



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

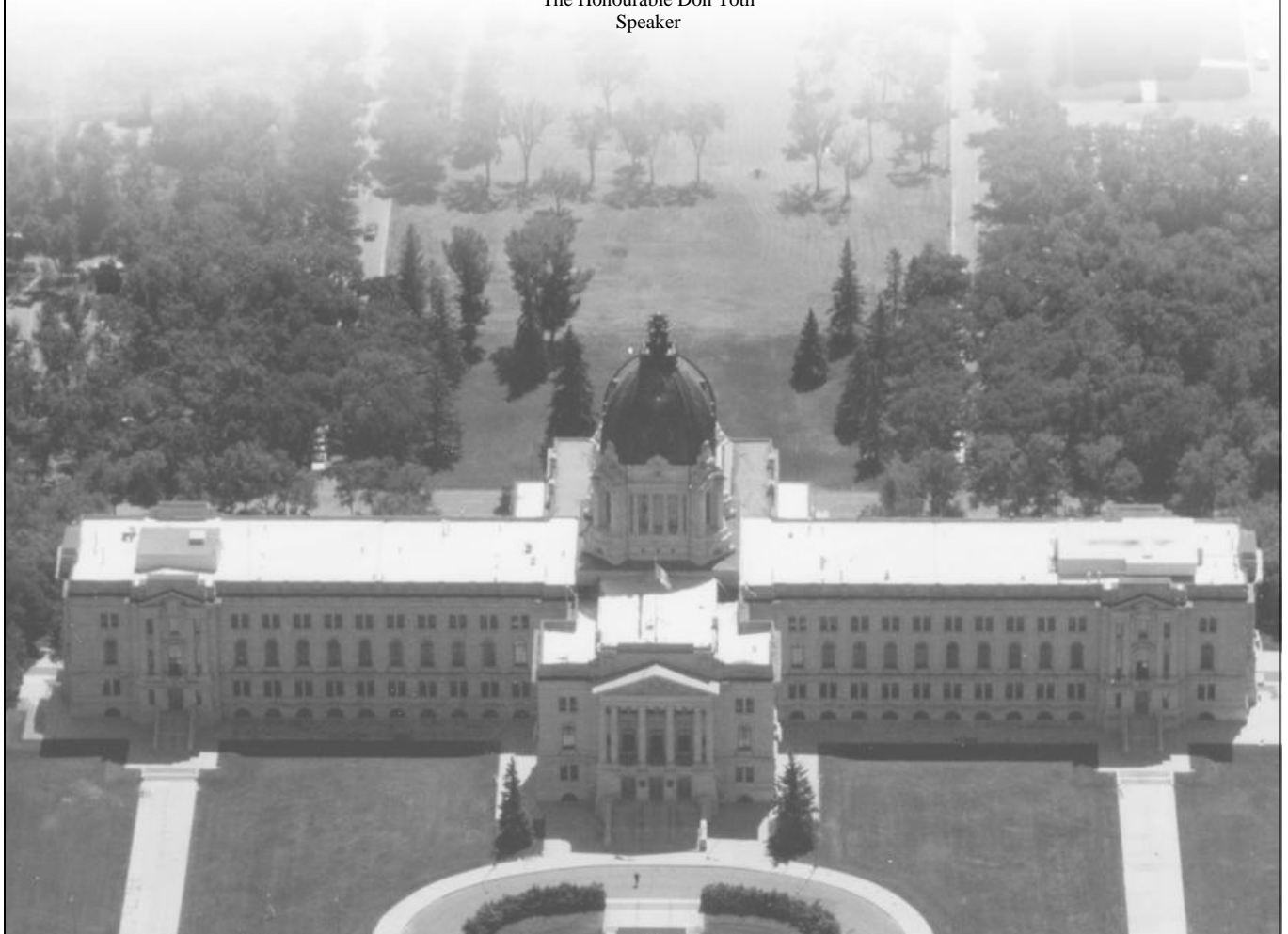
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Don Toth
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Allchurch, Denis	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Atkinson, Pat	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Hon. Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Brotten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Calvert, Lorne	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
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Duncan, Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
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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
Vermette, Doyle	NDP	Cumberland
Wall, Hon. Brad	SP	Swift Current
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Yates, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you very much. It's always an honour and a pleasure for me to rise in the Assembly and introduce guests to the Legislative Assembly but never more so than today. Today I have the pleasure of introducing to you and through you to all members of the Assembly a member of our reserve forces, a volunteer to and veteran of the Canadian mission in Afghanistan, my son Nathan Quennell.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Quennell: — I'm going to keep it short, Mr. Speaker, although my original temptation was not. Many members of the House — both sides of the House — have expressed concern while Nathan was in Afghanistan from the end of February to the end of September. I want to thank all members of the House who did so for that. Well I now know that as I expected that all members will wish to join me in welcoming him here today to the Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to join with the member opposite in the introduction of his son to the House. During this last weekend many of us attended Remembrance Day ceremonies, and we all felt a sense of pride and thanks to all the members who served. I also heard the member opposite's statement last week about the strain that this puts on family members, so we'd like to thank him and his wife Cheryl and in particular thank Nathan for his contribution to our country and to freedom. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to the rest of the Assembly I'd like to introduce some guests in the east gallery. They are members of the Service Employees International Union, SEIU West provincial locals. And seated up there are Al Chaisson; trustee Ron Flach; Russell Doell, business agent; Barb Cape, president; Janice Platzke, secretary-treasurer; Connie Jattansingh, board member; and Cori Deis, board member.

These members are working hard at bargaining, and I ask all members to . . . And also seated up there is Tom Graham, president of CUPE [Canadian Union of Public Employees] Sask

division. So I ask all members to welcome these trade unionists to their legislature.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Kelvington-Wadena.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you I'd like to introduce a number of guests in your gallery. We have Joel Sopp who is the vice-president of the board of directors for the Regina Early Learning Centre, where his son is also a student. The Regina Early Learning Centre and KidsFirst have 35 employees serving children and family. With Joel is Anne Luke, founder and capital campaign manager of the Regina Early Learning Centre, and Mary Ann McGrath, current executive director of the Regina Early Learning Centre, and Dan Clifford from RBC Insurance. Please join me in welcoming these guests to our legislature.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with my colleague across the floor to welcome the folks from the Regina Early Learning Centre. I don't think there's anyone in this House who would disagree with the work that they are doing, and we should all support it whenever we can. For children to have a very good start in life is so very important to their futures — not only their futures, but the futures of our community and the futures of our province of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, I just want to add one point. Anne Luke has been attached to the early learning and child care for so long and worked so hard. She's one of the most dedicated people I know in this province, and even though she is retired, she still has a vision for child care in this province and continues to work on it. So I would like to join with my colleagues in welcoming them here to the legislature.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you I'd like to introduce some further guests. Joining Tom Graham: Judy Henley, treasurer of CUPE Sask division; Debbie Hubick, secretary of Sask division; Gord Campbell, president of the health workers; and joining us today, the Canadian regional vice-president of CUPE, Kevin Rebeck. I ask all members to welcome these CUPE trade unionists to the legislature.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to welcome two young people to the proceedings this afternoon.

They're seated in the east gallery. They are two young people who have decided to make Saskatchewan their home. I would like to introduce to all members through you, Mr. Speaker, Curtis Calimente and Liz Merrigan.

Curtis is the brother of one of our researchers in the caucus office, and Liz has recently moved to Saskatchewan from New York state, Mr. Speaker. I want to welcome them both of course to the proceedings. I want to report to members of the House that it wasn't particularly a job opportunity that drew Liz or an educational opportunity. I think it was Curtis. And that's a great immigration policy, Curtis. I'd ask all members to welcome these two young people to the Chamber this afternoon.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of families who are struggling to find adequate child care spaces or struggling to afford child care spaces that may be available. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately add at least 1,000 new child care spaces in Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Speaker, I so present on behalf of my constituents in Moose Jaw and the good citizens of Regina.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present petitions to legislature about the cost of living in Saskatchewan, and the minimum wage increases are often sporadic and do not always reflect the rising costs of living. And the petition reads:

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

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

The petitions are signed by residents of Kamsack, Ituna, Yorkton, Regina, Langenburg, and Melville. Mr. Speaker, I so present.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina

Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions in support of a reduction in the education portion of property taxes. This is strongly desired by Saskatchewan families and business people here across Saskatchewan. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to stop withholding and to provide significant, sustainable, long-term property tax relief to property owners by 2009 through significantly increasing the provincial portion of education funding.

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

And these are signed by good folks, concerned citizens here in Regina, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

2008 Lieutenant Governor's Arts Awards

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to bring attention of the Assembly to the winners of the 2008 Lieutenant Governor's Arts Awards. I had the pleasure of attending the awards gala, along with the members for Prince Albert Carlton, Regina Rosemont, and Saskatoon Centre.

I can safely say, Mr. Speaker, that we were all impressed by the talent on display and by the tough choices that had to be made by judges John Noestheden, Barbara Keirnes-Young, and Lindsay "Eekwol" Knight. I thank them, Mr. Speaker, as well as the Saskatchewan Arts Board and especially Lieutenant Governor Gordon Barnhart for providing this important opportunity to shine a spotlight on the arts and artists in Saskatchewan.

Congratulations to all the individuals, groups, and organizations nominated. If I might use an analogy that perhaps favours the visual arts, Mr. Speaker, their contributions make the Saskatchewan tapestry all the more brilliant, but of course the winners were those judged to be the most brilliant of all.

And so I want to say a special word of congratulations to the following: for the Lifetime Achievement Award, Joan Borsa, Saskatoon; for the 30 Below Award — and I'm talking age, Mr. Speaker, not temperature — Alice Kuipers, Saskatoon; for the Arts and Learning Award, Tyrone W. Tootoosis, Saskatoon; for the Innovation in the Arts Award, Charley Farrero, Meacham; for the Volunteer Award, Gursh Madhur, Regina; and for the Leadership Award, Sandra Butel, Regina.

Congratulations to them all, Mr. Speaker, and I thank them for helping us to more fully realize the promise of Saskatchewan's motto: "from many peoples, strength." That is, to not just realize strength in the economy, but to know that from the

diversity and creativity of many peoples come culture, arts, and community that is strong, that is vibrant, that is vital. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

2008 First Nations Awards

Ms. Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The 14th Annual 2008 First Nations Awards on Thursday, November 6 were held here in Regina, honouring the excellence we see in our thriving First Nations community around the province. The gala event hosted by Women of the Dawn brought people together to share in a celebration of 14 awards in a far-reaching list of categories.

Awards were given to high-mark achievements in areas from arts, entertainment, to business and journalism, medicine, health, and justice, to name a few. One of the evening's high points came when William Thomson of Carry the Kettle First Nation proudly accepted the Veteran's Award to mark the many hours he spent volunteering at the Legislative Assembly and powwows. His willingness to promote issues facing First Nation veterans at public events, this was particularly poignant as we were about to mark the significant contributions made by our country's veterans yesterday, on Remembrance Day.

First Nations veterans made a powerful statement by going to war on behalf of Canada, since they were exempt from serving in our war efforts, but they chose to go to war anyway. The First Nations awards also shone a bright light on the youth. The Youth Award went to Jenna Tanner of Cowessess First Nation. This award is sponsored by SaskPower.

I was joined for this lovely evening of festivities by my colleagues — the Minister of Crowns, the Minister of Municipal Affairs, the Minister of Education, and the Minister of Enterprise and Innovation, and the Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations, and also the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood. We want to wish the award participants all the best.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Salvation Army Red Shield Luncheon

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Friday, October 31, I had the privilege of attending the Salvation Army's Red Shield luncheon in Saskatoon. Also in attendance was the Leader of the Opposition, the Premier, and several Saskatoon MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] from both sides of the House.

In addition to the good conversation that was shared around the tables, attendees heard from guest speaker, Major David Dalberg, director of EDS [Emergency Disaster Services], Metropolitan Division, USA [United States of America]. Major Dalberg provided the audience with moving vignettes

describing the many roles the Salvation Army assumes when disaster strikes. Mr. Speaker, while the examples provided were from all over North America, they reminded us of the important work done by the Salvation Army in our home communities. Whether it's shelter programs, summer camps, emergency assistance, or any of the many other programs provided by the Salvation Army, I would like to say thank you to the Salvation Army for their dedicated and caring work that is conducted all year long.

Mr. Speaker, the Salvation Army truly is an organization that is true to its motto. They truly do believe in the spirit of giving. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate all of the Salvation Army officers and volunteers for hosting another successful luncheon and wish them all the best as they continue their important work in our province and around the globe. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatchewan Rivers.

Regina Early Learning Centre Capital Campaign

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Regina Early Learning Centre has been serving children and families in the inner city since 1977. It has evolved and now offers a range of programming for children from prenatal to five years of age. This centre ensures that parents are involved in their children's early learning, links the child's home life with school, and supports parents in their crucial role.

This spring the Early Learning Centre launched a 1.5 million capital campaign in order to expand the centre and further bolster programming. As part of the capital campaign, the Early Learning Centre board of directors held a Small Hands — Big Dreams celebrity charity poker tournament at Casino Regina on November 2. The \$2,500 raised at the poker tournament bumped the capital campaign up over 1.1 million. This event was attended by my colleague, the Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations. These proceeds from the tournament will be used to support many facets of the project. One-third of the capital funds raised will go toward building an arts and science atrium which will encourage preschoolers to explore the world around them.

Mr. Speaker, we commend the work of the Regina Early Learning Centre and wish them well on their capital campaign. Thank you very much.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[13:45]

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

India-Canada Night

Ms. Atkinson: — On Saturday, November 8, I attended an India supper night sponsored by the India-Canada Cultural Association. Proceeds from the evening were donated to the

Saskatoon Food Bank and Learning Centre. The evening featured delicious Indian cuisine and a sparkling musical fusion trio including David Kaplan on piano, Robert Helgason on guitar, and Navdeep Sidhu on vocals.

The highlight of the evening was guest speaker Dr. Arun Gandhi, grandson of eminent political leader Mahatma Gandhi, the father of modern India, the man who modelled to the world non-violent activism to achieve India's independence from Britain. The audience was transfixed as Arun Gandhi shared memories of childhood lessons in non-violence learned from his eminent grandfather.

Dr. Gandhi spoke about escalating violence in our times — both physical and social. He referred to poverty as a form of violence increasing as a result of unregulated economic forces which concentrate wealth in the hands of fewer and fewer people. He also referred to environmental damage as violent abuse of our natural home.

During the evening Dr. Gandhi answered questions from the audience and shared many quotations from Mahatma Gandhi's writing. The most stirring is the following:

We want to create world peace. But peace is not merely the absence of war. We have to change ourselves if we want to change the world. Let us become the change we desire.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Carrot River Valley.

Aviation and Aerospace Week

Mr. Bradshaw: — Mr. Speaker, being a commercial pilot, I am pleased to rise today to talk about a vital component to Saskatchewan's transportation system. Aviation helps sustain Saskatchewan's growing economy. This sector and the countless professionals within it help link communities, businesses, the resource sector, and tourism quickly with provincial, national, and international clients and destinations. Whether it's the timely delivery of an important component to a facility because of an equipment breakdown or showcasing our beautiful province to visitors, aviation has a role to play in our economic growth.

Our quality of life is also enhanced, thanks to aviation. Air ambulances provide quick access to health care facilities when we are ill. Farmers rely on timely aerial application to enhance crop production. Police rely on Saskatchewan's airports to help carry out their duties and protect us from harm.

Therefore to recognize these valuable contributions to our province, November 10 to 16 has been designated Aviation and Aerospace Week in Saskatchewan.

In conjunction with the week, the Saskatchewan Aviation Council and the Saskatchewan Aerial Applicators Association are hosting their annual joint conference and trade show this week in Regina called Wings of Saskatchewan. The conference and trade show runs from November 12 to 14. The conference

is a great opportunity for everyone in the aviation sector to share best practices and new ideas while discussing ways to improve the industry. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Remembrance Day Ceremonies Honour Veterans

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday marked the 90th anniversary of the end of the First World War. The war ended with a single sniper's bullet that left a Moose Jaw man, George Lawrence Price, to die. Private Price paid the ultimate sacrifice a mere 2 minutes before armistice, and is recognized as the last soldier to perish in what was called the war to end all wars.

Private George Price was born in Kings County, Nova Scotia, and it is believed he came to Moose Jaw to help with harvest work in the early 1900s. He enlisted in the 210th Infantry Battalion and the Canadian Expeditionary Force in Moose Jaw, October 15, 1917. After a few transfers, Private Price then served with the 28th Battalion.

