



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

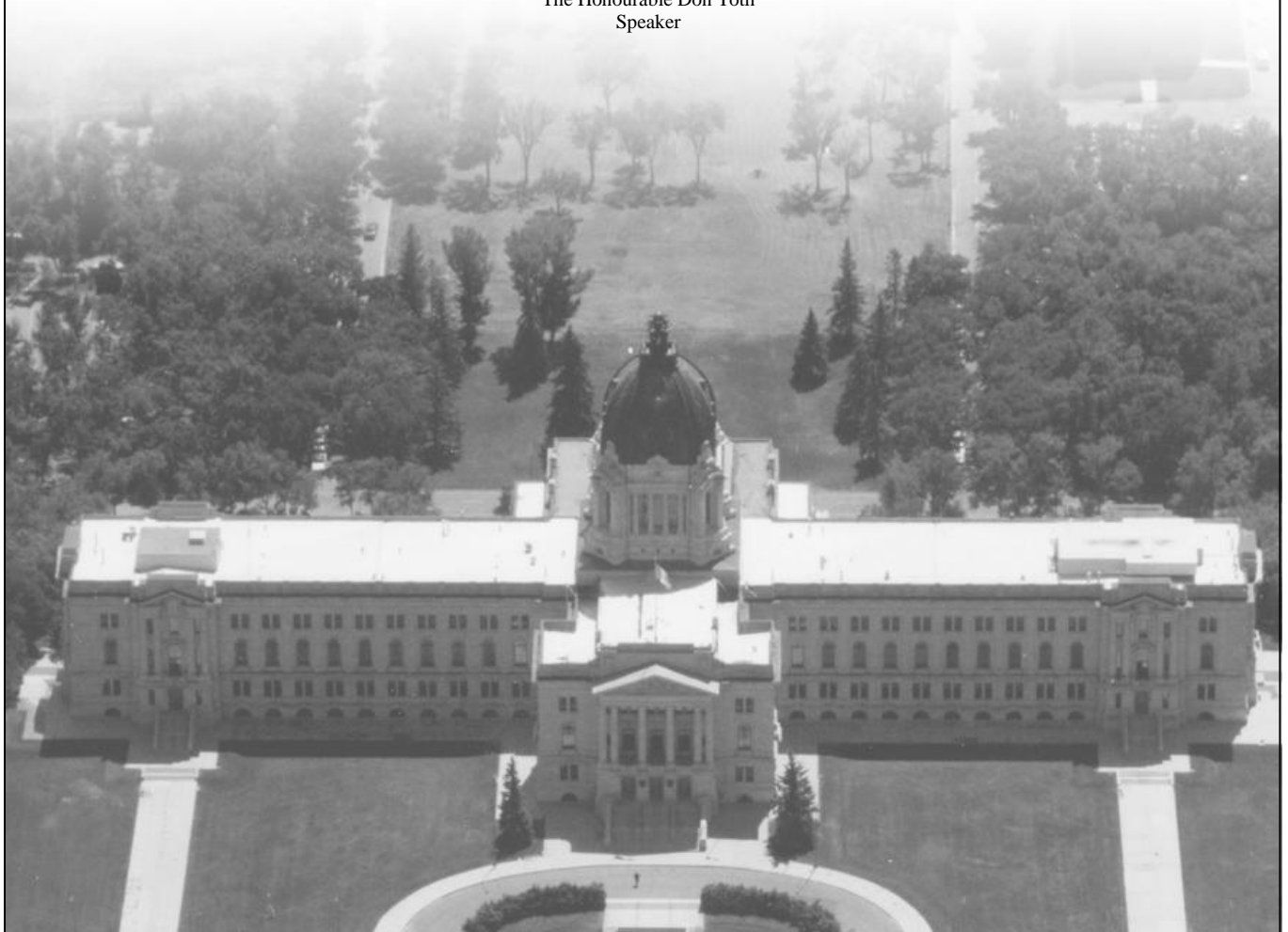
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
authority of  
The Honourable Don Toth  
Speaker



**MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**

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

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

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

**Clerk:** — I wish to advise the Assembly that Mr. Speaker will not be present today to open today's sitting.

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister for Tourism.

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to rise today to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Legislative Assembly a number of guests we are very pleased to have with us here today.

Many members met this group earlier today during a ceremony that took place. This group is seated in the Speaker's gallery, and I ask them to rise and give us a wave as I introduce them.

I'm very pleased to introduce Colten Teubert, a young man from White Rock, BC [British Columbia] who played defence for the Regina Pats. Colten has a great hockey resumé, having won a gold medal with Team Canada at the 2009 World Junior Championship in Ottawa, and of course the gold medal at the 2008 World Under-18 Championship in Russia. Colten was drafted in the first round by the Los Angeles Kings in 2008.

We also welcome Jordan Eberle, forward with the Regina Pats and one of the top scorers in the WHL [Western Hockey League]. Jordan's resumé is equally impressive in that he also won gold at the World Junior Hockey Championship in Ottawa last year. In that tournament, he scored the tying and winning shootout goal to help Canada defeat Russia in the semifinal.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — He also won gold at the 2008 World Under-18 Championship in Russia. Jordan was drafted in the first round by Edmonton in 2008.

The next individuals are all involved in various ways with the World Junior Hockey Championship, which of course are happening in Regina and Saskatoon from December 26, 2009 to January 5, 2010. Should I repeat? December 26 to January 5.

Mr. Nicholson, the president and CEO [chief executive officer] of Hockey Canada. Mr. Nicholson is in charge of all operations for competitions that Canada participates in internationally, including the Olympic Winter Games and the World Junior Championships. I would be remiss if I didn't also mention that during Bob's tenure with Hockey Canada, he has overseen Canada winning 49 medals in international competition since 1990 — 33 which were gold, three Olympic medals, and 12 World Junior Championship gold medals.

Mr. Jack Brodsky, hails from Saskatoon, who is president of the 2010 host organizing committee; Mr. John Lee, senior vice-president of the host organizing committee and president of the Regina host organizing committee. There are also

executive committee members present and staff that are here with us today: Mr. Dave Pettigrew, Al Hubbs, Joe Bloski, and Hugh Vassos. Please give these folks a very warm Saskatchewan welcome.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure, on behalf of the official opposition, to welcome all of our special guests here today in the legislature. I think it's fairly clear to all of us that you are welcome here any day that you would like to come. We really appreciate having you here as part of the celebration of what it means to be Saskatchewan. And I think that what we're going to see next December and January is a little bit of a hint of how proud we are of this province. I think that that's a message that all of us want to convey.

We especially want to give our thanks to the younger members up there, Colten Teubert and Jordan Eberle. We've been very proud to have you as part of the Regina Pats, but more importantly as part of Team Canada this year, and all of us in Saskatchewan will be following your careers in the years to come. So greetings on behalf of the opposition.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

**Hon. Mr. Hutchinson:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my great pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Hon. Assembly Mr. Michael Fougere, a former colleague in municipal government, respected current member of Regina City Council, and currently also the president of the Saskatchewan Construction Association. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join with me in welcoming Mr. Fougere to his legislature. Thank you so much.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce to you and to the other members of the Assembly, seated in the west gallery with Mr. Fougere is Monte Allan who is one of my constituents, active in the Construction Association, and also is the father-in-law of Tim Highmoor who is the chief of staff to the Minister of Agriculture. I'm not sure whether he's down today to deal with construction associations or just to make sure that his son-in-law is doing what he's paid to do. In either event, please join me in welcoming Mr. Allan.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. LeClerc:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, in your gallery I'd like to welcome Brian and Barb Larratt and their daughter, Rebecca,

and a member of their congregation, Mike Garbanewski. Barb and Brian are two of my most favourite pastors and they are from the Gateway Christian Fellowship here in Regina, and do great work for the folk of Regina. I'd like to welcome you to your Assembly today.

**Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise to present a petition that speaks to the inadequate access to quality and affordable child care, and points out that it's a major roadblock for parents who want to access the labour market or to further their own education. It's well recognized, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that quality child care delivers significant economic and social dividends to our province. And it also recognizes in the petition that too many Saskatchewan families are struggling and unable to find quality child care for their children, and this limits their future in the province. The prayer reads:

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

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

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I so present on behalf of Saskatchewan families and our littlest of citizens.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise to present a petition calling for wage equity for CBO [community-based organization] workers. We know that many of the folks working in the CBO sector are traditionally been underpaid and continue to earn poverty-level wages. I'll read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your Hon. Assembly may be pleased to cause the development and implementation of a multi-year funding plan to ensure that CBO workers achieve wage equity with employees who perform work of equal value in government departments.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, these folks come from the communities in Saskatchewan, including Yorkton, Watrous, North Battleford, Assiniboia, Tisdale, Nipawin, and Saskatoon. Thank you very much.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of a new Saskatchewan Hospital. Mr. Speaker, the petitioners note that in February 2006 the Government of Saskatchewan committed funds and resources to the development and construction of a new Saskatchewan Hospital at North Battleford. Mr. Speaker, the petitioners ask:

... that the Legislative Assembly call upon the Government of Saskatchewan to immediately recommit funds and resources for the continued development and construction of a new Saskatchewan Hospital at North Battleford and provide the Prairie North Regional Health Authority with the authority necessary to complete this essential and much-needed project.

Mr. Speaker, these petitioners are from the city of North Battleford and the town of Battleford.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to stand today and present a petition in support of expansion of the graduate retention program. Mr. Speaker, the prayer reads:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the individuals that signed this petition are students from the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan. I so present.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions in support of a reduction in the education portion of property tax. These are needed by Saskatchewan families and business, Mr. Speaker, who are hit particularly hard by the implications of reassessment here in 2009. The prayer reads as follows:

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

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

These petitions, Mr. Speaker, are signed by concerned citizens here in Regina. I so present.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Glass Slipper Benefit

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last Friday my wife and I had the pleasure of attending the second annual Glass Slipper Benefit for the Princess Shop. The Princess Shop is a non-profit organization operating in Saskatchewan, founded by Chantal Moloney and Ainsley Robertson. The purpose of the Princess Shop is to create enhanced graduation experiences for female students by providing them with mentorship, support, and the tools to succeed after graduation.

Chantal and Ainsley recognized the need to provide assistance to young women who are not able to afford the expenses associated with celebrating the important milestone of graduation. In true Saskatchewan style, these two individuals settled on a mission and started pouring their energy and ideas into the creation of the Princess Shop.

Mr. Speaker, the Glass Slipper Benefit was a great success. The event was emceed by the talented Devin Heroux. Musical entertainment was provided by Cidne Treen of Saskatoon and Jodi King of Winnipeg. The keynote address was given by Miss Canada, Shannon Smadella.

The night was documented by Shannon Brunner, who is the official photographer for the Princess Shop. The benefit was well supported by the Saskatoon business community, as evidenced by a great selection of silent and live auction items.

Mr. Speaker, our province is at its best when we recognize and encourage the potential in our young people. I would ask all members to join me in thanking the Princess Shop for its role in fostering and celebrating success for so many young Saskatchewan women. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of the Crowns.

#### World Junior Hockey Championships

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I'm thrilled to announce to all Saskatchewan hockey fans that the much anticipated 2010 World Junior Hockey Championships is getting very close to arriving in our province.

Earlier today the Minister of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sports and I had the pleasure of welcoming Mr. Bob Nicholson and Mr. Scott Farley from Hockey Canada to our province today.

All eyes will be on Saskatchewan between December 22 and January 5, 2010 to watch the top 10 international junior teams compete. Thirty-one games will be watched live by 330,000 fans, and millions more will watch TSN's [The Sports

Network] 12 live broadcasts as Team Canada strives for a sixth consecutive gold medal. Six in Sask, Mr. Speaker, is what they're calling it.

The world will be watching the action closely, not realizing that more than 3,000 Saskatchewan volunteers will be working behind the scenes, making the tournament run flawlessly. Mr. Speaker, these volunteers are to be recognized and congratulated for the countless hours of their time that they donate to put Saskatchewan on the international hockey stage.

And today I want to thank executive committee members Jack Brodsky, president; Joe Bloski, vice-president; John Lee, senior vice-president, Regina; Dave Pettigrew, senior vice-president facilities; Hugh Vassos, senior vice-president business and marketing; and Al Hubbs, senior vice-president Saskatchewan Hockey Association.

Mr. Speaker, if it wasn't for all the volunteers, the province wouldn't be reaping the benefits of an estimated \$30 million in economic impact.

Mr. Speaker, each and every day we learn Saskatchewan is a very exciting place to be. The upcoming world championships will most certainly add to that excitement. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### Breaking the Silence Conference

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was my pleasure to attend the opening of the 12th annual Breaking the Silence Conference, along with the member from Saskatoon Centre. This conference has a proud history of meaningful education, awareness, and activism on issues of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Mr. Speaker, far too often many gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people live with depression, isolation, abuse, and hurt. It is integral, Mr. Speaker, that our society and our institutions such as education build understanding, recognition, and affirmation on these issues.

The conference was sponsored by the University of Saskatchewan's College of Education and an opening message was brought by acting dean, Dr. Vivian Hajnal.

I want to recognize the many supporting organizations: the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation]; SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] student affairs; the USSU's [University of Saskatchewan Students' Union] Pride Centre, Women's Centre, and Victim Advocate; the U of S's [University of Saskatchewan] department of women and gender studies, President's Advisory Council on the Status of Women, and the Women's Studies Research Unit; PFLAG Canada, Sexual Health Centre Saskatoon, Avenue Community Centre, AIDS Saskatoon, Turning the Tide, NDP [New Democratic Party] Rainbow Pride, and the Saskatoon Straight and Gay Alliance.

I want to thank Don Cochrane, Kit Loewen, and the many organizers that ensured this conference's success. I ask all members of this Assembly to join with me in thanking the organizers, supporters, and leaders of Breaking the Silence. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[13:45]

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

### Contributions to Agriculture

**Mr. Michelson:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The family of Les and Judy Cochrane were recognized as the Moose Jaw Farm Family of the Year this past weekend by the Moose Jaw Exhibition Company. Each year the Moose Jaw Exhibition Company acknowledges a family that demonstrates a commitment to agriculture and their community in the Moose Jaw and surrounding area.

Les and Judy Cochrane have operated their Rafter C Ranch 10 miles west of Moose Jaw for more than half a century, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Their son Wayne and his wife Lesley now run much of the farm operation along with their two children, Courtney and Devon. That's three generations, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

This weekend's special evening also recognized members of the District 8 4-H for their oratory compositions. Another highlight was the induction of Irene Bishoff and Glenda Hennenfent into the District 8 4-H Hall of Fame.

Mr. Speaker, agriculture plays a significant role in the Saskatchewan economy, and our government recognizes that and takes actions to ensure the producers get the support they need. I would like to invite all members of this House to join me in congratulating the family of Les and Judy Cochrane, Irene Bishoff, and Glenda Hennenfent for the invaluable contributions they have made to the agricultural of Saskatchewan and the way of life. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### Young Entrepreneur Builds Business in Moose Jaw

**Ms. Higgins:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Recently, young entrepreneur Jillian Bilawchuk completed her first year as the owner of a retailing consulting business in Moose Jaw. Jillian returned to her hometown of Moose Jaw and ultimately charted her own business course as the inspiration and founder of Jillian's Design Elements. After finishing university, where she studied human ecology with minors in design and marketing, topped with an interior decorating certificate, she decided to become her own boss.

Jillian believes everything happens for a reason, explaining the

path her career has taken. What presented itself was an opportunity to become the local Benjamin Moore colour consultant, and before long she had taken the next step and opened a contemporary and unique store. Jillian's goal was to survive the first year, and with that behind her she hopes to continue building her business, which may lead to the expansion or even addition of another location. What began as a Benjamin Moore outlet now has the feel of a boutique with everything from furnishings and wall hangings to jewellery. In addition she operates an interior decorating consulting service alongside her retail operations.

Mr. Speaker, Jillian is just one of a number of young female entrepreneurs who have livened up Main Street in Moose Jaw and they are welcome to have there. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating Jillian and wishing her many more years of great business success. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### Social Work Week

**Mr. LeClerc:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to rise today in the House to inform you that the government has proclaimed this week, March 15 to 21, as Social Work Week in Saskatchewan. As you may know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of my degrees is in social work. This proclamation is made in honour of the province's social workers and in recognition of the crucial and often challenging work that they do on behalf of the citizens of Saskatchewan.

In the case of pensioners and other older adults living in our province, the compassion and expertise of social workers help them lead fuller lives and enjoy more comfortable and independent retirements. In addition to the tremendous dedication they provide Saskatchewan seniors, social workers provide an invaluable service to individuals requiring support and skills development within school settings, community organizations, hospitals, and the correctional system, just to name a few. Social workers also provide compassion and support to those who face the devastating circumstances of poverty, violence, and abuse.

Saskatchewan social workers tirelessly contribute their time and energy to helping those within our province who have found themselves on the wrong side of advantage. This work is to be applauded, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and this proclamation is one small way our province can show our appreciation to hundreds of men and women who have dedicated their careers to helping others.

