



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

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The Honourable Don Toth
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. Don Toth
 Premier — Hon. Brad Wall
 Leader of the Opposition — Dwain Lingenfelter

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Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Hon. Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
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Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
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Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Yates, Kevin	NDP	Regina Dewdney

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to all of my colleagues in the Legislative Assembly a very special guest who has joined us for today's proceedings. It's a pleasure to introduce Mr. Wu Xinjian who is the consul general of the People's Republic of China. He has joined us in your gallery.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Wu was born in Beijing in 1956. He's married and has a 14-year-old son. After holding a number of important jobs in the protocol department of Foreign Affairs in China, Mr. Wu was appointed as consul general in Calgary on the 11th of December, 2006.

China is Saskatchewan's second most important export customer, Mr. Speaker. It's estimated that by next year the yearly exports from Saskatchewan to China will exceed \$676 million in value. Imagine how many families are employed by that kind of economic activity right here in our province. And so we're very grateful for that partnership, for that export partnership that we have with the People's Republic of China.

I look forward to meeting with Mr. Wu tomorrow. He does have a number of meetings that are happening however for today as well.

And, Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that I'm also aware that Mr. Wu is fond of golf. So I expect that we'll be talking a little bit, hopefully, about golf and maybe comparing our respective games and handicaps.

Mr. Speaker, I want to invite all members to join us in the Assembly in welcoming Mr. Wu here. Before I do, let me just say, at least let me try to say:

[The hon. member spoke for a time in Mandarin.]

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, I want to join with the Premier in welcoming Mr. Wu and, I believe, also the consul of economic commercial section, Mr. Lei, who is along as well. Good to see you again. And I just want to say, Mr. Speaker, through you and to members of the Assembly, that obviously China is in fact hugely important when it comes to grain and potash, and we look forward to working with the consul general in Calgary over the next few years and wish you the very best in your stay here in Saskatchewan.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Martensville, the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Later today I will be reintroducing the government's greenhouse gas reduction Bill, and I would like to introduce some guests that have joined us today in support of Saskatchewan's Bill to make sure that we protect our environment.

And I would ask them if they could wave as I introduce them. From Evraz Inc., Jim Markatos; from Consumers' Co-operative Refineries Ltd., Doug Dunnigan; from the Saskatchewan Mining Association, Pam Schwann; from Morsky Industrial, general manager, Marty Willfong; from the Prairie Adaptation Research Collaborative, Norm Henderson; from Saskatchewan Environmental Industry and Managers Association, Lloyd Saul and also Dr. Jon Gillies.

Mr. Speaker, the stakeholders that we have consulted with over the past year have been a huge part of the approach that the government has taken, and I would like to publicly thank all those who have helped us and will continue to help us as we work on regulations to enact our legislation, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the official opposition, I too would like to join the minister in welcoming the guests to the legislature today. Thank you for the work you do, and it was certainly a pleasure to see you here today. So on behalf of the opposition, I would like to welcome the guests to the legislature as well.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to the rest of the Assembly it's a great privilege to introduce two individuals seated in your gallery. First of all is Lissette Coulling. She's the executive director of the Saskatchewan Brain Injury Association. And also with her is Larry Carlson who is the past president of the association. If you could both kindly stand and we can acknowledge you.

I just wanted to say that I wanted to thank them for all the great work that they do. Today we had the opportunity of attending a reception, as you know, recognizing some of the volunteers and the great work that the volunteers do in Saskatchewan for this association, Mr. Speaker. I don't think we can ever thank our volunteers and the people that are involved with these different organizations enough. So I'd like all members to join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to join in the minister welcoming the special guests from the SBIA [Saskatchewan Brain Injury Association]. That was a wonderful event we had at lunchtime recognizing the volunteers, whether they be individuals or survivors or groups, very worthwhile work that they do. It's so important. And of course they talked about the journey they'd taken over the last 20, 24 years and things that they look forward to. So I on behalf of the opposition would join the minister in welcoming them to

the legislature. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In your gallery I'd like to introduce a number of individuals from the communities of Southey, Strasbourg, Preeceville, Rama, and Ituna. These are farmers, Mr. Speaker, who have come to the legislature today on a snowy and icy day because they are owed money with Big Sky Farms going into creditor protection, Mr. Speaker. So they've come to the legislature today to hear the debate and hear the answers that the government has with respect to their situation. So I would ask all members to join me in welcoming them to the Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier, the member from Canora.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, part of that group, there are two young men who are very close to where I live with my wife, Gail. The two gentlemen are Clarke and Kelly Graham. They only live a half mile away from me and every time I'm home of course I get to see them drive by my yard as they go to their yard. And they've been active in our community, Mr. Speaker. They're strong advocates of our hockey team. And, of course, they're great farmers. And I know that they have tremendous concerns about the future of Big Sky and where they go.