On November 11, 1918, on the outskirts of Mons, Belgium, Price stepped out into the street to try and locate a target and was shot directly into the chest by an enemy sniper. Price was posthumously awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal. These are the remembrances that bring home to each of us the horrors of war and the necessity to never forget the cost of our freedom.

Mr. Speaker, across this province there were ceremonies that were held to honour Remembrance Day and mark the sacrifices made by veterans right across this country. I ask that all members join me in recognizing not only Private Price, but Canadian veterans in past and present conflicts and the families and friends of these soldiers.

Mr. Speaker, we shall remember them.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Public Notification Policy

Mr. Yates: — Well, Mr. Speaker, here we go again. Four more people escaped from the Paul Dojack Centre on Friday, bringing the total number of people escaped or mistakenly released since late August to 15. One remains at large.

On Saturday two inmates in Saskatoon tried to escape but were stopped. Media reports indicate that quote "The Minister of Justice was unavailable for comment." People all across the country, *Globe and Mail* readers and CTV [Canadian Television Network Ltd.] viewers included, are confused about who speaks for the government on matters of public safety.

Mr. Speaker, to the Premier: can he clarify which minister is responsible for this file — the Minister of Public Safety or the Minister of Justice?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Hickie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member opposite for his question. Mr. Speaker, as was portrayed through the media on the escape of the four from Dojack on Friday, this minister and the Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing are in charge of all notifications when it comes to escapes, Mr. Speaker, of our correctional facilities.

So, Mr. Speaker, on that note, this case worked perfectly well. We had ministry officials notify myself within 20 minutes of the escape. Ministry of Justice officials to the deputy minister consulted with my ministry officials and the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police], Mr. Speaker. This time, this policy that takes public safety as a paramount concern in this government worked perfectly.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't have to keep asking questions to clarify the minister's policy if he would just make it public. Corrections staff, including his deputy minister, have been suspended for allegedly breaking rules that no one has seen. Four separate reviews are currently under way in the ministry. We have very few if any examples of his so-called new policy working as advertised.

Mr. Speaker, the minister could clear all this up by just coming clean. To the minister: will he table his new policy, yes or no?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Hickie: — Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. And once again thank you to the member opposite for his question. Mr. Speaker, the senior officials of the ministry have the direction to notify to the deputy minister, to myself if there's an escape, Mr. Speaker.

I'm going to say it again, Mr. Speaker. In this case this was perfectly integrated, how it worked with the ministry officials talking to the Ministry of Justice and the RCMP, Mr. Speaker, and myself. This was a case where the people of Saskatchewan, people of Regina, Mr. Speaker, were made aware of an escapee after the law was followed, Mr. Speaker. And the RCMP were allowed to release the information of the one inmate still outstanding. In this case, Mr. Speaker, public safety was paramount and it worked, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, I don't understand why the minister won't table this policy in the House. If he actually did what he says he did, if he actually communicated the policy properly to his staff, it shouldn't be a problem. This is a serious matter, Mr. Speaker. Corrections staff have been suspended for their alleged failure to implement this policy. Saskatchewan people have a right to see for themselves what rules the ministry employees supposedly broke. Mr. Speaker, to the minister: why won't he table this policy?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is concerned about disclosure, and I can let him know that the difference between this government and the NDP [New Democratic Party] is that this government actually has a policy in place for disclosure to the public when dangerous offenders escape and to make sure that the public knows about that.

The NDP is actually zero for 21 when it comes to openness and transparency. Actually, Mr. Speaker, they're zero and 22 when it comes to openness and transparency. We asked last year during a freedom of information request for the settlement with Murdoch Carriere. Justice officials said it could be released. Environment officials told the NDP it could be released. The only person who said it couldn't be released is the member for Regina Lakeview. Perhaps the NDP could explain to us why they engaged in this complete political interference in the release of information that their own officials said could be released.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Investment Strategy for the Crown Corporations

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan] is imposing his ideological view on the Crowns.

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

Mr. Trew: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of CIC is imposing his ideological view on the Crowns, but the experts see through this minister and the backdoor privatization of the Crowns, and they're weighing in.

We've already seen the minister attacking SaskEnergy and SaskPower, but he's also going after SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance]. Let me quote from *The StarPhoenix* article from October 23. Quote:

Earlier this year, SGI Canada's out-of-province investment revenue was \$9 million out of \$35 million

total and was credited with helping cushion the drop in Saskatchewan revenue because of summer storms.

To the Minister of CIC: why is he attacking SGI's ability to quote, to stop the cushion of drop?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Crown Corporations.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the hon. member for the question. The announcement was made some two weeks ago but obviously he's forgotten some of the details, because we have done anything but an ideologically bent when it comes to this. We have done what's businesslike and what's sound. We have said on out-of-province investments that have lost money to the tune of a goal of 22 per cent to a return of minus 15 per cent, no more of that. No more of that red ink, Mr. Speaker.

What we will do, where it does make sense to have out-of-province investments, such as the case with SGI where it does spread the risk, we have said that it will continue business as usual to make the core Crown a stronger operation. And that's what we intend to do, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Trew: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we raised the very profitable examples of Heritage Gas and MRM [Muskeg River mine] cogen plant. And when the Minister of Government Services was giving totally incorrect answers, the Minister Responsible for CIC wasn't doing much better.

Don't take my word for it. Here is what the *Leader-Post* business commentator has to say about this issue. Quote:

Not kosher under the new policy are SaskEnergy's Heritage Gas business in Nova Scotia, SaskPower's MRM Cogen partnership in Alberta or SGI's Cooke Group insurance brokerage business in the Maritimes.

All of these investments, by the way, met or exceeded the Crowns' targeted return on investment, according to a KPMG study.

To the minister: he wouldn't answer the question for Heritage Gas or for MRM cogen, and growing numbers of Saskatchewan people are telling me their concern about the Sask Party's plan for privatization. Why is the Sask Party selling profitable Crown investments?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, which side is the member on? I quote from *Hansard*, October

28, from the hon. member opposite: "Mr. Deputy Speaker, [and I'm quoting] today's reannouncement of a now five-year-old policy, the Sask-first policy, is just that — it's five years old." It's a reannouncement.

Well, Mr. Speaker, he wants to take credit for our Sask-first announcement on one hand, and then he comes in here and criticizes it on the other. Which one is it, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Trew: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we're trying to get the for sale sign removed. Business commentators in this province are attacking the minister's decisions. From November 1 *Leader-Post*, quote:

Even some of the \$200 million in out-of-province investments earmarked for divesture don't seem to fit the Saskatchewan First policy.

For example, SaskPower's investments in the MRM co-generation facility near Fort McMurray and the Cooke Group brokerages in Atlantic Canada . . .

So to the minister: can he explain to the business people of Saskatchewan — the ones asking these questions — why is he selling SGI's profitable investment in Cooke Group insurance when it doesn't even seem to fit the minister's very own publicly released criteria?

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

[14:00]

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, I've been very clear when I made the announcement; we were very clear during the last election. Our commitment is to the core operations of the Crown corporations.

Over the history of the NDP, 16 years of mismanagement, 16 years of red ink, 16 years of 22 per cent targets and delivering minus 15 per cent, Mr. Speaker — how does that make our Crown corporations any stronger?

The people of Saskatchewan want us to invest in the hottest economy in the country, in the hottest economy in North America that's right here in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I will take Herbert over Halifax every day of the week.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Trew: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the business community rejects outright the arguments that this minister is making. The *Leader-Post*, November 1 quote: "Like putting lipstick on a pig, or trying to fit a round peg into a square hole, the result isn't pretty and promises to get messy."

Paul Martin, editor of the *Sask Business Magazine* quote: “Historically the Crowns have had success when they invested abroad.”

The StarPhoenix editorial October 30 quote: “[When] Mr. Cheveldayoff ordered this week seemed . . . like ordering Crown executives to employ meat tenderizer mallets on the companies until they’re soft enough to be sold . . .”

To the minister: are you telling us these business commentators are wrong, or will you reverse your decision to hold fire sale of our Crown investments?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the member opposite that investments that support in-province operations of Crown corporations will be maintained in Saskatchewan. Investments such as the Swan Valley part of SaskEnergy’s operations, SecurTek, and as he refers to SGI, SCI Alberta, SCI Manitoba, Coachman, and ICPEI [Insurance Company of Prince Edward Island] will all be maintained because in fact they do pass the test. They do enhance the operation here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, very shortly members opposite will get a chance to see what this government has planned for Crown corporations as far as investment in Saskatchewan. They will have a chance to then look at what those investments are doing for Saskatchewan, for Saskatchewan people, and comment on them at that time.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Funding for New School Construction

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the Saskatoon Public Schools board is considering private-public partnerships or P3s to build new schools. In November 5 article in *The StarPhoenix* reports, I quote, “School boards are strapped for cash but under pressure to provide schools to the city’s new neighbourhoods.”

And the March 27 *StarPhoenix* reported that the Minister of Finance told the Greater Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce that the Sask Party government is open to public-private partnerships, P3s.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people are asking why, at a time of big surpluses, this government would be interested in P3s. To the Minister of Education: does the government believe that P3s are an efficient use of taxpayers’ money?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker,

it’s great to finally have a question about capital construction in the province of Saskatchewan. And we can talk about the former government, the NDP’s record. Mr. Speaker, we have had an infrastructure deficit facing boards of education in this province that’s staggering, Mr. Speaker. We need \$1.2 billion worth of school construction, according to the Saskatchewan School Boards Association.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it’s interesting that last year for the first time in five years, Mr. Speaker, first time in five years that this new government was able to announce new school projects — new school projects.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, I’m very proud of the record of this government. We have added over \$100 million to the spending of new schools. Boards of education, Mr. Speaker, are very happy with the fact that we’re moving forward, that we’re unlike the NDP who allowed the physical structures in this province to deteriorate.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, this government likes to trumpet their so-called historic investment in infrastructure, but the fact is that they have a historic surplus too. I hear 3 billion reasons why they should be investing. They can afford to invest more in new schools.

Mr. Speaker, the available research suggests that instead of saving taxpayers’ money, P3s cost taxpayers more in the long run — far more. A 2007 case study in Alberta suggests that three schools could be built by the public for every two schools build under P3s. And Nova Scotia experimented with P3s earlier this decade but went back to the public sector construction because it would cost less.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: why is the minister considering lining a select few pockets instead of getting value for our money and ensuring sound fiscal policy?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what we’re very happy to do as a government, as was the case this spring after our budget where we announced a number of brand new projects based on the budget that was delivered here in the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker, we reintroduced something called the approval in principle — AIPs. AIPs allow boards of education to begin planning.

Mr. Speaker, we announced over \$60 million worth of AIPs for this coming budget, Mr. Speaker. What this is allowing communities and boards of education to do, it allows them to begin work. It allows them to begin planning to build a school, Mr. Speaker, to build a school that’s going to have a number of different components in it. We’re going to see components, Mr.

Speaker, that are going to involve urban municipalities; they're going to involve the particular communities in the school. Those are the kind of partnerships, Mr. Speaker, that we're happy to ensure succeed in this province, unlike the NDP.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the minister's completely dodging the question here. One of the biggest problems with P3s is that governments pay far more to compensate the private sector for the higher . . .

The Speaker: — Order. It seems to me that we have more than one person attempting to ask questions and more than one attempting to answer, so I would just like to ask the members to be mindful of the person recognized who has the floor. Member from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I'd just appreciate it if the minister would answer the question. But with P3s the government pays far more to compensate the private sector for the higher interest rates they have to pay to borrow money at, compared with government lending rates. Given the current credit crunch, one can only imagine how much this might add to the cost of building new schools. At the same time, experience in the United Kingdom suggests that many of these schools are poorly built and poorly maintained. Mr. Speaker, the minister is considering a plan to pay more and get less. This is not the best use of taxpayers' money.

To the minister: why is he squandering the surplus on what amounts to privatization?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I hope to make many announcements in this Legislative Assembly over the next year or two or three or five. I hope to make announcements that's going to catch up, that's going to catch up to the fact, Mr. Speaker, that within the current major capital listing of inventory — these are projects to do — we have 97 projects, Mr. Speaker, that are on our list.

Mr. Speaker, that former NDP government was working on projects that they approved in 2003. That's what we inherited, Mr. Speaker. We inherited the situation where we had to pay for projects that that government had announced in 2003. This was done in 2008. Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to report we have caught up to the expenditures that that government have made. Now we're going to be announcing new projects.

Mr. Speaker, there are many projects. There are projects all around the province because, you know what, Mr. Speaker? A problem that we have that that government never had was the fact that we are growing and we will need more schools.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the facts are these. This government has a historic surplus. It has the money to invest now in building good new schools, responding to the needs of our dynamic economy. This government claims that it's making a historic investment in infrastructure, yet the Sask Party is planning to put taxpayers in debt and on the hook for extra costs to build new schools through this plan to privatize.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: why will Saskatchewan people have to pay such a steep price to build needed schools? Is it just so this government can line the pockets of their friends or because they just can't manage this dynamic economy?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, the member has one thing right: this is a dynamic province, Mr. Speaker. This is a province that has tremendous . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — For the benefit of the member from Saskatoon Nutana, okay, Mr. Speaker, what she left, what she left was a legacy of the fact that over 70 per cent of our schools, Mr. Speaker, 70 per cent of our schools have been built before 1969, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, next year those buildings will be 40 years old.

The Speaker: — The member was allowed to place the question. Allow the minister to respond.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, this is a historic announcement. In fact, Mr. Speaker, we have already committed to the expenditure of \$1.5 billion worth of money for infrastructure, Mr. Speaker. That's a historic announcement.

I do hope, and in discussions with the Minister of Finance and Treasury Board officials, that a significant amount of that money will find its way into the construction of new schools, Mr. Speaker, because, Mr. Speaker, we need new schools. We need new schools in Warman. We need new schools in Martensville, in White City, in Balgonie, in Lloydminster. We need new schools across this province because this province is growing, Mr. Speaker, unlike that NDP who planned for decline.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Patient-First Review

Mr. Calvert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Education refuses to answer a very direct question about the role of P3s in the construction in the schools. I am hoping that when I put a question to the Minister of Health, he'll be a little

bit more forthcoming with information, Mr. Speaker.

About a week ago, the Minister of Health announced the patient-first review. Other than some pretty vague comments that this patient-first review was going to involve patients — which by the way, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Health now describes patients of our health care system as customers of the system — very little is known. It was a very vague announcement.

So I have a question or two today for the Minister of Health. The first is this. The Saskatchewan public have not yet been informed of how they might be engaged in this patient-first review. So my question to the Minister of Health: how will the Saskatchewan public be engaged in this review? And if he can't answer the question today, then my question would be, why in the world would you announce the review without knowing the answer to that very fundamental question?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, last Wednesday I was very proud to stand at the Pasqua Hospital and announce the patient-first review. It was a campaign promise made and a campaign promise kept. Mr. Speaker, that is almost 80 campaign promises that have been kept in the first eleven and a half months of this new government.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — At the announcement, Mr. Speaker, there were members from the Saskatchewan Medical Association, there were members from Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, there were members from the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association. There were CEOs [chief executive officer] from around the province, Mr. Speaker. There were patient groups represented and there was the College of Physicians and Surgeons represented, Mr. Speaker. It was a positive announcement, and all these groups were really looking forward to this patient-first review doing its work.

There might have been one dissenting word, Mr. Speaker, and unfortunately it was that opposition. Doom and gloom, that's all they have to say, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the patient-first review will be doing its work over the next number of months, and I think the whole province is looking forward to those results.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, I asked the Minister of Health how the public of Saskatchewan were going to be involved in this. He refuses to answer. Let me ask him another question then. Will he guarantee today that the front-line workers in the health care system and their representatives will be involved in this consultation? Would he guarantee that today?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, we're looking forward to . . . The commissioner of this review, Mr. Tony Dagnone, who I don't think anybody can discredit his credentials . . . He's a well respected person not only nationally but internationally, Mr. Speaker. He formerly ran the University Hospital in Saskatoon. He will be leading the commission which will consult broadly with not only patients but with all service providers. Absolutely they're going to have an input into this review.

But the review is going to look at this health care system like no other review has looked at a health care system, through the patients' eyes. And that is one thing, Mr. Speaker, that I can say: sitting on those benches for far too long, I would say, but for far too long that we brought in patient after patient that was seeing the system much different than that former government did. We want to see the system through the patients' eyes, and that's what this review will do.