I know all members of this House will want to join me today in recognizing the efforts of these dedicated professionals as part of Social Work Week in Saskatchewan.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### Affordable Housing in The Battlefords

**Mr. Taylor:** — There are a number of issues that the people in The Battlefords want this government to act on in the very near future. Of course construction of a new Saskatchewan Hospital is high on everyone's list, as is education property tax relief. But also high on everyone's list is additional, adequate, and affordable housing.

The Battlefords have seen a lot of pressure on housing in the last three years. The vacancy rate for rental accommodation throughout the city and town is very low. There is a lot of negative pressure on seniors; on students moving into town to take on new employment-related courses at North West Regional College; on immigrants who have been able to utilize the province's immigrant nominee program to secure jobs in The Battlefords; on young families who have moved to The Battlefords to take on some of the newly opened up jobs in the community; and on First Nations people who have come to The Battlefords for a variety of reasons, not the least of which are educational and employment opportunities.

This government needs to announce new projects in The Battlefords with funds already allocated to The Battlefords. Prior to 2007 provincial election, \$3 million was committed to The Battlefords for affordable housing. After the election the minister said the commitment would be honoured and applications for that funding were received. During the last year, no new projects have been announced — \$3 million would be very helpful to provide additional, affordable housing units in The Battlefords.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I remain optimistic that the provincial government will keep their \$3 million commitment and promise to the people of The Battlefords.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

### QUESTION PERIOD

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

#### Western Economic Partnership

**Mr. Calvert:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Vancouver and national media had a lot to report about our Premier's visit to British Columbia last Friday. Vancouver News1130 reported, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Premier "has joined a trade and labour agreement that already exists between BC and Alberta." The Saturday *Globe and Mail* reported that Saskatchewan will be included in an Alberta-BC agreement that will take effect on April 1, the same day that TILMA [Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement] comes into effect. And the Canadian Press reported that "the three westernmost premiers pledged Friday to form an extensive economic partnership."

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because Saskatchewan journalists were not afforded the opportunity on Friday to ask questions of the Premier, or premiers, I put a question to the Premier today: what commitments did the Premier of Saskatchewan make on behalf of Saskatchewan people when he was in British

Columbia last weekend?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I want to thank the member for the question. Well, Mr. Speaker, we know we have a very effective press gallery here at the legislature and a very effective media right across our province. And in this particular instance, the story of what happened last Friday, the stories that have been reported here in the province are, as we can well suppose them to be, accurate.

The stories that the hon. member was quoting from are not accurate. There was a little bit of work done with respect to TILMA on the Friday meeting — the agreement between the province of Alberta and BC. They were doing some finalization, were the premiers of those two provinces.

We were not at the table, Mr. Speaker, because we are not a signator of TILMA. Mr. Speaker, what we will be doing though is pursuing a brand new economic partnership with BC and Alberta. In Western Canada, the three have provinces represent a half a trillion market of 9 million people, Mr. Speaker. It is a strength of the Canadian economy. It can be even stronger if we're working together.

We signalled we're prepared to move forward with that co-operative work, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but only if the concerns we had about TILMA are addressed in any new agreement, Mr. Speaker. That was the promise we made in the campaign. That's the promise we'll keep.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Premier is right to raise the concerns about our municipalities, about our Crown corporations — a variety of concerns that Saskatchewan people have raised concerning TILMA.

Now, Mr. Speaker, some might say . . . I think it was Juliet who said, you know, a rose by any other name smells just as sweet. Well I'm not sure, I'm not sure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the smell here is sweet or not.

My question to the Premier is this: he has raised these concerns about the Crown corporations, about the municipalities. Has he raised those concerns at the table with the premiers of Alberta and British Columbia? Mr. Deputy Speaker, will the Premier inform this House whether the governments of Alberta and BC are prepared to amend their TILMA agreement to accommodate these concerns?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When our party, then in opposition in June '07, announced our position with

respect to TILMA after the hearings that were called — appropriately, I think by the previous government — we said quite clearly that we couldn't sign on to TILMA for some of the reasons that the hon. member has just indicated.

But the article that covered our announcement is quite accurate when it says, and I quote, it was from the *Leader-Post*, an article written by Angela Hall, when it says, “He said the . . .”

He [being myself] said the Sask. Party is still in favour of working on trade agreements between [the] provinces, and would like to see occasional joint cabinet meetings between Western provinces, similar to what B.C. and Alberta . . . [has done.]

Mr. Speaker, we have been consistent. I have been consistent with the position stated last June. We've made it very clear to Alberta and BC that we have these concerns about the agreement. What we've agreed to enter into though is a western economic partnership. And as a part of that, we are going to look at opportunities to reduce barriers to trade consistent with what we said prior to the election.

We know that labour mobility is already coming to the entire country, a process undertaken by that member when he was the premier, together with the other premiers of Canada. But this new agreement with BC and Alberta will also include us coordinating, co-operating on trade offices in the Asia-Pacific, co-operating on an innovation agenda so that our three provinces will continue to be an economic powerhouse in the country, creating opportunities for our respective residents, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Premier has confirmed that he has agreed to entering into a partnership, I think he calls it the western Canadian economic partnership. Mr. Speaker, my question then is a very direct one to the Premier: before he signs, on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan, something called the western Canadian economic partnership, will the Premier commit today that the people of Saskatchewan will see a full draft of this agreement before it's signed?

Because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're learning. We can read the headlines, but it's in the fine print of this government that sometimes we have the concern. So will the Premier today commit that a full draft of any such agreement would be provided to the people of Saskatchewan before his government signs it?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, the position of our party was very clear in opposition. It has remained consistent through the election process and post-election. Our position has not changed. And that very transparent position should be

expected, on the part of our citizens, to be honoured by the government. And it will be, Mr. Speaker.

We said very clearly we had concerns with respect to municipal autonomy, with respect to the impact of the agreement on the Crowns, especially their subsidiaries. Mr. Speaker, that's why we're not part of TILMA. TILMA's going to go ahead April 1, '09. It's implemented April 1, '09. The partners will be Alberta and British Columbia, Mr. Speaker.

We are going to pursue though a western economic partnership that contemplates much more than just trade, that contemplates much more than just labour mobility, Mr. Deputy Speaker. One that seeks to ensure that this part of the country continues to lead all of Canada, continues to provide economic opportunities as we see in unprecedented ways here in the province of Saskatchewan, and in a way that is very transparently consistent to what we said before the campaign, during the campaign, and after the campaign.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Calvert:** — Mr. Speaker, the record of this government on transparency has become very dismal in the last little while. Not so long ago, they signed the trade agreement across Canada, the labour mobility agreement across Canada. We couldn't even get a copy of the agreement after it was signed.

My question to the Premier is a very direct one: will he commit today that the people of Saskatchewan will see a full draft of any economic partnership agreement before he signs it on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[14:00]

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, that government, that government chose not to even participate in discussions on TILMA — that's unfortunate — when they were the government. I think perhaps the concerns we all had about the agreement from a Saskatchewan perspective could have been accommodated, and we would be part of this agreement now.

Western Canada represents a marketplace of a half-trillion dollars and 9 million people, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but our governments could be doing better. We could be doing better at reducing barriers between the two provinces. Right now if you own cattle on one side of the border and you want to move your own cattle to the other side, you need an inspector, Mr. Speaker. Right now if you're registered to do business in Saskatchewan, you'd have to re-register in Alberta, re-register in BC.

We will seek to reduce the barriers to the trade between these two regions, consistent with what we said prior to the election. We will seek every opportunity to further strengthen our economy, Mr. Speaker, in a province that today has the strongest economic record in the Dominion of Canada.



**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

#### Discussions with Manitoba Hydro

**Mr. Quennell:** — In February Saskatchewan's Crown Investments minister took a trip east to discuss a multi-million-dollar hydro deal with the Manitoba Energy minister. The trip was not listed on the public calendar of events, and Saskatchewan people learned of the trip through a *Winnipeg Free Press* story saying the deal was progressing well.

Secrecy and spin are the order of the day for this government. To the minister: why the secrecy? Why did people of Saskatchewan have to find out about the trip and the proposed hydro deal after the fact?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, at the request of Mr. Greg Selinger, Minister of Finance, province of Manitoba, I did go to Manitoba. And also Mr. Rondeau, Minister of Energy. They had wanted to meet members of the new government in Saskatchewan. They wanted to find out, what's this new administration all about? What are we hearing about SaskTel covering all of Saskatchewan with high-speed Internet services?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I was happy to accept their invitation. I was happy to go to the Manitoba legislature, talk about SaskPower, talk about the Crown corporations, and talk about the innovative things this government is doing to lead the country. I will accept any invitation like that.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Meewasin.

**Mr. Quennell:** — Mr. Speaker, on February 3 a spokesperson for the minister said the meeting was really preliminary. On February 28 the *Winnipeg Free Press* reported the Manitoba chief executive officer saying, "We want to talk and get something going this spring' . . ." And on March 5 the minister said, when referring to his proposed deal with Manitoba, "It's time for us to act upon it."

To the minister: how did a multi-million-dollar deal go from being in the preliminary stages to the minister acting on it in one month?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Crown

Corporations.

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What we did hear from the Manitoba government, and what we've heard in this House before, is that for 17 years very little progress was made on SaskPower or any other type of issue, Mr. Speaker, for 17 years. We talked about enhancing our interconnects between SaskPower and Manitoba Hydro — something that can be done to enhance both operations.

And, Mr. Speaker, we talked about wind power: about what Manitoba's doing; what Saskatchewan's doing; and what maybe we can do together. Mr. Speaker, no agreements were signed. It was indeed a preliminary meeting. We got to know each other first.

What we did agree on was that little was accomplished over the last number of years. More will be accomplished from this day forward. That's what'll happen, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Meewasin.

**Mr. Quennell:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The people of Saskatchewan have a right to know what the government plans on doing with provincial money. This government owes the people of Saskatchewan an explanation. This proposed deal raises more questions than answers. How much is it going to cost? What is the right price before the minister signs a long-term deal? Who has the minister consulted with? Where is the due diligence.

To the minister: will the Saskatchewan Party stop all the secrecy and become open and transparent with the people of Saskatchewan? Will the minister provide the people of Saskatchewan with the facts of the deal before he signs anything?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — We did talk about hydroelectric generation, Mr. Speaker. We did talk about many things, and we talked about certain facts.

One fact that I would like to talk about today, Mr. Speaker, is what the Manitoba government was doing in the '40s and '50s and '60s. They were building hydroelectric plants. What was the NDP [New Democratic Party] government under Allan Blakeney doing? They were buying up our own potash mines, Mr. Speaker. That's why today, that's why today when you mention potash around North America, people are concerned when it's in the same sentence as the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, Manitoba governments of all stripes have done a good job in putting hydroelectric generation forward. We've talked about them. We learned from them. We talked about what we can do together. And yes, SaskPower is looking at additional hydro-generation in the province and any other

power that we can purchase to support the fastest growing economy in the country, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Quennell:** — Mr. Speaker, the *Winnipeg Free Press* described the proposed deal as “. . . a power sale that would help Hydro keep electricity rates artificially low for Manitoba homeowners.”

To the minister: is the reason for all the secrecy because he doesn't want Saskatchewan people to know he is hammering out a deal that will subsidize Manitoba rates while Saskatchewan people are having their utilities cut off because of soaring utilities rates at home?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Recognize the Minister for Crown Corporations.

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Mr. Speaker, I would like nothing more than to be able to say at that very first meeting, that one-day meeting in Winnipeg, that we hammered out a deal. But in order for that to happen, Mr. Speaker, there would have had to be many years of groundwork that is done beforehand. And that wasn't done by that administration, Mr. Speaker. That's a mistake that we will not make.

We will be looking forward . . . We will ensure that there's enough safe, reliable power generated in the province of Saskatchewan. If there's a deal with our neighbours to the east or to the west or anywhere in the country, we will look at it because it's all part of being responsible and being able to provide that service to Saskatchewan residents. Having the fastest growing economy in the country is a great responsibility, and it's something that we're up to, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### SaskTel Services

**Mr. Trew:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last Thursday we learned the Sask Party was hiding their decision to snap off directory assistance, a key component of SaskTel. Then the minister said recommendations for outsourcing are given to the government and cabinet made a decision. Mr. Speaker, when the president of SaskTel was asked about outsourcing operator assistance — get this — he said, I don't believe in outsourcing directory assistance.

To the minister: with the president of SaskTel so clearly opposed to outsourcing directory assistance, why then did the Sask Party demand the outsourcing of operator assistance?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to snap on to that question. I can tell all members opposite and all members of this House, that the NDP certainly did outsource each and every year, and each and every Crown corporation and within the executive side of government as well.

I can tell the House today, Mr. Speaker, that SaskTel will not be outsourcing directory assistance operators, Mr. Speaker. The policy has not changed. It's the same policy that was in place under members opposite. It's the same policy that was in place under the NDP government for their terms in office. The SaskTel board and the SaskTel management will not be restricted. They will be able to make their recommendations towards the CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan] board and towards this government. That's what happened in this instance, Mr. Speaker. Their recommendation was not to outsource directory assistance operators. They decided not to do it and it's the right decision.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Trew:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister has said previously that SaskTel's core services will not be outsourced and yet operator assistance is being outsourced. Most Saskatchewan people understand directory assistance to be a core service.

But 5,200 people who work at SaskTel, along with the rest of Saskatchewan, would like to know what the minister considers core service. Last week, Mr. Speaker, the minister said he would work on a list of SaskTel's core service. He's had 17 months to complete that list now.

To the minister: will he provide the employees of SaskTel and the rest of Saskatchewan with the list that he considers core SaskTel services? Will he table that list today?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd be happy to speak to that list today. SaskTel's core services and networks include telecommunications, wireless broadband, Internet security, information systems, entertainment, and the Saskatchewan directories. Mr. Speaker, those are core services that are the responsibility of SaskTel.

But even more important than all of those services listed, Mr. Speaker, the core, the core service, the core part of SaskTel is indeed the customer, the Saskatchewan resident that can rely on world-class service, that can rely on coverage that is more aggressive than ever before in the province of Saskatchewan. That's what the people of Saskatchewan asked for. That's what this government committed to on November 7. Mr. Speaker,

that's what Saskatchewan residents deserve and they will get from this government.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Trew:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, let's review. The minister has said that SaskTel core services will not be outsourced. And when asked to provide a list of core services to table it, he hasn't tabled it. Then he tells Saskatchewan people only services, then he says only services that have become routine . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Order. Order. The member has a right to put a question. I'm having trouble hearing it.

**Mr. Trew:** — Then the minister says that only services that have become routine will be outsourced. And once again, we don't have a list of what's routine in his estimation. What SaskTel services are routine?

To the minister: is the reason he's ducking these questions because he doesn't want to be honest with the shareholders of SaskTel, the people of Saskatchewan, and tell them what the government's plan is? Why doesn't he just say that plan is to chip away and weaken SaskTel so they can go ahead and privatize it?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Mr. Speaker, routine services that were outsourced by the NDP government in 2004 were the spam filters. In 2005, the virus controls were outsourced by the NDP government at that time. Mr. Speaker, the biggest outsourcing ever. The biggest outsourcing ever contemplated by the Government of Saskatchewan happened on October 28, 2002 and I quote:

EDS came to me with a proposal that I thought was pretty interesting. It looked at ways for us to reform the government's IT system that would be more efficient, that would provide a return to taxpayers, and that would look at us creating more high-paying IT jobs in the province.

Who said that? The hon. Andrew Thomson, minister responsible for Information Technology. NDP minister, Mr. Speaker. Enough said.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

### Regina Correctional Centre Escape Report

**Mr. Yates:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Corrections cites privacy concerns as the reason for his blackout of large portions of the report into the escapes from the Regina

Correctional Centre last August. But, Mr. Speaker, politicians and their officials simply aren't qualified to decide what constitutes a violation of privacy. There is however an independent officer of this Assembly who is qualified and paid to do just that — the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

To the minister: will he agree to refer the original, unedited report to the Information and Privacy Commissioner for review with a view to deciding what additional portions can be made public?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing.

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. On Thursday last week, we released the report, the first ever independent external investigation report into an escape in this province's correction system. That report is very, very important to this government, Mr. Speaker. It does a number of things, but there's 23 recommendations that provide a framework for this government to move forward as a blueprint on the road ahead, Mr. Speaker, to fix long-standing concerns in corrections.

One of the most important commitments this year, Mr. Speaker, I said on Thursday, was \$87 million for a new remand centre in Saskatoon, never been looked at by the previous administration; over \$9 million for safety, systems, and infrastructure upgrades to all our correctional facilities. Once again, Mr. Speaker, been asked to do it for 20 years by the SGEU [Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union]; never once did they ever get their concerns ever listened to, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have a short-term, medium- and long-term solution and we're committed to those goals, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Yates:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the main questions Saskatchewan people want answers is why it took so long for the public to be informed of six dangerous inmates on the loose. Fifteen hours passed between the time police were first notified and the time the public was notified, but that section of the report that might answer those very questions is heavily censored, Mr. Speaker. To the minister: why did the Sask Party censor this part of the report, and what are they trying to hide?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

[14:15]

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing.

