



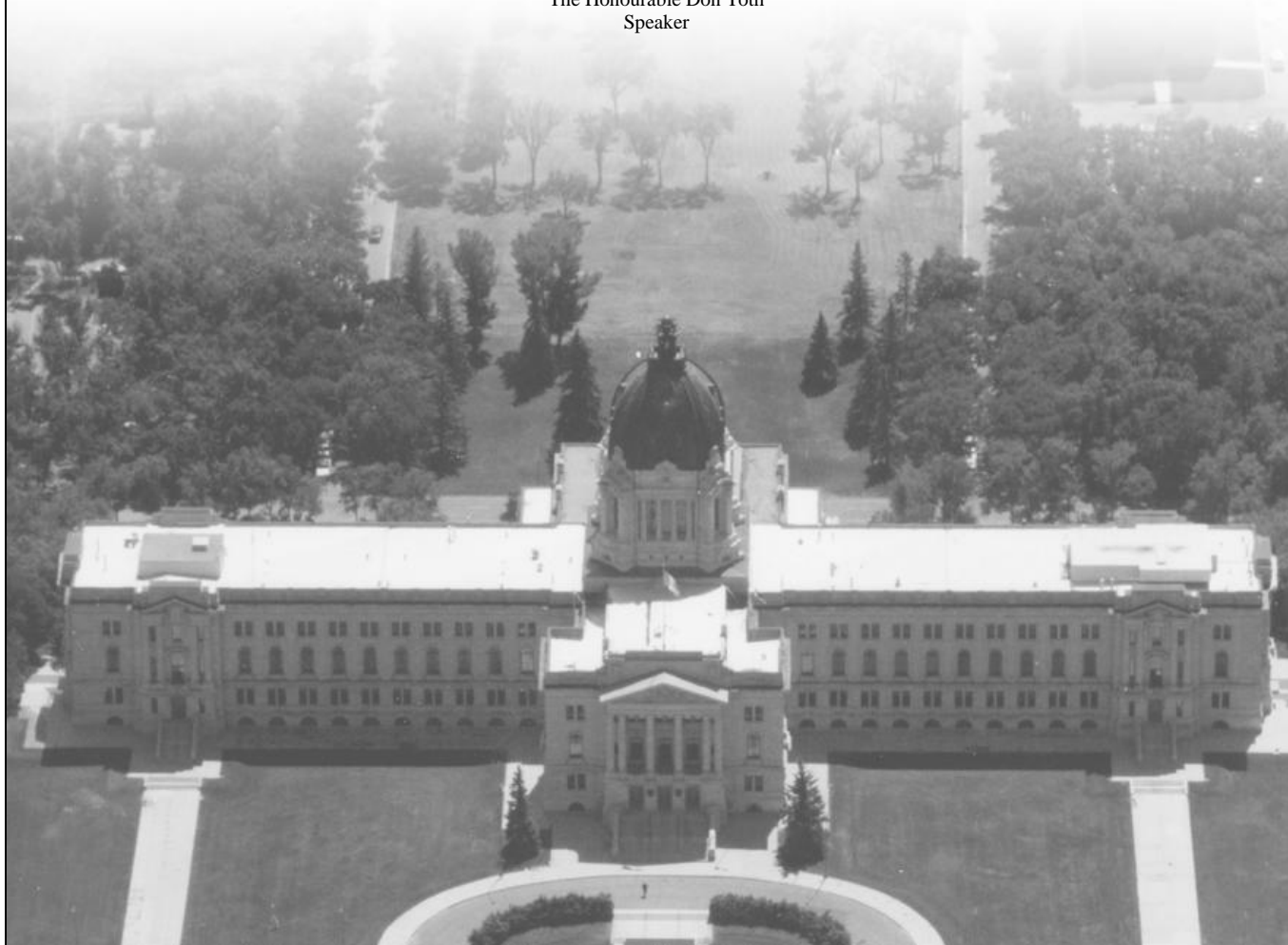
SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

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
Chisholm, Michael	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
D'Autremont, Hon. Dan	SP	Cannington
Draude, Hon. June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Hon. Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Furber, Darcy	NDP	Prince Albert Northcote
Gantfoer, Hon. Rod	SP	Melfort
Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harper, Ron	NDP	Regina Northeast
Harrison, Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Hon. Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Hon. Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Higgins, Deb	NDP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Hutchinson, Hon. Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, Yogi	SP	Wood River
Iwanchuk, Andy	NDP	Saskatoon Fairview
Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
LeClerc, Serge	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMillan, Tim	SP	Lloydminster
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Morin, Sandra	NDP	Regina Walsh Acres
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Hon. Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Greg	SP	Yorkton
Quennell, Frank	NDP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Reiter, Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Laura	SP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Schriemer, Joceline	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Stewart, Hon. Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Taylor, Len	NDP	The Battlefords
Tell, Hon. Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Toth, Hon. Don	SP	Moosomin
Trew, Kim	NDP	Regina Coronation Park
Van Mulligen, Harry	NDP	Regina Douglas Park
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 Cypress Hills, the minister of highways and public safety.

Hon. Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of the House today, I'd like to introduce 25 very important people who help us do our job, who help us look good, I guess, in the eyes of the public because they are our first line of reference to many of the programs and activities that the government represents.

We have 25 members from the public service as participants in the parliamentary program for public servants, and they represent a variety of government ministries, including Finance, Government Services, and including many who are in the building future leaders program. We have people from the Office of the Provincial Secretary. We have representatives from the Ministry of Social Services and from the Legislative Library.

And, Mr. Speaker, they're taking part in a day-long event full of activities. They are going to be watching the proceedings of the House for the next hour. We're going to be meeting with them a little later. And they're going to have a much better idea of what happens in this public venue once their tour is done today. But, Mr. Speaker, we'd like to welcome them here, and I ask all members to join with me in doing so.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister in welcoming our guests from the public service here today. As the minister indicated, the individuals who work in the public service are very valuable to this province. They're the ones who, in fact, make any government look good. And, Mr. Speaker, I would like to join with the minister in welcoming them here today, and hope that they can work hard enough to make this government look good.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all the members of this Assembly, I'd like to introduce some guests in your gallery. Some of them are regulars from the Saskatchewan House of Prayer, Richard and Joanne Lepp, and Peggy Arnold. Also from the Saskatchewan House of Prayer with us today is Patricia Fraser. Along with them is Pastor Terri Murphy and from the National House of Prayer in Ottawa, Fran Parker. Her husband Rob was unable to attend today. He had to take off to catch a flight.

They were some of the attendees at a breakfast this morning hosted by the Saskatchewan House of Prayer and Regina Evangelical Ministerial Association that the member from Moose Jaw North and I attended this morning. I'd like all members to welcome them to this Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome to their Assembly today, about 75 to 100 employees of the Department of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing, Mr. Speaker. They're here today to watch question period and to try to talk to their minister and their employer about some of the problems they're experiencing in their workplace. So I'd like to welcome them all here today.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — Before I recognize the next member, I just want to inform our guests that you're more than welcome to join with us in the Chamber today. We welcome you, but we also ask you not to participate in the debate in any form. Thank you.

I recognize the Minister of Corrections and Public Safety.

Hon. Mr. Hickie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well I want to join my colleague across the floor in also welcoming the members of the Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing, corrections workers. I want to take this time as well to acknowledge the fact that having worked in that field before, Mr. Speaker, for 14 years, it's a very dangerous field to work in. I respect the work they do day in and day out. I also want to thank Mr. Bob Bymoen today, who is with us.

Back in September he worked very well and worked well with my ministry officials and myself to get the provincial institutional lockdown and searches conducted. And Bob and I have a relationship, I guess; we know we can phone each other and talk. I look forward to that. As of Friday I left him a couple of voice mails on some issues, and I look forward to that continued relationship. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In your east gallery I notice some people from across Saskatchewan who are involved in health care. With us today are Barb Cape, president of SEIU [Service Employees International Union] west, SEIU and the bargaining committee from SEIU across the province. Also with us in the east gallery, Gord Campbell, president of the CUPE [Canadian Union of Public Employees] health care bargaining committee, and his bargaining committee from across the province.

Also while I'm on my feet I notice Tom Graham, president of

CUPE Saskatchewan there. And these people are working hard to get a collective agreement to make the health workplaces in our province a better place for all of us, Mr. Speaker.

I ask all members here to welcome these people to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Indian Head-Milestone, the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to the rest of the Assembly, seated in the west gallery there are 21 students, grade 5 and 6 students that have made the trek in from Avonlea and were going to be taking in the proceedings for a while today. I had a chance to meet with them just prior to them coming into the Assembly here. And they've had an opportunity of seeing the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] museum as well as the history museum just on Albert and College. And now they're here.

So, Mr. Speaker, accompanying them — I'm thanking my colleagues for having so much to say around me here — accompanying them are their teacher, Denise Dombowsky, as well as Renata Briggs. And I know they're going to have a very safe trip back to Avonlea, about a 45-minute trip back to Avonlea, because Darrell Epp is their bus driver, and I know he's a very good driver because he had a very good teacher. Anyway I'd like all members to welcome them to their Assembly.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon south, the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to rise in the House today to introduce Neil Buechler who is sitting in your gallery. Mr. Buechler is a long-time resident of Saskatoon, retired local director of the Marsh Canada office. He's been a good friend and a good supporter. He's been very active in many volunteer and community events. And in his case you usually get a package deal because you get his wife Verna and daughter Jill to come along. And I see they're not with him today, but they are certainly the better part of that family. And I want to wish him well and welcome to this legislature. Thank you.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Advanced Education, Employment and Labour.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you I'd like to introduce to the legislature, colleagues Lorne and Rhonda Veitch, visiting from Swift Current. And we're delighted to have them join us — and Lindell Veitch — here in their legislature. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again I rise with a petition in support of public safety and security in Saskatchewan. And the petition reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government, in the interest of safety and security of Saskatchewan families, residents, and communities, to immediately cause the Minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing to undertake a thorough consultation with a broad group of stakeholders — including the policing community, the corrections community, and community agencies, organizations, and educators that interface with gangs — so he might understand the risks and challenges that gangs present to our communities.

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

I so present.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of Saskatchewan families who are struggling and unable to find quality child care, which really restricts their futures here in the province. 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 here in Saskatchewan.

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present petitions to index the minimum wage. And the prayer reads as follows:

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.

And the petitions are signed from people in Montmartre,

Lumsden, Buena Vista, Regina, Fort Qu'Appelle, Grenfell, Indian Head, and Moosomin. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to present a petition concerning the high costs of post-secondary education and accessibility issues.

The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to increase funding for post-secondary students and help to alleviate the large financial burden placed on students for pursuing a post-secondary education at a Saskatchewan institution.

Mr. Speaker, I present this petition on behalf of students in Saskatchewan. I so present.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Business and Professional Women's Club

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to speak today about the Business and Professional Women's Club of Saskatoon, BPW, a non-partisan, non-sectarian network of business and professional women, and a member of BPW International which represents over 100 groups on five continents. It is notable that the BPW has a permanent seat on the United Nations.

BPW strives to improve social and economic status for working women to encourage women to pursue political office and to lobby at all levels of government. BPW provides women with many opportunities including networking, expanding their knowledge on women's issues, developing leadership capacities and self-confidence as aids to career advancement.

The BPW have offered informational meetings on issues like workplace harassment and bullying, on violence against women, and most recently an all-candidates forum for female federal candidates. They have organized a YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association] crisis shelter wish list for donations. They are extremely active in International Women's Day and carry out a yearly silent auction to raise funds for their educational bursary that they award to a mature woman returning to school. And the list goes on.

The BPW advance issues affecting women in the workplace by responding to government briefs on request, participating in government forums and committees, and networking with local, provincial, and national women's groups. They keep themselves informed on issues of national import and concerning women,

existing and proposed legislation, and federal task forces.

Internationally, BPW supports Nashi, a project to prevent children from becoming sex-trade victims by education and establishing trade schools and safe houses. They also support entrepreneurial women in developing countries.

BPW has a strong presence in our province. I'm proud to be a member of this organization, and to call many of these women my friends.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Rosetown-Elrose.

Saskatchewan Party Convention

Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This weekend, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party held its first convention since the November 2007 election, an election that saw the people of this province choose a new direction. And what did they choose, Mr. Speaker? As convention delegates heard, they chose a party that keeps its promises — 80 of them so far. A party that has given the people of this province the largest ever, single-year tax cut. They elected a government that has made a \$1 billion investment in infrastructure, soon to climb to \$1.5 billion, Mr. Speaker.

They chose a government that is taking steps to ensure a secure future for our children and our grandchildren through debt reduction — almost 40 per cent, at a rate of \$5,000 per minute.

Mr. Speaker, former Canadian ambassador, renowned broadcaster, and the pride of Wadena, Saskatchewan, Pamela Wallin spoke at that convention. She had this to say about her home province under its new government. This is a quote, Mr. Speaker, from Pamela Wallin, "Saskatchewan's new premier is very much a part of the new generation of leaders, post-partisan in a way, focused on getting stuff done, and making things happen," said Wallin.

As the Premier would say, turning Saskatchewan into a place where hope trumps fear. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

New Business Opens in Saskatoon

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate a young entrepreneur who has recently established a business in the constituency of Saskatoon Massey Place.

Ms. Sarah Gerow has opened Kreme Boutique, a store providing upscale, new and gently used women's clothing, shoes, handbags, and accessories. Sarah's a young entrepreneur who, after extensive experience of working in retail, decided to take the plunge and start her own business.

Mr. Speaker, Kreme Boutique is situated on the 600 block of 33rd Street, right in the heart of Saskatoon Massey Place. This location is just across from my constituency office. When I spoke to Sarah and asked why she chose to open her store in its location, she told me that she saw the commercial strip along 33rd Street as an area experiencing a rebirth.

Mr. Speaker, as someone who lives in this neighbourhood, I couldn't agree more. Each week there seems to be more and more strollers going down the sidewalks. Young families are choosing to move to this area of the city because they appreciate its character, charm, and good access to services and amenities.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to welcome Sarah to the neighbourhood and wish her all the best with this new business venture. I'm sure that in no time she'll have a regular clientele from the neighbourhood and from across the city. I would ask all members to join me in congratulating Ms. Sarah Gerow on the opening of Kreme Boutique. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Carrot River Wildcats Football Team Wins Championship

Mr. Bradshaw: — Mr. Speaker, the Carrot River Valley constituency has again risen to the occasion. November 8 was a great one for the Carrot River Wildcats football team as they beat the Plenty Wildcats 48 to 14, winning the provincial six-man football team.

Mr. Speaker, it should also be noted that Plenty is located in the Rosetown-Elrose constituency — my right-hand seatmate's riding. And though I give Plenty a ton of credit for making it to the finals, you just can't underestimate the people of Carrot River Valley.

[13:45]

Mr. Speaker, the Carrot River Wildcats football team has only been in existence for 10 years and in that time has won the provincial title three times and came second once. I give credit not only to the boys but to the coaches for their work ethic and fortitude.

Mr. Speaker, coaches Greg McJannet, Cory Schmaltz, and Dwight Wrubleski start practice every morning at 7 a.m. To top it all off, the boys have to meet academic standards to play. Now that is dedication.

Mr. Speaker, Eric Tillman and Coach Miller, if they would take my advice, need not look all over North America for talent. All they have to do is look to Carrot River for a winning team and players. Go Carrot River Wildcats. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Prince Albert's Award of Merit

Mr. Furber: — Mr. Speaker, on October 17, local Prince Albert musician Donny Parenteau was presented with the Prince Albert Award of Merit, which is the city's highest honour. Donny is the 143rd recipient in the entire history of the Award of Merit in Prince Albert.

