



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
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The Honourable Don Toth  
Speaker



**MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**

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 Premier — Hon. Brad Wall  
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Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Hon. Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
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Duncan, Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
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Iwanchuk, Andy	NDP	Saskatoon Fairview
Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
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Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
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Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
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Quennell, Frank	NDP	Saskatoon Meewasin
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Ross, Laura	SP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
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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 resumed at 19:00.]

EVENING SITTING  
ADJOURNED DEBATES  
SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 60

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 60 — *The Senate Nominee Election Act*** be now read a second time.]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan):** — It now being 7 o'clock, we'll now resume debate on Bill No. 60, *The Senate Nominee Election Act*. I recognize the member for Regina Dewdney.

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm very pleased to stand and enter into debate on this particular piece of legislation, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This particular piece of legislation, well it may have been well intended when it was put forward, Mr. Speaker, I think that the activities in Ottawa over the last two or three months have made a mockery of what may well have been a well-intended legislation, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we have a Bill before us talking about electing our representatives, electing individuals who would then be appointed as a representative to the Senate, Mr. Speaker, and we had a Prime Minister saying that he would appoint those individuals. And then just a very short period of time ago, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that same Prime Minister went and, Mr. Speaker, that same Prime Minister went and appointed 18 individuals to the Senate — doing exactly what he said he wouldn't do, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I hear the members opposite are so excited to talk about this legislation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I can understand them being upset because they put forward a piece of legislation only to have somebody make them look like they didn't know what they were doing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have today a non-elected Senate in Canada. We had a Prime Minister talk repeatedly about wanting to elect senators or have elections to elect senators in each province and then he would look to appoint those, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And then what did we have? We had the Prime Minister have some worry about he may not be there the next week, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What did he do? He went and did what he said he wouldn't do. He appointed 18 members to the Senate, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Were any of those elected? Absolutely not, absolutely not.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, did he ask the provinces who they wanted appointed? No, he didn't even go as far to ask the elected government in Saskatchewan or the legislature of Saskatchewan if they had any preference.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, he went one step further. He appointed people that don't currently live in those provinces as well. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is a Prime Minister, that is a Prime

Minister who isn't living up to what he told Canadians was important to him. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a Prime Minister that didn't live up to what he said was important to himself, to his party, and to Canadians, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So why should Saskatchewan people, why should Saskatchewan people believe that this Prime Minister would appoint anybody that was elected when he did just contrary to what he said he would do?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, why would the Prime Minister not do what he said he wanted to do and have senators elected? Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will tell you why. First off because he can't do it in the method he was trying to do it. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the only way that you can in fact have an elected Senate in Canada would be to take forward reform in the Constitution of Canada, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, he could have done it the right way. He could have worked with Canadian provinces to actually put forward a constitutional change so that we could have a truly elected Senate in Canada but, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we didn't see that. We saw this Prime Minister try to persuade governments in Canada and premiers across the country to put forward legislation to elect people in their own provinces, then he would appoint them.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he didn't do that. He didn't do that. When he thought he might lose power himself, he did what he said he would never do; what he said should never be done, Mr. Deputy Speaker. He did exactly opposite of what he said he believed in. What he tried to tell Canadians was important. Mr. Deputy Speaker, he did exactly opposite of what he said he believed in — in fact, he appointed 18 unelected senators to the Senate of Canada, something he said he would not do.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, many, many, many Canadians in this country are looking for some form of Senate reform. And yes, I think many Canadians believe there should be Senate reform. But maybe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we should take a page out of our own democratic system and ask Canadians what that democratic reform should be.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we haven't even had the opportunity as Canadians to have a national debate on what type of reform the Senate should actually undertake. Mr. Speaker, the House of Commons has not had the ability to have a comprehensive debate on the type of reform that maybe the Senate should undertake, Mr. Speaker. The provinces of Canada haven't been able to have a comprehensive debate on the type of reform that perhaps Canadians would like to see.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we had a Prime Minister who was going to do it his way. He told us he wanted an elected Senate. He asked Canadian provinces to put forward legislation to elect senators. And then, Mr. Speaker, what did he do? What did the Prime Minister of Canada do? He did exactly what he said he wouldn't do. He appointed 18 unelected senators less than two months ago, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, that leaves this Prime Minister with very little credibility on this issue in the country of Canada.

And, Mr. Speaker, we have legislation before us that would in

fact allow us to elect in some sort of popularity contest because we don't have an ability to actually elect a senator. We have an ability to find out who Saskatchewan people would like to be there, and then the Prime Minister can or cannot appoint that person as he so chooses. So we don't ever have the ability to actually elect a senator. What we have the ability to do is tell them who the people of Saskatchewan would like, and then he can either appoint that person or not.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation doesn't meet the needs of Saskatchewan people. It doesn't meet the needs of actual electoral reform in the Senate, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And as a result of the Prime Minister's actions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, just a few months ago, we don't know that he would even carry through with his own word. We don't know. We don't know what his intentions would be, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because when his first opportunity came along — or when his first problem came along, pardon me — what did he do? He did what he said he would never do. He appointed 18 unelected senators to the Senate of Canada.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Bill talks about putting in place something that is now a mockery in our Canadian system, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Because you can't on one hand say you want this and you won't do something, and then do exactly what you say you wouldn't do, and then expect others to believe that you really wanted to do it and that you were committed to it, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And we've seen other examples of that in this over the last couple of years, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We saw the government pass legislation on fixed election dates in Ottawa, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And then when the first . . . when this Prime Minister saw it as an opportune time, what did he do? He called an election outside his own legislation, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need to consider what has gone on, as far as any form of electoral reform in Ottawa which is including the concept of fixed election dates and the government of Canada having to live up to them. The Prime Minister didn't live up to his own mandate there. He didn't live up to his own mandate and his own beliefs — his own position, his own stated beliefs, Mr. Deputy Speaker — that we should have an elected Senate in Canada.

When he thought he might lose power, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he did what he said he would never do. He appointed 18 members to the Senate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and he did it in a very partisan way, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So we, as Canadians, didn't have a say. The province of Saskatchewan had no method or input into that decision, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Prime Minister did what he said should not happen.

So why would we then proceed with passing legislation in this province to tell him who we might want to be elected to the Senate, who we'd want appointed to the Senate, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Not elected, because he would never be elected, but who we'd want appointed to the Senate through any type of election process when (a) he doesn't have to follow it; and (b) he's shown he wouldn't anyway. He wouldn't follow his own direction anyway because he has proven to us when the going

got tough, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he did what he said he would never do.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I could speak for hours on this particular piece of legislation, but I think the members of the government understand that we have significant concerns about continuing with a piece of legislation that in the last two months has been significantly undermined by the very actions of the person who says it was necessary, the very actions of the person who says they wanted it. When he said he would not appoint senators — he wanted to have provinces elect individuals that he would appoint — and then he goes and does what he says he didn't want to do.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he showed very clearly that he won't necessarily listen to the people even if we do elect individuals. And Mr. Deputy Speaker, members opposite in the government may be concerned — and they should be concerned — that this legislation that they put forward doesn't mean anything anymore because of the actions of the Prime Minister.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they should just withdraw this legislation. They should withdraw this legislation today and not continue this mockery when the Prime Minister has clearly indicated that he doesn't believe in it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. He asked this government to put forward the legislation. They do and then he undermines their own position. He undermines their own position to proceed with this legislation in a meaningful way, even if the people of Saskatchewan wanted it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But the people of Saskatchewan never had a vote on it. They never had a chance to discuss it. But even before they might have had that chance, the Prime Minister has undermined it.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I said I could speak for hours about this particular legislation. I don't intend to do that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What I would like to do at this point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, after clearly indicating to the people of Saskatchewan and to the members opposite, that this legislation should be withdrawn. It should simply be withdrawn after the Prime Minister has appointed 18 unelected senators, saying he wouldn't do it.

This government should take the initiative to tell the Prime Minister, we don't like to be told, we don't like to be told that you want us to do something. We don't like to be told that we need to elect individuals to indicate who should be appointed to the Senate and then not do it. We don't want to be the puppets of Ottawa, that we need to tell the Prime Minister that we don't want to be their puppets.

And the best way to do that is to withdraw this legislation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, withdraw this legislation and not continue to make a fool of all those who sit in this Saskatchewan legislature, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with that I would move that we adjourn debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan):** — The member for Regina Dewdney has made a motion to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan):** — Carried.

**Bill No. 65**

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 65 — *The Seizure of Criminal Property Act, 2008*** be now read a second time.]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan):** — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Meewasin.

**Mr. Quennell:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's interesting, as much as a pleasure, to speak to this Bill, *The Seizure of Criminal Property Act*. And I'll come to why it's more interesting than some legislation of its type, even, although all legislation of its type's interesting, Mr. Speaker.

To give some context or background to this Bill and legislation like this, I'm sure all members will appreciate and many members of the public watching us or reading *Hansard* — as I know so many are fond of doing — will appreciate that within the Canadian Constitution, responsibility for criminal law, both substantially and much of it procedurally, falls with the national government, but the administration of crime falls to the provincial government.

There are a lot of ways, we have come to learn through experience, of suppressing crime other than through the procedures and the substantive criminal law as set out in the Criminal Code and falling within federal responsibility. There's ways of being tough on crime that happen to fall within provincial responsibility. As a matter of fact, quite a few of them fall within that broad range of property and civil rights, and there are things that the national government can't do.

I think sometimes ministers of Justice at the provincial level envy their federal counterparts' ability to change rules about sentencing or to increase sentences or to add new ways, new methods of homicide to the Criminal Code and do all those things. At least it seems to me that ministers of Justice often envy their federal counterparts because they're always calling upon their federal counterparts to do what they can't do, and trying to ride a bandwagon that they just don't have the reins on, or sometimes they're just joining the chorus, Mr. Speaker.

But there are things that can be done provincially and, as a matter of fact, they can only be done provincially because they fall within provincial powers. The effect of them is to suppress, prevent crime. And it is entirely of course constitutional because of the type of tools that they are, and they're civil tools.

We'll use a few examples, Mr. Speaker, from recent legislative experience. The last NDP [New Democratic Party] government brought in a number of measures that had that effect.

When I was minister of Justice, I noticed a gap between municipal bylaws — the ability of municipalities to close down buildings that were fire traps or health hazards — and the Criminal Code that required proof that an individual was carrying on a criminal activity beyond a reasonable doubt. And

within this gap operated somewhat formal, in some cases, or informal criminal enterprises in neighbourhoods for years, Mr. Speaker, and maybe somebody would be convicted of a crime arising from the activity in that building. But at the end of the day, that building and the activities in that building carried on.

[19:15]

And though we began to work better, and I'm sure the current government is maintaining this policy, working better with the cities in dovetailing what the province can do, what the police can do under their criminal powers, and what the municipalities can do with their bylaws, there remained a gap. And that gap was filled by the safer communities and neighbourhoods program. And I know that at the time, I wouldn't say that the members opposite, when they were in opposition, were opposed to the initiative, but at least they were skeptical, Mr. Speaker. But I think the program has proved itself, and I don't expect that it will receive anything but full support from the government.

Another civil tool that the previous NDP government had implemented was under *The Criminal Enterprise Suppression Act*. Now this the members opposite had a bit more difficulty with. The current Minister of Justice, when he was Justice critic, called it a chainsaw swatting a fly. Now put aside the crime against the English language there, Mr. Speaker, put aside that crime, I think it was wrong-headed in other ways, Mr. Speaker. It expressed a concern about property rights over above the safety and security of Saskatchewan citizens.

And I believe that the member from Saskatoon Southeast who is now the Minister of Justice has seen the error of his ways. I note that he has had a couple of opportunities to repeal the Bill that he was so opposed to, that he so condemned in this Chamber, and he hasn't taken them, and I trust he won't take them. I think he appreciates the value of that Bill and of this type of legislation. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, he so appreciates the value of this type of legislation that he is bringing in another one of the Bills that was passed when I was minister of Justice — again, Mr. Speaker, with a change, with a change that I will come to.

Now the value of these tools that we were so proactive in using when we were in government, Mr. Speaker, I think proved itself. And combined with crime reduction strategies in partnership with municipalities — Regina, Saskatoon on break and enter, Regina on auto theft, Prince Albert, North Battleford, and spreading throughout the province — I think we had a considerable effect. And during the four years that I was minister of Justice the crime rate in Saskatchewan dropped every single year of those four years.

Now I don't take sole credit for that. I was building on the work of my predecessors but I think it shows the province is not helpless because it doesn't have strict constitutional control over the criminal law, that in fact a lot of things can be done to fight crime that fall within the jurisdiction of the province.

I think the NDP government proved that, and they proved it with a couple pieces of legislation I've already mentioned — *The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act*, which I think is sort of the flagship of the crime suppression program of the

previous government, and *The Criminal Enterprise Suppression Act*.

But another Bill was *The Seizure of Criminal Property Act* and that legislation was passed. And I will tell the House what that legislation did, although many members here were there at the time the NDP government proposed this legislation and it was passed and brought into effect.

And what the Act allowed to happen was that property that was either the proceeds of crime or used in a crime could be seized and sold, upon application to a court. And that was the procedural safeguard. No question about its constitutionality, at least not in my mind, Mr. Speaker. I'm not aware of where similar legislation in Canada has been successfully challenged. I don't believe this legislation was challenged, and I don't think if it was challenged, that it would fail to withstand that challenge, Mr. Speaker.

The application in the case of the NDP legislation could either be made by the office of the Minister of Justice and Attorney General or by local police chiefs and RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] commanders. Either could make the application, Mr. Speaker, and if the courts thought that there was evidence — sufficient evidence, Mr. Speaker — that the property was the proceeds of a crime or had been used in a crime, the court could order it to be seized and then when appropriate sold. That was not the decision of the Minister of Justice nor was it the decision of the police chief. It was only their decision to make the application if they thought they had sufficient evidence to make the argument.

Now I know that the Minister of Justice, then when he was the Justice critic — the member from Saskatoon Southeast — for some reason which I have yet to understand but maybe will get explained to me in committee, did not believe that police chiefs should have the power to make the application, Mr. Speaker. I didn't understand the argument then. And it wasn't really made as an argument. It was made as questions. Why would you allow police chiefs to have this ability to make these applications? And I answered the questions the best I could, Mr. Speaker.

So I could understand if the minister wanted to amend the Bill, amend the legislation that didn't pass by the previous legislature, brought in by the previous NDP government, wanted to amend it to remove this ability from police chiefs and RCMP commanders to make these applications. I don't understand the reasoning behind that, but I understand that he felt that that was an appropriate thing to do — that all the power to make this application should rest in his office and that police chiefs cannot be trusted, not with seizing and selling property, but making an application to the court to seize and sell property. That that power should be removed from police chiefs and RCMP commanders on the ground, aware of all the facts around the property, the use of the property, or where the property came from, Mr. Speaker.

