



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

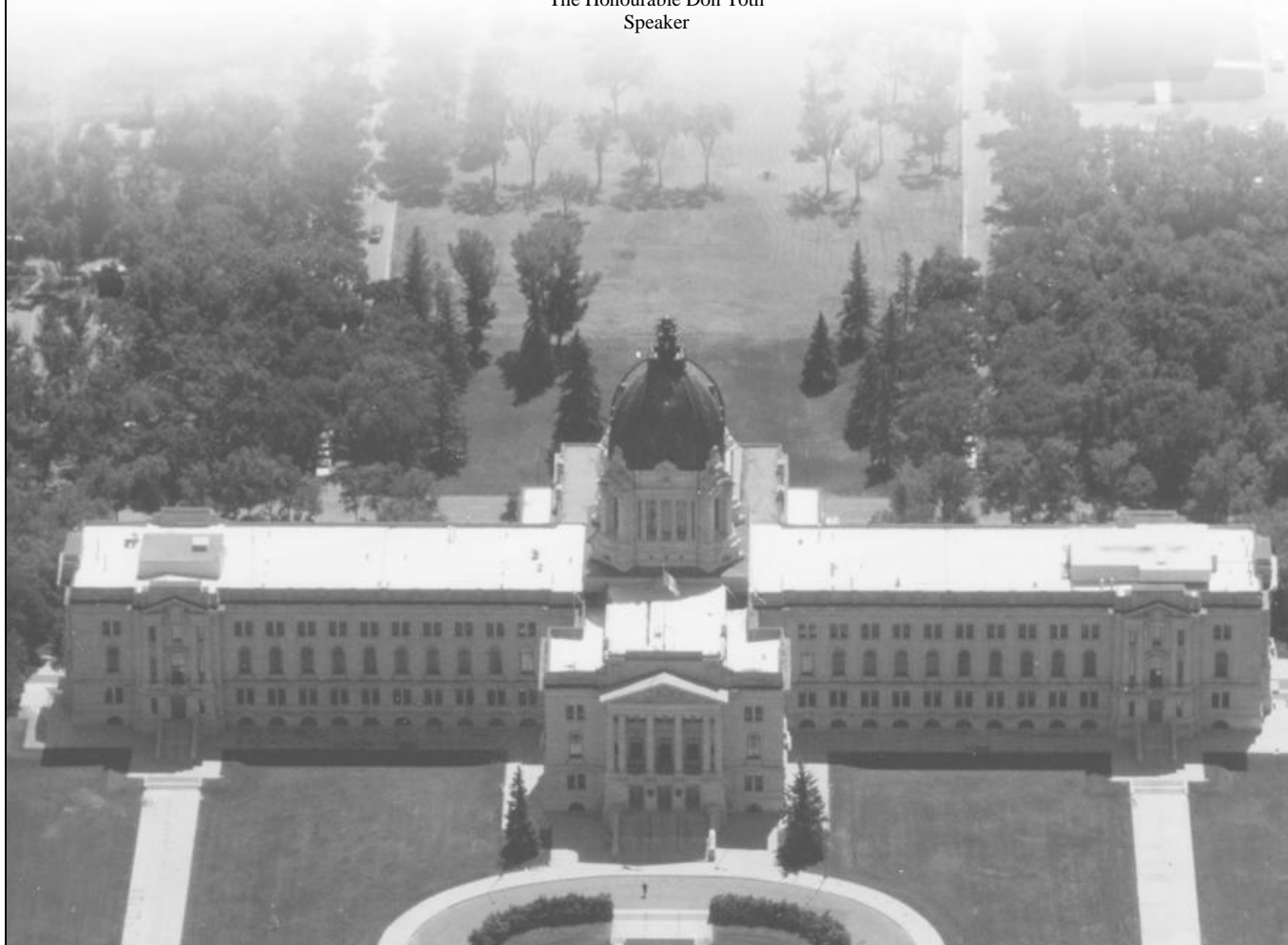
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
authority of  
The Honourable Don Toth  
Speaker



**MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**

Speaker — Hon. Don Toth  
 Premier — Hon. Brad Wall  
 Leader of the Opposition — Lorne Calvert

<b>Name of Member</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>	<b>Constituency</b>
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
Calvert, Lorne	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Chisholm, Michael	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
D'Autremont, Hon. Dan	SP	Cannington
Draude, Hon. June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Hon. 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, Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Hon. Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Hon. Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Higgins, Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Hutchinson, Hon. Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, 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
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, Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Laura	SP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Schriemer, Joceline	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Stewart, Hon. 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
Van Mulligen, Harry	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
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
Vacant		Cumberland

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to the legislature, I'd like to introduce some people in the east gallery. There are many people here who have travelled from throughout our province to watch the proceedings, and whose interests lie on the recent amendments to The Trade Union Act and the essential services Bills before us.

From Prince Albert, we have Carol McKnight, president of CUPE [Canadian Union of Public Employees] Local 4777. She's accompanied by members from Paddockwood, Birch Hills, Prince Albert, and Shellbrook.

We have President Brian Manegre from North Battleford and he's accompanied by members from Lloydminster and Meadow Lake and North Battleford. Mr. Speaker, we also have Larry Hubich, president of the SFL [Saskatchewan Federation of Labour]; Tom Graham, president of the CUPE; Larry Kowalchuk I see is up there — general counsel, RWDSU [Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union]; Terry Zahorski, Regina & District Labour Council.

We have Melanie Medlicott, a director CUPE; Bert Ottenbrite, Dave Miller; Barb Cape's out there, Service Employees International; Gordon Campbell from the CUPE; Patti Ginny, Amalgamated Transit Union; and I apologize to some of the other people I don't know.

But I'd ask all members here to welcome these trade unionists — I see Marianne Hladun, is also here from the Public Service Alliance of Canada — to their legislature. Thank you.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's with a great deal of pleasure that I present a petition on behalf of Moose Jaw residents with the hope that this government will support them and move forward on this initiative. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to take the necessary steps to provide funding for the expansion and renovation of the Moose Jaw Union Hospital.

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

Mr. Speaker, I present this on behalf of Moose Jaw residents.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents of Saskatchewan. The petitioners are concerned with the inadequate access to quality and affordable child care spaces in Regina and across the province. They see these as vital for many to enter the labour market and/or education. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to add at least 2,000 new child care spaces in Saskatchewan by 2011.

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

These petitions are presented on behalf of residents of Regina. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to present a petition signed by people of Saskatchewan on Bills 5 and 6. And the prayer reads as follows:

We respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan urge the new government to withdraw both Bills and hold broad public consultations about labour relations in the province.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And the petitions are signed by people from Carnduff, Alida, Redvers, Yorkton, Rhein, Springside, Saltcoats, Canora, Bredenbury, Melville, Grayson, Killaly, Ebenezer, Kelliher, Ituna, Waldron, Goodeve, Neudorf, Foam Lake, Elfros, Wynyard, Tuffnell, Sintaluta, Indian Head, Montmartre, Regina, Regina Beach, Qu'Appelle, Kendal, Kamsack, Veregin, Norquay, Togo, Lintlaw, Invermay, Margo, Rama, Pelly, Preeceville, and Sturgis. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### New Democratic Party Convention

**Mr. Yates:** — Well, well, well, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Yates:** — Over the past weekend, hundreds of New Democratic Party members gathered here in Regina for the annual party convention. Mr. Speaker, NDP [New Democratic Party] conventions have a well-deserved reputation as boisterous and contentious affairs, filled with straight talk and strong, often conflicting opinions, just as you'd expect from a party that believes fundamentally in democratic principles and the value of open, honest debate.

The NDP's freewheeling, let's-hear-what-everyone-has-to-say style is a far cry from the rigid, talk down, I'll-tell-you-what-to-think-and-say style that characterizes the Saskatchewan Party under their current leader.

Mr. Speaker, this past weekend was a time to examine the past and to think and talk about the future, about the future of their great province, about the future of our great party, and about the future of the arrogant and far out of touch . . . [inaudible] . . . government members opposite have.

Mr. Speaker, from the honest, heartfelt, and inspiring words of our leader to the freewheeling, often impassioned debate about ideas, innovation, and possibility from party members, young and old, urban and rural, long-term or new members, it was clear to all present . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. I know it's the beginning of the week, and members have come back energized to participate in debate, but we have one member recognized on the floor. The member from Regina Dewdney may complete his statement.

**Mr. Yates:** — From party members young and old, urban and rural, long-term or new, it was clear to all present that the process of party renewal has begun towards victory in 2011. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Arm River-Watrous.

### St. Patrick's Day

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we all know, today it is March 17, St. Paddy's Day. It's the annual feast day which celebrates Ireland's patron saint. It is widely observed as a time for celebration and merriment. While not an official holiday here in Saskatchewan, but in Newfoundland and Labrador consider it to be a selected holiday in their province.

Yesterday Montreal held its 184th St. Patrick's Day parade which was attended by over 300,000 people. Although New York city's parade is over five hours long and attracts approximately 2 million observers, the Montreal parade is the longest-running, continuous parade in North America, has never been stopped due to war or weather.

While this great province was founded, one in ten of our residents were of Irish, Irish origin. While many in Saskatchewan can claim some Irish ancestry, St. Patrick's Day is when everyone can be Irish for a day. The Irish have been a crucial part of Saskatchewan's development, and it's fitting that we recognize it.

It's also a great date to have birthdays. I know a few members in the . . . There is one member that has a birthday, but she said she didn't want to say who it was, but it's also my dad's birthday today. We always celebrate that, and I want to wish my dad a very happy birthday.