So I'd like all members to welcome Kelly and Clarke Graham to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Silver Springs.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Hey, Mr. Speaker, here's an intro for you:

I'm rapping today
Because these kids are so cool.
They come from Saskatoon
From Dr. Egnatoff School.
A group of 81,
They're in grade 8.
We know they'll learn a lot.
So that'll be great.

The school's population is a beautiful sight.
A mosaic of cultures,
Which we know is so right.
They're busy right now,
Christmas concerts and band.
I'll ask all hon. members to give them a hand!

Mr. Speaker, I'll stop right now, at the request of my colleagues, with the rap at the risk of any future embarrassment to myself. But, Mr. Speaker, along with 81 cool students, we have a group of cool teachers as well in the government gallery: Mr. Van Olst, Mr. Farthing, Mrs. Giesbrecht, and Mrs. Roadhouse from Dr. John G. Egnatoff School in the heart of the Saskatoon Silver Springs constituency.

And whenever, you know, we know that the groups from Silver Springs bring very large groups of students. And they are also accompanied by many cool parents — Shelly Klassen, Ray Bowkowsky, Owen McKeith, Jody Parschauer, Deb Johnson, Karen Mochoruk, Tom Berryere, Kelly Peru, Tyrone McKenzie, Gail Leck, Christine Moroz, and Andrew Ritza.

Mr. Speaker, through you and to all members of the Assembly, we'd like to welcome this fine group of students, their teachers, and their chaperones. I look forward to meeting with them after question period. I look forward to their questions and maybe a bit of a critique about my rapping abilities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Please join me.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Harper: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of concerned citizens of Saskatchewan who are concerned over the condition of Highway 310. The 310 Highway has significantly deteriorated and as many communities are reliant upon tourism as an economic development, this highway is certainly a barrier to that type of growth in our communities.

And the petition states that the highway is a potential of a safety hazard for residents who drive on that highway each and every day. And it's clear, Mr. Speaker, the 310 Highway is in dire need of an upgrade. And, Mr. Speaker, I'll read to you the prayer now:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the Sask Party government to commit to providing the repairs to Highway 310 that the people of Saskatchewan so need.

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

Mr. Speaker, this particular petition is signed by the good folks of Ituna, Hubbard, and Goodeve, Saskatchewan. I so submit.

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

Ms. Higgins: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition on the issue of maintaining quality health care services in the province and that the Government of Saskatchewan needs to recognize the essential role of all health care providers as valued members of the health care team. And that this government needs to realize that the utilization and value of the full range of professional skills offered by health care providers is promoted through the address of retention and recruitment issues and by ensuring safe staffing levels. And, Mr. Speaker, the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to commit to maintaining quality health care services and job security for all public health care providers.

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

Mr. Speaker, I so present on behalf of citizens in Zealandia, Rosetown, Biggar, Harris, Fiske, Elrose, and Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to again present petitions in support of people with autism. It's estimated that 1 in 98 children has autism spectrum disorder and that parents and guardians must now become educators, advocates, caregivers, and financiers and that the majority of Canadians now live in provinces with adequate autism spectrum disorder strategies and funding. The petition reads then:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the Sask Party government to commit to providing a comprehensive provincial autism spectrum strategy that is based on proven best practice, evidence-based research, treatments, and programming; and given the complexity of the disorder and its treatments, the individualized funding concept be adapted for parents and guardians of autistic individuals.

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

There is over 200 more signatures to add to the 200 I presented yesterday, and these petitioners today are from Regina, Gravelbourg, Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatoon, Balgonie, Strasbourg, Edenwold, Regina Beach, Indian Head, Lumsden, White City, and Pilot Butte. I so present.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of wage equity for CBO [community-based organization] workers. And we know that workers in community-based organizations, the CBOs in Saskatchewan, have traditionally been underpaid and many continue to earn poverty level wages.