The award was presented to him at a special benefit concert for the Parkland Community Club. Donny was instrumental in organizing the benefit which raised an astonishing \$78,000. The generosity of the people of Prince Albert never ceases to amaze, Mr. Speaker. Seventy-eight thousand dollars will go toward much-needed upgrades and repairs to the Parkland Community Hall so that it might be better utilized by the entire community.

Parkland Community Hall is in the West Flat in my constituency and is a place where I once worked for a summer. Donny grew up in the West Flat, and he has strived to give back as much as he can to his community. His actions have showed that greatly in the last number of years.

Additionally, I'd like to wish Donny the best of luck on his upcoming album, as I'm sure it will meet with the same success that seems to accompany everything he does.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join with me in congratulating Donny Parenteau on being awarded Prince Albert's Award of Merit. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Dedication to Business and Volunteerism

Hon. Mr. Hickie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On October 23, Mr. Ralph Boychuk was honoured by the Prince Albert & District Chamber of Commerce with a Lifetime Member Recipient Award.

Mr. Boychuk has been very dedicated to the success of the business community and has a long history of volunteerism with the chamber of commerce. Besides having been the president of the Prince Albert & District Chamber of Commerce, he also served in various executive capacities on the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce Board and was a 2006-2007 president of the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce.

He now sits on the executive council of the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce in an advisory position. He was the Chairman of the Saskatchewan Chamber's 25th anniversary of ABEX [Achievement in Business Excellence] awards that was held here in Regina in October. Ralph also sat on the board of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce from 2006 to June 2008. He has also shown his dedication to community through volunteerism with the Prince Albert High Noon Optimist Youth Soccer Association, the development and alumni committee for SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology], the Prince Albert Kinsmen Club, Prince Albert Golf and Curling Club, Prince Albert Raider Hockey Club, and

the Prince Albert Forestry Expo.

So today, Mr. Speaker, as MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for Prince Albert Carlton, I ask all members to join me in personally recognizing and congratulating Mr. Ralph Boychuk on receiving the well-deserved honour of lifetime member recipient by the Prince Albert and District Chamber of Commerce.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Saskatchewan Potash Council

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan Potash Council was officially formed September 10, 2008. The council members believe the formation of the council is truly a historical event for Saskatchewan labour and the Saskatchewan potash industry.

The participating Saskatchewan potash organizations are: the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union Local 922; Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union Local 892; United Steelworkers Area Council; United Steelworkers Local 189; United Steelworkers Local 7458; United Steelworkers Local 7552; United Steelworkers Local 7656; United Steelworkers Local 7689; and the Rocanville Potash Employees Association.

At this time the council has a broad mandate which includes some of the following: the exchange of information on a regular basis; to advise potash workers through their respective organizations on issues of concern, member education, collective bargaining, political action, strategic campaigns, health and safety regulations, WCB [Workers' Compensation Board] compensation and appeals; to help promote workers' issues with the potash industry; lobby both levels of government to support workers' rights; lobby the Saskatchewan Mining Association to promote common agendas.

Mr. Speaker, it is in the spirit of solidarity that the Saskatchewan Potash Council pledges to increase their members' joint efforts to achieve justice and equality for all workers in the potash industry. Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join me in recognizing the Saskatchewan Potash Council for its historic event and wish them all the best. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Severance for Former Public Servants

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. About a year ago the Deputy Premier and his transition team started their mass firings without cause in our province's professional public service.

To the Deputy Premier: what's the total cost of severance for these fired public servants, including deputy ministers?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in a question that was asked by the opposition that was tabled in this Assembly, we've provided information to that opposition. I can tell the member opposite, if she hasn't read that information, that in fact there were 44 people that we have provided a severance package to as a result of negotiations that have been ongoing with a number of legal firms. And it's my understanding as of the weekend that there are 10 individuals that are still in that process of negotiating through what is entitled through the regulations that we have within this Assembly.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, not a lot of support for that answer. But the numbers are starting to come in, and they're big. I'm going to table a list of civil servants that have reached settlements with the government to date. The cost is over \$4.1 million, and this doesn't include many of the deputy ministers that their government chose to fire. It doesn't include people from the Labour Relations Board or Crop Insurance or the protocol office or our Crown corporations. All of those folks were fired in the last year.

So will the deputy minister stop dodging the question and tell the taxpayers of the province how much, how much is this mass firing going to cost us all?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, as the Deputy Premier, I will inform the member opposite, as I've already indicated, that the process is ongoing. There is over a \$4 million settlement, as was indicated when the former premier released the staff that was currently within this building. There was about a \$4.5 million settlement in terms of ensuring that those individuals had the ability to move forward, Mr. Speaker.

So for me to provide a final number is impossible, as I indicated in my first answer, Mr. Speaker; that there are still negotiations under way with about 10 individuals that will be determined as the process unfolds. Mr. Speaker, the public accounts documents that will be produced next for March 31, 2009 will indicate all of those settlements. So we will arrive at full disclosure, we will arrive at accountability, and we will ensure that the people of the province understand exactly what has happened.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon

Nutana.

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, 44 people received \$4.163 million. These are public servants, Mr. Speaker. And it's clear the government doesn't mind spending money when it wants to. They can spend millions of dollars on severance for fired professional public servants, and they're going to spend millions more because we haven't yet heard what some of these long-term deputy ministers are going to receive, but they have no money when it comes to the hog and cattle industry.

So to the Deputy Premier: why is he taking millions of dollars and wasting it on firing professional public servants when his fellow Minister of Agriculture could be spending it on an industry that is going down the tubes, Mr. Speaker?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, that member, since she's been here since 1986, should understand that when governments change, there is a change in terms of numbers of people that are working for government. Mr. Speaker, we have been forthright with the opposition and we've been forthright with the people of Saskatchewan in talking about settlements.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to indicate that of the list that the member has, which we provided to her, is that no one, Mr. Speaker, no one received a settlement beyond \$250,000 except for one individual, Mr. Speaker, that's not on that list. That's a person whose name is Murdoch Carriere. They settled with him, telling people that he was fired when in fact he was not. That member should be held accountable for the money that she spent, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well you know, we haven't yet heard of the settlement for John Wright, which we believe will be close to \$1 million. And why is that? Because he is a professional public servant that has given over 30 years of his life to this province and they fired him without cause, Mr. Speaker.

They fired Gillian McCreary who was a public servant long before the NDP [New Democratic Party] was elected in 1991. They fired Jack Zepp, a public servant long before the NDP was elected in 1991, and they fired Hal Cushon, a public servant long before the NDP was elected in 1991. So we have millions of dollars being spent on professional public servants who did nothing — nothing, Mr. Speaker — other than to serve the people of this province.

Now tell us again: why do they see fit to spend \$4.16 million on firing professional public servants, and they can't provide money for senior citizens so all seniors can benefit from the drug plan?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, I can't really believe the questioning from that member. Mr. Speaker, every time a government has changed, Mr. Speaker, every time a government has changed, there has been a change of individuals. There has been a change of individuals within political responsibilities. There have been a change in terms of individuals responsible for providing leadership, Mr. Speaker. That is understood.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And we intend to follow that, Mr. Speaker. We intend to ensure . . .

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We intend to ensure that the people who are entitled to severance packages have the ability to negotiate them. It will involve change, Mr. Speaker. It will involve financial commitment, Mr. Speaker. But that is what occurs when governments change, Mr. Speaker.

And for that member to stand there sanctimoniously talking about the fact that, oh back in 1991 nothing changed — we didn't release anybody; it didn't cost anyone, any of the taxpayers' money — it's not true, Mr. Speaker. She knows it. Everybody in the province of Saskatchewan knows that as well.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Public Safety Procedures

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Public Safety admitted last week to the media that his policy of informing the public when offenders are unlawfully at large does not exist, describing it as quote "an interim protocol." We don't know if this protocol was communicated to front-line staff, but two front-line corrections workers along with the deputy minister have been suspended.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: why has he suspended people for failing to follow a policy that the minister admits doesn't exist?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Hickie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well let's go back, Mr. Speaker. An interim policy, interim statement was made to the deputy minister. Protocol and procedures now are in place, Mr. Speaker, where from the director level up . . . [inaudible] . . . central staff, information to myself and notification to the public will take place.

The hard-working staff members at the front line in corrections, Mr. Speaker, have done a great job. They'll maintain their great

performance by being very diligent and vigilant to make sure escapes do not happen, Mr. Speaker. That's what we're doing, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, on August 30 media reported suggesting that the staff at the Regina Correctional Centre were in fact not told that management had received advanced information about a possible escape. When I asked the minister about this a couple of weeks ago, he didn't seem to know the answer so I will try again.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: why were front-line workers at the Regina Correctional Centre kept in the dark about a possible threat to their safety and that of the general public?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Hickie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And to the member opposite, thank you for that question again. We have investigations going on and reviews, Mr. Speaker. At the conclusion of those particular processes, we will find out a number of things, I am sure, Mr. Speaker, one of which will be what happened surrounding the escape back in August, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to those results coming forward. The public will get those, as will the member opposite, Mr. Speaker, but for now I will not talk about ongoing investigations. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

[14:00]

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

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, the minister likes to hide behind the four different reviews currently under way in his department, except of course when he's hiding behind the Minister of Justice or the Minister of the Environment. Workers in the department must wish they were so lucky, Mr. Speaker. They're being suspended for breaking rules that no one has seen and which the minister now admits don't exist.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: when will these reviews be complete, and are these reviews examining the minister's role in these various fiascos? Or is it a plan to blame it all on front-line workers?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Hickie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, the reviews and the investigations will be done when

they're done, Mr. Speaker. Three of us on this side of the House understand the process, Mr. Speaker — not to meddle in investigations, not to obstruct investigations, and to wait for the conclusion of the investigations, Mr. Speaker. And when it comes to the member opposite, who was pretty free with information in the media, Mr. Speaker, I will not comment on the investigations, Mr. Speaker, until they are done in their conclusion. Thank you.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Yates: — Mr. Speaker, front-line workers want and deserve to be consulted before the government implements any changes that affect them or their families. To the minister: will he commit here today that he and his officials will consult front-line workers and their representatives prior to any changes being implemented by this government?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Mr. Hickie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the member opposite for that question. The answer is yes. I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, that a year ago when I was briefed by my officials, this particular issue came up about the ongoing committee work being done between officials and SGEU [Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union] officials, Mr. Speaker. So I will tell you right now that if there's operational concerns across this province, there's local union-management committees that talk to SGEU, to my officials, Mr. Speaker. I will say this, Mr. Speaker, that the process will be followed as always has been. But just to let everyone know, Mr. Speaker, that this has been ongoing for a number of years.

The member opposite doesn't want to mention, but back when he was given the minister's position of this particular portfolio, the officials were working with SGEU, Mr. Speaker. He stopped it. He stopped it, Mr. Speaker. Public safety's paramount here, Mr. Speaker, as is the staff safety, and he did not do anything about it, Mr. Speaker. He stopped it.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Essential Services Legislation

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, this government, without consultation, broke their word and rammed through essential services legislation in the spring. At the time, we raised dozens of valid concerns, and the answer was always the same — wait for the regulations. Yet here we are nine months later and still no regulations in sight.

To the Minister of Labour: when will he table the regulations?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Advanced Education, Employment and Labour.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to update the people of this province regarding essential services. The great news is the people of this province are now covered by essential services, Mr. Speaker. It was a yawning and obvious gap, Mr. Speaker, that was there.

Mr. Speaker, the question preamble highlighted the consultative process. That was very important, Mr. Speaker. That consultative process allowed us to reach out right across the province, Mr. Speaker. We met with nearly 100 individuals personally; we received feedback, Mr. Speaker, and it allowed us to strengthen the essential service piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker. On that, Mr. Speaker, what we can say is the people of this province can be reassured work is under way to ensure that their safety remains the primary component of this government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, back when this government was busy doing one thing before the election and then the exact opposite after, we asked another simple question. We asked which civil servants are covered under essential services legislation. So now, nine months later, maybe the minister finally, finally has an answer to this.

To the minister, again: who's in and who's out?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Advanced Education, Employment and Labour.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, the good news is the people of Saskatchewan are in and the members opposite are out.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, that's a good start.

Mr. Speaker, in January 2007, Mr. Speaker, Vince Ready provided a report that recommended to parties that he address the continuation of essential services during a labour dispute, Mr. Speaker. What he said is, the difficulty is that, unlike most provinces in Canada, there is no legislative regime in Saskatchewan for the provision of essential services during a labour dispute.

Mr. Speaker, what we're delighted with is that we have passed essential services, and 70 per cent of the people of this province supported that, Mr. Speaker, because they wanted to ensure that their highways are plowed in the winter and that people have access to medical care during strikes that we saw last year, Mr. Speaker. They're covered, Mr. Speaker. Once again the people of this province are in when it comes to essential services.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — I'll tell you who's not in on the know, and that's the Minister of Labour when it comes to essential services.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, in committees in the spring session, the Minister of Tourism, Parks and Culture knew exactly how many civil servants were affected by this legislation. In that same spring session, the Minister of Energy told us that all government departments were undertaking a review to determine which government employees were affected. We asked this question as well and it caught — surprise — the Minister of Labour by surprise. He had no idea what was going on, which is quite common for this minister.

To the minister: we know this is going to affect the people; we just don't know who and at what cost. Simple question: what is the cost of entering into essential services legislation negotiation with public sector workers?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Advanced Education, Employment and Labour.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to provide a bit of an update. The cost is considerably lower than if the people of this province were not covered by the legislation, Mr. Speaker. That's the first point. There are four very simple and important criteria, Mr. Speaker. It relates to a danger to life, health, and safety; it relates to the destruction of premises and property; it relates to environmental damage; and the operation of the courts, Mr. Speaker. Those are the four key criteria, Mr. Speaker, that will inform our work in this area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, the big problem with essential services legislation always was that they did it without consultation. Well here we are nine months later with no more consultation, no regulations, no more answers than we had nine months ago. And it's obvious the minister is not exactly in a rush to get these regulations out.

Again, Mr. Speaker, to the minister, yes or no: will he hold consultations before releasing the regulations?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Advanced Education, Employment and Labour.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, I find it a little bit strange

that back in January 2007, Mr. Speaker, when Vince Ready came forward and said that there needs to be an essential service framework in place, Mr. Speaker, he said the difficulty is that, unlike most provinces in Canada, there's no legislative regime in Saskatchewan for the provision of essential services during a labour dispute, Mr. Speaker.

What we were able to do upon being elected by the people of this province, Mr. Speaker, is ensure that we wouldn't go back to a time when 400 people per day were being turned around from the Royal University Hospital, Mr. Speaker — to ensure that health services were provided for the people of this province; to ensure that highways would be plowed, Mr. Speaker; essentially to ensure that the right to strike remains, but it's balanced with public safety, Mr. Speaker. That's why we've moved forward, Mr. Speaker, and in due course, those regulations will be released. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Response to Health Disparities Report

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Saskatoon Health Region's health disparities report outlines numerous solutions to alleviating poverty and closing the health gap between the province's rich and poor. The Minister of Health is entering his second year in government, and nothing he has done to close the health gap between the province's rich and poor has made a difference. The solutions to the problems are being given to the minister. Mr. Speaker, what is he going to do with these recommendations?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — I am very proud actually to answer on behalf of our government to this particular question on this report. We have not only — without having the report — addressed a number of the recommendations but gone well beyond the recommendations. So I hope the member opposite has more questions because it's going to take more than a minute to give her the answer.