Ever since I can remember, we've always celebrated St. Patrick's Day. And with that I want to wish my dad a toast:

May the road rise to meet you,  
May the wind be always at your back,  
May the sun shine warm upon your face,  
May the rain fall soft upon your fields.  
And until we meet again,  
May God hold you in the hollow of his hand.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### Z99 Radiothon

**Mr. Trew:** — Mr. Speaker, Z99's 21st annual radiothon took place Thursday and Friday, March 13 and 14. Regina and southern Saskatchewan people showed we care by putting our money where our hearts are. Baby heart, lung, and more state-of-the-art monitors at the Regina General neonatal intensive care unit will help the professional health care providers give every baby the best possible chance for a life.

Rawlco Radio's best, CC, Lorie, and Buzz of Z99, provided the selfless leadership we, the raging masses, rallied behind. For 36 straight hours on air, CC, Lorie, and Buzz provided the humour, wit, and just plain zany fun along with the poignant stories of successes and failures at the neonatal intensive care unit. Throughout the 36 hours CC, Lorie, and Buzz spoke only of hope and how we are, quote, "changing the world."

Thanks to everyone involved, especially CC, Lorie, and Buzz for providing so much of themselves as they entertained us with the 21st annual Z99 radiothon. We responded. Regina and southern Saskatchewan gave a record \$406,970.

To everyone involved, congratulations.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### Spring Free From Racism Event

**Ms. Ross:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday I had the honour of attending the ninth annual Spring Free From Racism event at the Regina Italian Club, in recognition of upcoming International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Over 1,500 people attended this great event which offered great food and wonderful entertainment to a packed house.

I had the opportunity to bring greetings on behalf of the new

government and join in the celebration of our diverse community. As a multicultural province, it is important for us to take every chance to learn about other cultures and experience their uniqueness.

During this celebration, I had the chance to speak with Sonny de Paz. He's the president of the Philippine Association of Saskatchewan. He's been a friendly, welcoming face at the airport for our new Filipino nurses, and his association has helped them integrate into their new home. It is through people like Sonny that the newest residents of Saskatchewan first experience our friendliness and our world-famous hospitality.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to have all other members join me in praising the committee and their members who organized this fantastic event, the sponsors who backed it, and the volunteers who provided the wonderful cuisine and top-notch entertainment all day long.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### **Labour Community Service Award to Saskatoon Union Member**

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Mr. Speaker, for the past 10 years the Saskatoon and District Labour Council and the United Way of Saskatoon and area have honoured the dedication and work of a union member in our community. The Labour Community Service Award dinner is an annual event held to recognize a dedicated trade unionist, active in both their community and their union. This year I was happy to be in attendance.

Mr. Speaker, the Labour Community Service Award is one of several projects of labour's partnership program of Saskatoon and District Labour Council and the United Way of Saskatoon and area — a partnership that is working to build community together.

This year the recipient of the 2008 Labour Community Service Award was Linda Flowers, member of Service Employees International Union Local 333. The overriding theme of Linda's involvement was both in her union and her community, as well as her ability to inspire and motivate others to get involved.

We heard, Mr. Speaker, that when it comes to important issues and causes, Linda has the ability to inspire the participation of others, helping them to understand the importance of their volunteerism and activism in making change and building a better community for all.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in a huge thank you to Linda Flowers, member of Service Employees International Union Local 333, for making our community a better place for all. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Meadow Lake.

[13:45]

#### **New Democratic Party Convention**

**Mr. Harrison:** — Mr. Speaker, it's my unfortunate duty to inform this House that, unshackled from the discipline of power, the NDP has fallen into the hands of the radical left.

At its weekend convention, the NDP debated a motion that would have seen the virtual elimination of private property rights. Of even greater concern was the motion that called for increasing royalty rates in oil and gas.

The highlight of the convention was the keynote speech on renewal delivered by a young firebrand named Allan Blakeney, with new ideas straight out of the 1970s. The federal NDP leader also put an appearance in, the same NDP leader who advocates a total shutdown of the oil sands, the confiscation of all firearms, and \$2 per litre gasoline.

At the conclusion of the convention even the Leader of the Opposition was forced to acknowledge that it was probable that his party would lose the next election, the only bit of foresight noticeable from a party that has its eyes firmly focused on the past.

Last week the NDP raised a concern about driving. That's kind of ironic because for 16 years the NDP was driving our government while looking squarely in the rear-view mirror. Well I'm happy to report that there's finally a government and Premier behind the wheel who's looking forward instead of backward, who's planning for growth instead of decline, and who's building the province instead of tearing it down. The Leader of the Opposition says that he's focused on providing strong opposition. Well I hope he gets the hang of it soon because he's going to be there for a very long time.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### **Luther Invitational Basketball Tournament**

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud to represent a constituent high school that hosts a first class basketball tournament that is steeped in tradition. The Luther Invitational Tournament, L.I.T., began in 1953 by John Chomay. It is the longest-running basketball tournament in Western Canada.

Tournament director, Mr. Dave Hall, notes that this would not have been such a success without the wholehearted support of faculty, students, alumni, parents, fans, and friends. Mr. Hall points out to the tournament legacy of great basketball, student leadership and organization, and sportsmanship.

I ask all members in this House to join with me in thanking Mr. Hall, faculty, students, alumni, parents of Luther College — present and past — for their enriching contributions to our community. Thank you.

#### **QUESTION PERIOD**

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

### Consultation Regarding Labour Legislation

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, I will give the Minister of Labour credit; at least he is consistent. He won't answer questions in this legislature. He won't answer questions out in the rotunda to the media, and when he meets with the public, it turns out he won't answer their questions either.

The minister was at the CUPE convention last week, and because they don't know the minister very well, they made the mistake of asking a question and actually expecting an answer. When the Minister of Labour was asked to speak about an email which showed clear contact between the government and University of Saskatchewan President Peter MacKinnon, the minister was left speechless. Now that he has had some time we'll try again.

To the minister: what discussions took place between government and the university president about essential services legislation prior to the Bill being tabled in the House?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister for Employment and Labour.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Mr. Speaker, there is an issue of credibility, and the issue of credibility rests on that side of the House, Mr. Speaker. In essence, Mr. Speaker, what we see is an email is distributed during a CUPE convention. It makes brief reference to a conversation.

Mr. Speaker, what the problem is — and it's a troubling problem — that is there's either an unwillingness or inability to grasp the distinction between a concept of essential services, which was certainly in the air after the strike at the University of Saskatchewan, and the actual legislation. Mr. Speaker, I will reiterate. There were no substantive conversations with any external stakeholders regarding essential service legislation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Broten:** — If only the member's competence was determined by his ability to not answer a question, he'd be doing splendidly well.

Mr. Speaker, a number of months ago it was suggested that the Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour had been in contact with the University of Saskatchewan president, Peter MacKinnon, during the recent CUPE strike. At the time the minister reportedly engaged in what he called quote, "quiet diplomacy."

But it's starting to come out. We learned on Friday that members of the Premier's communication staff, the minister's office, and quite possibly the minister himself were in discussions with President MacKinnon about the essential

services legislation which would be introduced just days later.

I have a very direct question for the minister. When he engaged in his quiet diplomacy back in December, did he talk about essential services legislation? Yes or no?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Employment and Labour.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Mr. Speaker, instead of speaking about the value of essential service legislation, instead of speaking about the fact that we're the only province to not have it in place or at least have it in tabled, instead of talking about the fact that this legislation balances the right to strike with public safety, instead they want to ask a very specific question. The very specific answer is no.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, the minister is kidding no one — not the media, not the opposition, and not the people of Saskatchewan. The emails released on Friday by CUPE make it painfully clear that the Premier's staff and the minister's staff were in discussions with the president of the University of Saskatchewan before the government's essential services legislation was introduced — this despite the government saying on numerous occasions that consultations did not take place. In fact just minutes before having the truth exposed through these emails, the minister told CUPE delegates that quote, "I did not consult with any stakeholder regarding the essential services legislation until after the legislation was tabled."

Mr. Speaker, can the minister explain why he hasn't been forthcoming with the Assembly, members of the media, and the people of Saskatchewan?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Employment and Labour.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to clarify this. In essence, in early December our Premier noted that essential service legislation would be forthcoming. Mr. Speaker, there's nothing curious about the fact that most of Saskatchewan was speaking about it when we tabled the legislation. It's nothing curious because 400 people per day were being turned away from medical care during the CUPE strike.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will reiterate. I will simply reiterate. There seems to be an inability to grasp the distinction between a general conception of essential services and the legislation. In

fact, in fact, Mr. Speaker, what is most troubling, Mr. Speaker, is that the member opposite does not listen to what Peter MacKinnon said publicly. What President MacKinnon has said publicly is, “. . . I was in support of the concept, but I had never seen any bills or legislation on the subject.” From President MacKinnon. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Mr. Speaker, we saw last week that the Minister of Labour doesn't really like to answer questions, either inside or outside of this House.

Mr. Speaker, allow me to ask a very direct question. Speaking to CUPE delegates last week he said, I quote, “This legislation was drafted by the Ministry of Justice and all consultations were held subsequent to the legislation being tabled.” A simple yes or no will do. Does the minister stand by this statement?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Employment and Labour.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate the opportunity to reiterate what's already been said. Essentially our focus is in ensuring that the people of Saskatchewan have their public safety and security addressed, at the same time to balance the right to strike. Mr. Speaker, that's what we aim to do through this legislation.

We went into consultations, extensive consultations, and we've actually taken under advisement from right across the policy community. On this it just is to reinforce the message. The Ministry of Justice was drafting this. The consultations occurred after the drafting occurred and the legislation was tabled. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — The member was probably doing better when he said, when he'd say, I'd get back to you. But anyways . . . Mr. Speaker, one of the names on the email mentioned was that of Kevin Wilson. I've done some research on Mr. Wilson. It appears that he is a lawyer who was involved in the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce back when the current member from Moose Jaw North was president.