[14:15]

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

Mr. Calvert: — Mr. Speaker, for reasons unknown to us, the minister decided to go with a one-person review as opposed to a committee which once he discussed, and the person he has chosen, correctly as identified by the minister, is Mr. Tony Dagnone. I am glad he raised the subject because I read in *The London Free Press* some time ago Mr. Dagnone saying quote "We're not scared of the use of the private sector."

Now the minister himself has said that he can see a further role for private sector involvement in the health care delivery in this province. My question to the Minister of Health: between he and Mr. Dagnone, what new private sector investment in the health care delivery in this province are they planning?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, that's a very interesting question coming from that member opposite. Mr. Speaker, so what he is saying that a one-member commission cannot do the work that a Ken Fyke Commission did, that the predecessor Roy Romanow did, that Senator Kirby did. So all that work is no good because it was a one-member commission — is that what that member's saying? Tony Dagnone is well respected not only in this province but across Canada and internationally.

Mr. Speaker, I find it strikingly interesting that he would bring up the privatization issue that under their government had no problem using private ambulance services within the system, that had no problem privatizing some lab services within the public system. Mr. Speaker, it must be tough to be talking out of one side of your mouth and accusing us of something totally different, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we'll let the review do its work, and I think that the health system of this province will be better for it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

TABLING OF SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before orders of the day, it is my pleasure to submit supplementary estimates accompanied by a message from His Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

The Speaker: — Would the members please rise for the message from the Lieutenant Governor. Order. The message is as follows:

The Lieutenant Governor transmits supplementary estimates of certain sums required for the service of the province for the 12 months ending March 31, 2009, and recommends the same to the Legislative Assembly. The Honourable Gordon L. Barnhart, Lieutenant Governor, province of Saskatchewan.

You may be seated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 42

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 42 — *The Securities Amendment Act, 2008*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to once again enter into a debate about the amendment to *The Securities Act* as I've done many years in the past.

I noted that when the minister gave his second reading speech that a couple of members, I think, well certainly the Premier was gently mocking his minister for the dryness of the subject — and not, I think, the dryness of the speech, but dryness of the briefing that had been given to cabinet on this subject. The Premier claims it wasn't him and if it wasn't, I apologize. But I'm pretty sure that it was actually, Mr. Speaker.

And I'm glad to know that at least some things haven't changed. Justice ministers who are charged with federal regulation, a financial regulation in this province, and dealing with this Act and other matters still receive very little respect from their colleagues. And that has not changed at all, as far as I could tell.

The other thing that hasn't changed very much is the second reading speech . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . The member from Kindersley has a question for me which may be relevant to

me, but isn't relevant to the Act. So, Mr. Speaker, out of respect to you and the rules of the House, I won't answer that member's question today. But I will return to the legislation in question, Mr. Speaker.

The other thing that hasn't changed very much was the minister's speech. I recognized a little bit of it, Mr. Speaker, particularly in the background — not so much in the detail around the Act, but in the background to the legislation. *The Securities Act* regulates the instruments that are dealt with in the public stock market, Mr. Speaker, and how we invest in, well, what used to be just shares but are now dividends and all types of creatures in publicly traded companies. The jurisdiction for such comes under property and civil rights which is the jurisdiction of the provinces of Canada. And this gives rise to regulators that exist in every province and in every territory and, as people point out, 13 regulators of the national securities system in our country.

What has come into development and which requires these amendments on a sessional basis, Mr. Speaker — I think I moved similar legislation every session while I was minister of Justice — is the passport system. And the principal idea behind the passport system is that if one receives registration in one jurisdiction, one is entitled to be registered in effect in every jurisdiction in the country, not to have to register 13 times to carry on business across the country and not to try to figure out what rules are in 13 different jurisdictions — 10 provinces and 3 territories — across the country.

The passport system has received wide support but not universal support across the country. Back in 2004 when I first became minister responsible for Securities in the province of Saskatchewan, Ontario was still involved in the passport system, still at the meetings setting it up. Ontario is now not onside. In principle at least, Mr. Speaker, Ontario supports the national government in its view that there should be one single regulator, one national regulator, that the passport system results in a balkanization of security regulation and — more importantly I suppose for the national government — enforcement, as it should be, of security regulations, Mr. Speaker.

But Ontario still is co-operating with other provinces in making the system work. And the way that this has developed over time is that the stripe of the federal government has changed, but the position of the federal government has not. The new Conservative government — I guess we can stop calling it new soon, Mr. Speaker — the Conservative government in Ottawa, like the Liberal government before it, does not think that the passport system is the way to go and wants a single, national regulator.

It's interesting sometimes to see, and I expect that some of my colleagues who now sit on the government side have noted this, that the political divide in this country is not always on partisan basis but is sometimes on a geographic basis: that the concerns of the West sometimes trump the concerns of the NDP or the Conservative or the Liberal government of a particular Western province, and that interestingly enough, I suppose, sometimes alliances cross party lines at federal provincial discussions on different issues in different areas. And the conflict which has been ongoing for a number of years now on the passport system

is certainly an example of that, Mr. Speaker.

The Liberal government of Ontario was not quite sure which way they wanted to go when there was a Liberal government in Ottawa is now onside with the Conservative government in Ottawa, in respect to believing that there should be a single regulator, a national regulator, probably coincidentally located, Mr. Speaker, in Toronto. The Liberal governments in Quebec and British Columbia demur, Mr. Speaker, and agree wholeheartedly with the Conservative government of Alberta and the NDP governments of Saskatchewan at the time and Manitoba still, Mr. Speaker.

It has been the case, and I will come back to this in a moment, Mr. Speaker, it's been the case that the federal government has been looking for allies in its campaign to move towards a single regulator, move away from the passport system — which most provinces and territories, as I've said, support — and have been looking for allies beyond Ontario in this move, looking for provincial governments that might abandon their colleagues in support of the passport system and move to support the national single regulator that the federal government would like to see in place, and which the federal government cannot impose, Mr. Speaker.

I believe the constitution would be clear. I mean, I guess they could attempt it, and I might be proven wrong that they might find some powers within the constitution to impose federal jurisdiction over the regulation securities. But discretion being the better part of valour, I don't think either federal government — the Conservative one that's now in place or the Liberal one that preceded them — really wanted to test whether they in fact had such an argument that would be successful, and would rather have a political success than the likely legal failure, Mr. Speaker. So they're always looking for allies to dismantle the passport system by getting more provinces offside. The ministers of the government maybe have been talked to about maybe changing the position on securities regulation, and that may be one reason why this is late coming to us, Mr. Speaker, but I'll come back to that.

When the Liberals were in power in Ottawa, and there were suggestions made that what the provinces have put together — and we were led at the time, our Chair at the securities ministers' meetings was the Minister of Finance from Alberta, so a Conservative minister — but the argument was made at the time that well, you know, if we could agree on a decentralized national system, maybe we could agree on a single regulator.

Passions and commitments on various issues vary across the country, Mr. Speaker. And at the time I said, well if the Liberals in Ottawa and the Liberals in Victoria and the Liberals in Quebec City could agree, then I think there could be change. But it was those three governments that probably were most adverse to each other, most opposed to each other. It was not a, obviously, a political partisan disagreement; it was a geographical disagreement, and in the case of the provinces, a defence of our constitutional rights to be the regulator in this area and given the opportunity to prove that it works.

I think we have, across the country, proven that it works. And the naysayers have little to point to to suggest the passport system does not work. National governments and national

governments of Liberal stripe and national governments of Conservative stripe have said the Americans have a single regulator. And the Americans are able to enforce the regulations, make the regulations. They have national regulations. And Canada . . . and I think some Finance ministers went so far as to say Canada in this area is a bit of a joke because of having all these regulators across the country trying to co-operate with each other and coordinate a system, Mr. Speaker.

And that stays the position of the federal government. After WorldCom, after Enron, after the stock market collapses in the United States, it's still the position of the national government in Ottawa that a single regulator like they have in the United States would be a good thing for Canada. And that what Canada has done, without having such glaring examples of failure of regulation, what Canada has done does not work, Mr. Speaker.

What Canada is doing seems to work. And I know that we have a government that is very prone to being as much of assistance to Ottawa as possible and representing Ottawa to the people of Saskatchewan — perhaps more than representing the people of Saskatchewan to Ottawa — and we have been critical of that and we'll continue to be so. Equalization's clearly an example, clean coal is another example, and I wonder if the passport system wasn't perhaps going to be another example, Mr. Speaker.

[14:30]

I think there's two reasons why the Minister of Justice was put in the position that he was put in on second reading to say, well we've been doing this for years. Mr. Speaker, year after year, the minister of Justice of the day brings an amendment to *The Securities Regulations, The Securities Act*, so as we can work within the passport system, hold up our end, make sure that you can register in Regina, register in Winnipeg, or register in Quebec City. It doesn't matter; you can do business across the country.

And so we have to keep up by changing the rules, changing the regulations, changing the legislation so that we're all working in tandem, in lock-step together to make the system work. And if we don't rush this Bill through the House, through this House, without a lot of consideration, Saskatchewan will be behind. We will not be holding up our end. Everybody else is ready or almost ready, and we are tagging behind and we're not ready.

Now Saskatchewan back in 2003 had a membership on the steering committee of the ministers responsible for securities. We've always been at the forefront of this file, despite the fact that we have relatively small capital markets. Westerners have always been at the forefront of this file. And one wonders why this kind of got past the new government here in Saskatchewan, why now there's such a rush, why this wasn't done in the last session when other provinces were clearly doing it, Mr. Speaker.

And there's two possible reasons. One was that by this government's definition of co-operative federalism, this government was considered going offside the passport system. The members opposite, the Government of Saskatchewan, the

Saskatchewan Party government was going to desert its colleagues and move away from the passport system and support the federal government's, Ottawa's call for a single regulator. And now they're not doing that, or at least they're not doing it yet. But if they were considering doing it, Mr. Speaker, that would explain why this was allowed to fall by the wayside while perhaps some less important legislation was given priority in the last session. That's one possibility.

The other possibility is there's nothing so nefarious as that, that the Saskatchewan government has never had any second thoughts about the passport system, it's just that they can't manage the legislative agenda, Mr. Speaker, that . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I'm not quite sure I caught the Premier's reference there, but I'll carry on.

It's just possible that they could not manage the legislative system, the legislative agenda. We saw that in the last session, Mr. Speaker. The government had to change the rules in order to get its legislation through the House. And the member from Regina Dewdney park and I were compelled, compelled to speak at length about the importance of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition and the traditions of this legislature, and the rules that the members opposite, when they were in opposition, so strongly endorsed but so quickly abandoned once they were in government.

And that may be as simple as that, Mr. Speaker, it may be as simple as the Minister of Justice is overwhelmed by his portfolio, and now he's taken on a portfolio of Corrections and Public Safety as well, and so things are going to fall by the wayside. It may be nothing more nefarious than that.

Now that said, I don't know why we would want necessarily visit upon our colleagues who've been working in this system so well all these years, why we would want to visit upon them the sins of this government in not holding up its end. The minister suggests that this matter might proceed more quickly. I know that there are members who want to talk about the change-in-trade trigger to that broader in-business-of trigger, but perhaps they don't need to do that in the second reading debate, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps they can do that in committee, and I would suggest that it may be appropriate for this Bill to proceed there.

Unless I hear calls from my colleagues for the ability to speak upon it in the legislature, and I certainly don't have much more to say, Mr. Speaker, this may very well be a Bill that should move to committee now. And I certainly don't have anything else to say about it today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The motion before the committee, the motion that Bill No. 42, *The Securities Amendment Act, 2008* be now read the second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? Ready for the question? Is the Assembly agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. To which committee shall this Bill be referred?

Hon. Mr. Gantfoer: — To the Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The Bill stands referred to the Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs.

Bill No. 48

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Gantfoer that **Bill No. 48 — *The Financial Administration Amendment Act, 2008*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes. Maybe the Minister of Finance will have as astute a questions for me as the Premier did on the last Bill.

Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise today on the Bill to amend *The Financial Administration Act, 1993* only because when I was speaking about securities legislation a moment ago, I heard so many members of the legislature — both sides of the House — call out for more. Perhaps it wasn't both sides of the House. Perhaps it was only an echo from this side of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Bill is, I think, a worthy one, Mr. Speaker, and the member for The Battlefords said as much when he spoke to it immediately following the minister's second reading speech. The Bill increases the automatic interim funding at the start of the fiscal year from one-twelfth of the previous year's estimates to two-twelfths, in other words allows for interim funding, not for one month but for two months, and will therefore take the main appropriation Act to the normal completion date of the legislative session, which is usually on or around . . . well the week before Victoria Day in May.

And when the old fiscal year has expired — which it does on March 31, the day aptly before April Fool's Day — and before the main appropriation Act is appropriated for the new fiscal year, the government requires funding to operate. Previously this has been available for, as it's been said, one month. And it is the proposal of the government that this be done for two months.

And the minister highlighted the requirement in particular for Education for additional funding to pay for schools. And the inability to provide funding for a two-month period has meant that the legislature's had to deal with interim supply Bill at the same time as dealing with other estimates.

And as the member from The Battlefords said when he spoke immediately following the minister's speech, we are inclined to support the legislation. It seems to make perfect sense. And the minister provided strong arguments in his second reading speech.

There are matters that do require some clarification for us. I am not — as the minister I think pointed out relatively kindly — the Finance critic for the opposition, although being minister of Justice for four years, one did spend a bit of time on financial

regulation. Which as my remarks demonstrated, in respect to the securities legislation that immediately proceeded this in the debate, it would be I think inappropriate to proceed to committee without having other members on our side of the House — and members on the other side of the House if they are so inclined — speak to this matter. But I'm thinking particularly of the Finance critic for Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, that he should have an opportunity to address this matter in the House in principle before this matter moves to committee. And so, Mr. Speaker, on this matter I will adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Meewasin has adjourned debate on Bill No. 48. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

Bill No. 43

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 43 — *The Trespass to Property Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased this afternoon to rise and speak on Bill No. 43, *The Trespass to Property Act*. Mr. Speaker, there's a number of questions that arise when we first look at this piece of legislation. And it is a piece of legislation that we've never had in the history of our province.

The first question obviously would be, is why do we need it and why do we need it now? What particular reason are we wanting to implement this piece of legislation today, and what are the implications of bringing in this legislation on the people of the province, Mr. Speaker? Was it to fix a particular problem or a series of particular problems? If it is, it'd be nice to know what those problems are, who's been consulted, and what we're actually trying to fix, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, who will benefit from the passage of this Act is another very important question. Is there stakeholder groups that feel they need this in order to carry out either their business operations or to protect in some way their private property? It would be nice to know if those issues have been raised and by who, Mr. Speaker.

Are there specific activities or problems this Act is intended to address? And if so, what might they be? What is this Act intended to be used for? It has a very broad application.

If you look at this Act and its potential application on the people of the province of Saskatchewan, it is very significant. It could in fact affect how businesses operate, Mr. Speaker. It could affect how private landowners operate, Mr. Speaker. It could affect a number of things. And unless we're sure why this Bill is being put in place, Mr. Speaker, it does raise significant concerns.

Mr. Speaker, if you look at the definitions in the Act as put forward, Mr. Speaker, there is no definition under interpretation of Crown land, Mr. Speaker. So what is the actual application on Crown land, Mr. Speaker? They do list a number of exclusions to Crown land. They say, "(a) vacant Crown agricultural land." All right. It says:

Crown resource land;
park land as defined in *The Parks Act*;
any other Crown land or any category of other Crown land that is prescribed in the regulations . . . [Mr. Speaker]

Mr. Speaker, but as the members opposite would know, Mr. Speaker, there are various definitions of Crown land and various pieces of legislation. And without it being defined, Mr. Speaker, what particular definition for Crown land is going to be applied to this Bill? Because it says what's excluded, but it doesn't say what is included, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, for example, are city sidewalks considered Crown land, Mr. Speaker? Are city roads and highways considered Crown land, Mr. Speaker? And if they are, Mr. Speaker, does this prohibit activities on those pieces of Crown land that would normally be carried out by individuals, Mr. Speaker?

Is the legislative grounds Crown land, Mr. Speaker? Is the steps and the roads in front of the legislative grounds Crown land, Mr. Speaker? Without the definition being clear what is in fact Crown land, Mr. Speaker, this piece of legislation could be used to prohibit individuals and groups from lawful assembly, individuals or groups from protesting against their government if they chose to do so, Mr. Speaker. It could in fact be used to prohibit individuals from showing their dissatisfaction of their government, Mr. Speaker — rights that are actually enshrined in our constitution, Mr. Speaker, rights that every citizen in our country should have.