He could have just brought in an amendment to the Bill if he wanted to create an office within the Ministry of Justice, could have made that part of the amendment as well, Mr. Speaker. But that's not what he did. Instead, bringing in an amendment that would highlight that he didn't trust police chiefs and didn't

want them to have this ability to make these court applications, he brings in a whole new seizure of criminal property Bill which leaves that out, Mr. Speaker. And I have to admit, when this was announced with great fanfare and lights downstairs in this building, I thought of Yogi Berra and his saying that this is déjà vu all over again. Why are we bringing a seizure of criminal property Act when we already have a seizure of criminal property Act?

When I looked at the Bill, well the only effect of it really is, the only substantive effect of this Bill is to take this power to make an application to the court away from police chiefs and RCMP commanders. That's the only reason to replace this Bill with this Bill.

There's actually more happening here than in some cases. I mean we have right now vital statistics legislation — enormous pieces of legislation, Mr. Speaker — two Bills which repeal the previous legislation brought in by the NDP government but are substantially the same except little minor details, Mr. Speaker. Things that could have clearly been put in by amendment, but for some reason the government doesn't want to draw attention to them. I don't know why. So they're bringing in the whole legislation all over again, Mr. Speaker, with almost no changes.

**An Hon. Member:** — It's called rebranding.

**Mr. Quennell:** — Yes, yes. And I think the Minister of Justice is being somewhat candid here, maybe more than somewhat candid. He just called it rebranding. So we bring in essentially the same Bill so we can say, as the Minister of Justice — I think he's a little embarrassed that he blurted that out — but that we could just rebrand.

And I'll come to this, Mr. Speaker, because I'll be talking about witness protection legislation, and that is a classic case of rebranding because that was also a program brought in by the NDP government, unfunded for the first year of this government and now, now, rebranded as the Minister of Justice would call it — rebranded witness protection Act.

But to return to this Bill, Mr. Speaker, I think there's a little bit more than just rebranding here. I think there is rebranding, Mr. Speaker . . . And you know, Mr. Speaker, the Premier called this Legislative Assembly a zoo, and I think there's members of the government who are trying to prove him right. And I appreciate that they'd like to prove their leader right, Mr. Speaker, but, you know, I don't think they should go to that extent, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this is a little bit more than rebranding because it does make a significant change, and the way to have made that significant change was to have been honest about making it. We have a seizure of criminal property Act. We don't want police chiefs to have this power. We don't want them to have the ability to make this application, so we're going to amend the Act so that they no longer have that power. That would have been the straightforward, candid thing to do.

If the government wanted to be as candid as the minister was when he said, well we're just bringing in almost identical or similar legislation for the point of rebranding, if they had been

as honest as he was in that comment, then they would have just made the amendments to the legislation that was already in place, Mr. Speaker. Because they didn't add any ability of the Minister of Justice's office to make the application. That was already in the previous legislation. This is an Act that looks like an addition but in fact, Mr. Speaker, is a subtraction.

Now I suppose there might be an explanation for why this is taking place other than the minister's admission or announcement that it's just rebranding. But that said, Mr. Speaker, I do look forward to the opportunity to have some of these questions asked in committee and answered, Mr. Speaker. I'm still curious about some of the Minister of Justice's concerns about our province's police chiefs. And to allow this Bill to go to committee where we can ask those questions and get maybe some better answers than rebranding, Mr. Speaker, I will suggest that this Bill now move to committee.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan):** — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the member from Saskatoon Meewasin that Bill No. 65, *The Seizure of Criminal Property Act, 2008* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan):** — Carried.

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

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan):** — To which committee shall this Bill be referred?

**Hon. Mr. Gantfoer:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan):** — This Bill stands committed to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

### Bill No. 66

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hickie that **Bill No. 66** — *The Witness Protection Act* be now read a second time.]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan):** — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Meewasin.

**Mr. Quennell:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like *The Seizure of Criminal Property Act*, *The Witness Protection Act* is again as Yogi Berra said, déjà vu all over again. The NDP government brought in a program in 2007 called the high-risk witness protection program. And the reason for it, Mr. Speaker, was that in consultation with law enforcement in the province of Saskatchewan, it became clear that there was another gap, and that was in respect to witnesses who didn't fall under the federal witness protection program.

Now the minister responsible for this legislation, the Minister of Corrections and Public Safety, may, I suppose, in one way be forgiven for not realizing the necessity for a program like this

for the first year that he was minister because apparently the minister did not read his mandate letter in respect to doing something about gangs in correctional facilities. Apparently the minister did not read the election program of his party in respect to these matters as well, and so I guess the minister could be excused for being somewhat oblivious of the issue of gang intimidation of witnesses.

[19:30]

However the previous government, the NDP government, was not and brought in a program to provide funding for the protection of witnesses prior to when they testify. There was in fact \$80,000 put aside for the balance of the 2007-2008 fiscal year and \$320,000 budgeted for the program annually after that. So in the last year, the fiscal year that we just went through, was the first year of a Sask Party government budget. There was a funding provided for, or forecast, for this program.

Now the program did not survive the election of the Sask Party government. Now I don't really believe that the minister did not see the value of the program, Mr. Speaker. I tend to believe, Mr. Speaker — although I guess we'll never know, or those of us on this side of the House will never know — that it just didn't make the cut, Mr. Speaker, that the minister did not have the clout or the influence in cabinet to ensure the funding that was already in place for this program.

And it's sort of like the revisionist history on Station 20 a little bit, Mr. Speaker. Well it hadn't been spent yet, so it really wasn't there, so we didn't really grab it away. Well, Mr. Speaker, everybody knows better. And in this case the program had been established. The money was there. It was a matter for this government of making sure that a budget that was very much like a continuation of the previous government's budget, that that budget carried on with this program as well. But it did not, Mr. Speaker.

Before, the Minister of Justice said from his seat, in response to some of my remarks on a previous Bill, that this is a matter of rebranding. I would not have so ascribed that motive of actually not bringing this program in, not funding it for a year, just so that you could rebrand it as a Sask Party government program. I wouldn't have suggested that. I would have just thought that it was a bit of negligence, it was oversight, and that it was maybe a lack of the minister responsible's clout within cabinet and when speaking to Treasury Board — if in fact this government has much of a Treasury Board.

But there's no question, Mr. Speaker, that the program is valuable. It's necessary. Probably more can be done as resources become available to do that. It probably does not need a lot of Justice spending, and Corrections and Public Safety spending does not need its own legislation. This probably does not need its own legislation, but the government wants to rebrand programs as their programs, and if one way of doing it, I guess, is to bring in the legislation, I'm not sure that, Mr. Speaker, that it actually does any harm.

It's not necessary, and we shouldn't be passing unnecessary legislation because we find ourselves — as I will be speaking to later — just repealing it later. And I don't know if *The Witness Protection Act* will ever be repealed. But with programming

like this that could probably . . . should change, should get better, should improve, I'm not sure if it really belongs within the strictures of an Act.

But the government wants to rebrand and try to pretend that this program was theirs, that they had brought it in, and for a year, for a year, that the minister responsible didn't seem to recognize that it was necessary because it's not in last year's budget, Mr. Speaker. It's not. Although the previous government had clearly made it a priority, this government decided not to put it in the last year's budget.

So now they're going to put it in this year's budget and make up for last year, all the unprotected witnesses last year, by giving them an Act, Mr. Speaker. Well that's not entirely appropriate. But, Mr. Speaker, as they say, better late than never. Let's move this to committee. Let's deal with the details, and let's get the program up and running again.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan):** — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the member for Meewasin, Bill No. 66, *The Witness Protection Act* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan):** — Carried.

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

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan):** — To which committee shall this Bill be referred?

**Hon. Mr. Gantfoer:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan):** — This Bill now stands committed to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

#### Bill No. 74

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 74** — *The Miscellaneous Statutes (English) Amendment and Repeal Act, 2008* be now read a second time.]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan):** — I recognize the member for Meewasin.

**Mr. Quennell:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now this Bill is the reason why the legislature shouldn't be passing legislation just for show, Mr. Speaker. And I'm not suggesting that any of the Bills being repealed were passed, were just for show . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . The Minister of Health thinks I'm doing all the heavy lifting tonight, but I'm not tired yet. And I think I'm going to be picking up speed, Mr. Speaker, if he will allow me to. None of the Bills being repealed, Mr. Speaker, I think, were passed just for show. And I think some of them all had, they all had good purposes. But circumstances have changed and they are, arguably at least, no longer required. We can have a greater investigation of that in committee.

So I'm not suggesting that there's legislation that's being repealed in this Bill that should never have been passed in the first place. But, Mr. Speaker, it does, I think, make worthy of note — and this might be as good a time to note it as any — when we're repealing legislation that has now become superfluous and irrelevant, that we pass legislation here to improve the situation for the people in the province of Saskatchewan. We pass legislation, in theory at least, to remedy evils. We pass legislation, at least in principle, to affect changes to the better, to the common good, Mr. Speaker.

And we should not be passing legislation primarily — and I don't mean to be naïve, but the shadow of democracy is politics — but we shouldn't be passing legislation primarily for the purpose of politics. Legislation should have a real effect. And good government is good politics; good politics is good government. So legislation that has a good effect should be good politics.

We shouldn't have to pass legislation just for show, which I suggest *The Witness Protection Act*, if it isn't that, is very close to that, Mr. Speaker. And we don't need to be doing that in this legislature. We don't need to be dealing with popularity contests that have been made irrelevant by the Prime Minister in the case of the so-called Senate election nominee Bill because, Mr. Speaker, we find ourselves with Bills that actually had some purpose, some real purpose beyond politics, that now are no longer necessary and need to be repealed. And surely that's enough, Mr. Speaker. We don't need to add Bills for political purposes alone as well.

In any case, Mr. Speaker, I don't intend to speak at length in defence of any of the Bills being repealed here. We'll want to make sure that in fact they all have outlived their usefulness, but we can best do that in committee, Mr. Speaker. And that's what I propose that we do.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan):** — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the member from Meewasin that Bill No. 74, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (English) Amendment and Repeal Act, 2008* now be read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan):** — Carried.

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

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan):** — To which committee shall it be referred?

**Hon. Mr. Gantfoer:** — To the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan):** — This Bill stands committed to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

#### Bill No. 75

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed



motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 75 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Bilingual) Amendment and Repeal Act, 2008/Loi corrective (lois bilingues) de 2008*** be now read a second time.]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan):** — I recognize the member from Meewasin.

**Mr. Quennell:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like the previous Bill that has just moved on from this Chamber into committee, this is another amendment and repeal Bill, Mr. Speaker, removing provisions from legislation that were never proclaimed — and that perhaps now should not be proclaimed, Mr. Speaker — and making some changes to correct spelling and grammatical errors which I assume, Mr. Speaker, predates spell-check.

I suspect we may not be doing quite as much of that in the future, Mr. Speaker. We're still doing some of it, and as I've learnt myself, spell-check does not correct all sins.

Mr. Speaker, there are probably relatively few questions, even in committee, on this Bill, but there will be some. And it's necessary to move it on with its sister legislation, the previous Bill that I just commented on, and I would propose to do that, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan):** — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the member from Saskatoon Meewasin that Bill No. 75, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Bilingual) Amendment and Repeal Act, 2008* now be read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan):** — Carried.

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

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan):** — To which committee shall this Bill be referred?

**Hon. Mr. Gantfoer:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Bill as well to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan):** — This Bill stands committed to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

### Bill No. 50

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 50 — *The Missing Persons and Presumption of Death Act*** be now read a second time.]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan):** — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Meewasin.

**Mr. Quennell:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This legislation

deals with an aspect of great human tragedy which most of us are aware of. When we watch the news, we see a family or a group of families asking the question as to where their loved one is, what's happened to them, and why can't there be an answer.

The NDP government were very concerned about the issues arising from missing persons in our province, took a number of steps but we didn't do them all without talking to the people affected, Mr. Speaker. We did increase, funded by the province of Saskatchewan, dramatically increase the number of historical crimes officers, with the belief that there should be no cold cases in the case of a missing person in the province of Saskatchewan. There should be no cold cases; there should be no closed cases, Mr. Speaker.

We also dramatically increased provincial funding for violent crime analysts, Mr. Speaker. I think that history has shown the value of those investments. Crimes, long-standing issues — and it turns out, unfortunately, violent crimes, Mr. Speaker — have been resolved, have been solved since these added resources were brought in. We all hope, I know, that there would have been a happier conclusion to some of those investigations, but some of the unanswered questions have been answered in some cases for some families, Mr. Speaker.

As I said, the action that we took on the addition of the specialized police resources was quick and decisive, but not all the steps were done without consultation with organizations that work very hard, very committed — in some cases long-standing commitments — to the issue of missing persons, Mr. Speaker, and without consultations with the families of missing persons.

[19:45]

And a number of recommendations, changes to police policy were made. A number of other recommendations were made to the government, Mr. Speaker, and so other changes have been made other than the important addition to police resources. And we are pleased, Mr. Speaker, that some of the issues that arise, unfortunately, from this tragedy are still being addressed.

And this issue of management of estates and how one deals with the estate of someone who might be presumed to be dead and may or may not in fact be dead, Mr. Speaker, is an important issue. It's not the most important issue, but it's an important issue. And in principle we are supportive of the government's work. We'll want to make sure that details are well taken care of, well handled.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure I can think of a more serious matter that's before us this evening, as a matter of fact, than these matters surrounding the issues of a missing person, perhaps dead, perhaps presumed to be dead under the effect of this legislation — that they be handled correctly, Mr. Speaker, that they be handled soberly and with some thought. And if I hesitate, it's only because I want to make sure that I give some thought to my words because I think the issue requires some, Mr. Speaker.

The opposition has given it some thought here, and I've wanted to reflect that in my remarks. I trust that the Ministry of Justice gave it some considerable thought in drafting, that due

consideration was given to any recommendations made by the committee struck by the previous government in respect to the issues surrounding missing persons when the legislation was drafted, Mr. Speaker. We will want to determine that all that is the case when the matter proceeds to committee, which I propose that it now do, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan):** — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the member from Saskatoon Meewasin that Bill No. 50, *The Missing Persons and Presumption of Death Act* now be read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan):** — Carried.

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

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan):** — To which committee shall it be referred?

**Hon. Mr. Gantefoer:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan):** — The Bill now stands committed to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

#### 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 Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan):** — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Massey Place.

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to stand tonight and have the opportunity to comment and provide some thoughts on Bill 44, *The Agreements of Sale Cancellation Amendment Act*, Mr. Speaker.

Over the course of Saskatchewan history of course there's a great deal of legislation that has been passed through the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, and this piece of legislation that we're looking at this evening now, Mr. Speaker, in Bill 44, goes back to legislation that was originally passed in 1917 — a considerable time ago, Mr. Speaker. It's a Bill that of course has guided and influenced a lot of the transactions and development that has occurred in the province over the years.

But it's only natural, Mr. Speaker, when looking at a piece of legislation that was passed so many decades ago that over the course of time, as with anything, over the course of time there's the need to review legislation, to examine legislation, to take a look and see if there are perhaps ways the legislation could be improved in order to gain efficiency or streamline the process in order to make sure that the original intent of the legislation is in fact continuing to serve the people of Saskatchewan. And from my reading of this Bill, Mr. Speaker, it would appear that this

amendment Act is in fact an attempt to do much of that — to modernize and to improve the way that this legislation influences and determines land sales here in the province.