A Saskatoon and district chamber of commerce newsletter from September 2003 discusses a report circulated by Mr. Wilson which documents, I quote, “. . . disenchantment with the current labour laws and regulations.” Mr. Wilson has also donated \$400 to the Saskatchewan Party since 2003, while his law firm has

donated over 15,000 in that same period.

To the minister: please explain who Kevin Wilson is. Did the minister meet with Kevin Wilson on Bills 5 and 6 prior to their introduction in the House? And what role did Mr. Wilson play in drafting Bills 5 and 6?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Employment and Labour.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Mr. Speaker, it's a privilege to speak about Kevin Wilson. He's a partner with MacPherson Leslie Tyerman in Saskatoon. And you know, Mr. Speaker, he was retained by this government very early on in our mandate. And indeed he's done extensive work with my ministry. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, in addition to the previous email, I'm also in possession of a similar email sent a few days earlier by the deputy minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour. The email, which I will now table, describes a briefing which includes a number of ministry officials as well as Kevin Wilson. Allow me to quote from the email:

What I would like to try is Mary Ellen taking us through each of the Bills, explaining important changes, implications, etc. Kevin Wilson will be present to offer his take on this too.

To the minister: the minister has repeatedly stated that the legislation was drafted by Justice officials and that no consultations took place. And yes, this email seems to contradict him.

Can the minister explain . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. I ask the members to give the member the right to place his question. I ask the member to go directly to the question, please.

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — The minister has stated that the Ministry of Justice has done all the . . .

**The Speaker:** — I ask the member to go directly to his question. Order, order. I ask the member to go directly to his question.

**Mr. Iwanchuk:** — Can the minister explain the contradiction?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Employment and Labour.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — I'll do my best, Mr. Speaker, because it seems there's an inability to quite grasp what I'm speaking about. In essence, Mr. Speaker, what we're dealing with is we had put Mr. Wilson on retainer, Mr. Speaker. We did that very early on in the mandate of this government, Mr. Speaker, to help us as we move forward with our ministry. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Calvert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My first question as well today is to the part-time Minister of Labour. The only inability that we've witnessed here in this afternoon's session is the inability or the unwillingness of that minister to answer a simple question. Yes or no, to the minister, did Mr. Kevin Wilson have any role in drafting the legislation that is before this House?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Employment and Labour.

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — It's a privilege to address a question from the rather retiring member opposite. Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Justice drafted this with input, obviously, from my ministry and Executive Council. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

**Mr. Calvert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One further question to the part-time Minister of Labour: is Mr. Kevin Wilson now or has he been on contract or is he an employee of the department of — whatever you call it — Advanced Education, Employment and Labour?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Employment and Labour.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Wilson is retained by our government, Mr. Speaker. That's the truth of Mr. Wilson's role. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — Order. Before I recognize the next questioner, I think it's appropriate to address members by their actual title. I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

#### Accountability

**Mr. Calvert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question now will go to the Premier. Mr. Speaker, over the past weekend,

even beyond the past week, we have observed a part-time Minister of Labour who has considerably mismanaged his portfolio. We witnessed a minister break the Sask Party promise to the people of Saskatchewan that there would not be essential services legislation. He has refused to consult with working people, particularly in the health care sector, with working people before any introduction or discussion of this legislation. We witnessed a minister who has acted with impunity in the way he has fired the existing members of the Labour Relations Board; a minister who has put in place now a partisan choice to head that board; Mr. Speaker, a minister who's now being questioned about his role in the CUPE strike, who's now under questioning in his involvement with Mr. Kevin Wilson and his comments publicly to the contrary.

My question is to the Premier. Does the Premier still enjoy the confidence . . . does he still place confidence in this minister?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[14:00]

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, the short answer to the question is absolutely. The minister enjoys . . .

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — The minister enjoys the confidence of the Premier. He enjoys the confidence of his colleagues . . .

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — And, Mr. Speaker, let me also just say this, that when it comes to introducing important trade union amendments that will rebalance the labour legislative environment in our province, Mr. Speaker, he enjoys the support of the people of Saskatchewan. When it comes to introducing essential services legislation that puts health care and public safety ahead of all other interests, he also enjoys the support of the people of the province in Saskatchewan.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, we've observed again in the House today, as it was observed with members of the public on Friday, as has often been observed with members of the media, this minister simply refuses to answer questions, simply refuses to answer questions.

Now I want to remind the Premier of his letter to this minister when he took office. He said in his mandate letter to the minister, quote:

Integrity and accountability will be at the forefront of our dealings as a government, and in your work as Minister of the Crown.



Well, Mr. Speaker, it's one thing to talk about accountability. It's quite another thing, Mr. Speaker, to practise accountability.

So this minister, he fires the Labour Relations Board members, goes without a competitive process to put a new person in place, gives a \$60,000 raise to their Sask Party hand-picked friend who's heading up the Labour Relations Board, won't answer a question about it, won't tell this House or the general public what this is going to cost the taxpayers of Saskatchewan.

I guess my question is to the Premier, Mr. Speaker. Is this his definition of accountability?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, accountability is very much about doing the things that you said you would do, Mr. Speaker. When the essential services piece of legislation was introduced in the wake of what we saw with the CUPE strike in the province, when that was introduced, there was a commitment to consult both with management and unions, with employers. That's happened, Mr. Speaker. There have been 20 meetings involving 100 groups. I think we may see some changes brought forward as a result of those good meetings with both sides.

There was a commitment, Mr. Speaker, in the election campaign for secret ballot certification. We'll keep that promise. There was a commitment made, Mr. Speaker, to improve the labour legislative environment through better communication in the workplace. We will keep that promise, Mr. Speaker. Promise after promise will be kept, and in our view that is precisely the definition of accountability and integrity.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Calvert:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, on one point the Premier's right. Accountability is doing what you said you would do before the election, after the election. On that he is right.

And he — the former leader — and the now Minister of Health said to the people of Saskatchewan, there is no need for essential services legislation. That's exactly what they said before the election. Now we see exactly the opposite. And they put this entire file in the hands of a minister who is demonstrating that he will not be accountable, not be accountable. He may enjoy the Premier's confidence today, but does he enjoy the confidence of working people in this province? I ask you that.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Calvert:** — Will the Premier, will the Premier assist his minister and instruct him today to begin to answer the important, significant questions that are outstanding? Let's start with the Labour Relations Board. Let's start with the Labour

Relations Board, a very simple question: how much is this costing the taxpayer of Saskatchewan? How much?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, with respect to the essential services legislation, I know the Leader of the Opposition is very aware that over a year ago, reported in *The Globe & Mail* newspaper, the article reported that the then leader of the opposition — myself — indicated that essential services legislation may well be needed in the province. The intervening CUPE strike at the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina where health care, where health care, the smooth delivery of health care was being threatened for Saskatchewan people underscored the need for this.

And so now the most important question before this Assembly on essential services — and I welcome this debate with the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker — the most important question is, how will the NDP vote? Will they vote in favour of public safety? Will they vote in favour of the continuance of health care for Saskatchewan people? Or will they vote, Mr. Speaker, for the agenda of union bosses and union leadership? What will be the choice?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### Equalization

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, I today have another question to the Premier about another of his cabinet colleagues. Last Thursday in this House, the Attorney General, the Minister of Justice began what can only be described as a new era in interprovincial co-operation when — what does he say? — he calls Premier Danny Williams in Newfoundland and Labrador destructive, destructive for vigorously pursuing a fair equalization deal promised by the Harper Tories.

Now my question to the Premier: does he share the view of his Attorney General, Minister of Justice that the current premier of Newfoundland Labrador is destructive?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Well I think the comment's underscored a different approach being taken by different premiers. And each premier, and each premier for each province will undertake their methods of dealing with the federal government in their own way, responsible to the people of their province.

Mr. Speaker, I noted in his year-end interviews in fact that on this count Premier Williams and I have something in common. There's a realization on the part of the Premier of

Newfoundland Labrador and the Premier of Saskatchewan — myself — that the national government is simply going to not move off of their position, that they refuse to reopen the question of the retention of natural resources. He has made the observation that that's the case. I've made the observation that that's the case.

The next question then is what do we do? What do we do on behalf of the people of the province who deserve more? What do we do on behalf of the people of the province who deserve to have federal help in infrastructure, who deserve to have federal help in our pursuit of clean coal technology?

Mr. Speaker, we've taken a certain tack, and it's pretty clear it's paying off, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, we have a minister that won't answer questions, and now the Premier won't answer a very direct question. So let me try this one out on the Premier, Mr. Speaker.

Informed sources in this country are saying that the Harper Tory federal government has requested that the Government of Saskatchewan withdraw any legal action, any constitutional challenge. Again a very simple question to the Premier: has the federal government asked of him or any member of his government through bureaucratic channels that the Government of Saskatchewan should drop our constitutional challenge which fights, which fights for a fair equalization deal for the people of Saskatchewan?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, we've been actually . . . I've been in conversation with the Prime Minister of Canada who's encouraged that this event take place. I have said to him, as I have said to the media and to the people of the province, that no final decision has been taken with respect to the court challenge.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, my question was not about whether the Premier or not has made up his mind or not. My question is: has any member of the Harper Conservative government, has the Prime Minister himself or any member of that government or any part of its bureaucracy approached the Premier or any minister or any department of this government, requesting that that constitutional challenge be shelved? That's a very simple question.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I did answer the question. But to be fair, the NDP just had a renewal convention over the weekend, and maybe the sound of all the celebration is still ringing in their ears, and they can't hear the answer. The answer is the Prime Minister has raised that with myself, and we've indicated to him that no decision has been taken at this time.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Calvert:** — So to be clear then, Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has lobbied the Premier of Saskatchewan for this province to drop its constitutional challenge. Is that correct? That's what the Premier just said.