So, Mr. Speaker, without the definitions being clear so we know what is excluded, so that we know what is intended by this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, it could have far-reaching implications.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite are talking about an issue such as skateboarding on the legislative grounds. Well, Mr. Speaker, that may be something that they may wish to prohibit, Mr. Speaker. But do they wish to prohibit other forms of lawful assembly, Mr. Speaker, using this legislation as a back door to carry out something that they can not do now, Mr. Speaker?

And without clear intention on the Act and without clear definitions, this piece of legislation could be used to prohibit citizens' rights in many, many ways. And the people of the province of Saskatchewan have the right to peaceful, lawful assembly to protest against their governments, to protest against the number of issues that they choose to do so, Mr. Speaker.

[14:45]

But, Mr. Speaker, this piece of legislation could prohibit even peaceful demonstrations, peaceful protest, Mr. Speaker, because it could in fact prohibit somebody from protesting on the steps of the legislature, or it could prohibit somebody from protesting on a city sidewalk or on a city street, Mr. Speaker, or on a

public highway, Mr. Speaker. And it could prevent individuals from exercising their rights that are guaranteed, Mr. Speaker. So is this a backdoor way to impose upon people things that it isn't clear, it's not intended, Mr. Speaker? No. We need to clearly understand what is intended by this Bill.

Mr. Speaker, just to talk a little bit about the broad, potential implications of this piece of legislation, it says:

Trespass prohibited

3(1) Without the consent of the occupier of a premises, no person who is not acting under the right or authority conferred by law shall:

- (a) enter in or on the premises when entry is prohibited pursuant to this Act.

Mr. Speaker, then it goes on to say that they can make something prohibited simply by posting or telling somebody, Mr. Speaker. And without a clear definition of Crown land, Mr. Speaker, it can be interpreted, based on definitions of Crown land in other pieces of legislation, to be all public land, Mr. Speaker, that isn't prohibited in their exclusion list, Mr. Speaker. And if that is their intent, it could be a backdoor way to do something that maybe they don't even want to or intend to do, Mr. Speaker.

But there's a great deal of clarification required on this Bill as to what the intent is. Now, Mr. Speaker, it may be that the intent of this is just a simple process in which to make it more difficult for individuals who are — for lack of a better word — not, Mr. Speaker, acting appropriately on private land, Mr. Speaker, or perhaps not acting appropriately on public land, Mr. Speaker.

If that is the intent, Mr. Speaker, it needs to be clarified. We need to actually clarify what the intent of the definition of Crown land is and what their intent is in putting the legislation in place. Mr. Speaker, without that clarification, this Act is very broad and could have very, very broad implications.

Mr. Speaker, it goes on to say that “after being requested either orally or in writing by the occupier to leave the premises, fail to leave the premises as soon as practicable,” is an offence, Mr. Speaker. An offence that you can be fined quite significantly for, Mr. Speaker, and you can actually, Mr. Speaker, pay a very significant consequence.

Mr. Speaker, without clear definitions this could be all the land in the province of Saskatchewan with a very few exclusions that they put under the title of Crown land, Mr. Speaker.

And I like to point out once again, Mr. Speaker, one of the simple ways to make this legislation much clearer would simply have been to define Crown land under the definitions for interpretation purposes. We don't have that definition here in this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, so we don't know what definition the government is intending to put in place, Mr. Speaker, and because of that the implications are unclear.

It says, Mr. Speaker, that prohibition of entry, under section 8(1): “Entry in or on premises may be prohibited by a notice given in accordance with section 11.”

Section 11 goes on to say:

A notice pursuant to this Act may be given:

orally or in writing;

by means of signs posted so that a sign is clearly visible in daylight under normal conditions from the approach to each ordinary point of access to the premises to which the notice applies . . .

Mr. Speaker, so you can simply put a notice up saying that you cannot enter or perform that activity on those premises, Mr. Speaker, and then it's prohibited, Mr. Speaker.

But without knowing what the intent is and without knowing the definition of Crown land, Mr. Speaker, this creates a situation where individuals may in fact lose rights that have been guaranteed to them. It may in fact take away the right to lawful assembly, Mr. Speaker. It may take away the . . . [inaudible] . . . of the right to lawful protest, Mr. Speaker. And those are fundamental rights of Canadian citizens, fundamental rights of Saskatchewan residents that we must be concerned about protecting, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, again I'd like to just say very clearly that they could clear this up by putting in a clear definition of Crown land, Mr. Speaker. And when they use in section 15, talk about Crown land, they talk about what's excluded from Crown land definition, but never actually define what Crown land is, Mr. Speaker, or what their intent is.

And furthermore, Mr. Speaker, it allows a great deal of authority within the regulatory component, the regulatory-making authority, Mr. Speaker, to define those types of issues, Mr. Speaker. It says under regulations, Mr. Speaker, section 18: “The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations . . .” Mr. Speaker, and for those that don't understand, the Lieutenant Governor in Council is in fact the Executive Council, the cabinet. And “for the purposes of clause 2(a), prescribing land or categories of land as enclosed land . . .” Mr. Speaker, so the cabinet can, after we pass this legislation, go away and through regulation, Mr. Speaker, prohibit additional utilization of lands for means that aren't clear or identified in this legislation, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it's important to clearly understand first of all what the intent is before we proceed with looking at this legislation in great detail. And it goes on to say, “for the purpose of clause 15(d), prescribing Crown land or categories of Crown land to which this Act does not apply,” Mr. Speaker. So another way, Mr. Speaker, another way they could fix this Act, Mr. Speaker, make it more clear, is to clearly define what Crown land means.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite, I think, are catching on, and by the time we get there, they may actually have their own amendment defining what Crown land is in the interpretation section so that the Act itself could not be used in a way that it was never intended, Mr. Speaker. And because we don't know what their intention is in putting this legislation forward, Mr. Speaker, we can't say that they have necessarily intent that is negative in nature, but we can't say they don't either, Mr.

Speaker, because we don't have enough information to make that determination.

Mr. Speaker, who was consulted before this Act was put in place? That may give some framework or some background to why this piece of legislation was actually put in place, Mr. Speaker, and why we're dealing with this piece of legislation today. But we don't have that information, and we won't have that information for some time.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I watched very carefully the minister's second reading speech, I listened very carefully to what he said to us, Mr. Speaker. He didn't alleviate some of those concerns because in no way did he confine or define in any way the definition of Crown land in his second reading speech. Had he done that, we may have had a great deal more comfort in where this piece of legislation was actually heading, Mr. Speaker.

This piece of legislation could be used to prohibit individuals from entering malls, Mr. Speaker. It could be used to prohibit individuals from entering public lands or Crown lands, Mr. Speaker, that aren't used for the purposes that are excluded, Mr. Speaker. And why would we do that? That's clear we would need to understand why they would want to do that, Mr. Speaker, and we don't have that.

Now this particular piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, requires a great deal of further review to determine whether its passage is to meet unintended consequences that aren't clear or in fact it's simply a straightforward piece of legislation to deal with a simple problem, Mr. Speaker. That wasn't clear so, Mr. Speaker, we're going to have to ask many, many questions before we're able to pass this legislation on second reading.

But, Mr. Speaker, the minister in his second reading speech could have clarified some of the concerns we have. We didn't see that in the second reading speech, Mr. Speaker. We clearly don't have a definition for what Crown land means, Mr. Speaker. Without that definition, Mr. Speaker, it becomes potentially a very broad piece of legislation. Mr. Speaker, when we actually get to a point where we're talking about clause by clause in this particular piece of legislation, it might be prudent to have the minister to bring forward a definition of Crown land in his interpretation section so that we're clear as to what the intent is in this piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, if this is to deal with simple situations like individuals entering a neighbour's property, Mr. Speaker, if this is to prevent individuals that are causing damage or trouble to private property from being prohibited to go on that land, well then, Mr. Speaker, we'd all actually support that type of legislation, Mr. Speaker. But we don't have that level of definition in the legislation to define it to those types of problems, Mr. Speaker.

In fact today as this legislation is now written, it could be very broad and very wide in its application, Mr. Speaker, and that may affect many people in ways that aren't clear. And the people of Saskatchewan have a right to fully understand what the implications are of legislation prior to it being passed, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, once again I'd like to say if we had some

background as to why this was being implemented, why this Bill was being put forward at this time, Mr. Speaker, and what problems it is intended to fix, it would help clarify a great deal.

And most significantly, Mr. Speaker, if we had Crown land defined in this Bill, Mr. Speaker, it would help to limit the potential for negative use of this legislation in a manner that might take away Saskatchewan citizens' rights, Mr. Speaker. That would go a long way to deal with some of our concerns and worries of this piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, there are many, many groups of people each year who want to express to their government their dissatisfaction with something. Mr. Speaker, there are groups who come to this legislature on a regular basis to indicate to a government that they're unhappy or dissatisfied with the actions of the government. Mr. Speaker, we'd hate to see this piece of legislation, with no definition of Crown land, be used to stifle or stop those peaceful demonstrations and peaceful assembly that citizens have a right to participate in.

They have right in our democracy to both vote for a government and to show displeasure with a government, Mr. Speaker, and those are rights we should all cherish and preserve for our children and for future generations, Mr. Speaker. We shouldn't be putting in place, directly or indirectly, provisions, Mr. Speaker, that would in fact limit the right of peaceful assembly, Mr. Speaker, or peaceful demonstration, Mr. Speaker, regardless of what the reason for that demonstration is, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this piece of legislation may have nothing but good intentions. When it was drafted and drawn up, it may have been for nothing but admirable intentions, Mr. Speaker, but that's not clear. Nor was it made clear in the minister's second reading speech. Mr. Speaker, a couple of simple changes would make this legislation much clearer, make it much more able to be supported by the opposition. And the members opposite already understand that one of them is a clear definition of Crown land. Mr. Speaker, that would make this piece of legislation much clearer and much more acceptable, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we all, I think on all sides of the Assembly, do in fact support a concept of, if this is to prevent individuals going on somebody else's land and doing damage to private property or creating problems for individuals, for that we'd all support, Mr. Speaker. But we're not certain that that's the full and total intent of this because of some omissions in definition, Mr. Speaker, some lack of clarity and intent and, Mr. Speaker, who this Bill was actually put in place to actually help, Mr. Speaker.

And because, Mr. Speaker, without that clear intent we at this time are not in a position to move this Bill, Mr. Speaker . . . We need to go out and first of all discover, Mr. Speaker, talk to individuals and stakeholders about why this particular piece of legislation was brought forward; to seek perhaps an opportunity to speak to the minister as to why he brought this legislation forward and why he brought it forward in this manner, Mr. Speaker; and, Mr. Speaker, perhaps convince the minister that he should define Crown land in the Bill to make it easier.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite are clearly

understanding that there should be a definition of Crown land now because they're telling me it should be there. And I happen to agree with them, Mr. Speaker. So that is what our legislative process is about, Mr. Speaker. It's about trying to pass laws and legislation that are meaningful to the people of Saskatchewan and accomplish the goals that we all wish to do, which is to have legislation that meets the needs of the people of the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, we're now, Mr. Speaker, at a point where without further clarification, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to have to adjourn debate on this Bill at this time, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The member from Regina Dewdney has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 43, *The Trespass to Property Act*. Is the Assembly agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

[15:00]

Bill No. 49

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. McMorris that **Bill No. 49** — *The Ambulance Amendment Act, 2008* be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure again to rise in the House this afternoon to speak to legislation that's before us. In this case, *The Ambulance Amendment Act, 2008* which, as the Minister of Health pointed out, is in large part housekeeping from the government's point of view, Mr. Speaker, because of other legislation that's now been proclaimed — legislation, I believe, of the NDP government in respect to paramedics and other changes in the health care system that require updating at some point of *The Ambulance Act*.

The question, I guess, Mr. Speaker, is since these changes are required — or desirable in any case, Mr. Speaker, if not absolutely required — has the government taken a full look at the emergency services system when considering changes to this Act? I expect that if this Bill becomes law, Mr. Speaker, that the government may not again during this term of government look at these issues, and this is the opportunity for them to do so.

Have they done so, Mr. Speaker? Should the legislature be taking a look at the opportunities that arise when one looks at the emergency and trauma care system within the province, Mr. Speaker?

And particularly a province like Saskatchewan which is, as we know, a beautiful province with a relatively small population compared to some of our provincial sisters, is spread over a very wide area. A province that probably has more per capita paved road; if not the most miles of telephone wire at one time and electrical wire still today in the country — pretty close, Mr.

Speaker. A province where we try to provide a similar if not identical quality of services to people no matter where they live, Mr. Speaker — and power to people at the same price no matter where they live — so that the quality of one's life, to the extent that it's possible, Mr. Speaker, the quality of one's life does not depend upon what municipality you live in or the size of that municipality.

And when it comes to access to health care and to expeditious transport to health care and to qualified first responders at the scene of a heart attack or a stroke or an accident, this is more important in the province of Saskatchewan, to the million people who live in the province of Saskatchewan, in many ways, to it is to the 3 or 4 million people who live in the city of Toronto who live very close to all the services that they require, including their health care services — although sometimes you can get between municipalities in the province of Saskatchewan quicker than you can get across the city of Toronto. I think, Mr. Speaker, you would take my point.

What health care is delivered in our hospitals and even in the emergency rooms of our hospitals of course is vitally important, but in many cases and particularly for trauma and particularly for heart attacks and strokes, Mr. Speaker, the care one receives either at the site or in transit can be as important, or even more vitally important than the care that one receives after one arrives at the hospital, Mr. Speaker.

I have a constituent who I spoke to during the last provincial election — happened to have a reporter with me at the time — and he spoke glowingly of the health care system in the province of Saskatchewan. And he'd recently suffered a heart attack and gone to City Hospital and was very pleased with his treatment and very pleased with the outcome. And he was out raking leaves in his yard, and I suppose evidence that there had been a very good outcome, Mr. Speaker.

But he lives about two or three blocks from City Hospital, which is just on the other side of the southern border of my constituency of Saskatoon Meewasin. It wasn't very far for him to go to City Hospital. I think even though that was the case, it may very well have been the case that those who attended on him at his home, prepared him for transit, perhaps even provided some treatment in transit, were important to him. But certainly all the more important to him if he had lived at some distance from the hospital, a further distance than he lived.

Recently there was a study done in the United States comparing your chance of surviving a heart attack in different communities across the United States. And the article that I read that talked about the study, Mr. Speaker, was entitled, "If you're going to have a heart attack, have it in Seattle."

And it wasn't because the hospitals are necessarily better in Seattle; it isn't necessarily the case that drinking lattes make the heart surgeons better in Seattle than in municipalities less known for their coffee, Mr. Speaker. The study, I believe, placed the survival rate in Seattle the highest in the country of the United States based upon the paramedic and ambulance care that people received before they arrived at the hospital. Because heart attacks, like strokes, like car accidents — what's done immediately can be far more important and more indicative of the chance for survival or recovery than what is done perhaps

two or three hours later or even half an hour later, Mr. Speaker.

So these services provided by ambulances, delivered by ambulances, provided by paramedics and others in our province, are of vital importance in our health care system, particularly of vital importance in a province which wants to provide a quality or near quality of services across a wide area. And those of us who have had an opportunity to travel immediately south of our border to the Dakotas, to Montana, I think appreciate how much better — and maybe there's a bit a chauvinism and patriotism involved here, Mr. Speaker — but how better I think in a number of areas, particularly health care, but not only health care, education, and other areas.

We have been able in the Canadian Prairie provinces, and I would hold Saskatchewan as high as any of the three, we have been able to deliver quality services to rural areas and people who are distributed across a wide area I think much better than our American neighbours have been able to do. I think they have particular problems with the way that they have decided to deliver health care or not deliver health care, but it's not limited to health care, Mr. Speaker. I think we may have an issue about rural schools; no doubt we do. But I wouldn't want to have the situation here that we have in the Dakotas or in Montana or a number of the Midwestern states.

A commitment has been made by successive governments in the province of Saskatchewan to ensure that electricity costs the same in Saskatoon as it does in Nipawin or further north, that the lights are on everywhere, and that the trip on the school bus is as short as possible. And I know that the members opposite feel strongly about this, and the members who sat in government and sit in opposition now feel strongly about this. And that is the case for ambulance services as well as any other part of the health care system or any other public service that's provided to the people of Saskatchewan. That has been our commitment.