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Well thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and thanks to the member opposite for that question. What I want to say, Mr. Speaker, is that report included information that was

vetted to protect public safety and the safety and security of the Regina Provincial Correctional Centre and ensure the privacy of staff employed in the corrections system at all levels. And you know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker? It ensured the privacy of those inmates who did not escape August 24, 2008.

All the people that contributed to the report in one way or the other — whether they were staff, inmates, working that night, or otherwise — for privacy, safety concerns of everyone involved, that information was vetted for due reason, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Yates:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, Saskatchewan people have been asking since last August how long it took for the minister to be informed of the escapes and what impact that delay had on notifying the public. But again this section of the report that could answer those questions has been blacked out.

The minister does not have the right to expect privacy in this matter. He is accountable to the people of this province, Mr. Speaker. To the minister: will he give Saskatchewan people the answers they deserve? Will he refer that unedited report to the Information and Privacy Commissioner, Mr. Deputy Speaker, or will he continue to hide the truth?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing.

**Hon. Mr. Hickie:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. On March 12, 2009 the Saskatchewan Party government lifted the NDP's total blackout policy, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The blackout policies discussed in *Hansard* of April 9, 2003, the minister at the time, the former member for Regina South, said while refusing the Saskatchewan Party opposition's request that he table an investigation report about an escape, and I quote, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

Mr. Chair, obviously for security reasons I'm not in a position to table the report in the Assembly. And if the member has questions, I'm prepared to do my best to answer them.

So it is true, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The NDP did not get any information from escape reports when they formed the government, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But that's because . . . Notice not once did the other previous government ever release a report into an escape, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I will say one thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the member opposite. There is a process in place under the freedom of information and privacy Act. He can follow that . . .

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Time has expired.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour.

### Mid-Year Capital Projects

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to have the opportunity to inform members of this Assembly regarding a number of mid-year capital projects — projects that the Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour will implement as part of our government's accelerated infrastructure, \$500 million economic booster shot.

Our government is investing \$26.4 million in four post-secondary institutions. These investments help us to achieve two important goals — it helps to address our ongoing talent challenge by enhancing our capacity to educate Saskatchewan people, and, more immediately, it also creates new opportunities and economic activity for our province.

As our government continues to work to build a seamless path for education, jobs, and careers, creating an ever-stronger post-secondary system, it's an important milestone along this path. Improving facilities for students will result in the implementation of new programs and expansion of number of seats in some existing programs.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm pleased to announce that the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology in both Regina and Prince Albert will receive funding for renovations to classrooms, laboratories, and enhancements to faculty, administration, and student space. The renovations at SIAST Wascana Campus in Regina will help meet the government's commitment to work toward the goal of creating 300 new registered nursing education seats by 2011.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Funding for the SIAST renovations will also help to mean the delivery of plumbing apprenticeships right here in Regina, Mr. Speaker, and expanded opportunities for carpenter and electrician training in Prince Albert.

I'm also pleased to inform you that Great Plains College will renovate its main campus in Swift Current . . . [inaudible] . . . This regional college builds on a tradition which has served thousands of students across southwestern Saskatchewan. The Swift Current campus has not undergone a major renovation since it was built in 1948. This project involves upgrades to classrooms, offices, and common areas, an overhaul of the facility's mechanical and electrical system, and installation of new cooling and sprinkler systems. These renovations will enable the college to more effectively respond to local demands for training, particularly in areas of construction and energy.

St. Peter's College in Muenster will also undertake much-needed building improvements. The college's Michael Hall was constructed in the 1920s and requires significant renovation to provide better accessibility and provision of services. This renovation will also create opportunities for partnerships with other post-secondary institutions, like the University of Saskatchewan, that will broaden and strengthen

program delivery in the east central region of our province.

This government supports quality post-secondary education and skills training opportunities for our province's First Nation and Métis peoples, Mr. Deputy Speaker. A highly skilled, well-trained First Nation and Métis workforce is part of a homegrown solution for our talent challenge. It is also important that First Nation and Métis workers, families, and communities are able to benefit from Saskatchewan's continued economic growth.

Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to announce that the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies will also be receiving funding. This marks the very first time that a provincial government has invested in SIIT's [Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies] infrastructure, the very first time, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — The funding will support much-needed improvements at SIIT's Saskatoon campus to enable the institute to develop video conferencing capacity and distance education, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Funding will also go toward redevelopment of part of the existing facility to support the coaching and mentoring services that are an essential part of SIIT's student experience.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, these projects spread throughout the province from Swift Current to Prince Albert. These are an important step to ensure that the province's post-secondary system has the capacity to enrich communities, foster citizenship, as well as provide education, skills training, and personal and professional development, and deliver a workforce that meets the needs of Saskatchewan's growing economy now and well into the future, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Thank you.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to first start off by thanking the minister for sending his remarks across the floor in advance and giving me a chance to read them.

And I have to confess, Mr. Speaker, when the House Leader first gave me the folder and told me that there was a ministerial statement today, I opened it up and I was sort of curious: well what has this minister been up to? But I was a little shocked and disappointed, Mr. Speaker, when the information that was presented in the folder actually has all been discussed in committee last week. So for regular watchers of the legislative channel, if they would like more information on this, I would encourage them to go to the Human Services Committee and check the *Hansard* there, and there is a more full discussion on this repeat statement, Mr. Speaker.

The funding announced here in the statement is 26.4 million. I see, if the members would look back to the supplementary estimates, the amount for Advanced Education is 26.35 million, so the difference there must just be rounding up, but I assume there isn't any additional spending there.

Mr. Speaker, a number of these items here, or all these items here, are good projects, of course. We look at expansion to the SIAST system. We look at a significant amount of funding being sent or going to Great Plains College in Swift Current, St. Peter's College, SIIT, where there's been a long-standing partnership with government there, Mr. Speaker. Indeed as the official opposition, funding for our post-secondary system is very important, so of course that is in a sense a positive thing.

This funding does raise a couple of questions though and these are questions that are tied to Advanced Education but also tied to other ministries where we've seen spending. And that is how the projects are being selected. And in Human Services Committee — again if individuals go back to *Hansard* — there's a larger discussion about the criteria used to select the projects. I think that's an interesting thing for people to watch to see why certain projects are chosen over others and the reasons behind that.

The second point which is tied into why certain projects are chosen, Mr. Speaker, is the stimulus. How much of the additional funding is actual stimulus, Mr. Speaker, and how much of it is announcing planned projects earlier in order to free up capacity for the upcoming budget and live up to commitments that have been made there, Mr. Speaker?

So again I would thank the minister for sending his remarks across even though it was a repeat announcement of funding that all members and the public have already learned about. But I do appreciate that, and I look forward to more information on this.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

#### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy.

#### Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

**Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report that it has considered the order of reference dated March 12, 2009, that the committee divide Bill No. 72, *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2008* into two Bills and to present its report.

Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies has considered the matter, and recommends that Bill No. 72 be divided into Bill 82, *The Traffic Safety (Volunteer Firefighters) Amendment Act*, and Bill 83, *The Traffic Safety (Licencing Provisions) Amendment Act*.

I move:

That the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies be now concurred in.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Chair:

That the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies be now concurred in.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried. It is ordered the Bill No. 72, *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2008* be divided into Bill No. 82, *The Traffic Safety (Volunteer Firefighters) Amendment Act*, and Bill No. 83, *The Traffic Safety (Licencing Provisions) Amendment Act*.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Government Whip.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I wish to table the answer to question no. 261 and 262.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — It has been moved that the Government Whip table questions no. 261 and 262.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

### MOTIONS FOR RETURNS (Not Debatable)

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Government Whip.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would like to table the requested document in return no. 34.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The government has ordered tabled return order for question no. 34.

I recognize the Government Whip.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would like to convert return no. 35 to a notice of motion for return (debatable).

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Government Whip has made a return . . . to table, to convert question no. 35. I recognize the Government Whip.

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would like to convert return no. 36 to a notice of motion for return (debatable).

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Government Whip has made a motion to convert to return (debatable) question no. 36.

[14:30]

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### SECOND READINGS

#### **Bill No. 80 — *The Construction Industry Labour Relations Amendment Act, 2009***

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour.

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of *The Construction Industry Labour Relations Amendment Act, 2009*. Last week, Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to announce the government is moving to ensure Saskatchewan's construction industry operates under fair, flexible, and effective labour laws. The government is amending *The Construction Industry Labour Relations Act* to expand the choices available for workers and employers, and to provide greater clarity for those involved in the industry.

Currently the legislation requires that unionized employers in construction be a member of a representative employers' organization or REO [representative employer organization] for the purposes of bargaining. It also sets out which unions are allowed to represent construction workers. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this legislation is unique; that is, it's an anomaly to Saskatchewan. No other jurisdiction in Canada gives government the legislative authority to directly shape collective bargaining arrangements in the construction industry.

In our view, the government should not have the statutory right to pick a union for a worker, nor should it have the power to direct an employer to join an REO established by government decree which bargains with a particular union. Not only is this inappropriate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's also likely unconstitutional. Mr. Speaker, the restrictive nature of this legislation as it has existed has discouraged some companies from participating in Saskatchewan's construction industry and prevented some unions from representing Saskatchewan construction workers.

We need to renew this Act, Mr. Speaker. We need to create an environment that allows Saskatchewan construction workers the same opportunities all other workers in the province enjoy with respect to choosing a union to represent their interests. We also need to attract more companies and more skilled workers, many originally from Saskatchewan, into the province. Too many projects have been delayed because of a shortage of skilled labour. There have been cost overruns and a growth of backlog regarding projects.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, now more than ever our construction industry needs labour laws that make sense because right now we are literally laying the foundation for future prosperity. The government has embarked on an unprecedented effort to renew Saskatchewan's infrastructure. This fiscal year we've committed a record \$1.5 billion to fix roads, health care facilities, educational advanced institutions, as well as other parts of our vital infrastructure. Meanwhile the private sector is investing heavily within our province.

This legislation will allow a trade union to organize a company on a multi-trade or all-employee basis as well as on a craft or

single trade basis; enable any trade union to certify an employer; allow an employer operating within the Act to choose the REO that will represent it; allow an employer operating outside an REO to negotiate a collective agreement for the duration of a specific project; give the Saskatchewan Labour Relations Board the authority to investigate complaints that a union has abandoned its bargaining rights; give the Labour Relations Board the right to revoke a union certification on the basis of an abandonment claim; and change the definition of construction industry to remove reference to maintaining a building or structure.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation will continue to prohibit a unionized construction company from creating a non-union spinoff company to evade its responsibilities. This legislation continues our effort to ensure Saskatchewan's labour laws are fair to workers and employers and competitive with other jurisdictions.

I'm encouraged by the reaction since we introduced these amendments last week, Mr. Speaker. Industry representatives say they expect more companies to become involved in Saskatchewan, which will lead to more competitive bidding, more opportunities for workers, more jobs, and will help us rebuild Saskatchewan's infrastructure after years of neglect.

The Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada, the largest union in the country, called the legislation a giant step forward for construction workers and predicts it will give workers more say in working conditions. I look forward to hearing more from organized labour, industry, and the people of our province during consultations on this legislation, which will take place over the summer.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Premier has made it clear. Our government is focused on ensuring our economy continues to grow with the benefits of growth being shared with the people of Saskatchewan. In summary, these amendments help us to move Saskatchewan forward.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move second reading, *The Construction Industry Labour Relations Amendment Act, 2009*.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Hear, hear!

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour has moved second reading of Bill No. 80, *The Construction Industry Labour Relations Act, 2009*. Is it the pleasure . . . I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

**Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure today to rise and speak at second reading to Bill No. 80, *An Act to amend the Construction Industry Labour Relations Act, 1992*. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise on this for a couple of reasons, not the least of which is the government's most recent concession with regards to open consultation and public hearings with regards to this Bill.

But, Mr. Speaker, before I do that, I simply would like to acknowledge the comments that the Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour just made in regards to explaining the provisions of *The Construction Industry Labour Relations Act*.

Mr. Speaker, to summarize briefly what he said, he's expecting that the Act provides for fair, flexible, and effective labour laws. He says the Bill will provide greater clarity. He says it will provide greater choice for workers. He says, Mr. Speaker, this is a unique Bill to Saskatchewan; in fact the word he used was it's an anomaly, Mr. Speaker. He said there is a need to renew the existing Act, and more importantly, Mr. Speaker, a need to attract more companies and workers to Saskatchewan.

Well my goodness, Mr. Speaker, if indeed this legislation did all of these things, my comments today would be very short. Mr. Speaker, if the legislation in fact did all of these things, it would take no time whatsoever to proceed through all stages of this legislation, Mr. Speaker, to conclusion. And, Mr. Speaker, if this Bill did all that the minister says it would do, Mr. Speaker, there would be no need for public hearings and public consultation because, Mr. Speaker, these are all wonderful things.

But I think, Mr. Speaker, I will take a few minutes today to discuss some of the provisions of the Act, to discuss the economy in Saskatchewan and the way in which the construction sector, Mr. Speaker, is impacted by and influenced by the economy that we're facing, Mr. Speaker. And I think, Mr. Speaker, I will establish that there's a great need, Mr. Speaker, to question the arguments that the government is putting forward with regards to this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, is it fair, flexible, and effective? Mr. Speaker, I think we'll be able to argue that it is far from fair, Mr. Speaker, and therefore it will likely be ineffective. Mr. Speaker, does it provide greater clarity? I think, Mr. Speaker, arguments can be made and likely will be made to the committee that this Bill provides greater uncertainty, Mr. Speaker, and less clarity.

Does it provide choice for workers, Mr. Speaker? It depends entirely on your perspective, Mr. Speaker, of choice. We all love that word, choice, Mr. Speaker. But at the end of the day some will argue — some will in fact bring forward evidence, Mr. Speaker — that it's not just more choice, Mr. Speaker. In fact this legislation means less for workers, not more choice, Mr. Speaker.

Is it unique to Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker? I don't know that yet, and in fact we'll take a look at labour legislation in other provinces, specifically in regards to the construction associations, the construction sector, Mr. Speaker. And in fact if this is unique to Saskatchewan, what is it that motivates Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker? We like to be first in most things. And, Mr. Speaker, it's a good thing to take that leap and go forward. But, Mr. Speaker, what's the motivation? What's the need? And what do we gain by moving forward in doing something that nobody else has done, nobody else perhaps has contemplated, Mr. Speaker? This could indeed be an anomaly, Mr. Speaker. It could indeed be that, and that's not necessarily a good thing.

Mr. Speaker, is there a need to renew the existing legislation? More than likely, Mr. Speaker. There is a need, Mr. Speaker, to renew the legislation. That's something that governments need to do. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, it's useful to consult widely with those who are involved in potential changes, and after consultation, Mr. Speaker, provide the legislature with an

opportunity to review the legislation that's based on consultation.

Mr. Speaker, I will make more comments in this regard in a few minutes. But, Mr. Speaker, if we are renewing existing legislation, there's another way to do it than what the way this government has chosen to do.

And, Mr. Speaker, finally, is there a need to attract more companies and workers to Saskatchewan? Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. What we want to do in this province, however — and I will elaborate on this later in my remarks, Mr. Speaker — but we want to attract more taxpayers to the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. To bring in a company from Alberta or from Manitoba to do work, and they bring in residents working for them from Alberta and Manitoba so they pay their income tax, Mr. Speaker, in Alberta and Manitoba, what we're doing effectively, Mr. Speaker, is that in fact we are sending our booster shot money outside our own borders, Mr. . . .

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

**Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the interjection. So, Mr. Speaker, what we want to do is ensure that we have the ability, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that we've got a fair, flexible, and effective labour regime in this province, Mr. Speaker, to cover Saskatchewan companies, to cover Saskatchewan workers — and, Mr. Speaker, if there's investments from outside the province, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that the Saskatchewan residents are the net beneficiary of additional provincial money, Mr. Speaker, and not the residents, the taxpayers of other provinces.

Mr. Speaker, I will also, before I conclude my remarks, indicate that I believe that there will be representation made at the committee stage this summer. There will be representation made, Mr. Speaker, that will establish that what this legislation does primarily is ensure that there are more Alberta licence plates on job sites in Saskatchewan than we've ever seen before, Mr. Speaker. And I do not believe that's the intention of this government in bringing this legislation forward.

So, Mr. Speaker, after that introduction and laying out some of my comments . . . And I'm surprised, Mr. Speaker, that given the unlimited time that the minister had to outline his legislation, Mr. Speaker, that he chose not to delve into a number of these subjects, Mr. Speaker, but decided to simply frame this legislation in terms of glowing, positive words, without an explanation or an understanding of need, or, Mr. Speaker, about the consequences of some of the actions that he's undertaken.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this legislation, as the Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour said, he introduced last week. This legislation in the introduction last week, Mr. Speaker, was framed in a news conference, in a press conference, Mr. Speaker, for exactly what the minister said it was going to be.

But, Mr. Speaker, one member of the media, concerned about the lack of consultation that was going to occur around this Bill,

pressed the minister, Mr. Speaker. And the reporter said, and I quote from that news conference, and he says this, Mr. Speaker, pointing his finger at the minister, “. . . why did you follow a process that was so loathed by labour the last time around?”