Well then, Mr. Speaker, then let us as a legislature resolve ourselves, let us resolve ourselves today, Mr. Speaker. Three years ago almost to the day, I think three years ago last week, this legislature stood in common purpose, stood unanimously, demanding of this federal government, this Prime Minister that they keep their promise to the people of Saskatchewan, a promise worth \$800 million a year — \$800 million a year.

This Premier, this Premier has an opportunity today to stand up for the people of Saskatchewan, to stand firm for the people of Saskatchewan and join us in an emergency resolution which I intend to, which I intend to present here shortly, an exact replica of that resolution which this legislature passed two years ago, which that member, which that member supported, which every member in the House at that time supported.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier allow this emergency resolution debate to go ahead, and will he support the same resolution that he supported two years ago?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, it's pretty clear from the events of the NDP convention over the weekend and even in this question that the NDP continue to look behind. They continue to look in the rear-view mirror.

We're focused on the future, Mr. Speaker, and we're focused on delivering results, results like, for example, an announcement from the national government that there would be \$250 million for carbon capture and the province of Saskatchewan got \$240 million of that.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Now progress, progress, Mr. Speaker . . . Progress, Mr. Speaker, like additional money, funding for the . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. I would ask members to give

the Premier the opportunity to respond to the question from the Opposition Leader, Mr. Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Progress and results, Mr. Speaker, like additional new funding for the synchrotron, like additional new funding for child care, Mr. Speaker.

Now we're going to continue to work hard because we think there is more opportunity and more of an opportunity not just for our government, but the national government to be investing in the province — including, Mr. Speaker, in the area of the nuclear file, including pursuing value-added opportunities in nuclear power.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — We're going to continue to do that work, Mr. Speaker. Compared with 16 years — the last four years from the NDP — when they got, as my friend from Invermay would say, nyet from the federal government.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — Time for oral questions has elapsed.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### Bill No. 13 — The Teachers' Life Insurance (Government Contributory) Amendment Act, 2008

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Education.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 13, The Teachers' Life Insurance (Government Contributory) Amendment Act, 2008 be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Education has moved that the Bill No. 13, The Teachers' Life Insurance (Government Contributory) Amendment Act, 2008 be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed. Carried.

**Clerk:** — First reading of this Bill.

**The Speaker:** — When shall this Bill be read a second time?

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

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

#### MOTION UNDER RULE 59

##### Energy Accord and Equalization Formula

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, as we move to government orders, I'm asking leave of the Assembly to move a motion under rule 49 of the *Rules and Procedures* of this Assembly.

The motion that I intend to introduce as an emergency resolution, as an emergency motion, is in its text identical to a resolution that was passed by this legislature two years ago. A resolution that was passed by this legislature, Mr. Speaker, I would remind you and others, that followed a gathering of people concerned about the ability for Saskatchewan people to retain the benefits of their own natural resources. This meeting was held in this legislature. It involved the now Premier. It involved the Leader of the Liberal Party. And it involved, Mr. Speaker . . .

**The Speaker:** — I bring to the attention of the Leader of the Opposition, for the emergency debate, to give us a quick, short review of the intent and then present the motion.

[14:15]

**Mr. Calvert:** — The intent, Mr. Speaker, is to have this Assembly again demonstrate for the people of Saskatchewan, to demonstrate on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan, this Legislative Assembly's determination to get a fair deal for their natural resources; this Legislative Assembly demand that the Harper Conservative government keep its promise. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move:

That this Assembly urge the Prime Minister and the federal Minister of Finance to respect the principle of equity in the treatment of provincial energy revenues and immediately begin negotiations with the Government of Saskatchewan on the achievement of a Saskatchewan energy accord . . .

Mr. Speaker, by the way, that was in their party platform, the government's party platform.

On the achievement of a Saskatchewan energy accord that guarantees 100 per cent protection from equalization clawbacks on its energy revenues; and further,

That this Assembly urge the Prime Minister and the federal Minister of Finance to introduce reforms to the manner in which equalization entitlements are determined, to recognize that natural resources are non-renewable and that the financial benefits from the depletion of these resources should remain with the province that owns them, and that any program reforms include the return to a national determination of provincial fiscal disparities.

I so move, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Leader of the Opposition has requested leave to move a motion without notice under rule 59. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Yes.

**Some Hon. Members:** — No.

**The Speaker:** — Leave is not granted. Next item of business.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. Order. I ask members to come to order so that we can move forward with the government business, second readings.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### SECOND READINGS

##### Bill No. 8 — The Natural Resources Amendment Act, 2008

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Environment.

**Hon. Ms. Heppner:** — Mr. Speaker, after my remarks I'll be moving second reading of The Natural Resources Amendment Act, 2008. The Act authorizes the termination of the Resource Protection and Development Revolving Fund.

Mr. Speaker, the fund was used mainly to provide radio and communication services for the Ministry of Environment, other ministries, and outside agencies operating in the province's North. The fund charged for its services and used the income to cover expenses and pay salaries.

During 2006-07, Ministry of Environment staff reviewed the operation and concluded that there was a way to provide the radio and communication services in a more efficient manner. The review indicated that there was significant administrative effort involved in maintaining the Resource Protection and Development Revolving Fund.

Mr. Speaker, the review also determined the services delivered through the Resource Protection and Development Revolving Fund could be seamlessly integrated into the Ministry of Environment operations. The authority for the Ministry of Environment to continue to perform the activities of the fund in this manner can be found in subsection 2(g) and 4(1)(i) of The Natural Resources Act and sections 3 and 4 of The Resource Protection and Development Services Regulations, 1994. Effective April 1, 2001, the money generated by the continued communications activities goes into the General Revenue Fund and all costs previously incurred by the fund are now budgeted within the Ministry of Environment appropriation.

Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Comptroller's office and the Treasury Board have approved this plan. As a result, the activities of the former Resource Protection and Development Revolving Fund and the staff who fell under it were transferred to the Ministry of Environment on April 1, 2007.

The Ministry of Environment is constantly striving to provide the people of Saskatchewan the best possible service in the most efficient and cost-effective manner. The Bill before you repeals section 19 of The Natural Resources Act and officially terminates the Resource Protection and Development Revolving Fund.

Mr. Speaker, I now move second reading of The Natural Resources Amendment Act, 2008.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of the Environment has moved that Bill No. 8, The Natural Resources Amendment Act, 2008 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion? I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today to talk about the revolving fund and the Act here that's being brought forward to eliminate this particular fund from the administration or structure of the Government of Saskatchewan.

Now I know that some of these things can be rather humorous or difficult to sort out sometimes, but I think that it's important that we spend a little bit of time understanding what it is that we're doing here today, because this particular fund is the type of fund that exists throughout government. And there are a number of times where these are created; there are a number of times where these are eliminated.

Just for example, in the Department of the Environment or the Ministry of Environment as it's now called, there presently exist, including this one, I think, three funds. One is the Commercial Revolving Fund. And that's a fund that's used for collection of revenues and funds used in the provincial parks, recreation sites, and historical parks. And that's one where often there are public discussions because people get concerned about how much it costs to camp, how much it costs to go to a particular facility, how much for the various services that are there. And so in that particular instance over the years, there's been a very good use, appropriate use, of a revolving fund to provide for the continual renewal and expenses involved in the whole parks system. And basically this recognizes that there are many aspects of the services that are provided in the parks system that are commercial in nature and therefore have revenues that are directly related to expenses that provide services for people.

One of the challenges always in running a central administration for the government — or as we call it in Saskatchewan, a General Revenue Fund — is that to be accountable to the public when a budget is introduced, as it will be later this week, the fewer funds, whatever you want to call them, that are in your budget, the more transparent the activities that are presented to the public. And it would be my understanding that this particular fund related to the Resource Protection and Development Revolving Fund is one that has outlived its usefulness according to the people within the Finance department and within the Ministry of the Environment.

And one of the aspects of the funding as it relates to the overall General Revenue Fund is that when you have to defend the kinds of expenditures that you need in a particular area — whether it's a department or a division of a ministry — on an annual basis, there's more opportunity for appropriate questions to be asked in the budget building process.

So my sense would be that the reason that the various . . . comptroller's office, the Finance department officials, and others who are very supportive of this particular piece of legislation would be that it will mean one less fund that they end up having to review and deal with as a separate entity.

Now the Resource Protection and Development Revolving Fund had a number of interesting aspects to it. And I think it's important that we understand what these are. It was effectively a funding mechanism that allowed for the cost allocation for capital and operating expenses for a number of different cost centres.

One of the first cost centres was radio communications. And this is effectively the centre based out of Prince Albert but has offices in other parts of northern Saskatchewan that provided the connections, or does provide the connections for departmental staff across the North. And there were many times that there were expenditures, especially for capital in that particular area, that it just made more sense to have a particular revolving fund there to fund that.

Also included in this fund was a whole area of equipment rental. And what happened was that there were various types of equipment that were needed within the Saskatchewan Environment that actually provided revenues to the department when they were being used in other places for other paying customers, whether it would be other governments or I think sometimes some other private people working with that. So this would allow for the rental payments to go into this fund and then replenish the fund so it could be used to purchase new equipment that would then subsequently be rented out. So this was a relatively long-term project within the particular fund that was well used.

Another area that was covered out of this fund was the whole issue of staff housing. Many times it was a challenge to find housing in some of the areas of the province. And what this fund allowed the department to do was to secure housing by purchasing housing that would subsequently then be rented out to the staff that would be assigned to various parts, particularly in northern Saskatchewan. By taking the revenues that would come in from that housing, put it into this fund, it could then be used as a way of replenishing or purchasing new housing depending on what would happen.

And finally, this also included the whole . . . a lot of the financial information related to the northern air operations. If you want to get some sense of what was happening in this particular fund, I would like to go back to look at the 2003-2004 budget and look through the types of revenue and expenses that went through the budget at that time. In 2003-04, the revenues that came in on an annual basis from equipment rental and recoveries was \$331,000. Now that was the last year that this particular source of revenue was available to the fund because in that year all of the capital assets were removed from the Resource Protection and Development Revolving Fund.

