



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

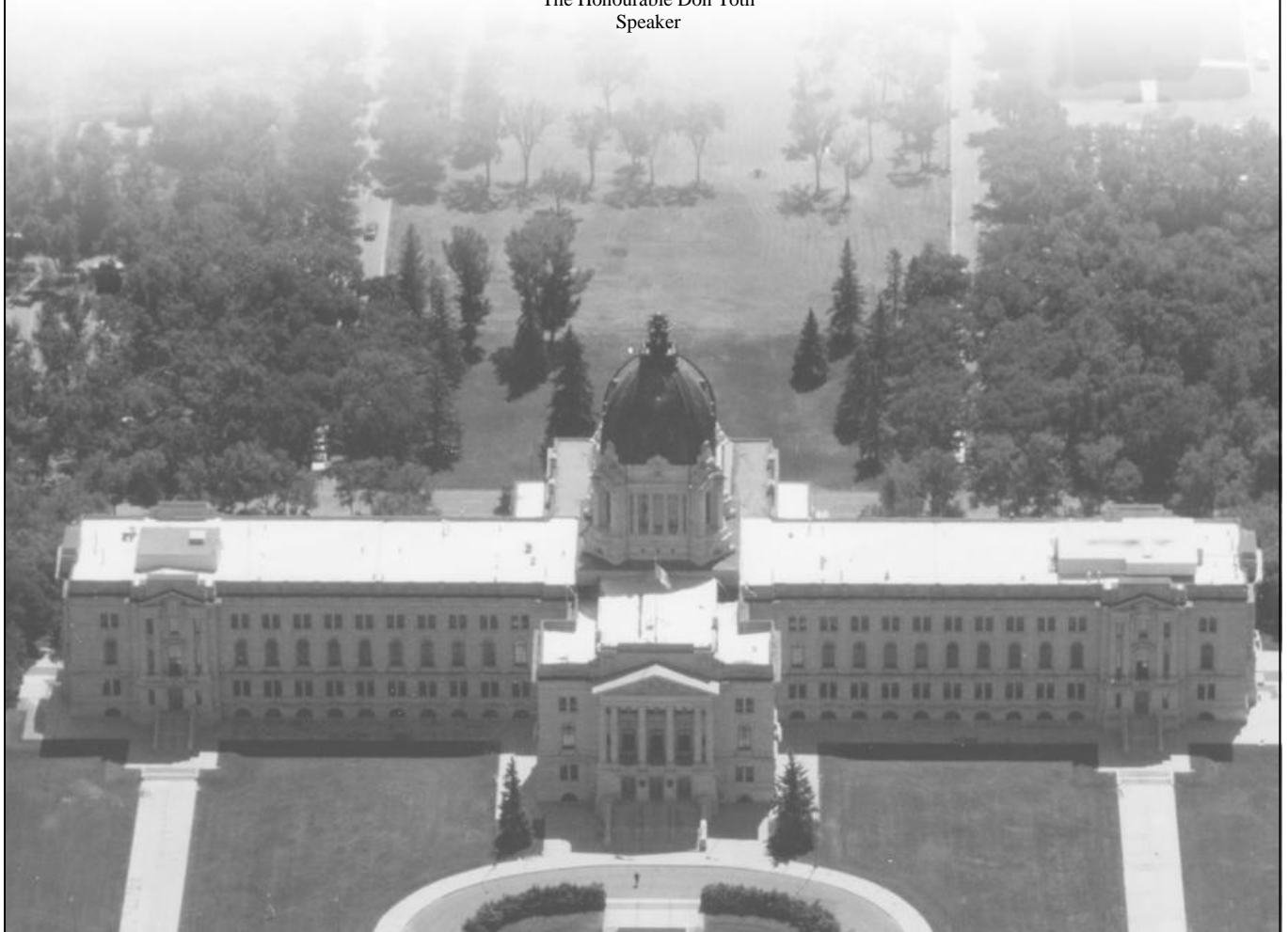
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Don Toth
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. Don Toth
 Premier — Hon. Brad Wall
 Leader of the Opposition — Dwain Lingenfelter

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Hon. Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Brotten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Chartier, Danielle	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Chisholm, Michael	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
D'Autremont, Dan	SP	Cannington
Draude, Hon. 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
Furber, Darcy	NDP	Prince Albert Northcote
Gantfoer, Hon. Rod	SP	Melfort
Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harper, Ron	NDP	Regina Northeast
Harrison, Hon. Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Hon. Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Higgins, Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Hutchinson, Hon. Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, Hon. D.F. (Yogi)	SP	Wood River
Iwanchuk, Andy	NDP	Saskatoon Fairview
Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
LeClerc, Serge	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
Lingenfelter, Dwain	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMillan, Tim	SP	Lloydminster
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Morin, Sandra	NDP	Regina Walsh Acres
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Hon. Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Greg	SP	Yorkton
Quennell, Frank	NDP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Reiter, Hon. Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Laura	SP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Schriemer, Joceline	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Stewart, Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Taylor, Len	NDP	The Battlefords
Tell, Hon. Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Toth, Hon. Don	SP	Moosomin
Trew, Kim	NDP	Regina Coronation Park
Vermette, Doyle	NDP	Cumberland
Wall, Hon. Brad	SP	Swift Current
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Yates, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney

[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. Seated in your gallery today just behind, in the second row, behind some very famous Saskatchewan people are two more very famous Saskatchewan people that I'm pleased to introduce to you and through you to members of the Assembly here today. Sherri and Marc Beaugregard are from Rockglen, Saskatchewan. Maybe you could just give us a little wave. There they are.

The Beaugregards are two of the many heroes across the province, and especially in southern Saskatchewan, that emerged during the major blizzard that hit our province on the 23rd and 24th of January. You might recall, Mr. Speaker — I know members on, well I'm sure both sides of the House recall — that in some areas of Saskatchewan received between 20 and 30 centimetres of snow, and winds were gusting in excess of 80 kilometres an hour.

Sherri and Marc run the Sherri Whiskey Hotel & Bar in Rockglen, and they came up with a system using six car batteries and I think a Toyota Camry as a source of the energy. They MacGyvered this together so that they could keep their property warm. The steak pit was kept open to supply people with . . . We talked about French onion soup earlier on and some chili that was served there, some coffee and tea during the storm. And of course they made the hotel available to others who needed literally a port in the storm that day.

Mr. Speaker, when Toronto was hit by a blizzard, they called in the army. But here in Saskatchewan we had people like Marc and Sherri and countless other heroes who were able to help out the people of the province. And through them to all of the rest of the people in Saskatchewan who volunteered to help that day and do heroic Saskatchewan deeds, we want to say welcome to their Legislative Assembly today, and thank you very much for what you've done.

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

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct privilege and honour to introduce to you, through you, and to all members of the Legislative Assembly a woman that's seated in the front row of your gallery. And perhaps she can stand when I call her name. Her name is Barb Dedi.

Barb Dedi is a tireless volunteer and community activist in the city of Regina and the surrounding area. She has contributed so many hours of volunteerism to multicultural events, helping others in need. She never says no. I don't know of a single situation that someone has approached her with where she has said no. She's an inspiration to all of us who live in the constituency of Regina Walsh Acres and she is well known

throughout the city of Regina.

She is also the founder who came up with the wonderful idea and the person who is still the lead organizer for the 11th annual Spring Free From Racism event that just took place this weekend. She is someone that we are very, very proud of in our constituency and I would ask all my colleagues to welcome her to the Legislative Assembly today, please.

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

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too would also like to extend a welcome to Barb. She did an absolutely incredible job on Sunday and I think that each and every one of us should show our appreciation for the hard work she does in the Spring Free From Racism event. It was a big success. I know I enjoy attending every year and I encourage all members to make time to attend this wonderful event. So welcome to your Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce a young man seated in the east gallery. Kent Peterson hails from originally Nipawin and is in Regina attending the University of Regina. And I invite all hon. members to welcome Kent to the legislature.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy, the Minister Responsible for Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's an honour for me to rise and introduce to you and through you to members of this Chamber several members of the Saskatchewan planning team who made Saskatchewan's pavilion at the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics and Paralympics such a huge success.

Mr. Speaker, seated in your gallery in the front row is Trent Fraser who acted as our director of marketing and production. He's joined by Grant Langford who's also seated in the gallery, who did a superb job, Mr. Speaker, in their duties and their jobs in obtaining corporate and city sponsorships for the pavilion.

Also seated in the gallery is Nancy Hubenig who acted as the production manager for the Saskatchewan pavilion. And, Mr. Speaker, one of our entertainers is also seated in your gallery, probably a gentleman who needs no introduction in this province, Mr. Brad Johner who was one of our entertainers and did such a great job, Mr. Speaker, at the pavilion. And of course, last but certainly not least is Joan McCusker, Mr. Speaker, who is obviously an Olympic gold medallist and was the coordinator for the Saskatchewan portion of the Olympic torch relay.

Mr. Speaker, members and the public will know that the Saskatchewan pavilion was an overwhelming success. It was due in large part to these individuals and the number, hundreds of volunteers that we had at our pavilion. And I'd ask all

members to welcome them to their House today.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the official opposition, I too would like to extend a big thank you for sharing Saskatchewan's story at the Olympics and at the Paralympics, and welcome you to your Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Estevan.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to join the minister in welcoming the planning committee for the Olympics, and specifically Brad Johnner. Brad is originally from Midale, which is in my constituency, and in fact he attended the same school I did in Macoun, although many years later, and his dad was my bus driver. And I just want to thank him for being a wonderful ambassador for our province.

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

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and to all members of the Assembly Sandy Evanovich, who's seated in the gallery behind me, Mr. Speaker. He is one of the senior elected officials at the Saskatchewan Government Employees' Union.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition in support of First Nations University of Canada. And the prayer of this petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the provincial government to recognize the importance of the First Nations University of Canada, to restore funding to the institution, and call upon their federal counterparts also to restore funding to the First Nations University of Canada.

This petition is signed by individuals from the good city of Regina. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Northeast.

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to rise today to present a petition on behalf of concerned citizens of Saskatchewan who are concerned about the condition of their highways across this great province. And this particular petition is concerned about the highway condition of Highway 22, and it clearly states here that the highway has deteriorated to the point where now it's becoming a safety hazard for the residents who have to drive on this highway each and every day. And, Mr. Speaker, the prayer goes as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the Sask Party government to commit to providing the repairs to Highway 22 that the people of Saskatchewan need.

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

Mr. Speaker, this particular petition is signed by the good folks from Earl Grey, Saskatchewan. I so submit.

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

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to present a petition on behalf of the Saskatchewan Student Coalition. This petition is in support of the implementation of a Saskatchewan scholarship fund. That would be the same fund that was promised by the Saskatchewan Party in the 2007 election campaign. The petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to implement the promised Saskatchewan scholarship fund.

Mr. Speaker, the signators on this petition are all from Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition in support of indexing minimum wage. And we know that increases to minimum wage helps low-income individuals and families improve their standard of living and build a better future and maintain a standard of living as the cost of living increases. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to commit to indexing Saskatchewan minimum wage to ensure that the standard of living of minimum wage earners is maintained in the face of the cost of living increases.

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

Mr. Speaker, I so present on behalf of constituents in Moose Jaw.

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

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today again to present the thousands of petitions presented by people who are concerned about the possibility of the elimination of government funding for chiropractic services. And the petition reads as follows:

We in the prayer that reads as follows respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan honour the agreement negotiated between the Ministry of Health and

the Chiropractors' Association of Saskatchewan.

And again, Mr. Speaker, these signatures are from all across the province, and here they are: from Wadena, Norquay, Canora, Cupar, Saltcoats, Nut Mountain, Yorkton, Rose Valley, Preeceville, Buchanan, Meadow Lake, Goodsoil, Dorintosh, Loon Lake, Kamsack, Langenburg, Arran, Togo, Pelly, Calder, Wroxton, Kamsack, Lipton, Raymore, Regina, Pilot Butte, Kipling, White City, Montmartre, Strasbourg, Saskatoon, Dalmeny, Leask, Weyburn, Halbrite, Radville, Fillmore, Lang, Biggar, Lumsden, Kelvington, Big River, Makwa, Assiniboia, Lafleche, Milestone, Broadview, Coderre, Mortlach, Edenwold, Preeceville, Caron, Caronport, Balgonie, Air Ronge, Watrous, Fort Qu'Appelle, Earl Grey, Lemberg, Melfort, Allan, La Ronge, Delisle, Beauval, Debden, Nipawin, Prince Albert, Kronau, Carlyle, La Loche, Warman, Spiritwood, Birch Hills, Swift Current, Kyle, Rapid View, Crane Valley, Martensville, Rush Lake, Dundurn, Hanley, Langham, Southey, Corning, Waldeck, Vanguard, Val Marie, Claydon, Grenfell, Francis, Riceton, Dysart, Asquith, Clavet, Tisdale, Kerrobert, Cut Knife, Unity, Wilkie, Battlefords, Denzil, Major, Coleville, Senlac, Kisbey, Pangman, Lake Alma, Canwood, Big River, Weirdale, Shellbrook, St. Louis, Wakaw, Paddockwood, Grandora, Wiseton, Kenaston, Davidson, Outlook, Alvena, Vanscoy, Porcupine Plain, Carrot River, Weekes, Hudson Bay, Ridgedale, Bjorkdale, Carragana, Aylsham, Quill Lake, Humboldt, Yellow Creek, Naicam, Foam Lake, Neudorf, Willowbrook, Gull Lake, Shaunavon, Estevan, Redvers, Carnduff, Stoughton, Alameda, Bienfait, Oxbow, Luseland, Wapella, Rocanville, Whitewood, Moosomin, Esterhazy, Spruce Home, Christopher Lake, Cabri, Cadillac, Weirdale, Parry, St. Brieux, Codette, Handel, Gouldtown, Wynyard, Pennant, Lancer, Herbert, Wymark, Abbey, Ponteix, Hazlet, Sylvania, Hague, Cudworth, Hodgeville, Maple Creek, Pambrun, Arborfield, Gronlid, White Fox, Zenon Park, Lestock, Sturgis, Pense, Perdue, McLean, Bethune, Fernwood, Willowbunch, Balcarres, Vibank, Ogema, Indian Head, and Creelman.

I so present, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to reinstate the domestic abuse outreach program. And the petition reads:

We the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan wish to bring to your attention the following: that the domestic abuse outreach program provided a number of valuable services to women victims of domestic violence and their children, including helping women find emergency shelter and accompanying women to their homes, court, the hospital, or the police station as needed; that the domestic abuse outreach program was a model for other family violence support programs throughout the province; that the Government of Saskatchewan removed funding for the domestic abuse outreach program on December 31, 2009 without consultation with the community.

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 reinstate the domestic abuse outreach program as a provincial government service and make it available to all parts of Saskatchewan.

And the petitioners come from the city of Saskatoon. I so present.

[13:45]

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for protection for renters from unreasonable rent increases. And we know that many renters have suffered rent increases of hundreds of dollars each, with average rent increases in even smaller communities like Estevan and Yorkton being more than \$200 year over year — nearly a 20 per cent increase.

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 consider enacting some form of rent control with a view to protect Saskatchewan renters from unreasonable increases in rent.

Mr. Speaker, the people signing this come from the city of Regina. I do so present. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition in support of a new long-term care facility in La Ronge. With a waiting list of almost one full year for our residents to wait, it is appalling. I'd like to read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately invest in the planning and construction of new long-term care beds in La Ronge.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

It is signed by the good people of Air Ronge, La Ronge — let's see — Stanley Mission and Southend. I so present.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to present a petition that has been circulated by the Saskatchewan Student Coalition, a petition on affordable undergraduate tuition and a call for the Sask Party government's actions to match its rhetoric. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to implement a long-term tuition management strategy in which tuition is increased by an average 2 per cent or the most recent increase to the

consumer price index.