And it's not been an inexpensive commitment. But it's a commitment that the people of Saskatchewan have made to each other and that I don't think people in larger centres begrudge their neighbours. Nobody — including myself, Mr. Speaker — is much more than a generation from the farm in this province. And I don't know how long this will continue in our history, but it's a commitment that we have and that we continue to have, and I know is shared on both sides of this House. And the Minister of Health needs to know that I'm talking about one of his Bills.

And so, Mr. Speaker, when we have an opportunity to look at, as we now do, as the government thought it was desirable do, to look at the ambulance system, then questions arise as to if this might be the only look at it that we make in this term of government. If we're not going to have an ambulance amendment Act every session, then are we doing everything that we can do to make sure that the system is as good as it can be, that we deal with issues of immediacy like trauma and heart attack and stroke as well as we can, Mr. Speaker.

I don't want to diminish the suffering that's caused by heart disease or cancer in old age, Mr. Speaker, but the real tragedies are those who die young. And most people die young, Mr. Speaker, as a result of some trauma or accident — a fire, car

accident is a common reason. When, Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — Order. It's kind of difficult when the Speaker's actually hearing voices from the farthest end of the room rather than the person speaking. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Meewasin.

Mr. Quennell: — Mr. Speaker, I'll try not to be so soft-spoken.

The true tragedies are of course when people die young, and personally if I never attend another funeral of a person under 30, I'll be quite happy, Mr. Speaker. And to our economy to lose young people in the prime of life who have another 30 — or now that we've done away with mandatory retirement — 35, 40 years to contribute to their society, to their economy, to their neighbours, to their clients, to their employers, to their customers, the loss is beyond the merely personal. But the personal loss of course is very great.

And the ability to save a person from death or long-term disability from a trauma, it doesn't exist in the recovery room or even in the operating room to the extent that it occurs at the site of the trauma and with the people who arrive in the ambulance and what they can do then and what they can do quickly and what they can do soon after the trauma and what they can do even prior to transporting and during transport of that person to the hospital. And that's why this is such an important issue, Mr. Speaker.

And if those issues are best dealt with in other legislation or in other ways or in other policies, that's fair, Mr. Speaker. But I suspect that the opening up of this legislation provides some opportunities for us to look at how we can ensure that what we do in the ambulance system is as good as it can be, and as suited to the particular needs of the Saskatchewan people and how we continue to live in this province as possible.

And I think other members of the legislature who know more about the health care system than I do may have comments to make in that respect, Mr. Speaker, and I would certainly like them to have the opportunity to do that, whatever side of the House that they are on. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would propose now to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Meewasin has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 49, *The Ambulance Amendment Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

Bill No. 45

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 45 — *The Credit Union Amendment Act, 2008*** be now read a second time.]

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

[15:15]

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to be able to rise and add a few comments to this Act, *The Credit Union Amendment Act*.

I have to say, Mr. Speaker, there was some questions in my mind when I first looked at the Bill and seen the acronym CUDGC [Credit Union Deposit Guarantee Corporation]. I had a bit of debate as to what exactly it stood for, and I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, there is a number of folks at home that are wondering just exactly what it stands for if they happened to miss the minister's second reading speech that really laid it out a little more clearly, but it's the Credit Union Deposit Guarantee Corporation.

And, Mr. Speaker, CUDGC was formed in 1953 as Canada's first deposit protection agency. And I think by anyone's standards here in the province of Saskatchewan, anyone who has dealt with credit unions, anyone that has a credit union in their community, I think we would all agree that it has been successful and that it has successfully really delivered on its mandate of protecting depositors.

Mr. Speaker, I went through the minister's second reading speech to get an idea of exactly what the changes being proposed are, had a look at the Bill. It seems to be just the number of board members and the makeup of the board that is changing. But I've had a look through the second reading speech. And I guess one of the issues that popped to mind for me was when it talked about CUDGC, how successful it has been, its many years of protecting the deposits of people right across the province and guaranteeing credit union depositors, and he made some comments about, "... Saskatchewan credit unions are strong, stable, and well capitalized."

And I think that was comforting for many folks in Saskatchewan to hear. While we have a great deal of faith in the credit union system and a regulatory regime that supports that system and has been successful in this province, I think to hear the minister say that offered a certain amount of comfort to people in Saskatchewan when we have heard the reports from around the globe, concern over financial institutions and others that are having some pretty difficult times. And a number of people that I have spoken to have talked about the deregulation of the industry and how it has really led us to where we are today.

Mr. Speaker, so when we see a piece of legislation that is coming forward, I guess the first question is, what does it do? What are the changes that are being proposed? Does it improve the system? Does it improve the safeguards that are in place? And does it allow for better operation of the organization, and the opportunity for the operation to reach its stated goals and mandates?

Mr. Speaker, when I look at this though, I believe as near as I can tell, it really just lays out the changes in the structure of the board. We're moving from a five-person board to a seven-person board, changing some of where the board members are appointed from, and looking at more of independent board members to be put on the board and enhance, hopefully, the governance structure.

So, Mr. Speaker, I don't have an awful lot of comments on this.

There was just one line that really jumped out at me from the minister's speech. When he talked about:

The current structure of the CUDGC board is not in keeping with similar deposit guarantee corporations in other jurisdictions where the majority of board members are government appointees or are otherwise independent of the regulated entities.

Mr. Speaker, I haven't heard of any examples where that would give me some concrete examples of what happens in other jurisdictions, what other jurisdictions the minister is referring to, or in fact what research has been done to support that comment.

So what I have to say, Mr. Speaker, is that while we're always pleased to see improvements made in the credit union system, CUDGC I think is one of those that we would look forward to seeing this improvement made to if in fact it is an improvement.

I would like some time to be able to do some research, talk to people within the field, and also look at other jurisdictions that the minister referred to, to see what the norm is in other jurisdictions, if in fact this is unusual.

And there is a number of concerns, or one particular concern, that if we have a strong system in place currently which has served the province of Saskatchewan and the people of Saskatchewan well since 1953, does this in fact improve or is it just a change for change's sake?

And, Mr. Speaker, I think there needs to be a bit more research done, a look at other jurisdictions to see what is commonplace there, and why it's commonplace. We don't need to do things and make changes just because they are in other provinces. If it's working well, maybe we need to maintain what is in place already. But, Mr. Speaker, I would like to be able to have a little more time to talk to some people in the industry and do a little more research on other jurisdictions. So with that, I would adjourn debate on Bill 45.

The Speaker: — The member from Moose Jaw Wakamow has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 45, *The Credit Union Amendment Act, 2008*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

Bill No. 9

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Gantfoer that **Bill No. 9 — *The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Amendment Act, 2008*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased once again to stand and speak on Bill No. 9, *An Act to Amend the Superannuation Act*, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this particular piece of legislation does a number of things, some of which I see as positive and some of which I think are significantly negative in the public interest, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill that I . . . In my last opportunity to speak to the Bill, I referred to it often as the double-dipping Bill, Mr. Speaker. And the reason I referred to it as the double-dipping Bill, Mr. Speaker, is this. Mr. Speaker, this piece of legislation now makes it legal for an individual to retire and to maintain employment in the Government of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, without ever leaving his employment, Mr. Speaker. So one day, one day, Mr. Speaker, an individual could be making his normal salary, whatever that amount is, Mr. Speaker. Let's use, for purposes of articulating legislation, \$100,000, Mr. Speaker. The next day, Mr. Speaker, he could come and in fact be making his \$100,000 salary and collecting a pension at the same time, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, Mr. Speaker, as the member said, so could I. And that's correct, Mr. Speaker. It could apply to somebody like myself or it could apply to other members. And it does in fact apply to many, many people who move from one employer to another employer, Mr. Speaker. But in most circumstances, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't apply. And I cannot find a single circumstance, Mr. Speaker, where it would actually apply to somebody being able to work full-time, Mr. Speaker, and collect his pension, Mr. Speaker. Today, working for the same employer, Mr. Speaker, I can't find an employer that allows that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, now if you want to retire from one employer, Mr. Speaker, and seek employment with somebody else and collect your pension and work, that, I agree, happens on a very regular basis, Mr. Speaker. But the difficulty of working for the same employer, collecting your pension and working full time for that employer, Mr. Speaker, is in fact double-dipping.

And, Mr. Speaker, if I could have just a few minutes just to explain why that's double-dipping . . . If you look at pension provisions historically, Mr. Speaker, pension provisions are there as income or salary replacement when an individual quits working for that employer, Mr. Speaker, after having worked many, many years, Mr. Speaker.

Normally, Mr. Speaker, most pension plans, defined benefit pension plans, Mr. Speaker, you have to work anywhere from 25 to 35 years before you're eligible to in fact collect pension. You have to be age 50 as a minimum. You have to be age 50 as a minimum, Mr. Speaker. And they say I could collect pension, Mr. Speaker. They well know I'm not 50 yet, so I couldn't collect pension yet, Mr. Speaker. No, Mr. Speaker, I'm quite a ways yet from 50, so I couldn't actually collect the pension right now, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, it's not common for an employer to pay the full salary of an individual and pay the pension from the same employer. As I said, it is quite common from people to retire from one occupation, collect the pension, and move on to a secondary occupation, Mr. Speaker. That's common in both the private and public sector, Mr. Speaker, but to work for the exact same employer, Mr. Speaker, is not common. And, Mr.

Speaker, pension provisions were put in place as salary replacement when an individual retires. Mr. Speaker, in this case the person hasn't actually retired. They'd still be working for the same employer full time, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this has become a problem for public accounting in the province of Saskatchewan because we've allowed individuals to come back on contract basis. We've allowed individuals to come back part time, Mr. Speaker, but nobody's been allowed to come back full time. Mr. Speaker, this would make it legal for somebody to actually work full time and collect the full pension, Mr. Speaker, and that is why I define it as double-dipping.

Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of the taxpayers of the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, because we have — at least in the public service, Mr. Speaker — a pension plan that's not funded, it's not fully funded, Mr. Speaker, so that money comes each and every year out of the General Revenue Fund, Mr. Speaker. So the taxpayers are paying, through their tax dollars, the full amount of the pension and the full amount of the salary. So that individual, Mr. Speaker, is collecting, it could be up to 170 per cent of his full-time salary, Mr. Speaker, and doing the same job he was doing the day before. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, deserve better. Mr. Speaker, they have a right to know that their government's acting in their best interest, Mr. Speaker.

Now I can understand that this provision is allowed between two employers, two different employers. That happens on a regular basis. It's not uncommon for individuals to retire from one employer and go to work for another — that's very common, Mr. Speaker — and while they're doing that, collect that pension from the first employer and collect a salary from a second employer. But, Mr. Speaker, the difficulty here is it's the same employer, Mr. Speaker, and it's the same payer, Mr. Speaker. And when that's occurring, Mr. Speaker, we are paying as taxpayers more than we need to pay to get that job performed. We are paying more than we need to pay, Mr. Speaker, and when we pay more than we need to pay, Mr. Speaker, I would say, Mr. Speaker, we're not getting value for our dollar then, Mr. Speaker. The taxpayers of this province are not getting value for their dollar, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to spend a few minutes talking about some of the other provisions in this legislation, Mr. Speaker, and some of it is appropriate and very good changes, Mr. Speaker — changes that I think we'd all like to see, Mr. Speaker. It clarifies how a pension is divided and how a new spouse would be entitled to benefit, Mr. Speaker, under the pension Act, something that I think is appropriate. I think that's something that's been unclear for some time and left a second spouse perhaps in less than adequate compensation or adequate ability to live after an individual deceased, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, those provisions we all agree with. Those provisions are good, Mr. Speaker, and those provisions help make this legislation better. Mr. Speaker, nobody would disagree with those particular provisions.

But, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read into the record the provisions of section 27 in the original Act which is being, Mr. Speaker, repealed and removed from the legislation. And it says,

“Suspension of allowance upon re-employment.” Today, Mr. Speaker, and until this legislation is passed, Mr. Speaker:

Where a person who is in receipt of a superannuation allowance under this Act or any other superannuation Act hereafter becomes entitled to receive a salary from the government, then the superannuation allowance shall be suspended from the day on which this section comes into force or from the day on which such salary entitlement commences, whichever is later.

Mr. Speaker, so today you cannot collect your pension from the same employer at the same time as you're being paid to perform a service on behalf of that employer, a salary, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, that's the norm. That is the norm throughout pensions across North America, Mr. Speaker. It's the norm across pensions throughout, Mr. Speaker, largely the world where pensions exist, Mr. Speaker.

[15:30]

Mr. Speaker, I understand the member from Swift Current is absolutely thrilled to listen to this one more time, Mr. Speaker. But, Mr. Speaker, for some time he'll have the opportunity to hear what is actually going on in this legislation. It goes on to say, Mr. Speaker, in section 27:

(2) Notwithstanding subsection (1), a person who is in receipt of a superannuation allowance may be employed by the government as a temporary, casual or provisional employee for any period or periods, not exceeding in the aggregate six months in any fiscal year, without suspension of the superannuation allowance.

Mr. Speaker, so it does allow employees to come back on a contractual basis or to come back part-time to fill in where there are needs for speciality skills, Mr. Speaker, or an individual who is there to assist in providing potential additional workforce, Mr. Speaker, in any one of our government agencies. So it does allow somebody to come back on a part-time basis, Mr. Speaker, but the current legislation does not allow somebody to come back on a permanent basis, Mr. Speaker.

And:

Subsection (1) does not apply where the person in receipt of a superannuation allowance is the spouse of a person who at the time of death was an employee or a superannuate and where the person in receipt of the allowance is not personally a superannuate.

Mr. Speaker, so if you're in fact receiving benefits from a spouse that passed on, Mr. Speaker, and you are still employed by the government by virtue you were a government employee, or get employed as a government employee, Mr. Speaker, it does not cut off that superannuation situation, Mr. Speaker, because it is that of a spouse, Mr. Speaker. And that's also common in legislation, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, the primary problem with this piece of legislation is simple. It allows individuals to actually collect more than 100 per cent of their salary while performing the

duties to which they are already being paid 100 per cent of the allowable salary for. And, Mr. Speaker, the taxpayers of Saskatchewan would be paying that additional, up to 70 per cent, Mr. Speaker, if the person had 35 years of employment in and, Mr. Speaker, the pension allows for 2 per cent of salary for each year of service to a maximum of 35, or 70 per cent, Mr. Speaker. So that individual could collect 170 per cent of salary.

Mr. Speaker, that's a concern not just of myself, but it should be a concern of the members opposite as well. Mr. Speaker, the members opposite I hope take the opportunity to think about this before deciding to proceed with it, Mr. Speaker, because of course they have the numbers at the end of the day to pass this legislation, Mr. Speaker. But they need to think about whose interest is it in and is it in the best interest of the taxpayers of the province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there are clearly people who would like this legislation, Mr. Speaker. And I can see many government employees who'd like to see this legislation in place — many, many people who would have the opportunity to continue employment and make, Mr. Speaker, 170 per cent of their salary potential.

But, Mr. Speaker, that is not what was intended when pensions were put in place. As I stated earlier, when pensions were put in place it was put in place as a salary replacement when an individual retired or left employment, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, if somebody chose then to go to another employer and work and collect pension but a different employer, that was permissible, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, what we have here is a situation where the one employer would be paying twice, Mr. Speaker, and that's a questionable practice, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, why would we want to institute a practice, Mr. Speaker, that would allow or see the taxpayers of Saskatchewan paying significantly more money? And yes, Mr. Speaker, I can understand many people would be asking for this. Anybody who would financially benefit from it, Mr. Speaker, would be asking for it, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, we have to make public policy not based on what an individual lobby group asks us for. We need to make public policy based on what's best for the entirety of the population of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, what's in the best interests of all the taxpayers in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. So in doing so, we need to take those things into consideration.

Mr. Speaker, I can clearly see the benefit to those individuals who could collect, Mr. Speaker. I could clearly see the benefit to those who could collect, Mr. Speaker, a pension and work full-time, Mr. Speaker, and I could see why individuals would like to have that opportunity, Mr. Speaker. I can also see rationally why individuals would make the argument, if I can do it with a different employer, why can't I do it with the same employer? I can see why those arguments would be made, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, we in the Legislative Assembly here are tasked with acting in the best interests of the public of Saskatchewan, safeguarding public funds, and spending those

funds in the best interest of all the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, we need to consider when we're making decisions like this what is in the best interests of the people of the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Is it in the best interest to have individuals continue in employment beyond 35 years collecting their full salary and their 70 per cent salary, not making opportunity for advancement for younger people? That needs to be taken into consideration, Mr. Speaker. It's part of the equation. It's part of what we need to look at, Mr. Speaker.