When purchasing land or when there is transaction, there are of course a number of ways that that can occur. The sale can happen all at once, Mr. Speaker, or in other situations it's possible that the payments for land can be delivered over a period of months or years even, Mr. Speaker.

And so with the legislation that was originally passed way back in 1917, a result of the process that we've seen with the way the legislation has been working to date, is that one can come across a situation where there has been an agreement to purchase land over an extended period of time, but for whatever reason, Mr. Speaker, that sale has not been completed and problems have come up for the two parties involved in the sale of land.

And when that has occurred, Mr. Speaker, in the past, over the past years, it can bring the situation present where the person who was not able to make the payments on the land over a course of more than six months, that person holds up the process and it can slow down the sale of the land and cause problems for all the parties involved to bring a resolution to the settlement. So in a sense it can bring a strange bargaining power to the person that is unable to live up to the commitment that was made for the purchase of the land.

So this amendment Act is a response to that situation that can come up from time to time. It's an attempt to provide clarity and a better definition of what the contract or agreement for the sale of land would be in a given situation, so that when this situation does become a reality for a party, there's a faster resolution that serves the interests of the parties that are involved, as well as the province as a whole, Mr. Speaker, as of course land sales are a reality and an important part of the commerce and the transactions that go on in our province.

So in the past, Mr. Speaker, before . . . If this legislation does go through and take effect, in the past the resolution has been sought through the court system, so that the individual not receiving payment would be required to go through the courts in order to find a resolution and complete the process. This will end that, so from the perspective of increasing the efficiency of the legal system as well and for everyone involved having a faster and more efficient way of handling the matter, from the perspective of the opposition, we see this as a positive move and a way of modernizing the existence of this Act — an Act that does go back, as I mentioned, to 1917.

However, whenever looking at this type of legislation that does have a fairly significant effect for parties that are involved in the sale of a piece of land, it's important to get it right. And I know there have been a few members from this side of the House that have had the opportunity so far to comment on Bill 44, and I do believe that there will be others who would like to share some thoughts and some reflections and some of the ideas around this legislation before in fact it is sent to committee. So having stated some of my thoughts on this, how the modernization process of legislation is a positive thing, I would at this time move that we adjourn debate on Bill 44, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan):** — It has been moved that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 44. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan):** — Carried.

### Bill No. 73

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Norris that **Bill No. 73 — *The University of Saskatchewan Amendment Act, 2008*** be now read a second time.]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan):** — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Centre.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to engage in this debate on Bill 73, *The University of Saskatchewan Amendment Act*. It's an honour to be part of this.

I went to school at the University of Saskatchewan and got my masters in education there, and I feel a real connection with it. My daughter also got her law degree there and my brother an engineering degree, one of the last mining engineering degrees from the University of Saskatchewan. In fact another brother got his vocational papers there as well. So we have a strong connection with . . .

The University of Saskatchewan has a real history in this province and in fact in this country. And people look to it as a real institution that shows educational leadership, both in the community and also academically, in the work that it does in helping young people understand the world that we find ourselves in, but also how we can be innovative in that world. And so we truly do value the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] and we look with strong listening to the points that they make about how they want to become a modern university.

What are some of the challenges that face them? And we look at some of the amendments here, and I have some questions about this. I know that we are looking forward to the discussion in committee about this, and I do hope that the minister has taken the time to do some consultations, to talk to some of the people that are involved, that are connected to the university. I'm interested in hearing what the teaching staff, the research staff have to say about these amendments.

I'm very interested in hearing what the students have to say about these amendments. I mean they are the future of the province. They're the future of the university.

And when we look back at the universities we've graduated from or spent some time at, we feel a real connection with that institution. We feel that it's really helped shaped who we are and what this province is all about. It's an important part of our identity. And we know when we talk about the different ways the U of S represents itself, whether it's through its research or through even its sporting teams, we all connect very much, take a lot of pride in the work that the U of S does.

And so when we look at these amendments, I do have some questions. First of all — and I know I've heard some of the speeches on this — I talk about the change in the way that the method of selection for the chancellor will go, from being an election to a nomination by joint senate or board search committee, followed by an appointment by the senate.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have to tell you tonight that we've had some very interesting debates and speeches about elections, about the senates, about the appointments, and about participation, engagement. And I wonder, this government here seems to be a little disconnected here. On one hand, they want to . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . A little disconnected. A little bit disconnected.

And they don't know what one hand is doing in terms of the other hand. Here you have a government that's putting forward a Bill that, and I'll use their words, calls for an election to the Senate — I know my colleague from Meewasin put a good argument here — calls about, talked about an election to a Senate. They're not happy about appointments, not happy about appointments, and then in this Bill they want to move from an election to an appointment.

What is it? Do they like elections? Do they like appointments? What is it? One day they want elections; the next day they're all for appointments. I really do think the cabinet over there really needs to get their act together on this. What is it that they really want?

Both institutions . . . I understand that there's some low participation rate in terms of the voting for chancellor, you know. And so what do you do? You take away the opportunity to become fully engaged in the process and say, no, we just give up. What we want to do is have an appointment process. We really don't believe that the people have an opinion on this. We believe in the appointment process for the University of Saskatchewan. That's what they say. They believe in the appointment process.

But for the Senate of Canada right now, that's an appointment process which the current Prime Minister took full advantage of — on one hand said he liked to do elections, but when the moment came, he appointed people. All these inconsistencies, all these inconsistencies really speak to what the problem is with so much of the legislation that's coming out from this government, Mr. Speaker.

[20:00]

Now, Mr. Speaker, the other problem I have and I have some questions about is around the visitor, the elimination of the position of visitor. And this is what the minister said when he introduced this back on November 19, 2008, and I'll quote, Mr. Deputy Speaker: "And it explained that the traditional position of visitor as an avenue of appeal was a holdover from the earliest days of university governance in the United Kingdom." Quite correct. That is true. That's the history.

He goes on to say, and I quote, "Today the university's robust internal mechanisms are balanced by a number of external avenues of appeal . . ." The question I have is, what are those external avenues of appeal? We really don't know. He's not

clear. The notes that come along to explain the Bill don't outline that.

And we see, and I've done a little bit of research — the library was very helpful today — because I wanted to know a little bit more about what is a visitor. What is the role of a visitor? And we can see, we can see that this may be a change that we haven't quite fully thought out. This is a challenge. We have unintended consequences. We see there's been examples — and I'll talk a little bit about this — at other universities where they don't have a visitor. And quite clearly the courts have seen if there's not a visitor, then the courts can be involved. If there is a visitor, a formal visitor, then the courts won't be involved. So does the University of Saskatchewan fully understand the implications of removing this?

So I'll go through this a little bit. Here is the legal definition that was provided to me from the *New Oxford Companion to Law*, 2008. It talks about the visitor is “a domestic forum appointed by the founder for the purpose of regulating the foundation's domestic affairs in accordance with its statutes, including the determination of the domestic disputes.”

And so clearly the founder in this case would be, I think, the province of Saskatchewan that established the University of Saskatchewan and is the prime benefactor, the main source of funding for the University of Saskatchewan. And so we have an interest to make sure that the original foundation, the original principles the U of S was founded on, are adhered to and that the domestic disputes can be resolved in a fair and equitable way, and there is a process. And clearly there is a process.

It goes on to talk about legal status of higher educational institutions. And it talks about that there really are seven specific areas that need to be concerned or considered. And what are some of those areas that really need to be considered when you're talking about higher educational institutions? Well the first is the legal status. Okay, we'll . . . that's not about this tonight; that's fair enough.

Another one is fair access to higher education. That's a major concern for all of us; we all talk about that. In fact, just yesterday we had questions about tuition fees and how tuitions were going to go up, and the minister assured us that they would be affordable. We have some real concerns about that. But one of the concerns, Deputy Speaker, that I did not realize that was a major concern when you come to higher educational institutions is the visitorial jurisdiction.

What is the jurisdiction of the visitor? And it goes on to talk about that. It talks about how it's so important to have a fair system of dispute resolution. Whether it's contract of employment for the teachers and the support staff or for the students, somehow you have to make sure things can be resolved at the university level.

What's interesting, this has been talked about in Australia. And we often think . . . We look at Australia for comparisons, and they talked about how they've moved away from that. In fact in Australia the visitorial jurisdiction was, and I'll quote here, was rarely invoked prior to 1979. But since that time, there have been about 200 attempts to invoke the powers of the visitor.

And although there's only been 10 petitioners that have been successful or partially successful, we know that in University of Saskatchewan, I know of one case where the visitor has been petitioned, and that case was successful. And I'd hope that that was okay, that this is not a little bit of resolving that issue. But we need to make sure that there is a fair process involved.

I found this piece very interesting. Now many people would know or heard of Trent University in Ontario. They had some major dispute in 2000; I don't want to go into the whole case. This article here is entitled the “Judicial Review in the Community of Scholars: A Short History of *Kulchyski v. Trent University*.” And I understand it was about closing some of the colleges and the process that was engaged in terms of closing two of the colleges, and there was a dispute about who had the power or authority to make some of those decisions.

And so it ended up going to court. In fact it ended up going all the way up to the Supreme Court of Canada. And the writer of this article talked about what might have happened if this could have been taken on in a different way. And I'll quote here from page 391:

This battle was not so much about bricks and mortar as it was about the very philosophical underpinnings of Trent University. At stake was power; whoever won the battle would have the power to impose their vision for the University.

And again we're talking about the foundational principles:

The majority's analysis missed the point: who had power to decide? Broad powers were granted to each, which were meant to be as definitive and conclusive as possible but, like Canada's own federal-provincial division of powers, conclusiveness was not possible. New and unforeseen challenges emerge and must be accommodated within the existing constitutional rubric; this is rarely an easy fit. The incorporating statute no process to resolve the dispute and no University Visitor existed to resolve it.

Now when they go on to talk about the university visitor, in the footnote it talks about “The New Brunswick Court of Queens Bench held that the court would not interfere in the University of New Brunswick's internal affairs because it was the jurisdiction of the University's Visitor.”

So it was clear and it seems to be the tradition for the court not to be involved in internal processes of the university if it has a visitor. If it has no visitor, then it's open game. Are we going down that back road? I'm not sure. I'm not a lawyer, but I have some concerns, and that's what I want to raise tonight. And I hope that can be addressed in committee.

This is an interesting . . . just a little piece here I want to close on, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And this is from the *Higher Learning* education magazine or *Times Higher Education* and it is from April 6, 2001. And it talks about, and I'll quote from this:

From the leading lights of British higher education, there is talk of ambitious change throughout the sector. Mergers, e-universities, foundation degrees, new approaches to credit accumulation and transfers are all under discussion.

But what price action? The apparent impossibility of removing the medieval barnacle of the visitor system, established originally to check heresy in Oxbridge colleges, suggests that higher education's reforming zeal may be sound and fury signifying little. What is proposed is a feeble compromise whereby university visitors would be asked to refer student complaints to an ombudsman paid by universities, or preferably by the government.

But they're unclear about what to do with the staff. Now it goes on to talk about . . .

[There are] . . . sound reasons to do with protecting autonomous institutions from political interference, changing universities' constitutions is difficult. But that is not a good reason for keeping this . . . [visitor].

If the visitors remain, they will either be reduced to postboxes for the ombudsman, or they will carry on considering complaints with resulting confusion, delay, duplication of effort and possible legal challenge. Neither is satisfactory.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have some questions. I don't know which is better. I do think though there needs to be a good discussion about this because clearly around the world, whether it's Australia, whether it's . . . I have questions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have questions. And the questions are for the minister in committee, that when we go down this road, we need to make sure the university knows what they're doing, okay? That's what's really important.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this has been talked about around the world. Australia's states have looked at it. United Kingdom has taken a look at it. We see what's happened at Trent University. Are there lessons from Trent University? This side over here that can't make up its mind whether it wants to be appointments or whether it wants elections. They want to get rid of a visitor, but they don't know what a visitor is. They just want an answer right away, yes or no.

I tell you what you got to do, and this is what you do at university. You learn all about it. You study it, and you get the minister in for some good questions in committee. Therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan):** — Motion is to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan):** — Carried.

### Bill No. 43

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

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan):** — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

**Mr. Vermette:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to rise and to speak on Bill No. 43, *The Trespass to Property Act*. There's a number of questions that I need addressed and I think the people expect to be addressed before this Act should pass.

First of all, I want to start out with consultation of our First Nations and Métis people. I'm hoping that the Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations will make sure that they are consulted. It is important that the input and what they have to say and how they feel . . . This Act may affect them, and I think it's important that they have an opportunity to express what they're feeling. And if this Act is going to do them any good or if this Act is going to cause them problems with their traditions that they're used to — their fishing, their hunting — we don't know if this Act will affect them. We hope it will not, but we know there's a lot of questions that have to be addressed, and I'm hoping that the government and all the ministers responsible, that anybody in their area would bring their concerns to them and share with them and that people truly feel like they're consulted, and not just in a way. There's so many different things that could impact them.

Mayors and councils also should have an opportunity to share how this will affect them. Could this Act affect them in different ways? Is it going to improve . . . What protection is it going to give? I think there's a lot of people that are looking at the government and looking at the individuals that will pass this Act to make sure that they're looking out for the best interests of the community members.

I think it's important that we allow community members to have their voice heard. And there's different ways. There's different ministers that are responsible, and there's people that actually care about some of the legislation that goes on. We know that. There's people that truly care about listening to it when it impacts people in Saskatchewan. It's important, Mr. Speaker, the people's views, when we come here and represent them, that they're heard. It's vital. It's the law. This House, and I guess this Assembly, has a lot of power to do the right thing for the people that it's supposed to represent. And the people ask us to come here and represent them to be truly an effective body that's supposed to work for what's best for Saskatchewan people, whether they be First Nations, Métis, whether non-Aboriginal. They have a right to have us address their needs and their concerns.

[20:15]

And I'm not sure how this Act will impact on them. But I think it's important before we pass this Act that the questions and all the questions that community members have of this province are answered before we rush out and just say, let's do it. I'm not sure how this is going to impact the Métis. I don't know if they've been consulted. There's many locals. There's many individuals that might have some input that they would like to share with all the ministers that are affecting them.

I think the First Nations, they're a large organization. They want to be heard, and they want to make sure that they're consulted. They're not feeling that way, so I think it's time that somebody allow them to share what they're feeling and how this will impact them. And I'm hoping that we care enough about our First Nations people and our Métis people to hear

them and listen to their concerns. It's fine to say you've consulted, but I don't know how this Act will impact on them.

It's definitely alarming to a lot of them how they're feeling. And when you talk to them, they're not feeling heard. So I guess this is my opportunity for the people I represent, Lac La Ronge Indian Band, Peter Ball, Cumberland House First Nation, Montreal Lake First Nation, Wollaston Lake.