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

Mr. Speaker, I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present a petition in support of reducing the interest on fixed-rate student loans to prime, considering that students in Saskatchewan are paying the highest amount of interest on fixed-rate student loans in Canada at prime plus two and a half per cent. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately reduce the interest on fixed-rate student loans to the prime rate of borrowing so that students can accumulate less debt and focus their finances on building their lives here in Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Speaker, the petition has been circulated by the Saskatchewan Student Coalition and has signatures on it from people from the city of Regina. I so present.

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

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I stand to present a petition on behalf of rural residents of Saskatchewan who are dealing with yet another water issue. The government ministry has directed that customers may no longer treat non-potable water using methods approved by Sask Health, and that Furdale residents dealing in good faith with SaskWater over 30 years have paid large amounts for their domestic systems and in-home treatment equipment. The alternative water supply referred to them by a government ministry . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I would ask the member to move to the prayer, please. I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Ms. Morin: — This is the same preamble that I've read in the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. I've brought to members' attention and most of the members have recognized the long-standing tradition — that a short indication of what the petition represents and then to move to the prayer — made by Speakers in the past. I recognize the member from Prince Albert . . . pardon me, Regina Walsh Acres.

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, and the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to withdraw its order to cut off

non-potable water to the residents of the hamlet of Furdale, causing great hardship with no suitable alternatives, to exempt the hamlet of Furdale from further water service cut-offs by granting a grandfather clause under *The Environmental Management and Protection Act, 2002* and *The Water Regulations, 2002*, and that this government fulfills its promises to rural Saskatchewan.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, these petitions are signed by the good residents of Furdale and Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Fairview. I rise today to present a petition in support of the withdrawal of Bill 80. Mr. Speaker, the members of the building trade unions have a proud history of craft union certification in Saskatchewan, and what this has resulted in is a stable labour relations environment which provides quality work and safe construction sites that benefit all the people of this province. And, Mr. Speaker, also these building trades contracts support an apprenticeship training system which results in a highly skilled workforce. And the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to withdraw its ill-conceived Bill 80, *The Construction Industry Labour Relations Amendment Act, 2009* which dismantles the proud history of the building trades in this province, creates instability in the labour market, and impacts the quality of training required of workers before entering the workforce.

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

Mr. Speaker, these petitions are signed by people in Regina. And I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to rise and present a petition in support of affordable rents and housing for The Battlefords. The petitioners note the vacancy rate for rental accommodation in The Battlefords is very low, but the cost of rental accommodation is increasing at an alarming rate. The petitioners call upon the Legislative Assembly to ask the Government of Saskatchewan:

To develop an affordable housing program that will result in a greater number of quality and affordable rental units to be made available to a greater number of people throughout The Battlefords and that will implement a process of rent review or rent control to better protect tenants in a non-competitive housing environment.

Mr. Speaker, the petition is signed by residents of the city of North Battleford. I so present.

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

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again to present a petition signed by residents of Saskatchewan concerned about this government's disregard and disrespect for legal, constitutional, and human rights. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to direct marriage commissioners to uphold the law and the equality rights of all Saskatchewan couples, and to withdraw the reference to the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal that would allow marriage commissioners to opt out of their legal obligation to provide all couples with civil marriage services.

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

Today the petition is signed by residents of Saskatoon.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents from across Saskatchewan as it relates to the unprecedented mismanagement of our finances by the Sask Party. They allude to the shameful \$1 billion deficit. They recognize that this is getting worse, not better, Mr. Speaker. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the Sask Party government to start managing our provincial finances responsibly and prudently to ensure that it does not continue its trend of massive budgetary shortfalls, runaway and unsustainable spending, equity stripping from our Crowns, and irresponsible revenue setting.

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

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

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present a petition in support of expansion of the graduate retention program. This petition is basically about fairness in how we treat post-secondary students and about retaining the best and the brightest here in our province. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately expand the graduate retention program to include master's and Ph.D. graduates.

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

This petition is signed by good residents of Saskatoon and Osler. I so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — According to order, a certain petition regarding funding for the First Nations University of Canada, presented on March 22nd, 2010, has been reviewed and pursuant to rule 16(4) is found to be irregular and therefore cannot be read and received.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Spring Free From Racism

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Sunday, March 21st was the international day for the elimination of racism. The citizens of Regina were able to recognize this day through the 11th annual Spring Free From Racism event. I had the privilege of attending this event along with the Leader of the Opposition and the members for Regina Walsh Acres, Regina Dewdney, Regina Rosemont, and Prince Albert Northcote as well as the member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley.

The event has grown in attendance to 3,000 visitors and is a family day celebration where all cultures come together to grow in understanding their own multicultural diversity through dance, song, food, and many, many displays. Spring Free From Racism guests were able to enjoy approximately 40 different entertainment performances along with feature guest, David Stone, who is a well-known singer-songwriter from Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan can be proud that under the CCF [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation], we were the first province to pass legislation protecting human rights with the Saskatchewan Bill of Rights; however, there is still much work to be done on this issue.

I would like to ask all my colleagues to congratulate the lead organizers, Barb Dedi and Lucian Roska, as well as all the committee members for the Spring Free From Racism Day for another successful event. And may we all rededicate ourselves to eliminating racism in Saskatchewan and in the world. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Population Trends

Mr. LeClerc: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just recently StatsCan released some gloomy numbers for the province of Saskatchewan. One headline read, "StatsCan report predicts tepid growth for Saskatchewan." Surprisingly, the NDP [New Democratic Party] missed this report as an opportunity to yet again tear down our province.

But, Mr. Speaker, when you get beneath the headlines, you will discover that this projection was based on data from the year 2006, during the waning years of the tired, tired, old NDP. Now, Mr. Speaker, StatsCan can be forgiven for their gloomy projections because the NDP was responsible for a trend of

population decline during their time in government.

However, Mr. Speaker, on November 7, 2007, this province embarked upon a new path, one of renewal, growth, and optimism. Over the past two years, our population has grown consistently. In fact, Mr. Speaker, in fact our population hit an all-time high of 1,034,974 at the end of 2009. The increase in population numbers is proof that Saskatchewan is a great place to live, work, and raise a family. That's right, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has reversed the trend of out-migration and, Mr. Speaker, I am certain that the new population numbers released this month will show continuation of this emerging trend.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

New Spa Offers Natural Products

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A new spa has opened up in Prince Albert Northcote. It's the Ozera Healing Spa, and it's owned by Jaedean Mitchell.

What makes this spa unique, Mr. Speaker, is that it offers natural and environmentally friendly products. One product line carried in the spa is by a company that uses solely wind powered plants and post-consumer packaging and is committed to sustainable products and innovation. Ms. Mitchell says that with so many people suffering from allergies, all-natural, chemical-free products are growing in demand, and her customer base is expanding because of the natural products Ozera offers. Anyone who simply wants to be pampered and enjoy a day at the spa can do so knowing that they are in a green environment, that there is minimal damage to the Earth from any of the products that are being used.

Jaedean Mitchell loves to indulge people, and she's making a career out of it. She feels that in this busy world people don't take enough time for themselves, and she hopes her spa will provide a sanctuary in response to everyday chaos.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join with me in commending Jaedean Mitchell on her use of environmentally sustainable products and offer her our best wishes for success in her business venture. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cannington.

[14:00]

Paralympic Athletes' Achievements

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday was the closing ceremonies for the 2010 Paralympic Games. The Paralympic Games was a grand event, embodying the concepts of participation and camaraderie. The athletes accomplished remarkable achievements and showed their positive attitude towards life. Every Paralympic athlete has provided a unique interpretation of the values and significance of life through his or her fortitude, perseverance, and dedication to their sport.

Mr. Speaker, cross-country skier Colette Bourgonje of Saskatoon received the Whang Youn Dai Achievement Award at the closing ceremonies of the Paralympic Winter Games.

Colette just finished competing in her ninth Paralympic Games and has won 10 medals. She has a silver medal in the 10-kilometre sit-skiing and a bronze in the 5-kilometre event at these games.

"Colette . . . continues to embody the paralympic movement in Canada," says Blair McIntosh, chef de mission of the Canadian team. "In addition to her success in para-nordic skiing, Colette is a wonderful ambassador for the Canadian Paralympic Committee and a role model for future Paralympians."

Paralympic athletes have shared the joy of success and the pleasure of participation through their presence at the winter games. Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge all the Paralympic athletes, their hard work, dedication, and determination as a source of inspiration for us all. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

Answering Questions

Mr. Taylor: — Yesterday in this Chamber, the Minister of Justice was asked three times whether he knew of any investigation involving an MLA's [Member of the Legislative Assembly] violation of *The Elections Act*. Three times he stood in his place refusing to or avoiding to answer a clear and direct question put to him by an elected representative of the people.

Just minutes later, in answer to the same question put to him by the media outside the Chamber, the minister answered the question. The minister has it backwards. Ministers of the Crown are accountable first to elected members of the Assembly during question period in this Chamber. If the minister has an answer to a question, and yesterday he did, he should provide that answer in the very place where ministers and the government are to be most accountable. That the minister would respond in two distinctly different ways in these two different places shows both a lack of transparency and a lack of respect for the traditions of parliamentary democracy and a lack of respect for the office that he holds.

What makes the minister's apparent disregard for the rights of elected members even more disturbing is that he would show such disregard on the question of whether his party is seeking to politicize the process of choosing a Chief Electoral Officer and thus to politicize the oversight of the very elections that send members to this place. One hopes that a minister of the Crown refusing to answer difficult questions in the House is not also trying to ensure that fewer of them get asked in the first place.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Carlton.

Additional Child Care Spaces Opened

Mr. Hickie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Monday of last week, I had the honour of attending the official opening of 32 new child care spaces at Riverside Community School. These spaces came about due to the efforts of the Ministry of Education, Family Futures and its executive director, Donna Strauss, along with her board of directors, and Saskatchewan Rivers School Division.

On Thursday of last week, the Premier, Minister of Education, and I joined the Children's Choice Child Development Co-Operative board in celebrating the opening of 54 new licensed child care spaces in Prince Albert's St. Michael Community School. That's 86 new child care spaces last week alone, Mr. Speaker, with over 190 new spaces created in Prince Albert this past fiscal year. There is renewed sense of optimism in the city, Mr. Speaker. Here are the words of the Children's Choice executive director, Gail Szautner:

These new spaces will serve a great need in this area of Prince Albert . . . This exciting partnership with the school, the school board and the Ministry of Education has made the development of these new spaces possible. We look forward to building on this partnership in the future.

Here are some other words from the Prince Albert Catholic School Division board Chair, Mr. Speaker:

We are proud to be part of this project and pleased to have had this opportunity to partner with the Ministry of Education and Children's Choice . . . This is a great example of how people working together can assist families with young children.

Mr. Speaker, just like the Government of Saskatchewan, the people of Prince Albert are moving forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Buyer's Remorse

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, sometimes we all suffer from buyer's remorse. I'm sure the Premier is feeling a little buyer's remorse after his investment property in Phoenix didn't turn out quite so well. After all, he paid 105,000 for it and now it's only worth \$69,000.

But I'm sure many people in Saskatchewan are also feeling a little buyer's remorse. When they voted for the Saskatchewan Party in November 2007, they thought they were getting a great deal. They thought they would be getting a children's hospital. They thought they would be getting 13 long-term care beds. They thought they would be getting shorter surgical waiting lists. They thought cities and towns would be getting a full percentage point of PST [provincial sales tax].

But instead, Mr. Speaker, now that the gift wrap has come off and the warranty has run out, what are they left with, Mr. Speaker? A cheap Grant Devine knock-off model and the consolation prize that comes with every Saskatchewan Party government, Mr. Speaker — unlimited deficits, incompetence, and broken promises.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it's too late for the people of Saskatchewan to ask for a refund, but in November of 2011, they will have a chance to trade in for an upgrade, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw

Wakamow.

Revenue Sharing

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We've learned that Regina residents could see the biggest tax increase they have seen in a decade and Regina has been shortchanged a whopping \$8.4 million because of this government's incompetent handling of provincial finances and their growing list of broken promises. A concerned citizen even wrote in the paper today, "... please don't talk about downtown improvement or domed stadiums until I know if I have to sell my house to pay the taxes."

To the Minister of Finance: will your budget tomorrow increase funding to Saskatchewan cities and towns, or will you force Regina families to face the biggest tax increase they have seen in a decade?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Municipal Affairs.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I'd like to thank the member for the opportunity to talk about all of the things that this government has done for the city of Regina, Mr. Speaker. This year alone: \$26 million in revenue sharing — \$10 million increase, 65 per cent increase — in revenue sharing to the city of Regina in two years, Mr. Speaker; a \$19.5 million municipal economic enhancement program grant to the city of Regina, Mr. Speaker. Recreational infrastructure projects, Mr. Speaker: \$750,000 for Leibel Field upgrades in the Leader of the Opposition's riding; \$300,000 for the YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association] renovation, Mr. Speaker; \$190,000 for the Broad Street pedestrian bridge, Mr. Speaker, which we see going in today; \$283,000 for Wascana Rehabilitation Centre playground improvements. And \$43.1 million in an interest-free loan to the city of Regina for the global transportation hub. This government has done a tremendous amount for the city.

The Speaker: — Next question. I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Ms. Higgins: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the minister needs to check which are federal programs and which are provincial, but that's a different debate.

The city of Saskatoon will be finalizing their budget soon, and there's been a number of comments where they talk about the process being very painful. They're also looking at a \$9 million shortfall because of the broken promise from this government. They have to totally rebuild their budget, and it will be a slow and painful process.

So they're getting down to the city of Saskatoon having only two choices: either huge tax increases or program cuts. So my question to the minister: why are you forcing Saskatoon to choose between cutting programs or increasing their taxes?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Municipal Affairs.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we of course know

that the city of Saskatoon had a surplus in the last budget year owing to the massive, the massive investment that this government has made: \$29.2 million in revenue sharing to the city of Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, a 65 per cent increase over two years ago, the last year that those members were in government; \$22 million to the municipal economic enhancement program; 22 and a half million dollars to the Building Canada Fund; the Destination Centre, \$13 million, Mr. Speaker.

And the record of those members opposite, Mr. Speaker, clawing back \$150 million from the city of Saskatoon over the 16 years of their government. They don't have a leg to stand on, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Higgins: — Mr. Speaker, I do have to say one thing that the NDP did for a number of years and were well known for was balanced budgets and not spending beyond our means.

Mr. Speaker, this trend is growing across the province. And we see the city of Weyburn talking about a half-million dollar shortfall because of their broken promise. They're talking about reducing services, and of course no new programs, that's for sure. And on top of these cuts, they're talking about increasing taxes by 4 per cent. P.A.'s [Prince Albert] the same, a million dollars short; taxes could increase up to 9 per cent. Moose Jaw, taxes could go up 7 per cent. Why is this minister picking the pockets of families in Weyburn, Prince Albert, and Moose Jaw to pay for his own incompetence?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Municipal Affairs.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I really am happy to talk about revenue sharing. This government has increased revenue sharing by 43 per cent in the first two years of our government, Mr. Speaker.

The record of those members opposite is to have clawed back \$600 million from municipalities over the course of their 16 years in government, Mr. Speaker. They frankly, Mr. Speaker, don't have a leg to stand on in talking about these matters.

We've invested in record amounts of infrastructure, Mr. Speaker. We've made record investments into communities right across this province. And you know what, Mr. Speaker, the news is pretty darn good. We have the lowest unemployment rate in Canada — 4.3 per cent, Mr. Speaker. The lowest youth unemployment rate in the country, Mr. Speaker. Our population at an all-time high, and all we hear from the other side is negativity.

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

Ms. Higgins: — Well, Mr. Speaker, how quick they forget their promises and all the hoopla of a year ago about increased revenue sharing and a permanent formula that was put in place. Where'd that go? Gone. It's gone, Mr. Speaker.