Now today in our current situation, Mr. Speaker, with near zero unemployment, Mr. Speaker, the job market would maybe perhaps warrant one thing, Mr. Speaker. But we also can't make public policy just on a short-term examination of a problem, Mr. Speaker. We need to understand what the implications are long term.

And, Mr. Speaker, we also need to understand that, is it in the public interest? Is it in the public interest, Mr. Speaker, for a government to pay the 100 per cent of a salary and 70 per cent of pension — both coming out of the General Revenue Fund — when they can get the same work done for simply paying 100 per cent of the salary, Mr. Speaker? You can get the same work done paying 100 per cent of the salary, Mr. Speaker, without paying that 70 per cent out to pensions, Mr. Speaker.

I hear members saying, who does the pension belong to, Mr. Speaker. I will agree wholeheartedly with the concept that pensions belong to the employee, to the individual, Mr. Speaker. The difficulty becomes, when pension laws were created in this country, and what was intended was this, Mr. Speaker, is that pension income was there to be salary replacement when an individual retired, Mr. Speaker, when they chose to move on, Mr. Speaker, and retire, Mr. Speaker.

Well, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, and if you move to another employer and work for another employer, Mr. Speaker, it is very common to collect a pension and collect a salary, but it's not with the same employer, Mr. Speaker. The situation we're dealing with is, the taxpayers of Saskatchewan could pay up to 170 per cent of that salary to get what they could actually only pay 100 per cent for and get the work done. So they are paying 70 per cent more, Mr. Speaker. And is that appropriate? Is that good stewardship of public dollars, Mr. Speaker? And is that what we want to actually do, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, employees in the private sector who work for private companies don't have that option, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, employees in private pension plans working for companies don't have those options, Mr. Speaker. So why should we have one set of options for one group of people in our province and other sets of options for others, Mr. Speaker?

I challenge the members opposite to find me a private sector pension plan that allows an individual to remain working at 100 per cent of their salary and collecting their pension, Mr. Speaker, from the same employer. Mr. Speaker, I challenge them to find me examples of that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I can see why people want this, Mr. Speaker, but we are here to act in the interest of the general public of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And as I said a year ago when this

legislation came forward, Mr. Speaker, my concern is that in the interest of proper stewardship of public dollars, Mr. Speaker, this could potentially impact not just a few government employees, Mr. Speaker, or Crown employees, but maybe thousands and thousands of employees over time, Mr. Speaker. And then you start paying more than 100 per cent of salary to a large number of . . . [inaudible] . . . employees, Mr. Speaker, that has a significant cost to the public purse, Mr. Speaker. And that significant cost, that significant cost, Mr. Speaker, has an implication on what services a government can deliver, Mr. Speaker, and what is appropriate for that government to deliver, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, they say if you hire somebody else you're still paying. I say, yes you are, Mr. Speaker. Yes you are, Mr. Speaker. You're paying 100 per cent for that salary, Mr. Speaker, and you'd still be paying the 70 per cent for the individual who's retired. I agree with that, Mr. Speaker. But it's not to the same person making 170 per cent to do this very job he would be willing to do — and has done for many years — for 100 per cent of his salary, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, members opposite are saying, you know, ask me all types of questions. I can only deal with one issue at a time. Ask one question at a time and I'll try to address it, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this particular piece of legislation, although I can see many people who would like the provisions, Mr. Speaker, many people who would want the provisions, Mr. Speaker, and you know, Mr. Speaker, members often say I potentially would be one of the benefactors, Mr. Speaker.

You know what, Mr. Speaker? That is potentially true, Mr. Speaker. But I have to make decisions not based on what's in my own best interest, Mr. Speaker, but in the best interest of the public of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And in the best interest of the public of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, is it in the best interest of the public to pay for 170 per cent potentially of a salary where the individual today would be doing it for 100 per cent, Mr. Speaker?

And, Mr. Speaker, those have long-lasting and far-reaching implications, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that has long-reaching and far-reaching implications, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite seem to be disturbed, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has the floor. You'd think we were in committee the way the questions are being fired across the floor. I will recognize the member that . . . Respect the member that has the floor. I recognize the member from Regina Dewdney.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Members are drawing comparisons from various pension plans and various retirement situations, Mr. Speaker, and trying to put them on a par with this particular situation, Mr. Speaker. There are differences.

The point I'm trying to make, Mr. Speaker, is this particular piece of legislation has been in place for some time, restricting the ability to do what they are actually putting forward today. And it was put forward restricting that ability for a reason, Mr.

Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it was put there in the interests of protecting the public funds, Mr. Speaker, and in fact ensuring that value for dollar was obtained, Mr. Speaker, through the employment and through the retirement, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, if we allow individuals to retire and collect their pension in the same job, Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, somebody could actually on a Friday be making \$100,000 a year and on Monday making \$170,000 a year — not moved his desk, not changed anything else in his employment, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the previous legislation prevented that.

The removal of those clauses would allow that, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that wouldn't be prohibited under this legislation. If this Bill is in fact passed, Mr. Speaker, it would allow that to happen. And that isn't pension fraud, Mr. Speaker. It isn't what it's being perceived to be. Under the current legislation that was not permissible. Under this legislation, Mr. Speaker, it would be permissible. And, Mr. Speaker, we have to safeguard the public funds.

It's the responsibility of the opposition to ask tough questions, to make sure that the public interest is protected as we're looking at how public dollars are expended, Mr. Speaker. So we need to ensure that as we examine these pieces of legislation and as we pass public policy, it is in the best interests of all the people of Saskatchewan, not just those who may benefit directly from the legislation, Mr. Speaker.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite are asking various questions. I can only answer one question at a time. I didn't hear some of the comments, Mr. Speaker.

This may have very narrow application today, Mr. Speaker, a very small application to very few people today, Mr. Speaker. But like many pieces of legislation, you have to look at what the implications are long term, what the financial implications are on the public purse and what impact it will have in the long-term stability of the pension plan, Mr. Speaker.

In this particular case, it will not change the stability of the pension plan because this pension plan is not funded, Mr. Speaker, and it's fully funded out of the General Revenue Fund on an annual basis. So, Mr. Speaker, each year the government has to set aside a portion of money in order to pay the pensions of employees that fall under this pension plan because it's an unfunded liability, Mr. Speaker. But, Mr. Speaker, it won't even change the unfunded liability by paying this out, Mr. Speaker. But what it does do is see us paying out the same person 170 per cent of what they would earn, Mr. Speaker, if they stayed employed in their job and didn't retire and remain employed, Mr. Speaker. And those are concerns, though some members may not like, I think that they're tough questions that need to be asked.

[15:45]

And, Mr. Speaker, many people would like this legislation, as I've pointed out. But when we're making public policy decisions, when we're making public policy decisions we have to make the best decisions, Mr. Speaker. And if we have the opportunity to debate them and look at them fully, Mr. Speaker,

then we perhaps should make better decisions, Mr. Speaker. At the end of the day, what I'm trying to do and what members of the opposition try to do is get the government to examine the legislation to see if this is really what they think should be done in the public interest of Saskatchewan.

We all know that the government has the majority of members and can and will eventually, if they so choose, pass this legislation. But what we're doing, what we're doing is simply asking the questions if this is what they really want to do. Is this really the public policy interest that they have or is this a piece of legislation that was brought forward by some stakeholders who want this because they will potentially benefit from it directly? Mr. Speaker, I don't have the answers to those questions and at some point later in the future as we go into committee, we will ask those questions, Mr. Speaker.

This piece of legislation has been brought forward several times. It had been brought forward when we were the government, Mr. Speaker. We would not proceed with that legislation for our concerns in the public interest, Mr. Speaker, and public accountability of public dollars, Mr. Speaker. This government has chosen to bring forward the legislation. A year ago, to their credit, when questions were asked they took a step back, didn't proceed with the Bill at that time — I imagine sought some input and further examination of the issues. Maybe some of the concerns I have when we get to committee and that I've expressed, they'll be able to satisfy my answers, Mr. Speaker.

But in the interest, Mr. Speaker, of ensuring that a close and careful examination of this piece of legislation is done, Mr. Speaker — and as the members are well aware, we have some time left to go this afternoon and this is the last piece of legislation we have to deal with this afternoon, Mr. Speaker — we're going to discuss this Bill for some time.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if we were proceeding with this legislation as is, Mr. Speaker, today, there's a number of questions that we would be asking the minister responsible, including what are the projections for utilization of these provisions and what are the costs to the public purse, Mr. Speaker. What are their projections or implications for possible promotional opportunities for more junior employees as a result of this legislation and people potentially staying longer in their jobs, Mr. Speaker?

And, Mr. Speaker, we will be asking questions about what does this do to . . . How does this affect new people coming into the civil service as individuals choose to stay much longer because they can collect upwards of 170 per cent of their salary, Mr. Speaker?

Those are all important questions. They are important questions that we need to consider as we examine this piece of legislation. As I had stated earlier, there is more than one aspect to this piece of legislation. The changes that have been made in regards to improving the rights of second spouses, Mr. Speaker, are changes that all members of the Assembly I think can agree with. They are clearly changes that are beneficial.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if we legalize the concept of double-dipping today, Mr. Speaker, and the ability to collect a pension and

work 100 per cent, Mr. Speaker, in the same job for the same employer for the government, Mr. Speaker, does that have any long-term implications on other private sector pension plans? Does it set precedents that could potentially have impact on other employers, Mr. Speaker? These are all things that we need to be concerned about as a legislature as we set precedent that affects individuals under our direct control, Mr. Speaker, because those precedents often get used then as examples for other individuals for changes to their pension plans, Mr. Speaker.

So before we pass any particular piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, we need to understand what those implications are in a broader context to other employers in the province of Saskatchewan potentially as their employees bring up these implications and desire these changes as well, Mr. Speaker. We don't know what those implications are today, Mr. Speaker. We don't fully understand them. I think we need to examine that in more detail.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite say I can understand it. Well yes, I can understand that there will be potential implications, Mr. Speaker. Just as you bargain with one group it sets an expectation or a pattern for other groups that do similar things or do like work, Mr. Speaker. I would expect nothing different from changes to pension legislation, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in all fairness I should point out that today, today if you had your retirement savings in RRSPs [registered retirement saving plan], Mr. Speaker, and you needed at any time to access that money, you have the ability to access that money, Mr. Speaker. It's not locked in; you could cash them in. Of course you'd pay income tax on cashing in those RRSPs, but that is money that's readily utilized at any period of time if you have additional need, Mr. Speaker.

Now traditionally defined benefit pension plans haven't had any of those types of provisions, Mr. Speaker. This would be not moving to anywhere near the lucrative type of provisions that you would see in self-directed RRSP plans, Mr. Speaker, but it would be an opening to make the pension plan more flexible and allowing employees to do things, Mr. Speaker, that they can't currently do.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's with no ill intent or malice or anything towards any of the employees who may benefit from this, Mr. Speaker, because I understand why they would desire it, Mr. Speaker. I as an individual would desire that as well, Mr. Speaker.

But we, Mr. Speaker, have a responsibility in setting precedent, Mr. Speaker, and ensuring that what we do is in the broader public interest, Mr. Speaker. It accomplishes the goals of not just what is immediately in front of us, but that we understand what implications it has to other employers, Mr. Speaker, what implications it has in other public sector employers, Mr. Speaker. And not necessarily just in Saskatchewan either, Mr. Speaker, because provinces and that compare to one another as well, Mr. Speaker. So we always have to be concerned about what precedents we're setting and are they really in the public interest.

We can't afford to experiment with things like pensions without

understanding what those implications are, Mr. Speaker, because today, Mr. Speaker, there are many, many pension plans who have difficulty, Mr. Speaker, remaining solvent, Mr. Speaker, and having adequate funding, Mr. Speaker, to deliver the benefit which was once intended, Mr. Speaker.

So we can't — just because we didn't fund this and we didn't set aside the money, Mr. Speaker — decide that we can change things and provide any amount of money at any time. And that's what this change really would allow to happen as well, Mr. Speaker. It would allow us to say that we would be able to provide any amount at any time, Mr. Speaker.

Well, Mr. Speaker, is that in the public interest? I would question it being in the public interest, Mr. Speaker. And I would ask members opposite to consider whether or not they believe it's in the public interest, Mr. Speaker.

I don't know what analysis the members of the government have done in whether this is good public policy or not, whether they've had a round table discussion, Mr. Speaker, if they've asked other private sector employers whether they think this is a good precedent to be set — I know none of that, Mr. Speaker. But when we get to actual . . . Mr. Speaker, in committee on this particular piece of legislation, those are questions that we'll have the opportunity to ask.

Mr. Speaker, I know why the Bill is originally brought forward because it was brought forward when I was in the government, Mr. Speaker. We had the opportunity to examine it, and we decided not to proceed at this time with this change in legislation, Mr. Speaker.

I want to point out that this particular change was not driven by the previous NDP government internally; it was a change driven within the bureaucracy, Mr. Speaker. And most of our legislation is in fact driven by changes in the bureaucracy, things that need to be updated and renewed, Mr. Speaker.

But the question is, is this particular change what we want to do? And I think that's a fair question, Mr. Speaker. And we will hear from members opposite that they think it's the right thing to do or at least some members opposite have said that from their seats, Mr. Speaker, and that's fair ball that they think it is.

But our role as the official opposition is to ensure that there's due diligence done in consideration of changes in public policy, and that those changes in public policy in fact benefit the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We would not be doing our jobs if we didn't ask the very difficult questions, we didn't bring up the issues that may not be as pleasant as some of the others, in order to ensure a full examination of the impact and implications of each and every piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker.

And this particular piece of legislation has significant implications. And those implications, Mr. Speaker, can affect, Mr. Speaker, a number of aspects of employment within the public service. It can also affect total overall cost dollars to the Government of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. It can change promotional opportunities for others, Mr. Speaker. And all those things need to be taken into consideration as you look at having a viable, long-term civil service with the ability to

entertain changes, Mr. Speaker, and entertain changes in a way that looks for stability, looks for the opportunity for individuals to advance, Mr. Speaker, and to plan that advancement within the civil service, Mr. Speaker.

One of the things all employers need to do today is to plan, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that they can keep their workforce, Mr. Speaker. And one of the ways is to ensure that there are advancement opportunities for employees, Mr. Speaker. And this potentially could impact that.

My questions to the members opposite would be, has that been examined? Has it been examined as to its implications in the civil service, Mr. Speaker? I'd also like to point out to the people of Saskatchewan who may not be aware, we have a civil service that is growing, Mr. Speaker, in . . . or growing is the incorrect word, but is becoming older each year, Mr. Speaker, in the sense that the average age is increasing, Mr. Speaker. So we need to understand those implications.

If two-thirds or one-third of the workforce, Mr. Speaker, five years from now are in fact collecting pension on this fund and collecting their salaries, what are the financial implications, Mr. Speaker, but what also are the human resource implications and the ability to attract younger people into those jobs in a timely manner in order for them to learn the skills and the abilities to advance within the organization, Mr. Speaker? Those are all things that need to be considered. They're all things that we need to look at and examine, Mr. Speaker, and we need to talk about.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if the members opposite have examined all those things, then we'll have the opportunity later to talk about those things. We'll have the opportunity later to see whether or not there's been a close scrutiny of the implications of this, Mr. Speaker. We'll have the opportunity to see whether or not they've consulted other employers as to whether they see this as a precedent being good in the overall community of Saskatchewan. Many, many employers out there provide pension opportunities, Mr. Speaker, and does this potentially have any implications, Mr. Speaker?

It certainly doesn't have implications if people have RRSP plans or those types of pension plans, Mr. Speaker, because as members opposite would know, an employee that has an RRSP pension plan or buys personal RRSPs can cash those in when they need to or when they want to, Mr. Speaker. They in fact can have access to that money at any time, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, nothing in the operations of government pensions in the past or today would prevent an individual from buying additional RRSPs as well as their funded pension plan, Mr. Speaker. Most people in the province would be aware, until just most recently it was matched at 5 per cent, Mr. Speaker. The employee put in 5 per cent — the government put in 5 per cent — and there was a sliding scale based on the age in which you entered the civil service with slightly more being paid if you enter at a later age, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that before we proceed with this legislation, to have a full examination, Mr. Speaker. And I have had some time to talk about the things I think need to be examined in detail, Mr. Speaker. I hope that we will have

the opportunity at a later date, Mr. Speaker, to have some detailed examination of this potential legislation in committee, Mr. Speaker, where we'll have the opportunity to question whether or not individuals actually have — individuals on the other side, Mr. Speaker — have actually looked at any of the implications, and what those implications are on the overall public policy of the Government of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I at this time think I will conclude my remarks for today.