The next source of revenue was the radio communications revenue, and that was \$1.698 million. This is funding that came into the fund as it relates to the cost of radio communications. And that amount continued at approximately that amount right up until the fund was finally wrapped up on April 1, 2007.

In the 2003-04 budget, the staff housing program brought in revenue of \$174,000. So this would be revenues that came in from people who were using staff housing and would then go to replenish the housing stock as that went. But that source of revenue was eliminated from the fund after April 1, 2005.

[14:30]

A third area of revenue was the northern air operations repair facility. There was money paid to the revolving fund from the northern air operations repair facility so that they would actually pay for the capital asset there and keep it going.

And finally, there were funds that came in from land titles fees that were directed to this fund. So in 2003-04, which was last year where there was the full robust revenue, it was about \$2.353 million in revenue that came into the fund.

Now in the same year the expenditures were as follows . . . And the net income from the operations in that year was a negative \$36,000. It was about a break-even. But the equipment rental and recovery expenditures were \$331,000, exactly the amount that was taken in on the revenue side.

On the radio communication side, the cost was exactly as was brought in, so that balanced off. On the staff housing, the expenditures were 210,000 which is about \$40,000 more than what was coming in . . . or \$36,000 more than what was coming in on the revenues for that. And then on the air operations repair facility, the amount that was coming in was the amount of the expenditure and, in a similar way, the land titles fees. So effectively this was a way to have a fund available that would continually renew the equipment and deal with the expenses in these particular areas.

As we move forward in the next years from '03-04 to '04-05, '05-06, the various forms of expense with their related revenue were moved out of this fund and back into the department's budget and therefore included in the General Revenue Fund. The last parts that were kept in the fund up until April 1, 2007 were the radio communications area and the land titles fee area.

At the end of that particular period of April 1, 2007, there was an accumulated surplus in the fund of \$264,000. And this amount was to be transferred into the General Revenue Fund. So what we have is a method of accounting for costs and expenditures that was obviously an entirely appropriate way to do that when it was originally set up, but which has in many ways outlived its usefulness.

Now sometimes the plans that are made around the financing arrangements don't always anticipate the ebbs and flows and the needs of a particular area of government or of the operations of a ministry. And one of the questions that does arise here is whether there will be sufficient funds in the general budget to cover the costs that will undoubtedly be there as the radio communication system is modernized, as the needs for a new air operations facility in the North is identified and completed.

And so when we look at this we end up wondering whether some of the mechanisms that are available in this revolving fund may not still have some use as we move forward, and I'd like to just give a couple of examples. And I think that one of the areas that we do know needs further resolution and development and I know, in the long-term plans of the province, the arrangements are there about making sure that we have the capacity in northern Saskatchewan to do the maintenance of our air fleet.

As we all know, over the last number of years, we purchased a number of the new chemical retardant planes to use in fighting forest fires. They're bigger than the water bombers that we have used, which we still have but don't use as often. But we know that the ability to fly a longer distance and have a greater payload of fire retardant does make a difference in how fires are fought. And so one of the questions becomes, as we move forward is, will there be sufficient funding out of the General Revenue Fund to make sure that we build the appropriate maintenance facilities, whether that be in Prince Albert or La Ronge or other communities in the North.

One of the options which is always there — and it's one that is of concern to the people of Saskatchewan — is the fact that there are contractors located in other provinces or even other countries who would say, well bring your planes to us; we will do all of that work maintaining them. But I think we all recognize that the airplane maintenance jobs in Saskatchewan are skilled jobs that are very important for those communities where these services are provided.

And so I raise that particular issue because I'm not certain whether the resulting mechanisms that are being developed within the Ministry of Environment will provide as much assurance around making sure that the new air maintenance operations facilities in the North are going to be built as planned or expanded as necessary as we refurbish the forest fire fighting fleet.

Now another area which we know continues to be an issue not just in northern Saskatchewan, where Saskatchewan Environment has a great deal of responsibility, but throughout the province relates to housing. And one of the factors in this revolving fund is that it did provide another mechanism, another tool to allow for housing to be available for the workers who were required to live in various communities to do their job.

Now ideally all of that will be covered through the General Revenue Fund, but we don't have assurances of that, in what we see here, that that in fact will actually happen because given, as I started out talking about, how the General Revenue Fund allows for an annual decision on priorities for budgets, it does eliminate the ability to plan through a revolving fund over a number of years around providing housing in Saskatchewan for a number of these employees who work for Saskatchewan Environment.

So I think that that's a question that we should keep out there, and I assume on Wednesday, when the budget's introduced, that we will see some very clear provisions around providing housing across the province, but more specifically to the areas in the North because we need to deal with all of these things in a very reasonable, positive way.

Now it's interesting how, when one examines this role of the Resource Protection and Development Revolving Fund, it was justified and continues to be justified when it was in full existence back in '03-04 as being a major support program that supported several of the goals and objectives of the department.

**The Speaker:** — Order. I'm thinking there are just too many discussions taking place in the Assembly and while I don't want

to interfere with members being able to communicate, if you could just cut the level down a little bit, it would make it a lot simpler to hear the member on his feet.

I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Yes. As I was just saying that this Resource Protection and Development Revolving Fund was set up as a support structure within the department and as I've identified it, it contained these different programs: radio communications, equipment rental, staff housing, northern air operations support. And basically the resource users were charged a fee based on the cost of providing these goods and services across the North.

But the revolving fund itself supported the goals of the department in a few interesting ways. Basically the radio communications and the northern air operations segments support goal number one of the department, which is reduced risked clean and healthy ecosystems. Goal number two of the department: people, resources, and property values at risk from wildfires are protected. And goal number three, a fair opportunity for sustainable use and enjoyment of renewable resources.

Now I'm not sure how much discussion the members opposite had within their caucus around this particular fund, but I know in my previous role as the minister of Environment, I answered many, many questions about protection of people, resources, and property from wildfires, and I'm not sure that the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood had a chance to look at this and if he realizes that there may be some threat to some of the services that are being provided through the department as it relates to wildfires.

Now over the longer term, the clear message that we need for the people of Saskatchewan as we move forward with these kinds of pieces of legislation are, what will replace the existing structures that have been of benefit to quite a number of communities in the province? And, Mr. Speaker, I think it's imperative that the minister or others who are going to be explaining the rationale for this moving forward, that they set out for us how the services are going to be provided in each of these different areas, and in actual fact what the budgets are and what the continuing budgets will be that support what this revolving fund has provided over many, many years.

Because that's not obvious today, I think that we need to wait to hear what will be set out within the budget later this week as it relates to some of these services. Because it doesn't make sense to me that we would eliminate one tool that would help us deal with housing issues in the North or deal with northern air operations or deal with radio communications that are so vital for especially the forest fire fighting and other emergency services provided.

So, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on this Bill.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The member from Regina Lakeview has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 8, The Natural Resources Amendment Act. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed. Carried.

**Bill No. 9 — The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Amendment Act, 2008**

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 9, The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Amendment Act, 2008.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation pertains to the following defined benefit plans: the public service superannuation plan, the Liquor Board superannuation plan, the Power Corporation superannuation plan, the Anti-Tuberculosis League employees' superannuation plan, and the Saskatchewan Transportation Company employees' superannuation plan. These defined benefit pension plans were closed to new members on October 1, 1977. Effective that date, new employees join and participate in the public employees pension plan, which is a defined contribution pension plan. Mr. Speaker, when members of these closed defined pension plans return to work for government after retirement, their pension income may be impacted.

[14:45]

Several inequities arise from the return-to-work-provision, which is commonly referred to as section 27. Section 27 applies to persons who retire under one of the old defined benefit plans and does not apply to people who retire under the public employees pension plan. At December 31, 2007, there were 1,847 active and inactive members remaining in the defined benefit plans and 7,856 pensioners.

In comparison, there are over 45,000 active and inactive members participating in the largest Saskatchewan public pension plan, being the public employees pension plan. Members of this pension plan have a variety of retirement income options, which includes the option to transfer the money out of the plan to purchase a prescribed pension benefit.

The public employees pension plan does not and has never had a restriction for pensioners returning to work in the public sector. Employees retained through contract are excluded from the section 27 provision. A retiree can return to work with the government on a contractual basis, as long as the contract does not create an employee-employer relationship, without affecting the pension, the payment of the retiree's pension.

A retiree who returns to work for a fixed term of employment that is less than 132 days in the fiscal year of the pension plan, can return to work and not have his or her pension suspended. Retirees working less than full-time often do not monitor how many days they work in a fiscal year, and by extension of their end date, may work more than 132 days in the fiscal year. This is unfair to those who return to work on a full-time basis with an immediate suspension of pension benefits.

Mr. Speaker, it is difficult to establish effective administrative practices for the purpose of section 27, causing its enforcement

to be an issue of concern for many years. It is the retired member's responsibility to inform the pension plan of the return to work for the government. Likewise the employer is responsible for asking for this information and reporting it to the pension plan. If the information is not voluntarily reported by either party, the pension plan has no way of knowing that the retired employee has returned to work. Employees are informed upon their retirement of what employers are deemed to be government, but often retired members forget and do not see that the information pertains to their situation.

Annually, Mr. Speaker, since 2001, the plans to which The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Act pertains have been cited by the Provincial Auditor for not ensuring that pensions are suspended when retired members are re-employed by the government. A number of provincial public sector defined benefit pension plans permit pensioners to return to work without affecting their pensions. Mr. Speaker, we want to ensure that the return-to-work rules are the same for all public sector pensioners.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, given the tight labour market in Saskatchewan and its growing economy, it is appropriate that the rules governing these pension plans do not create artificial barriers that would prevent people from returning to employment in the civil service if the opportunity presents itself. The government is therefore moving to eliminate suspension of a pensioner's income if the pensioner returns to employment.