And over and over again we are seeing this government

off-loading expenses onto Saskatchewan families every chance they get. Just go pay your power bill; it's up. Go to a chiropractor; could be up after tomorrow. Looks like it. Go post-secondary education; your tuition's going up. Or pay your property tax, Mr. Speaker. And it's all because of this government's mismanagement. Everyone in this province is paying more. Mr. Speaker, to the minister: why is he forcing families from across this province to pay more and get less?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Municipal Affairs.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I am happy to talk about the record of this government, the economic record of this government: the lowest unemployment rate in Canada, Mr. Speaker, 4.3 per cent; employment up 12,000 full-time jobs created year over year, Mr. Speaker. We're forecast to lead the country in economic growth by almost all of the private sector forecasters out there, Mr. Speaker. The population growth, the population growth at the highest level it has ever been in the history of this province.

And all we have from the members opposite is the running down of the economy, the running down of the province, and the running down of the people. And that's why where they're at in the polls.

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

Film Industry Issues

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, my question is a simple one. To the minister: will this government take action in tomorrow's budget to help the film industry reverse its 70 per cent decline in production?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sports.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite for her question. Certainly this has been a very difficult couple of years when it comes to the film employment, film and television sector, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in 2008 there were 1,800 films that were . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, in 2008 there were 1,800 films produced in North America. Last year it was 900, Mr. Speaker, and this year has not been a very good year. The film industry has been . . . It's been a very difficult year for the industry, Mr. Speaker.

I have met with representatives from the industry, from SMPIA [Saskatchewan Motion Picture Association], Mr. Speaker, in recent weeks, and we look forward to helping them succeed in their industry, Mr. Speaker. But it will be the industry that takes a lead role in ensuring that this industry succeeds going forward in this province.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, volumes may be down around the world and across Saskatchewan, but talk to Manitoba and Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, in 2007-2008 the film and television industry contributed nearly 68 million to the Saskatchewan economy and created over 1,200 full-time jobs, but over the last two years production has declined by 70 per cent. And last week William F. White, a supplier of film and video equipment here in Regina and a pillar of the film community, announced it was closing its doors.

To the minister: will the government make the changes to the film employment tax credit in tomorrow's budget that the industry needs to stay competitive?

[14:15]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sports.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated in my last answer, I've recently met with representatives of the film industry. We have talked about a number of areas where they feel that the province and the industry can work together to do better, Mr. Speaker. I'm not going to reveal what may or may not be in the budget at this point, Mr. Speaker. The member can wait until tomorrow.

But certainly we know that across the entire industry, not just in Saskatchewan, but that film and television productions are down, Mr. Speaker — 1,800 in 2008 and last year it was less than half of that, 900 productions, Mr. Speaker. So I'm looking forward to working with the industry to identify where we can help the industry leaders succeed in this industry going forward, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again talk is cheap and it'll be great to see some action on this file.

The Premier has been known to wrap himself in the *Corner Gas* flag, and he even made a so-called comedic debut by crossing a picket line on the show. Interestingly enough, to film his latest sitcom, Brent Butt crossed the line too — the Saskatchewan border heading west to Vancouver.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: why is this government driving film industry jobs and investment out of Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sports.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to thank the member for her question. We have been working as a ministry, Mr. Speaker, to attract high profile series to the province. Mr. Speaker, obviously when one series makes up about 25 per cent of the entire industry, it's certainly a blow

when that series comes to an end, Mr. Speaker. And that's why we're looking to bring more series back to the province, Mr. Speaker.

But what we do in this budget and what we do as a government and in this province, whether it's the film sector or any other industry, is going to be within a balanced budget, Mr. Speaker. That's what we're going to do in this province — going forward in a prudent, in a fiscally prudent manner, Mr. Speaker, whether it comes to the film industry, the television industry, or any other industry across the province, Mr. Speaker.

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

Treatment of Government Employees

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, does the Minister Responsible for Public Service Commission think that it's appropriate to terminate public employees who the government believes provided information to elected members of this Assembly?

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, every public employee we have in this province is critical to our province, to the growth, and to ensure that we can have an efficient government and managed well. We respect the people that are public employees in this province, and I assure members opposite that we respect the people that are working for this government.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, last fall the opposition made public the case of a convicted sex offender who was unlawfully at large. Instead of finding out why the individual in question was mistakenly released, the government chose to focus on who might have provided this information to the opposition.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: has an employee of Corrections and Public Safety been fired, or will someone be fired based on the government's belief that they provided this information to the public?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Corrections, Public Safety and Policing.

Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we know, the situation that happened last fall, there was information that was passed inappropriately to a member of the Legislative Assembly. We know that there is a right way and a wrong way of doing business in the public service.

The individual could have easily passed the information, or if he had a problem with public safety, he could have talked to his supervisor. Or if his supervisor . . . he could talk to the police. There's a chain of command. Mr. Speaker, this individual had violated the chain of command, and there is an investigation that's ongoing. The investigation is ongoing, or it's being completed as we speak right now.

Mr. Speaker, I think that we'll wait until . . . see that the investigation is completed. It is a human resources issue. I have not been involved in the investigation. I did not call the investigation; it was the deputy minister. And I'm happy to answer another question.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, we know that the government focused all their attention on an employee who provided information to members of the legislature rather than on the issue that was of concern to the public and the public safety.

So once again, to the minister: has an employee of Corrections and Public Safety been fired, or will someone be fired, based on the government's belief that they provided this information to the public?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Corrections, Public Safety and Policing.

Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert: — Mr. Speaker, once again, I would remind the members opposite that the investigation is an independent investigation that was called by the ministry. It's a totally . . . I was totally hands-off on the investigation and the result. I have not seen any report on it. I had a briefing by the deputy minister. It's a deputy minister's decision. It's a human resources issue. It is not a politicized issue. Mr. Speaker, we'll wait until . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Order. The minister can complete his response.

Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert: — Mr. Speaker, the deputy minister will review the report, which he is doing, and we will wait to see what his recommendations are. Again, it's a human resources issue, and the deputy minister will be dealing with it. It will not be dealt with in the political domain.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, public servants have bills to pay and families to support like the rest of us. Firing public servants who try to do their jobs sends a clear message to the other public servants: if you try to serve the public interest instead of the Sask Party political interest, you and your family will suffer the consequences. It's intimidation, pure and simple. But firing the wrong person is even worse.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: does the Sask Party intend to fire public servants every time the opposition raises an issue in the legislature? Why are public servants paying the price for this government's mismanagement and incompetence?

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I assure the members opposite that we respect and value the people that work for our

government and with our government. I think the members opposite only have to think back a little while when they remember that they have . . . there was public servants that were fired a number of times. In fact in 1996, the NDP released 554 people, and there was just . . . their idea of the right thing to do.

Mr. Speaker, under this government, the people that work for us are important and valuable and help bring forward our policy, and we look forward to our working relationship with them.

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

Selection of a Chief Electoral Officer

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is the Minister of Justice aware of any investigations past or present into any Sask Party MLA, the party itself, or any Sask Party candidate by the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer?

The Speaker: — Order. I think it's important for members to recognize that questions are to be related directly to the ministry, the responsibility of the ministry, and not the Board of Internal Economy. If the minister wishes to respond, the minister can respond.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, given the events in the House yesterday, I asked my officials whether they are considering for prosecution any allegations of violations of *The Election Act* by any member of this Assembly. They have advised me that they are not. If there are any further questions regarding compliance with *The Election Act*, they should be redirected to the Acting Chief Electoral Officer. I have no knowledge of any such investigation, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the issue arose because we chose not to appoint any specific individual. Mr. Speaker, that individual was the fifth on a list of candidates. I do not wish to get into the individual's credentials, Mr. Speaker, but it was a reasonable decision taken by this caucus.

Mr. Speaker, I have also asked the Chief Justice of the Court of Appeal for this province to assist us by appointing an overseer and facilitator for the process of selecting a new Chief Electoral Officer for Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, this individual must give us some assistance to ensure that we have a fair, impartial, and appropriate process.

The Speaker: — Next question. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Meewasin.

Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, it seems to be the position of the minister that a majority of the Legislative Assembly gets to choose who the Chief Electoral Officer will be who oversees the conduct in an election. I will remind the minister that he spoke glowingly of the successful candidate and referred to him as the last man standing, not the fifth choice.

To the minister: is this simply not a government appointment of what was once an independent officer of the legislature?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, it is imperative that not just the MLAs but the public have confidence in this system. They must have confidence in the Chief Electoral Officer and, Mr. Speaker, they must also have confidence in the process that selects that individual. For that reason, Mr. Speaker, I have asked the Chief Justice for the province of Saskatchewan to appoint a facilitator and overseer to ensure that that process happens in a fair, appropriate, and an impartial manner.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to . . .

[Interjections]

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the individual that will be appointed will be either a retired or supernumerary judge. And, Mr. Speaker, it is my request of the members opposite that they participate actively in the process, that they give some meaningful and valued input so that we are able to arrive at a candidate that will give us fair, appropriate, and impartial election results that are handled in a democratic and appropriate manner, Mr. Speaker. The fundamentals of our democracy require that.

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

Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice has a very strange way of making requests to the opposition, I have to say. Mr. Speaker, when asked what knowledge the Saskatchewan Party caucus would have to reject the recommended individual, the minister said, and I quote, “We all went through an election in 2007. We all filed returns. We all had communications as we filed those returns.” He said that the Sask Party MLAs had dealings with the current incumbent, the Chief Electoral Officer, Mr. Speaker. The Sask Party criteria for the Chief Electoral Officer seems to be how thoroughly he will scrutinize their election returns.

To the minister: is the public really served by MLAs choosing who will scrutinize their returns based on the level of scrutiny that they wish to undergo?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I can advise the members of the House that we want this process to be brought to an end as quickly as possible. We want to appoint a Chief Electoral Officer that will have the confidence not only of the members of this House but, Mr. Speaker, of the citizens of the province of Saskatchewan.

We hope that that individual will review and look at all of the returns that are filed by parties, by all of the candidates with appropriate vigour and caution to ensure that *The Election Act* is complied with. We also look to that individual to supply guidance and direction and assistance in those members when they file their returns.

Mr. Speaker, this is a difficult and complex process. The individual who will be hired will have to take us through the

next two elections, will take us through redistribution, and in fact, Mr. Speaker, a major rework of the electoral Act. This is a difficult and complex process. We look forward to the co-operation of the members opposite.

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

Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, this was the difficult and complex process that existed before the Sask Party caucus decided that the majority in this legislature was going to appoint independent officers. The process was this: a bipartisan committee, including the Speaker of this House, recommended independent legislative officers. The members of this House, unless they had very good reason not to, Mr. Speaker, and hadn't had up to this day, accepted those recommendations. And a number of independent officers serve under that process, Mr. Speaker. Not a difficult process, not a complex process.

They politicized it, Mr. Speaker, and now they want to try to fix it by rejecting this officer. And they have given no reason why they should do so, and this side of the House is not going to co-operate in that, Mr. Speaker.

[14:30]

The Premier has expressed non-confidence in two individuals: inappropriately in the Acting Chief Electoral Officer, perhaps appropriately in his Attorney General who serves on the board . . .

The Speaker: — I would ask the member to place the question directly.

Mr. Quennell: — The opposition cannot have confidence if the government doesn't have confidence in the Attorney General. Will the Attorney General step aside from the Board of Internal Economy so that it can do its work with the confidence of this House?

The Speaker: — Just remind members again of the rules, and rule 19(2) says, “Questions relating to any . . .” Order. “Questions relating to any matter within the administrative competence of the government or on matters related to individual ministerial responsibility may be asked of a Minister of the Crown.”

Order. “Questions on issues not officially connected with the government of a . . .”

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Order. If the members will listen, they'll hear the rules that they created. “Questions . . . with the government, of a private nature, related to the Board of Internal Economy, caucus, party or political responsibilities are prohibited.”

The member's question is directly related to Board of Internal Economy. However, if the minister is prepared to respond, the minister can respond.

Question period is over.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

School Capital Projects

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, last Thursday I was pleased to join the Premier, the Minister for Enterprise Saskatchewan, mayors, board of education Chairs and members, school division administrators, principals, educators, and community members in Saskatoon for a major school announcement.

The Premier announced that we are moving ahead six new major school capital projects, including a new public and separate school for the Willowgrove community in Saskatoon, a new school facility to consolidate St. Patrick Elementary School and St. Joseph Middle School in Swift Current, a replacement school for École St. Thomas Elementary School in Lloydminster, the École St. Andrew Elementary School major renovation right here in Regina and, Mr. Speaker, a new middle school in the community of Warman. Mr. Speaker, all six projects are entering the approval in principle stage and receiving a total of \$6 million in government support to complete the preparation of detailed plans and specifications which must be completed before construction can begin.

Mr. Speaker, we are also advancing \$5 million to support facility maintenance projects ranging from roof and boiler replacements to structural repairs in seven communities. This includes Churchbridge, Melfort, Loon Lake, Imperial, Rosthern, Swift Current, and Lucky Lake.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, Regina and Saskatoon public school divisions will also receive financial support to complete facility audits. This . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. The Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, the facility audits are a part of a larger initiative to get an accurate picture of the actual conditions of all of our schools across Saskatchewan. This will allow us to take the best care of our school infrastructure over the long haul.

Mr. Speaker, over the past two and a half years, the Government of Saskatchewan has made school infrastructure a priority. To date we have invested in excess of \$300 million to support moving forward 28 major and almost 400 additional smaller school capital projects across the province of which, Mr. Speaker, 50 were early learning and child care space development projects.

From the northwest corner of our province in Turnor Lake to Oxbow in the Southeast, more than one in three schools in our province is receiving much-needed upgrades. This is a record capital investment in Saskatchewan schools, but we know that there is still need in many communities that must be met. We are committed to addressing in a substantial way the sizeable school infrastructure deficit that has accumulated across the

province.

Our focus has been on moving forward school projects that were the most pressing, schools that required renovations, additions, or new builds to ensure the health and safety of students. We have also made significant headway on smaller capital projects to maintain our facilities and keep our schools safe and in good repair for our students.

Now we are able to turn our attention towards projects that address critical space shortages. The projects announced last Thursday do that. Thursday's announcement signals that we are on the right track and our priorities have not changed. We recognize the importance of schools that are in good condition, accessible, and responsive to the needs of students, teachers, and the community.

We want our students to attend school in a facility they can be proud of, that truly reflects the kind of great school communities that we have across our province. Mr. Speaker, we are pleased to be advancing six major and nine block capital projects that, once complete, will support the education of 2,900 Saskatchewan students.

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

Ms. Atkinson: — I want to thank the minister for sending me a copy of his ministerial statement about 10 minutes to 1. And, Mr. Speaker, I do note that the minister announced what he is calling a ministerial statement last Thursday in the city of Saskatoon. At some stage, Mr. Speaker, I'd really appreciate it if you could apprise the House what is indeed appropriate as a ministerial statement, given that there are press conferences that took place five days ago, Mr. Speaker, and I'm not sure what's new in terms of this ministerial statement.

But I will say this. I've had an opportunity to go across the province since being appointed Education critic, meeting with school trustees across Saskatchewan as well as teachers and parents. And, Mr. Speaker, I've had an opportunity to place some questions in this House and ask the Minister of Education to provide the House with a listing of school capital. And what was so interesting is that last November 23rd I asked the minister if he could provide me with an updated list of school capital and in fact, Mr. Speaker, he did not provide me the list for 2009. He provided me a list for 2008.

So when the minister made his announcement on Thursday, the newest list I had had the following order: Saskatoon Public, Willowgrove; Prairie Valley, the Lumsden Elementary School; the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools, Willowgrove; Greater Saskatoon Catholic, St. Matthew's; and then of course Holy Family, St. Michael School in Weyburn, Georges Vanier — Georges Vanier in Saskatoon that has been waiting for some time for an addition and renovation. And then of course Greater Saskatoon Catholic, Holy Cross, where we have people that are sitting at Holy Cross and they have been waiting for some time to have an addition and renovation at Holy Cross. And then of course Warman. And we had the Warman folks into the legislature a couple of weeks ago and they very quickly, with the help of my colleague from Massey Place, organized over 2,000 signatures on petitions to deal with that whole issue of

overcrowding in Warman, Mr. Speaker.