We announced a historical tax cut which will take 80,000 people, low-income workers, off of the tax roll.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, the report recommends that no one under the income, combined income, of 33,390 should pay income tax. We did better than that, Mr. Speaker. No one under the income of 41,300 will be paying income tax.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I'm waiting for the next question to continue the answer. But we increased shelter rates.

We indexed it, which is unprecedented in our country, to the market within the different regions. That is for all of the low-income clients. And there is far more that we did than that.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Many of those things don't affect people who don't work. And no one can deny the health gap between the rich and the poor. People in low-income neighbourhoods are three times more likely to be hospitalized for diabetes. They are 34 times more likely to have hep [hepatitis] C, three times more likely to have heart disease, 15 times more likely to attempt suicide, and five times more likely to have a child die in infancy than those people living in a high-income neighbourhood.

Will the minister listen to the pleas of the men, women, and children living in poverty in the inner cities and commit the required millions needed to implement the report's recommendations?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps the member opposite doesn't understand the system that is administrated within my ministry, because those on SAP [Saskatchewan assistance plan] and TEA [transitional employment allowance] are not working. They're not working. They receive shelter allowance and they're not working. And that has been increased and indexed under this government. They receive rental supplement, and they don't necessarily have to be working. Some of the low-income working people also qualify for the rental supplement. That too was increased and indexed, Mr. Speaker.

We announced an increase to the low-income tax credit, Mr. Speaker, that will apply to those that are working and not working. Mr. Speaker, we more than doubled the seniors' income plan. That is for the low-income seniors, and chances are, Mr. Speaker, they're not working.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, I think it's been quite clear who doesn't know their file.

A November 14, 2008 *Leader-Post* article stated the Canadian Institute for Health Information, and I quote, "... estimates the additional cost to the health system from people living in poverty to be \$640 million a year across the country."

In the same article, Mark Lemstra, one of the authors of the health disparity report, says, and I quote, "... an investment of \$300 million ... into the province's poorest citizens could ...

save \$1 billion down the line.”

To the minister: if he won't commit to helping the province's most vulnerable, will he commit to saving Saskatchewan taxpayers \$1 billion by investing in the report's recommendations?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me continue. Let me continue to what we've done, and I'm sure if she adds it all up it's a considerable amount of money that is spent for those most vulnerable within our society.

We have met the cost of any increase to the utility rates to those that are most vulnerable with the SAP and TEA clients within my ministry. We increased the mileage that we pay for them for their medical appointments so that they get more per kilometre than they were receiving under the previous government. For the low-income working, most of whom are single-parent families, we significantly increased the Saskatchewan employment supplement as well as increasing the income threshold for those that will qualify.

We have increased the rental supplements of those with disabilities to 40 per cent, so along with the shelter allowance they qualify for 110 per cent of the average market in any given district.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Ms. Junor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That government has done nothing but turn their back on the province's most vulnerable people. This spring, with a mountain of money in the bank, what did they do? They cold-heartedly ripped the funding from Station 20 West, which would have addressed many of the problems outlined in this report. Their only solution to the problem was a health bus. If the minister will not commit the required funding necessary to implement the report's recommendations, will he at least return funding to Station 20 West?

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to add one more point, and that is that this government has also committed 77 million for people with disabilities who have to be, beyond a doubt, the most vulnerable people within our society.

[14:15]

But let's never forget, Mr. Speaker, that the Lemstra report is based on history and data from when the NDP were

government. This is when the NDP were government. This did not happen within the last eleven and a half months. But guess what? In eleven and a half months this government has taken significant action. We have fewer people than ever before on social assistance, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 59 — *The Election Amendment Act, 2008*

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 59, *The Election Amendment Act, 2008* be now introduced and read a first time.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Minister of Justice has moved that Bill No. 59, *The Election Amendment Act, 2008* be now read the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

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

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting. Order. I call members to order. The Speaker is quite prepared to listen to the debate. The House will stand at a pause till we have members' attention.

Bill No. 60 — *The Senate Nominee Election Act*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 60, *The Senate Nominee Election Act* be now introduced and read a first time.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Minister of Justice has moved first reading of Bill No. 60, *The Senate Nominee Election Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed.

Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be considered a second time?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Next sitting of the House.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 61 — *The Local Government Election Amendment Act, 2008*

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

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 61, *The Local Government Election Amendment Act, 2008* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — The Minister Responsible for Municipal Affairs has moved first reading of Bill No. 61, *The Local Government Election Amendment Act, 2008*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Clerk: — First reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be considered a second time?

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Biggar, the Government Whip.

Mr. Weekes: — Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the answer to questions 93 through 106.

The Speaker: — Questions 93 to 106 tabled.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 58 — *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2008 (No. 2)*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader, Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise and move second reading of Bill 58, to amend *The Income Tax Act, 2000*.

Mr. Speaker, during our government's first year in office we have consistently adhered to three key priorities. These priorities have been investment and infrastructure, reduction of debt, and broad-based tax relief. Over the course of this past summer, we asked Saskatchewan people to write to us with their views on their priorities for our province. As it turns out, the people of Saskatchewan and the Government of

Saskatchewan are in agreement on the priorities.

Mr. Speaker, on October 21 our government responded to these consultations by announcing the largest investment in infrastructure in Saskatchewan history, the largest amount of debt reduction in Saskatchewan history, and the largest, single-year income tax cut in Saskatchewan history.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill will enable the implementation of our income tax reduction initiative. This Bill increases a Saskatchewan basic personal exemption, the amount you can earn tax free before you start paying income tax, by \$4,000 from the 2008 taxation year. This amount will be now \$12,945, the second highest personal exemption amount in Canada. In addition, Mr. Speaker, the spousal exemption amount and the equivalent to spouse amount are also being increased by a matching \$4,000 for the 2008 taxation year, bringing these amounts to \$12,945 as well. Mr. Speaker, this Bill also increases the dependent child tax credit amount by \$2,000 per child to \$4,795 for the 2008 taxation year.

Mr. Speaker, these measures will save an individual taxpayer \$440 a year and will save a family of four \$1,320 a year. In combination, Mr. Speaker, these enhancements to Saskatchewan's exemption amounts will mean that a working family now can earn up to \$41,300 before paying any provincial income tax. That's because we now have the highest family exemption in Canada, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Not only that, Mr. Speaker, these exemption enhancements mean that 80,000 lower income Saskatchewan people will no longer have to pay any provincial income tax.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — But, Mr. Speaker, we know that many lower income Saskatchewan residents already pay no provincial income tax. Our income tax reduction initiatives did not forget these residents, Mr. Speaker. This Bill replaces the existing Saskatchewan sales tax credit with the new and enhanced Saskatchewan low-income tax credit. Mr. Speaker, benefit levels are significantly enhanced and ramp-up for adults is eliminated and eligibility has been extended to more people.

This new initiative is a fully refundable tax credit that will continue to be delivered by the Canada Revenue Agency in conjunction with the quarterly federal goods and services tax credit. And these changes are effective July 2008, Mr. Speaker, the start of the current benefit year. Retroactive benefits for the July and October 2008 quarters will be paid out with the January 2009 quarterly payment. Annual benefits for a family of four can be as high as \$600, and this family will receive partial benefits until their income exceeds \$58,000. And, Mr. Speaker, we anticipate that the new Saskatchewan low-income tax credit will now be available to 300,000 Saskatchewan residents.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated, these tax changes are all retroactive to the start of the 2008 taxation or benefit year. And although we have just announced these tax changes, we

also remain committed to full inflation indexation of the provincial income tax system. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, this Bill also includes technical amendments to ensure that all of the new personal exemption amounts and the new low-income tax credit amounts are fully indexed to inflation for the 2009 taxation or benefit year.

Mr. Speaker, I very pridefully move second reading of *The Act to amend The Income Tax Act, 2000*.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Minister of Finance has moved that Bill No. 58, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2008* be now read the second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me today to stand and speak today to Bill No. 58, *An Act to amend the Income Tax Act, 2000*.

Mr. Speaker, the minister who just rose gave a pretty good explanation about the Bill which, for the interests of those who may read my remarks in the next few days, Mr. Speaker, I'd simply like to acknowledge what the minister has said.

The Income Tax Amendment Act today does deal with the retroactive increasing of the basic exemption amounts effective for the 2008 tax year. It deals with the retroactive increasing of the exemption amount with respect to a dependent spouse effective for the 2008 tax year. It retroactively increases the exemption amount in respect to and equivalent to spouse — i.e., a dependent other than the spouse — effective for the 2008 taxation year, and retroactively increases the exemption amount in respect to a dependent child also effective for the 2008 tax year. And, Mr. Speaker, finally it enhances the refundable Saskatchewan sales tax credit, including changing the name to the low-income tax credit effective for the '08-09 benefit year.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we can't take a piece of legislation in isolation from comments that have been made by the government or in isolation from the overall specifics of the economy that we're in or in the context of other legislation or other matters in front of the Chamber. Mr. Speaker, in that regard, not wanting to take this Bill too much in isolation, I know we are a good week since we dealt with the Speech from the Throne, Mr. Speaker, but I just want to make reference to a couple of comments in the Speech from the Throne before I carry on with some of my remarks on the Bill in front of us today.

And I quote from the Speech from the Throne, and I suspect that members opposite who are just delighted with the speech will probably applaud me on a couple of occasions here in the next moment or two, Mr. Speaker.

The Speech from the Throne actually, as it's printed on page 2, starts:

For as long as I can remember, people have called our province "Next Year Country."

Today, I am pleased to report that in our Saskatchewan, next year has arrived.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

Mr. Taylor: — You see, Mr. Speaker, I knew that they would applaud my comments. I just knew it.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's very interesting that earlier this year . . . And people who were listening to my comments with regards to the Throne Speech earlier this month, Mr. Speaker, will remember that I talked about the surplus that the government has inherited and that they are now working towards building upon, Mr. Speaker. And as we know, that the government earlier reported a surplus of roughly \$3 billion, Mr. Speaker.

So here we have the context of \$3 billion in the bank, an economy that is booming, an economy that because it's booming is creating some obstacles for individuals, vulnerable people in our communities, municipalities and, Mr. Speaker, certain sectors of our economy. And I can name just one for example, right now, Mr. Speaker — the trucking sector who is having trouble with labour shortages and the cost of moving goods.

Mr. Speaker, there are challenges in this booming economy. So as people who are watching this, Mr. Speaker, already know, the Premier this summer sent his members out into the province to identify what it is that people were talking about needing in terms of this \$3 billion deficit. And one of the things, one of many things that was told to government members, one of the things that they came back with, Mr. Speaker, was income tax cuts. So, Mr. Speaker, this government proceeded to make some income tax cuts and that's what brings the Bill forward today, Mr. Speaker.

[14:30]

Back to the context: \$3 billion in the bank; a crisis, Mr. Speaker, for some people in our booming economy; and an income tax Act, Mr. Speaker, that by its very nature produces a circumstance in which for people to benefit, to benefit from the benefits included in this Act, Mr. Speaker, they are going to have to wait till next year to receive the benefits.

So the Throne Speech that the members opposite applauded just a few moments ago, Mr. Speaker, said this isn't next year country; it's this year. And yet the solution to . . . The problems that individuals and businesses and communities are experiencing, Mr. Speaker, are this year. So this Act proceeds to address this issue of next year. We're going to provide funding, and yes, Mr. Speaker, we acknowledge it's retroactive so it covers this tax year, but in doing the coverage, Mr. Speaker, no one actually receives any of that benefit till next year.

So the senior on a fixed income in North Battleford or Weyburn or Swift Current, Mr. Speaker, a senior who's received a rent increase for their apartment or their house where they're living, Mr. Speaker, now are going to have to wait till next year in order to see the benefit that they're earning this year on money, Mr. Speaker, that this government inherited from this government, this party, last year. Mr. Speaker, this context that

I'm talking about seems to have eluded the members opposite, who are continuing to talk through my remarks on this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker.

So is it next year country or is it this year country, Mr. Speaker — \$3 billion? We happen to have an understanding that of course the tax cuts and the debt reduction that the members opposite are so proud of, Mr. Speaker, represent roughly — get this, Mr. Speaker — represent roughly \$300 million. Or let's put it in a percentage context, Mr. Speaker: 10 per cent, 10 per cent of the total surplus that's sitting in the bank, Mr. Speaker.

And what do they leave in the bank, Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, but about \$1.9 billion or 60 per cent of the overall surplus. So this legislation today which is meant to bring next year country to this year country and doesn't quite do that, actually only applies 10 per cent of the surplus that in fact they inherited from last year's, last year's economy, Mr. Speaker. So very, very interesting — very interesting, very interesting, Mr. Speaker.

So the bottom line for me today in speaking about this Bill, Mr. Speaker, is to ensure that the public fully understands that indeed there is more, there's more to this process of helping people during difficult times, Mr. Speaker, and a booming economy does provide difficult times. I can quote some. Maybe I will, Mr. Speaker. They're animated across the way and are interested in additional information from me, so maybe I will indeed put some additional information on the paper, Mr. Speaker. But you know, we've got to fully understand, the public's got to fully understand that while this is welcome news, there is a broad context, Mr. Speaker, that we have to put this in.

The comments that I made a few moments ago about seniors in their homes . . . Mr. Speaker, I read a lot of newspapers from across Canada. Mr. Speaker, I also read the local newspapers. And back in August of this year I was reading the Regina *Leader-Post*. And there was quite an interesting story there by a writer here in Regina who, Mr. Speaker, had travelled to one of the booming areas of the province. And I think everybody knows that Weyburn community is booming; it really is, Mr. Speaker. The activity that's taking place in that area is welcomed, I know, not only by Weyburn residents but by all residents in the province of Saskatchewan. But there are challenges, Mr. Speaker, that this booming economy presents.

And I know the member from Weyburn over there has been barking at me a little bit during my comments, Mr. Speaker. Maybe he didn't read this. Maybe he didn't read this article in the Regina *Leader-Post* from August 2, 2008. And here, I'm just going to quote:

Weyburn renters — like their counterparts in Regina and Saskatoon — aren't immune to the rising costs of progress during Saskatchewan's economic boom [says Charlie Hoskins].

Here's what Charlie Hoskins says:

"I moved here in June 1995. I'm coming up on 81 shortly [age 81, Mr. Speaker, and I continue the quote] and I would like to be able to relax and take it easy instead of

having somebody hounding me all the time to pay more rent. My pension doesn't go up that much. They have got you over a barrel because there is nowhere else to go down here."

Well Charlie Hoskins, Mr. Speaker, is the people that we are trying to speak for on this side of the House. They're seniors, they're students, they're immigrants, they're First Nations people moving into our towns and villages, Mr. Speaker, to take advantage of job opportunities there.

Mr. Speaker, there are people who are still earning minimum wage, living on pensions, living on fixed incomes of one kind or another. They may have a disability, Mr. Speaker, or indeed they may just not have the skills yet to participate in our economy. Mr. Speaker, their income is not sufficient to allow them to deal with the rising rents, the rising cost of transportation, the rising food costs. And, Mr. Speaker, I quoted this story in Weyburn. It's the same in North Battleford. It's the same in Swift Current. It's the same in Meadow Lake. Mr. Speaker, these are the people that we speak for today.

Now I'm sure they're happy to know that when they file their income tax in February or March — if they file their income tax, Mr. Speaker — but when they file their income tax, that maybe in March, April, or May they might see some benefit, benefit that actually has been out of their pocket for maybe as much as a year to 18 months, because we know that rents started to rise some time ago.