I guess all of the First Nations people and the Dene people feel like they have to be heard and should be heard. And they're asking this Assembly before we pass certain legislations that we make sure they're consulted and their views and talk to their elders, talk to the trappers, the people fishing. How will this impact them? I don't know. That's why I think we must consult and we must make sure that they're given the opportunities to talk.

We have large Métis locals in Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert. We have small Métis locals as well. Have they been talked to? The northern Métis communities, have they had a chance to talk?

I think, Mr. Speaker, it's important that we make sure the people are truly consulted, that we spend the time and we move very slowly to make sure that this is what's good for the people of our province. We're supposed to be leading the way, making sure that the people we represent, we truly care about and want to do what's best for their interest. I hope we can accomplish that.

I'm not sure how this will impact some of our farmers. I know there's areas of concern. I hear on, you know, ATVs [all-terrain vehicles], snowmobilers going in on their areas and causing them grief. If that's what this is about, there's parts of it that might be good.

I'm not sure what it's going to all deal with in the end. But I think we better make sure that we consult with everyone, and there's a lot of people that have to be consulted. I think this is going to be a very slow process.

And maybe other provinces have trespass Acts that are really good. I don't know. I think there's got to be a lot of research before we just go out and go ahead and, you know, pass this. But I also want to express how important it is to have Saskatchewan people views, how it's going to impact them.

You know I think about people who want to demonstrate in a peaceful way. Is this going to impact them in any way? We see some of the things happening in our province now, you know. When you look at some of the legislation that's been passed, essential services, it eliminates a lot of people. Maybe there's only another 25 per cent that could actually protest; well now it eliminates them. Who knows where this thing's going?

It's going to be interesting to see . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well that's good. I'm glad that you're listening to the people, First Nations and Métis people and Saskatchewan citizens. It's important. And as long as you guys are hearing their concerns and we're hearing them, we'll move in a way that we need to move, and we'll bring up the concerns and it's a nice debate. And we can talk about this, and I'm glad you guys are listening,

and I hope you hear what the people are saying.

I think it's very important, Mr. Speaker, that we are their voice and it's important. And I take that very serious. I'm here to do a job, and it's a learning process, but I'm going to do my best to represent the people that have asked me to be here. And I ask all of you to do the same — to hear the voices of our community members and to act very slowly on this Act and to make sure we know what's all in it before we go ahead and pass an Act like this.

There's a lot of concerns out there right now. Some people feel like troubled times, and they're not sure how this Act is going to impact them. So, Mr. Speaker, I think we make sure at the end of the day that we do all we can to make sure we are hearing people's concern because I'm telling you . . . You talk about a trespass Act. What exactly does that mean? You know, there's different ways to look at this thing. Is it hunting? Is it hunting? Is it going to eliminate people's opportunities to go hunting? Is that what this is about?

So there's a lot of different things. I'm just hoping that, Mr. Speaker, we can make sure that we cover a lot of the areas that maybe people feel like are not being covered. So I encourage us, and I think it's an obligation on all of us to make sure in this House that we have a serious look at this Bill. We make sure everybody who's going to be impacted has a chance to be heard, that we go out and deal with the communities, make sure that we have done that. And I think we have to do that. It's so important.

I don't know if fishing is going to be an issue, if the people that are fishing are going to be impacted by this. I'm not sure if it's going to happen. It may; it may not. I don't know. There may be situations where it'll interfere with people's hunting rights, fishing rights, but I'm not sure. It could. I'm not sure. Oh it says that, but who knows what's going to happen? Things change. How's it used?

We'll keep going away at it. And I'll keep going at it as long as I can to bring up the concerns of the people I represent, the First Nations, the Métis, Saskatchewan residents. Like I said, I'm hoping at the end of the day that I will hear that the First Nations and the Métis were consulted by the different departments to make sure, before this Act is passed, that they had an opportunity to talk to you.

So at this point I'm not sure what all it's going to impact the communities that I represent or all the communities in Saskatchewan. But I'm here to say I'm counting on the government, and before we pass this Act, that those opportunities are given to the community members.

So at this time, Mr. Speaker, I know there's other opportunities for my colleagues that would like to speak to this. Mr. Speaker, at this point I am ready to adjourn debate on this Bill No. 43.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Cumberland has adjourned debate on Bill No. 43, *The Trespass to Property Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

**Bill No. 71**

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Stewart that **Bill No. 71 — *The Innovation Saskatchewan Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Van Mulligen:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Bill that I am speaking to proposes to take a number of existing programs, entities, and also funding within government — various places within government and some from outside of government at this point at least — and to combine these into a single agency called Innovation Saskatchewan. In the main, these are activities that are now centred in government departments, activities that are currently controlled by government through government departments, but will all be combined in a separate Crown corporation.

The purpose of the agency in question is to facilitate the coordination and strategic direction of the government's support for research and development in science and technology with the objective of fostering development of new ideas, products, and processes to ensure the long-term sustainable growth of Saskatchewan's economy; also to provide advice and guidance — these are two objectives that are now being performed by government, advice and guidance — to the government respecting science and technology policy, to coordinate and support the establishment and maintenance of science research and development infrastructure in Saskatchewan, and as we shall see, we have significant infrastructure; provide recommendations and advice to the Government of Saskatchewan respecting research, development, demonstration and commercialization, and any other program or activities that might be called upon by the government, I guess, to provide.

The agency can accept any funds that are granted to the agency by the minister or appropriated by the legislature; can enter into agreements; operate any facility, program, or undertaking; accept contributions or receive money from any source; and incorporate as a body corporate. There are some checks and balances on this, of course. In terms of real property, any transaction exceeding \$250,000 needs the approval of the cabinet before the agency can acquire or dispose of real property.

The membership of the board of the agency will be the minister as defined — and currently the Minister for Enterprise and Innovation, I assume — and six other people. And then of course there's stipulation as to how long people will serve on the board and so on. So the board is not a board representative in any way of other interests in Saskatchewan as we might see with other agencies where it's desirable to stipulate who might provide the control or the direction for that agency.

But in this particular case, it's very clear that the board will be comprised of the minister and six other persons appointed by the government. And there's nothing to say who those six people might be or what particular strengths they have to bear or what interests, if any, in the area of science, research, and

development those people might in fact represent.

When I talked about existing interests, I would refer the public to agencies such as the Saskatchewan Research Council, the Canadian Light Source synchrotron in Saskatoon, the Petroleum Technology Research Centre in Regina, and the Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute, which I believe is located in Humboldt — PAMI, so-called.

And this new entity would be created, and its creation would coincide with the winding down of an agency called Investment Saskatchewan — an investment portfolio created by the previous NDP government in 2003. And I suppose they'll take over some of the assets and some of the liabilities of Investment Saskatchewan.

That's a brief rundown of the Bill as it's constructed. So in the main, it's to take existing departmental officials from within government who are responsible for science and technology and the innovation agenda — the activities of the Saskatchewan Research Council, the synchrotron, the Petroleum Technology Research Centre, and the Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute — and to combine these into one entity coupled with, I suppose, some assets and funding that will come its way from Investment Saskatchewan, and all to be controlled by a board exclusively appointed by the government — no qualifications on that board, none at all.

[20:30]

Now my impressions of this, first of all, is political. And I suppose that's a surprise that I would have a political reaction to something. But I think the name is a bit of a misnomer to call it Innovation Saskatchewan when all this agency is doing in terms of how it's structured.

And I might say the same for another agency constructed by the government, called Enterprise Saskatchewan. Both of these are agencies that follow on the footsteps of innovation that we saw some years ago, in that particular case engineered by Dwain Lingenfelter, who was then a minister for Economic Development and who set about to work with interests in the one case, interests in the areas of export in Saskatchewan, worked with the export industry and brought together the interests in the export industry and private industry with existing knowledge and resources and support within government to form something called the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership.

Similarly he worked with interests in the tourism industry to bring together the various interests in that industry, including people in the hotel business, people in the retail business, people in tourism promotion business, and brought those interests together with, again, the resources and the competencies within government and the funding within government, to bring those together into a separate agency called Tourism Saskatchewan.

And so if the government is calling this Innovation Saskatchewan and is patting themselves on the back for this, and as the case will be with Enterprise Saskatchewan, patting themselves on the back for being innovative in terms of their approach to delivery of services that meet the needs of

Saskatchewan people, again I would just point out then this is a government that is in fact following in the footsteps of Dwain Lingenfelter who pioneered this type of activity in the 1990s.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'll leave that. I might say though that here the government is following, not leading, and they may soon have an opportunity to again see the innovation brought by Mr. Lingenfelter and follow in his footsteps again, Mr. Speaker.

You know, speaking of innovation, I'm hard pressed to think of any example of a successful innovation by a right wing government when it comes to research and development, science and technology. And I wonder if anyone can provide me an example of such a successful innovation.

Well, Mr. Speaker, *Hansard* doesn't record silences. It doesn't show them. But let the record show that there was a pause and that there was a silence because there is no answer to that question, obviously because there hasn't been any real record of innovation by right wing governments in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I mentioned earlier these other two agencies that Mr. Lingenfelter played a crucial role in developing — that is to say, the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership and Tourism Saskatchewan. And I wouldn't want, I wouldn't want people to think that there's a direct comparison that can be made with the two agencies that have been — in the case of the Enterprise Saskatchewan, has been set up by the government and now Innovation Saskatchewan proposed to be set up by the government — that there is a direct correlation in terms of these agencies. There's a hugely important difference between the agencies he set up and these agencies and a difference that then plays out in a small area of something called accountability.

In the case of the Trade and Export Partnership and of Tourism Saskatchewan, in each case there was a question of marrying — how shall I say? — public resources and competencies and funds with those of private agencies and businesses in Saskatchewan so that you brought the two together. And there was a clear — how shall I say? — a clear group of people who had an interest and contributed to that and therefore had very specific interest and clear interest in terms of scrutiny as to how those organizations worked, and also accounting as to what funds were given to those agencies and how those were expended because there's more than government. It was their own funds that were being expended. So in those particular cases, we see a great interest of accountability on the part of those organizations as opposed to this particular organization where they're all appointed by government.

And as near as I can tell, most of the funding, if not all of the funding initially — maybe down the line that'll change — but it would appear that all of the funding for this agency will in fact come from the taxpayers of Saskatchewan. And herein lies one little change that the government won't talk about very much. Now we see these expenditures. And I talked about existing agencies and services and so on being thrown into this new mix. We have existing lines in the budget that we can look at, and we can ask questions about in the Legislative Assembly. We can ask questions about, in the Public Accounts Committee, about the activities of the agency on a line-by-line basis, so we get a greater — how shall I say? — reporting of what is taking place

in those activity areas. But now we take all of that, and we reduce it to one line in the budget and say here's a bunch of money for the minister for that particular agency. So what we have here is less of a clear view, less of a clear view as people of Saskatchewan as to what is taking place with respect to that particular agency.

So as opposed to these other agencies that I mentioned, STEP [Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership] and Tourism Saskatchewan, at least you have partners in those organizations who form a significant part of those boards, who have a real interest in scrutiny and performance and what takes place there. And I'm not so sure that that is particularly the case with this particular agency and Enterprise Saskatchewan which, as I said, has already been established.

But then questions of accountability might seem largely unimportant to the people. But you know, I've just got to draw back a little bit in history to say that whenever a right wing government in Saskatchewan proposes to alter matters of accountability and matters of scrutiny and reporting, that the public should be at least somewhat concerned, given their history in Saskatchewan during the 1980s in Saskatchewan under the then Devine government. And I know the members on the other side, but you know, we're a different party and different . . . but you know, some of the same characters, some of the same actors, and so on, Mr. Speaker.

So they do have a history, and it does give it some cause for concern, a couple of other things giving some cause for concern in that vein. Oh I hear they're kind of dragging their feet on freedom of information requests these days. Is that such an accountable thing that we really want to see, Mr. Speaker? We know that some members of the Public Accounts Committee, of which I am a member, of course have had questions for the Provincial Auditor, the likes of which we've not seen for some time.

But again I just make the point that we should always be concerned about accountability when it comes to members of that party and their antecedents, and their intrusion into governing structures in our province in a way to reduce accountability reporting and scrutiny, Mr. Speaker. That is a concern that I have and I think one that is shared by people, especially those that understand our history going back the last 20 years or so.

Mr. Speaker, I guess it's refreshing to see the government embracing innovation after so many years of being in opposition and just absolutely trashing the NDP at times for some of the innovations that we introduced in areas of research and development and science and technology — just absolutely trashing the NDP. You know, they couldn't say enough bad things about all the bad things that the NDP were doing when it comes to research and development.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we have a record of course. We did help to build the Canadian Light Source synchrotron in Saskatoon, one of the largest scientific infrastructure programs in Canadian history. We provided funding for the Petroleum Technology Research Centre and the International Centre for CO<sub>2</sub> Capture at the University of Regina — both agencies which figure largely in the public's plans and the plans of government and



corporations in terms of significant issues like carbon capture on our planet.

We provided funding to expand the Innovation Place research parks. The Innovation Place was initially put into place by the then Blakeney government back in the 1970s. And I dare say — and I stand to be corrected — but I dare say that if we looked at the legislative record for that period of time, I would not be surprised to find that that, too, that they had some critical comments to make about Innovation Place which is a facility or a development that figures very large in the eyes of Canadians in terms of a successful research and development park in this country.

So again we created an Innovation and Science Fund at Saskatchewan universities. We provided funding for the Saskatchewan Research Council. We fostered commercialization of new technologies such as the enhanced oil recovery project at Weyburn and Midale. So we as a New Democratic Party have, I think, a good solid record when it comes to research and development, science and technology, but I'm sure the public will remember all of the negative criticisms that that government or that particular party has had to make over the years.

Other aspects of innovation by the provincial government or the previous provincial government, the NDP, when it comes to at least the area of organizing technology so it can impact your society in a positive way, would be the efforts by the previous government to bring together SaskTel on the one hand, the needs of government departments to extend technology on the other hand, to bring those together in an effort to expand broadband service, so-called high-speed Internet service, to great sections of Saskatchewan and did that in a way and more rapidly than is certainly the case in many jurisdictions in the world.

I'm always reminded that some years ago I was in New York and was attending a meeting, I think in this case a luncheon with the Consul General in New York, Pamela Wallin. That has been referred to, I think, in debate. I'm not sure but . . . And we talked about Saskatchewan. I said that Saskatchewan at the end of that year, and this is a few years ago now, would have an 86 per cent reach of population being able to access high-speed Internet and that was in a largely rural jurisdiction — rural at least compared to New York and many places in the world.

And one federal official was incredulous that we would have an 86 per cent reach because he pointed out that there were suburbs of New York that had not yet achieved high-speed Internet service, but that we were able to provide that in Saskatchewan. And that was and reflected an ability by government to organize itself in a way to take interest within government to speed up the development in an area of technology for the benefit of all the people of Saskatchewan. And in this particular case too, I think, set Saskatchewan apart from all of the rest of the world.