And so when the minister provides the critic with “the latest information,” one assumes that when he’s making his announcement in Saskatoon that it resembles the information that he provided in this legislature to the opposition Education critic.

Now had I just gone with the minister’s information that he provided me on November 23rd, I could have said, what happened to Lumsden? What happened to St. Michael’s? What happened to Georges Vanier? What happened to Holy Cross? How did all of these schools jump ahead?

But I did have an opportunity on my way home to contact some of my contacts in school divisions across the province, and they said, oh now the minister provided us with a list in August of 2009 and it’s the latest list. But that’s not the list he put into this Legislative Assembly to inform the House, Mr. Speaker. There was quite a different list for the opposition and then the list that he provided school boards with last August.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when you look at the list that he provided school boards with — Holy Trinity; Saskatoon Public, Willowgrove; Greater Saskatoon Catholic, Willowgrove; Lloydminster, École St. Thomas — the one missing is Weyburn. That would be St. Michael’s School in Weyburn. That wasn’t mentioned by the minister when he made his announcement. École St. Andrew’s, which is the Regina Catholic School Board, that was announced as well as Prairie Spirit, Warman.

So, Mr. Speaker, may I ask the minister that when people submit written questions from the opposition, could the minister please provide the latest information in the ministry, and accurate information, so that we can all do our job on behalf of the citizens of Saskatchewan.

Now if those aren’t the rules, if those aren’t the rules that written questions will be answered precisely and honestly with the latest information, I think all members of the opposition should know this. I think we should know. But if the minister genuinely, his officials made a mistake or his office, then they need to say that. But, Mr. Speaker, the information the minister provided me, the minister provided me . . . Oh so he’s playing games. Oh he’s playing games, that’s what he’s doing; he’s playing games. And I would ask the minister, please don’t play . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Order. I would ask members to come to order and allow the member to wind up her comments. Members have been allowed to respond to ministerial statements roughly about the same amount of time that the minister has made their statements. The member’s time . . . I’d ask the member to wrap up her comments.

Ms. Atkinson: — I would ask the minister, all ministers, don’t play games. We ask information. Please provide the information, Mr. Speaker. It’s appropriate in the name of allowing us to do our jobs, Mr. Speaker. I would ask the minister to provide the most accurate and up-to-date

information that the minister can because when he doesn’t do that, Mr. Speaker, he creates difficulty. And I think we’re all here to act and represent all constituents in the province of Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Any further ministerial statements? Why is the Leader of the Opposition on his feet?

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, before orders of the day, I wish to request leave to move a motion under rule 59.

The Speaker: — I would ask the Leader of the Opposition to state briefly the purpose of the motion and to read the motion into the record.

MOTION UNDER RULE 59

Public Access to Information Regarding Tommy Douglas

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate very much the opportunity to say a few words, and I’ll be very brief. But, Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police are refusing to release the complete intelligence file of former Saskatchewan premier, Tommy Douglas.

Mr. Speaker, public access to information is a core tenet of democracy. Saskatchewan people and Canadians from coast to coast deserve to know the information contained in that intelligence file.

Tommy Douglas served our province and the country with great distinction as our first social democratic leader in North America. His legacy to our province and our country is extensive, including medicare, old age pension, family allowance, social programs, the central Bank of Canada, civil liberties and rights of legislation, and our Crown corporations.

[14:45]

This Assembly owes it to the memory of Tommy Douglas and his family to call for a full release of the complete intelligence file on our former premier. And I ask leave of the Assembly to move the following motion:

That this Assembly calls on the Government of Canada, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to release the complete intelligence file on former Saskatchewan premier, Tommy Douglas. And further that in making this call, the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan assert the following:

(1) the public access to the information is a core tenet of democracy;

(2) that the Canadian Security Intelligence Services should be consistent in that it routinely releases intelligence files on individuals 20 years after their death; and

(3) that 24 years after Tommy Douglas’s death and several decades after the information on him was gathered, there

is no legitimate security reason for keeping this information secret; and

(4) that the release of this information is important to the legacy of Tommy Douglas and to the people of Saskatchewan and Canada; and

(5) Mr. Speaker, that this Assembly recognize that Tommy Douglas served our province and our country with distinction as the first social democratic leader in North America; and

(6) that this Assembly values Tommy Douglas's legacy to Saskatchewan and Canada, including medicare, old age security pension, family allowances, social programs, the central Bank of Canada, civil liberties and the rights legislation, and our Crown corporations; and

(7) that this Assembly recognizes the people of Canada voted Tommy Douglas as the greatest Canadian to mark his accomplishments; and

(8) that this Assembly believes that Tommy Douglas's family, friends, and all Canadians deserve to know the information contained in the intelligence file.

I so move.

The Speaker: — The Leader of the Opposition has asked for leave to move a motion under rule 59. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — Leave is not granted.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. I would like to hear the responses so I can accurately put them in the *Hansard*. I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answers to questions 889 through 927.

The Speaker: — Questions 889 through 927 are ordered. I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 928 through 970.

The Speaker: — Questions 928 through 970 are tabled.

An Hon. Member: — Mr. Speaker.

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

An Hon. Member: — A point of order.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina

Dewdney.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would ask you to review the ministerial statement presented by the Minister of Education to in fact check if it meets the criteria of a ministerial statement in our Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, the announcement that the minister made today was in fact the announcement he made several days ago in a very public way. It was a government announcement made in . . . last Thursday, pardon me, Mr. Speaker. The information contained was exactly the same.

So what new information or program was announced today that was not previously announced by the government? It was very public, Mr. Speaker, and several sitting days have actually passed since that announcement. The minister had opportunity to rise on that particular statement immediately after, the day after he made that statement. He didn't take that opportunity, Mr. Speaker.

So it seems that today in rising with this particular ministerial statement he used it as a diversion from a very difficult day in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, and to get away from the very issues which we wish to debate in this House, Mr. Speaker. I ask you to review the statement and please rule on whether or not it is in fact a ministerial statement.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on the point of order, ministerial statements are to be about new policy or new money expenditures, Mr. Speaker. This clearly fits into that category, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this point of order is an attempt by the opposition to divert time away from the business of the House, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there was one sitting day between the announcement and the ministerial statement today. The announcement was made on Thursday. The House does not sit on Fridays. It does not sit on Saturdays and it does not sit on Sundays, Mr. Speaker. So yesterday would have been the only time for this to have been delivered. The minister didn't have time to prepare the ministerial statement, Mr. Speaker, so it was delivered today, Mr. Speaker.

This is simply an attempt, an attempt as we've seen on many of the items before the House today, of the opposition to waste the government and this Assembly's time, Mr. Speaker.

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. I'd ask members, I'd ask members to come . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I've listened to the member, the Opposition House Leader's point of order. I've listened to the Government House Leader's response. And I will take the question under advisement. I will look at it carefully and come

back with a response.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 133

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. McMorris that **Bill No. 133 — *The Tobacco Control Amendment Act, 2009*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased today to rise and speak to *The Tobacco Control Act*, Bill 133, the Act to amend *The Tobacco Control Act*.

Before I actually start into my remarks on the actual amendments today, I'd like to actually give a little history to *The Tobacco Control Act*. It was my motion in December of 1999 that actually established the all-party committee on tobacco, the legislative Committee on Tobacco Control. And the work of that committee, including . . . It was an all-party committee. The work of that committee actually informed *The Tobacco Control Act* that we're now amending and have amended over the years to strengthen tobacco control and serve the people of Saskatchewan.

Unfortunately as we move along, there's still many people who do smoke in Saskatchewan and there still . . . When I read my remarks that I made in December of '99, I was talking about young people who are still in great numbers smoking, and I noticed the minister, in his response, he also said the same thing. So we still have young people smoking and in greater numbers than we would wish to see.

The new Bill actually does some changes that will address some things that are missing in the legislation. One is to prevent smoking right outside of buildings in entranceways. And people have complained, I think, quite a bit about this when you have to walk through someone smoking at the entrance to a building. So there will, I think, be a fair amount of support for that.

There's also a fair amount of housekeeping in the Bill, so that really isn't of concern for a debate. The definition of enclosed public spaces is now going to include the common areas of multi-unit residential buildings, which will be very useful as well. And the definition of flavoured little cigars and flavoured tobacco products will be included now to reach those people who are using those products, and also the new definition of pharmacy as defined in *The Pharmacy Act*.

There are many provisions now that exist that this may strengthen. And I know, speaking to the various organizations who this is of keen interest to — like the Heart and Stroke Foundation, the Lung Association, and the Canadian cancer association — they are very committed to seeing the rate of death from cigarette smoking decrease in this province, as they

are across the country.

And every time we make a change, hopefully it is for the better. There are questions that need to be asked of anything of course that comes forward in legislation, and that is our job to do. So we need to know from a opposition's point of view, who was consulted and what did they say? I understand what the Lung Association and the Heart and Stroke Foundation and the Canadian cancer association says.

But what do others say? People that have an interest in when these new changes will affect smoking on school grounds. What do the school boards say? And what do people say who will have to actually put into play the guidelines or the restrictions on smoking in front of the entrance to a building, of a public building?

So some of the questions too that will need to be asked — and this will of course be some of the work that will happen at the committee — and that will be, what would be the enforcement strategies that we will have? And so it's all well and good to say we have certain legislation. But how will it be enforced so that actually people will do what we've asked them to do and that we will then see some change in our smoking rates, in particular in young people.

And we also are looking at advertising in this Bill, changing the way advertising and promoting is done, so that there is a clarification that signs that appear will not be advertising or indicating the price of tobacco outside the facility so people can see it.

There is a mention in the explanatory notes about the amendments to section 6, that the Lieutenant Governor will have the ability to create regulations that exempt historical signs and items. And of course that's a question that I have marked on my paper — what does that mean and who would that impact?

Like I said, there are several housekeeping aspects of this, and that is always the changes that the government is making from department to ministry, which really as I said doesn't really concern people for very long.

Another one that's of particular interest and we've had debate for a long time around is sale of tobacco in pharmacies. And this one, the explanation of this change, is that retail stores like Walmart and Superstore that sell tobacco products and have a pharmacy within their location will be required to ensure that there's a separate and distinct access to the pharmacy. And the majority of provinces in Canada have prohibited the sale of tobacco in pharmacies because of the ethical issues associated with selling a product that is known to cause significant health problems.

So this is something too I think that is of interest to . . . and lots of people would support. It is of course, the question is, what do the retailers say and the pharmacists? And what is their response to this? And that's another question that we will have in committee and of course of the stakeholders who were consulted by the government.

The biggest one I think that people are waiting for . . . Although

I do think there are some significant changes contemplated in changing whether people can smoke in the doorway to public buildings, and the definition of a public building to include multi-unit facilities, as well as signage and various definitions of cigarillos and fancy cigars.

I think one of the things that people have talked the most about is the new section 10(1). And this is a new section. And it will prohibit the smoking of a person in a motor vehicle when another person under the age of 16 is present in the same vehicle. And Nova Scotia and Ontario have similar legislation. I think this is what is of interest to many parents; people who look at the damage that second-hand smoke does to especially children who have no choice in the matter, that they travel in cars that they are put into and strapped into seats and basically forced to inhale whatever air is in the car.

So I think this is of great interest to many people. I know there's been some push back. People see this as an infringement on their rights as parents or rights as people driving, but it . . . The rights of children under 16 who have no voice in saying, I don't want to be in my car seat when there's smoke in the vehicle, I think that does supersede some of the naysayers and some of the push backs. So I'm looking forward to having this discussion again in committee.

There's also a change in the health . . . The definition of a public space to include a child care facility. Again children are involved in daycare facilities or any child care facilities. And the amendments are of course changing in light of this — prohibiting a person from smoking or holding lighted tobacco:

in an enclosed public . . . [space];

within a prescribed distance from a doorway, window or air intake of an enclosed public . . . [space]; or

on the grounds surrounding a school or an independent school, as defined in *The Education Act, 1995*".

This is where I think we will have some conversation with the school boards because I know when we've had this discussion, when we were in government, there was some concern about children moving across the street and smoking on peoples' lawns across the street from the schools or smoking in the enclosed bus shelters on the street in a public space. And the school boards were, and the school divisions were concerned about who enforces this and what are the penalties.

[15:00]

So these are certainly questions that will need to be asked, and I think that all people who will be impacted by this will want to have some conversation about the areas of the Bill that particularly affect them.

There's going to be, and I don't understand this so I'm interested in knowing what it means in the Act, is to ensure the definition of an ashtray is expanded to include other receptacles that may be provided by providers of enclosed public spaces. So I'm interested to find out why we needed that one and what import that has on the Bill.

There is also amendments to another section that includes if there's something else in another Act that is in conflict with this Act, like a bylaw of a municipality or a regulation of a municipality, that the provision that is more restrictive prevails. So that strengthens up the existing legislation and makes it . . . especially with the motor vehicle one. I think this is speaking to that so that there is no conflict with enforcing this in a motor vehicle.

There is also some changes proposed that there will be some changes included in the fine, and that, I think, again speaks to what's the fine for someone smoking in a motor vehicle with a child under 16. So that is going to make sure that, that part is going to make sure that there will be some . . . they'll be capturing people that are doing this and what fine they will have under the existing fine structure.

Also there's going to be some changes in the amendment that removes, the liability one, that removes of course the reference to the ministry.

All in all, Mr. Speaker, I think there is some really good proposals here. I think people are interested in hearing the rationale behind some of the changes. I do think there'll be some interest in, from some agencies or some proprietors. And for certain I can see some interest from the school boards to see who is going to actually enforce this tobacco legislation changes on the school, on the school grounds.

And I understand, and I've seen children smoking on the street and across in the bus shelters, and I know people were concerned about ashes and butts and things on their lawns right across from the school. So it will be something I think that will need some attention, because I think it will be difficult to put something in an Act and then not do anything about it and leave it to the school divisions to handle this on their own.

And I know the minister said that this Bill will be definitely . . . He's said that they've done some, quite a bit of consultation with non-governmental organizations, health regions, regional authorities, and also business associations. So I'm interested in seeing what they had to say, particularly some of the changes that changed the definition of an enclosed space. And that will of course be something that the hoteliers will want to talk about, and some of the business associations — how will it affect their business?

I also know that the minister agreed that there is a very high incidence of smoking, and particularly in our young people, and that there has been incremental steps. Once that the original tobacco control Act was brought in, there have been incremental steps to move the population forward. I know there was a great deal of interest in the all-party committee when they went around. Several people on the committee I think had some quite eye-opening experiences because they too were smokers.

I have the most interesting poster in my office that I won't give to anybody because it's something I got from the United States during this debate. And it shows various animals in real . . . real pictures of a pig and a camel and a cow and a duck, and they all have a cigarette in their mouth. And the poster says, it looks just as ridiculous when you do it. So it's a poster I have that is a souvenir of this time, bringing in *The Tobacco Control Act*.

And I also know that over the years, as changes have been made and proposed, there has been more acceptance of some of the things — the restriction of sale in confectionaries so you have to cover the product, asking people for their age. I think it's become the norm. And it just shows that society does accept the fact that second-hand smoke is harmful, that smoking is harmful, and people have made the connection. They've made the commitment in stores and businesses to comply with the Act so that you do see all the products covered.

And I think as we move forward and look at new things that are being added to make it stronger, I think we really do have to look at what is the reason that our young people still are smoking so much. Why is that incidence increasing or at least not levelling out or, we would hope, decreasing? Why is that? And what could we do better to make sure, other than stopping children from smoking on the school grounds? That doesn't stop them from starting to smoke in the first place.

So we haven't done enough work there yet, and it'd be interesting to know in discussions at committee what, if anything, there is proposed to come next, to better strengthen our tobacco control Act, and better address the population of our children particularly.