What he was referring to, Mr. Speaker, is this process whereby the ministry sends out invitations to people that they want to consult with. They invite those people they want to consult with to a hotel, a closed room, Mr. Speaker. They have their consultation. No member of the public knows what was said, no member of the media is included in that process, and at the end of it, Mr. Speaker, these invited individuals who speak behind closed doors, Mr. Speaker, the government comes out and says, we've listened to people and we've responded.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that didn't cut it for the Ministry of Labour in the past. It shouldn't cut it for the Ministry of Labour in the future. But when the reporter asked the minister the question that I just put — why did he follow a process like that? — the minister said, and I quote from this news conference of March 10, the minister said, and I quote:

What we want to do is establish a sense of continuity. This is the way that we're going to be moving forward on labour relations.

Mr. Speaker, continuity. They had a failed process of privacy and secrecy and lack of transparency. And the minister says, we want a sense of continuity, so we'll just continue with this process of consultation that's private and lacks a sense of transparency, Mr. Speaker. And then he puts his foot down and kind of stomps his foot, Mr. Speaker. He drops his shoulder forward and he says, this is the way we're going to do it from now on.

[14:45]

Well, Mr. Speaker, I heard that. I saw that, Mr. Speaker, and I thought, this can't happen. There's no way, Mr. Speaker, that this can happen. I immediately, on behalf of the opposition caucus, Mr. Speaker, drafted a letter to the Government House Leader, asking that this legislation be dealt with by the Legislative Assembly through the consultation process, Mr. Speaker. I immediately asked that the legislative committee, all-party committee, Mr. Speaker, deal with this piece of legislation so that the public knows what the stakeholders are saying about the legislation and has a full understanding, Mr. Speaker, of the potential consequences that this legislation is going to have on the province because, Mr. Speaker, we want, we want peace in the province.

We want to have working people in this province and investors in this province and contractors in this province, Mr. Speaker, working together to ensure that the infrastructure that they're involved in is completed on time and in budget, Mr. Speaker, and for the benefit of Saskatchewan people. Mr. Speaker, consultation in public with a full range of the sectors involved, Mr. Speaker — that was important.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the Government House Leader called, indicated that they were prepared to change direction from the previous consultation process undertaken by this minister, Mr. Speaker, and that under the right set of circumstances this



legislation could proceed to the legislative committee and, Mr. Speaker, be subject to more public consultation and more importantly, Mr. Speaker, greater transparency.

Mr. Speaker, you can understand, the public I think can understand, that closed doors, private meetings by invitation only are completely unacceptable for the development of legislation that ultimately is going to affect everybody.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's no doubt that that status quo of secrecy, spin, and unaccountability had to change, Mr. Speaker. And as a result of efforts that were made from this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, we are now going to have a process that's going to ensure that members of the Legislative Assembly — opposition members and government members — are going to be able to identify individuals and groups that will want to speak publicly about this legislation, will bring them in front of the committee where members of the media are eligible to be present and to hear, Mr. Speaker, and will be able to put all of their comments on record.

And we will find out, Mr. Speaker, whether this legislation meets the terms that have been outlined by the member opposite; that indeed it is fair, and it's flexible, and it's effective. Because, Mr. Speaker, I'm not all negative. The members opposite would like to say from time to time that oh my goodness, he's all negative, Mr. Speaker. He never has a good and positive thing to say. But, Mr. Speaker, I want to say, I want to say that I support fair, flexible, and effective legislation in this province, Mr. Speaker. And the government just has to prove, just has to prove, Mr. Speaker, that in fact that's indeed what this legislation is.

So, Mr. Speaker, through public consultation, with representatives of the contractor and investor sectors, Mr. Speaker, with representation from working people in the province, I think we will establish, Mr. Speaker, that indeed this legislation is either fair, flexible, and effective, or it needs to be changed in order to become fair, flexible, and effective.

Or, Mr. Speaker, if in fact this legislation is so poorly drafted that it can be neither fair nor flexible, then, Mr. Speaker, the only alternative would be to scrap this and do what would normally be done outside of the Department of Labour's current approach, Mr. Speaker: consult first and then draft, Mr. Speaker. Because when you draft, you are committing yourself to a specific agenda and direction, Mr. Speaker. There's no way of actually backing off and saving face, Mr. Speaker, when something is already drafted. But that's what we're faced with here, Mr. Speaker.

And I expect that those who want to engage in the debate, discussion, representation, Mr. Speaker, at the committee level will indeed do so. So, Mr. Speaker, just to outline how this process should work because I think the arrangement that has been worked out by the government and the opposition is indeed fair to the process. And, Mr. Speaker, as Opposition House Leader, I believe that this is a fine institution, and whereby fair process will lead, Mr. Speaker, to effective representation of the public in the Assembly.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have agreed that we will have debate here in the Legislative Assembly at second reading. We're kicking

that off here today, and over the course of the next about eight weeks of legislative session, we will engage in about five hours of debate and discussion at this stage, Mr. Speaker. I don't intend to speak that long myself here today. However, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that the members have these questions they're shouting at me, that who knows, maybe I might try to answer all of them.

But that having been said, Mr. Speaker, after we've had an opportunity to engage in debate of the Bill in principle, this legislation will indeed, as the minister said, be sent to committee. And we're in full support of that, Mr. Speaker; that's what we asked for.

So this summer the committee of — if I'm not mistaken — it is the health and Human Services Committee will meet to establish a timetable, will meet to discuss a invitation list of individuals and groups who will make representation. Mr. Speaker, the committee, after invitations have been sent out and meeting dates have been scheduled, will hear representation from those who support the legislation and from those who don't or who want it changed for — if I have it right, Mr. Speaker — about 10 hours of public participation.

And then, Mr. Speaker, the minister has agreed to sit before the committee, explain what he and his ministerial officials have heard from the public consultations, express where they want to go with the legislation and what they might do with the legislation having heard where the public is. Mr. Speaker, I think the minister's comments will be heard over about a five-hour sitting of the committee.

That legislation, Bill No. 80, Mr. Speaker, will then be next fall reported back to the House, back to the Assembly. And this Assembly will then dispose of all matters that are left and the legislation will either pass as stands or as amended or, Mr. Speaker, it will be scrapped, depending on what the recommendation of the committee will be.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have reached an agreement that will see this Bill proceed in a orderly fashion. One would say it's going to proceed quickly for the way in which legislation often proceeds in this place. And, Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day the public will have been heard.

Now, Mr. Speaker, do we have any examples of this working? Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the members opposite are in a good position, and especially after question period today, have to acknowledge, Mr. Speaker, that this process works, Mr. Speaker. Previously there was committee hearings, Mr. Speaker, on the Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement that Alberta and British Columbia signed. Mr. Speaker, there were hearings. The members opposite consulted widely in the province, and what they heard was the municipal sector had concerns with the so-called TILMA agreement. The Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker . . .

**The Speaker:** — I would just ask members . . . I know that you have, members have different things to confer about, but I would ask if we could just cut the tone a little bit to allow the member who's been recognized to be able to speak without a lot of interference. I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

**Mr. Taylor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And so as I was saying, the members opposite heard from the public. The municipal sector had concerns. The Crown corporations sector had concerns, Mr. Speaker. And after the now-government members — then in opposition, Mr. Speaker — while they had said we support TILMA, we'll sign TILMA, before they'd read TILMA, they were gung-ho about it, Mr. Speaker.

When they actually heard the public speak about TILMA, what did they do, Mr. Speaker? They said, whoa, wait a minute, we are not supportive of TILMA. We will not sign TILMA, and we want to see changes made to TILMA before we sign or go anywhere near the agreement.

So, Mr. Speaker, what happened? The members opposite who now believe they've got the right approach to this legislation with no consultation, when they approached TILMA without reading it they were all supportive, Mr. Speaker. But when the public told them what they thought about it, they backed off; they said no, Mr. Speaker. And even as late as today in question period, Mr. Speaker, the Premier says that those concerns are valid; those concerns stand, Mr. Speaker. And if this government is going to proceed on any matter that's even related to the TILMA agreement, Mr. Speaker, the concerns that were expressed by the public are going to be addressed.

So does this process work, Mr. Speaker, when you engage the public? Absolutely it does, Mr. Speaker. The members opposite are fully aware of that, and as a result it still is surprising that the ministry and the minister, Mr. Speaker, would continue to put forward and argue that in fact it should be standard practice to put something out there and stand by it without full public consultation. That's going to happen, Mr. Speaker, and I encourage members of the public to read the legislation, to understand it in terms of what it's going to mean in their workplace, in their environment, in their community, and within this province, Mr. Speaker.

So I don't want to say too much specific to the legislation, Mr. Speaker, because there are going to be a number of my colleagues who are doing some preliminary consultations about this, so that we'll have a few things to bring forward during the course of this second reading or this in-principle debate that we are currently having.

But there are some things that I do want to address, Mr. Speaker, just to set the tone for what members of the public have already communicated for us. Mr. Speaker, the point that I want to raise first, that the member opposite, the minister, talked about the legislation bringing greater clarity to the circumstance, to the legislation, Mr. Speaker. I think there's another word that the members opposite are going to hear frequently when the public talks about this legislation, Mr. Speaker, and it's not going to be clarity. It's going to be instability, Mr. Speaker. The expectation is that without some significant change, this legislation will create greater instability, greater uncertainty in the province, Mr. Speaker.

There's no question at all that those points, Mr. Speaker, are — stability, that is, and certainty — are very important in a climate that requires investment and workers in an economic environment where we have a lack of workers. With uncertainty, with instability, you create turmoil.

Now the last piece of legislation that this government brought forward that had to do with workers in the province, Mr. Speaker — with Bills 5 and 6, the essential services legislation, Mr. Speaker — the instability and the uncertainty and the turmoil that that created a year later is still permeating through the environs of the province, Mr. Speaker.

A year ago the legislation passed. We still have no collective agreement signed, Mr. Speaker. This legislation was supposed to create greater clarity, reduce uncertainty, and create a better and more effective labour-business climate in the province, Mr. Speaker. A year later, has it done that? Absolutely not, Mr. Speaker. There is more uncertainty in the province today than there was before Bills 5 and 6, Mr. Speaker.

[15:00]

It's because the government has a tendency to believe you just have to say nice things and everything works out. Well, Mr. Speaker, the nice things they said were not followed through, Mr. Speaker, in the detail. It's politics, Mr. Speaker. It's politics and it's not a detail that allows for effective relationships.

Mr. Speaker, we want a balance in this province. New Democrats and CCF [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation] people before us, Mr. Speaker, were all about balance. Balance, Mr. Speaker. The public sector, the private sector, the co-operative sector working together, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that the people, the residents of the province are able to live in an economy, Mr. Speaker, that provides for all.

Well the fact of the matter is if the environment of labour and business, Mr. Speaker, is unbalanced or instable, it drives investment away, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't bring investment in, Mr. Speaker. What we need to ensure, if we're going to have investment coming in, is that we need to have an effective relationship between labour and business. So one argues, is the relationship broke in this province, Mr. Speaker, and therefore we need to do something completely different? Or, Mr. Speaker, do we need to sit down and ensure that the parties are doing what they want to do, and that is talking together to ensure that we ultimately reach the goal that we set ourselves.

Bottom line is we don't need instability. We don't need uncertainty. We certainly don't need additional turmoil to attract investment into this province. One could argue, Mr. Speaker, at this time of global economic crisis, the government seems to think that we are this island of stability in this world of economic instability, Mr. Speaker, when in fact we are affected by the instability that exists elsewhere. And there is no reason whatsoever to increase the instability inside our borders, Mr. Speaker, when there is so much going on around us. We cannot do things that will destabilize our construction sector, Mr. Speaker, when we are trying to stimulate the construction sector.

Mr. Speaker, the government speaks volumes with regards to infrastructure funding. We're seeing new money going out to stimulate the economy, Mr. Speaker, for roads, for hospitals, for schools, for municipalities, Mr. Speaker.

The members opposite yell, that's good for us. Yes, it is, Mr. Speaker. That stimulus is good for us, Mr. Speaker. And in a

recession, governments tend to put money out there to stimulate the economy. And, Mr. Speaker, we need to have the capacity throughout our province to respond to those things. But, Mr. Speaker, the benefits of this need to be those who live and raise their families and, for lack of a better word, play within our economies, Mr. Speaker. So what we need to ensure, Mr. Speaker, is that our provincial economy, our provincial contractors, our provincial labour force are able to take as much advantage of this stimulus as possible, and not just ship it out beyond our borders.

Well one can argue, and I expect they will, Mr. Speaker, that Bill 80 is a wrong policy at the wrong time. I said earlier about the consequence of this legislation could simply be the influx of Alberta licence plates at construction sites in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, we do want to encourage workers, we do want to encourage contractors, we do want to encourage investors from outside Saskatchewan to be a part of Saskatchewan's growth during this instable economic environment that we find ourselves in, Mr. Speaker. But what we don't want to do is to ensure that the biggest beneficiary are people who pay their taxes in Alberta, people who pay their taxes in Manitoba, people who pay their taxes in British Columbia, whether they are investors, contractors or workers, Mr. Speaker.

We need to ensure that when this government talks, as they do in the Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker — we need a Sask-first policy in the infrastructure field, in the job creation field, in the investment field, in the contracting field, Mr. Speaker — we also have to ensure that this Sask-first policy applies, Mr. Speaker.

So what the members opposite are yelling at me about, Mr. Speaker — for the interest of the public — is essentially, who's going to do the work, says the Deputy Premier. Who's going to do the work? Well I have no objections, Mr. Speaker, for individuals coming in from out of province to do some work in our province. Absolutely not, Mr. Speaker. But when there's 1,000 people at the Potash Corporation being laid off, when there's 1,500 people on the west side of the province in the oil and gas sector being laid off, when there's people out of the Oilsands Quest project in La Loche being laid off, when there are people in the agriculture sector who are giving up, Mr. Speaker, and moving into the communities, without jobs, Mr. Speaker, then certainly there are people — trained, skilled people — ready to go to work in this province on these projects.

And if we're passing legislation or even contemplating legislation today to encourage Alberta licence plates to drive into this province and do work that thousands of unemployed Saskatchewan people can't do because the contractor who hires them in Lethbridge is also doing the work in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, well that is wrong. That's a consequence, Mr. Speaker, that we have to ensure we understand before we proceed on these projects.

Now, Mr. Speaker, one of the things we're going to find out is . . . The legislation is being reviewed this summer. A lot of the projects that the government is currently funding we assume, because that was the intention, are going to go ahead this summer. We are going to see — without this legislation, Mr. Speaker — the ability of Saskatchewan contractors and Saskatchewan labour to step up to the plate and work with

municipalities, to work with health boards, to work with school boards, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that the funding that's going out for these new projects are able to get in the ground and that Saskatchewan people are the beneficiary today through employment and next year, Mr. Speaker, through the taxes collected by the Government of Saskatchewan.

People want a fair and effective work environment, Mr. Speaker. And government needs to move in that direction when indeed we are dealing with legislation.

And more importantly, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people want to work in a fair and safe environment. Mr. Speaker, there's currently a standard set of rules for job sites. That's in the current legislation. That's not really a part of the future of Saskatchewan, based on what I read in this legislation, at a time, as I said earlier about boosting infrastructure spending, this is a time when we need the least reduction in rules.

It's not that contractors, Mr. Speaker, can't find any work. There's lots of work to be found. We don't need to be reducing the rules on the work sites, Mr. Speaker, to encourage contractors to step up to the plate and work. And workers need to know that the safety in their environment, Mr. Speaker, their work environment, is of the highest quality.

Mr. Speaker, one thing I think that the government has not taken into account that we are going to hear about during the committee hearings is the whole apprenticeship system. Mr. Speaker, I think Saskatchewan residents can claim, have been able to claim for some time that although there's a constant evolution and a need to continue to evolve the apprenticeship system, we in Saskatchewan enjoy one of the best apprenticeship systems in the country. As the minister said earlier about Saskatchewan being unique, well, Mr. Speaker, there are some unique features in our apprenticeship system that other provinces would do well to learn from us.

So, Mr. Speaker, how well thought out is this legislation as far as the apprenticeship system goes? Mr. Speaker, this legislation does not provide us any clear direction whatsoever. So there is a chance, Mr. Speaker — and we're going to have to listen carefully in committee — there is a chance that this legislation threatens the apprenticeship system in the province of Saskatchewan. And that, Mr. Speaker, and some other matters jeopardizes our ability to be first in some things as far as labour legislation goes in the country.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to further add that we want nothing better for Saskatchewan people than to ensure that if there are unemployed people in Saskatchewan, that this government is supporting opportunities for them to go back to work, Mr. Speaker. Not just those in potash and steel and in the oil fields, Mr. Speaker, but also individuals who live within our First Nations communities, Mr. Speaker, who for the last several years have been involved in the new education programs that have been developed to help to move First Nations people, Mr. Speaker, from the poverty that exists within a lot of their communities into a wage-based labour force, Mr. Speaker — education that this government has supported over quite a few years, Mr. Speaker. And now we want to ensure that there are good quality jobs at labour sites, Mr. Speaker, that are fully understood and supported across the piece.