Now I think some can make an argument that there are jurisdictions in the world that have a slightly higher reach of high-speed Internet, but those would be city states like Singapore. But in terms of comparable jurisdictions, large rural areas and so on, nothing in the world compared to

Saskatchewan when it came to the reach of broadband and high-speed services. And that was achieved, achieved as a result in innovation in organizing and administration of research and technology. And that's part of the NDP record, Mr. Speaker. And I believe that if you check the *Hansard*, there's probably some sour criticisms from the Saskatchewan Party at that point too about the government efforts and how fast they were doing things and not fast enough and so on.

[20:45]

As a person who was interested in Saskatchewan politics before I was elected to this Chamber, there's a particular issue that stood out for me in public debate in Saskatchewan as a matter of public discourse and not something that . . . Well I think again it reflected innovation by a NDP government — in that case it was the Blakeney government — and nothing but scathing criticism from the right wing at that time.

Now I know that they're going to say, we're Saskatchewan Party; we weren't around. But I tell you, Mr. Speaker, there are members there, at one time they were part of the Conservative PCs [Progressive Conservative] and then they joined the Haverstock Liberals, then they joined the Saskatchewan Party. So it's hard to define them. We know that there's a NDP in Saskatchewan and we know that there is an anybody-but-the-NDP and those are people that are part of the anybody-but-the-NDP.

Well the anybody-but-the-NDP in the 1970s was just hugely, scathingly critical of the NDP government of Allan Blakeney for daring, for daring to invest public funds and then extending fibre optic cables throughout Saskatchewan, for the government to become involved in laying down that kind of high-tech infrastructure in Saskatchewan.

I think, review the record. They'll all be lambasting the NDP for wasting money on that, not knowing where they're going. No end of scathing criticism of the government of the day for daring to venture and to provide leadership in an area of innovation, in the area of research and development, science and technology. Nothing but criticism from those people on that side of the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

Well the NDP persevered, notwithstanding criticism from the then anybody-but-the-NDP opposition, persevered to lay down fibre optics which is an important part of the infrastructure that has supported the expansion of high-speed Internet throughout Saskatchewan because that was done years ago. And all I can say it's a good thing that the NDP didn't listen to the right wing at that point because they had absolutely zip ideas when it came to innovation.

So that's a long ways of getting around back to my point: it's refreshing to see a right wing government, the Saskatchewan Party government embracing innovation after so many years of just trashing the NDP, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I have some other concerns with this Bill. I'm concerned about a shift in control over what I would call significant public funds. As I mentioned at the outset, part of this Bill is proposed to facilitate the transfer of assets from an agency called Investment Saskatchewan to this new

organization.

Investment Saskatchewan was set up to limit — limit — the amount of government or political influence when it came to investment decisions, and especially in significant areas such as technology and so on. So here's an area where the NDP worked for a number of years to try to limit, limit the amount of political influence that we would see in these kinds of investment decisions; and now here's a Sask Party government that says, well we might have criticized that while we were in opposition, but we really don't believe that.

And in fact what we're doing with this Bill is that we are taking back political control, and I would say probably, in the future, political interference in how investment decisions are made with significant large sums of public dollars, Mr. Speaker.

And that is a source of concern that I have and one of the sources of concern that is also shared by the media in Saskatchewan who took the Premier to task for, in opposition, again saying that: oh no, we don't want any kind of political interference; we're going to have hands off and all of that. But one of its first acts is in fact to create an agency where they've admitted that there's potential for — not only potential for, but where there will be — political influence.

So, you know, that is again one of these flip-flops that the Saskatchewan Party is known for, and one of the reasons that a lot of people say, you can't trust what they say, you know. That's what people are beginning to say because again it's not, as we're finding out, uncommon, uncommon to find instances of where this particular party . . . and I can't think of them off the top, but I'm sure there's lots of examples of where they said things in opposition but, now as a government, they propose to do it differently.

I know that in the area of finances that I'm familiar with, that they said, oh, we won't have a fiscalization reserve or Fiscal Stabilization Fund. And then the first thing they did after getting elected, they said, oh, you know, we are going to have one now after all. But that's not what you said when you were trying to get elected. Then it fitted your purposes or suited your purposes to say something else; but once you get into government, the reality sinks in and you do things differently.

So again that's another example of a massive flip-flop between what they said in opposition and the way that they're now acting as a government, Mr. Speaker. And that's the kind of thing that catches up with you after a while, you know, that you can't continue to go on and have people believe in something and then dash those beliefs and those hopes by performing in a completely different manner.

So that again is something that's troubling, that here we have the development of something that they clearly disavowed, disavowed when they were in opposition, but now that they're in government they're saying, we're going to go ahead with that because now we control the levers of power. Now we control the money. Now we want to have that control, that ability to make political decisions and politically influence major investment decisions in Saskatchewan. That's what this is all about.

And again, Mr. Speaker, given the history in Saskatchewan, given their history in their antecedents in the Progressive Conservative administration in this province, we should all be very, very worried by a government, a right wing government that proposes to take this kind of control over a major investment decision — as opposed to following this trend of eliminating, reducing the amount of political interference that we see in these kinds of investments, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have many concerns about this Bill. Applaud the notion that we would have an innovation agency, but again had many concerns about what the government's real agenda is here. Real concerns about issues of accountability. And as I indicated, real concerns about issues of political influence and what that will cost the people of Saskatchewan at the end of the day. Because again, in some way, we are still paying for many of the bad decisions that were made by those members when they previously served in government in the . . . [inaudible] . . . Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, I don't have much more to say on this particular Bill. I think it's a Bill that will see a great deal of scrutiny. I think there will be a great deal of interest in this Bill. Certainly we'll continue to consult with the people of Saskatchewan that would have an interest and might be affected by this to get their reaction to what is in the Bill. I think other colleagues in this Legislative Assembly will want to express their concerns and, Mr. Speaker, having said that, at this point I move to adjourn debate.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Regina Douglas Park has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 71, *The Innovation Saskatchewan Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

#### Bill No. 45

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to first of all begin my comments by saying hello to my two grandchildren that are in Saskatoon watching the proceedings tonight. I told them I had a little surprise for them so they turned off Treehouse, I hope, and put on their version of Treehouse.

So I want to say hello to both Brodey and to Meika, who are watching for the first time I think in their history, watching their papa on TV talking about some of the issues facing the banking sector in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I looked at the Act to amend *The Credit Union Act*, as presented by the Saskatchewan Party. And what I tell a lot of folks out there is you've got to be certainly aware of

what's happening with some of the debate and some of the Bills that are proceeding forward in this House, and to also pay a lot of scrutiny to what the Saskatchewan Party is up to.

Some of the amendments, albeit minor in detail — and certainly I think these amendments are minor in their intent — we always have to as an opposition make sure that these folks aren't up to anything greater or grander according to their political philosophies.

So one of the things we want to point out is that anything that the credit union wants to proceed with . . . In general terms, we are very proud of the movement that the credit union has certainly undertaken in Saskatchewan. And they've also pointed out on numerous occasions the success of the credit union movement.

And that's the kind of skill, expertise, and dynamic vision that many people in Saskatchewan have. We embrace the co-operative effort, we've embraced the notion of helping each other out.

And certainly the one organization that does that in the banking perspective, Mr. Speaker, is of course the credit union system in Saskatchewan. We're very proud to have the credit union system around in the province for a number of years. And some of the changes that are being presented today, as I mentioned at the outset, that they may be minor in nature — they may be certainly not really mind-blowing in terms of their intent — but we want to make sure that we have ample opportunity to look at the Bill and to consult with people to make sure that there isn't any kind of negative effect. And that's certainly what a political opposition party does.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to again point out that the intent is to shift a bit of the board responsibilities and the board appointments somewhat from a five-member board to a seven-member board, if my notes are correct. And of that, there's going to be three independent people as part of the credit union movement as well as two from Credit Union Central and two from the province, according to my calculations here.

And so in general terms, having more people participate in the credit union movement gives us a bit more confidence as we look at what's across the way here, at the selection that they would have. So having some independent parties such as the proud credit union movement, having five members appointed from Credit Union Central and their affiliates, and only having two appointed from those guys, well in general terms we kind of think that's a good idea, Mr. Speaker, because the less of them around, the better Saskatchewan is in the long term.

Mr. Speaker, as we look at the Act itself, we want to make sure that we learn from our neighbours to the south. The American economy of course, as we all know, is in significant troubles. And I think one of the things that somebody mentioned, in fact, that they're \$1 trillion in debt. And that's just a certainly insurmountable debt that many people look at and say, wow, you know, how much is that? And it's quite a significant amount.

And I think one of the analogies I heard on TV last night is if you piled all the dollar bills on the \$1 trillion budget, it'd get

you a quarter way to the moon. So I don't know why you'd want to go a quarter of the way to the moon, but that's kind of what \$1 trillion represents in terms of distance. So it gives you a sense of just exactly how much money that the American people are facing in terms of their debt.

And they can certainly attribute some of that debt and some of the problems and the stumbling economy to how the banking system I think works in the States. And we in Canada, and certainly in Saskatchewan, through some of the efforts of the credit union folks and *The Credit Union Act* itself and the credit union movement itself, that we have really have a stronger position that banks and the credit union have taken in Saskatchewan, in terms of monitoring how loans are given and so on and so forth.

And that's one of the reasons why, Mr. Speaker, that any type, any hint of deregulation in general that that party might want to propose or even suggest, that we want to make sure there's no hint of that. And that's one of the reasons why we're looking at the Bill very carefully.

[21:00]

And more importantly is, we're consulting with people in the know. Because obviously we, as any good party would do is you consult with people to get advice and direction and make sure that what you intend to do is the intended action. Because many times if we don't consult, you can have all the good intentions in the world, and sometimes it just doesn't work out to what you want to have occur.

So in that sense, I think it's important for us to continue monitoring what is being done to *The Credit Union Act* — not to stifle the growth of the credit union; nor to question the integrity of the credit union executives, people who work at Credit Union Central or the affiliates — but really, to really watch that all their good work and all their good intentions and all their history and all the progress that they've made thus far, and all the progress that they could make as a result of this minor change, that it's not compromised by a hidden agenda from that party opposite when it comes to deregulation. Because we really don't need that kind of advice from that particular party, Mr. Speaker.

I think what's important is people ought to know is that as you embark on some of these legislative Acts and some of these Bills that they want to present, is you can't, for the life of me . . . I always tell people that you've got to be very careful when you get into bed with a party that doesn't really have your best interest. You've got to be very careful. You've got to monitor things. You have to really manage this issue right from stump to dump, as the phrase goes, to make sure that what you want is actually what is done and it's not used for a larger hidden political purpose such as deregulation of the banks.

And some of the people I talk to, I always mention to them, if you look at what they are trying to do — the credit union movement itself — it's honourable, it's well-intentioned, and it's probably going to be very effective because they have a proven track record and they know their business quite well.

But when you ask those guys to be part of a solution, be very,

very careful because what you might be doing is ushering in a new era under their hidden agenda. And it might be deregulation of the banking industry. And we all know that possibility is there. Why? Because of their recent history.

It's a very short history I might add, but it's recent because, Mr. Speaker, when we left office and they assumed office, the Roughriders won the Grey Cup. Well they've lost the Grey Cup. They had Kerry Joseph. Well they lost Kerry Joseph. And most recently, they lost a couple key marquee players. And you know, that's a credit to them because when we were in government, you used to always blame us when the Roughriders lost. And we say to them, well they lost under your watch. Certainly it wasn't under our watch.

Secondly, we had a booming economy, Mr. Speaker. And somehow they messed that up as well. So that's one of the things that people out there are saying, is that, geez, you guys inherited a booming economy. The Roughriders won the cup. So, so far they've lost the cup. They've lost marquee players. And now they're starting to lose jobs in Saskatchewan.

And the message was, we're going to trust you guys for one term to do one simple thing. And you can't do it. And the problem is, the problem is, Mr. Speaker, is a lot of people are watching. And what happens is, if you take good intentions and you turn them on, and you try and achieve your own right wing agenda, then a lot more people are going to be worried about what you do.

So you look at the Roughriders losing the cup. You look at the booming economy that's starting to drop. And you look at the billions in the bank that was left to that particular government by this former government, Mr. Speaker. And what they've done is if they keep this up, they'll make millionaires out of us. And certainly from our perspective, when I say millionaires, is we are now considered billionaires. And if you want to listen to those guys' advice, then obviously we're going backwards.

So you look at all these factors. They assumed a winning Grey Cup team. They assumed a booming economy. They assumed billions in the bank. And, Mr. Speaker, they ran against a tough government that had four terms. And the people decided to give this great government a break. And we'll be back within two and a half years.

And I can point out in the meantime, whether it's a simple Bill such as this, Mr. Speaker, please don't mess things up. Because when we come back, when we come back we want to be able to have a brand new start as the government and a brand new start as a party, and finally not have the fifteen and a half billion dollar debt hanging over our heads so that we can become very innovative and we can become very dynamic and build this province as we originally thought it should be built.

But, Mr. Speaker, they know across the way, if you're talking about simple Bills like this, please don't deregulate the banking industry or don't try and do harm to the Credit Union Central. Please ensure that the people that know what they're doing — namely the credit union people — they are the ones, they are the ones that have done a significant amount of great work for our province. So respect their institution, respect their input, respect their participation, and don't try and sneak in your

hidden agenda in the dark of night to try and deregulate the banking industry that many of your right wing counterparts support.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And one of the reasons why the opposition is really scrutinizing what these guys are doing and talking about the Saskatchewan Party, even on simple Bills, is because we know there are a number of areas that are hidden. They're hidden agendas.

And if you look at some of the most recent issues associated with some of their activity, we have seen no discussion on their nuclear partner, Bruce Power — no discussion. We've had a lot of issues in terms of what they plan to do with the banking industry. As the Bill indicates, they're minor changes, Mr. Speaker, minor changes. But is their plan to deregulate the banking industry? Well we ought to have those questions.

And some people might be saying we're crying wolf, but there's been no discussion on the economic cloud on the horizon of Saskatchewan. We'll just try and do what we can and spend the money you guys left us, and hopefully, Mr. Speaker, that come four years from now the people of Saskatchewan will realize the real agenda that this government so far has shown, nothing but incompetence. They have shown nothing in terms of commitment to the real issues of Saskatchewan. They have shown no discipline, no leadership, and no vision, Mr. Speaker.

And that's why I say on some of the issues affecting us, like these minor Bills, that this opposition will keep a close watch on what they do, Mr. Speaker. And they'll keep in close contact with the parties that are being affected, and they'll keep close contact with the institution, with the credit unions that are going to be impacted.

And we warn them, give us the necessary information as an opposition. We will support your initiative, and we'll make sure that that party opposite doesn't take your good intentions, your good word, your history, and your potential for our province, and try and somehow devise a strategy to move their hidden agenda along your life raft of good intentions. That's exactly what is happening, Mr. Speaker.

I think, certainly from our perspective, we're going to watch carefully what they propose in their upcoming budget as how it affects the credit union. We're going to watch every Bill that comes through this Assembly. We're going to debate every Bill. We're going to look and scrutinize every line department that they have in their respective departments to ensure that areas are not forgotten, that issues are not ignored, and that intentions are really fully respected by the various institutions that are reaching out to these guys.