And I know it's not just children. I was just recently watching a story on TV that was talking about women who were having difficulty quitting smoking because they're worried about gaining weight. Well that's a whole different reason for smoking. It's not something that you're necessarily addicted to or that legislation will help you with. It's a whole different aspect of why people smoke.

And there's also some interest in what the cost of smoking cessation is. There's products on the market that lots of people cannot buy because they can't afford it. Is there some interest in making some of those products more accessible to people, especially low-income people or people on fixed incomes or people that need some assistance to buy these so that they could actually make tobacco cessation real to them, not just a New Year's resolution every year? Lots of people would really like to stop smoking, but I think they have a difficult time buying the products. So there are still some things that a government could do with taxation and incentives, especially on cessation products, that would maybe speak to the high incidence that we still have of smoking.

And I think the interest that I have in particular is seeing what we could do to help children so they don't start smoking and to certainly stop them from smoking once they've started if they have. And that I don't see much of in here other than the stopping smoking on school grounds. So I think that's something that would be of interest to ask various stakeholders who have . . . will come, I'm assuming, or at least the minister will speak for them, giving us some of the feedback from the consultation process of what they said and what was asked of them, and if perhaps there is something that we could do that would address some of those things.

And as I said, Mr. Speaker, I have had a very, very significant interest in this since I was elected. And when I did bring the motion forward to start the all-party committee in the legislature in December of '99, the then deputy premier, who is now the

Leader of the Opposition, he was the one who helped me as a new member, a new MLA in this legislature, how to actually bring forward a motion and how to make that all happen.

And to watch that, Mr. Speaker, and to know the community out at large, in the tobacco control sort of area, they recognized this commitment. They recognized the commitment from myself and from the Leader of the Opposition and from our caucus on this issue. And I think they look forward to seeing the debate here. And they also look forward to seeing the hearings of the Bill once it's sent to committee so that we can actually add another piece of strong legislation to our existing legislation that will, in fact then, speak to reducing our incidence of smoking in this province and decrease our deaths. We do have . . . I think it's clear that smoking causes death, causes lung cancer, causes many other things like emphysema and different breathing problems. So it does cost the health system a lot of money as well as the individual person their life and their existence and their families who breathe the second-hand smoke.

I had a person who had smoked for so long in their life, when they passed away, their furniture was being given to another relative and the furniture had to come back because it was so soaked with smoke no one could use it. And you really don't understand that until you have something like that happen, about how pervasive smoke is and how pervasive it is if it goes that far into wood. Imagine what it's doing into our lungs.

So I think people are quite concerned still and hopefully more so, that as we move forward with changes to *The Tobacco Control Act* that people accept them and see them for what they are, that they're a public health issue. They're certainly a benefit to society as well as to individuals, and there certainly is an onus on government — and that includes government and opposition — to do things that do protect the public safety but also to protect children who do not have a voice in many cases.

So the change in the legislation to changing the legislation so that there would be no smoking in cars with children under 16, I think that goes a long way to speak to our commitment to look at the health of children and the most vulnerable in our society.

So, Mr. Speaker, with those remarks I think I would be excited to see what happens in committee with this Bill and have the opportunity to question the minister and his officials on who was consulted, who also was interested in moving this forward, and what will be the people who speak up against it and what will be their objections. And then how we can see, which is something I think all of us agree, that we do support changes to *The Tobacco Control Act* that strengthen it and that meet the needs of the people and that move us forward so that we are a healthier society. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister of Health, Bill No. 133. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — Second reading of this Bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I designate that Bill No. 133, *The Tobacco Control Amendment Act, 2009* be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

The Speaker: — The Bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

Bill No. 97

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Bjornerud that **Bill No. 97 — *The Agri-Food Amendment Act, 2009*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise this afternoon and participate in the debate on Bill 97, *The Agri-Food Amendment Act, 2009*. It seems to be a relatively straightforward Bill in terms of its provisions, but we have some questions in terms of the broader impact of this legislation and how it plays out through different things like the revolving fund that it's currently part of in the Department of Agriculture, the extent of consultation throughout the livestock industry, and the impact that it has on other funds that are collected in the revolving fund, in the current revolving fund housed in the Department of Agriculture.

It would appear that this Bill allows the Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association to collect both the \$1 non-refundable national levy collected on cattle sold at market and the \$2 refundable provincial levy collected on cattle sold at market. Previously of course, both the national and provincial levies were collected and went into a revolving fund in the Department of Agriculture. There was a government-appointed board consisting of a number of livestock producers that funnelled out the money from there. Primarily these funds went to research that benefits the industry.

Obviously there's support for this within the industry, but again we have some question around the extent of the consultation that took place before this legislation was brought forward, and what is that level of support throughout the industry as a whole. It's quite, you know . . . Is it possible that people are making an informed opinion about this legislation, or is it simply a matter of some people not knowing what is happening with the check-off and the funds that derive therefrom?

We're also going to be interested to see what the SCA [Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association] will be doing with the funds in the future, what the breakdown will be between funds allocated to research and to development within the industry. Of course the SCA is a long-established body and certainly great

roots and experience and track record in the industry. But I think it's fair to ask those questions in terms of what the breakdown is and will be between the way that the funds will be allocated in the future.

[15:15]

There's some question as well how much of the funding will be going to the day-to-day operation and marketing of the Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association. Will other cattle producer associations such as the Saskatchewan Stock Growers' Association, who are not part of the SCA, will they benefit from the levies? Will the stock growers still receive money from these levies to use for operation and marketing as they did under the old system?

Who within the Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association will be determining where and when those funds will be allocated? Of course this piece of oversight is vital. It's one thing to establish funds, Mr. Speaker, but it's always critical to establish very clearly what the oversight provisions are for those funds and who those people will be accountable to, who will be appointing them, and what the makeup of that board will be.

Is there a significant advantage to having the SCA act as a self-regulating body, or is this simply about shifting fees or levies previously charged for licensing, registration, and inspection that went into the revolving fund? Again there's a presumption that the SCA is actively participating in this and calling for this legislation, and again any time that you can devolve more power to the people that are on the ground, that are involved daily within the industry and, you know, maintain that partnership with government, but promote that kind of capacity and self-development. That's important.

We're also interested to see that Bill No. 97 separates one organization out of a number of organizations out from the current revolving fund, from organizations that paid licensing, registration, and inspection fees. Why is there the move for just this one participant in that revolving fund? And what for example do the Saskatchewan ag producers, the Saskatchewan poultry producers, what are their thoughts on the development?

Certainly they pay fees and levies into the same revolving fund that the SCA paid into, and does this impact the way that their . . . the fund operates into the future. What impact does that have on the other stakeholders? And is there agreement on the benefit of this for the parties involved?

Beyond that, is there interest on the part of the other producer groups to move into a similar situation as outlined in this piece of legislation, and will that be coming forward in the days to come?

So we have some questions in terms of the changes and the particulars of them, how they will impact other aspects of the current regime with the revolving fund housed in the Department of Agriculture, how this will impact the operations and the relations of other producer groups to that revolving fund, and how this will go into the future.

I guess I wouldn't mind delving a bit into the explanatory notes that have accompanied the Bill 97, and certainly, you know, off

the top, the existing provision to be changed regarding development commissions, 4(1):

- (a) establish a plan to promote and develop the production, marketing or production in marketing of an agricultural product or agricultural products;
- (b) constitute a development commission to administer the plan mentioned in clause (a);
- (c) authorize the development commission to fund the plan through a levy that is refundable on the request of a producer of the agricultural product that is, or the agricultural products that are, the subject of the plan in accordance with prescribed terms and conditions; and
- (d) authorize the plan to be funded by any prescribed means other than a levy on the producers of the agricultural product that is, or the agricultural products that are, the subject of the plan, including authorizing the development commission to accept appropriations, grants or moneys that may be transferred or given to it.

The section (2) of course:

Regulations made for the purposes of clause (1)(c) must prescribe the terms and conditions pursuant to which a development commission must make a refund of levies to producers.

That's, if I might add by way of commentary, Mr. Speaker, that's obviously a vital concern and consideration to be taken care of when you're amassing these funds, when you're levying these fees on producers. They should have a very clear understanding of where the money is going, what it is going to, and should the need arise, how do they go about requesting a refund.

Looking further through the legislation, Mr. Speaker, this will affect *The Cattle Marketing Deductions Act* and will result in its repeal, as well as the regulations from 2004. Section (5) in the proposed legislation deals with the windup of the Cattle Marketing Deductions Fund and the transfer of those assets and liabilities from the fund to the Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association.

There will be "An audit of the accounts and financial statements, as well as a report of the activities of the former fund and financial statements showing the business of the former fund for the period commencing April 1, 2009 and ending on the day this Act comes into force [and it] shall be tabled by the Minister of Agriculture."

That will be a very interesting body of information to consider, Mr. Speaker, and again if you're going to get this fund off to a good start, it's important to make sure that all the facts are on the table and that everybody knows where they will be starting from.

The existing provision in *The Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization Act* states, regarding the Livestock Services Revolving Fund, that:

(4) The minister may use the revolving fund to:

- (a) provide services related to the production, manufacture, sale, purchase, transportation and inspection of animals or animal products;
- (b) provide services related to the registration and use of animal identification marks;
- (c) provide services related to the licensing of producers and dealers for the purposes of the production, purchase or sale of animals;
- (d) provide services related to the collection of deductions related to cattle marketing and horned cattle; and
- (e) provide for the development and administration of legislative and regulatory requirements related to any matter mentioned in clauses (a) to (d).

Again, Mr. Speaker, taking the functions of the current regime, transferring them out into the new fund envisioned by Bill 97 and under the authority of the Saskatchewan Cattlemen's Association.

Section (10) gets into where this legislation has an immediate impact on other legislation and regulations concerning other producer groups. It states as such:

The following shall be paid to the Minister of Finance and credited to the revolving fund:

- (a) all fees charged pursuant to subsection (7);
- (b) all payments made pursuant to subsection (9);
- (c) all fees charged for licensing, registration or inspection pursuant to *The Animal Products Act* or *The Animal Identification Act* or any regulations made pursuant to those Acts except *The Fur Farming Regulations*, *The Game Farming and Game Products Merchandising Regulations*, 1989, "The Saskatchewan Egg Regulations", being Saskatchewan Regulations 269/78, "The Saskatchewan Hatchery Regulations, 1978", being Saskatchewan Regulations 268/78, and "The Saskatchewan Poultry Regulations", being Saskatchewan Regulations 257/78;
- (d) all administrative fees charged by the minister in accordance with any agreement made pursuant to section 8 of *The Cattle Marketing Deductions Act, 1998* to support the operation of a promotion-research agency, as defined in that Act; [and]
- (e) all administrative fees provided for and regulations made pursuant to *The Cattle Marketing Deductions Act, 1998* for services provided by the minister to administer that Act.

The final clause in the explanatory notes attached to the legislation, I'll just go into these very briefly before I conclude my remarks, Mr. Speaker. "Clause 17.1(4)(d) is amended by

striking out ‘cattle marketing and’ and clauses (10)(d) and (e) are repealed as a consequence of the repeal” of the marketing deductions Act, 1998 and regulations.

So to recap, Mr. Speaker, it’s again transferring the housing and the administration of funds that are currently being collected and that find their way into a revolving fund, which is currently housed and under the authority of the Department of Agriculture. Moving those funds into, under the administration of the Saskatchewan Cattlemen’s Association, again on the face of it, this would seem to promote better . . . a more direct relationship between a stakeholder group and the funds that they need to conduct researching and marketing for their product which, on its face, would seem to be a fairly positive development.

We of course are interested to see what the level of consultation has been across the industry. Are there those who simply are unaware of these changes and reforms and as such aren’t able to comment in an informed way?

We’re also interested to see if there’s an analysis that has been done on the other producer groups that operate in relation to the current revolving fund. Will this constrain the pool of funds available to them? How will it impact the operating of that fund going into the future? And is there agreement on the part of the other producer groups that this is a good thing?

Is there interest on the part of the other producer groups that they would like to proceed in a similar manner to make the changes to the legislation that would, in turn, move the funds that they provide into the fund into their . . . under their authority? These are a number of the questions that we have concerning this legislation, but for the time being, Mr. Speaker, I would conclude my remarks. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The motion before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister of Agriculture that Bill No. 97 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — Second reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this Bill stand referred? I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

The Speaker: — Bill No. 97 stands referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

Bill No. 109

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Harrison that **Bill No. 109 — *The Municipalities Amendment Act, 2009*** be now read a second

time.]

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

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to address issues raised by Bill No. 109, *An Act to amend The Municipalities Act and to make related amendments to The Local Government Election Act*, Mr. Speaker. And the purpose of the Act is . . . Well it’s a basket of purposes, Mr. Speaker. It doesn’t have one purpose. But I take it from both the Act itself, the way it’s put together, its reference to numerous other Acts — or I should say, Mr. Speaker, from the Bill itself and its reference to numerous other Acts — and from the minister’s second reading speech, that a number of issues have arisen in the view of the government.

And they’re not necessarily related issues, but they are related in the sense that they all fall within legislation governed specifically by *The Municipalities Act* and *The Local Government Election Act* and that the government saw fit to include this basket of fixes, if I might call them that, Mr. Speaker — and I don’t mean anything pejorative by the use of that word — but fixes to two pieces of legislation within one Act.

And that’s maybe, perhaps, an interesting decision on the part of the government, Mr. Speaker. The amendment to *The Municipalities Act, 2009*, cover other issues and then a different set of issues, a different set of issues I think, Mr. Speaker, to *The Local Government Election Act*. And, Mr. Speaker, I think an alternative for the government would have been to take the one basket of perceived need for fixes to *The Municipalities Act* and put in a Bill somewhat like this Bill, Bill No. 109, to implement those fixes to *The Municipalities Act*, and then to make, I think, a significant policy change that this Bill proposes to make to *The Local Government Election Act* in its own legislation.

[15:30]

And it’s an interesting question, Mr. Speaker — I suppose not determinative of very much — but an interesting question as to the government’s decision to address these issues in the same piece of legislation. In other words, to amend *The Municipalities Act* and to amend *The Local Government Election Act* in issues that aren’t really similar in any way. I mean you can’t really see why the amendments to one piece of legislation fall into the basket that includes the amendments to the other pieces of legislation, Mr. Speaker.

And one can speculate I suppose as to why the government decided to proceed this way. And one reason they might have proceeded this way is because they already have an overloaded legislative agenda, Mr. Speaker. And dividing this Bill into two Bills — which you might think this Bill should be — would have just overloaded that agenda even more. So this Bill now gets a maximum of 20 hours consideration by members of the Legislative Assembly.

If they had amended *The Local Government Election Act* as they propose to do, Mr. Speaker, in its own Bill as one might think one would do, then that amendment and that discussion

about that amendment would get 20 hours potentially, Mr. Speaker. And the other amendments to *The Municipalities Act* would get 20 hours, Mr. Speaker.

And so you have a Bill that the government, I trust, thinks that they can get through in sort of half the time by making it an omnibus Bill. Now to call it an omnibus Bill may be a little bit unfair or surprising because it is still remarkably thin, and omnibus Bills are often much larger.

But they do have the advantage, whether they're a small omnibus being driven by the government or a large omnibus being driven by the government, they do have the advantage of limiting debate to 20 hours on all the provisions within the Bill, no matter how many pieces of legislation are being amended and no matter how many different items are under discussion in the Bill.

The Bill first of all starts off with the responsibility of municipalities to fix roads, and perceived difficulties that municipalities have. I shouldn't perhaps call them perceived difficulties, Mr. Speaker. They are real and actual difficulties. I think we hear about them on both sides of the House quite often and for a long time. And the Bill progresses from the fix for addressing the concerns in municipalities about maintaining roads to questions of individual conduct and disclosure of individual conduct in local government elections.

And so you can see the breadth of the legislation, Mr. Speaker, from roads to the fair conduct of elections, which is quite a subject of debate concerning provincial elections in the legislature this week and usually not tied up with roads, although concerns about the province's highways increasingly come up in the legislature as well, Mr. Speaker.