[16:00]

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

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity today as well to rise on Bill No. 9, *The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Amendment Act, 2008*. I'm hoping, Mr. Speaker, that the thousands of people who had tuned in knowing that the member from Regina Dewdney was going to speak on this Bill again will hang in there for a short while longer as I add some additional information, Mr. Speaker, to what the member from Regina Dewdney raised.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think it is very important that members of this House, members of the public who are watching, staff members of the government opposite who are reviewing this legislation also take some time, Mr. Speaker, to review not only the member of Regina Dewdney's comments from today, but also his comments back on March 17, 2008 when this piece of legislation was first brought in. And, Mr. Speaker, for those who don't have access to the March 17 debate, I think in a few minutes I would like to put a few of those comments back on the record so that those who are watching today will be able to catch up entirely on where this debate is at.

Mr. Speaker, by saying that, March 17, 2008, members of the public today and in the future should be aware that this legislation was introduced in the spring. And why in the fall now are we currently debating it again, Mr. Speaker, is because when this Bill was first introduced — and it was introduced for second reading on March 17, 2008 — the government opposite introduced the Bill, and it would appear that the government, the newly elected government was bringing forward legislation that they hadn't fully understood. Because, Mr. Speaker, within minutes of the member of Regina Dewdney speaking on March 17, 2008, the Bill disappeared. Within minutes, Mr. Speaker, of the member from Regina Dewdney speaking, the Bill disappeared.

And now, Mr. Speaker, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, Mr. Speaker, eight months later — if it's November now, which it is, nine months later — Mr. Speaker, the Bill suddenly reappears. But it hasn't been changed. Mr. Speaker, the government members opposite took a time out to review the Bill and apparently, Mr. Speaker, didn't find anything wanting to provide any changes which could have been done over that period of time, Mr. Speaker.

So the comments made by the member from Regina Dewdney, which I will refer to shortly, Mr. Speaker, the comments about this Bill establishes the legal provision for government employees to double-dip, Mr. Speaker, seem to have fallen on

deaf ears across the way.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think one of the goals that we have to engage in today and over the next few weeks, Mr. Speaker, is to ensure that while this Bill is in front of the public for debate and before the majority members that sit on the government side vote to pass this legislation, that the public firmly understands that the members opposite, the new government, Mr. Speaker, supports the idea of double-dipping within government. That's the essence of the argument here, Mr. Speaker.

I think we should take a minute to simply review the Bill in front of us, Mr. Speaker, because it helps to put it all into context. And the member from Regina Dewdney's comments about public policy are critically important — critically important, Mr. Speaker — to a firm understanding of what it is that's in front of us here.

But let's go back to the second reading speech of the minister, Mr. Speaker, so that we get some context of what it is that we're talking about, because of course it's very easy for members of the public to focus on one thing and lose the overall context because, Mr. Speaker, there are provisions inside this legislation that we're reviewing today, provisions that are entirely supportable. And, Mr. Speaker, I know provisions that were in the process of being brought forward for legislation prior to the election of November 2007, so there are some provisions here that are entirely supportable.

What we want to do, Mr. Speaker, is ensure that the context is understood before we carry on with our raising concerns about this provision of double-dipping. So, Mr. Speaker, what is this Bill No. 9? Back in March when the minister provided the second reading speech, he indicated, Mr. Speaker, that the legislation pertains to defined benefit plans, not defined contribution plans, Mr. Speaker, and perhaps we should define that a little bit further now, Mr. Speaker. Defined benefit plans means that you have employees that are contributing to a plan today through their payroll deduction or whatever, but the benefit that you get on retirement is defined. The benefit, Mr. Speaker, is defined. So you know, you know, Mr. Speaker, that your pension when you retire will be X number of dollars or it would be a percentage of your final salary or it would be a combination of things.

But the benefit is defined, Mr. Speaker. It means that before retirement you know exactly, as a potential retiree, you know exactly what you're going to get in retirement. That means, Mr. Speaker, that a defined benefit plan gave individuals an opportunity to know what was going to happen with their incomes into the future, and they could make plans otherwise, Mr. Speaker. Did they need to seek income elsewhere before they retire? They can make that decision. Could they live on that without indexing? Because a lot of these plans, Mr. Speaker, were not indexed, and of course, Mr. Speaker, that's a subject as well that hasn't been addressed by this government.

And perhaps we should remind members of the public that members of these plans, which I'm going to describe even further later, did have pensions, Mr. Speaker; that because they were defined and not indexed, have become subject to concerns by people who did retire 10 years ago, 15 years ago, and who have felt that their pensions have not kept up with the cost of

living and, Mr. Speaker, who are asking government to provide that full indexing and other benefits, Mr. Speaker, to this closed plan.

Mr. Speaker, members of the now government that were in opposition not that long ago indicated to the superannuates, Mr. Speaker, that if they got into government, everything would be fixed overnight. Here we are, Mr. Speaker, a year later. The election was more than a year ago now, Mr. Speaker, so it's more than a year and they still have not addressed this issue. And to my understanding, Mr. Speaker, the minister who has some responsibility in this regard has not even answered the letters of the superannuates who have been asking these questions.

Mr. Speaker, while we're on that subject, let me just say that I think that the superannuates deserve an answer from the new government, Mr. Speaker. There were promises made, expectations raised when they were in opposition, and now it's time, Mr. Speaker, for them to step up to the plate and address those issues front and centre. Mr. Speaker, the superannuates deserve that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I was talking about the defined benefit plan, Mr. Speaker. We know now that the new plans of government and the plans that the majority of workers in Canada now have, Mr. Speaker, are defined contribution plans. A defined contribution plan, Mr. Speaker, is a circumstance whereby you know what you put in, but you don't know for sure what you're going to get out. So, Mr. Speaker, the contribution is defined, not the benefit. And when you define the contribution, Mr. Speaker, you provide yourself as a potential retiree with an opportunity to take advantage of growing markets. And, Mr. Speaker, up until a few months ago the majority, the vast majority of pensioners were very anxious to take advantage of the growing marketplace. And, Mr. Speaker, now of course there are pressures on individuals who have retired and whose pensions are subject to market forces.

So, Mr. Speaker, knowing what we know, it is hugely important for people who are employed where there is a pension plan to understand the difference between a defined benefit plan and a defined contribution plan, to understand what it is that they are involved in and to make decisions, Mr. Speaker, based on that in the months leading up to retirement.

So that's why this particular piece of legislation is important, Mr. Speaker, because people are going to make decisions based on the provisions that are inside this Act, Mr. Speaker, which when the majority on the government side passes it, that's exactly what it will become, Mr. Speaker, the law of the land.

So I hope that I have, for the benefit of those people who are watching here today and those who are taking notes, I hope that I have provided some understanding of the difference between defined benefit plans and defined contribution plans.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Bill 9, which is what we're discussing here, deals with the following defined benefit plans. It's very specific, Mr. Speaker. It applies to the public service superannuation plan. It applies to the Liquor Board superannuation plan. It applies to the Power Corporation superannuation plan. It also applies to the Anti-Tuberculosis

League employees' superannuation plan, and, Mr. Speaker, it applies to the Saskatchewan Transportation Company employees superannuation plan. So, Mr. Speaker, this is a very specific group of plans that this legislation applies to.

Now in referring back to the second reading speech of the minister, Mr. Speaker, he further outlined in his comments about providing the background for this legislation, he argued very clearly that these defined benefit pension plans were closed to new members on October 1, 1977. That means, Mr. Speaker, that decisions were made by individual employees prior to October 1, 1977 and, Mr. Speaker, these defined benefit plans no longer were available for new employees to contribute to.

So that means, Mr. Speaker, we are dealing with a very specific group of people, a specific group of people who have been working for the provincial government since 1977, some of whom have already retired, Mr. Speaker, many of whom have already retired.

Now just in terms of numbers, what does that mean, Mr. Speaker? Well as of December 31, 2007 — so at the end of the calendar year preceding the one we're in today — at December 31, 2007, there were 1,847 active and inactive members remaining in the defined benefit plan and, Mr. Speaker, 7,856 pensioners.

So when the member from Regina Dewdney in his comments earlier talked about this change perhaps affecting thousands of employees within the provincial civil service, Mr. Speaker, he was bang on. This is just short of 2,000 active employees of the provincial government, Mr. Speaker, who could be in a position to legally double-dip on the approval of the government in front of us. So, Mr. Speaker, as members of the Public Accounts Committee understand, as members of the Treasury Board — current and former members of the Treasury Board — and as members of the Finance Committee, old former Finance Committee, know, Mr. Speaker, it's very important to understand the implications, the policy decisions on the bottom line of government and what are the overall total costs going to be.

[16:15]

Because, Mr. Speaker, here we are potentially creating a circumstance where, as the member from Regina Dewdney properly indicated, we will have individuals who could be working for government today and retire tonight and, Mr. Speaker, be hired back by government tomorrow or early next week at their same salary. Mr. Speaker, they're then eligible for their pension benefits and, Mr. Speaker, continuing on the salary grid as it applies, Mr. Speaker. And I think, I think, Mr. Speaker — and I will get into this more in a few minutes, Mr. Speaker — but I think that the majority of Saskatchewan residents would find that that would be inappropriate.

Let me put it in another context, Mr. Speaker. I think members fully remember and acknowledge and understand that I served in the House of Commons as a Member of Parliament for two terms, Mr. Speaker, and as a Member of Parliament I was eligible for some pension provisions. Mr. Speaker, my pension provisions with the federal government, by law, Mr. Speaker,

are clawed back should I go back to work in any capacity with the federal government. In other words, Mr. Speaker, it is not allowed by Ottawa for one to double-dip, to receive two cheques from the same employer, the employer being the Government of Canada. In this case, Mr. Speaker, this newly elected government is saying to the people of Saskatchewan, it is okay to receive two cheques for the same job working for the province of Saskatchewan. But more on that in a few moments, Mr. Speaker.

As we all know, Mr. Speaker, when members of the defined pension plans that are now closed, Mr. Speaker, there's no more money going into those plans, Mr. Speaker, so the pensioners receiving their monthly stipends, Mr. Speaker, their pensions, are receiving it from a closed system. There's no new money coming into the system. So it's very important, Mr. Speaker, that those pension dollars be protected.

Let's not forget, Mr. Speaker — and I think it's important to acknowledge this as well — is that Saskatchewan has been well served by our public servants, Mr. Speaker, well served over the years. Public servants in this province, Mr. Speaker, working with the elected members, have developed some of the most innovative public policy matters in the world — and I'm not exaggerating, Mr. Speaker — in the world.

We go back a number of years, public servants working for the Government of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, developed the medicare plan that for five years we funded right here in Saskatchewan — the hospitalization plan. I'd better get my language right here. For five years, Saskatchewan managed and operated the hospitalization plan brought about by a very progressive government — but the policy matters developed by a public service in this province, Mr. Speaker — and for five years we funded that by ourselves until, five years after instituted here, the federal government made a decision that in fact it would be a Canada-wide medicare program with federal funding. Mr. Speaker, interestingly, over the years, what originally was a 50/50 cost-sharing program between federal and provincial governments rapidly became one where the provinces pay the majority of the share, Mr. Speaker.

But Saskatchewan back in the early '60s, not a wealthy province by any means, Mr. Speaker, fought hard, fought hard and built a system that now is universally revered, Mr. Speaker. And we can thank public servants for bringing that forward. And, Mr. Speaker, we can cite an endless number of programs, whether it be in the education sector, the social service sector, the justice sector, Mr. Speaker, areas where public servants have contributed greatly to the well-being of the people of this province and whose work has been studied and instituted in other provinces in Canada, in other governments around the world, including the United States, Great Britain, Australia, countries in Africa, Mr. Speaker. These are things that we have to be proud of and recognize when we are talking about contributions that have been made by men and women serving the people of Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of the work that our public servants have made and we don't want to see barriers put in their way when they retire. But, Mr. Speaker, as protectors of the public purse as well as protectors of public policy and protectors of the people who work within government, Mr.

Speaker, we have to take this global approach to ensuring that we are doing the right things at the right time for the right people.

Now back to the speech of the minister in introducing Bill No. 9 back in March 2008, and the minister clearly says:

The public employees pension plan does not and has never had a restriction for pensioners returning to work in the public sector . . . 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.

So, Mr. Speaker, while there are and have been protections against double-dipping on salaries, people who bring a wealth of experience to the table have always been welcomed back by government to serve the people of Saskatchewan. But, Mr. Speaker, it's on a contract basis, and it's done in such way that there's a net benefit for the individual, for the ministry now or the old department, and for the people of Saskatchewan.

And yet now, Mr. Speaker, even though that provision has always existed, we're seeing that the government today is saying that, let's not just do it on a contract basis. Let's just allow people to stay in their jobs, retire one day and stay on salary, come to work the next and receive 170 per cent of their salary. Mr. Speaker, a challenging circumstance by any means. But we have never ever said to a retiree of the provincial government, your expertise is no longer wanted; your contributions to the province are no longer wanted; if you retire, you're done. Mr. Speaker, we've never said that. We've always allowed a contractual relationship to exist.

The public policy issue there, Mr. Speaker, is that if you need a contract filled by somebody, don't you want that contract filled by the most experienced, most credible individual available? And quite often that's somebody who has a clear working knowledge of the ministry or the department for which work was done previously, Mr. Speaker. These contracts have helped them to develop programs and not have to worry about the day-to-day matters that take place in the office environment — such things, you know, as managing the office supplies and that sort of thing. Mr. Speaker, a contract can be policy related.

Now, Mr. Speaker, while we're at it, I said earlier that I wanted to ensure that the public understood the overall context of this, to ensure that we know that there are some provisions here that are certainly worth supporting. So, Mr. Speaker, I think we want to acknowledge that this Act does have a number of provisions that are worthy of our support.

Mr. Speaker, again I just quote from the minister's speech in this regard in which the minister on March 17, 2008, said:

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 [and again I'm quoting the minister], 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.

Mr. Speaker, indeed when we talk about cleaning up pension legislation, cleaning it up to the point where it is serving the needs of the pensioners, Mr. Speaker, this is exactly the sorts of things that we need to continue to do from year to year as we gain better understanding of the plan itself and the needs of the pensioners themselves.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think it is important that we also recognize some of the things that my colleague from Regina Dewdney put on the record back in March that were not part of his speech today, Mr. Speaker. And I say this is important simply because the people who are watching today or members of the government staff who are taking notes about how to manage this Bill in committee, Mr. Speaker, should be aware that some of the things that the member from Regina Dewdney said back in March, when the Bill was introduced last, continue to be relevant today.

And remember, remember, Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of my remarks I indicated that within minutes of the member from Regina Dewdney taking his seat nine months ago, this Bill disappeared. There were concerns on the other side, Mr. Speaker, concerns that seem to have been lost. Perhaps members of government were lobbied by friends of theirs who could stand to benefit from this double-dipping provision, Mr. Speaker. Not suggesting that that's the case, only that there's a possibility, Mr. Speaker, that the members have returned to this legislation without a full and careful review.

I want to quote the member from Regina Dewdney, Mr. Speaker, when he said:

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 [that is, the government has chosen] to deal with it in another way and simply make it legal to double-dip.

So, Mr. Speaker, the point there and what we have to keep in mind for this discussion, Mr. Speaker, is that the Provincial Auditor has commented on the issue of double-dipping, has indicated that there shouldn't be double-dipping. And, Mr. Speaker, people should be prevented from double-dipping. And instead of dealing with the issue as the Provincial Auditor has suggested, this government has chosen instead, and I use that word very carefully, they've chosen — because there were options, there are alternatives — they have chosen to make it legal, to make it legal to double-dip.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Regina Dewdney had another

comment in regard to the Provincial Auditor as well that I think . . . Actually the comment that I wanted to put on the record, Mr. Speaker, had to do with choice. And that's why I used the language about the members opposite indeed had a choice, Mr. Speaker.

[16:30]

The quote again, Mr. Speaker, from March 17 by the member from Regina Dewdney, Mr. Speaker . . . And he's talking here about how the government can't hide from the fact that governments make choices, that they have options, Mr. Speaker, and choices are important to make. So, Mr. Speaker, this is what he had to say, and I quote, "We don't have the money, we don't have the money to have . . ." And he's quoting government from prior to the election, Mr. Speaker, the election of November 2007. The government members are saying:

We don't have the money, we don't have the money to have a universal seniors' drug plan, the members opposite [had to] 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 . . . [more than] \$65,000 a year.