This Act was also amended in 2003 to provide members who would obtain a spouse after retirement the opportunity to provide the new spouse with a survivor's benefit upon the death of the pensioner. This was in response to the needs of the pensioners. It is necessary to amend the existing calculation of this benefit to ensure that it results in a benefit that is cost neutral to the pension plan and the pensioner.

The legislation, Mr. Speaker, requires the pension boards to identify in the pension plan's annual report the names of those members who have retired or died in the fiscal year. This requirement serves no practical purpose and is not consistent with the spirit and intent of The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Housekeeping amendments have been introduced in this Bill to ensure that legislation correctly reflects administrative practice and that the legislation complies with the Income Tax Act of Canada.

It is proposed that these changes will come into effect on assent. Mr. Speaker, these amendments demonstrate government's concern for current and former employees and for the overall governance of the pension plans subject to this legislation. And with that, I move second reading of The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Amendment Act, 2008. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Finance has moved that Bill No. 9, The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Amendment Act, 2008 be now read a second time. Is the

Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Dewdney.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased this afternoon to rise to speak on this very important piece of legislation. Mr. Speaker, this piece of legislation fundamentally changes a position of very sound public policy.

Mr. Speaker, section 27 of the superannuation amendment Act, 2008, and all previous Acts, was there for a reason. Section 27 prevented an employee who was collecting superannuation from the Government of Saskatchewan from being re-employed with the Government of Saskatchewan or continuing their employment without actually retiring, which would be allowed under this provision, Mr. Speaker, prevented somebody from double-dipping and prevented the taxpayers from paying twice for the same service — a fundamental, important public policy position.

Mr. Speaker, the way this Act now reads, an employee can . . . And let's use as an example a deputy minister being paid a \$200,000 salary, who has worked for the province of Saskatchewan. And we do value and appreciate their work and their service to the people of Saskatchewan. They're fundamentally important to the well-being of this province, Mr. Speaker. But they could retire, Mr. Speaker. They could retire and get 70 per cent — if they've worked 35 years in public service in Saskatchewan — 70 per cent of their pension, so be collecting a \$140,000 pension and collecting a \$200,000 salary at the same time, Mr. Speaker. The taxpayers of the province would be paying twice.

Mr. Speaker, we have provisions in many Acts, in many pieces of legislation, Mr. Speaker, that prevent individuals from double-dipping — from collecting twice from the public purse — prevent individuals from getting paid for doing the same work twice. And that's in essence what would happen if somebody was able to retire, collect their pension, and continue to work.

Mr. Speaker, you may or may not be aware that in many pieces of legislation, if you receive a severance payment, you cannot continue to collect that severance payment if you go back to work for the Government of Saskatchewan. It's the exact same principle. It's the exact same premise that you cannot double-dip. You cannot collect twice for performing services for the people of this province.

Mr. Speaker, what is the difference if an individual is severed from employment and given a severance and goes back to work and is still collecting a severance and a salary or collecting a pension and a salary, Mr. Speaker? They're both the taxpayers of the province, the citizens of the province, paying twice for the same work.

Mr. Speaker, that's been a long held premise in the public sector in Canada. Over the last number of years it's been watered down where it's been on the onus of the employee to tell the government or the employer whether or not they return to work. And rather than put in place provisions to cross-reference and check whether somebody returns to work in

the broader public sector, we've decided to take the easy road and just pay.

And yes, Mr. Speaker, we have had the Provincial Auditor cite over the last number of years that in fact people were doing that — they were double-dipping. And they shouldn't be double-dipping, and they should be prevented from double-dipping. So rather than, Mr. Speaker, dealing with that issue, we've chosen to deal with it in another way and simply make it legal to double-dip.

Now, Mr. Speaker, most people in the general public wouldn't approve of that. I know my parents and my aunts and uncles and my friends wouldn't approve of that. But, Mr. Speaker, why are we doing it? Why would we choose to take that route rather than find a mechanism to ensure that people couldn't double-dip?

And we can talk about the employment environment. We can talk about the employment environment, Mr. Speaker. And yes, we have a tight market employment environment. We have a desire to keep people employed. But we don't desire as taxpayers and citizens to be paying twice for the same work. Where would you enjoy paying twice for the same work, Mr. Speaker? It comes out of the same pot of money. It comes out of the General Revenue Fund. It comes from the taxpayers of this province. Mr. Speaker, we've taken an easy way to deal with a very complex problem.

We have another piece of legislation coming forward very shortly that's going to change the pension provisions to allow people to work much longer and saying that you're not forced to retirement. Mr. Speaker, that means you could be paying these double-dipping potentially for a great deal longer than you would have in previous times when it was forced retirement at age 65.

Today, when you don't have to retire our new provisions or under Bill 10, which you're proposing and we'll be speaking to in just a few minutes, it's now age 69. That's when the provisions kick in in the Income Tax Act, Mr. Speaker. But what this allows is people to continue to potentially double-dip for a much longer period of time.

The other difficulty with this, Mr. Speaker, is that the people who would generally enjoy the benefit of this opportunity aren't the entire members of the civil service. If you go and look who has come back on contract, who has come back to work for government after retiring, it's generally those in the senior executive levels of departments and/or Crown corporations. And, Mr. Speaker, these provisions make it easier for those in the higher positions to earn even more money, and that does not necessarily sit well with the general population of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we pay salaries that are comparable or competitive to the employment climate in the province of Saskatchewan. We have to or we wouldn't be able to hire people, Mr. Speaker. So we hire competent people paying a competitive salary. Mr. Speaker, I contend we don't have to pay them twice to do the same job.

And, Mr. Speaker, if we do this — if we proceed and pass this



legislation — the next thing we have to do is deal with the same issue on severance, Mr. Speaker. Because we can't say on one hand you can collect twice on pension and you can't collect severance and collect a salary because, Mr. Speaker, we can't speak out of both sides of our mouth. We either have to believe in the fundamental principle that you cannot double dip or you have to allow it in all of its circumstances, Mr. Speaker. You can't be unfair about it.

Mr. Speaker, this is an issue where it would be easier. I fully agree it is much easier to change this legislation and allow it to happen because people have found loopholes to be able to do it as a contract employee, to be able to do it in other ways. But, Mr. Speaker, the issue is, it's been a concern because people have found loopholes in the existing legislation. The solution isn't to make it legal. The solution is to close those loopholes so that you can't be hired on as a contract employee after being retired and continue to collect your pension. It's still double-dipping. And the fundamental principle of public policy when this was brought forward is that the taxpayers should pay once.

And I believe in rural Saskatchewan, which the members opposite represent, that the concept of paying twice for doing one job, Mr. Speaker, would not go over well. In fact when I talked to my friends and relatives in rural Saskatchewan, they have a great deal of difficulty with it.

So, Mr. Speaker, section 27 of this legislation, which is being eliminated now today, puts limits on what can be done. I believe those limits should be increased. Section 27 should go on to address the issue of employees in contract situations. It just shouldn't be eliminated.

Mr. Speaker, it already allows provisions for short-term employment. It allows for provisions for employees to come back on a temporary basis or for a short-term period for up to six months in a year. So for those situations where you need a carry-over of knowledge or you need carry-over of a particular expertise, there is an ability to do that.

[15:00]

But it was never contemplated that people should be able to continue employment and both collect a pension and work for the same employer. Mr. Speaker, I don't believe taxpayers believe that should happen. I don't believe we should either.

Mr. Speaker, this is a fundamental shift in public policy. I believe very strongly that those people who elect us, those people who live in small towns, villages, and on farms in rural Saskatchewan, as well as those who live in our urban areas, don't believe that a government should pay somebody twice for doing the same job.

And, Mr. Speaker, you can make the argument, well one's a pension and one's a paycheque. One's their salary. But the pension is coming from the same payer as is the salary. Mr. Speaker, in the real world out there, you can retire from one job and go to work for somebody else. You can collect a pension from a different employer and go to work for another employer. And that ability is open to every single employee that retires from the civil service or the public service of Saskatchewan and

is covered by our superannuation plan. They can go to work for somebody else; it doesn't end their employment. But there's been a long-standing provision and public policy position that you cannot retire, collect your pension from the same employer, and in fact collect your salary.

And as the analogy I used earlier where a person can, if they were making \$200,000 a year, be collecting a \$200,000 salary and if they have worked 35 years for government in the old pension plan, Mr. Speaker, superannuation pension plan, could be collecting 70 per cent of that \$200,000 salary as a pension benefit, so in essence making \$340,000 for doing the same job he was doing one day before. On Friday of one week he could be making \$200,000 and Monday the next week making \$340,000, with the taxpayer of Saskatchewan paying both the pension and the salary, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that's a serious concern to people. It's an awful lot of money. And it's a concern when people have to pay twice to get the same job done.

Mr. Speaker, the second part of this Bill deals with paying an appropriate pension to a spouse. We amended the Bill in 2003, allowing for pension provisions to be paid to a second spouse if in fact there had been an agreement between the first spouse and second spouse as to how pension would be divided. Or had there been a death of the first spouse, you could then sign your second spouse up to be entitled to pension benefits. That was a good amendment. It made sense. It was a logical amendment: that you paid into a pension, it's your money, but your spouse should be able to collect. There's a minor amendment in this legislation as well, Mr. Speaker, that I think the people of Saskatchewan would agree with, they'd fundamentally agree with it. It allows for a proper calculation of that benefit for that spouse. And, Mr. Speaker, that provision we agree with. Not only do we agree with it; we agree with it wholeheartedly. We believe that there should be an appropriate division of funds.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the repeal of section 27, we don't agree with. Section 27 fundamentally changes public policy. And I would challenge the members opposite to test public opinion on the issue, if whether the people of this province believe that you should be paying somebody a pension and their salary for doing the same job. And that's what this legislation would allow. That's what repeal of section 27 would allow.