So, Mr. Speaker, very important — broad context of this legislation. Can't argue with a number of the points that are directly in this. But what else matters, Mr. Speaker, when we're dealing with basic personal credits and the sorts of things that I outlined when I started my remarks today?

And I think the last point that we have to take into account, Mr. Speaker, that I just started on here a second ago, is not all people in Saskatchewan file their income tax returns, although, Mr. Speaker, I argue whenever I see somebody in this situation that everybody in Saskatchewan should file income tax return, regardless of what their income is, regardless of whether they have income or not. Mr. Speaker, there are benefits to filing an income tax return, but all of us are aware there are people out there who simply do not.

And, Mr. Speaker, when we address this piece of legislation, we should be addressing how do we make sure, how do we make it easier for people whose education, Mr. Speaker, may not have taught them the need to file an income tax return every year, whose circumstances may be such that they've never had to file or that they have difficulty in understanding how to file?

Mr. Speaker, there are benefits here for people that will take place next year and therefore, Mr. Speaker, it will be incumbent upon all of us to help those who don't know about it to take advantage of it next year.

So the second part of my comments in regards to this Bill, Mr. Speaker . . . Remember my first ones were about, what about this year country that they talked about so proudly in the Throne Speech? But when we do look at next year country, Mr. Speaker, how do we make sure that those who should benefit

from this legislation will in fact be able to benefit from it?

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm not saying for everybody, especially on the other side, to just tell everyone to go off to see, whether it's in December or January or February, to see a private tax filer, Mr. Speaker. There's no reason whatsoever for private tax filers to take advantage of these opportunities in charging people a percentage of what money they might be eligible to receive. Mr. Speaker, people should have the ability and the opportunity to benefit fully from this credit without having to involve somebody else in that process. But, Mr. Speaker, they need to be talked to. They need to be told about, and maybe we need to do something to make it easier for low-income people or those with little or perhaps no education to understand what needs to be done.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think there's still a considerable amount of work that needs to be done, but, Mr. Speaker, I do say on behalf of the opposition that by and large the provisions as they appear in this piece of legislation, the provisions as they appear in this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, are quite supportable. But we need to ensure that the public and the government fully understands the context and the implications of what's involved here. So, Mr. Speaker, having said that, I would like to move therefore that debate on Bill No. 58 be now adjourned.

The Speaker: — The Opposition House Leader, the member from The Battlefords, has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried. Members, before I recognize the second reading speech, I would ask that members . . . I realize there's a number of conversations taking place, and if you could just tone it down a little bit, it would make it a lot easier to hear the person recognized and speaking on the floor.

Bill No. 57 — *The Land Titles Amendment Act, 2008*

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is with great pleasure that I offer the second reading speech on *The Land Titles Amendment Act, 2008*. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of *The Land Titles Amendment Act, 2008*.

Saskatchewan's land registry system is known nationwide for innovation, reliability, and customer service. The amendments contained in the Bill will enhance the reliability and security of Saskatchewan's land registry. The major category of amendments contained in the Bill relate to the assurance and compensation provisions of the Act.

These amendments are intended to settle the concerns people may have in losing their homes to fraud. Though fraud is an extremely rare occurrence in Saskatchewan, with only two reported cases occurring in the past 30 years, the importance of having a home and feeling secure that that home will not be lost because of fraud is something that we recognize is very important to the people of Saskatchewan. We are doing

everything we can to ensure that the land registry is secure so that people can feel confident that their homes are secure, Mr. Speaker. These amendments will expand the assurance provisions of the Act to provide additional protection to title owners as well as to mortgagees suffering losses as the result of fraud.

This Bill also contains a number of other amendments that improve the functionality of the system in many different ways. The first of these amendments recognizes the registrar of titles' responsibility over the grant directory. The second places a limit on fractional ownership in mines and minerals. The third category, Mr. Speaker, allows Information Services Corporation, ISC, to establish fees and pricing strategies for special land information products and services.

Mr. Speaker, the proposed Bill will ensure that rightful owners of a home who have been removed from title by fraudulent actions and have been in continuous possession and occupation of that said home are able to get the title back in their name, if they wish, in situations where innocent purchasers have not occupied the residence.

Mr. Speaker, land titles legislation has always set out who gets the title and who gets compensation regarding a fraud. This amendment ensures that there is a presumption that the person who has the strongest connection to the home — the person in actual occupation of the home — gets to keep the home while ensuring that the other party has access to compensation. The Bill will allow a quicker and less costly resolution of issues related to fraud by giving the registrar the ability to restore title to the former registered owner or, if that is not possible, allow the registrar to refer the matter to court, Mr. Speaker.

The amendments expand the assurance provisions to provide compensation to financial institutions and other lenders who entered into a mortgage with a fraudster, and register that mortgage in the land registry as long as the lender meets the required standard of due diligence when entering into the mortgage and is not covered by any other insurance for their loss.

[14:45]

The Bill facilitates compensation in excess of the actual value of the title where a home lost through fraud cannot be restored to the original owner. So the owner, Mr. Speaker, no longer has to bear the cost of legal fees, realtors' fees, and other expenses that were necessary in acquiring a comparable residence.

The registrar of titles will be responsible for establishment and maintenance of the land grant directory, thus providing an easily accessible and searchable record of all Crown land grants that were submitted to the land registry with a request for issue of title.

The amendments facilitate the creation of the limitation of fractional ownership of mineral titles to facilitate development in the oil and gas sector. And I know the hon. member from Kindersley, the Minister of Energy, is certainly somebody who has lobbied very hard for this and has spoken passionately about this provision in the Act.

ISC will now have the authority, similar to other Crown corporations, to enter into agreements with individual customers for services where the fees agreed to be paid may differ from those generally applied to the land registry customers, to determine the appropriate method of payment to meet its business and customer needs, Mr. Speaker, and to waive the . . . in addition to the power, the registrar that already exists, the power to waive fees. Regulation-making powers are expanded with respect to the circumstances where authorizations or consents are not required to issue titles or abstracts and defining rules relating to the operation of the abstract directory. The registrar of the corporation will now have the authority to determine the hours of operation of the land title registry, Mr. Speaker.

The law reform commissions of Saskatchewan and Manitoba jointly issued a report on private title insurance which included recommendations to cover assurance coverage in this province. These recommendations were considered in drafting the new amendments.

ISC, Mr. Speaker, also sought the advice of the Law Society of Saskatchewan and the Canadian Bar Association. Certainly with whatever piece of legislation we're talking about, consultation is so important. And in this particular instance, the Law Society of Saskatchewan was consulted along with the Canadian Bar Association, and I know all members are appreciative of the efforts that have taken place to ensure that this has happened.

We recommended that ISC expand the insurance provisions to ensure that title owners would not lose their land as a result of fraud, Mr. Speaker. Today *The Land Titles Act, 2000*, the Act that exists today, does not assign responsibility for the grant directory to the registrar. Easy access to and consistent maintenance of the grant directory is important to the province because our history is integrally connected to the land through farming, forestry, resource development, and First Nations, Mr. Speaker. It is appropriate that the registrar be given the responsibility for this key historical information.

The mineral sector, as I indicated earlier, is important to the province's economy. There's nobody that can certainly challenge that. Unlimited fractional ownership in minerals impedes an economic development in the oil and gas sector because consent is required from all mineral owners before the minerals can be developed in our province. Mineral development becomes difficult when there are a large number of owners that must be located and provide their consent prior to development. This provision reflects the broad consultations with the oil and gas sector and the legal community, Mr. Speaker. This amendment balances the interests of mineral developers and mineral owners, Mr. Speaker.

ISC delivers specialized services in addition to land registry, and it tends to deliver new land information, products, and services. These amendments will allow ISC to facilitate these services by providing ISC with the authority to establish fees and pricing strategies for these services.

ISC has been very successful at running the land registry. Efficiency and customer satisfaction have vastly improved over the last couple of years, increased since ISC's inception. And

these amendments seek to continue to provide the people of Saskatchewan the level of service that they expect from their public sector, from their Crown corporations, from a Crown corporation like ISC, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, with that I am pleased to move second reading of *The Land Titles Amendment Act, 2008*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

The Speaker: — The Minister Responsible for Crown Corporations has moved that Bill No. 57, *The Land Titles Amendment Act, 2008* be now read the second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to respond to this second reading speech by the Minister of ISC.

I think that it's quite noteworthy that that member said on quite a few occasions during the speech this afternoon that this corporation is doing a good job for the people of Saskatchewan, and I agree. This corporation was an attempt, and I think it's been a very successful attempt, to modernize the land registry in Saskatchewan because what everybody knows is that the ability to have a chance to borrow money against land or to know for sure that you have the use of land in developing business, in providing security for your home, making sure that you've provided for your family — whether it's a farming operation, ranching, mining, or an industry — is absolutely crucial.

And we had a long history, and I guess we have a long history of very secure title in this province. And I think anybody looking at the numbers of problems in the land title systems over a century recognize that there was much good work that was done by the people who ran a paper-based system. But, Mr. Speaker, it became quite clear just over 10, 12 years ago that a paper-based system would not be the appropriate system to work in the 21st century.

And I think what we're seeing now is the result of hard work and much struggle by many people to transform a system that was based on oodles and oodles of paper to a system that is digitally controlled, that's based on a digital map of the whole province, and that it clearly gives everybody an assurance that their properties are secure. It gives lenders the ability to lend money against many, many properties all at once because they can work very quickly.

I just have to say, when I first started practising law in Saskatchewan 30 years ago, I was assigned to work with a senior land lawyer who worked in the areas of oil and gas and pipeline work, and I spent much time going over legal opinions which we would provide to oil companies or gas companies or pipeline companies as to the security of title related to the work that they were doing. Give you an example, when pipelines are built right across the province — and we know now that we have quite a few of these pipelines — that particular pipeline, that particular business goes underneath many, many pieces of property. And anybody can look at a map of Saskatchewan and see the patchwork and realize that you're going to be through,

underneath many fences, many roads, many other parcels.

Well the old system was a system whereby one would go and look at each title. And what that meant is that you'd go back to the original grant and then you'd check every title all the way through the century to make sure that the person who you were going to sign the lease with that would allow for the building of the pipeline was the right person. And I'd have to say that in that process, which was something we did very carefully as a team, we often discovered discrepancies.

And very rarely were the discrepancies discrepancies of the land titles office themselves, but they may have been discrepancies within families or within perceived ownership, or I think the reference was to fractional titles. There may have been certain kinds of things that happened. Other times it related to problems with railway title that had been put through land or other places, but there was always a question that needed to be answered and then provided assurance.

And as lawyers, our job was to provide assurance to the bankers that when they lent money to build a half a billion dollar pipeline, that when they were done there wouldn't be somebody who owned a chunk of that pipe that would stop the flow through it.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I tell that little story because what the minister has brought forward today is in one sense another step along the road in making sure that businesses can rely on the land titles system we have in Saskatchewan, now run by ISC, so that the further development of business in Saskatchewan can continue without any restrictions. And this particular legislation is I think quite interesting, and I know my colleague, the Minister of Justice, is going to do some more thinking about this to identify all of the different aspects of it. But today I just wanted to outline a few things that I think are particularly interesting about this and what's being done.

Now I think it's appropriate that the minister started off with the question of fraud because that's always been one of the difficulties in a paper base system or in a now modern digital system is, are you actually getting all of the true documents, and does the record actually reflect what's actually happened in a transaction. And I think it's appropriate in this particular legislation we'll be authorizing the registrar in a greater fashion than we have in the history of Saskatchewan to be a participant in solving those particular problems if they arise.

And I note that the minister said there are only a couple in the last 30 years and so that practically it seems like not a big problem. But when it does arise, it causes incredible difficulties, whether it's for a business but particularly when it's a homeowner because often a homeowner may not know that their title has been transferred even two or three times, money borrowed against it, and you have banks and others coming forward trying to get money from a house that you always thought was yours.

Now what this particular legislation does is it appears to give the registrar the power to correct titles which used to be reserved pretty well for the courts to correct the titles. And it does it in a way that also allows for the insurance fund which backs up our land titles system to compensate not just for the

particular piece of property but also for the related expenses. I think that that's an entirely appropriate way to do this, but I think we'll have to spend some time looking at this to make sure we understand what the mechanism is, and I know that my colleague will start looking at that.

Now one of the areas in this particular vein relates to how you correct the situation, and I know that there's much debate in the courts but also within the policy-makers trying to develop land titles policy as to whether you go back to where the original mistake was made or if you deal with the situation related to who would be most disrupted by a correction of the title. And it appears — although we'll have to ask some more questions — that the officials advising the minister in this particular case have opted for a solution which attempts to keep whole the person who is in a particular house or a business that might be in a particular building or piece of land.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think that's an appropriate way to look at it, and I know that it gives the registrar some power to fix these things, but also appropriately it gives the registrar the ability to refer the matter to the court if there isn't complete agreement or satisfaction. And as with anything related to land titles, any matter can go to court. But this also gives a chance for the registrar to refer matters there, and I think that's appropriate.

[15:00]

Now another area in this legislation today, moving on from the fraud question, is related to the registry of grants. And this I think is also a helpful addition because it will provide all of that information that sets out what the original grant was from the Crown. And I think the explanation here that the public may need is that the Crown in the right of the province has basically had control of the whole of the land of this province, and all of the grants have come either from the federal Crown or the provincial Crown. More recently, and I guess since 1930, the province has had more control of the land and of the grants.

And so quite often a question becomes, well what was actually granted in that original grant? Did it include just the surface, or surface and coal, surface and gravel, surface and oil and gas, or surface and everything below the surface? As some of our industries move forward in finding new uses for resources that are under the soil, some of the questions about the original grants become even more crucial. What this particular legislation appears to do is provide access to all of those original grants and the new grants that come as they come forward. This will be of assistance to everybody.

One of the interesting questions that it does raise, and I think it goes to the heart of the system that we now have in Saskatchewan, is we have a digital map that includes the whole of the province. The land titles system will include all those lands where grants have been made from the Crown but will still retain a registry in the Department of Environment which includes land in northern Saskatchewan and will still have, in southern Saskatchewan, titles that will be registered in this system but that will be primarily in the hands of the Department of Agriculture.

It raises a continued question about how we move forward in the province as we deal with unpatented or ungranted land in all

parts, but especially in northern Saskatchewan. And I know that the minister and ministry and the officials in the ministry will be looking at this kind of a question over the longer term because ultimately the system that we now have pretty well requires that every square centimetre of the province have some description or some way that it can be described within the system that we have. I think that this step related to the grants is another step down that road, but we have some more work to do.

Now the issue around compensation, which was mentioned in this particular legislation, has some interesting history. And I was pleased to hear that the minister has consulted with the Canadian Bar Association and the Law Society. And I know many of the lawyers in Saskatchewan and across the country have received requests to work with title insurance companies as opposed to relying on our communal or provincial insurance that we have through our land titles system. And one of the questions that always arose and provided possibly a little bit of interest from the title insurance companies were some of the extra costs if there was a problem with the title. What this particular legislation we have here does is allows for compensation for appropriate extra costs if they do relate to a problem with the title, including the fraud. And I think that's important.

What they also make clear is that there is no possibility of an insurance company selling insurance to cover a risk knowing full well that they will be totally compensated by the province for that risk. In other words, the claim cannot be subrogated and paid out to the insurance company such as you might in some other situations. I think this is a new area for this particular kind of legislation. And I know we'll have to look at this and ask some questions about this as we move forward to make sure that we have the right plan and the right intent as we move forward because there are very large interests worldwide in having another layer of title insurance on top of what we know in Saskatchewan has been very good title protection for over a century. So I'm pleased with how it's presented in the legislation. Obviously some of these things will be covered by further regulation.