But, Mr. Speaker, options. The member continues to quote:

. . . 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 [dollars] be part of a universal seniors' health plan.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, governments have options. And, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that is more clear today than it was in March and even more clear than it was prior to the election last year, Mr. Speaker, the information that was contained today in the government's release of the second-quarter report of the finances of the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, there was a technical briefing this morning for MLAs, and you walked by the door outside of where this technical briefing was taking place, you could almost hear them singing, we're in the money, we're in the money now. Mr. Speaker, the report today indicates that revenues continue to rise, Mr. Speaker, and even though spending has risen, Mr. Speaker, even though spending has risen, Mr. Speaker, revenues continue to outstrip the government's increased spending.

So, Mr. Speaker, the government opposite continues to have options, continues to have the opportunity to choose to do things differently. This is a group of people who one year ago were saying that a drug plan to benefit the seniors in this province was unsustainable — those were their words, Mr. Speaker, unsustainable — and today they've got so much money they don't know what to do with, Mr. Speaker. So instead they sing, we're in the money now, Mr. Speaker. Incredible circumstances.

So, Mr. Speaker, in March of this year, we didn't know where we were going to end up by this period of time. And certainly a year ago, the members opposite didn't know where we were going. And let's not forget that shortly after the election, the

Premier steps up to the microphone and he says, oh my goodness, the finances of the province are stark — stark, Mr. Speaker. And every day since then, every day since then, the bank account's gotten bigger and bigger and bigger. I don't understand what the word stark means when the Premier of the province uses it in connection with the financial state of the province of Saskatchewan.

The point of all of this, Mr. Speaker, quite clearly, is that governments have options, and never in the history of this province has the government had more options available to them than right now. And maybe even over the course of the next 12 months, Mr. Speaker, we will have even more options available to us as this mountain of money continues to grow.

The Premier sent members of the government out on a summer excursion this year, Mr. Speaker, sent them out on a summer excursion to talk to people. Unbelievable, probably never heard of in the history of this province, that MLAs had to be told how to do their job, Mr. Speaker. But the Premier said, go out, go out, talk to people and come back and tell me what it is that the public wants us to spend their money on. What does people want to spend the money on? Well, Mr. Speaker, there were lots of options brought forward . . .

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

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. So the Premier was acknowledging that of course there are options available to governments and there are choices that government will then have to make based on those options. And so what came back, Mr. Speaker, according to members opposite, was that members of the public provided members of government with certain options, and choices have since been made. But, Mr. Speaker, those choices continue to leave money in the bank for government to do other things with, and today's release of the second quarter report, Mr. Speaker, indicates that there will be additional dollars to work with in the future.

So, Mr. Speaker, when government sits down to make choices, they need to be considering a number of things — housing and the drug plan for seniors, Mr. Speaker. I think it's time that the government reconsidered their decision on that. They reconsidered their decision on Bill No. 9. They reviewed Bill No. 9; they brought it back, Mr. Speaker. I think review the seniors' drug plan and bring it back, Mr. Speaker. There are dollars that they said were not sustainable in it in the past. There are dollars available today, Mr. Speaker, that certainly make it proven to be a very sustainable program.

Mr. Speaker, coming back to Bill No. 9 shortly, Mr. Speaker, because I think the people of Saskatchewan, if they were consulted more fully on Bill No. 9, would say to this government, would say to the Premier, would say to the members sitting opposite, you represent — speaking to the government, Mr. Speaker, not to you — the people would say to the government members, you represent us, the people of Saskatchewan, in the provincial legislature. We do not approve of double-dipping within the Government of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I think without a doubt coffee row — whether it's in Neilburg or whether it's in Herbert or whether it's in Swift Current — coffee row would say to the members opposite, you

can't legalize double-dipping in the province of Saskatchewan. You just can't do that. You are not representing me when you do that. That's what the people of Saskatchewan would say.

The government has choices and options, Mr. Speaker. And the Premier should ask his members, the Premier should ask his members to go back out to the people they talked to before and ask them what they think of double-dipping. Ask them, Mr. Speaker, before we conclude our debate and our discussion on Bill No. 9.

Mr. Speaker, this is an important matter. We will utilize, Mr. Speaker, time and options available to us over the course of this session and maybe into the next session, Mr. Speaker. We will use the time available to us to help the public to understand what it is that the government is doing with this legislation. And it is. The government had a choice to do as the Provincial Auditor was suggesting, a choice that the Provincial Auditor said, don't legalize this. They are choosing instead, Mr. Speaker, to legalize double-dipping. And we're talking about as many as almost 2,000 people, Mr. Speaker, who could benefit specifically and directly by this piece of legislation. Mr. Speaker, for those who are sitting on future Public Accounts Committee, this is a lot of work for them, a lot of work.

Mr. Speaker, while I've got my feet, I know that at some point this Bill will go to committee. It's not going to go to committee today, Mr. Speaker, or in the very near future, but this Bill will go to committee. And the members opposite . . . I know that for those watching, they can't hear the speeches that are being made on the other side while I'm standing on my feet here. They can't hear the speeches that are being made from people who are sitting in their seats, Mr. Speaker. But there's been a number of members opposite, while I've been on my feet and while the member from Regina Dewdney was on his feet, who are offering all kinds of suggestions and actually, Mr. Speaker, were asking some questions.

So, Mr. Speaker, I couldn't help but think that sooner or later this Bill goes to committee. It's in committee where one can ask questions to get the answers as to what it is that's intended, how will this influence, what are the unintended consequences, what are the costs going to be, who's been consulted, all those sorts of things — the kind of questions, Mr. Speaker, that were being shouted across the floor, and the members of the public didn't have a chance to hear them because only my mike is live.

Mr. Speaker, I would hope that when we are in committee discussing Bill No. 9, that the questions being asked are not being asked only by members from this side of the House. Mr. Speaker, I would hope that not only opposition members concerned about this are asking questions of the minister and of ministerial officials, but I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that members of government who also have concerns or questions about this Bill would ask them in committee, put them on the record, and ensure, Mr. Speaker, that the public has a full understanding of what the answers to those questions are.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite had a lot of questions for the member of Regina Dewdney and myself this afternoon. Mr. Speaker, I will be attending this committee meeting, as much of it as I can, and I'm going to be listening for members opposite in asking their questions about this Bill . . . [inaudible

interjection] . . . The member from Regina Dewdney reminds me of something, Mr. Speaker. We know from previous discussions about other legislations that appeared in the spring and then disappeared off the order paper at the end of the session that the members opposite don't have a specific process for reviewing legislation either before it comes into this Chamber or before it actually comes out of a ministry and enters into this Chamber.

We know that the members opposite, many of them had not even seen legislation that was being introduced. They were caught by complete surprise with Bills like the accountability Act, Mr. Speaker, and they pulled that. With Bills like No. 9, relating to double-dipping, they were caught by complete surprise, Mr. Speaker.

The members opposite I hope have taken the opportunity to establish a legislative review process that allows every member of cabinet to understand the provisions of every Bill before they are actually introduced for debate in the Chamber. Because while members of the opposition are quite prepared to do the job that the public has asked us to do, which is to review the material that government puts forward to ensure that it's in the interests of Saskatchewan people, one would hope that the government would also do that on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan as members of government — review what it is that's coming from their hand-picked deputy ministers, Mr. Speaker, for who knows whose benefit, to ensure that the interests of Saskatchewan people are reviewed prior to legislation being introduced. I don't think that was the case here with Bill No. 9, Mr. Speaker.

I know from my days working in the federal House of Commons, Mr. Speaker, that the public was very clear about double-dipping, and here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, people on coffee row have got lots of issues that they like to talk about. Mr. Speaker, they aren't talking about double-dipping today. Why? Because the members opposite are quietly trying to bring, legalize double-dipping in with this bit of legislation, and it's only going to be if the public has enough time to understand the issues and to get some information back into government sources.

So, Mr. Speaker, maybe, maybe the best thing that I could do in the interests of this Bill, in the interests of public good, public policy, Mr. Speaker, maybe the best thing that I could do right now is to challenge the people who are watching here today, watching the legislative channel today, to challenge the people out there who believe that double-dipping should not happen, that the Government of Saskatchewan should not legalize double-dipping. Mr. Speaker. To challenge those people who believe that the government should do what the Provincial Auditor has said, Mr. Speaker, and not allow double-dipping in the public service, challenge those people, Mr. Speaker, to pick up their phones, phone their MLA — preferably government MLAs, Mr. Speaker, because obviously the opposition has figured this out; we got it, Mr. Speaker — but to phone members of government, government MLAs, and to say, I do not support the principle of double-dipping. I ask you, members of government, I ask you, my MLA, I ask you to represent my interests and to choose, to choose not to support double-dipping and to choose the interests of Saskatchewan people instead.

[16:45]

Mr. Speaker, that may be the best thing that I could accomplish today with my few remarks. I hope, Mr. Speaker, that some of my comments tonight have shed some light on the principle of good public policy, on the principle of government choice and options, on the principle of support for a good public service and the good work that the public engages in. Mr. Speaker, I would hope that members opposite feel that there is a place to ask their questions, that they can utilize the provisions of the Chamber, of the committee rooms, and of the quiet of their own caucus chamber to address some of the issues that present themselves in Bill No. 9, the superannuation amendment Act.

So, Mr. Speaker, I know that the time is rolling along here but, Mr. Speaker, I think . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . You see, Mr. Speaker, I know that the public at home do not see the members opposite continuing to ask their questions of me. They have not understood yet, Mr. Speaker, that they can ask these questions in committee when we get there.

Actually, Mr. Speaker, it does remind me of the order paper that we will see next week, Mr. Speaker. Supplementary estimates were introduced in the Chamber today. Supplementary estimates, which means the government's interim spending between now and the end of the government's fiscal year will be discussed in committee next week, Mr. Speaker. There are numerous opportunities for members of government, members of the opposition to review some of the spending options, some of the spending choices of government, and we will be doing that in committee next week.

And again, Mr. Speaker, I urge members of the public to watch the proceedings of the committee work next week and to ensure that members of government and members of the opposition know their views as we proceed through those committee hearings to the end of this session.

But, Mr. Speaker, that having been said, I think that there are a number of people who are choosing to pick up their phones and to give us some information about their feelings on this. And so, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that the House has the full benefit of some time available to gather those opinions and to present them in this House, Mr. Speaker, I would choose therefore at this time to move that debate on Bill No. 9, the superannuation amendment Act be now adjourned.

The Speaker: — The member from The Battlefords has moved adjournment of Bill No. 9, *The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Amendment Act, 2008*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

Bill No. 46

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Stewart that **Bill No. 46** — *The Labour Market Commission Amendment Act, 2008* be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am extremely pleased this afternoon to stand and enter into debate on Bill No. 46, *An Act to amend The Labour Market Commission Act*, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this particular piece of legislation amends the Act and changes the composition of the board, Mr. Speaker, and changes it in some ways that may or may not be productive, Mr. Speaker.

Clearly one of the major concerns we have about the changes made to this particular piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, is in speaking to stakeholders who are involved in this board, Mr. Speaker — the Labour Market Commission — they weren't consulted, Mr. Speaker. They didn't agree to these changes, and they weren't consulted, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, there are concerns being raised about the changes, Mr. Speaker, but most significantly, if you're going to change something that is working, Mr. Speaker, you should talk to those individuals involved with it, Mr. Speaker, prior to making the changes. And, Mr. Speaker, that wasn't done.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill will reduce the size of the commission to 11 members, and they are appointed now by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, Mr. Speaker. For those who don't understand what that would mean, Mr. Speaker, that means they're appointed by the cabinet, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, in the past, the various stakeholder groups put forward names for individuals to be put forward on the commission. Today, Mr. Speaker, the cabinet will appoint all the members to the commission, and it does not necessarily have to have the support of any of the stakeholder groups, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there are considerations that need to be taken into place when appointing the labour market board, Mr. Speaker. And one of those is, there needs to be a balance in gender; age, including youth; ethnic diversity, Mr. Speaker; geographic representation from the various areas of the province, Mr. Speaker; representation from the economic sectors of the economy, Mr. Speaker. And in the case of individuals appointed for the purpose of clauses 2(a) and (b), the number of employees in places of employment, Mr. Speaker, are taken into consideration, Mr. Speaker.

These changes, Mr. Speaker, have been put forward, as well as a change in the ministry in which that is accountable, Mr. Speaker. Today this new piece of legislation falls under the Minister Responsible for Innovation, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, the new formula, new format of this commission brings concerns forward as to whether or not the representation is adequate in order to fully represent the people of the province of Saskatchewan and to recommend the types of changes that need to be made in the province, Mr. Speaker, in order to seek opportunities for all members of the province of Saskatchewan to be employed and seek meaningful employment in the province, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, as we looked at this piece of legislation, the previous board was larger, but its composition was put forward after significant consultations, Mr. Speaker. Today they've

decided to change that composition without even seeking the advice of the Co-Chairs of the board, Mr. Speaker — the current Labour Market Commission.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the new board — as I've pointed out before — reports to the Minister Responsible for Innovation or Enterprise Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Before, previously it reported to the minister responsible for post-secondary education, Mr. Speaker.

And today the board with its much reduced size, Mr. Speaker — it formerly had 19 members, Mr. Speaker; it had larger and broader representation, Mr. Speaker, throughout the province — can this board fulfill the same level of duty that the previous board did? That's the major consideration that we would have on this particular piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, if it can't, why did we reduce the size, Mr. Speaker? It can always be argued that a smaller board is more manageable and more easy to work with, Mr. Speaker, but you could have a board of one person and it's much easier to work with, Mr. Speaker. But, Mr. Speaker, can it do the job and does it have the diversity and does it reflect the skills and abilities needed on that commission in order to actually fulfill its duties, Mr. Speaker?

The reduction of eight individuals on the board is just about a 40 per cent reduction or more, Mr. Speaker. Does that reduction in any way hamper the ability of the commission to fulfill its duties? Mr. Speaker, these changes, as I've indicated earlier, were brought forward without consultation, even though the union Co-Chair, labour Co-Chair on the commission, Mr. Speaker . . . And we see this in conjunction with many other changes being made throughout the province without a clear understanding what those changes . . . what impact those changes will have on the people of the province of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, that's always a concern as we see changes being made without understanding what the impact potentially is on people, Mr. Speaker.

Because we in opposition have a responsibility to ensure that legislative changes, in fact, are to the benefit of the people of the province of Saskatchewan. And in doing so we need to look at it from a variety of perspectives, Mr. Speaker. And the reduction from 19 to 11 does change, in fact, the ability of the board to have as wide a diversity as it previously had, to have as much representation. And perhaps, Mr. Speaker, this puts the board out of balance in comparison to what it was in the past. And it may not be able to function at the same level of accountability, Mr. Speaker, and efficiency as it did as a larger board, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that a larger board does, more people involved, it increases both accountability and transparency and more people are aware of what's going on, more individuals have the opportunity to report back to their stakeholder group, Mr. Speaker. And it creates for the people of Saskatchewan some assurance that the Labour Market Commission is in fact fulfilling its duties as the people of the province of Saskatchewan would like it to, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as we look at this particular change, we see a reduction in the number of individuals. Many of the other

changes though in fact would be seen as housekeeping, Mr. Speaker. But this board has been in operation for a relatively short period of time in comparison to many government agencies or boards or commissions, Mr. Speaker, and so hasn't had the opportunity to fully understand whether or not a larger number than 19 previously or 11 are adequate to do the job, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, they weren't even consulted — the current board or commission — in the changes that were made. They were made unilaterally by the government for ideological reasons, believing it should in fact be smaller, that it's easier to control, easier to work with a smaller number of people, Mr. Speaker. And is that in the best interest of the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker? Those are things that all need to be examined in this Bill.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as we look at this particular Bill, it changes first the ministry which it reports to and is accountable to, but also significantly changes the individuals on the board, in the sense that the representatives are significantly fewer. And with 40 per cent fewer representatives, Mr. Speaker, can this board in fact fulfill its duties? Can it in fact, Mr. Speaker, outdo the duties that it's expected to do, Mr. Speaker?

And, Mr. Speaker, seeing as we're approaching the hour of 5 o'clock, I would move we adjourn debate on this Bill.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — It now being 5 p.m., the hour of adjournment, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.]

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