Mr. Speaker, I had mentioned earlier that it is very important that Saskatchewan people understand the direction that the government is taking, which means, Mr. Speaker, we have to ensure that there isn't some other reason for Bill 80 to be brought forward, Mr. Speaker.

We do know that across Canada, Mr. Speaker, parties that share the philosophy of the right wing Conservative parties — the Saskatchewan Party opposite, Mr. Speaker, sharing a lot of that philosophy, a lot of that philosophy, Mr. Speaker — really do believe that the less regulation there is, the better. The less government, the better. It's always interesting to me, Mr. Speaker, that those who say that there should be less government, when they become government, actually do more government work than others, Mr. Speaker.

But there is always an agenda there that, Mr. Speaker, we have to watch closely. An agenda that talks about the race to the bottom. An agenda that results in salaries or wage rates being reduced. An agenda that results in fewer benefits being paid to working people. And, Mr. Speaker, more importantly, an agenda that leads to a reduction in safety requirements, Mr. Speaker.

These are all things that when one looks at the long-term consequences of any particular piece of legislation, that indeed we keep in mind, is there another goal behind this process? Freedom of choice, Mr. Speaker, sounds absolutely wonderful if you're out there. But freedom to reduce or freedom to lose, Mr. Speaker, is not a choice. And Saskatchewan should not be participating in a process that leads to less, especially when we live in such a wonderful province, Mr. Speaker — a province that for years has enjoyed a good, solid, strong balance between labour and business and that has and does attract investment into our province.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are about to engage in a process, a process that sees this legislature being able to do the work that the people sent us here to do. The government has given us a Bill, a Bill that, Mr. Speaker, has a lot of questions attached to it. A process, Mr. Speaker, that will allow the public an opportunity to ask some of those questions themselves and to answer some of those questions, Mr. Speaker, to review the legislation and put on record the concerns that they might have or, more importantly, a direction, Mr. Speaker, that could lead us in another direction. Another direction that in fact will ensure that the legislation that we come out of here with is fair and flexible and more importantly is effective.

Mr. Speaker, we do need greater clarity. Mr. Speaker, we can be unique, but we've got to be unique in a way in which all other provinces would want to follow us. Mr. Speaker, I don't want to be an anomaly. Mr. Speaker, I do not want to be an anomaly if that means you are set aside; you are looked at as being unusual, that you are not doing something that others want to emulate or to follow. Mr. Speaker, we can be unique and being unique means doing the right things.

[15:15]

Mr. Speaker, we do need to attract more investment into this province. We do need to attract more workers. Those workers can be from inside this province, Mr. Speaker, and if we don't

have enough to do the work in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, we can attract workers from elsewhere. But, Mr. Speaker, they have to understand that the rules that apply here to protect Saskatchewan people also apply to them.

The bottom line, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan taxpayers are putting money into a lot of projects around the province. The Saskatchewan taxpayers do have a stake in the work that's being done here, and ultimately Saskatchewan taxpayers should be the ones who benefit from this whole process.

So, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to have been able to say a few words in regards to this legislation. I hope the members opposite who I know have been listening carefully to what I've had to say, I know that every single one of them has asked me a question while I've been on my feet. The rules don't allow me to engage in that sort of debate or discussion with them but, Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased that they have been listening to the remarks that I've made. I hope that those members who serve on the committee this summer and the early fall will listen carefully to those who are going to come before the committee and will put their thoughts on record.

More importantly, Mr. Speaker, I hope that the government will learn from what has happened here over the last few days, will learn that you cannot, you cannot, Mr. Speaker, in government simply assume that you are right all of the time and that you don't need open, public dialogue in the legislative process.

Mr. Speaker, this process exists to allow the public input into the decisions made in this place. Mr. Speaker, we have to enjoy the full benefits of the rules that we have established to allow ourselves to do a job that the public wants us to do. We are a representative Assembly, Mr. Speaker, and when you represent individuals, you are expected to do so in a number of ways. One of those ways is to ensure that the public voice is heard. So, Mr. Speaker, I hope this process that the government has engaged in will be instructive for future activities of all ministries, of all Crowns, of all aspects of work under the influence of the ministers and the members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, with that having been said, I think that I have indicated there are a number of members on this side of the Assembly who wish to comment on this legislation before it gets sent to committee, and therefore, Mr. Speaker, I now move that debate on Bill No. 80, *An Act to amend The Construction Industry Labour Relations Act, 1992*, be now adjourned.

**The Speaker:** — The member from The Battlefords has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 80. Is it the pleasure of Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed. Carried.

## ADJOURNED DEBATES

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 63

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed

motion by the Hon. Ms. Harpauer that **Bill No. 63 — *The Saskatchewan Housing Corporation Amendment Act, 2008*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's indeed a delight and a pleasure to rise to speak to Bill No. 63, an Act to amend the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation. It's essentially a one-page Bill. It's relatively straightforward, but it's one that means an awful lot to an awful lot of people in Saskatchewan, and so I have a few things to say and then we'll take it from there. It's relatively straightforward. It does talk about the affairs, and I'll just quote the Bill:

The affairs and business of the corporation shall be conducted by a board of directors consisting of not less than five persons appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

So it gives it more flexibility. We do support the idea of increasing the number. It was one before, since '95. I think at that point, it was the time when we were going through some tough times and we had to really focus our energies. And now it's important to take a look at this again, and we think that's a fair suggestion.

Not less than five. So we anticipate that it may be more, obviously, than five. We know that we see another Bill before us, the Labour Market Commission, where they're reducing the number from 19 to 11. Is this a trend to reduce the number of people on boards? I'm not sure. But this is a good thing here.

It's relatively straightforward, Mr. Speaker, but what my concern is that largely are we missing some opportunities here to do the kind of things that need to be done for housing in Saskatchewan? Housing, as I said earlier, is such an important area. It's one of the basic, fundamental needs for strong communities, for strong families. And if we miss the opportunity now, what will be those consequences? And sometimes, Mr. Speaker, we talk about those unintended consequences.

I want to say, though, before we get too far into the comments, that I do want to say that this is a very important Act. When it was struck, when it was passed in the '70s, it really was visionary in so many ways. I'll get into the objectives later, but I do want to say that it's allowed a lot of people in Saskatchewan — many people, many communities — to do some really good work and provide affordable housing in our communities.

The housing authorities that we see right across the province are doing outstanding work. The boards volunteer their time to guide their employees in the resources within their communities and those are provided by the government to do an important job in our communities.

And so the corporation as well provides a very important service to the people of Saskatchewan. I think that they deserve a lot of credit, and they've worked many years to build the kind of province that we appreciate. And it's so important for the

different communities and the people who live in those communities, whether they be seniors or people living with disabilities, those with low incomes. I think this is an important feature.

Now we see that in the minister — and I will quote from her speech in just a minute — talks about the drive, the reason for these amendments. Clearly they wanted to act on the recommendations of the Merriman-Pringle report. Many of those recommendations have been acted on. Many were very, very good, very sound.

I am concerned, though, that again we're missing an opportunity, and I will talk about some specific recommendations that could have been worked into this Bill. And I am concerned that we're missing an opportunity here to have those things in the Bill and strengthen the Act. This is one part, but there could have been a few others. And we're missing some real opportunities here.

And still, you know, it's interesting because we talk about moving quickly, and we remember the summer of '07 and prior to the election, and the Sask Party at the time didn't really seem to think that there was an issue. They didn't really move that quickly. It was only till March a year ago that they actually set a task force. And here we are a year hence, and we're debating one amendment to the Act. So I am really concerned, and we know that this is an issue.

Well the minister said on November 19, 2008, and I'll quote, and the quote goes:

Concerns were raised that there was no representation from housing stakeholders or municipalities in the corporation's governance. *The Saskatchewan Housing Corporation Act* amendment that we're requesting, Mr. Speaker, will deal with that concern.

Well, Mr. Speaker, and I will talk about this a bit because we feel that there's a real opportunity to include a much fuller representation on the governance of the Sask Housing Corporation. In fact, Mr. Speaker, we had called in our presentation to Merriman-Pringle that they consider using all the partners within the housing sector. Municipalities clearly are a major role, play a major role; so do business.

But some of the other stakeholders include the First Nations, the FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations], tribal band councils — very important. Will they be represented at the board?

As well, the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan. We pointed out, clearly they've developed some real expertise. And I think of CUMFI [Central Urban Métis Federation Inc.] in Saskatoon, the kind of work they are doing. And the ministry is actually utilizing those folks. Will they be at the table? Very important.

We also think about the North with their unique challenges. Very important that we don't neglect the North.

And, Mr. Speaker, we saw a report just a few weeks ago from the student union at the University of Saskatchewan. Students bring a wealth of knowledge, first-hand experience of what it's

like to be looking for housing. And the student unions, both at the University of Regina and at the University of Saskatchewan and throughout SIAST, I think have a lot of expertise. And as well, the regional colleges, post-secondary institutions. Clearly these folks are the ones who administer the post-secondary institutions, have a lot of expertise. Will they be at the table? We need to think about them.

Housing and homelessness advocates. This is an area that we've seen emerge since the '80s and the '90s. Prior to the '80s, homelessness was not the major issue that it is today. But we have people who can bring an awful lot to the table in terms of governance who should be included. Has the corporation, has the minister considered those? And those who are living in chronic poverty, advocates for those people — clearly these are people we need to have at the table.

Another one, another group that we think is very important are advocates for those people living with disabilities — huge issue. We know that there's work with those . . . that are being done for those living with intellectual disabilities. But we know that the range of disabilities now is quite far-ranging as we really fully understand the meaning of living with disabilities and what it means to have access, a fully accessible housing unit or a home. We also know about safety. We know about inclusive communities. That's so important.

And, Mr. Speaker, of course this is one that we've worked really hard in this province, attracting recent immigrants. How can we make sure that those people who've come to our communities, our province, from around the world and across Canada have safe and affordable housing? Will they be included?

And, Mr. Speaker, we've talked about the business community. We've talked about the builders, those folks, very clearly. They have a role; they have the expertise. But I also want to say the public has a role as well because in our communities we want to make sure the voice is heard and questions that can be asked are asked. And that ensures the transparency and the accountability.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about the Sask Housing Corporation Act. And as I said, this was really quite a visionary piece when it was developed, and I think that in many ways it was ahead of its time. But I do think that in some ways we should really take a look at the objects of the corporation. This is one that I think needs to be updated and we have seen this government take time to update. Sometimes I have some questions about how they've updated some things, but here's one that I think, now that we've got the Act opened and they're amending it, in one way I think that some of the things could have been done here as well.

One of the objects of the corporation include “. . . to evaluate housing needs and conditions and the adequacy of housing accommodation in Saskatchewan.”

This is an important role for the Sask Housing Corporation and clearly this Act says that and gives it the mandate to do that.

But the problem we see — and this is one of the concerns and I raised it last week and I'll raise it again today — when we've seen the minister respond to the Merriman-Pringle report . . .

And clearly she's responded to some of the recommendations, but we've not seen an overall plan, an overall statement of their world view of housing in Saskatchewan. We don't have an overall statement of benchmarks, where they see the province going in five or ten years. We've seen that called for by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, a 10-year plan. We need to see that and I'm hoping that we see that in a few short weeks.

We also see another recommendation goes on:

to promote and encourage and undertake the development of measures that will provide adequate housing options for all Saskatchewan residents and will increase the affordability of housing to those in need.

Again very important. But now, you know, the modern language is not so much we talk about options and you pick and choose your option, but we talk about a housing continuum. That as we move through our different stages as families or individuals, students, seniors, it's clearly we have different needs. And I think we need to have that work done so there are options for people along that continuum.

[15:30]

A third object: “to undertake, facilitate and promote the development of housing accommodation for [seniors] . . . the disabled and other groups or persons who require assistance.” Now, Mr. Speaker, just a clarification here. It does say the disabled, and I think this would be an opportunity for the minister to update the language. We probably should be talking about those living with disabilities. And we know that this was a sensitive area for the government last spring, and so this would be one word that we think should be modified.

And we want to think that, as I said earlier, that the definition of those living with disabilities, we've come to appreciate and understand that that spans quite a range of disabilities, whether it's physical disabilities or those living with intellectual disabilities, those who have mental health illnesses, challenges — very important that we include that whole range. And we're prepared to do that, particularly in the objects of the corporation, that we're not limited by the language that was used in the '70s. Now that we're in the 2009-2010 years, we should be thinking more about that.

Mr. Speaker, I think this one is very important. It talks about “to promote, undertake and facilitate the repair . . . and improvement of housing accommodation.” That this is one that actually I think would be really innovative. And this is a recommendation made by Merriman and Pringle, when it talks about incorporating energy-efficient building practices into affordable housing whenever possible.

It would be a real sign to the builders, the communities, that we are taking sustainability seriously here in Saskatchewan. There has been a lot of talk about this. And we know actually Sask Housing has been a real innovator in this area, but I think we need to include that in the objects. And a statement like that would go a long way to send a signal that Saskatchewan is a little greener, and we're doing that through updating our language in the objects.

And in fact, Mr. Speaker, we see that there's a debate at the federal level that talks about supporting a national housing strategy, that talks about sustainable and environmentally sound design standards for new housing. We think, what a wonderful opportunity here that we could include language like that when we're talking about repair or building, improving housing accommodation. So, so important.

And that also leads into the next object: to encourage, promote public and private initiatives in housing matters. What a wonderful time, an opportunity, to say sustainability really is important — so important that we're putting it into the objects of the Sask Housing Corporation.

Here it goes onto the next object, the innovation of new housing types, construction methods, forms of housing ownership, and evaluation of the application to housing needs in Saskatchewan. Wouldn't we be a leader if we made that a real sustainability statement? Just added a few words, but to the people who are looking to the Sask Housing for innovation this would be important. I know from our experience in Saskatoon that this is something that they're looking at whenever they talked about building, that we need to have that as part of our mandate, to be part of the objects.

Now again here you go. And I think here's an opportunity at yet another object to stimulate and encourage research and education for constructive competition within the housing industry. To make it a little more green would be just a wonderful thing.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that there's some real opportunities here. But as I read through that, there were a couple of words that I did not hear, and that was talking about addressing the issues of homelessness and shelter — that there's some responsibility that the Sask Housing Corporation has to ensure that no one is homeless in Saskatchewan. And here's an opportunity that we could include that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when these objects were first developed in the '70s, again we had a federal housing strategy, and this played right into that. There was a partnership between the municipalities, the province, and the federal government. That fell apart. We knew that that happened in the '80s. And now's the opportunity to strengthen that and say, what are the new challenges that we have? And of course we know homelessness is a challenge we have in Saskatchewan, a challenge right across Canada, and we could have some real leadership with that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to take a look at another part of the Bill here. And I think here, this speaks to the leadership in the '70s when they saw the important role of housing in our communities and, in particular, with students and the type of housing we have. And I did appreciate that the Minister Responsible for Sask Housing did make an announcement regarding student housing just a few short weeks ago, because we've been asking about that. But clearly section 19(1) talks about the role that the province has to provide and to allow for, and to play a role in providing student housing. So clearly there is a mandate and we need to see more of that.

Now the administration at the U of S has talked about they

would like to bring this up to the national average, which I think that's about 12 or 15 per cent. They have about, I think, a shortfall of about 800 units or beds that they need to get to. We've come up with 400; we need another 800. Clearly more work needs to be done on that. Co-operative housing again speaks to how innovative this Act was — very, very important, Mr. Speaker.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about some of the other things that this legislation is missing. And I've talked a little bit about the energy efficient building practices. There's a real opportunity to include that in some shape or form. We know — and this was raised back in November and already there is discussions happening in Saskatoon within the CBO sector — about how can we help create an emergency tenant fund. Now this is the actual recommendation from Merriman-Pringle, and I'll quote:

Create an "Emergency Tenant Fund" to provide repayable short-term assistance to renters who are having difficulties in making payments.

I think this is a real innovation. We know that this is happening both in Toronto and Calgary. I've had calls to my own office talking about tenants who are short one month's rent and they're going to be evicted. If there is a way to make this happen, I think this is really important.

So one question I will have for the minister when we move this to committee is: are there legislative requirements to allow for Sask Housing to be a partner in this? I am not sure if that's the case. I don't know. But hopefully there will be expertise who can answer that question in committee, because I think this is an important thing. But we don't want to lose the opportunity, when the community obviously feels there is a need, that we can't do it because the legislation won't allow us to do it.

Here we have an opportunity today to have the Act amended. It is open, and why not make sure that whatever amendments need to happen, happen — happens within the sitting right away. Clearly this is one that Merriman-Pringle felt was important — so important it included it within their recommendations. They saw it as a real innovation and I think it's very, very important.

Well, Mr. Speaker, as well as the two or three recommendations I wanted to speak to, the other one was making sure that we value the partnerships, and I've already addressed that. I went through the list of people, of groups that we felt were important to include. And clearly, Merriman-Pringle, and I'll quote their recommendation and . . . I'll quote it directly. I quote:

Enhance partnerships with community based, First Nations and Métis organizations to create integrated place-based housing solutions as part of broader community revitalization efforts.