And there's still a lot of trust issues, Mr. Speaker. There's a lot of trust issues. So the message we have as an opposition is whether it's a minor consequential amendment to *The Credit Union Act*, or the nuclear debate that they refuse to have, that

this opposition will not rest in terms of keeping that government accountable on many, many fronts, Mr. Speaker. And we intend to keep that promise.

I think it's important to note as well that the credit union movement itself certainly has gone where no others have gone. We see them in our communities. We see their presence in many of our business dealings in the business community. The consumers, the individual consumers, they've certainly have all been impacted on a positive note by the credit union movement.

And the credit union movement has flourished as a result of the respect they afford people and the respect that people afford them. And they have added to the Saskatchewan community; they have added to the Saskatchewan people. And that's really important to note because some of the examples I would use in terms of the credit union movement.

And that's why we have confidence in the fact that they're adding more members to this governance structure, is that in order to ensure that they know that we as an opposition — an NDP opposition — that we mean them no harm. We mean them a lot of respect, and we want to ensure that their intentions are exactly what is accomplished by this particular Bill.

You should note that the communities of Ile-a-la-Crosse and Beauval in my constituency, Mr. Speaker, got notices last week that the Bank of Montreal, who had small offices there, are intending to shut down those two branches, those two small branches. And they're really just an office with the ability to open accounts and to transfer money back and forth.

And the Bank of Montreal served notice last week that the Bank of Montreal was permanently closing down these two sites. And the official reason was given that there was no . . . potential for little or no growth. And that really set the communities back. Both Ile-a-la-Crosse and Beauval of course are unhappy to lose their banking services, but we're undeterred. We know that the credit union system is nearby in Buffalo Narrows; we hope that discussions and negotiations with the credit union can result in a branch being opened up in Ile-a-la-Crosse and Beauval as well.

And that's the kind of commitment that we ought to have, Mr. Speaker. And this is where it begins to sink into people's minds and to people's psyches that perhaps the credit union system is a solid system because they, I don't think, will certainly leave the community in the instance that the Bank of Montreal did. And we're very, very disappointed with their decision.

And I think one of the things we want to point out is that if the credit union centre needs an issue to look at and needs expansion plans and looking at expansion plans, then many northern communities look to them for leadership. And I would encourage the folks at Credit Union Central to continue thinking of that possibility because the northern people in our communities would certainly appreciate that kind of banking leadership.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, it is important that people know that the banking industries per se in Saskatchewan, in general terms, really have higher standards, certainly, I think, have good codes of conduct and ethics overall as a Canadian

banking system. And they're certainly a lot tougher, and they're certainly more savvy in my opinion as compared to their southern counterparts in the States.

So I think one of the reasons that they have flourished in this concept is that they know how to do banking and that they're not allowing a whole bunch of fly-by-night banking institutions to flood the market under a deregulation process and begin to debase some of their hard work and to really begin to chip away at what we think is a solid financial foundation in Canada. And a solid part of that foundation of course is the credit union movement in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I would point out again is that as a result of the transition, we're pleased to see more intelligence being afforded to the process of this governing committee by increasing the amount of the people from the credit union central movement — I think it's increasing from three to five. And it's also expanding to members of the Credit Union Central, which are various communities that have branches. And various branches, they're allowed to appoint three independent officers of the credit union movement, I believe. So that is also very much appreciated and applauded. And of course the Credit Union Central themselves appointing two and the government appointing two as well.

So overall the Bill itself is well-intentioned in terms of the credit union requests. They probably have a bit of confidence as a result of this Bill and, you know, we certainly want to see that. And we want to point out that it is important that we respect what was their intention to begin with and not try and do a quick rope-a-dope here and sneak the deregulation process under their noses.

So I would say, Mr. Speaker, that I thank you for the time. And I certainly want to encourage the credit union system to look at the northern communities that are currently being abandoned by the Bank of Montreal. I would encourage them to continue being very vigilant when it comes to dealing with this particular party to make sure that they don't sneak something under their agenda, under your intention. And I'd also point out that, in general, that the respect and the relationship that they have with the Saskatchewan people is very much appreciated and certainly very much something that we want to build on and something that we want to protect.

So overall I would want to point out that those are my thoughts on this particular debate and on this particular Bill, and we look forward to hearing more of this Bill as we progress in this session. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

[21:15]

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Did you adjourn debate?

**Mr. Belanger:** — Yes, I did.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Athabasca has adjourned 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 Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

**Bill No. 9**

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Gantefer 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 Saskatoon Nutana.

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Tonight we are debating the amendment to *The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Act* or Bill 9. As members will know, that this was a Bill that was introduced last spring by the government. It was pulled by the government after the member from Dewdney spoke in this Assembly, and then lo and behold, this Bill reappears in the fall sitting of the legislature.

This Bill is simply a wrong-headed Bill. The significant element in this Bill, I believe, is bad public policy, and I think it's financially irresponsible. The point that I'm referring to is an amendment to the legislation that would allow people who have superannuated and are now collecting a public pension to not only collect their public pension but also re-enter the public service at a full salary, Mr. Speaker. This is called double-dipping and, Mr. Speaker, it is wrong, wrong, wrong.

Mr. Speaker, let's give you an example. You're a deputy minister in the province of Saskatchewan. You've worked for 35 years. You're eligible under the old pension plan for 70 per cent of your best five years. You're earning \$200,000 a year. You've earned that, in excess of \$200,000 a year, for the past five years. You'd be entitled to a pension under the defined benefit plan of \$140,000 per annum. Now, Mr. Speaker, this legislation allows you to collect your pension and to re-enter the public service and continue to collect a salary. So technically we could have someone collecting a pension of \$140,000 a year plus continuing their duties as a deputy minister at \$200,000 a year, so in essence they would be receiving \$340,000 from the public purse. Mr. Speaker, this is wrong public policy, particularly when we're trying to encourage people to enter the public service. We're trying to encourage people to move up in the public service, to take over new positions, and this does little, Mr. Speaker, to continue that kind of movement by people in the public service.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there will be people that will argue that a pension really is a deferred income. And that's true. You contribute. You work in the public service. You contribute into your pension plan. Your employer, the government, contributes into the pension plan. And at the end of the day you're entitled to a income or a pension. With the changes that the government is proposing, what they're basically doing is saying that you can retire and start working for the government the next day in your old job and not only receive your pension, which is deferred income, but you can also continue to receive a salary from the people of the province.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that this amendment in particular, is very problematic, and we also believe it's financially irresponsible. Now some members will argue that there will be

few people that will be interested in returning to the public service after they retire. Well we do know that when we changed the legislation that allowed people to work beyond the age of 65, that there are what we consider people who are healthy and productive and they're well past the age of 65. They're working into their 70s. And we have no difficulty with that, Mr. Speaker. What we have difficulty with is someone who continues to collect a pension and then works in the public service. What we think really is that this double-dipping provides an incentive for individuals at the end of their careers to remain in a position, which really does slow the rise of younger individuals in the organization. We don't think that this is something that we want to encourage.

In addition I think that this piece of legislation has financial ramifications for the taxpayers of this province and deserves very close scrutiny. And so when we go before the committee, we will be asking what this means in terms of the provinces' finances.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation has ramifications. I think those ramifications aren't immediately apparent on first blush, but I think in the long term the ramifications are significant. For all of these reasons we think that it's important that this Bill go through a wide consultation and careful consideration before any final decision is made by this Legislative Assembly. We think it's wrong public policy, it's bad public policy, and we think in the long term it's financially irresponsible.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I'd move adjournment of the debate.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm very pleased tonight to enter into debate on Bill No. 49, *The Ambulance Amendment Act*.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, many may look at this legislation as simply housekeeping, but it's significant legislation, Mr. Speaker, and gives us the opportunity to acknowledge those who work in the emergency medical field in our province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This Act removes references to what were known formerly as ambulance districts and makes new reference to health regions, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That in itself is more or less housekeeping in nature. It brings the references up to the terminology used today in our health care system.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it also removes the provisions that regulate emergency medical technicians and paramedics in the province of Saskatchewan, and that was done as the result of legislation, professional legislation that was brought forward. And now they are a self-regulating organization and industry, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in which the professionals regulate themselves in the same manner that nurses do, the same manner that engineers do, and other professionals in our province, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And this gives us an opportunity to take some time to talk about and honour in some ways and identify for the public the great work that those professionals do within the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Deputy Speaker, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, those individuals provide services to our communities throughout the province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And it's their professional organization that now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, ensures that those services are delivered in the appropriate manner. It's no longer done by the government. We now recognize their professional association and let them self-regulate their industry.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, those professionals in our province provide services from small towns in the Southwest to the villages of the North to our major urban areas of Regina and Saskatoon. Mr. Deputy Speaker, they do it each and every day very professionally. They care for people; they provide quality medical services, emergency services to people. And they ensure, they ensure that our citizens have the best opportunity to that emergency service in the shortest interval, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the most opportune way in each of our communities.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that isn't always easy to do because Saskatchewan is a province that has vast territory spread out with great distances sometimes between communities, particularly in the North. But these individuals work throughout our communities in both the South and North providing service on a daily basis, a very important service to the people of our province, and they do so with a great deal of professionalism, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So recognizing, as was done through professional legislation, that they could be and should be a self-regulatory profession, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was important. And this legislation reflects those changes by in fact removing the regulatory control that was once in this legislation, from the Act, because it's now covered off in their own professional legislation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, those professionals provide services in sometimes very trying and dangerous situations, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They provide life-saving services sometimes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, having to crawl into a badly damaged vehicle, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and apply life-saving techniques, Mr. Deputy Speaker, until that individual can be extricated from that vehicle and taken to hospital. They crawl into very tight and very difficult spaces sometimes. They have to perform, under very difficult situations, emergency medical procedures, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And those make a difference to the people of the province of Saskatchewan. It saves lives, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and these people do this on a daily basis.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, prior to my being elected to the

legislature, one of the things that I did on a part-time basis is I worked for what was known as RAMRAD then, the Regina Area Municipal Road Ambulance District. I worked with these gentlemen that are doing this job. I was trained and worked for many years part-time for the Regina ambulance service.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know first-hand how difficult this work is. You see very tragic situations. You have to work under very difficult situations, and you have to perform professionally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in a manner that is often difficult to do because you will see some horrific sights. You will have to deal with very serious trauma, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and you may have to make very difficult decisions if you're some distance from a hospital facility.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, these people do this. And they do it under those very difficult circumstances, and they do it very professionally every day. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week these professionals across our province deliver this service.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, they do it from a variety of delivery models as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We have in this province a range from municipal-run or shall I say health-district-run ambulance services — run by the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region would be a good example — to private operators who operate in both large districts, the Saskatoon Health District, but also the very small districts, to volunteers, volunteers who operate in other areas of the province where there is a distance between the closest paid ambulance service, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And those individuals provide that service, that quality service throughout the province, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And because of their self-regulating professional legislation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it doesn't matter if it's in a private organization, Mr. Speaker, a public organization or, for that matter, volunteers — they're trained to the same standards. They deliver the same service, and they care in the same way about the quality and delivery of that service, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And that's an asset to our province. It's an asset to the people of this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and at this time I think when we're talking about this legislation, it gives me an opportunity to talk about just how good that service is and how caring the people are who are delivering that service, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I've had the opportunity to know many, both in the public and private delivery services in the province and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they're quality people. They care about what they're doing. They deliver that service with compassion every single day. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they do that, as I indicated earlier, under very difficult and trying circumstances sometimes.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they do it and they've done it for a number of years in the province of Saskatchewan. They will continue to do it. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, now today they are paid far more than they were a number of years ago. Just 10 years ago, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this profession in many locations paid hardly more than minimum wage, but yet dedicated individuals for that low of salary did this each and every day throughout our province, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with the recognition and advanced education and skills that individuals have, it's a much better paying profession, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Still not what they're worth, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because these are the people who provide for us life-saving services around the province. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we all owe them a debt of gratitude. We all should understand that these people go above and beyond each day.

[21:30]

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I indicated before, for several years I worked with these individuals on a part-time basis. I worked at least once a week for many years. I enjoyed it greatly. There's nothing more satisfying than being able to help somebody who truly needs your help and to make a difference in whether somebody in fact lives or dies, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to make a difference for people, for families, to children.

There is nothing more uplifting than being helpful to others. Mr. Deputy Speaker, these people get to experience that every day, but they do it under very difficult and trying circumstances in many cases. And I think this gives us an opportunity to recognize that, to show that we care and we understand, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we know the hard work, the hard work that they put forward on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, sometimes the most difficult type of job is one that you have to wait for something to happen. Because you're always ready to go, but you're sitting there waiting. And that waiting, that waiting becomes frustrating, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And you have to be ready to go on a moment's notice because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that first hour in a trauma situation determines whether a person lives or dies. Every one of those individuals knows that. So they need to be able to respond in the shortest possible period of time in order to reach that emergency, to reach that situation in the very quickest possible time.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, these are jobs that, when you arrive at the scene, you often have very difficult decisions to be made. You have to quickly analyze the situation and look for potential hazards and dangers before you begin treating individuals, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And there are times, yes, there are times when you can do your very best and you still will not, Mr. Deputy Speaker, be successful. And they have to deal with that. And you may have two or three or four occurrences in a 24-hour period or a 12-hour period, if you're working, where you do your very best and you still, you still cannot save everyone. And they have to live with that. They have to deal with that. They have to learn to deal with that very difficult situation.

And that may be a young child or it may be somebody's friend or it may be somebody they know. And it's a very difficult job. And under very difficult circumstances these professionals continue to serve the province of Saskatchewan with dedication, with compassion, and with the expertise and professionalism that we would expect from them, and they've done this for many years in some cases.

It's a job that because of the nature you're as likely to be called

out at 2 o'clock in the morning as you are at 10 o'clock in the morning. So you have to be ready all the time. You have to be prepared to go on a moment's notice. You have to travel in sometimes very difficult and treacherous situations to reach an accident. But regardless what the circumstances are, you have to do it. You have to go. You have to be there for others. And you have to believe, and you have to believe, that it's important. It's not something you do for the money. It's not something you do for the glory. You do it because you believe that it needs to be done — that people need help, they deserve help. And, Mr. Speaker, they're dedicated professionals.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I indicated earlier, it doesn't matter whether they're in the public sector or employed by health district or in the private sector, for that matter. In a volunteer ambulance service, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you'll see the same level of care, the same level of professionalism, and the same desire to help others. And that desire to help others, it drives other medical professionals as well — nurses, doctors. They do it because they believe in it, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now doctors and nurses often get to do it in a nicer and more comfortable environment in the hospital, but EMTs [emergency medical technician] and paramedics may have to perform CPR [cardiopulmonary resuscitation] in a vehicle, a partially crushed vehicle, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where they can't remove the individual. They may have to deal with very difficult problems under very difficult circumstances. It's not in a hospital — emergencies occur all over. There are times that you have to extricate people from tanker containers, all different types of potential problems, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And they do it. And they do it every day. And they do it professionally. They do it proudly. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they do it in a way that truly — and I mean this in all sincerity — truly make others in our province honour them. They do it in a manner that few others can do.