Saskatchewan municipalities have the responsibility for maintaining roads. Not the provincial highways, but many roads in the province are the responsibility of Saskatchewan municipalities. The greatest amount of mileage of these roads is through the least densely populated areas, Mr. Speaker.

So the major, almost overwhelming financial responsibility of rural municipalities is the maintenance of these roads. There's I don't think anything that falls within the responsibility of a rural municipality that would even come close. All the other responsibilities of a rural municipality together probably do not add up to the cost of maintaining roads that travel through the least populated areas of the province. And I say that not to suggest that the roads aren't necessary; they are absolutely necessary and essential. Rural municipalities wouldn't be maintaining them at great expense if they were not.

But the point I wish to make, Mr. Speaker, is that the population, the rate-paying, tax-paying population to support the burden of maintaining those roads, which are quite extensive, is smaller in those municipalities that have that extensive road network. And it is perhaps not an irony — that word is overused, Mr. Speaker — but it is certainly a difficult paradox with which rural municipalities live, that the cost of the provincial highway system is borne by all the people of Saskatchewan but the cost of the municipal road system is borne by a very small group of people who nevertheless rely, as we all do, on municipal roads. It is true of Saskatchewan as a

whole.

I think that not only do we have more electrical wire per capita than any other place in North America because of our commitment to provide electrical power to every resident of the province, if that is at all humanly possible . . . And that goes back to the commitment and ideals of Tommy Douglas. And I would have rather, Mr. Speaker, been perhaps today debating the heritage, the legacy of Mr. Douglas in respect to the federal government's refusal to release the intelligence file over two decades after his death. But I can comment on that legacy in respect both to rural electrification and to the province's road system. Not only do we have more miles of electrical wire per person than any place else in North America; we would have more miles of paved highway per person, I think, than anywhere else in North America, Mr. Speaker.

And I know that this government finds that to be a challenge. And I think they were a little surprised, Mr. Speaker. I think they thought that government was going to be easy and that the challenges of maintaining those roads that the former government faced were not problems that they were going to have, Mr. Speaker. I think this government is to a certain extent genuinely surprised by the fact that it's hard to meet revenues and expenditures and to make the choices that are necessary to make in government.

As John F. Kennedy said, government is about choosing. And it's the inability to choose, to have the discipline to make decisions, that has caused so much difficulty for the Saskatchewan Party government in respect to a number of matters, including, including roads.

Now I'm going to sound like someone of a certain age with historic interests, Mr. Speaker, but you can't talk about the destruction of roads in rural Saskatchewan without talking about the history of rail line abandonment in Western Canada, Mr. Speaker. It is the increase in truck traffic that has resulted from branch line abandonment over the years that has resulted in municipalities absorbing costs that were . . . It's practically, Mr. Speaker, it's practically a matter of the Canadian and Saskatchewan Constitution.

A deal was struck, Mr. Speaker, and I know that deals and conventions and rules don't mean very much to government members. I mean that has been, that has been front and centre in this Legislative Assembly since we returned this spring. That's very clear. But this deal was a deal that was struck. It was an historic deal in this country.

Really I mean the country was, to a certain extent, built by the railway. The railway was built and the railway built the country. And when I refer to that as a constitutional deal, Mr. Speaker, it's actually entrenched almost in the constitution of the province by an Act of parliament that the Canadian Pacific Railway is not subject to taxes and will be free of taxes in perpetuity. And there's a reason for that, Mr. Speaker. It wasn't just a gift because people liked railways. I think even in the 19th century — perhaps especially in the 19th century — a lot of people, particularly farmers in the West, weren't all that fond of railways, Mr. Speaker.

But the deal was that the economy, the fundamental basis of the

economy in the province of Saskatchewan as it . . . Well the territories because the province didn't exist yet when this deal was made. The territories in Western Canada, the fundamental basis of their new economy was grain, specifically wheat. And that grain was to be transported to the seaports and to market at a rate that farmers could make a living. And the West could be populated in many cases by ancestors going back two, three, four, five generations — perhaps not five generations, but three or four in some cases, Mr. Speaker — of members of this Legislative Assembly.

That was the deal. And governments have lived up to that deal, and Canadian Pacific Railway is still free from taxation in a way that other corporations are not. But the Crow rate is gone, the branch lines are gone, and now the people who are recipients of that bargain, the other side of that bargain, Mr. Speaker, farmers, people who live in rural Saskatchewan, no longer have the benefits of that deal, no longer have the benefits of that understanding.

What they have, Mr. Speaker, is decreased access to the railway and increased traffic, growing traffic, and not just traffic carrying grain, but every other resource that travels out of rural Saskatchewan — potash, Mr. Speaker, in good times — and as a rule, all these being carried on our roads sometimes to main lines but sometimes just to the highway. And both the province and municipalities for a number of years now have had this increased burden of maintaining roads throughout the province of Saskatchewan.

And the government I think, government after successive government . . . And I know that the members opposite will look back and say that the NDP government did not keep this bargain. But I believe government after government, including this government, have striven to keep faith with the people of Saskatchewan that no matter where you live, you'll have electricity and no matter where you live, you'll have access to a road. And that's not a bargain that's been kept well in the North. I see the member from Cumberland looking at me but we are working on this. We are working on this. Work is being done.

And you don't hear the stories in Saskatchewan that you hear in Manitoba now about collapsing roads and the missing truckers. And now maybe geography helps us a little bit. Manitoba may have a larger North, but you don't hear those problems here. What more can be done? We've kept that bargain. And when the Minister of Highways gets up and says, in response to a question or a statement from this side of the House, that a highway, perhaps a northern highway, is so full of potholes that it's a danger, the minister I think is inclined to say — because it's the political thing to say — well that's the responsibility of the previous government.

[15:45]

Well, Mr. Speaker, one of two things is true: either the potholes are not two years old, in which case they're the responsibility of the current minister, or they're over two years old, Mr. Speaker, which the minister would claim that they are. And if they're over two years old, well shame on the minister, Mr. Speaker, if he's had over two years, the government's had over two years to address them.

I don't know how either answer is a satisfactory answer from a government, Mr. Speaker. Either they're your potholes and you should have fixed them, or they're our potholes and you should have fixed them a long time ago because they're even older. There's no other, there's no other alternative there, Mr. Speaker.

But although governments I think have striven . . . And this government that we currently have has at least increased the highway budget by the factor of inflation. It hasn't gone down by any amount. The Government of Saskatchewan, I think, has kept good faith on roads.

The federal government and the railways have not kept their deal on rail lines, particularly branch lines, and municipalities are forced to absorb increased costs for which they don't really have the resources, Mr. Speaker. They don't really have a tax base. And if the government is not able to keep a deal on revenue sharing that was supposed to be based on provincial sales tax but apparently was not — it was actually based on potash revenues — if the government is not able to keep that deal, as it has not been able to, not able to keep that promise and is not able to keep that promise going forward, Mr. Speaker . . . And it would surprise me if the budget, like the last Throne Speech, didn't claim to be going forward. If they're not able to keep that promise going forward, Mr. Speaker, then municipalities are going to come under increased strain.

And this is true for cities. It's true for towns. It's true for villages. It's true for hamlets. And it's true for rural municipalities. And the resources in rural Saskatchewan to deal with the issues caused by branch line abandonment . . .

And I don't know if younger people in the House — not necessarily members of the Legislative Assembly — really appreciate the history lesson, but I remember an attempt to fight the election on the Crow rate, Mr. Speaker. And it didn't work out too well, as I recall, but it was an important issue. And I think the failure of the people of Saskatchewan to rally behind insisting that the deal that had been made with the railways — and a very good deal for the railways, Mr. Speaker — that insisting that it not be kept and benefiting all the people of Saskatchewan but particularly the residents of rural Saskatchewan and particularly the farming community.

The legislation purports to provide municipalities with a mechanism for resolving disputes with private contractors whose activities may have a big impact on municipal roads. And the opposition supports this in principle, but we query whether the government has consulted sufficiently on the mechanism, Mr. Speaker.

And I suppose that sounds repetitive. I have been in this Assembly for six years and no matter who's in opposition — and that's varied over the six years, obviously — no matter who's in opposition, the opposition members get up and say, well, Mr. Speaker, we don't know if the government has consulted. And that's what opposition members like to say, Mr. Speaker. I think probably you've heard it. I don't want to bring you into the debate, but you may have even said it in your time. I don't know.

But I think the opposition has valid reasons for being concerned

about this government's consultation, and we have seen example after example after example of that. And today, Mr. Speaker, not to digress very long from the Bill, but today I understand that the Minister of Justice's reason for not consulting with the opposition before making the outlandish proposal he made in the House during question period was he was playing telephone tag with the Chief Justice.

So it was the government's view that they should put the all-party system into place first and then ask the party later whether they agree to it or not. And my response to the press was, well the minister was playing telephone tag with the wrong person. Surely if he's genuine in his consultations, he would want to consult with the other side of the House as to whether his proposal was acceptable before he started phoning people to actually implement it, Mr. Speaker.

But that, Mr. Speaker, I think is indicative of the attitude. I think the response of the opposition that, well you would talk to the other party first, strikes this government as very strange, Mr. Speaker. So when legislation arises that says to municipalities . . . And I appreciate that, and we hear quite a bit now about, well this is what the rules say. This is what the rules say, and if you just look at what the rules say then this is what we can do. And that's being held up as an argument that there's a majority on that side of the House and that majority can appoint the ombudsman. That majority can appoint the Children's Advocate. That majority can appoint the Conflict of Interest Commissioner and that the majority can appoint the Chief Electoral Officer. And that's the argument that we're hearing from a government that thinks that majority government is a dictatorship, Mr. Speaker.

Now the rules say, the constitution says that municipalities are a creature of the province. That's what the rules say, and if you wanted to be as legalistic as this government is on the question of independent legal officers, then of course the government wouldn't consult with municipalities. But no government in Saskatchewan would say . . . I don't think they would use the constitutional phrase out loud, we can do what we want in respect to municipal government because municipalities are a creature of the province. I think if they used the language from the constitution, Mr. Speaker, that would be offensive in municipalities, and the members opposite know that.

The written rules, the written rules aren't the only rules, Mr. Speaker. There are conventions. There are conventions that govern the Constitution of Canada. It's not all written, Mr. Speaker. I think that's been clearly established by references in the Supreme Court, and there are conventions with how governments deal with each other that aren't in the constitution.

And it is a well-established convention — even more established — that the government does not impose independent legal officers by majority, Mr. Speaker. A well-established convention that municipalities are treated as a level of government and not creatures of the province of Saskatchewan.

So knowing that, we have two, we have, well, two broad questions. They lead to a number of specific questions, but two broad questions, Mr. Speaker. The first broad question is, what consultation took place with the municipalities about the

development of this mechanism? Is it, is it the mechanism they want?

We followed the meeting of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities. We noted that there's a lot of concern about rural health care. We noted that a lot of municipalities are wondering when the promise is going to be kept about doctors in their community by this government. We know that.

But we suspect also that there was discussion about respecting the powers by convention — because there aren't any constitutional powers — the powers by convention of municipalities. Is this based upon a proposal from rural municipalities, Mr. Speaker? I don't think the minister, in his second reading speech, went so far as to say that it was. So is this an act of paternalism or is this an act of consultation? And I don't think the opposition knows the answer to that broad question yet and is, therefore, not prepared to make a decision about whether we support the principle in more than just principle at this point, Mr. Speaker.

And again, I guess the other broad question is, the devil being in the details, does the mechanism make sense? Does the mechanism work?

Now actually, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite have pretty well established this week that they don't much care about process and mechanisms. But I assume, Mr. Speaker, that this mechanism was not a creation of the Minister of Municipal Affairs. I assume that this mechanism was a creation of policy development people in the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, perhaps with input from the policy work in highways and traffic, the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure, Mr. Speaker. And that would be, that would be relevant.

Now this leads to a concern that we have with a broad range of legislation, particularly environmental legislation where, quite frankly, the issues and the mechanisms are complex. In the words of the Minister of Justice today, "the process is complex." They are.

And I don't notice — with the greatest respect, Mr. Speaker — on behalf of the legislators opposite, much interest in legislation. I don't expect . . . see very little evidence that many of the legislators opposite have read the legislation that they've brought into this House or could explain the legislation they brought into the House, which is fine, Mr. Speaker, but we are very dependant in the implementation of legislation like this on the public servants who drafted it, Mr. Speaker.

And we do know, and this government's confirmed, that the public service is going to be reduced, and it's not going to be reduced in a rational way. The government does not have the courage to pick programs, for the most part, which they no longer want to fund . . . [inaudible] . . . discontinue those programs. The government doesn't have the discipline or courage to make those choices and decisions.

So the government is going to reduce the civil service, we are told, by 16 per cent over four years — four by four — by attrition, Mr. Speaker. So whoever happens to retire, unless Corey O'Soup is ready to take their job, whoever happens to retire is gone. And it may be somebody who works in a

program that the members opposite don't really care about or it may be a very crucial person who understands how, for example, this mechanism is supposed to work and is charged with implementing it. But because the government won't make decisions about programs, which policy people go and aren't going to be replaced by anybody else who can assist these people, this government, in implementing its programs, it's going to be random, Mr. Speaker.

I don't know whether it's going to be environmental assessment. I don't know if it's going to be in Justice. I don't know if it's going to be in social services programming. I don't know if it's going to be in facilitating some greater co-operation and mediation between private contractors and municipalities. I don't know, Mr. Speaker. It's going to be random hits to the public service. It's going to be random hits to the public service, and we don't know where they're going to be.

People who are preparing to retire may know, Mr. Speaker. They know that they're going. They're not going to be replaced and that's how the government's going to decide what's an important program and what's not an important program. And, Mr. Speaker, quite frankly we have no or very little ministerial responsibility on the part of this government, and without proper public servant support, matters are only going to get worse.

Moving a little bit beyond the issue of roads, Mr. Speaker, and the mechanism for resolving disputes with private contractors on dealing with the repair and the maintenance of municipal roads, there are changes to the requirements for public disclosures of conflict of interest. These appear to bring municipal legislation more in line with the requirements for MLAs, which seem reasonable. Now again this has history, Mr. Speaker, in this legislature.

I don't like to spend a lot of time reliving the unhappy circumstances after which more than a dozen members of the Grant Devine cabinet were found guilty of fraud and breach of trust, Mr. Speaker, but those were days where there wasn't very much independent oversight in this legislature. And you can't make excuses for people who commit an offence and clearly had the intent to commit an offence, or at least that's what a court found. You can't make excuses for them.

[16:00]

But the general lack of oversight and accountability allowed people who didn't have the ability to monitor and police themselves to get into a great deal of trouble, and it's only decreased the confidence of the public and the administration of government in the province of Saskatchewan. There was embarrassment that the province had to endure within the country and it joined the other embarrassment, this double-barrelled embarrassment of the province. It had almost got to the point of bankruptcy and it was a province that had a really dark cloud cast over the administration, the members of the government who had brought about that near bankruptcy of the province.

And there really wasn't — among other things — until the '90s, Mr. Speaker, apparently adequate disclosure of conflict of interests and other steps in place to prevent members of the

government in particular, but any member of the Legislative Assembly from getting into that kind of trouble. And so one of the reforms of the Romanow NDP government was conflict of interest legislation and the creation of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, and that has worked fairly well, Mr. Speaker.

And how was that person appointed? Well that person is appointed, members opposite might say and technically they'd be correct, by the members of the Legislative Assembly. So we, in effect, I guess a majority of us theoretically — well not theoretically — technically, legalistically looking at the rules, appoint the person who's going to oversee whether we're in a conflict of interest. I think that that's what actually happened, Mr. Speaker. That's what actually happened with conflict of interest.

If that's what actually happened with chief electoral officers, I think the public would say, well isn't the natural human tendency to appoint somebody who's going to be looking over your shoulder, somebody who's not going to do a good job of that? I mean isn't it natural, human tendency to look for somebody that's going to be compliant and agreeable? Not somebody who's going to be critical and really, in the long run, be of assistance in avoiding the situation that we had in the '80s.