I think another positive point of the legislation as you go through it is that there are quite a number of places where present rules that are located in regulations — in other words that are easy to change — have been recognized by the officials to have the quality that they should actually be in the Act so that they can't be changed without coming back to the legislature. The importance of this is that this adds another layer of protection to landowners and lenders and other people involved in business in the province. And I think that we will see that those suggestions do make sense, although I think we'll have to take further look at it and ask some questions. But I think that's the right way to go.

Also the legislation continues to expand the areas where the registrar could make regulations. Now normally the role of the opposition is to be quite suspect of chances to increase the amount of regulatory power. But I think in this particular case so far — although we'll have to examine it some more — there seems to be a right balance around the regulatory power in the sense that some regulations have been moved into the Act because that'll provide security. It although does add some

regulatory power which allows for the registrar to have more flexibility dealing with fraud and a couple of other matters.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this legislation is quite complicated. It's based on a lot of very good work over quite a long period of time. It does have some aspects that we're going to continue to want to look at. Even though we know there's been some consultation here, we also know that we will have to ask some more questions. And so, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move adjournment of this debate to allow us to do further work. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The member from Regina Lakeview has moved that Bill No. 57, *The Land Titles Amendment Act, 2008* be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 48

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

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just on a point of order, I believe I'm going to have to clarify with the Government House Leader the order in which Bills were being called today. I have a list that's somewhat different than that which the Clerk was just referring to. So I just want to clarify that. But we are prepared, we are prepared at the moment to proceed with the Bill as called, but I just want to serve notice I need to spend a little bit of time with the Government House Leader here before the next Bill is called.

The Speaker: — Just a point of clarification. That isn't really a point of order, but I would certainly give the Opposition House Leader the opportunity to work with the Government House Leader to address the order of debate that will take place this afternoon. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Gantefoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to put on the record that the same information is circulated before the House sits for the Clerks at the Table and for the opposition as well as our members. So I certainly believe that this information was transmitted appropriately.

The Speaker: — Debate on Bill No. 48, *The Financial Administration Amendment Act, 2008*. I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

Mr. Van Mulligen: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to have an opportunity to make a few comments with respect to this Bill. And although the subject matter may sound

rather straightforward, it is in fact a Bill and a principle that goes to the heart of why it is that the Legislative Assembly convenes.

There is an impression in our society that governments are able to do lots of things and act in many different ways, and governments surely can. But there's some things that governments cannot do in our system of parliamentary democracy, and that is that governments cannot pass legislation. Governments can certainly, as we see, put forward Bills and legislation, but governments cannot pass legislation, cannot enact legislation. That is something that has to be done by the representatives of the people of Saskatchewan through their Legislative Assembly.

Similarly, although governments can spend money, and certainly do, governments cannot have access to those funds unless that has been approved by the Legislative Assembly. And it's an important parliamentary principle in our system of government that no government can spend money unless that money has been and that spending has been authorized by the Legislative Assembly on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan through their elected representative.

So this particular Bill deals with the question of giving government approval to spend money without there being a budget in place. The public may know that sometime before the end of the fiscal year, in the month of March usually, the government will come forward with a budget that anticipates the government's spending needs for the next fiscal year starting April 1. And ultimately those budgets are passed and then provides the government with the authority to in fact expend the funds that are stipulated and laid out in that particular budget.

The problem comes when the government needs to spend money before the budget is finalized. Although the budget may be put before the Legislative Assembly in March, the debate on that budget can go for a number of weeks. And then there's a detailed examination of all of the aspects of the budget in review, in various committees — sometimes in Committee of the Whole of the Legislative Assembly but mostly in various policy field committees of the Legislative Assembly — where each of the committees will look in detail at the proposals in the budget for the particular areas they're interested. And at some point, that all then comes together. Usually close to the end of the legislative sitting, say sometime in May, approval is given to the government finally to proceed to spend funds as these funds are outlined in the budget for the year, the estimates for the year.

The question that arises for governments and for the Legislative Assembly is, how can the government spend money if it hasn't received the authority from the Legislative Assembly? What should the government do in the interim?

In the past, the position has been taken that the government should come to the Legislative Assembly on a monthly basis, pending the adoption of the budget, should come to the Legislative Assembly on a monthly basis and request approval from the Legislative Assembly for one-twelfth of all the funds that it needs to meet its commitment so that the government can send the monies that are required by the school boards, so that

the government can expend one-twelfth of its budget, roughly speaking, for the various health districts, that the government does have funds available to meet its obligations, say for social assistance and other transfer programs.

[15:15]

And so the practice has been for the government to come to the Legislative Assembly and say, here's our proposed expenditure for the next month and we're asking for your permission to then expend those funds for the coming months pending the approval of the budget.

Now the government is asking with this particular piece of legislation for an amendment that would then mean that the government no longer would have to come to the Legislative Assembly for that kind of approval; would no longer require interim supply for one month at a time. What this legislation would do is make it automatic that when the budget is tabled, the government can be provided with two-twelfths of the funds that it needs to carry on pending the adoption of the budget. In most years the budget will have been adopted at the end of that period and therefore there would be no issue created.

There may be the odd year, for whatever reason, if the budget is delayed that at some point the government may have to come back for an interim supply. But the government is asking in this particular case to be provided with the authority to provide the funding that it requires for two-twelfths of the budget year, recognizing that even while it's asking for that, lots of debate is going on as I indicated, whether it's in committees of the whole House or whether it's through other policy field committees of the Legislative Assembly, where lots of questions are being raised about specific expenditures — whether it's efficient, whether it's the right kind of expenditure, and so on. But that debate is ongoing and therefore the government is indicating that really no further purpose is really solved by delaying or having to put the government through the hoop, shall we say, to ask for approval for one-twelfth of the funding that it needs for the coming year because we are involved in discussing the larger picture.

Well on the one hand, Mr. Speaker, this is a very important principle of no supply unless it's authorized by the Legislative Assembly. On the other hand, Mr. Speaker, there's no record that I'm aware of where there's ever been any denial of interim supply requests by the provincial government. I'm not sure whether that denial would in fact trigger a provincial election or what it might do. But realistically there's no opposition, I gather, that's ever been wanting to put itself in a position of denying that request say, for example, to allocate funds for school boards for a month or allocating funds for the government to meet its social assistance payments, being put in a position of denying that request and then being held responsible for making that decision. So on the one hand it's an important principle. On the other hand there is no record of any denial in the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly that I'm aware of.

Secondly, any thoughts that people might have that this then provides the members of the Legislative Assembly with an opportunity to question the nature of the expenditure that the government has, I certainly am aware of rulings in the Legislative Assembly by Committee of Finance Chairs over the

years that would suggest that the interim supply is really not a mini-budget debate in providing the members of the Legislative Assembly with an opportunity to question the nature of the expenditure that the government is providing.

And the rulings have been that narrowly this is a question of interim supply, that the questions should relate to whether the funds that the government is asking for to meet its commitments for a one-month period is in fact sufficient; if there is some other request inherent in that, for example, you know, the government paying out funds to school boards not on a one-twelfth but on a two-twelfths model, whether or not the funds that are in that Bill are sufficient. And so therefore any questions have to be narrowly put as to the sufficiency of the fund for the government to meet its commitments for that one-month period and not in terms of the nature of the request.

For example, is there enough money in the budget for highways? Is there enough money in the budget for health care? Is there sufficient funds to enable schools to proceed in a certain manner, Mr. Speaker? And so consistently the rulings have been that, no, it's strictly a question of whether the government has sufficient funds for the one-month period.

Recognizing that should this legislation pass, if there are questions in the future from say a group that is funded by the government, that group taking exception to the amount of funds that was provided to the government even though the funds might be in the budget, the members of the Legislative Assembly still have the opportunity through question period to put questions to the provincial government about the funding that has been provided under interim supply, now an automatic interim supply should the Bill pass. So that opportunity is still there through question period for those questions to be asked and also for written questions if these are great detail issues to be put to the government and to ask them to reply.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would say on balance that, yes, it's an important parliamentary principle that no funds should be advanced to the government unless these have been approved by the Legislative Assembly. On the other hand, practice would show that there's never been an instance of funds being refused. And realistically we don't think that efficiency of this particular House is well served by continuing on with what is a rather arcane practice in many ways, and that the people of Saskatchewan will be better served by proceeding through with this legislation and making the change that is outlined in the legislation to make the interim supply an automatic two months supply once the budget is tabled with the Legislative Assembly.

Having said that, there's still lots of opportunity for members of the Legislative Assembly and specifically, I guess, the opposition members to raise questions — obviously in the budget process we have — about the priorities of the government and what the government is providing as a program for the year through that budget.

So having said that, Mr. Speaker, we are satisfied that on balance that this is a change that can be accepted by the members of the Legislative Assembly. We would certainly ask at this time that this Bill proceed through to committee, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion that Bill No. 48, *The Financial Administration Amendment Act, 2008* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Clerk: — Second reading of this Bill.

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — To Crown and Central Agencies, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — This Bill now stands referred to the Standing Committee on the Crowns, CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan]. Crown and Central Agencies.

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

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Chair. It's a pleasure to rise today and enter debate on the trespass Bill, *The Trespass to Property Act* that has been introduced in the House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know there has been a number of questions that have been put forward on *The Trespass to Property Act*, and I think the main one is, what's the need for this Bill, what issues does it fix, and where are we going with this Bill in general?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know in all the time that I have been elected, I know I have heard of a number of incidents here and there . . . It's pretty scattered. Maybe a little more often at this time of year when we're dealing with hunting season and things that may go on there. But it's pretty rare to hear complaints of this nature throughout the rest of the year. And I know personally I cannot recall one time where I had a constituent or a citizen of the province of Saskatchewan that has approached me about the need for a trespass to property Act.

So when we look at it, you always take an open mind or have an open mind when you look at any of the pieces of legislation that are coming forward, ask yourself a number of questions. What do they do? What's the intent? What groups may have been lobbying for this? Who does it help? But you also have to have the ability to look at the big picture. Who may it hinder? What are the unintended consequences? And I believe my colleague

the other day, when he made comments about this Bill, he also referred to it and he called it the law of unintended consequences. And solely because it is a new Bill, Mr. Speaker, we really need to give the Bill some scrutiny, do some comparisons, and see what it actually means and what the unintended consequences may be from this piece of legislation.

I think when we look at the Bill, when you go through it initially, it's fairly straightforward. I think in many cases it seems to be fairly upfront in what its intentions are. But one of the things that we have always done — and I know that I like to do — is to be able to look at other jurisdictions, see what legislation is there, see what the differences are and what the similarities are, and then really have a discussion with people that may be impacted by the legislation and get a feel from them as to what their take on the legislation is, if they have concerns or if they are supportive.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, while all of us here are elected to represent our constituents, none of us knows everything. There isn't one of us in the Assembly here that will have real life experiences in all aspects of life in the province of Saskatchewan, so we really rely on our constituents to give us feedback, to give us input and guidance in the decisions that we will make. I know in the area south of Moose Jaw, because I have a rural component to my constituency, and there are many people out there that I've spoken to over the summer and there's a couple of those that I will phone to get their take on the legislation and have a bit of a discussion.

So, Mr. Speaker, one of the other issues I think we need to do is to look at, like I said previously, look at other provinces. Where are the similarities in Bills that are currently in other provinces, and why has it always been felt that Saskatchewan did not have a need for a trespass to property Act? Those are a couple of things that I believe we need to look into. We need to have a bit more time to discuss this with the citizens of Saskatchewan and really put a little more definition on the areas of concern. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at this point in time until we have more research done on the Bill, I move that we adjourn debate on *The Trespass to Property Act*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Moose Jaw Wakamow has made a motion to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my honour today to speak to Bill No. 9 which is an Act to amend the superannuation and supplementary pensions Act. This Bill in

principle affects many. All of us are concerned about pensions one way or another. But this Bill specifically speaks to just over, well just about 1,900 people who are currently involved in the pension plan that is a defined benefit plan. And I'll get to a little bit more about that later, but my opening was that I'm honoured to be speaking to this Bill.

[15:30]

My second point is, I'm following two of my colleagues. The member for Regina Dewdney has spoken to this in March 17 of this year when the Bill was before the House, and then again November 12, just five days ago. The member for The Battlefords has also spoken to this Bill on November 12. And the thing that struck me as I read their wise counsel and their speeches was, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that my colleagues were quite clear that there are parts of this Bill that of course we accept and of course are progressive and will be helpful, but the double-dipping provisions clearly require much more consultation. Clearly we have a great deal of nervousness on this side of the legislature respecting the benefit, respecting whether that's a good thing to do or not.

And want to say along those lines that members on this side of the legislature have a long tradition of respect for our civil service. We genuinely appreciate the job that civil servants do in every walk of Saskatchewan's life. And for over 100 years now, we've had civil servants that have served us — our province — have served us just in an exemplary fashion.

Of course there's always someone you can point to that isn't necessarily doing the job we'd like them to do. Sometimes it's because they're not actually doing the job, but more often it's because we're tasking them to do a job that's not so popular. But civil servants are a necessary part of our society, and they just work very diligently overall — day in and day out. Many of them I'm proud to call acquaintances, but many I'm proud to call friends as well. And I want to be on the record of thanking our civil servants for doing the great work that they do, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But as legislators . . . and I know that the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow was referring to the trespass Act, and said as MLAs we don't have a lock on all of life's experiences in Saskatchewan. And it's just so with this Act as well; I've not received superannuation yet. And in fact, I want to point out I won't be receiving one under this at any time because this is a defined benefit Act.

But MLAs, even when we don't have a direct personal relationship with this particular Act — even though we don't have that — we do have an overall responsibility to our constituents, the very people that we applied to go to this place and represent. Every election we go and we apply to our constituents, and the result is here on both sides of the legislature. The people that are elected, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are the ones that had the most, enjoyed the most support in their constituency. And ergo we have a responsibility to try and be protectors of their tax dollars and protectors of our constituents in everything that they would want.

And that takes me to, by way of explanation, this Bill. As I understand it, the minister said in his second reading speech that

this Bill, *An Act to amend The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Act* does not involve members of a defined contribution pension plan. Instead it affects — and I'll get to the more definitive list — but instead it affects some people who are in a defined benefit plan.

And by that I'm referring to a plan that is often referred to as a formulary plan where there's a provision for so much pension per year of service times. Typically it will be the best five years of your pensionable earnings, and that's a formula. So that particularly, when you get near to the time that you want to start drawing from your pension plan, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you can figure it out literally to the dollar what it is that you would be receiving on a monthly basis or on an annual basis if that's the way you wanted to calculate it. But it's a defined benefit plan, and it has more relationship to a promise that's made by, in this instance this Bill, a promise made by respective governments. And the promise is made and supported by taxpayers, and that then speaks to how it is that we come, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to fund a defined benefit plan like this.

We make promises, so much per year of service based on, you know, a formula that includes how long you've worked, what your earnings are. And usually they include some formula that is the best three or five years of your earnings so that your pension would be the greatest value to the pensioner. But that's not funded. It's only partially funded and that's something that happened historically, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's not something that any individual on either side of this House set up.

This plan in fact that we're dealing, the plans we're dealing with had no new members coming on to after 1977. 1977, so that's a full nine years before the longest serving MLA that's currently in this House was first elected. So nine years before anyone that's here in the House today was elected, this Bill would affect those people from before.