And there are people who, Mr. Deputy Speaker, enter professions knowing what the requirements are, who also play roles like that. We see that with police officers and firefighters and others. But it takes special people to do those types of jobs, knowing that you're going into a dangerous situation potentially any time, and to have that ability to deal with those situations at the drop of a hat, Mr. Speaker, and deal with them. It takes special people. And I think it's important that we recognize the special abilities of people who do that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I think it's important that we recognize and show support for these people, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And it think it's very important in opportunities like this we talk about it. Because as we talk about it, it shows that we care. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we, the leaders of our province, the legislators of our province, need to show that we care about what others do, we care about the service that these individuals deliver within our province. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's our opportunity to thank them in the small way that we can.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, many of us may never have the opportunity to need emergency medical intervention from EMTs or paramedics employed either in the private or public sector in our province or, for that matter, volunteer service. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if we do need, rest assured that in Saskatchewan you will see quality professional service



delivered by caring, compassionate emergency medical technicians and paramedics, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're seeing an advancement of the quality of emergency medical delivery in our province. Just a few short years ago, you saw a huge, huge increase in the number of paramedics that are employed within the province of Saskatchewan. That occurred at a time when those paramedics still were not being paid well. They were being paid at about 10 or \$11 an hour, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But people entered that profession because they believed in it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And they did it because they care about others.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, they lobbied to see their salaries increased, and I'm proud to say today that they are paid considerably better today than they were a number of years ago. They're recognized. The professionalism of their service is recognized by the people of the province of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, we appreciate it. We truly do appreciate the service that they provide for us.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Bill removes the reference of control of their conduct from *The Ambulance Act*, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we support that. We support it for a number of reasons but most importantly because it's now a profession that has reached its level of expertise and maturity in a way that we now have — they have the ability to be a self-regulating profession. Mr. Deputy Speaker, today there are hundreds of EMTs and paramedics in the province of Saskatchewan who provide those services.

Now a decade ago, 15 years ago, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there was probably half that number. And what that reflects is the importance that we have put in providing quality emergency medical care throughout our province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We, as a society and as a province, have taken steps to ensure that we're providing better quality care and intervention, and emergency medical personnel across this province have stepped up to the plate to ensure that we are delivering that better quality emergency care in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's not possible to deliver the exact same level of service in every community of Saskatchewan because of our geographic differences, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But we endeavour and those professionals endeavour, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to provide the best possible care that they can.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it doesn't matter if you are in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; Regina, Saskatchewan; or Climax, Saskatchewan, those professionals try to deliver the very best possible care every single day. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they do deliver the very best possible care every single day.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this opportunity to recognize them is extremely important. As I have indicated earlier, we don't get many opportunities to publicly recognize, as members of the legislature, those who are providing these quality services in our communities. Maybe other members of the legislature . . . and it wouldn't surprise me at all if members of this legislature knew individuals who work and provide these services across the province because they're your neighbours. They're our neighbours. They're our friends and relatives, Mr. Deputy

Speaker. And we may even know some of the private operators. I have the opportunity to know many of the private operators personally. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I consider some of them friends.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, some of the pioneers of the emergency medical industry and the emergency medical care in our province are leaders in our country. They develop procedures and help advance our emergency medical services here in Saskatchewan. And many of them — there was a time in this province where all of the ambulance services were private — many may be able to think back to a time when the ambulance service in Regina was called Olson's Ambulance and was run by the Olson family. And I can remember those days because I worked for a period of time for the Olson family as well when it was Olson's Ambulance. And I can remember when every single ambulance service in this province was privately owned.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the advancements that have been made through these pioneers of our service here in Saskatchewan has resulted in the changes that we have and has resulted in the changes that we see in this legislation today. It has resulted in the now self-regulating professional industry. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that this Bill helps to finally acknowledge the great work that these emergency medical personnel do in our province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I think that it's a step in the right direction.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to take a couple of minutes to talk about some of the other changes that are in this Bill. Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are changes in this Bill that . . . most of the changes are simply reference of changes to bring the legislation up to date. As I indicated earlier, that the references were to ambulance districts before, and now we're talking about, with the amalgamation and the formation of health districts, Mr. Deputy Speaker, those ambulance services are now run by the individual health districts. Now when I say run, it may be that there's an individual or private operator who provides the actual service, but it's the health district that determines what level of service is needed, that funds it through the health district, and in fact approves the individual plans, whether it's run directly by the health district or through a series of private operators providing . . .

I think it should be emphasized that in Saskatchewan we have, in two of our three largest cities, the ambulance services run by a family — the Dutchak family — who have been a long-time ambulance service delivery family in the province of Saskatchewan. I don't know if they were the first, but I can tell you they are very, very strong proponents of high-quality service delivery in Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they have made a significant difference to the quality of ambulance service in the province of Saskatchewan over many, many years.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the transformation from ambulance districts to health districts has been an opportunity to advance the quality of ambulance service delivery in Saskatchewan. It's increased the ability to coordinate those services in a better way across the province, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But there are a few things that this Bill doesn't do that I think it

should do, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As an example, it's up to the health districts to set the ambulance fee rates in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and they don't have to be the same, so that the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region could have one fee rate schedule and the Saskatoon Health Region could have another fee rate schedule, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And what would be most appropriate is if we had a universal fee, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for ambulance service delivery in the province of Saskatchewan so that all the citizens of this province were treated equitably and equally as far as the cost of delivering a service. Because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a fee attached to utilization of an ambulance service unless it's ordered by the health district — as an example, a transfer between hospitals — and it's often paid by the district. But even that is determined, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by the health region and may not be consistent across the province.

[21:45]

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Bill, although it may seem quite insignificant and primarily housekeeping, it's a very important piece of legislation. I hope that the Health minister of the province of Saskatchewan realizes how important emergency medical personnel are to the overall health care delivery in our province.

I hope that the Health minister will continue to support the advancement of our emergency medical services, continue to promote increased and advanced education and skilled training and development of our emergency medical personnel, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because the greater, the greater the training, the greater the skills. And the better quality of service that can be delivered to those who are injured at the actual scene of that accident or that trauma, Mr. Deputy Speaker, makes a huge difference to the outcome for that individual, the outcome for that individual's family. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it makes a difference to the province of Saskatchewan because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in this province, we care about one another.

We're a province of just over 1 million people. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, although we cover vast, vast area and territory, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are a province of caring people. We care about one another. It doesn't matter where you live in this province — whether it's in rural Saskatchewan or urban Saskatchewan — we care about one another. That's the nature of our province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it's the nature of the people who live in the province of Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this legislation may not seem to be earth-shattering. It may not seem to be the type of legislation that would actually demand the level of time I'm spending on it. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's an opportunity to truly recognize those professionals, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And in doing so, this legislature acknowledges how important they are, how important they are to our province, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, before I take my seat, I just want to formally say to the men and women who provide those emergency medical services in our province, those who man the ambulances across the province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, those who provide these very important services, we thank you. I simply want to say, we thank you. You're special people. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with that I would like to move that we

adjourn debate.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Regina Dewdney has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 49, *The Ambulance Amendment Act, 2008*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

### Bill No. 76

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Heppner that **Bill No. 76 — *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Amendment Act, 2008 (No. 2)*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is a pleasure to enter into the debate on Bill 76, *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Amendment Act*. I think this is an important Act, and we get this pretty regular on almost an annual basis. It's a very important piece of legislation, *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*, and here we're amending it.

I think that I understand and appreciate the explanation that's gone along. And I reviewed the minister's speech and it's very helpful. She does talk about there's four amendments this time. I think last time it might have been in the 20's. Four is much more manageable. She talks about two are administrative in nature. We understand when you're managing the size of land that's in protection — which is 1.4 million hectares — there may be the odd time where there's a few administrative errors, and we understand two occasions arise in this case.

The third involves the deregulation of 20 acres to expand a farmstead. That makes a lot of sense. And of course some land will be put into the Act, protected, to make up for this, to compensate for this withdrawal.

The fourth amendment I think is also interesting and I think this is a good move. It talks about removing 160 acres from the registry to allow for land sale, but it's sold on the condition of a conservation easement. And this is a very important, innovative approach to conservation. I think this is good to see right across Canada. In Saskatchewan we know many groups are involved in this, whether it's Ducks Unlimited, the wildlife federation, the department itself, the ministry. At the federal level it's very important. I think this shows some real leadership.

So I think this is a very important piece of legislation. I can't wait to see it in committee so we can ask a few questions. I've got to fully understand, research, understand this.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think there's a lot of good work here. We do have some questions though. We do have some concerns. One is what is happening . . . *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act* forms a pretty integral part of the biodiversity action plan for this province. We know that one has just expired. We had five years. We'd like to know what is the

future for biodiversity here in this province. Where are we going to go in the next five years? But of course a key integral part, especially for a province like Saskatchewan with such vast amounts of land, and because of that the huge biodiversity we have. We're very blessed with that. And so I'm looking forward to hearing more about the biodiversity plan, what's happening. How does this Act, how does this amendment fit into that?

Now it was interesting, we had set a goal — and this is based on the United Nations goal — of 12 per cent of land set aside in representative areas. It's called the representative area network. We were at 9 per cent. We're making some gains. I'm hoping to see that we're going to make more gains than that. It's tougher as we go along. I understand that. We've made some pretty huge gains at the beginning because we moved Crown lands into it. Now we know the North is protected, the Crown land's protected through the Ministry of Environment. The South is protected through the Department of Agriculture. We know there has been some movement around land sales in agriculture.

We hope though that particularly around fragile areas, the vulnerable areas, that they are being protected. And I'm thinking along the Saskatchewan River basin, particularly around the South Saskatchewan River basin. I know that that's one people have talked to me about that, around where the river comes into Saskatchewan. It's called the Chesterfield Flats, and the Saskatchewan breaks the land forms as we go into Diefenbaker Lake. I'd like to make sure that that land continues to be protected.

I know — and I know this isn't for the Ministry of Environment, the minister responsible for parks — we are still waiting on the promise around the wilderness parks. And I'm hoping that we will hear more about that in the future because as land is designated as parkland, obviously it's protected and again is related in terms of biodiversity action plan. And we hope to hear more about that as we move forward.

So, Mr. Speaker, I see that the land here is actually more in the Northwest. Many people are watching what's happening with land in the Northwest, particularly in The Battlefords area. We see that's where this land is located. But it all makes a lot of sense, and we don't see a lot of problem with that. Again though we'll have questions in committee, and I know the critic will have those questions.

So with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would move that we adjourn the debate at this moment. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon Centre has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 76, *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Amendment Act, 2008*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

### Bill No. 68

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Tell that **Bill No. 68** — *The Arts Professions Act/Loi sur les professions artistiques* be now read

a second time.]

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

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well it's a real pleasure to enter into this debate on this new piece of legislation which really in fact is replacing the status of the artist legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I think for many people who've been engaged in the arts in the province of Saskatchewan over that last number of years, they are sincerely disappointed that this piece of legislation makes no reference to improving the financial status of artists living in our province.

As people will know, status of the artists actually is a federal initiative. And artists across the country have been working very, very hard to have status of the artist Act that in fact move forward with the provisions that artists will be able to collectively bargain for income and benefits. And, Mr. Speaker, the disappointment in this particular piece of legislation is that there are absolutely no provisions or references to the collective bargaining process for people who are engaged in the arts. Mr. Speaker, this is in fact very, very disappointing.

The members opposite should know that, if they were to have read a recent article in *The Globe and Mail* dated January 7, '09, some very important research work has been done about the plight of Canadian artists in Canada. And what this research shows is that artists in Canada are hovering at poverty levels, and the situation is likely worsening as the worldwide recession deepens, according to the statistical profile of our country's artists, Mr. Speaker.

What's really discouraging about this report is what's happening to female artists, and in fact if you look at the research that's been done, they show that it's the female artisan or craftsperson, the female musician and singer, and female dancers that are the poorest paid Canadian artists in Canada, and in particularly so, also for female visual artists.

Mr. Speaker, what artists have been talking about for the last decade is the need to have artists have access to the ability to bargain wages, and also bargain benefits. Mr. Speaker, I had a situation in my own constituency where a comedian was injured. He was a obviously a self-employed comedian, but he was injured in a hotel where he had been contracted to perform, and he had no access really to workers' compensation, Mr. Speaker, because he was an independent artist.

Mr. Speaker, the other thing that this report shows, that was done by the Hill Strategies Research company is that Aboriginal artists are also poor earners. And in fact, if you compare Aboriginal artists to other First Nations and Métis people that are in the paid labour force, they in fact receive about 30 per cent lower than the average First Nation or Aboriginal person.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's clear that the research has been done. We know that people in this country have identified themselves as artists. According to the 2006 census, there were approximately 140,000 Canadians who had identified themselves as artists and who in fact made their primary income from the performance of

their art or their work of their art.

Mr. Speaker, I think that certainly people who have worked on this file for the last several years understand that what was important for people, particularly those groups of people involved in the Arts Alliance, was the need to move the whole notion of collective bargaining forward.

And when you look at the piece of legislation that the government has entered into this Assembly, there's absolutely no reference at all to collective bargaining. And in fact members opposite have refused . . . I see they're applauding. Well, Mr. Speaker, what a terrible thing to have people applauding on the government side of the House when we have some of the poorest people who work in this country and in this province not have access to the right to bargain collectively for wages and benefits. Mr. Speaker, they refuse to move those provisions into this piece of legislation, and that is indeed regrettable.

[22:00]

I think finally what I will say, Mr. Speaker, is that this legislation does only half of what needs to be done. This legislation does not move forward the incomes of artists in our province. It does not move forward the notion that artists would have access to benefits like other people do in the workplace. And we think that that is a shame. Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well you can say no over there. But the reality is that if you are an artist in this province, you do not have the ability to bargain collectively for your work. And this Bill does not put that provision into the legislation.

And, Mr. Speaker, those members opposite participated in the committee hearings. We were on the verge of having this legislation passed by this Assembly. And what did they do? They stopped it in committee, Mr. Speaker. That's what they did. Now they can say you never got it done, but the intent of the government was to have it done.

And this government has come back in with a piece of legislation that only goes part way. It does not give people the right, who are involved in the arts community, to bargain collectively. The people who work for the symphony do not have the right to bargain collectively. The people who work for the symphony in Saskatoon and Regina do not have the right to form an employee association and bargain. It is voluntarily recognized by the two symphony boards of directors, it's voluntarily recognized that the musicians' union will represent them. Now they'll say, get it done. They didn't get it done. And they've only gone halfway. And they've stopped it.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, these people over there don't like working people. They don't like working people. They bring in essential services legislation. They take away people's right to go on strike, Mr. Speaker. And they have taken away, they will not give artists the rights to form a union. Now they can get all mad if they want to, but that is the reality.

This legislation does not allow the poorest working people in this country, who are artists, the ability to form a union, and it's because they would not put this provision in the legislation. And, Mr. Speaker, artists will continue to be low income. They

will continue to not have access to benefits. They will continue to not have access to workers' compensation because these mean-spirited people over there refuse to put this provision in this legislation.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I know I've got them upset over there, but that is the reality. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I will say this finally — that this legislation goes partway but it doesn't go far enough to protect the interests of artists in our province.