Here is a real opportunity to invite these folks to be part of the solutions at the board table, at the governance table. And I really am hoping that that's the case. But I am concerned that, while it's not spelled out in the Act, it's very general. And who will be on the board? I have some concerns about that, Mr. Speaker.

So I think that there's some real opportunities here. I think this is very, very important that we take a look at some of these things and act on those things. We do see that many of the things have been acted on. I think that I would have wished for us to have taken a look at more of the Act so that it would have been . . . we would have seized the opportunity, that we're not going to let at least another year go by. Because some of those challenges, people just can't wait that long.

Mr. Speaker, I would say that, for example, I just want to make the case — and we made it last Thursday — and I just want to say that this report that I just thought was outstanding . . . from the University of Saskatchewan Students' Union, was outstanding. And this shows the kind of calibre, the quality of people who could be on that board. Here is an outstanding report called living well, learning well, and I just think that it just covers all the bases.

Students these days are so articulate. They are so thoughtful. And when I look through the issues that they talk about, I think this is an important discussion at any board table. But particularly the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation board, these people would bring an awful lot of insight into it. When they talk about the student housing, talk about new and first-year students, the challenges they have, students living in residence, rural and northern students, I think that's an important discussion to have. International and out-of-province students, we've heard concerns that people have come, students have come . . . well, haven't even come to the province. Because as soon as they hear that student housing here is virtually non-existent, they decide not to come.

Now I know they have other challenges like the graduate tax exemption — the graduate students have. Here's yet another example of a challenge that graduate students have. Of course Aboriginal students face specific unique challenges too. Students are talking about their concerns. We know lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual students face unique issues, and we talked about that issue actually during members' statements.

Students with disabilities, very important that we meet their needs because clearly they're going to play a large role as our economy grows and they take their rightful place in our economy. Student parents and graduate students clearly have unique needs.

Mr. Speaker, this is not articulated well, and I have not heard the minister talk about housing as a right. We know that it's a right. We know that the United Nations . . . We have signed on as a country talking about our basic rights as a society, as individuals. And housing is a right, but we tend to gloss over that. And I think that needs to be discussed as well.

We talk about specific housing problems. Shannon Dyck in this report really clearly outlines some of the challenges that we have — housing costs versus availability; rents, rent caps, rent increases; landlord accountability; and student loans. And we talk about the government component, whether it's provincial, or now we talk about the municipal role at the table with Sask Housing. But we also know the federal government has a huge role and that's so important, whether they're at the political level with the cabinet, the federal cabinet or with their offices.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that I think this is an important document. I am looking forward to the next few months, and I have a few questions. We know that the housing policy framework for Saskatchewan that was launched in 2004 was a five-year plan. It expired now, and we're looking forward to see what the next framework is. We have, as I said earlier, a series of recommendations that have been enacted, and we appreciate that. There has been some helpful things. But we have not seen an overall framework or world view from the minister about what housing is going to be like in Saskatchewan, and we need to see that happen.

And so, Mr. Speaker, with that, we do have some specific questions that we would like answered in the committee. I've identified some of those today. I will be asking about the emergency tenant fund, whether there was an opportunity that we missed because we didn't amend the legislation to include that. We'll be asking about the minister's intentions to ensure that all the partners will be at the table, that there's good representation, good diversity. Who will be at the table? What's the government's intention of that? So we need to hear that out because this legislation is kind of thin, and it's not very clear about the government's intentions. And clearly, Mr. Speaker, as I've said before, what is the intention? Seeing that we may have missed the opportunity to include sustainability and green innovation as part of Sask Housing Corporation's mandate, will that take another form? I will be asking questions about that, and I'll be asking a few other questions as we get closer to that time in committee.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the committee deliberations. And at this point we're prepared to have the Bill go to committee. Thank you.

[15:45]

**The Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister of Social Services that Bill No. 63, *The Saskatchewan Housing Corporation Amendment Act, 2008* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed.

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

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

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It would be referred to the Human Services Committee.

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

#### Bill No. 44

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 44** — *The Agreements of Sale Cancellation Amendment Act, 2008* be



now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Quennell:** — I rise to speak briefly on the legislation to amend the agreement for sales cancellation Act. The intent, I think, on the part of the government was to clarify the legislative intent in the Act to ensure that the Act read what I think the legislature intended it to say, and which it didn't say with sufficient clarity. Unfortunately the government's first pass at making the Act clearer failed, Mr. Speaker. And in fact the amendments simply just raised more questions about how the Act was to operate and how the amendments to other legislation set out in this Bill were meant to operate, and what was being referred to by the time period set out in the legislation, Mr. Speaker.

The advantage of this type of Bill is that it deals with issues that lawyers deal with in their practice every day. Like some other legislation that comes out of Justice, it deals with issues and conduct and areas of business with which lawyers, in assisting the Saskatchewan public, are quite well versed, Mr. Speaker.

So this type of legislation, unlike other government legislation, has dozens more eyes looking at it after it's been introduced in the legislature. What can get past, what can get past the department or the ministry, Mr. Speaker — what can get past, clearly get past the minister in this case — doesn't necessarily get past all the real estate lawyers that deal with the legislation, Mr. Speaker. A number of members have raised issues about this Bill with me, with other members of the opposition, and it's quite clear that they've raised them with the Ministry of Justice and with the minister.

I guess the minister has written to me and said, well the legislation that is in front of the House for second reading has to be amended, and these are the proposed amendments that the government will be bringing to the committee so that the Bill clarifying the legislation in respect to agreements for sale in fact does clarify it, instead of making it even less clear, Mr. Speaker.

And I don't think it was the intention of the government to make the water muddier. They were doing that. It was caught by people who practice in the area. I understand that the minister practiced in the area, but I think it kind of got past him obviously, what would have been in the original legislation. But it has been caught by others.

And it's an important principle I think of drafting legislation and passing legislation more importantly, Mr. Speaker, that what we do, we do deliberately; what we do, we do with intent and we do with a purpose. Not all the legislation that has been in front of this Chamber, and I think of *The Witness Protection Act*, necessarily has a purpose beyond politics, but this certainly did. And that purpose should be fulfilled.

That said, Mr. Speaker, we're happy to see that lawyers in the province have brought matters to light. I think that's one of the values of having some delay in this Chamber before matters go to committee, before legislation gets rushed through, to have members of the public who are knowledgeable and interested take a look at the legislation. And happy to see that the

government has conceded that point on construction labour legislation, Mr. Speaker, and that there'll be public hearings there. That's a much larger example of the value of receiving public input. But this is another case of receiving public input.

I am reminded of a recent trip to New Zealand, Mr. Speaker, where I did visit the house of parliament in Wellington and was interested to hear that legislation after first reading goes to committee, that every piece of legislation is subject to public hearings.

Now many times legislation of a housekeeping nature doesn't get any interest from the public, but the legislation is advertised as to when it's going to be before the committee. People attend. It is not necessary to be a New Zealand citizen to attend the committee hearings, and it's not necessary to be a voter. The youngest person to speak before a committee in New Zealand on legislation was 12 years old, so far, Mr. Speaker.

So all that legislation receives a kind of public examination in committee as a matter of default, as a matter of course. Whereas in this legislature, we have to argue for that kind of attention to be given to legislation. We're successful in the case of Bill 80, the construction labour legislation. But that should be the default position in my view, that certainly a province, Saskatchewan, not divided into two islands as New Zealand is, could well afford to give this kind of public attention, probably after second reading, to every Bill.

And this is another example of the value of doing that, Mr. Speaker, because these matters were caught by an attentive profession. But one could understand that the kind of mistakes that were made here in drafting and the wording that got through the Ministry of Justice could be in other pieces of legislation that are in front of us that aren't as well studied by the people who have to enact that legislation and put it into force. And some legislation that is used on a daily basis by lawyers was examined, and carefully examined, and has been the result of at least some amendments coming from the government side of the House when the matter gets to committee.

The important principle in this Bill for us in opposition is that it not change what has been a bedrock principle in the province of Saskatchewan for many decades. And that is that in the case of one's home, that the only thing that can possibly be at risk — and it should be protected; there should be safeguards in place, and there are safeguards in place in Saskatchewan — but what should only be at risk is, under extreme circumstances and after all legal protections and all the opportunities have been provided, all that one can lose is one's home, that one cannot be pursued for the deficiency owed by the owner or the purchaser of the home to anybody else.

And that's been safeguarded in legislation in the province of Saskatchewan for a long period of time, Mr. Speaker, and I don't think there's any controversy about that. But we want to make sure that that principle is protected here. And I raise that, Mr. Speaker, because I'm not sure that the changes that the government is making put that at risk.

But on the other hand, the drafting here, the government has to admit by its own actions in this matter that the drafting here was

not perfectly done. And we don't want, through inadvertence, to put a question in any court case in respect to the unfortunate circumstance where somebody is losing their home, the principle that they cannot be pursued for the deficiency. And that is set out in legislation that is amended by this Bill, Mr. Speaker.

So that is the bedrock principle for the opposition: to ensure that the government is not even inadvertently — because that's of cold comfort to anyone who's affected, Mr. Speaker — even inadvertently making a situation worse instead of making it better, Mr. Speaker. And I would have set out that principle and the value of that principle to this NDP opposition in any case, Mr. Speaker, but I think it's highlighted by the fact that this legislation which, if it had any value, the value was to clarify legislative intent in respect to cancellation of agreements for sale.

And it doesn't give you a lot of confidence about . . . legislation coming from the government side was so hastily drawn up that it did not clarify that. As a matter of fact, it raised questions and now has to be amended in committee. It doesn't inspire a lot of confidence in government legislation, Mr. Speaker, when the legislation that is brought to us for the sole purpose of clarifying people's rights in fact raises so many questions that . . . I think it's three amendments the government is making in response to objections and concerns raised by the profession. And that's before we get to committee, Mr. Speaker, that we know about those.

So not a lot of confidence inspired in the government's due diligence and care in bringing legislation before this Assembly. Obviously some attention has to be given to make sure there aren't other issues with this legislation that have not been caught but, Mr. Speaker, that work is going to have to be done in committee. And we are prepared to do that work now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is the motion presented by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 44, *The Agreements of Sale Cancellation Amendment Act, 2008* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed. Carried.

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

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

I recognize the Minister of Justice.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — I designate that Bill No. 44, *The Agreements of Sale Cancellation Act, 2008* be referred to the Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice Committee.

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

## Bill No. 46

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

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to enter in the debate on Bill No. 46, *An Act to amend The Labour Market Commission Act*.

I think this is a pretty significant piece of legislation that we're talking about here. I know this government has talked a lot about how it strives to ensure that it will increase its transparency and accountability through all its actions. And here we have a piece that I would say is actually moving backwards.

It is somewhat ironic that just a minute ago I was on my feet talking about Sask Housing and how they were increasing their board from one to at least five, and here we're going from 19 down to 11 — cutting people out. And so I have many of those same concerns. I did have a concern that that Bill was kind of thin. And this Bill in front of us is a two-pager.

And it does talk about specifically who will be on the board, and of course that's been missing from some other pieces of legislation where they just say not less than — in that case — not less than five. And here you have not more than 11. So we know that it could be eight, nine, something like that, but it won't be more than 11. And here are the . . . who will be on the board, if you take a look at the new section no. 4 where it outlines who these folks are.

And of course many of my colleagues have raised the issue really around a couple of key points. I think there are three key points here. One is the consultation that's gone into this legislation, which is becoming a real hallmark of the government and their style of what they call consultation, or lack thereof. A lot of people have a lot of questions.

So we'll talk about the consultation. We'll talk also in terms of the role of the new Labour Market Commission within Enterprise Saskatchewan — one branch of the government that we don't know an awful lot about. We're not sure how effective it is. And while we had high hopes for the Labour Market Commission as a stand-alone commission, now that it's within Enterprise Saskatchewan, I have some deep concerns.

[16:00]

And the one that's particularly concerning for me, and I want to talk about this right now, is that it eliminates the representation from the social economy completely. And I would be curious to know how they determined that. Why did they do that? And that will be a question we have in committee.

I know, representing the core communities of Saskatoon, we think the social economy plays a large role in the strength of our communities, and we think that this is alarming. This is a

dangerous signal that the government is sending to the CBO, the community-based organizations who are particularly interested in economic development, whether that be housing, agricultural production, that type of thing. What does it mean when they're saying we don't value that any more. We don't value that at all; in fact you're out of the picture.

I don't know if there were consultations beforehand, if there will be a new role for those folks. We wait and see in the next few days, in terms of the budget, what this really means. But to be cut out like that and we see . . . We know this sector has been very successful throughout the country. We think particularly Quebec has been a real leader in this, and Saskatoon actually has been as well. This was some real leadership that we saw in how we strengthen our communities and community economic development.

So now to take out this social economy is really, really a backward step. And so I just want to read into the record from the explanatory notes for Bill No. 46 of 2008, what does social economy mean? And under 3(e) and I'll quote: "'social economy' means the not-for-profit sector that seeks to enhance the social, economic and environmental conditions of communities and includes the voluntary sector."

And I know that this government is loathe to talk about the voluntary sector. It seems to have crossed out that language wherever it can. It talks now about the CBO, or the community-based sector, which is fair enough. I think that's a very worthwhile name, but it doesn't mean you cut it out, period. And this is a real concern. And I'm not sure what kind of initiatives the minister for Enterprise Saskatchewan, now that he has the responsibility, or I guess, non-responsibility or just . . . He said, I'm not touching it. I don't know what he said.

But this is a real backwards step for a province that was showing some real leadership. We know that in many ways community-based organizations pay a huge role when it comes to housing. And so what does that mean? That we can expect no further interest from community-based organizations in terms of this?

We know the government made a big deal last year about a summit. I don't know if they had at that point in the summit actually talked to many of the folks who were there talking about that they were actually going to be cut out. We know, for example, there are . . . Actually as I think about this, I can tell you many examples. One I can think about that deals with a recycling, rejuvenating computers that gets kids back into the workforce. Are they now going to be cut out? Clearly they're not wanted at the governance table though, and I think this is hugely, hugely unfortunate.

This description . . . Section 4 is very thorough in terms of, for example, (c) when it talks about the:

. . . three individuals from post-secondary educational institutions that are recognized by the minister responsible for the administration of *The Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training Act*, at least one of whom must be appointed to represent post-secondary educational institutions operated or administered by First Nations or Métis persons or organizations.

Very thorough. That's a very good definition.

We don't see that in some of the other Acts. Why is it, how is it that this government can bring forward on one day a piece of legislation that has a section like that, and then in other pieces of legislation, nothing? Here's the one, section (b): "three individuals, at least one of whom must be of First Nations or Métis ancestry, representing business in Saskatchewan." And (a), ". . . representing labour in Saskatchewan." That's all you get?

We know the workforce is very diverse. There are many unique challenges faced by the workers in Saskatchewan. Women have specific issues that they would like to raise. Families have specific issues that they would like to raise. Recent immigrants have specific issues. Those living with disabilities have specific issues. Students who are about to go into the workforce have specific issues. Are they not going to be at all at this table here? I'm really, I'm really disappointed with this.

Likewise with business. We know the business community in Saskatchewan is very diverse. We know there are independent businesses. There is the small-business sector. We know there are multinationals in this province — large, large corporations. We have some very different unique circumstances. We know there are businesses and labour who have their labour standards governed or their bargaining regulations governed by the federal regulations. Some are governed by the provincial regulations.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think while on one hand this seems to be . . . Well not one hand — I think there's some big holes. I won't even go that far. I think there's some big holes and some big gaps and so I am concerned about this.

And I'm concerned about, you know, when I look at, when I went on the website, when we saw what was the intention of the Labour Market Commission and we saw the partnership. Clearly when you have a rich and full dialogue at the table, you can have a real building of partnerships, and I don't see this happening. Clearly this government has picked some winners and some losers. When they go out and consult, some people seem to have the ear of government and some just don't seem to be able to get their voice heard at all.

And I look at what the objectives of the commission were as defined by the Act:

to provide advice to the minister on provincial, regional and sectoral labour market issues, trends and strategies.

So here you have three unique needs: at the provincial level; at the regional level; and also at the sectoral level. Whether it be public labour issues and business issues, private, there's different sectors that need to be addressed.

One, and I think this is huge:

to foster co-operation among labour, business, First Nations and Métis organizations, training institutions and government to develop labour market strategies [and] policies . . .

So how do you foster that co-operation? By taking five people away from the board? I think that's a huge mistake. We know the five: two are from labour; two are from business; and the one voice from the social economy sector is now completely gone, and I think that's a huge mistake. That's one that needs to be there for sure. I think all five need to be there.

One that we heard, and we heard this an awful lot when we were in government, it needs to be more nimble on the research and provide answers to government and to business and to labour about the needs, about how we can meet our labour market challenges. And clearly that was met through one of the objectives — to research and provide analysis of provincial, regional, sectoral labour market issues, trends, and strategies. So hugely important.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think this is clearly a step backwards. This could have been an opportunity. Again we've spoken about this — missed opportunities. If the government clearly wanted to do something to rejuvenate the Labour Market Commission, that's okay with us. I think that's a positive thing. You can always go back and say, are we doing the best job we can? But to do this kind of legislation without the consultation is clearly a step backwards. And it's clearly some missed opportunities because we probably could have strengthened it. And here we have an opportunity that's missed, Mr. Speaker.