Like I pointed out earlier in my speech, there's close to 1,900 of those people that work in various departments and various areas of Government of Saskatchewan responsibility. Close to 1,900 of them have started work prior to 1977 and are still qualifying under the terms of this supplementary provisions Act, this Act to amend the superannuation Act. So we're not talking about a small number of people. You know, 2,000 or 1,900 people is not an insignificant number of people, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for us to be dealing with. And we want to make sure that the government's got it right.

The other type of plan, just to sort of make it very clear, is a defined contribution plan as opposed to a defined benefit. And a defined contribution plan is one that all civil servants who participate in a pension plan in Saskatchewan subsequent to . . . after 1977 and all MLAs elected after 1977 participate in. And that's where a percentage of our earnings is deducted from our paycheque and it is matched by the taxpayers, the employer, and that's then invested.

And whatever that will . . . That lump of money that usually grows, although I'm reticent to point out it hasn't grown in the last months. In fact it's taken a dive as the stock markets have taken a dive, and so our pension plans have diminished greatly. But that's the other type of most common pension is the defined contribution plan.

This Act deals, as I pointed out, with the defined benefit. And as an aside on this, I want to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a number of superannuates, there's 7,856 pensioners as of December 31, 2007, so 7,856 pensioners that have been looking for indexing. And I want to point out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that members of the now government promised that that would happen almost overnight — almost overnight. And here we are, over a year since the election.

And we're not talking about indexing the pension for these 7,856 pensioners, people who were pensioned off, who were retired as of December 31, 2007. Instead we're talking about an Act that will affect about 1,900 people directly, potentially, and of course it affects all of taxpayers beyond that.

I just want to be a little bit more clear about who all is in this Act. And, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that Bill 9, which is what we're discussing here today, deals with the following defined benefit plan because there's a number of them. It's not a long list but I just want to read into the record which specific plans they are. 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 applies to the Anti-Tuberculosis League superannuation plan and, Mr. Speaker, it also applies to the Saskatchewan Transportation Company employees' superannuation plan.

So it's a very specific group that this affects. I've said the number of people that are currently retired under these plans, and I've also said, pointed out that there's close to 1,900 people that will be affected by the double-dipping provisions that this Bill has in it — the double-dipping provisions that frankly causes us the most concern on this side of the House.

Before I get a little further into the double-dipping portion, I want to stake some high ground so that in principle we can all understand what it is that I certainly have a level of comfort with. Mr. Deputy Speaker, every day there are individuals who change employment — every day. Sometimes the employees want to change; they want to move and seek work somewhere else. Sometimes the job has simply run out and they have to move on.

I think of people who are hired sessionally here — and not to put too much of a damper on our Pages who do terrific work — but when the session's over, shortly thereafter their job grinds to a halt here, and it's simply time to move on to a different part of their lives. And we hope they've carried good memories of their times here, and certainly they will carry good wishes of members on both sides of the House when that time does come.

So people change employment. That's the point that I'm trying to make here. Sometimes, Mr. Speaker, people will have served for a considerable length of time — many years — and they've reached retirement age and they superannuate. They then retire. And I want to stake the high ground which is, I have no problem at all with someone retiring, collecting a pension, and going to work building houses or going to work for a different employer — for a different employer. That's unequivocally no problem for me at all.

[15:45]

The problem that we have in this Bill is that it allows . . . Well let me just use an example. It would allow a civil servant — well MLAs — it will allow deputy ministers, for example, to retire. They're working and earning, well let's say \$200,000. They could retire today and be hired back tomorrow to do the same job. They could then collect their pension. Their pension in this case which could be as high as \$140,000 in the example I've used. It could be as high as that. It's again based on years of service and it would vary in every instance, but it could be as high as 140,000, plus they could get paid their salary again, and clearly that's double-dipping. Now I'm not wishing good or bad on deputy ministers. That's not the point of citing that example. It's just a very senior level of civil service that I use in this example.

Again I want to say I have no problem with a deputy minister retiring from being a deputy minister and then going on and doing some employment for a different employer or clearly a different job, but never, never should a deputy minister come back other than perhaps a very, very definite, short time frame for training. You know, I'm thinking six weeks, maybe even as long as three months, so you could train somebody else — although I'm hesitant to even say that that's a good idea, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because my question is, well isn't that part of our jobs is to make sure that there's somebody looking over our shoulders that can step up to the plate when we're done? And certainly every ministry should have someone that could step up to the plate and become a deputy minister with little or no notice. I know it's always been the way it's happened in years gone by.

So the double-dipping provisions are the part that causes us the most discomfort. And we think what's happened, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that there was loopholes respecting double-dipping and that some people found ways to retire, collect a pension, and then get hired back to do the same job, and not just for a very, very short period of time but for an extended period of time. And that's clearly double-dipping.

That's the sort of thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that has been pointed out earlier, but I fully subscribe to this notion. If any of us went to coffee row or went knocking door to door and asking our constituents or in some form were able to ask the people we represent in a meaningful way, do you subscribe, do you favour that someone could retire today, draw their pension, and get hired back to the same job and then draw both pension and salary for an indefinite period into the future, the simple majority of people would say no, that's double-dipping. And that's not appropriate.

What instinctually we know is appropriate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that when it comes time to retire, hopefully we have the luxury of spending some months at least mentoring and helping our replacement understand the issues at very least so that when we retire, they're on the job and running, they actually have the background knowledge.

And of course the replacement, you know, the person that replaces us, won't do the job in exactly the way that we are. And you know, that's a good thing. Everything should change, or people who are doing the work should be able to make informed decisions and make the best choices that they can. And that's the appropriate way for this to work.

So constituents and the people of the province would by and large say double-dipping shouldn't happen. We had tried to stop double-dipping. This Bill, one of the things it does is simply acknowledges that some people were able to find ways to double-dip, and this Bill then says, well they were finding ways to double-dip so let's just make it legal; let's make it okay.

And I don't think that's where our constituents' heads are necessarily at. I think our constituents would say, if there's a loophole that allows some individuals to find ways to double-dip, let's fix those loopholes. Let's wish our superannuates the very, very best. Let's look after them, and a way we could look after them, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is, as I said, look after the indexing that was promised by the Sask Party government, look after the indexing that was supposed to happen overnight. Here we are a year later and I don't think there's a Bill on the order paper dealing with indexing. I don't think there's been any significant movement on that front. And I say shame, because it was a clear promise that was made through the last election.

I won't go further down that other than to say, I know that from personal experience, from talking to some of the superannuates, of these plans that wanted indexing. And we were on a certain path of getting there, but clearly not fast enough for these superannuates. But the incoming government had said, we'll fix it real quick. And yet here we are a year later and the quick fix is simply not happening. So I say there's a broken promise. And that's something that the government could bring forward more appropriately than this Bill that simply is dealing with issues like double-dipping.

We clearly have not had the wide consultation that the former two speakers had asked for on this Bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We had called for a wide consultation so that we got the Bill right. There is no way that we've had wide public consultation, no way that that's happened because we wouldn't have the double-dipping provisions in it if there had been that consultation that went far and wide.

So my plea would be that we in fact, the government take up the responsibility of doing this consultation, and listening. Consultation isn't always out there just saying, this is the way it's going to be. Consultation should involve a two-way process where it's not just talk — I'll talk and you'll listen. It should be a situation where we'll have a dialogue back and forth and find out what just might be the most reasonable way to proceed on this.

And I don't think that this Bill is going to be . . . It shouldn't be that difficult to reach agreement on what is the appropriate thing to do. But the appropriate thing is not to continue to simply just make the double-dipping the proper or the allowable thing to do.

So I think I've outlined, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think I've outlined the major concerns that I have on this speech. And I want to again commend anyone that has interest in this to go to a couple of very good speeches. My colleagues, the member for Regina Dewdney and The Battlefords, spoke March 17, 2008, and both of them spoke November 12, 2008 on this very issue. And both of them made some very cogent arguments.

I hope that in some tiny way I've at least added a little bit more to this debate today . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I hear the government saying, at least a government member saying, no I haven't. I accept responsibility for that, but I think that the responsibility is also on the government to listen, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to do a broad consultation. And all three of us on this side of the House have been very explicit. We've said, no, you have not done the broad consultation. Because there is no way that our constituents would say, simply make double-dipping legal. Our constituents would be saying, for heaven's sakes, close the loopholes, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's what they would say.

I hear government members yip, yip, yip about this. I wish they would get up and speak to the Bill, Mr. Speaker. Better yet, I wish they would speak up in their caucus. I wish they would speak up in their cabinet, and I wish they would say, do this Bill right. And part of how you do it right is to do the broad consultation and actually listen, hear what some people are saying. Or as a sign of good faith, deal with the indexing of the superannuation plan as you promised in the last election . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . The member for Kindersley chirping from his seat, he should deal with his promises that he made during the last election.

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. All members will have their chance to participate in the debate. I recognize the member from Regina Coronation Park.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I have said pretty much what I wanted to on this Bill. But on the offside chance that I may have missed some important point, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 9 at this time.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member for Regina Coronation Park has made a motion to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm very pleased once again to stand up and talk about Bill No. 46, *An Act to amend the Labour Market Commission Act*. Mr. Speaker, this is an important Bill. The labour market partnership between business, labour, education and training institutes, governments, and other stakeholders is essential to connect the dots and, Mr. Speaker, make things work within our Saskatchewan labour market.

We need to have our educational institutions, our businesses,

labour organizations, and stakeholders all working together to try to make sure that we're training people and educating people for the workforce of tomorrow. So on the fact that the actions that we take meet a need that the people of the province have, a need to supply and deliver a qualified workforce to prepare young people for that workforce of the future, Mr. Speaker, the Labour Market Commission is one of the instrumental tools in helping to achieve that.

Mr. Speaker, any government has the responsibility to meet the many challenges that come with economic growth, and one of those challenges of course is to have adequate labour to meet the future market needs of that economy. And, Mr. Speaker, the Labour Market Commission works with government and labour and educational institutions and other stakeholders to make sure that we're educating people in the right disciplines in order to meet that need moving forward.

Mr. Speaker, it's no surprise that Saskatchewan is currently — as are many other jurisdictions — experiencing a serious labour shortage, and there is a large gap between what the government is doing and what actually needs to be done to address it, Mr. Speaker.

But what this Bill does is make the Labour Market Commission, which was currently 19 members, it cuts it back to 11, Mr. Speaker. In an area where we already need more work, we need greater co-operation, the ability to work together to accomplish the connecting of the dots between our educational institutions, our businesses, and our labour organizations, Mr. Speaker, we don't need fewer people to do that. There is adequate work to go around, Mr. Speaker.

But this government has decided that the size of the commission was unwieldy, and they couldn't achieve what they wanted to achieve with 19 members so decided to make 11, Mr. Speaker. Well in our environment, that doesn't make sense, Mr. Speaker. There is enough work to go around for 19 people, Mr. Speaker. And these people are not full-time sitting on the Labour Market Commission, Mr. Speaker. They're all people who have other jobs. They have other responsibilities, Mr. Speaker, so many of them couldn't attend every meeting, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So 19 members on a piece of paper might seem unwieldy, Mr. Speaker, but they're not always all going to be there because they have other responsibilities in their communities. They have other responsibilities in their jobs, Mr. Speaker, so that many of them may miss a large number of meetings so that we really need to cut back from 19 to 11 to achieve the end goal, which is actually to connect the dots between the various players in our labour market to ensure that our goals to achieve our educational institutions meeting the needs of our future labour market are in fact being achieved, Mr. Speaker.

[16:00]

We on the opposition side have a great deal of respect for the work the Labour Commission has done in the province. It's gone a long way to help connect the dots to this point, Mr. Speaker, and we expect great things from them in the future.

This legislation is based on a government's belief that the

current Labour Market Commission is an impediment to economic growth. Well, Mr. Speaker, that's just not the case . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Why is the member on her feet?

Ms. Schriemer: — To request leave to introduce guests.

The Deputy Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Go ahead, member from Sutherland.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Ms. Schriemer: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to this afternoon introduce to you and through you my son, Jarrod Schriemer, sitting in our gallery. And he's in Regina to take his advanced care paramedic course, and he's doing very well. He just told me he got a 92 on his last exam. Anyway, thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Members: — Hear, hear!

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

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 46 — *The Labour Market Commission Amendment Act, 2008*
(continued)

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As I started to indicate, that the changes in this legislation are based on the government's belief that the current Labour Market Commission and its size of 19 members is an impediment to economic growth. That simply is not the case, Mr. Speaker. There is more than enough work to go around for all 19 members, Mr. Speaker. There's the opportunity to have a greater knowledge base around that table when decisions are made with 19 members, Mr. Speaker, and there is no clear indication that its size of 19 members is in any way an impediment to economic growth. Through the current boom, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is clear evidence to the contrary.

The Sask Party has made it very clear that it believes labour to be an impediment to growth. Rolling the labour management committee into Enterprise Saskatchewan is just one more way the Sask Party is attempting to weaken labour here in the province, Mr. Speaker, and cutting back the representatives from the labour organizations on the committee, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, if we look at this in some detail, we see removal of a single representative from what was previously termed the social economy, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Those are individuals from the non-for-profit sector, Mr. Speaker — non-governmental organizations who are in fact, Mr. Speaker, one of the areas where we have difficulty recruiting people into the labour force today, qualified people. Mr. Speaker, people that have the education that they need to have to deliver some

of the most sensitive social service programs that we have, Mr. Speaker, to deliver programs to some of the most vulnerable people in our society, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's just one small change made in this legislation that leaves that entire sector of the economy, that entire sector of our population, without any direct involvement in the Labour Market Commission, without the voice being around the table, Mr. Speaker. So those employers in the non-profit sector, Mr. Speaker, don't have any voice in the future of the Labour Market Commission in our province. And, Mr. Speaker, that's shameful.

Mr. Speaker, who did the Sask Party consult with before proceeding with this legislation? We're told by members of the commission that they weren't consulted, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is another ideological change without any input from those who are involved in the commission or the stakeholders in which to see whether or not it's beneficial to the people of the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, they simply made a change because they believe they have a right to, as government, to change whatever they want.

Well yes, they do have the right to make changes. But changes should have a meaningful, productive impact on the people of Saskatchewan in a way that the people of Saskatchewan would appreciate those changes, Mr. Speaker. To go from 19 to 11, Mr. Speaker, leaves voices out from around the table, Mr. Speaker, and leaves sectors without proper involvement in the process, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, it's about excluding people, not including people. And Mr. Speaker, the best way to work with the people of Saskatchewan is through inclusion, Mr. Speaker, not exclusion.

Inclusion is where people want to be, Mr. Speaker. And by the way, that is the NDP way. It's what we believe in. We believe in including people in decision making. We believe in including people in decision making for the benefit of their organizations and for the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We don't believe in exclusion, Mr. Speaker.

The Enterprise Saskatchewan portfolio or ministry is relatively unknown today, Mr. Speaker. Why are the people of the province or the members of the opposition to have any confidence that this body is going to be able to oversee the Labour Market Commission and put the decisions that are in the best interest of the province — as an example, educational institutions and labour organizations — into consideration with their decisions, Mr. Speaker? Because the Enterprise Saskatchewan's mandate, Mr. Speaker, is all about ensuring and removing impediments to the business community, impediments to economic growth, Mr. Speaker. It isn't about balancing the issues of education and training with the future needs of employers in Saskatchewan. But, Mr. Speaker, without a lot of thought, they just simply folded it in.

Mr. Speaker, the Act also does one significant thing. It removes the requirement to consult with organized labour and business organizations that are most representative of labour and business. They don't have to consult with them before they decide who's on the commission, and they don't have to consult with them before they make decisions. We have no doubt that the business will continue to be widely consulted by the

government opposite while labour organizations will be largely left out or ignored by the government opposite.