And so we would answer to the public, or we would up until this week, I think we would have said, well but really we don't. We really don't let every member of the Legislative Assembly say, well let's go for the lowest common denominator. We have a process that includes the objective, disinterested Speaker. It's bipartisan. It doesn't matter how many seats you have in the House — one opposition member, one government member. And we accept the results of a competition, Mr. Speaker, and we always have.

Least we always have, Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House. In all the years I've been here, and I don't think any of my predecessors remember anything else different going back to the '90s, we've always accepted that, Mr. Speaker. Because if we were to look behind it, I think there are a couple implications. First of all, that our member on the Board of Internal Economy, our member on the Board of Internal Economy . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Mr. Speaker, I'm addressing the issue of conflict of interest, which I understand in this legislation would bring it in line with what provincial MLAs undergo.

There would have to be a good reason, a very good reason why we wouldn't trust the recommendation of our member on the Board of Internal Economy and really, in effect politicize the process, by actually saying, well, I mean the person passed the most rigorous competition and checks that could be put forward by this committee, but we're going to make a decision on a political basis.

So this process, which the Minister of Justice has declared as broken, in respect to independent officers of the legislature — said that to the press today, the process is broken — this is the process that this legislation would impose on municipalities, Mr. Speaker. The government says, on one hand, the process is broken. It doesn't work. On the other hand, by the actions of Bill No. 109, an Act to amend *The Municipalities Act*, this is the

process that municipalities should follow, Mr. Speaker.

Well the government should decide, does the process work? Has the process worked for 12 years and therefore is a good process for municipalities to follow, and can we lead by example? Or is the process broken? In which case, does the government want to rethink its Bill, or at least that portion of the Bill that deals with the interest of conflict of interest and imposing on, or making available at least to municipalities a process similar to the provincial process and how MLAs' conduct is governed in a number of respects by independent officers.

Now as again I said, Mr. Speaker, it's a basket. Bill 109, *An Act to amend The Municipalities Act and to make related amendments to The Local Government Election Act* is a basket of fixes. So we've got roads, and then we've got disclosures of conflict of interest, and then we've got demographics, Mr. Speaker. It's just three unrelated matters, and no problem with that, Mr. Speaker. And I can understand why a government that can't handle its legislative agenda — sort of can't do that division by 20 — Mr. Speaker, and finds itself every single sitting in trouble with its legislative agenda, I can understand why they don't want to make each one of these fixes part of a different Bill. I can understand why we have an omnibus Bill here.

But there's, as I said, a number of different matters being dealt with. And another one is how population figures are calculated depending on the purpose for which the information is being used. Again it seems sensible. Probably can't credit the minister with personally coming up with it. Again dependent on a public service that's robust enough to implement the policy in the legislation. And we need more information on how these changes will work as well.

And then after these different fixes to *The Municipalities Act* this Bill goes on and deals with an entirely different piece of legislation entirely, *The Local Government Election Act*, and would give municipalities the authority and, I think to be clear as I understand both the legislation and the minister's second reading remarks, the option of requesting criminal record checks for candidates seeking public office. And the government says that voters deserve to have all the information they need to make an informed decision. And we support this principle as well.

But it's interesting that the government didn't want to make this a requirement for people seeking provincial office, but only people seeking municipal office. If it's a useful bit of information to have about a candidate running for municipal office, then why is not useful information to have for the candidate running for provincial office? And if the government was requiring this of municipalities but not requiring it of candidates for provincial office, then I think that would be, well, I don't like to overuse the word outrageous, but it would border on that. But I appreciate the government isn't requiring municipalities to do that. But the government is saying through this Bill that it's useful information which does beg the question, well why not? Why not provincially?

And perhaps problematically is that the government doesn't have the courage of its convictions in respect to provincial

elections. It doesn't even have the courage of its convictions in respect to municipal elections because issues arise because of the option to require these criminal checks, Mr. Speaker. There is a weapon that the incumbents in a municipal government can use or not use.

And I just raise this scenario, Mr. Speaker. In a municipality the incumbents, the people who control the municipal government, have the option once this legislation is passed to require criminal record checks. The incumbents know, the incumbents know that challengers to their incumbency have criminal records, Mr. Speaker. They have the option of doing that, Mr. Speaker. If they know that challengers to their incumbency have a criminal record that might embarrass them, then they have an incentive to take the option that the government has provided them, Mr. Speaker.

Now let's take a different scenario. You have a municipality where an incumbent has a criminal record, Mr. Speaker, and has been elected to public office. Doesn't want the public to know that he has a criminal record and that his challenger in an upcoming election does not or probably does not. In that municipality, the municipality will not take the option perhaps to require criminal record checks.

This is a weapon that has been given by the provincial government to municipalities to use or not use — and we certainly see in the provincial level the willingness of this government to use whatever weapons it can find — to use or not use depending on the circumstances. And so we will get certainly a patchwork because some municipalities will think this is an important thing to do and others will think it's not an important thing to do. We are guaranteed, Mr. Speaker, to get a patchwork across the province, municipalities where criminal record checks are required and municipalities where criminal record checks are not required.

But part of that patchwork could very well result from the advantages to incumbents as to whether to use the weapon that the province has provided. So if the province believes that this is important information for voters to have in municipal elections, then to guarantee a fair playing field and to not provide an advantage to incumbent municipal leaders to pick or chose whether to use this weapon or not, depending on whether it advantages them or disadvantages them, if the government truly believes that these criminal record checks are a good idea, then the government should require them, Mr. Speaker, because the alternative is discretionary use of this weapon.

And why does the government not require it? Not because they don't think it's a good idea. They do. That's why it's in the legislation. That's why the minister said so in his second reading speech. The government doesn't require it, Mr. Speaker, because then the government would have to do it for us. And this government is not about greater scrutiny of members of the Legislative Assembly. This government clearly is all about less scrutiny of members of the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker. That has become abundantly clear.

So, Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, we have legislation that addresses a number of issues, each one important, each one unrelated to the next.

[16:15]

The stress on provincial-municipal road network which is decades old, continuing and which rural municipalities do not have the resources to address, really that issue is not addressed by the legislation. The legislation only gives a mechanism for mediation, arbitration with private contractors. Mr. Speaker, it is a band-aid solution to a problem that governments of Saskatchewan are going to have to address more seriously and really look at whose responsibility are economic roads that really serve and benefit everybody in Saskatchewan, even if they live in the heart of Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker.

Then the legislation addressed conflict of interest for municipal leaders. And not sure that this Assembly now, this legislature, this government, is really in a position to lead by example, but that is also in this Bill.

And then the Bill deals with demographics. I mean this is a Bill that touches on infrastructure, touches on vital statistics, and that touches on, to a certain extent, justice issues. And it's just a very wide range in that respect. And then it goes on to touch on electoral law.

And though I had concerns about and spoke to them, about concerns about the mechanism for resolving disputes around the repair and maintenance of roads, and some concern about, well particularly about the example that this government is providing in respect to disclosure of the conflict of interest, I think my largest concern clearly, to those who are listening to my remarks, is how well-thought-out it has been to provide a discretionary weapon, I would say, to incumbent municipal governments in respect to upcoming municipal elections.

And if the government should not seriously reconsider, for the sake of consistency and fair play, either withdrawing a provision, a level of scrutiny that MLAs do not seem to be willing to impose on themselves or, even if we don't have the courage to do that, consistently requiring this disclosure across the piece for municipal government, as opposed to providing a discretionary weapon that can be used by incumbents in their self interest, depending on their circumstances and the circumstances of their challengers.

So there are a lot of questions raised by the Bill, and they cover a lot of different areas, Mr. Speaker. And I think we may still have questions to people working in rural Saskatchewan in a lot of different areas covered by what again I would call an omnibus Bill despite its slightness.

And so, Mr. Speaker, to allow others to speak to this matter — I don't think it's received sufficient consideration in the House yet — I move to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Meewasin has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 109.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

Bill No. 110

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Harrison that **Bill No. 110 — *The Northern Municipalities Act, 2009*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to rise today to enter into the debate on Bill No. 110, *An Act respecting Local Government in Northern Saskatchewan and making consequential amendments to other Acts*. And of course it's a very thick document. It's a very important document and as I've read and reviewed the pieces that go along with this, I see there's been considerable work. But it is our responsibility to make sure that we take some time to think about the consequences — the intended consequences, the unintended consequences — to make sure it's done right so we don't have to go back and correct those mistakes that perhaps were not thought of.

And of course we've seen that a few times, with this government in particular, that they've rushed into legislation. They haven't really thought through the full consequences of some of the things that they were in a hurry to get out the door.

And so as we go through this, we see what we can uncover. And some of the good things that they deserve credit for, we'll make mention of that as well. But unfortunately that seems far and few between because it's been a rare thing, particularly in the last little while.

But I am looking forward to talking a bit about this Act. I've had some experience in the North. Having growing up in the South though, I've just come to appreciate how important consultation in the North is.

My colleague from Regina East had a good discussion actually about the work that he's done, particularly around the labour standards that we were able to introduce in the northern areas. A very important piece of legislation and of course it took a lot of work to make sure that people understood the consequences of that kind of implementation, as with this piece of legislation.

When you do that kind of work, when you have southerners in a southern world view, a southern perspective, it's important that we have an appropriate way of hearing the concerns from the northerners about their hopes and fears, their aspirations, their views about their communities, and how they strengthen their communities to make sure that they're strong and healthy and vibrant. Something that we all strive for, Mr. Speaker, and we all hope for no matter where we are in this province, this country, because we have so much to be proud of, you know.

But the issues that the North has, you know . . . And they have such a strong history but they also have so much geography. And this is something that we hear some of the challenges . . . In fact, actually it's interesting the news that Manitoba's facing in terms of their ice roads thawing too early and how there may be communities stranded. And fortunately our ice roads here seem to be hanging on. But sometimes we take these things for granted that things can be just like they are in the South, and

they're not. They face unique challenges.

And so a Bill like this is so important that we get it right. Not only do we get it right in terms of the written word, but we also get it right in terms of the tools and resources that go along with it. And I'll keep coming back to this, Mr. Speaker, because I know these folks keep coming back to it. I've met numerous times with the folks from New North and they raise this issue continually, and rightfully so, that if they don't have the capacity to make a difference in their communities, all this kind of stuff is for naught.

And tomorrow we will find that out. Will they have the capacity to deliver on a piece of legislation such as Bill No. 110? Because it's important that they do. Tomorrow is budget day, and we will find out whether or not they have the resources to deliver on all the parts of this legislation. And it's a very thorough piece of legislation. And of course when they try to . . . And this is the attempt to align this with what southern municipalities have and this is very, very important. But it also recognizes, and it's important to recognize, the unique qualities of the northern communities.

And as I said, my colleague from Regina talked extensively about his consultations and how he got to know the North, particularly his remarks around the highways in the North, the roads in the North — a major, major concern. And again speaks to the resources that go along with the legislation. We all dream that the legislation can take reality, but again the capacity is a big part of it.

But the labour standards was an interesting eye-opener in terms of how can we take our world view, things that we take for granted in the South and make sure that the northerners are treated in a fair and an equitable way, but also an appropriate way that is culturally sensitive and deals with the reality of the North so they can reach their dreams. And of course this is something that's really, really important. So those are the kinds of things that I want to talk about.

And of course my experience as Environment minister also gives me some insight, particularly around some important issues that I'm not sure are addressed in here. And I'm thinking about the waste management aspect. And of course municipalities, it's so important for them to have a good handle on how they deal with their waste management, both in terms of the water, the grey water, but also the solid waste management.

And of course if we don't have good regulations then there can be really unfortunate circumstances, and we've seen that in the North, unfortunately with a fellow passing away a few years ago in connection, the unfortunate incident with animals in the North, with Points North. And that was really unfortunate. So this is really important. And I know the minister in his remarks, and I will talk a little bit about this, talked about the unfortunate, extremely unfortunate, tragic circumstances that happens far too often in the North, particularly with dangerous animals and specifically with dogs, dogs at large.

And if there's ever a circumstance that really highlights how important it is to have not just the letter of the law but the capacity to deliver the new law, the new regulations so that they can actually make a difference in their communities, it's that

particular circumstance. We've heard far, far too often of dangerous animals and the fact that they, whether they are not . . . the whole issue around spaying and neutering. The whole issue of ownership, the whole issue of proper dog control continues to be one that they struggle with because of the issue of resources. How can you have that kind of control? And it's often after the fact that we hear about this as opposed to before the fact.

So these are the kind of things that I'm hoping to hear that we hear tomorrow and over the next while is, how are the resources coming along to make this happen?

So waste management is a huge issue. And I'm not sure we know . . . We heard something yesterday about \$2 million from this government around waste management recycling. I don't know if they're having anything special for the North; clearly that's an important aspect.

And recycling in the North takes on a brand new, a whole new different meaning because we don't again have the infrastructure, the roads, the way to connect with potential markets for materials. And so we have to think about, how is that happening?

The other issue that I learned particularly that was so important for people in the North was around forest fire management. And of course that was and continues to be a real issue in communities. And now fortunately, in the past few years, it has not been quite as significant. But when you have a fire in your community, it doesn't matter what's happening in the whole North if your fire, if the fire is in your area. It's still a concern.

And so both in terms of how is that happening and what's the connection with the Ministry of Environment, with the forest fire folks and how does this speak to that, to allow stronger dialogue so people feel secure in their communities and understanding the science behind forest management? But also understanding the importance that communities feel about how forest fires are managed in that they feel secure and safe in their natural environments. This is hugely, hugely important. And so I think that this is one that we've not heard. And I've reviewed the minister's remarks, and we've not heard him speak specifically about these two areas.

And the third of course is, how do you deal with specifically specific areas that should be protected? And of course, we talk about the planning. It goes on in Environment, but how do they intersect with the local governments in northern Saskatchewan? So when we get into committee, those will be the kind of questions I'll be asking.

So how does Environment . . . Environment has a really, the Ministry of Environment has a very unique role in northern Saskatchewan, much different than they do in the South, you know, particularly around the ownership of Crown land. And the fact that they are a significant employer in the North and they have the ways and means really to have a huge impact on the economic development of the North because so much of the North really is connected with what we value here in Saskatchewan and Canada in terms of our lands and our waters. I mean this is something that we take so much pride in in Saskatchewan, the fact that we have over 100,000 lakes and of

course the vast, vast majority of them are in the North.

[16:30]

And so I'm curious about the interrelationship with Environment in terms of this Bill before us. The South obviously truly did, you know, the municipalities in the South truly do have a connection. We have *The Water Regulations* and the waste management regulations, all of that in the South too, so the Environment ministry has a real and unique relationship to those municipalities.

But I have to say that when it comes to the northern communities, it's a very unique and important one and the one that's very different, very different from the South. And clearly as I said, specifically with the forest fires, there is a huge life-and-death aspect to it, a circumstance that I don't think very many others could relate to. And of course the South in many ways, in municipalities, have some capacity, but I won't, I can't say that they have full capacity because I know when we met, they often talked about not having the capacity to deal with wildfires in the South as well, particularly along the forest fringe. But even when you get into the prairie and the grasslands, when you have wildfires there it is a challenge as well. And I know particularly in the Southeast, in the Southwest — Moose Mountain Park and in Cypress Hills Park — the forests there are hugely important. But it's a different type of thing.

And somehow we've been able to develop good working relationships in municipalities right across the province, but it's the uniqueness that I speak to. And I think this has to be dealt with in committee when we have the folks come, and I do hope Environment does come along to visit. I think this is very important. This is an important piece of legislation.

And of course the people in the North have a right to real democracy, and this is pretty much . . . I was struck by my colleague from Athabasca when he was talking about the voter turnout and how it could be as high as 85, 95 per cent in the North. And if only we could have that in the South, that would be phenomenal. When I know in my own city of Saskatoon, the voter turnout I think hit 27 per cent, and it's just not the same. So the folks in the North really do take this seriously in terms of how they see their future and how they view their mayors and how they view their councillors.