And rather than deal with the problems that have been created through loopholes — the problem that has allowed a Crown corporation or a government department to hire an employee on contract, to hire them back, where they'd be able to collect both a pension and the salary — rather than fix that problem in the way that it has historically been fixed in pension plans by changing the provision to make that provision of working in a contract and collecting pension, to make that clear that that's not allowed, we decide to open the door all the way. And we decide to open the public purse, and we decide just to pay the people of Saskatchewan's money to somebody for doing the same job, paying them twice.

Mr. Speaker, that does not make sense to the average person in rural Saskatchewan, and I dare you to ask that of your own parents, your own friends, and your own family because it's their money. They're not going to want to pay twice. You should go and talk to the people of this province before you put

forward such a provision.

And, Mr. Speaker, if you allow this, the next step is not to claw back severance payments, if somebody receives a severance payment and then comes back to work, because what's the difference? The concept is you can't double-dip. Well if you're collecting a severance from the employer and come back to work, they claw back the severance, and they should.

But what's the difference with somebody collecting a pension from the same employer and collecting their salary? Nothing. It's the concept of double-dipping. And, Mr. Speaker, it's a serious issue to people. Taxpayers of this province pay taxes, and they pay a lot of taxes for their services. But they do not want to pay for people to collect twice for doing the same job.

Mr. Speaker, we've seen, since the new government's taken power, we have seen an explosion of expenditures and spending on salaries. We saw an increase of about \$60,000 on the top ministerial assistants' salaries. We've seen new heads of boards and commissions paid significantly more money. We've seen spending galore in ways that the people of this province probably don't appreciate.

And now we see, now we see the government brings forward a provision to allow double-dipping. And taxpayers in this province aren't going to support that. And rather than clean up the existing problems, rather than clean up the existing problems, Mr. Speaker, they want to make it legal to double-dip.

Now there are many problems with the process and how this is done within the civil service as well, Mr. Speaker. The people who make the decisions on whether or not who gets hired are the ones most likely to access this benefit. It doesn't apply to the front-line clerical support employee or to the resource officer in rural Saskatchewan or to the corrections worker in the correctional centres or any of the front-line employees. It's primarily, if you look who's done this and who has accessed this provision through contract employment and through other employment, it is not front-line workers, Mr. Speaker. It's those who sit in the top positions in departments and Crown corporations.

So it's not fairly distributed. It's not equally applied to all employees. All employees aren't equally eligible to the benefits. Even though it's a flawed concept to start with, even if it were a concept that would be allowed, it's not equally applied across the piece, and nor would we expect it to be in the future.

But fundamentally the issue is this, Mr. Speaker. Taxpayers in this province don't want to pay twice for the same service. I as a taxpayer don't want to pay twice for the same service.

And, Mr. Speaker, you know, as many of the members in this Assembly know, I spent many years and most of my life in the civil service. Many of my friends may have access to these benefits. That's not the point. The point is, from the point of public policy, we don't want to have taxpayers have to pay twice for the same service.

Now, Mr. Speaker, why does the government want this? Yes, they can cite that the Provincial Auditor has cited the various

departments and Public Service Commission and Finance for not correcting the problem of people being employed in contract basis. But rather than deal with the problem, rather than deal with the problem, they've made it easy to simply double-dip. Mr. Speaker, it isn't the way to deal with this problem.

I will acknowledge that there is a problem. Any time that you have a set of rules, that you have legislation that's not enforceable, you have to find a way to deal with it. I agree with that. But this isn't the way to deal with it. Just to make a bad problem worse or make a bad problem legal doesn't solve the problem.

Mr. Speaker, people in rural Saskatchewan, the people that the members opposite and government represent, the people that we represent in opposition, the people we need to speak for, do not want to pay twice for the same salary. Mr. Speaker, I just urge members to ask their neighbours, ask their friends the simple question: do you believe somebody that's getting paid a salary — and you could pick the number of \$100,000 a year or \$80,000 a year — should be able to also collect an \$80,000 salary and 70 per cent of that \$80,000 in pension? And they're going to tell you no, because they're paying for it and they don't get the right of the same benefit.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe the major unions in this province will support this. I don't believe the majority of employees support this because again, as I've pointed out, the benefit is afforded to few and those few are largely in the position of determining whether or not they would continue their own employment. Mr. Speaker, we have to get back to the fundamental principles of good government and the fundamental principles of good government would say you cannot double-dip — you cannot double-dip. You cannot be paid twice for doing the same job.

We work and we work respectfully for the people of the province of Saskatchewan, all of us. But we need to understand what the people of Saskatchewan want us to do. And I can tell you my friends and neighbours don't want me to support a Bill that'll allow people to be paid twice for doing the same job. And I believe, I believe that the constituents and the people that the members opposite represent don't want — do not want — to pay an individual's salary and their pension at the same time when it's one employer. So they're paying 70 per cent more perhaps, or up to 70 per cent more, to get the same job done. I don't believe the constituents of Moose Jaw North would agree with that. I don't believe the constituents of Swift Current would believe that. I don't believe the constituents of Yorkton would believe in that. I don't believe constituents across this province believe that.

I think what you're trying to do is you're trying to solve a problem by taking the easy way, and the easy way is to simply make something that's problematic, hard to enforce, legal. Well the proper way to deal with this, Mr. Speaker, would be to take a step back and say, why haven't we been able to enforce this? What things do we need to change to be able to enforce this, Mr. Speaker? And how do we go about making sure that in the future that people cannot be collecting a salary and a pension from the same employer at the same time?

I believe that's what the people of Saskatchewan would want us to do. Now, Mr. Speaker, there's a number of reasons for that. Every time somebody that has retired remains in their position, it means that somebody else younger doesn't get to promote. The younger people don't get to move up in our workforce. Younger people don't get the opportunities to those key jobs and to bring new ideas forward. Mr. Speaker, it allows the same people to remain in the same jobs for a very long period of time, collecting an even larger salary, limiting opportunities for young people in the province.

And one of the key things we need to do is encourage more young people to come back to our province. We don't need to encourage a bunch of people to remain in their jobs past retirement, collecting both their pension and their salary. I want my children and I want the children of the members opposite to have the opportunities for advancement within the public service of Saskatchewan. I want our children to have the opportunities to move up rather than have somebody collecting both their salary and their pension sitting in their same chair, Mr. Speaker.

And I believe that's what the people of Saskatchewan want. If I didn't believe it, I wouldn't be talking about this issue in the manner in which I am. I don't believe that the constituents that any of us represent — that any of us represent — believe that a person should be able to be collecting their full salary and their pension for doing the same job from the same employer because they're both paid out of the General Revenue Fund. They're both paid by the taxpayers of Saskatchewan. We're paying twice.

Did you get any practical advice when you decided to proceed with this legislation? Did you talk to your caucus? Did they understand that people would be able to double-dip? Did you talk to any of your constituents, to your friends and neighbours in those communities which you represent? Because I don't believe if you asked them in that fundamental a way that any of them would agree with this. I know employers wouldn't agree with that. I don't know that you agree with it. I think you just brought forward a piece of legislation to solve a problem in the easiest possible way.

[15:15]

I know my relatives that live on the farm — who don't have a nice pension plan, who pay the salaries, who work very hard on their farms to make ends meet, and through taxes pay the salaries of those who work in the civil service, pay our salaries — don't want to pay for the ability for an individual to both collect pension at the same time they remain employed in their job and collecting their full salary. I believe fundamentally that that's true of your constituents; it's true of my constituents. I think it's true of the majority of the people in the province of Saskatchewan.

Did you look at other ways to fix this problem? Did you look at ways to close the loopholes, look at ways to make it more fair so that the taxpayers could only ever pay once for that work being performed?

Mr. Speaker, this is a fundamental public policy issue which leads us down a road that's going to open other doors. Because

if we move down this road, Mr. Speaker, next comes clawback of severance payments, and that leads to other challenges.

Mr. Speaker, the taxpayers, our constituents, the people of this province don't believe they should pay twice for a service. They don't believe they should be paying a person a severance and a salary at the same time as they're working for the same employer. And I don't believe that, and I hope the members opposite don't believe that.

And, Mr. Speaker, it is no different when it's the same payer on a pension and a salary. You could be working, as I've said more than once before, on a Friday you could be making \$200,000 a year sitting in your desk doing your job. I'm not going to say it isn't being well done because it would be being well done. We have a very quality, professional civil service, people who work very hard for their salaries. I'm not going to say that they don't work hard and they don't earn their pay, because they do. We have a very quality, professional civil service.

But, Mr. Speaker, it is not right. Fundamentally it is not right that that individual can be making his salary on a Friday and on Monday could be receiving a full pension and collecting a salary and the taxpayers of Saskatchewan paying 170 per cent on Monday of what they were paying on Friday.

Mr. Speaker, I know, I know the constituents that you represent and the constituents I represent do not agree with that. And, Mr. Speaker, I think they need to take a long, hard look at this legislation and re-evaluate whether they want to proceed with this legislation. This is important public policy.

Now, Mr. Speaker, members opposite are making remarks and saying things that probably aren't fair. Mr. Speaker, they don't like the fact that I'm challenging this legislation and the fact that I'm laying it on the line for their constituents and mine, how it would apply. Mr. Speaker, they don't have to like it, Mr. Speaker.

But the taxpayers of this province need and have a right to understand what the implications are. Mr. Speaker, we're not here to just slide things under or put things through that people don't understand. The people of the province have a right to understand what this legislation can mean.