We have today a Premier who, when he was the leader of the opposition, said he was going to go to war with labour organizations, Mr. Speaker, go to war with unions, Mr. Speaker. So why would those organizations have confidence that they are going to be consulted by this Premier or his government? Mr. Speaker, they don't have that confidence, Mr. Speaker, nor should they based on the unilateral changes to pieces of legislation, including *The Trade Union Act*, Mr. Speaker, including putting in place essential service legislation that the members opposite talked about wasn't required before they were government. And the minute they become government they implement, you know, essential service legislation. So, Mr. Speaker, why would labour organizations have any confidence that this government would consult with them prior to making changes, prior to taking steps that would have impact upon the working men and women of this province, Mr. Speaker? That's a lack of respect for those individuals as they're moving forward.

The legislation reduces the overall number and eliminates representation, as I mentioned earlier, from the social economy completely. Mr. Speaker, that leaves an entire sector of our economy unrepresented in this debate, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, the concept of inclusion and meaningful consultation and meaningfully working with the various sectors of the economy and the various sectors of our society is very important. And when you exclude individuals, that means you're not getting their perspective or their point of view as you're making decisions that may well affect them, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, we think that the removal of the references to social economy or those in the non-profit organizations, from the Labour Market Commission, can significantly hamper those agencies in the future from being able to meet their labour needs as we move forward.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk for a few minutes about why originally we put in place a Labour Market Commission, Mr. Speaker, and it was to deal with a number of challenges that we had in the province of Saskatchewan. And there were several converging factors a few years ago that made it very, very important that we first put in place the current commission and the structure, but also its current complement of 19 members, Mr. Speaker.

The members opposite can chirp from their seats, Mr. Speaker, but it would be nice if they actually were listening, Mr. Speaker, and cared about what we, representative of the people of Saskatchewan as well, are saying, Mr. Speaker. Because we are all elected by our constituents here to represent the people of the province of Saskatchewan and to ensure that the decisions made by government are the appropriate decisions, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk for a few minutes about the converging factors that led to the current structure, 19-member Labour Market Commission. One of the things was, was we had very strong economic growth in the last few years, Mr. Speaker. I'm very proud that when we were in government, we became a have province. We became a have province, and as we built the foundation for today's economy, Mr. Speaker, we had surplus

budgets of billions of dollars, Mr. Speaker, over the last three or four years, Mr. Speaker. And this government today doesn't like to acknowledge that the previous government put in place the foundation — in fact made this province a have province, Mr. Speaker — made the tough decisions on oil royalties, made the tough decisions on corporate capital taxes, made the tough decisions on corporate taxes, Mr. Speaker, made those tough decisions.

But what do we hear, Mr. Speaker? Mr. Speaker, we heard today the government tell us that they made the largest single tax cut in the province's history, Mr. Speaker — in a member's statement — but, Mr. Speaker, that is false, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to point out to the members opposite that when the provincial sales tax, when the provincial sales tax was cut by two points, Mr. Speaker, that's about \$400 million, Mr. Speaker — about \$100 million more than the members opposite, Mr. Speaker . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. Order.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As I was indicating a minute ago, the previous NDP government, when it cut the sales tax by 2 per cent, it was a \$400 million tax cut, Mr. Speaker. Their \$300 million tax cut is not the largest in the province's history, Mr. Speaker. I would argue it isn't even the second largest, Mr. Speaker, but the members can always go out and they can always tell that they've done everything first and have done everything better, Mr. Speaker.

The truth is though, Mr. Speaker, the people of the province of Saskatchewan are smarter than that, Mr. Speaker. They'll understand. They'll know what's really happening in the province. They know very well that this government hasn't changed royalty rates, hasn't changed any of the corporate tax structures, so our economic boom is based on what the previous government did, Mr. Speaker. And they should be rewarded, the previous government, for having achieved that.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I have to say the chamber of commerce, the chamber of commerce last week did. The chamber of commerce acknowledged the fact that the previous government had made this province a have province. The previous government had made the changes that were necessary, Mr. Speaker, and those things, those things, Mr. Speaker, those things have made a difference in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. They've made a huge difference. It's allowed our economy to grow. It's created the boom that we're in today, Mr. Speaker.

The second factor that contributed to the tightening of the labour market conditions were, we have an aging population due to a declining birth rate, Mr. Speaker. Those are issues that do present challenges, Mr. Speaker. The average number of children per family is declining, not just here but around the world, Mr. Speaker. But, Mr. Speaker, we need to understand that that's a reality in our province and a reality within our economic boundaries, and we need to work to address that, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we need to address those issues that are affecting our labour market climate, and one of them is the fact that we have an aging population, Mr. Speaker, and a declining birth rate. That we can't change rapidly, Mr. Speaker, and those are issues that we must then find new strategies to work around,

Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, at the onset of the retirement of the baby boom generation . . . Our history in this country saw a huge surge of population in what's known as the baby boom generation, Mr. Speaker, after the Second World War, and that generation has largely carried us in the workforce till today, Mr. Speaker. But as that group of people, men and women, begin to retire, Mr. Speaker, we're going to have that huge bulge of influx of people that was there 25, 30, 35 years ago, Mr. Speaker, we're going to lose that in the same proportion in which they entered the workforce, Mr. Speaker. They're leaving the workforce through retirement. And, Mr. Speaker, that's another challenge that we have to work with.

Mr. Speaker, we have a growing Aboriginal population, which is not a surprise to anybody here. Now that is a challenge but a great opportunity as well, Mr. Speaker, because that growing youth population of Aboriginal youth, Mr. Speaker, give us an opportunity to bring that new generation of Aboriginal youth into full employment in our marketplace, Mr. Speaker. To create educational opportunities to see more and more Aboriginal young people get post-secondary training, more and more Aboriginal young people into trades and skill training, Mr. Speaker. And that's an opportunity for this province, an opportunity that many other provinces don't have today, Mr. Speaker.

One of our challenges, we have limited immigration. Now that's an issue that we all have concerns about and we're all working to try to improve, Mr. Speaker. We need more immigrant workers in our province, Mr. Speaker. We need to open our doors to allow more immigration into our province. Mr. Speaker, we as a province all want to see that. We need to be open and very . . . Mr. Speaker, I'm at a loss for words for a second. We need to be open and willing to make changes in order to make those immigrant families more comfortable in our communities. We need to find a place where they feel comfortable, Mr. Speaker, that we can help them to feel comfortable living and working in our environment, Mr. Speaker.

[16:15]

We had a historical out-migration, the population, particularly the youth, but that changed around about 2006, Mr. Speaker, and we started to see an increase in population in a . . . And by, Mr. Speaker, by the end of 2006, Mr. Speaker, we had a — for the first time in over a decade, Mr. Speaker — we saw net in-migration. That started to occur again under the previous government as the economy grew, as the economy grew, Mr. Speaker, and as that foundation that had been built through tough choices, Mr. Speaker, in difficult times many times, Mr. Speaker. But tough choices were made to build the economy to become a have province, Mr. Speaker, and with that came the shift in population in the end of last quarter, last two quarters of 2006, Mr. Speaker.

And people are now coming to this province, Mr. Speaker — from 2006 on — in numbers that we haven't seen in a long time. And again the fundamental foundation and work that made that happen was done by the previous government, Mr. Speaker. It's not done by this government. But, Mr. Speaker,

the new government tends to think everything started, the world was created on November 7, 2007, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, we've had a situation with increased competition from other jurisdictions, the in provinces of Canada, Mr. Speaker, and as a result of that increased competition, we've had some difficulty in recruiting individuals from other jurisdictions. But, Mr. Speaker, we worked very hard as has the government. And I'm going to say this, you know, the new government also has worked very, very hard to create an environment in which people want to come to our province.

When we advertised, and we did — we advertised in Alberta; we advertised in Ontario — about the need to have people in Saskatchewan, inviting people to Saskatchewan. The current government when in opposition criticized us for spending that money on advertising, Mr. Speaker. But we're not going to criticize them for spending that money on advertising that they're doing today because it's what we needed to do in 2005 and '06 in order to get people to come to our province, and it's what you need to do today. It is what you need to do today to encourage more people to come. So we do encourage you to continue to work to get people to come the province, as we did from 2004, 2005, 2006.

Mr. Speaker, things don't change overnight. People need to understand that there's a change, that things are moving forward, Mr. Speaker. And it took some time in order to get people to understand that Saskatchewan was the place to be in the future. And by the end of 2006, Mr. Speaker, people understood that, and people were . . . The net migration was into the province of Saskatchewan, not out, Mr. Speaker. And that pattern has continued with the new government.

And I do want to thank them for continuing our programs. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank them for continuing our programs. I want to thank them for continuing our tax schemes, Mr. Speaker. I think that the new government, the new government knew that the previous government had put a good foundation in place, that this province would continue to grow on that foundation, Mr. Speaker. And I do want to thank them for continuing that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, now having said that, Mr. Speaker, when we're dealing with the Labour Market Commission, we put a Labour Market Commission with 19 members in place for a reason, Mr. Speaker. And we put that in place to ensure that we had adequate bodies and the right knowledge around the table, Mr. Speaker, to continue to connect the dots between labour, business, educational institutions, government, and other stakeholders, Mr. Speaker. We had an inclusive plan to want to connect the dots in a way that help provide a continued, enhanced labour market environment in our province, Mr. Speaker. And that's what the previous commission with 19 members was designed to do, Mr. Speaker.

Now the new government's decided unilaterally to cut it back to 11 without very little or no consultation of the people of the province, Mr. Speaker . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — There seems to be a few conversations going on, and they seem to be from members that

are sitting at the opposite ends of the Chamber. If you want to have conversations, move behind the bar. That way you wouldn't have to shout to one another. I recognize the member from Regina Dewdney.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying before, the current Labour Market Commission structure of 19 members looked very closely at what the needs were of the various stakeholders including business, labour, and educational institutions and other stakeholders, including the representative from what was deemed the social economy — the non-for-profit sector, Mr. Speaker. And they've eliminated that representative, the non-profit sector, Mr. Speaker. And they've cut back representatives from the labour organizations and business, shortening the number of people and denying some of that knowledge and depth that those individuals brought around the table, Mr. Speaker.

Now why did they do that, Mr. Speaker? We don't really know, Mr. Speaker, because they didn't consult with the current board. We don't know who they consulted with. We don't know if they worked with other stakeholders in the community, Mr. Speaker. Or did they simply just ideologically make a decision — which I would say they did, Mr. Speaker. They made an ideological decision. They wanted a board of 11 people. And, Mr. Speaker, that board of 11 people, Mr. Speaker, is not adequate, not adequate to fully examine what the labour market in our province in the future needs, Mr. Speaker.

We need a group of 19 individuals, Mr. Speaker. We need representation from the social economy, Mr. Speaker. And we need representation, Mr. Speaker, from the business community — of broad stakeholders of the business community, Mr. Speaker — the labour community, the educational institutions, Mr. Speaker, and other stakeholders that are important to meeting the needs of . . . our labour needs moving forward, Mr. Speaker. We need to have people who understand the issues of immigration on the board, Mr. Speaker. But as we've limited the board now to 11 members, we're losing some of those skills, Mr. Speaker. We're losing some of that representation. That knowledge that's gone from the table is going to make it very difficult, Mr. Speaker, for the Labour Market Commission to function to the same quality level that it had in the past, Mr. Speaker.

The new government for ideological reasons have removed seven members from the board, which is a removal of stakeholders, Mr. Speaker — significant stakeholders, Mr. Speaker — that have something to offer to this province. They have something to offer for the benefit and the well-being of the people of the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And when they have been removed, when individuals have been removed, when seats have been taken away from that commission, Mr. Speaker, it limits the information we have around the table to make decisions. It limits the number of people who have input into making the decisions about the future of our labour market needs in the province, Mr. Speaker.

We need representation from big business, from small business, Mr. Speaker, from medium-sized business, from the manufacturing sector to the service sector, Mr. Speaker. And if we don't have representation from all those groups, Mr. Speaker, then somebody's voice is not heard around the table.

And when we remove those voices, Mr. Speaker, in whose interest is it in removing those voices, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, this change could have long, long, long-lasting impact, Mr. Speaker, on our province. It could in fact change the ability of the commission to make the types of quality recommendations they have been able to make in the past to move forward our needs, to match our labour needs to our business's requirements, Mr. Speaker, to our social needs of our communities, Mr. Speaker. All those things needed to be examined, Mr. Speaker, and when those parts of the equation aren't there as we make decisions, Mr. Speaker, I argue we do not make as good a decisions, Mr. Speaker.

When you in fact take away some of that knowledge from the table, you make different decisions, Mr. Speaker. And it's important as we move forward, Mr. Speaker, that we have an inclusive system that allows the very best decisions possible to be made by the Labour Market Commission, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, once again I'd like to say that there is never too many people, there is never too much inclusion as you're making decisions. There's never too much knowledge around the table. As you're making decisions about the fundamental future of our province — the future of our young people, our children, in some cases our grandchildren, Mr. Speaker — we need the knowledge around the table to ensure that the right decisions are made, Mr. Speaker.

I think it is absolutely wrong, Mr. Speaker, to reduce the size of the Labour Market Commission from 19 to 11 and remove some of that fundamental knowledge, Mr. Speaker, from around the table as decisions are made, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I have made my points over the last 25 minutes or so, Mr. Speaker, and so at this time I would move adjournment for debate.

The Speaker: — The member from Regina Dewdney has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 46, *The Labour Market Commission Amendment Act, 2008*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

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 Massey Place.

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to stand today and speak to Bill 49, *The Ambulance Amendment Act*. My comments might not be quite as inciting as perhaps the member from Dewdney in his last speech for some of the members opposite, but I will see what . . . I would like to share some thoughts on this important Act, Mr. Speaker.

As our province changes, as the institutions develop, as the

realities in the various communities throughout our province change, inevitably legislation at different points in time needs to be looked at to ensure that it indeed reflects the reality in communities and to ensure that the legislation is serving its initial purpose and the need for that legislation. And, Mr. Speaker, Bill 49, *The Ambulance Amendment Act* is one such piece. A good amount of this Act, Mr. Speaker, could be termed as housekeeping matters, and cleaning up the Act to ensure that it is modernized and it reflects the current reality in our province.

To start off, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say from this side of the House, and I'm sure this sentiment is shared by members on the opposite side, that we truly do appreciate and value the good work done by the ambulance operators in our province. We have a very large province and people are spread out in many corners. And it's important to have ambulance services to ensure that all members in our province receive the urgent medical care that they receive. So whether that's a result of something like a heart attack, whether that's a result of a serious accident, Mr. Speaker, it's important that individuals have the proper access to ambulances in order to get to a place where they can receive urgent medical care.

I know for myself, Mr. Speaker, as a teen I broke my femur in rural Saskatchewan near the town of Shell Lake. And it was because of the quick response I was able to have from paramedics that I was able to be stabilized and taken to Spiritwood Hospital where I could later be taken to the city. So it's very important for people throughout the province, in urban centres, and of course especially in rural areas as well.

This legislation, Mr. Speaker, is also tied into recent changes we've seen with the expanded role of paramedics, not only in the ambulance system but in the health system as a whole, with paramedics now being a self-regulated profession. It's a positive step, and it's part of larger discussions within the health care sector, Mr. Speaker, examining who is the best medical professional to deliver a specific type of care in a specific situation in a era, not a new era, but an era where we need to use our resources wisely to ensure that people receive the best possible care for the most number of people. That's an important thing to do. So certainly the step of moving paramedics into the direction of being a self-regulated profession, that's a positive change.