I know that in many ways we have a lot of confidence in our leadership in the South. And I don't know whether that's a view that the low voter turnout is because of that, but I think we'd still like to have people come out to vote. So when you have that kind of turnout of 85, 95 per cent, it's a real vote of confidence that their leadership in the North will have their hopes and fears at heart.

So this is exciting. This is exciting stuff. So we're looking to see that they get authority similar to the folks in the South. And this legislation really proposes to give northern municipalities more autonomy and more authority in line with what the people have in the southern municipalities. And of course we support that in principle.

But you know this really, as I say, has to reflect the reality of

life in northern communities, and this is something that we have to pay attention to. And you know today, as I said earlier, whether it's the ice roads going out earlier as we've heard in Manitoba — the impact that will have on the folks there and how we just can't take it for granted that the North has long, cold winters. They have challenges and particularly we see that with the impact of climate change, and is there innovation happening and how do we allow that kind of innovation to happen, you know. Or forest fires in the summer which can just play havoc, play havoc with their communities.

And the real challenge really relies too around the capacity. And it is interesting when folks get together, and we've met with them many times, and whether it's in La Ronge, Stony Lake in the North, Cumberland, it's just a real challenge. And we see that in, you know, communities where . . . You know, I've met with folks in La Loche. The challenge is what they see both as a collective capacity within their own local government, that the people that they hire, making sure they have the appropriate skills and knowledge, and of course this will be . . . And I hope that people have been brought along so they understand the changes.

Now I understand — and as I've reviewed the minister's comments — that he's met with the folks, particularly with New North, and it was great to see that he recognized some of the individuals. But we have to go beyond just recognizing them. We have to give them the capacity to do the job effectively. And this is so hugely important.

And we see this at a time when we want to see governments manage the resources as well as they can, and of course that depends totally on their capacity. And we just have to look across the way, Mr. Speaker, to see how that's a reality with this government here and how they've mismanaged their resources. Never has a government been blessed with such good fortune coming into government — some \$2.3 billion. And now tomorrow we wait to see what the reality of what their mismanagement will end up looking like.

And this is something that I think we have some real serious concerns, because it's a bit like the kettle calling the pot black. It's kind of ironic that these folks can lay judgment on others in terms of mismanagement when we see the kind of mismanagement that's coming across the way. Right from the very top, Mr. Speaker, right from the Premier all the way down.

With the kind of decisions that have been made, we have some real questions, some real questions. And the people of the North I think deserve some answers. And they deserve, they deserve to see some real proof of what their intentions are. This is all well and good. But if there's no resources, no capacity to come along with this, then there's some real challenges.

We also know, and this seems to have really played into the limelight a bit, that the legislation also gives northern municipalities the authority to request criminal record checks for candidates seeking public office. So this Bill 110 provides for that. And the government says that the voters deserve to know the information before they make an informed decision. And of course we would support this in principle but it does give rise to a whole new set of questions, and particularly to all of us who are elected.

If we are going to put this kind of standard on one set of candidates, is this something we should be looking right across the board? Particularly it is kind of an odd circumstance that we would have a situation where we we're saying, for those in municipal office they should be providing criminal record checks and that become public knowledge, but not so at the provincial level.

It seems kind of contradictory that this would happen when we have people, particularly as we see people expecting high standards from anyone who is elected, anyone who is put in positions of authority, in positions of power. And sometimes, we think that those in municipal positions aren't quite as . . . the same as we are at the provincial level.

And I would tell you that from an urban perspective — and I think it's right across the board we could have examples of this — but I know one of the biggest issues in Saskatoon of course is snow removal. Well it may not seem to be the end of the world, but for many people it was. If you happened to be on a street that was plugged and not cleaned out, it was a big deal. So that seemed to be the topic of conversation in Saskatoon for a long, long time. So it really didn't matter whether you're provincial or municipal; the issue of the day was getting rid of the snow.

And I think that's the same thing up north. Whether you're talking about stray dogs, dangerous animals, about forest fires, or roads, it doesn't matter whether you're talking about the provincial level or you're talking the municipal level. People view if you're elected, you're elected. And so what's good for the goose is good for the gander, and I think this is important that we talk more about this.

You know, it's a bit of an ethical issue. It's not just as simple as a fix-it issue. What are the ethics? What are we really trying to resolve here? Because there's also the limit to how the government has set this — the different levels of the record check, and also whether or not the notice of being charged, and being charged for a serious crime, versus one that is not as serious.

So I'd like to know the screen, the process for determining this. How did this happen? It's a very important issue. We have this kind of issue in other areas of public life, in public service. We have situations where, you know, as teachers you belong to a professional organization and, if there's a complaint made about you, it goes to the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation] and it's a very public circumstance. And so like with Bill 110, calls for that same sort of thing but not quite the same, for people with record checks. Where does it start and where does it end?

We see that also even in social services, and that applies in a big way up north where we have social workers who are registered with the Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers. And of course this is their week, and we'll talk more about that through members' statements, not here right now because I know this isn't really related to the speech at hand, but what is related is public accountability.

And you have people who are doing work for Social Services who are not registered and that causes a lot of concern, because

there's a whole issue around public accountability and public transparency. And for this government, those are two issues that they're struggling with themselves — transparency and accountability.

And so I think it is somewhat ironic and contradictory that this government would put forward a Bill that calls on one level of government to have some record checks — and we're not sure why they went with just that — but not the provincial.

And the other irony of course with this is how the minister's announced he's wanting it to go to a four-year term for municipal elected officials, and part of the reasoning was that it would line up with the provincial elections. And so he's seeing some of that consistency, but not all of it and we don't know why that is. And I think he has a bit of responsibility. He may say that it's because that's what the municipal elected officials asked for, and that's fair enough.

I'm not sure whether he got a lot of feedback from individuals around the four-year term, whether people were mounting a letter writing campaign to keep municipal candidates off their doors every third year and move it to every fourth year. I don't know if that's the case.

So I don't know how he's making his decisions. Is it just based on solely consulting the municipal elected folks, which is so important, but it's not the only people you need to consult. And so this is critical that there is some consistency, some consistency right across the board. And so, Mr. Speaker, this has been a challenge though for this government in terms of being consistent.

And they tend to like to appease groups fairly quickly by putting in things and not really thinking through some of the difficult decisions that have to be made. And maybe they're not difficult, but I think it's really appropriate that the ministers, the government of the day consult not just only with stakeholders, but with the public. And that may be a little more complicated and more complex and sometimes you hear things that you don't want to hear or that you hear things that you don't know what to do with, but the fact of the matter is people need to know that you are making some changes and that these changes will be out there.

And we need to have some of the discussions. For example I would like to know what does John Howard Society have to say about this? What does John Howard have to say about this because they deal with people, with men, or Elizabeth Fry? What do some of the other groups who deal with people in law reform have to say?

[16:45]

What truly are the ethics when you go into record checks? What is necessary? And what is just a little too much information? But people kind of like to know what it is, but is it really, really necessary? And does it stop some people from running for office that unfortunately would have made good leadership people? Or does it . . . Because you've created some loopholes, you do get people who should have been stopped. But they get in because there's a loophole or you haven't really completely thought this through. I think that there's some real, real serious

questions about that.

So, Mr. Speaker, when I review what the minister had been talking about . . . And he actually gave a fairly long discussion. And as we've said, you know, this is important because when you go back, these are the kind of things that can be interpreted to make sure the policy is right. And so I do have to say that the minister gave a fairly long speech about this.

And he did give credit to New North and its partnership and the review committee, and I think it's important to give that credit again to these folks. I won't name them — they're in *Hansard* already — but we do appreciate the fact that . . . the good work that New North does and that they're active and they've lobbied for this. So like we said, we agree with this in principle, but we do have some serious, serious concerns. And of course there are people from Timber Bay, Denare Beach, Beauval, Air Ronge, Stony Rapids, Patuanak, and La Loche, and so this is important to have a good cross-section of people across the way.

So they did take a long time to take a look through this, about a year or so, and I think that was very, very important. They looked at *The Cities Act*, *The Municipalities Act*; it's important to get that interconnection. But as I said, I didn't see in this document or this speech that the minister gave any work or any connection with environment folks. Because I think that's an important connection of how do they interface with those folks in such an important way, when they deal with their land base, when they deal with their water, when they deal with their waste management, when they deal with the whole issue around . . . Now highways, of course, will be the roads people, but of course you have Environment holding the land most likely right off the bat.

And of course I do appreciate that the minister did talk about dogs running loose, dangerous animals, but I do have some concerns because is there a capacity to actually do something in a proactive way. Are we going to see this be something like, too often we see that it will be after the fact. And I think for people in the North, and when we saw the circumstance in Ile-a-la-Crosse, it was just really unfortunate and you feel for everyone in the community, from the family, the brothers and sisters, the father and extended family, and the leadership in the community.

Nobody wants to see this kind of thing happen, but it did happen and we have to ask, how could we have been more proactive, more proactive in this? Because bylaws won't solve the problem by themselves. You do have the capacity. You do have to have the tools. And if you're without those then you really are stranded because it doesn't make a lot of difference. And families cannot appreciate, and should not have to appreciate that there might've been something in place — we could've or we should've — just doesn't work at all in this circumstance. Because we see this way, way too often. And so the whole issue around dangerous animals is just so, it's so important. This is very, very important.

The minister talked about that he had heard at length from the northern stakeholders about the important partnerships, and this is very important. And he talked about not only at the municipal level but also the regional scale. And this is very important because this is something that, when we talk about the

circumstances in the North, that are a little different and we actually have the great opportunity to do it right.

I know in my time in Environment that we talked a lot about watershed planning and how do we do that. And particularly when we have significant economic projects in the North like the oil sands, we get it right. We get it right the first time, right off the bat. If we mess up at the beginning then it's really hard to get it back. And we see that in the South and we see the wildlife habitat lands that we're trying to protect, especially the grasslands, and we talked at length.

I had mentioned the good work my former colleague Peter Prebble did around the Great Sand Hills, trying to re-establish something like that, when we have some of the most beautiful environments, both in terms of the lakes and the forests and of course the sand dunes in the Far North. We just want to make sure we get it right and not only . . . but when we say we, that we really are sensitive to the northerners. Because truly they have a right to self-determination and the right to some very . . . to a level of economic development that we all aspire to, that we all aspire to. But I know that they feel very strongly about how the North is protected.

So I didn't see that and I do take a look. I do have to ask, what role did Environment have in this? This is hugely important because if they didn't have, then they maybe have to, we have to think about back to the drawing board. But if we did have, then why isn't it out there more in front? Because clearly, I can't believe that they weren't at the table but they didn't get a space on the minister's speech, because I think it's very important that we do hear, we do hear from Environment's perspective.

It's really a unique circumstance in the North that Environment actually holds the Crown lands and is the guardian for the ground, Crown lands, the steward. But truly, the northerners feel that this is where their economic development lie and they look to their leadership for a larger role, probably a larger role than say they would in the South. Of course we have in the South REDAs, economic development agencies and that type of thing. And I'm not sure what the circumstance is in the North, but I think this is really something that they talk about in this legislation and that they hope can actually have some reality here.

Because if we don't do it right, like I say, the first time, it's really hard to get it back. So it's hard to get back the pristine nature of the North and it's hard though to hold back, especially when we've talked about the roads, how important road . . . that infrastructure, that is for folks up north. And then along comes with it the development.

And you know, one of the biggest issues we've had — and I can remember this, and my colleagues would, and I'm sure the current Minister of Environment would know this as well — the whole issue around squatters. How are we going to deal with squatters? And there is some, I believe that there's over 700 squatters, people who just moved up north and decided to live on land that's not theirs. Now I'm not sure of the current circumstance, and I'd be happy to hear, how's this going to work into this? How are we going to resolve the issue of people who've just moved up north? They're on land. They're squatted

on land, but what are we going to do? How do they fit into this governance model? They may not be of the Métis communities, the First Nations community. I'm not sure about that. But how do they deal with that kind of circumstance? That was something that the South in terms of how, when they did homesteading, they had a different approach to it. So how are we going to approach this issue?

And so when we talk about Bill 110, there's some really unique challenges here that we have in the North and I think that this is our opportunity to get it right. And I know that my colleagues have talked a lot about this and I'm glad that they have, because it's one that is really in many ways a landmark piece of legislation, that if we get it right it's a wonderful thing. And I think the northerners will appreciate that.

But if there's some concerns, if they see the inconsistencies like we've said between the record checks for the provincial level and the municipal level — and first we're going to start with the northerners — I think there's some real concerns about that. I think that shows some hypocritical action on the level of this government. And I think this is the opportunity where they say, hey, did we think through all of this? I don't think that was the . . .

An Hon. Member: — Time to consult.

Mr. Forbes: — Yeah, time to consult. I think that's an unintended consequence. Because people say, so if it's good for the goose, well it must be good for the gander. So why aren't we doing that?

We do have another Bill. It's called the consequential amendments Act. I think we're going to be talking about or maybe we talked about it just prior to this, would have been the place to have that in if we're going to do it. But again I would have to say, what are the whole ethics behind it? Because as I say, many of us see this in different forms. And we talk about leadership in our communities. Whether it's elective leadership or there's professional leadership, we're looking for new benchmarks. But it has to be consistent, has to be consistent, because people are wondering . . .

An Hon. Member: — It should be helpful. It should be helpful too.

Mr. Forbes: — It should be very helpful. If it's not helpful, I think that's the key question . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Does it advance the development of this? It's very important. Is it advancing the leadership, the quality of leadership? It's very important that we advance the leadership. And I think we have an opportunity in Bill 110 to make sure that when we talk about local government in northern Saskatchewan that we have the best possible leadership.

Clearly the folks in the North, when they have voter turnouts of 85 or 95 per cent, clearly they're feeling pretty darn good about their leadership and they're engaged. As I said, if only the southern folks could get that kind of voter turnout it would be a great, great thing. But we don't seem to do that. And yet it's ironic that we feel the need to have criminal record checks. And I understand it was the northerners who had asked for this and I think that it's quite appropriate to listen to them.

Now I think that it's . . . I know we're getting close to 5 o'clock here, but I do have a few more things to say and I don't want to lose just how important the Ministry of Environment is here on this. And I do want to talk a little further about that because I think it is key, from my experience anyways, that we have some information about, how do they feel about? How do . . . Again the interface with Environment, the ministry in all its different places in terms of the lands branch, protected areas, this, you know, the economic development, whether it's forestry or whether it's oil sands.

And of course the issue really then becomes around getting it right right off the bat, that whole thing, and developing capacity. I know particularly around the hunting issue is hugely important, hugely important, especially with the Métis communities. How are we making sure that this legislation, when we look at northern municipalities, that that fits, that fits? Because for us in the South it may be a different . . . I was going to say a different kettle of fish, and maybe it is. I think it is actually.

But clearly the northerners need and expect and rightfully deserve the capacity to breathe life into Bill 110, *An Act respecting Local Government in Northern Saskatchewan*. I think it's critical, it's absolutely critical that when we see the budget tomorrow that we see some resources to breathe life into Bill 110. It's really about the capacity, the tools, and the resources to make this a reality. We've seen too many times when we've seen consultation in the North and hopes have risen and they've been dashed because there just hasn't been the resources to make it happen. But I . . .

The Speaker: — Being now 5 p.m., this Assembly is recessed until 7 p.m. this evening.

[The Assembly recessed until 19:00.]

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President of the Executive Council

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Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Crop Insurance Corporation

Hon. Bill Boyd
Minister of Energy and Resources
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Power Corporation
Minister Responsible for Uranium
Development Partnership
Minister Responsible for Innovation Saskatchewan
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Research Council

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff
Minister of Enterprise
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated
Minister Responsible for Trade

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Minister Responsible for Crown Investments
Corporation
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Minister Responsible for Information Technology Office
Minister Responsible for Information
Services Corporation
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