As I look at the website — we printed it out — one of the quotes that I say that I really appreciate is to:

. . . is best achieved through a partnership between labour, business, education and training institutes, government, and other stakeholders to essentially connect the dots . . .

Connect the dots. And I love that phrase because I clearly think there is a problem here about connecting the dots. or some dots are more important than other dots. And we see one dot, the social economy, being completely left out. And we know that there seems to be a reduction from one other individual to represent the public — the old one, there was to be two. We think that's a missed opportunity.

So, Mr. Speaker, some of these dots seem to be more important than the others. And clearly that alarms us. And we look for a better, better work from this government. When it talks about . . . And it gets up many times and talks about transparency and accountability. How can that be when you're reducing the number of people at the table?

Well when you have so many important issues, so many issues that have substance . . . And clearly the message is — you know what? — we're rolling you over into Enterprise Saskatchewan. There's not going to be so many of you at the table so we don't really want to hear about the issues. Those thoughts that we thought were important, aren't so important any more. So, Mr. Speaker, I just think that this government is missing the boat.

When it talks about consultations, clearly it doesn't really mean it. They don't really mean it. And I am very interested in hearing what the minister has to say about the social economy when we get to the committee. Because I want to know what does he envision for that role, the community-based organizations that do get involved with economic activity

within the communities, particularly sustainable economic activities and those that matter an awful lot to the people in our communities, such as housing. What is the plan here? I think this is clearly out of step.

Another issue that I see happening here is a bit of a disconnect, even within government here. We see now the Labour Market Commission going over to Enterprise Saskatchewan. It was with the part-time Minister of Labour and Advanced Education. He has lost this job to the Minister of Enterprise Saskatchewan. That's an interesting thing.

I don't know what happened there, whether there was some arm wrestling or what happened. What's the logic behind that? I don't know. You know, the members over there think that may have happened. I'm not sure. But I know that this doesn't seem to have a lot of rhyme or reason to it, Mr. Speaker. I think there's some big question marks out there.

And again, if we're not connecting all the dots, if some of the dots are going to be left, if we're not going to be interested in some of the dots, I don't know what the rush is here. Why don't we get out and talk to the people.

Here we saw a summit last fall throughout the province, talking to those CBO groups about some of the challenges they have. And we know that this government when it was running in the campaign, particularly talked about they wanted to talk to the CBO organizations that had issues or worked with young people and those who were vulnerable who were not making the connection to the labour market. And now we see the outcome of that. They're just going to be cut loose. They're done. They're history. That's the end of it.

And I think that's alarming, Mr. Speaker, because we think we could do better. We know this government has the resources. We know that they could be providing support to community-based organizations. Some of the things they've done in the past have been quite alarming, and we've seen some of these actions after last year's budget. Are we going to see those same things happen this year after this year's budget?

We were concerned, Mr. Speaker, about how we heard about Station 20 after the fact. What a cut that was. No announcement about that but about a week after the budget we heard that Station 20 was history. A very important innovative group in Saskatoon that were really meeting the needs, and that could have been called one of the social-economic drivers in Saskatoon. But it's now history. We think this is a real problem, Mr. Speaker. And it clearly . . . You know, Mr. Speaker, they're very sensitive still about this issue because they really, really did the wrong thing at that point, Mr. Speaker.

[16:15]

So, Mr. Speaker, with that, as I said there, we'll have some questions about this. I will be asking the Minister of Enterprise Saskatchewan what is his world, what is his view about the social economy? What are we going to do about that? Is it just done? Is it over with? And if that's the case, I think that's really a disappointment. We'll be asking about that.

We'll be asking about the consultations that took place. What

were the nature of that, and what can we expect in the future? I am interested in hearing that, because if there is information to be shared, I am very interested in that.

Mr. Speaker, I am so disappointed that the number has been decreased. We saw in one hand, one Bill that's going on not less than five. And now, we have not more than 11. So I guess the magic number is somewhere between 5 and 11. And so I don't know what that is here for, for this government. But I think they need to be more consistent in how they talk about how they set up the representation from the public.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 46, *The Labour Market Commission Act*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon Centre has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 64. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed. Carried.

### Bill No. 9

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

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

**Mr. Harper:** — Thank you. It truly is a pleasure and an honour for me to have the privilege to enter into this debate this afternoon on behalf of the fine people of Regina Northeast.

And this is, I think, a very important piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker. This is a piece of legislation that fundamentally changes the position of a very sound public policy. This Bill has taken on a bit of a life of its own. It's already developed a nickname in the community of the double-dipping Bill. And basically this is what it allows, it allows people the ability to double dip within our system.

Mr. Speaker, section 27 of *The Superannuation Amendment Act, 2008* and all the previous Acts was there for a reason. Section 27 was there to prevent employees who would have the ability to collect superannuation from the Government of Saskatchewan while being re-employed by the Government of Saskatchewan or continue to work for their employer without actually retiring, — which would be allowed under this provision, Mr. Speaker — preventing someone from double-dipping and preventing the taxpayer from really basically paying twice for the same service.

And that's what is, I think, at stake here, Mr. Speaker, is there's been a long-time held opinion that civil servants of this great province of ours . . . Which, by the way, Mr. Speaker, I don't think anybody has anything ill to say about the civil servants of our province. They do a yeoman's job. They do wonderful work on behalf of the taxpayers of Saskatchewan. But there is a belief

that when they retire that that should be the end of their ability to continue to double dip or the ability for them to continue to draw on the taxpayers of this province.

The changes to this legislation would set that stage, would allow them to — a civil servant, for example — to retire and then to be hired back on and basically do the same job for the same wage. Only the reality is, drawing his pension plus being paid, it would be getting twice what they're entitled to, to do that job. And they would be doing that at the expense of the taxpayers of this great province.

Mr. Speaker, the way the Act now reads, an employee can — and let's just use an accurate example of an employee working for the civil service here in Saskatchewan who would be maybe paid \$200,000 a year in salary — would be able to work for the province and do some very valuable and appreciated work. Don't get me wrong there. And their services to the people of Saskatchewan is well documented, and we have a very good civil service, a very strong civil service. But this legislation would allow them to move to a situation where upon retirement they'd be entitled to draw 70 per cent of their wage as a pension. Then they'd be able to go back and do that same work on a salaried level.

So drawing 70 per cent of their salary to do that work — as on pension they would receive about \$140,000 a year — then they could go back and do the same job they were doing for the same 200,000. So reality is they would be drawing from the taxpayer of this great province twice. They'd be drawing once through their pension and once through their salary . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Totalling three forty.

**Mr. Harper:** — And my learned colleague over here was quick with his math — soon that would add up to be 340,000. So I appreciate that, because that's a significant amount of money.

But the real problem here, the real issue here at hand is the ability to double dip, the ability to draw twice on the taxpayers to do the same job they're doing now. That's what the flaw in this particular legislation is, is that it opens the door, it opens the door to allow that double-dipping to take place. That is a long-time, fundamental understanding in this province that that would not be the case, where an employee of the Government of Saskatchewan could take their retirement, they would take that retirement and they would be severed then from the ability to go back and do that same job for the same amount of compensation.

And that is, I suppose, the big issue that we have here with this particular piece of legislation, is that it really opens the door and perhaps even, Mr. Speaker, one could say it even misses the opportunity. It misses the opportunity to set a standard — a high standard — for the civil servants of this great province and that could be measured against that of other provinces.

And it's unfortunate that this government hasn't seen the light, I suppose, to take that opportunity to ensure that we do have those standards. But in fact they're bringing in legislation that really weakens the Act and opens up the real potential for double-dipping, and really opens up the potential for civil servants who would be able to retire, they would be able to

retire at 70 per cent of their salary; draw that 70 per cent of their salary as pension; and then go back and do their job as they've been doing for many years at the salary level of reasonable and fair compensation.

And I believe that, Mr. Speaker, we have to have fair and reasonable compensation for our civil servants. They do a great job. They do a wonderful job in this province, and if we want to continue on that high standard, the quality work that we're used to in this great province from our civil servants, then we need to pay reasonable compensation for those efforts in order to attract the brightest, the young, the very capable people to continue to bolster our ranks of our civil servants so that we as Saskatchewan citizens, but also Saskatchewan here, would enjoy their talents and their abilities.

And basically the talents that they bring to the workplace — the education, the experience — they bring to the workplace, it demands, it simply demands reasonable compensation. And I don't think anybody would argue with that.

I think the issue here is this particular piece of legislation opens the door, opens the door to abuse. It opens the door to double-dipping. It opens the door to allowing individuals to retire, to draw 70 per cent of their salary, and then go back to the workplace and do the same job they've been doing and continue to receive the same compensation.

So that is really a double hit on the taxpayers of this province, and I don't think that's right. I think most people in this province would not see that as being right. They would see that as not being fair and reasonable. And I think what we're looking forward here is to have the legislation that would reflect fairness, would be reasonable to the taxpayers of this province. After all, they're the ones that are footing the bill.

Mr. Speaker, you may or may not be aware that in many pieces of legislation, if you received a severance payment, you cannot continue to collect that severance payment if you go back to work for the Government of Saskatchewan. And that seems reasonable. I don't think anybody would object to that.

And I know some folks myself who were former employees of the government, who through negotiations came up with a settlement of their severance package, and a part of that severance package was an understanding that during the period of severance, if they were to find themselves re-employed with the Government of Saskatchewan, then they would lose that portion of the severance package that would commence with their employment date. And I think that's fair and those people who've received those packages, when negotiating this, they believe that to be fair too. I mean, if you're going to go back and work for your employer, then you shouldn't be getting a severance as well as receiving a payment for your work being done.

And I think that probably that's the biggest flaw in this particular piece of legislation is that it opens that door to allow for that — lack of a better term — double-dipping that allows people who would be able to continue to receive their salary because they're still doing the job, but because they have retired or moved down the road towards retirement, they'd be able to draw their pension. So then the taxpayers of Saskatchewan

would be basically on the hook for both, making payments for their pension as well as making payments for their services being rendered.

It's exactly that same principle, it's exactly that same premise, that you cannot double dip. You cannot collect twice for performing the services for this province. You shouldn't be able to collect twice for doing the same job. I mean this is basically what it is. If you're doing the job for the good people of this province and have been doing so, seek retirement — and fair enough; after a good, lengthy record of service to the province, retirement is an option that should be available.

But it shouldn't be a retirement where you retire one day, say on a Friday you retire, and Monday you come back to do the same job now at a salaried level. You're collecting your pension which is about 70 per cent of your salary and then you end up taking the whole salary again. So what you end up doing is having somebody who's receiving really 240 per cent, which is even more than the suggestion of double-dipping. It would be even higher than that.

And we're not talking about a huge number of people. I think we're talking about some 1,900 people that find themselves in that situation. But it's the principle, Mr. Speaker, that you open the door and you allow this principle to be established. And then who's next?

You may find those people who for whatever reasons find themselves in the need of to leave the employment of the Government of Saskatchewan, and they do so through a severance package method of exiting. And as most severance packages that I've been aware of will include the clause simply that if you regain employment with the province of Saskatchewan, the Government of Saskatchewan, that your severance package will end the date, the commencement of your re-employment with the Government of Saskatchewan. And that's only fair.

And if you talk to, which I've had the opportunity to talk to a number of people who've found themselves in that situation over the last number of years here, they will be the first to agree that that's a fair and reasonable solution. I mean I suppose, yes, we would all, I suppose, in our moment of human greed . . . They would ask them if they would like to have both. Well sure they'd like to have both. They'd like to have their severance package and continue to work for their salary. I mean that would, I suppose, there's a little bit of human greed in all of us that would say, that'd be great.

But there's also a sense of fairness in all of us that would see that this is not fair. It's not fair for the Government of Saskatchewan to be on the hook for both, making compensation for either the severance package exodus or the retirement exodus and finding themselves also with the need to maintain the salary.

So that, Mr. Speaker, is probably, I guess you could say, the bottom line of what this particular piece of legislation is all about. And it's different, I suppose, if an employee retires from their particular job and goes on to work for a different government or a different company. And that's acceptable. That's quite fine. That's quite all right.

I think what we're concerned about here is the real potential, the real opportunity for a person or persons within our civil service to have reached the magic age of retirement or perhaps being offered even an opportunity of early retirement, take that opportunity, and then return the very next day to the very same desk doing the very same job they have been for a number of years and being paid salary for it while they're drawing their pension. So that would be, that seems to be the number one issue here.

And it's a long-held premise in the public sector in Canada — over the last number of years it's been watered down somewhat — but that the onus is on the employee to tell the government or the employer whether or not they're returning to work. And that's basically what the severance package agreements have been that I have been aware of, having in fact just most recently talked to a good friend of mine who is a former employee of the Government of Saskatchewan here, who found himself let go a few months ago with the change of government. He was one of those victims of this government's decision to rid, I suppose, the civil service of that particular individual.

[16:30]

And it took a little while. I think it took something like four months or five months of negotiations. Unfortunately he did have to get a lawyer involved, and they did have to have serious negotiations with the government lawyers. But at the end of the day they did come up with a severance package, a fair and reasonable — at least he believes it was a fair and reasonable — severance package.

And part of that severance package, part of the agreement is that if he finds himself re-employed with the Government of Saskatchewan — you know, one of the departments or an agency of the Government of Saskatchewan — that he will then notify the government officials here that he is now re-employed with the Government of Saskatchewan and that his severance package compensation will end the very day of his commencement of his re-employment. And that's fair and reasonable. I think that's pretty well an accepted clause whenever you look at severance packages, whether it be in this province or elsewhere.

And we can always talk about the employment environment, Mr. Speaker. And yes, we have a tight market employment atmosphere, and I think that's fair to say that the environment is tight. There's opportunity throughout the province but we have in some cases more jobs than we have workers to fill them. And to do this and then assure that we have the ability to attract and retain some of the brightest and the youngest in our province here, we need to ensure that they have fair and reasonable compensation for their efforts and for the job that they provide for us.

And we often overlook the value of many of the employees that we have and civil servants we have in this great province because they . . . I know from knowing many of them personally, but also just looking at my experience as an MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] and watching some of the good work that's being done by many of the civil servants whom I haven't even had the pleasure of meeting, you can see that they have a loyalty. They feel a certain loyalty to this

province. They feel a certain loyalty to their government and they certainly want to produce the best possible product that they can, and they do.

I think we are very, very fortunate the top-quality personnel we have throughout our civil service here. They certainly do great work. They have been outstanding. I believe if there was awards handed out throughout Canada here, our civil service would win a lot of those awards for the quality work that they do.

But we have to ensure, Mr. Speaker, that we have the ability to continue to maintain and strengthen our civil service. You do this by replacing those who are retiring and those who move on to other things. You replace them with the best possible people out there. In order to do this, in order to have the ability to attract these people, you have to provide fair and reasonable compensation. I don't think anybody would object to that.

I think you'll find that fair, reasonable compensation is something that the taxpayers of this province look forward to because they know that it's an investment. Their money, their taxpayers' money that goes towards financing the civil service, the money that goes towards attracting and retaining these people, is really an investment because we get it back manyfold. We get that money back manyfold from the quality of work that's done by our civil servants.

So there's no doubt that we need to continue to do that, but we must also look at the fact that we don't want to create a situation where you can have personnel who are at a point in time in their life where perhaps they can take retirement or they could take early retirement, or perhaps a early retirement package is something that's being offered to them. And they could take that early retirement package on a, oh say on a Friday and then return to the same job on a Monday and be paid a compensation, a fair and reasonable compensation.

I think the rule of thumb here . . . I don't think we're wrong too much on our figures when we say that a retirement package would look something like about 70 per cent of the salary level that the individual was receiving. And then to take retirement on a Friday and simply come back to doing the same job at the same desk on a Monday at full salary would certainly create a situation where the taxpayer of this province is supporting, on both levels, that level of income, and it simply wouldn't be fair. It wouldn't be right for the people of this province and certainly not fair or right for the taxpayers.

And after all, Mr. Speaker, I mean that money really all comes out of the same pot and it comes out of the general revenue, and that is the taxpayers of this province. One way or the other it's going to be supported by the taxpayers of Saskatchewan. And what we need to do is ensure that we have, yes, the best quality people that we attract — the youngest and the brightest.

And we have no problem, the taxpayers of this province have no problem in funding that and supporting that approach because they know that is simply an investment in the future. By hiring the best people possible and paying them a fair and reasonable compensation package, we know that that's an investment in the future because our history has shown that civil servants in this province here, who are unique, I think,

who are unique because they demonstrate a real loyalty over and above just being a job, they demonstrate a real loyalty to this province. And they work hard at their job — do excellent work. We've seen that day in and day out.

And we know that the taxpayers of Saskatchewan look upon paying fair and reasonable compensation to those people who we hire to do our work on behalf of us as an investment. Because it's an investment in the future; it's an investment that is returned to this province many times over. And we benefit from it. There's no question about that, Mr. Speaker.