I'm also encouraged by the minister's remarks on this Bill 49, Mr. Speaker, that it was done in ongoing discussions with the Saskatchewan Emergency Medical Services Association. Certainly engaging with stakeholders, with the professional association, is only natural and is most fitting when introducing legislation that has a direct impact on the people working in the field. And so that is a positive thing as well.

However whenever we look at legislation, and especially with housekeeping types of Bills, it's important to see what are perhaps some of the larger implications that might not be seen at first glance, or what are some of the larger changes that perhaps need to occur with a piece of legislation. And indeed *The Ambulance Amendment Act*, it might not be something that this House returns to in the immediate future. So it's important that when we make changes such as the changes outlined in Bill 49, it's important that these changes are reflective of what is

needed in the community and what is needed in the profession.

So I know on this side, Mr. Speaker, of the House there are a number of questions that we want to ask — questions that we want to address to the public, questions that we want to ask to members in the broader community, in the various professions that are outlined and that would be impacted in some way with *The Ambulance Amendment Act*. And that's something that we want to continue to do on this side, Mr. Speaker.

So given that I know a number of my colleagues also want to look at Bill 49 and make comment and since we are talking to other people and wanting more information on this, at this time, Mr. Speaker, I would move that we adjourn debate on Bill 49.

[16:30]

The Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Massey Place has moved adjournment of Bill No. 49, *The Ambulance Amendment Act, 2008*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 53

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. McMorris that **Bill No. 53 — *The Medical Profession Amendment Act, 2008*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to stand today and continue discussion on Bill 53, *The Medical Profession Amendment Act*, a pleasure to follow up on the initial comments that were made from, well, the minister introducing the Bill and then comments from the member from Battlefords.

This piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, is indeed a very important one and one that requires looking at by many people because it involves the health care system, and it involves the quality of care that's delivered to patients and to the citizens of Saskatchewan.

Certainly when we're looking at the type of health care that is provided, the type of service that is provided to individuals, it's necessary to ensure that the systems that we have in place within the broader health care system, that they can respond to any problems that might come up. I would like to start off, Mr. Speaker, by saying thank you to the many people that work within the health care sector. Whatever the profession, whatever the discipline, it's through these people that people receive great quality care here in Saskatchewan.

I know through an election process and then of course through doing constituency work, you do come across situations where perhaps someone hasn't had a completely positive experience with the health care system, or they have some worries about a

particular element of the health care system. But in my experience at least, Mr. Speaker, that's been far out-shadowed by the many people who really speak with pride about the health care system in Saskatchewan and the quality of care they've received — whether that was for themselves or whether that was for their family members.

It's no secret in almost any public opinion poll, health care continues to rank near the top or if not at the top of people's concerns when it comes to government, when it comes around to election time. So it's only natural, Mr. Speaker, when looking at *The Medical Profession Act*, we want to ensure that the Act is set up in such way that quality care can be provided to people.

So I provided kudos and a thank you to the many people that work within the health care system. It is true, from time to time though, there is an investigation. And tying into my comments on the previous Bill, Mr. Speaker, there are many self-regulating professions within the health care field, and these health care professions, through the legislation that is put in place, have the ability to do investigations when necessary. That is the case looking at the changes here with *The Medical Profession Act*.

We believe of course that public safety is very important, and it's important to ensure that the system allows for the public to be safe, the system allows for situations where perhaps someone's safety is put in jeopardy or in question, allows the system to look at that case and learn lessons from it. And that is why for *The Medical Profession Act* these changes here, as I understand them, would allow the College of Physicians and Surgeons the ability . . . when coming across information in an investigation, Mr. Speaker, it would provide them with the ability to share that information with other required organizations within the health care sector — whether that was the association of registered nurses or whether that was information to the minister. That's important feedback. Or whether that was with the Saskatchewan College of Pharmacists. That's necessary.

It's my understanding, Mr. Speaker, that this legislation is in many ways coming out of the request from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan and that also the Saskatchewan Medical Association, the Saskatchewan College of Pharmacists, and the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association have also had input in this process and see it as a good development.

When dealing with any type of investigation where there is information, obviously privacy, Mr. Speaker, and obviously the protection of individuals — whether that's the practitioner or whether that is the patient — that protection needs to be there. So it's necessary that the legislation allows for the correct balance, the correct balance of on one hand ensuring that patient care is of the utmost concern, is being taken into consideration, and then also the anonymity of patients or the medical professionals in the various fields.

In reading the legislation, Mr. Speaker, I see the way that it is designed that it would be a council decision, a council of the College of Physicians and Surgeons. I think that's a positive thing as it allows a larger group of professionals who are

experienced and have knowledge about medical care to make the determination as to whether or not information should indeed be passed on to another body and to another organization. As with any group, Mr. Speaker, it's always better when there are more thinking heads around the table as opposed to fewer for most things, Mr. Speaker.

So as I've gone through the legislation and listened to other comments and had the opportunity to speak with some of the stakeholders in the field, Mr. Speaker, it appears that Bill 53, *The Medical Profession Amendment Act* does make decent sense from my first impressions and from looking at it and doing some thinking. But I know there are other members on this side who would like to have a say on this piece and might have some other questions and some different points of view, perhaps from their own life experience or their experience from the work that they've done in this building or their experience with dealing with constituents. So seeing that I've expressed some of my ideas on this, Mr. Speaker, I would move now that we would adjourn debate on Bill 53.

The Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Massey Place has moved adjournment of Bill No. 53, *The Medical Profession Amendment Act, 2008*. 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 Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter into this debate and speak about something that is very near and dear to the heart of many Saskatchewan people — the credit union system and the proper functioning thereof. It's not the most, you know, groundbreaking legislation being brought forward, but it's an important piece of legislation notwithstanding.

Again the main sort of import of the changes are to making the board a bit more independent of the industry itself, bringing people from the outsides in. It gets them, I guess, a bit more space between them and the industry to provide fresher eyes.

But I would venture to say, Mr. Speaker, that to date certainly the Credit Union Deposit Guarantee Corporation — having been founded in 1953, the first of its kind in the country, Mr. Speaker — I guess the hope that we would have is that those that are coming after in this new configuration of the board, that they continue the diligence and the good service for the credit union system and the healthy functioning in Saskatchewan of the credit union system that we have certainly been beneficiaries of in this province, Mr. Speaker.

It's interesting. Casting a bit of a glance around the country in

terms of the deposits guarantee limit that certain other jurisdictions have on their deposits with the credit union, I, you know, note with pride that in Saskatchewan there is no limit on the insurance for guarantees. It's interesting times, Mr. Speaker, with the turmoil and the crisis in the international financial sector. Canada's banking system generally is in a stronger position than certainly most other countries and is held up as a bit of a model. And I'd argue within that, where credit unions are provincially regulated entities, that the credit union system also is in a fairly strong position to safeguard the financial interests of its members and the financial services sector that they represent.

It's interesting in other jurisdictions, British Columbia coming to mind, Mr. Speaker. October 22, Premier Campbell brought forward a promise that they were going to bring the House back in November 20, coming right up, Mr. Speaker. And they were going to change the credit union Act in British Columbia to take the limit off guarantees for credit union members and for deposits held with the credit union in British Columbia. And again this was heralded as something that was groundbreaking, that was being responsive to uncertain financial times. And again, Mr. Speaker, I note with interest that that's already the case here in Saskatchewan.

So I think that's something that again we've certainly taken pride in the credit union system over the years and in many ways. You know again, 1953, the Credit Union Deposit Guarantee Corporation being the first such entity in Canada, again I think the credit union system here is ahead of the pack when it comes to the rest of the country. And here they are leading.

I note that Nova Scotia, they have a \$250,000 limit on insurance to the guarantees they provide. Prince Edward Island, it's \$125,000 or 100 per cent of RRSPs [Registered Retirement Savings Plan] or RRIFs [Registered Retirement Income Fund]. And again here in Saskatchewan, there is no limit on the insurance provided.

So it's just one instance, Mr. Speaker, where I think we've been served well in past by the Credit Union Deposit Guarantee Corporation. And it will be interesting to see how the work of this very critical board continues in terms of not just providing good service for the people of Saskatchewan, the members of the credit union sector, but in ensuring that the sector continues to lead in Canada and that others are catching up to us. All the more important in these uncertain financial times, Mr. Speaker.

So I guess the main points I wanted to bring up were those, Mr. Speaker. The credit union system . . . I guess in the interest of some disclosure, I'm a credit union member and have been since I was old enough to take the money from underneath the mattress and trot it down to 5th Avenue. I had an account with the Sherwood Credit Union and now of course Conexus. I know that they do a tremendous amount of good work across the province.

An Hon. Member: — A Fat Cat account.

Mr. McCall: — And in terms of Fat . . . Well the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy is asking me if I'd had a Fat Cat account. I have to say I'm so old that I came after the Fat Cat accounts

came on. But I think he may have had a Fat Cat account; I'm not sure.

An Hon. Member: — No. Royal Bank didn't . . .

Mr. McCall: — Maybe more of a . . . Royal Bank wouldn't have one? Well I guess I'll be interested to see what he has to say in this debate, Mr. Speaker.

Anyway, the legislation in terms of the composition of the board, bringing them in line with the best practices in terms of governance, we think this is laudable. We of course want to examine these measures further, Mr. Speaker, to be sure that what we think what is a good step forward is in fact that. So in that respect, Mr. Speaker, I will at this time move to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — The member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre 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. 44

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 44 – *The Agreements of Sale Cancellation Amendment Act, 2008*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to speak to Bill No. 44, *The Agreements of Sale Cancellation Act*. As the minister indicated in his second reading speech a couple of weeks ago, this is a change to legislation that was passed in this House in 1917, and it relates to some fundamental problems that have arisen in Saskatchewan as it relates to agreements for sale.

Now the whole area relating to the sale of land has many appropriate rules, and the common law has developed over many centuries, in fact, to deal with problems that do arise. But in this particular situation, I think that some problems have arisen recently whereby people have used the concept of an agreement for sale to tie up land in ways that are considered inappropriate. And it's my understanding that this particular legislation is set up as a way to respond to some specific problems that have arisen.

[16:45]

Now I know that we'll be having a chance later in these proceedings to ask some specific questions of the officials who have been working on this particular problem, but I'd like to set out a few of my thoughts today as it relates to this particular legislation.

It appears that problems arise in situations where people make a deposit to buy land and then subsequently are caught up in other transactions around that particular land which then become

quite difficult to disentangle. And this involves financial institutions. It can involve other purchasers. It can involve joint ventures or other things that may happen. And subsequently if something goes wrong or there's a downturn in the economy or one of the people involved in the whole development are not able to come up with the funds that they'd originally promised, you end up with a situation where you need to go through a procedure to cancel this original agreement for sale.

The procedure that is presently the remedy here in Saskatchewan involves application to the court, and many times that may be the most appropriate place for this to be resolved. But sometimes the procedure to do that ends up taking quite a bit longer than what any of the parties had understood, or it may actually give some kind of strange bargaining power to a particular person involved in the transaction that doesn't actually have very much money in the whole transaction.

And so I think that the suggestions that have come forward around this particular legislation have related to trying to figure out how to provide a remedy. And so what has happened is there's a definition of the contract or agreement for the sale of land that's in this particular legislation. And basically it's quite simple, which is appropriate. Purchase price has to be paid over a period of time and upon the payment of the purchase price the vendor transfers the title — that's the key, that you don't actually get the title until you've made all your payments — and that this particular payment period is more than six months from the date of the possession.

There are situations where, to assist a purchaser, a vendor may agree to payments over quite a number of years to get the asset or the property that's being purchased.

And I note that one of the books that was just published this fall, which is kind of an interesting book about the Depression, written by Bill Waiser of Saskatoon, called *Who Killed Jackie Bates?* And basically one of the factors in that book actually is an agreement for sale of a butcher shop in a small town in western Saskatchewan where all of the money wasn't able to be paid in the '30s, and so they accepted that they would get some of the money and then eventually, when all of the money was paid, they would transfer pursuant to this agreement for sale.

One of the factors in the book is the fact that this money doesn't come forward and these people end up becoming quite desperate. And they actually use the excuse that they didn't get the full price for their business that they sold as one of the factors in the court case involving the charge of murder of this young child. It's a fascinating book for lots of other reasons but I thought it was quite curious, that particular issue, around then, how do you get property back? And some of these other things was a factor in this book as well.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when one is involved in a transaction to purchase land and you end up making a promise to pay over quite a number of years, we clearly want a protection for the people who are in that situation. And the legislation was passed in 1917 and the amendment that we're going to do now will provide that protection but with an even greater or better remedy for those people who are involved now.

So how does that remedy work? Well basically it allows for a

cancellation of these agreements for sale in a way that is much more expeditious. And the importance of this is that it will eliminate some of the situations where a person who has very little money paid into an agreement — in fact they may have a five-year agreement for sale to purchase a property, for example, where they've only paid 5 per cent or 10 per cent of the purchase price — it'll eliminate the situation where that person can actually control land of a much greater value with very little money deposited in the whole situation or paid in the situation.

And this is important legislation both in times when values of land are going up dramatically but also when they're going down dramatically, because clearly when land prices are increasing quite dramatically year to year as we've seen over the last number of years, somebody can enter into an agreement for sale and pay 10 or 20 per cent down on that particular property and actually see the value of the property that they purchased double in value and therefore end up . . . I guess if you do this on a broader basis, you could purchase a lot more land than you might otherwise. But the other side of that though is when things start to get into a problem and the original owner maybe wants to get the property back or use some of the other clauses in the agreement, some of the remedies haven't been as clear as to how to do that.

Now the types of things that are going to be included in this particular amendment will also be passed through to other legislation in Saskatchewan so that the concept will be available for quite a number of other remedies that we have. And so for example in the farm security Act dealing specifically with farm land, there are a number of remedies, and basically we'll add into that particular legislation the definition of agreement for sale, so that there will be a statutory definition rather than a common law definition.

This is always an interesting task, to put in statutory definitions into land law, because what can happen is that you may then allow for new interpretations that are based on the common law, but that then are based on the wording of the statutes. And so, Mr. Speaker, it'll be especially crucial for us as we move forward in examining this particular Bill to make sure that the definitions that we do put in our legislation will match what have traditionally thought to have been the definition for an agreement for sale.

Now I don't think there are any particular situations where regulatory powers have been created in this area, which I think is appropriate, but once again we will have to ask the officials to make sure that we're not in a situation where some of the certainty of the law is being changed because of this particular legislation.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I will continue to look at this one and work with my colleagues as we move forward to make sure that the appropriate legislation is passed and with that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — The member from Regina Lakeview has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 44, *The Agreements of Sale Cancellation Amendment Act, 2008*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. Gantefer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In order to allow the Standing Committees on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice as well as Human Services to meet this evening, I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:58.]

CORRIGENDUM

On page 1399 of *Hansard*, No. 4A of Tuesday, October 28, 2008, in the fifth paragraph of Hon. Ms. Heppner's introduction of guests:

“Mr. Zhu Li” should read “Liu Shuguang”;

“Yao Xin” should read “Li Hailin”; and

“Zhao Yue” should read “Jiang Hengwei.”

We apologize for these errors.

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Premier

Hon. Bob Bjornerud
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Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Crop Insurance Corporation

Hon. Bill Boyd
Minister of Energy and Resources
Minister Responsible for Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff
Minister of Crown Corporations

Hon. Dan D'Autremont
Minister of Government Services
Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan Liquor and
Gaming Authority
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