Now, Mr. Speaker, they can say, they can say over there that we, you know, we don't understand it. Section 27 was put in place, section 27 was put in place to prevent people from both collecting a pension and collecting a salary, Mr. Speaker, working for the same employer. That makes sense. That's what public policy has been about in this province for a long time up until now.

Now because the Provincial Auditor has said that this practice can't continue because there have been some loopholes in which individuals have both been able to collect a salary and a pension, rather than closing those loopholes, rather than telling those people that they can't double-dip, they want to make it legal to double-dip. Well if you make it legal to double-dip in this mechanism, in this manner, with pensions and salaries, next comes severance and salaries. And where does that slippery slope end, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, we are elected to represent the people of the province of Saskatchewan. We're elected to represent their interest and their ideology, Mr. Speaker — not our own. And, Mr. Speaker, we need to in fact live up to the principles of which the people of Saskatchewan want us to. And I fundamentally don't believe that our neighbours, our friends, our constituents want people to have the ability from the same employer to be collecting a pension and collecting a salary. Mr. Speaker, I think that people in this province are fundamentally against that.

And the members opposite can say whatever. They can say, well it's a bad speech, and I don't know what I'm talking about. But I just challenge them to go ask their neighbours and their constituents in their ridings if they agree with that — that you should be able to collect a pension from the same employer at the same time you're collecting salary for doing the same job. And it can happen, the way they've got this legislation constructed.

Mr. Speaker, I don't believe their neighbours agree with that. I know my neighbours don't agree with it. I know my constituents don't agree with it. And I know that the people of this province don't agree with it.

So, Mr. Speaker, you can't hide from it. This is what they're proposing. You have to live with what you're proposing. You have to be accountable for what you're putting forward. And, Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that the people of this province will pass judgment on. They will pass judgment on this issue. This is the type of issue, Mr. Speaker, this is the type of issue that ordinary people in this province, that citizens care about.

We don't have the money, we don't have the money to have a universal seniors' drug plan, the members opposite say. So we would put a means test in that you can't be part of the universal seniors' drug plan if you have a salary over \$65,000 a year. But we'll let a civil servant, a senior civil servant, make \$200,000 a year, collect \$140,000 pension, and their health benefits at the same time — all at the same time — but we won't let a senior citizen with a family income of 65,000 be part of a universal seniors' health plan.

It's all about choice, Mr. Speaker. So we're choosing. Instead of allowing seniors to have a universal health plan, we're choosing to pay twice for people who . . . allowing people to retire and collect their salary, Mr. Speaker.

I don't believe that's the public policy choice that the people of Saskatchewan have made. I don't believe your constituents agree with that. And I think, Mr. Speaker, when the people of Saskatchewan understand that, they're not going to be very happy. And let me assure you, they will understand it because we will make sure that they understand it. Seniors can't have a universal drug plan because you can't afford it; you have to means test it. But not the same means test for people who can collect a pension and collect their salary at the same time, as well as have the health benefits they would be afforded as a government employee.

Mr. Speaker, I think this is a very bad public policy choice, and I think the members need to take a very careful look at this. They need to understand the implications of it before they

decide to proceed with it. And, Mr. Speaker, although this is a bad public policy choice, the one good thing about it is now that we've made them aware of all the problems, they have the opportunity, if they like, to change their mind. They can fix it. They can withdraw this legislation. They don't have to proceed with it.

They instead could bring forward a Bill, an appropriate Bill that would close the loopholes with the existing problems — close the existing loopholes — so that we then could be in compliance with what the Provincial Auditor wanted. And, Mr. Speaker, that'd be a good piece of legislation and we'd . . . I would heartily support that. I would even second the motion. I'd stand up and speak in support of it, and we could push that through very quickly. But this particular piece of legislation that allows double-dipping, Mr. Speaker, is not the way to fix the problem.

And, Mr. Speaker, because I've just started my remarks and I have many, many other points of discussion on this particular piece of legislation, at this point I'd like to adjourn debate on this piece of legislation.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member from Regina Dewdney that Bill No. 9, The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Amendment Act, 2008 be adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed. Carried.

#### **Bill No. 10 — The Miscellaneous Pensions Statutes (Commencement of Pension) Amendment Act, 2008**

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Gantefoer:** — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 10, The Miscellaneous Pensions Statutes (Commencement of Pension) Amendment Act, 2008.

Mr. Speaker, the 2007 federal budget speech proposed to increase the age at which retirement savings and registered retirement savings instruments must be converted to pension income to 71 years of age from 69 years of age, effective 2007. The Income Tax Act Canada and regulations were amended accordingly in 2007. This measure allowed registered pension plans to permit members to continue to contribute to the end of the calendar year in which they turn age 71, at which time they would have to receive a pension.

This Bill, Mr. Speaker, has the effect of mirroring the changes in age from 69 to 71 for a number of provincial public service pension plans, including the public employees pension plan, the Saskatchewan pension plan, the teachers' superannuation plan, the municipal employees' pension plan, the public service superannuation plan, the Liquor Board superannuation plan, and the Power Corporation superannuation plan and other smaller pension plans.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, this legislation will actually amend the age at which pensions must commence from the end of the calendar year in which members turn age 69 to the end of the calendar year pursuant to provisions of the Income Tax Act of Canada. The generic wording of the amendment, Mr. Speaker, permits provincial statutory pension plans to automatically change the age at which pensions must commence to whatever the corresponding rules are in the Income Tax Act of Canada. This will eliminate the need to amend provincial legislation in the future and to align with whatever changes are in the federal rules.

In 2007 members of the provincial statutory pension plans that I've already referenced required their members to commence their pensions at age 69 until the legislation could be amended. These pension plans continue to comply with the Income Tax Act Canada, as this Act specifies the latest date that a person may convert their registered retired savings plan to pension income without tax consequences. Amending this legislation to require members to retire at December 31 of the calendar year in which the member turns an age specified pursuant to the Income Tax Act of Canada is consistent with the elimination of mandatory retirement effective November 17, 2007 pursuant to The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code as amended in 2007. It is proposed that these changes will come into effect on assent.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of The Miscellaneous Pensions Statutes (Commencement of Pension) Amendment Act, 2008.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Finance has moved that Bill No. 10, The Miscellaneous Pensions Statutes (Commencement of Pension) Amendment Act, 2008 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Dewdney.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to stand on this particular piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill now puts the province in line with the federal Income Tax Act. Now the Income Tax Act says when you reach age 69, you must start to collect your pension. What it has done is postponed from age 65 to age 69 the period in which, time of which you must start to collect benefits from your pension. And, Mr. Speaker, this particular piece of legislation conforms now with the Income Tax Act.

It also makes a very fundamental change that automatically will change our provision to meet that of the Income Tax Act. So there are subsequent changes to the age of mandatory . . . that you must retire and you must start collecting your pension. It moves whenever the federal government chooses to change the Income Tax Act, and that makes sense. So that every time that there's a moderate change or perhaps a minimal change in this piece of legislation, that we don't have to reopen the Act and make the change. We'll just simply amend ours automatically as the Income Tax Act changes, and that makes good sense. It's good legislation that puts common sense to the approach.

But, Mr. Speaker, this particular piece of legislation says you shouldn't and don't have to collect your pension benefits till

you reach the age of 69. The previous piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, allowed you to collect both your pension and your salary. This talks about the option, Mr. Speaker, about not collecting it till age 69.

[15:30]

Mr. Speaker, this particular piece of legislation will be well accepted by the people of the province of Saskatchewan. This means those who at age 65 can continue to work and enjoy employment . . . Many people now choose to work beyond age 65. Many times they move from one job to another in order to work at different types of employment later in their life. But people are, have an interest today, Mr. Speaker, in working beyond age 65. And many, many people do. And, Mr. Speaker, they contribute greatly to our economy, they contribute greatly to our province, and they contribute greatly to the well-being of individuals in our province. Mr. Speaker, people who choose to want to work beyond age 65 are very, very important to our economy, important to our communities, and important to the province.

Mr. Speaker, it does go on to say that you can't make contributions after age 69 to a pension plan, to one of our pension plans, and that makes sense again as well, Mr. Speaker. It's continuity in direction across this piece of legislation. Basically if you make contributions to age 69 you don't have to collect, and then in fact you can in fact stop making those contributions at age 69.

Mr. Speaker, it also clarifies what people can do with their pensions upon reaching the age of 65 and what determinations the pension board will make if we as individuals don't make an option or notify the pension board of what option we would like to pursue. It lays out what will happen.

Mr. Speaker, this piece of legislation is very much a housekeeping piece of legislation that is putting our rules and our regulations and legislation in compliance with the Income Tax Act, but also making it easier for people who reach that age of 69 to deal with first getting their pension and opting in which way to receive their pension. There are many options in which to receive their pension, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there are provisions in this Act that change the reporting accountability so that we no longer have to report who is receiving pensions. It makes sense; it falls in line with where we're at in this piece of legislation. It also allows for an individual to make voluntary contributions to their fund up until age 69.

Mr. Speaker, all in all this is a largely a housekeeping piece of legislation that allows us to comply with the Income Tax Act, as I've said before. It makes sense. It is an appropriate piece of legislation and I believe all members in the House will support this piece of legislation. It makes sense. There's no need not to support it.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my colleagues opposite are encouraging me to continue this vigorous debate on this particular piece of legislation but I think, Mr. Speaker, I think, Mr. Speaker, that we need to at this time consider this piece of legislation. It's a good piece of work

and, Mr. Speaker, with that I will adjourn debate.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Regina Dewdney has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 10, The Miscellaneous Pensions Statutes (Commencement of Pension) Amendment Act, 2008. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Mr. Gantefoer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To allow the important work of the committees to move forward, I move that this House do now adjourn.

**The Speaker:** — The Government House Leader has moved that in order to facilitate the working of committees, the Assembly do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed. Carried. This Assembly stands adjourned until tomorrow afternoon at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 15:34.]

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