But I think when we take a little closer look at this particular Act, the Act to amend the superannuation Act, we see that there are some things that I think we all agree with. I think we all likely agree that, is that the reports do not disclose — the annual reports that is — should not disclose personal information such as names of individuals who are retiring, who may have passed on during a certain period of time, the amount of superannuation or other allowances or benefits being granted on individual cases.

I don't think that the people of Saskatchewan are interested in knowing that. I think there's a great deal of support for keeping private, private information. And I don't think anybody across this great province would want to see that in any annual report.

What they do want to see though, they want to see fairness, and they want to see a fair and reasonable compensation being paid to employees who are doing the good work on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan here. But I don't think you'd find too many people out here would agree with the concept of double-dipping and people being able to draw their pension while still working and earning their full salary. I don't think you'd find a great deal of support for that anywhere.

I think we can likely all agree on the proposed minor amendments regarding the calculation of pension benefits for the spouse. I think that's something we have to look forward to. I think in the past we looked at pension plans where the spouse, you know, in the event the pensioner passed on, the spouse probably ended up without getting the full benefits that she may have been entitled to. And I think that's unfortunate.

And I think those are the kind of things that should be fixed because a lot of cases the spouse is just as much responsible for the quality of work being done by the civil servant in this province as the civil servant him or herself, mainly because they were there to support the individual.

Like the rest of us, we all have our good days and our bad days and when we come after a bad day, it's nice to have somebody to sit down and talk to and be able to share your problems with and share your concerns, and it sort of lightens the load. And there's no question in my mind that that's certainly the case with our civil servants too. Because they have good days and bad days. There are days when things go well, and days when things don't go quite as well as we had planned.

So they, I'm sure, go home and they take that home and they have the opportunity to sit down and share that with their spouses. And it's nice to have that sounding board; it's nice to have somebody there to support you when those days happen.

And I'm sure that that's exactly the case here. If you talk to any of our civil servants, I think they would agree with me at least that the home is very important, and the opportunity to ensure that the spouse receives a fair and reasonable compensation is something that . . . [inaudible] . . . followed up on.

And this piece of legislation though, Mr. Speaker, does raise a concern. It raises the concern that this is a fundamental shift in public policy. And my question would be, who was consulted before these amendments were proposed? Who did the government talk to? Did the government talk to anybody? Was there anybody that brought these concerns to the government?

If they did do the consultation, how broad was that consultation? Who were the stakeholders? What were the different groups that they may have consulted with? Or did they not consult with anybody? Did they just do this on their own?

And they seem to have that tendency, Mr. Speaker, of bringing forward legislation, and then we'll do the consultations. It's a little like, you know, slapping the top of the desk with a two-by-four and saying, okay now we'll talk about it. The noise has already happened and the event has already taken place.

So I would like to know, and that's one of the questions I would like to have. And hopefully at some point in time when we get to a committee, when this Bill finally gets to committee, we'll have the opportunity to ask that question. And I would hope we'd get a straightforward response as to, you know, who was consulted before these amendments were proposed. Was there a broad range of consulting over a large period of time? Or was there very limited consulting, or perhaps none at all?

One also has to wonder what other alternatives were explored before this amendment was allowed for the double-dipping to be introduced. I mean what else did the government look at? What other provisions? What other alternatives? What other issues? Who else did they talk to? What were the other things that perhaps were available that the government made a choice to go in this double-dipping direction? Whether they're following something else.

Double-dipping, actually, Mr. Speaker, has some negative stuff. It provides an incentive for individuals to end their careers, to remain in that position which will slow down the rise of young individuals into the organization. This is something that we want to encourage — and that is the young people coming into the positions that are being vacated or the vacancies that occurred throughout government and throughout bureaucracy on an ongoing basis.

There's I think a real need, Mr. Speaker, to continue to modernize, to continue to update, continue to add youth to our system because there's a first of all the energy level, if nothing else. Certainly they bring energy to it. But they also bring a new, fresh perspective. And that is I think welcomed in any organization, the government bureaucracy not being any different than any other organization. Certainly brings that forward. And we look forward to having that on an ongoing basis.

And we actually encourage, we encourage the government to look at that as an opportunity to bring young people in, to bring



that youth, that enthusiasm that comes with youth, but also the desire. And a lot of the educational levels today of the people coming out of our universities certainly bring with it a lot of experience that they've learned from, you know, from their university professors and their own experience at university. But many of them throughout their university career have also been out in the real workforce during the summer months earning revenue, earning money to help compensate the costs of their education. And those experiences are very valuable. And we would like to see that.

We'd like to encourage the government to continue to attract youth to fill the vacancies that do occur, to limit the ability for individuals to leave, perhaps prematurely leave their positions so that they can take an early retirement so they can simply come back, do the same job at full salary level. I think what we want to see is career civil servants doing their job. When the time comes to retire, they retire and open the door and the opportunity for young people coming on. Because young people bring with them the enthusiasm of youth but they also bring with them a bright, new outlook, a fresh outlook.

We've seen that in every organization, whether it be private sector companies or whether it be other governments in other jurisdictions. We see that a bright, young future is held for the youth who join the government, who bring forward their thoughts, their ideas.

And it's very encouraging and a lot of times are very rewarding to those, you know, those taxpayers who are footing the bill. They certainly get their money back because this is . . . sure it's an investment. It's an investment in the youth. But that youth usually very quickly repays that investment. And then of course we stand to gain because of that. Certainly this piece of legislation could have some significant financial ramifications for the taxpayers and deserves a very close scrutiny.

[16:45]

And I've tried in my humble way here to outline some of the issues that had come to mind, but I'm sure that when we get the opportunity to have this Bill before committee and have the opportunity to discuss it thoroughly with the minister, I'm hoping, I'm hoping that the minister will be able to answer some of these questions very forthright and give us some very straight answers from what I'm sure will be some very, very straight questions. I think we'll have some good questions for the minister, and I'm hoping that the minister will respond in kind with some good answers.

This legislation could have ramifications not even immediately apparent. And I'm sure there's lots of areas that I, in my brief time up here, will have skipped right over and didn't recognize. And I'm hoping that, you know, as we get into the discussions around this Bill that we will be able to flush some of this stuff out.

I'd also like to have the opportunity to talk to people across this great province about this, particularly those people who may be affected, perhaps some of those people who may have already retired — and they would have their opinions on this — because we have a real host of retired civil servants across this great province who obviously served Saskatchewan well,

served Saskatchewan for many, many years through some very tough times, might I add. They made some very tough decisions and led this province in some very, very crucial times and very tough times.

And those people who have now retired and are out of government, they've now retired, and they sometimes join my colleague over here on the golf course — they'd probably win in the golf game, knowing how my colleague golfs over here — but they carry with them a wealth of knowledge, a wealth of knowledge based on their experience. They have served in the civil service. They have served the people of Saskatchewan. They've done a very fine job of that.

But they've also gained a great deal of knowledge that we can benefit from by having the opportunity of sitting down and having a conversation with them. They, I'm sure, will have their opinions on this particular piece of legislation. And I would like to hear from them. I would like to hear what their opinions are because there's no greater teacher than experience.

And when you get the opportunity to sit down with somebody who has experienced a lifetime of service, whether that lifetime be 30 or 35 years . . . And I'm thinking back to one of my constituents, who I had the opportunity of door knocking on more than one occasion but most recently I think was probably during the last election. And he was a freshly retired civil servant from the Government of Saskatchewan.

And it was one of the conversations that I had that I really, really enjoyed because now that he was retired he was able to discuss with me a lot of his thoughts and his opinions that he would have not shared with me in the past. Being an employee of the government, he didn't think it would be the right thing to do. So he would, you know, be very polite at the doorstep and so on and so forth, but certainly not indicate to me any of his political preferences — which by the way I don't know what they were today because I just don't know that. That wasn't what I was interested in.

What I soon became interested in was having the conversation with him and hearing from him first-hand some of the experiences that he had during his 35 years as a civil servant here in the province of Saskatchewan, and to sharing some of his thoughts based on those experiences, some of his opinions of how changes could be made to make Saskatchewan even a more effective civil service, to make it more efficient.

And he had some great ideas and I'm looking forward to having the opportunity of sitting down with him one of these days over a cup of coffee or maybe even a pot of coffee and have him share with me some of his thoughts and his ideas because there's no doubt in my mind that the greatest teacher of all is a teacher of experience.

And when you have somebody who's had that experience, somebody that's gone through 35 years of history of this province as a civil servant here has offered that leadership, has offered that experience, has offered his time, and he's just one of those examples of loyal civil servants that we have in this province. I mean he was one of those who didn't look at the clock when the time came to the close of the day. He looked at the work that was still left to do, and I know that there was

many times that he didn't leave the office at 5 because that was quitting time. He was one of those that left the office when the job was done.

And I admire that because that's the loyalty I was talking about earlier, that I find that many of our civil servants have in this province. They're not just loyal to the job. They're just not loyal to the paycheque. They're loyal to the province. There's a job to do; they want to get on with it. They want to get results. They want things to happen and when they're given that opportunity, we can see as the result of it the quality of civil servant, the quality of work that's done in this province day in and day out.

And we have not just one of those. We have many, many of them and in fact, Mr. Speaker, I would say the vast majority of the fine people working for this province and delivering the services are those type of people. They're committed to the province, not committed just to the job, not committed just to the paycheque, but committed to doing quality work on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan. And we see that every day.

And I'm just thinking back to a conversation I had with my good friend who's now retired. And after 35 years you can imagine, Mr. Speaker — 35 years — the amount of change that he would have seen during his time with the Government of Saskatchewan, the amount of change that would have taken place during that period of time, the amount of progress that he would have seen.

And all of this was done without him having to double dip. He didn't double dip. He didn't take an early retirement and go back and fill his pockets because he had the opportunity to. No, he didn't. He did it because he felt a loyalty to this province. He did it because there was a job to do. That was his job, his responsibility, and he did it. And he led the way, along with many of our civil servants, he led the way on making those tough decisions when those decisions were thrust upon him and he was asked to make those decisions.

He made those tough decisions because it was the love maybe — it might be the right word to use — the love for this province that they held. Not just the love for the paycheque, not just the love for the job, but the love for this province that they held because they wanted to make sure that Saskatchewan benefited, benefited to the best of its potential, benefited to the best of its possibility. Without having to double dip, without having to get extra pay, without having to do any of this, they did it because Saskatchewan in their belief is the province to be in — as I do and I'm sure you do, Mr. Speaker.

I think all the members of the House here would agree that Saskatchewan is a wonderful, wonderful province, and we're all very, very fortunate to live here. But what makes it a wonderful province is the fact that we have great civil servants working for the people of Saskatchewan. We have civil servants who provide top quality services.

We've enjoyed that for many years, and we will enjoy that into the future if we can recruit young, bright young university students and graduates who come forward to provide us with their enthusiasm. Yes, youthful enthusiasm, but also the knowledge that they gained through their studies, the

knowledge that they've gained through their experiences in life.

And they bring that in combination with some veterans that have been around awhile and served this province well, and have a tremendous amount of knowledge built up. And I don't think we don't want to get past that because I don't think we want to lose that.

We have the opportunity here, and I know, I think every member here probably could identify several people in their constituency who are retired civil servants who are carrying with them vast amount of knowledge, vast amounts of knowledge based on their experiences, based on their time in the civil service, not only in their time in the work place, but their time in life's experience. Throughout life's experience they've gained a lot of that.

So we don't want to lose sight of that. We don't want to lose sight of the fact that we have tremendous potential within the civil servants here to continue, continue to have a strong civil service that provides effective and efficient leadership on issues.

We need to be able to ensure that we have openings for those youthful graduates of our universities who bring forward a lot of their education and a lot of their life experiences. And they do so quite willingly. But we need to be able to attract them and to retain them. And in order to do that, you have to have a fair and reasonable compensation package — fair and reasonable when you compare it to other provinces, fair and reasonable when you compare it to other opportunities that might exist within the private sector.

And I think if you look around you, we'll find the opportunity does exist to do so without having to provide a double-dipping process. The double-dipping process is something, Mr. Speaker, that I think most Saskatchewan people would find not acceptable. I think that when they look at the fact that perhaps an opportunity does exist for someone to take early retirement, and to be able to draw or to qualify for 70 per cent of their income as a pension or their retirement income, and then be able to go back to the same desk they were holding and taking on the same job, the same responsibilities, and being paid a full compensation package there, really, really is double-dipping.

What it does do, it puts the taxpayers of Saskatchewan responsible for funding both levels of income — the pension level of income and the salary level of income. And that, Mr. Speaker, I think most people would find that fairly distasteful and not acceptable. And that's certainly not an acceptable practice that we would find most people in Saskatchewan enjoying.

I think one of the problems here, Mr. Speaker, just at first blush of this particular legislation, is that it legalizes a form of double-dipping, simply as easy through a very costly way of addressing a difficult problem. I see this as perhaps the opportunity here — and really I would hope the government would look at this as an opportunity — an opportunity to enhance our civil service by providing those vacancies as they come up, as their retirement comes along, if somebody retires or takes an early retirement package, that the government would look at this as an opportunity to recruit youthful, young, bright

individuals to be a part of our civil service in Saskatchewan.

I think there is no finer calling than the calling of serving the great people of Saskatchewan. I think it's a great opportunity for people who really want to make their mark and who really have a lot to contribute, a lot to add to our system and our society. I think that it's an opportunity for the ability to bring in young people to enjoy a good mixture of youthful enthusiasm, most recently trained and educated young people, mixing them with veterans who have been around awhile, who have had some very good experiences throughout their experiences within the government and within the administration of the government.

And if you have the opportunity to speak to many of the veterans that have been around for awhile, I think you'll agree with me, Mr. Speaker, when you say it's a very enjoyable time when they sit down and take the time, start to share with you some of the experiences, some of their experiences in the past when they've had to make some decisions in tough and troubling times in this province.

And we've gone through that in the past. I can relate to some of that, having been around in 1991 to 1995 and sat in the government benches. And I can recollect the tough, tough debates that went on within our caucus and the decision-making process of dealing with the economy of the province and the financial situation of the province at that time. And as much as I found it tough, and as much as the caucus members I'm sure found it quite stressful, I think it was equally as stressful on the civil servants who were wrestling with the solutions to the problems, wrestling with the requests from government members saying what can we do in this particular situation, or how can we save money here, or how can we trim something here or trim something there.

And those requests were put forward to . . . and they're the ones who had to make that decision. They're the ones who had to come up with the options to present to government as to how they can be cut here, where it can be cut there . . .

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. McMillan):** — It now being 5 o'clock, the Assembly will adjourn until at 7 . . . will recess until 7 o'clock.

[The Assembly recessed until 19:00.]

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

Tell .....	2273
Nilson .....	2273
Hutchinson .....	2273
Morgan .....	2273
LeClerc .....	2273

**PRESENTING PETITIONS**

Higgins .....	2274
Forbes .....	2274
Taylor .....	2274
Brotten .....	2274
Wotherspoon .....	2274

**STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS**

<b>Glass Slipper Benefit</b>	
Brotten .....	2275
<b>World Junior Hockey Championships</b>	
Cheveldayoff .....	2275
<b>Breaking the Silence Conference</b>	
Wotherspoon .....	2275
<b>Contributions to Agriculture</b>	
Michelson .....	2276
<b>Young Entrepreneur Builds Business in Moose Jaw</b>	
Higgins .....	2276
<b>Social Work Week</b>	
LeClerc .....	2276
<b>Affordable Housing in The Battlefords</b>	
Taylor .....	2277

**QUESTION PERIOD**

<b>Western Economic Partnership</b>	
Calvert .....	2277
Wall .....	2277
<b>Discussions with Manitoba Hydro</b>	
Quennell .....	2279
Cheveldayoff .....	2279
<b>SaskTel Services</b>	
Trew .....	2280
Cheveldayoff .....	2280
<b>Regina Correctional Centre Escape Report</b>	
Yates .....	2281
Hickie .....	2281

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**

<b>Mid-Year Capital Projects</b>	
Norris .....	2282
Brotten .....	2283

**PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

<b>Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies</b>	
Duncan .....	2283

**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

Weekes .....	2284
--------------	------

**MOTIONS FOR RETURNS (Not Debatable)**

Weekes .....	2284
--------------	------

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

**SECOND READINGS**

<b>Bill No. 80 — <i>The Construction Industry Labour Relations Amendment Act, 2009</i></b>	
Norris .....	2284
Taylor .....	2285

**ADJOURNED DEBATES**

**SECOND READINGS**

<b>Bill No. 63 — <i>The Saskatchewan Housing Corporation Amendment Act, 2008</i></b>	
Forbes .....	2291
Harpauer (referral to committee) .....	2294

<b>Bill No. 44 — <i>The Agreements of Sale Cancellation Amendment Act, 2008</i></b>	
<b>Quennell</b> .....	2295
<b>Morgan (referral to committee)</b> .....	2296
<b>Bill No. 46 — <i>The Labour Market Commission Amendment Act, 2008</i></b>	
<b>Forbes</b> .....	2296
<b>Bill No. 9 — <i>The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Amendment Act, 2008</i></b>	
<b>Harper</b> .....	2299

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