And I would adjourn this debate.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon Nutana has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 68, *The Arts Professions Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

### Bill No. 51

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 51 — *The Provincial Court Amendment Act, 2008*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise tonight to make some comments to *The Provincial Court Amendment Act*. The minister moved the Act with two significant amendments: one about the judges . . . our ability to look at judges' alleged misconduct after resignation, and one about the judges' pension funds.

The most interesting thing I want to comment on is that the public has expectations of the judiciary, and the public has been watching with some interest in some of the things that have happened in our judicial system. And basically they have lost some confidence in the judicial system and have raised some questions about the transparency and the accountability. And I think that being as our justice system is a key pillar in a strong democracy, that it is incumbent on us to make sure that people do have confidence in the system, that they do think the system will be fair, that they do think it'll be transparent, and that there is accountability for the people in the system who deliver the services, and that includes the judges in particular.

The judges of course are the most visible of people who work in the system, that deal with the criminal aspect and deal with the court system. And I think that the confidence issue, when the people are not confident in the system, it does weaken our democracy. And I think this, the two amendments that I see in this legislation, one of them in particular allowing the Judicial Council to have authority over judges who have resigned for after two years, they can still go back and carry on investigations into alleged misconduct, that is a big step forward.

There is, however, a piece missing in that there is no further

punishment. I know the minister has said that the public will be able to see that the judge has been found guilty or has been found that there is misconduct, but there is nothing further in that, and I think that is something that would bear looking at.

There is also the fact that we're going to be looking at other professions who have similar legislation to this, that there is the ability to go back two years or to go ahead two years after resignation and still bring allegations and investigations.

But there are still many other professions who don't have this, so we'll probably be looking at some similar legislation coming forward to cover many of those professions. I think the minister has said there's 42 others that could have similar legislation. Legislation now that covers some professions that would be similar to what's being proposed are *The Legal Profession Act*, *The Medical Profession Act*, *The Pharmacy Act*, and *The Veterinarians Act*. So there's precedent to have this put into legislation and I think this is a good amendment that the minister is bringing forward.

The second piece of this legislation is about pension amendments. And that of course is something that we are keenly interested in making sure that again people are treated fairly in a relationship breakdown. So I think that our Justice critic has made some comments that he's certainly wanting to see and ask questions on this legislation. It is similar to legislation that we had brought forward last year — or the year before, I guess it was — but there are some things that are different and some clauses that we certainly want to look at and see if there's things that we maybe have to change.

And we definitely want to see clarity in the pension and the benefits because it certainly deals with a fairness of distribution of assets. We want to see that happen. And I think that the minister has explained pretty clearly what's going to happen in these amendments, so I look forward to seeing it at committee and having some of the questions asked.

I know that some of my colleagues still have questions about it and comments to make, but I, however, have nothing more to add to the debate, and will now adjourn debate on this Bill tonight.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon Eastview has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 51, *The Provincial Court Amendment Act, 2008*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

### Bill No. 61

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hutchinson that **Bill No. 61** — *The Local Government Election 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 extremely pleased to stand and enter into debate on this very important Bill, Bill No. 61 which is *The Local Government Election Amendment Act*, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now this particular piece of legislation reflects ongoing changes through consultation at the municipal level, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and over the years there has been consultation with municipal governments to improve *The Election Act* process within the province of Saskatchewan. It's an ongoing dialogue that will continue for many years in the future because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we can always continue to make improvements. We can always continue to enhance the ability of our provincial citizens to have say and impact on local government.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this has been worked on, as I indicated, for many years. There have been continual changes, recommendations made by SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association], Mr. Deputy Speaker, and by SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] wanting processes changed, updated. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's a good thing to have an ongoing dialogue and to continue to improve and update local government election legislation, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

There was a desire, and always has been a desire, at the local level to have many of the rules in the local elections to be similar to those of provincial legislation or federal legislation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we couldn't disagree with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. To make a more uniform administration of local election laws across the province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, makes sense. And as a result, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there have been ongoing discussions and changes made at the discretion and the request of local governments.

There are specific changes here though, however, that are going to take some time to examine and to . . . Some consultations with local government, with SUMA and SARM, and local government administrators to ensure that the changes are being made are firstly what they wanted; secondly, make common sense in their application to provide better response to the citizens of those municipalities, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And we want to make sure that we catch any particular nuisances or problems that may be within this legislation, so that at this time we can take the opportunity to ensure that what we're doing benefits the citizens in the local . . . and the local government administrators, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We have quite a number of people that have experience either at the local government level or being a minister responsible for local government within our caucus, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We're going to be looking carefully at these provisions to ensure that they in fact reflect what we have heard from those local government officials over the years. We may identify areas and make suggestions for even greater improvement, and how to fine tune the legislation and make it even more effective through things that we will observe in this legislation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and through consultations with local government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to talk about one change that isn't in this legislation that has been lobbied for by municipal

governments for some time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that is municipal governments wanted a change from a three-year election period to a four-year election period, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for a number of reasons, one of which is cost, of course. The more often you go to election, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the more money it costs and that of course is expenses that are at the cost of local taxpayers, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because local governments raise their money through property tax, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So this was one particular change that local governments wanted across the province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They wanted to move from a three-year term to a four-year term. We're disappointed that it's not there. We're disappointed that local governments weren't listened to, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

It would have been very helpful if local governments would have been listened to in this case, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Those local governments face the same challenges provincial and federal governments do, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with the cost of elections. It would have been nice if the government would have listened and moved on four-year election terms, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Unfortunately they didn't. Maybe the minister of Municipal Government will at some future date bring forward legislation that will in fact reflect the needs of local government, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

In our time in office, Mr. Deputy Speaker — we were the government for a number of years — we saw significant changes. We saw *The Cities Act* introduced which changed the entire onus in legislation, from one of being where the provincial government was more parental in their nature, to very permissive legislation allowing those governments to make their own decisions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, within parameters where they didn't have to come to the provincial government for permission on many, many things.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a next step would have been a move from three-year election periods to four, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but unfortunately this government failed to listen to municipal governments in the province of Saskatchewan and have failed to move to a four-year term.

We hope in the future that they will, over the next couple of years as they continue to dialogue with municipal governments, they will consider it. Because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we see changes to this legislation on a regular basis. It's often that over a four-year term, we'll see two or three potential changes in this legislation. And we hope over the next couple of years, through continued dialogue, that those municipal governments will in fact achieve, achieve what they want very badly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which is to have a similar term to provincial and federal levels of government — a four-year term.

They'll go to the ballot box less often. Local ratepayers will pay less money as a result, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And of course, Mr. Deputy Speaker, those ratepayers always have concerns about how their money is being spent. Because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, local governments don't have money that don't belong to the citizens of those municipalities, just like provincial governments don't have money that does not belong to the citizens of the province of Saskatchewan.

[22:15]

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, although we're disappointed — we are disappointed in the failure to listen to that very specific point, Mr. Deputy Speaker — we will take time over the next several weeks to examine this legislation in greater detail, to have greater consultations with SUMA and SARM to ensure that the changes that are being put forward are in fact . . . reflect to their values and views.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is the responsibility of the opposition in any legislature or any parliament, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to scrutinize legislation to ensure that it in fact improves the situation and doesn't hinder or cause additional problems, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So we're going to take the time to analyze this very carefully, to review it very carefully, and to reflect upon what those municipalities want. Because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need to work with the municipalities, but we need to work co-operatively to advance the provisions of the electoral system for municipal governments in our province.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they're not asking for things that don't make sense. They're very pragmatic, reasonable people, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We want to work with them, and we hope in the future the government will listen to them in regards to their request for longer election terms, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, having said that, the members opposite seem rather quiet. They don't seem to be paying much attention to the fact that we're talking about very important legislation — important to municipal governments, important to the citizens of our province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we would hope important to the government as well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it seems that they're paying very little attention and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I hope they'll then take the time to read the *Hansard* after to consider, consider what are in the best interests of the people of the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Members opposite tend not to want to pay much attention to any suggestions that may be put forward by others, whether it's municipal governments, the members of the opposition. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's our job. That's our responsibility and we take it very seriously.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would just say to the government, please take the time to review my comments tomorrow if you don't want to pay attention tonight. I hope the minister will at least take the time to read them. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we always will take the time to make sure that we do due diligence on this legislation.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at this time, seeing the late hour that we're experiencing, and we have other legislation that people would like to speak to, I move that we adjourn debate on this particular piece of legislation.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Regina Dewdney has moved to adjourn debate on 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 Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

**Bill No. 59**

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 59** — *The Election Amendment Act, 2008* be now read a second time.]

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thanks for keeping with us. I'm glad to be able to enter into debate tonight on Bill. No. 59, the Act to amend *The Election Act, 1996*.

It's largely a housekeeping Bill in most respects concerning the changes made to the fixing of the election dates — the next one being 2011, November 7. And you know, subsequent changes that need to be made in order to do all the things that accompany a general election, such as fixing the polling date; fixing the nomination date for candidates; fixing the date the Chief Electoral Officer issues the writ, the maximum of 17 clear days and the minimum of 11 clear days before nomination day; the fixing any five days before polling day on which the advance poll is to be held and those days. It must not include a holiday, of course. It must be neither more than seven clear days nor less than one clear day before polling day. Fixing the dates on which the returning officer shall hold the final count, and that being 12 days after polling day. Again, I can tell that I'm thrilling you with this, Mr. Speaker, so I guess I'll cut to the chase.

The housekeeping amendments are important. They are pursuant to, I believe, the review that takes place of *The Election Act* in general after each general election, a process which has served us well in recent history and which should continue to do so down the line.

There's some new sections, sections 277 to 277.2, and of course these pertain to expanding the restrictions around government advertising. We'll be most interested to see how this works out, Mr. Speaker, whether or not there's any manipulation of the process in advance, the year leading up. It sounds not bad, but again some of these things — especially when we're dealing with this current government, Mr. Speaker — some of the things sound pretty good, but how they play out in reality is often something different altogether. So we'll be watching that very closely.

I can't help but wonder, in terms of the manipulation that is possible under this, if we'll see, you know, where are the penalties in the legislation in terms of enforcing compliance. And again, we've had a very recent example this past fall with the federal government. You know, Prime Minister Stephen Harper staked no small amount of his credibility on what a champion of democracy he was, and the fixed election dates legislation that they'd brought in — of course, turned out to be not worth the paper it was written on.

And it's interesting, Mr. Speaker, that since then, of course, the way that things have gone in terms of the economy and, of course, the way that Flaherty and Harper talked about how first

we're in a . . . You know, there's nothing to fear and there's going to be lots of great buying opportunities out there in the economy, and that then we were in a technical deficit. And then it was, you know, straight into, well, we're in big trouble now; what are we going to do? And it's interesting to see the evolution that's taken place there.

But you can't help but wonder, Mr. Speaker, in the timing of this, was the federal government looking at what was coming down the line and thinking, okay, how does this square with our fixed election date legislation? Why was it that that election came along earlier than needed to be the case? So, you know, on the one hand you've got looming economic hardship, on the other hand you've got this fixed election date legislation. So what's the solution there, Mr. Speaker? Well of course you go against the fixed election date legislation. So the federal legislation wasn't worth the paper it was written on.

You know, time will tell the tale in terms of what happens with the provincial situation here and these fine words that have been spoken about the fixed election date legislation and the changes pursuant to it in terms of *The Election Act*. But I guess we'll believe it when we see it, Mr. Speaker.

I can't help but think as well that I'll be interested to see what kind of work is done with the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer in terms of ensuring that there's the work that needs to be done around enumerating of particularly difficult to enumerate ridings. I think of myself, my own situation in inner-city Regina, what the approach of the electoral officer will be in terms of making sure that the people of Regina Elphinstone are enumerated as they need to be. In ridings that are more widely distributed, such as Arm River-Watrous, you know, is the enumeration job being done there? Are they being well served by the Chief Electoral Officer as he attempts or she attempts to carry out *The Election Act*?

I think of my good colleague and friend from Cumberland, and the mighty challenge that exists in terms of ensuring that the enumeration is equal to the task, in terms of a riding like Cumberland, and the massive geographic expanse that has to be navigated in terms of making sure that the people are enumerated, so they can go and make their mark on a ballot and have their voice heard electorally, which of course they just recently did. And I'm very happy that they sent our fine colleague from Cumberland to join us here.

So I wonder if this particular item of legislation is equal to those tasks, Mr. Speaker. I wonder if there isn't, you know . . . In terms of updating the legislation generally, could there not have been a greater effort made to see what we can do in terms of modernizing our election system. Again, a lot of this is sort of pro forma in terms of the date as such, so you adjust the calendar and the requirements in the legislation accordingly. So there's not a lot to be heard here on that. It's largely housekeeping. But again, what is new in this is notable, and we'll be watching very closely to see how this plays out in real time, Mr. Speaker.

And what is also noticeable and notable is what is not in this legislation, Mr. Speaker, is an undertaking to do what we can as this legislature to better serve the people as they go about exercising their franchise and casting their ballot in our

democratic system.

I guess that's the main concerns that I would like to raise at this time, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad that this doesn't veer into messing around with the boundary distribution process. Again, I come from a riding where, in the lead-up to the 1971 election, it was the first one on which the boundaries for Regina Centre were struck. And in that election, there was something on the order of 19,500 electors in Regina Centre. And Allan Blakeney, of course, carried the day there in 1971, as compared to a riding that had been carved out of the south of Regina which had just over 4,000 electors.

I'm glad to see that there's nothing in this legislation that takes us back to those kind of abuses of the spirit of democracy and the electoral practice of this province. But again, Mr. Speaker, the price of freedom, as has been said, is vigilance. And we will be vigilant in regarding what comes down the line in terms of democratic practice.

And I guess one other thing I'd reflect on, Mr. Speaker, is very recently I had my eighth anniversary as the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for Regina Elphinstone. February 26, 2001 was the date of the by-election that brought me to this Chamber. And I will always remember the cold of that day, and the great effort that it took on the part of so many people to actually get out to the polls to fight the cold and to make their voices heard.

And I will forever remember pulling up to Walker School which is now in the riding of Regina Rosemont, and again, a bitterly cold day, Mr. Speaker — I think something like minus 50 with the wind chill — and seeing a senior citizen, you know, moving into the polling station with her walker because she was that earnest about casting her ballot.

So as we said about changing *The Election Act* and making amendments to it, we should always remember how we can live up to the kind of commitment demonstrated by individuals like that — the kind of people that fought, that bore arms so that we might enjoy the freedom of a parliamentary democracy here in Canada.

And as we said about changing the mechanics of the election systems that enable people to make their voices heard, I think we do that work very thoughtfully and seriously. And I'd like to see, you know, I'd . . . Again, this is fairly pro forma. We'll see how the changes work.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The House now being adjourned, having reached the time of adjournment, now stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow afternoon.

[The Assembly adjourned at 22:30.]



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