And we know that CBO workers care for and provide valuable services to some of the most vulnerable members of our society such as persons living with mental and intellectual disabilities, women and children in crisis, low-income, at-risk individuals, young children, youth, Aboriginal, immigrant, and visible minority persons. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable 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.

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

Mr. Speaker, these folks come from Melville, Maple Creek, Webb, and Regina. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition in support of a new long-term care facility in La Ronge. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to immediately invest in the planning and construction of new long-term care beds in La Ronge.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

It is signed by the good people of La Ronge and area. I so present.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to present a petition in support of fairness for Saskatchewan students through the necessary expansion of the graduate retention program. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable 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 who signed this petition are from the city of Saskatoon. I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

[13:45]

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present yet another petition on behalf of rural residents of Saskatchewan who question why the Sask Party government is leaving them behind with respect to providing safe and affordable water and who despite the fact that these petitions have been read every day of the spring session as well as every day of the fall session, have not yet had any sign of commitment from the Sask Party government in terms of commitment of assistance. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to financially assist the town of Duck Lake residents for the good of their health and safety due to the exorbitant water rates being forced on them by a government agency, and that this government fulfills its commitment to rural Saskatchewan.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And, Mr. Speaker, these petitions are signed by the good residents of Duck Lake, Stanley Mission, Prince Albert. I so present. Thank you.

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

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to present a petition on behalf of Saskatchewan residents that are concerned about public employees being able to disclose information in the greater public interest, Mr. Speaker. And the prayer reads as follows:

We respect and request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan pass Bill No. 609, *The Whistleblower Protection Act* in order to ensure the safety, security, and protection of any employee who acts as a whistle-blower by disclosing information for the greater public interest.

I so submit.

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, I stand today to present a petition in support of withdrawal of Bill 80. Mr. Speaker, the existing construction industry labour relations Act, 1992, has provided a stable environment for labour relations. And, Mr. Speaker, we all know that stable labour relations provide for quality work and safe construction work sites. Mr. Speaker, also on that, the building trade contracts that are now in existence support an apprenticeship system of training which results in highly skilled workers. And the petition reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to withdraw its ill-conceived Bill 80, *The Construction Industry Labour Relations Amendment Act, 2009* which dismantles the proud history of the building trades in this province, creates instability in the labour market, and impacts the quality of training required for workers before entering the workforce.

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

And the petitions are signed by residents of Kinistino, Semans, Saskatoon, Buffalo Narrows, Prince Albert, Saskatoon, Grand Coulee, Lumsden, and Regina. I so present.

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

Mr. Taylor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to rise and present a petition in support of affordable rents and housing for The Battlefords. The petitioners note that the vacancy rate for rental accommodation in The Battlefords is very low but the cost of rental accommodation in The Battlefords is increasing at an alarming rate. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to call upon the Government of Saskatchewan to develop an affordable housing program that will result in a greater number of quality and affordable rental units to be made available to a greater number of people throughout The Battlefords and that will implement a process of rent review or rent control to better protect tenants in a

non-competitive housing environment.

Mr. Speaker, these petitions are signed by residents of North Battleford and Saskatoon. I so present, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents from across Saskatchewan as it relates to the unprecedented mismanagement of our finances by the Sask Party. They allude to the shameful billion dollar deficit created by the Saskatchewan Party government in just two years, Mr. Speaker. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the Sask Party government to start managing our provincial finances responsibly and prudently to ensure that it does not continue its trend of massive budgetary shortfalls, runaway and unsustainable spending, equity stripping from our Crowns, and irresponsible revenue setting.

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

These petitions are signed by good folks from across southeastern Saskatchewan, specifically Arcola and Carnduff. I so present.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of Saskatchewan citizens who are concerned about rapidly rising rents throughout the province; that private apartment vacancy rates were less than 1 per cent in Regina, North Battleford, and Moose Jaw in April 2009, and less than 2 per cent in Saskatoon and Swift Current; that the majority of Canadians now live in provinces with rent control guidelines, including Manitoba, BC, Ontario, Quebec, and Prince Edward Island. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to consider enacting some form of rent control, with a view to protecting Saskatchewan renters from unreasonable increases in rent.

Mr. Speaker, I so present on behalf of citizens in Saskatoon. Thank you.

The Speaker: — Before we move on, I just want to remind members of the rules of the Assembly which they've put in place through the Board of Internal Economy. Over the past number of years, the laying of petitions has been basically limited to the prayer, although Speakers have allowed a short and brief comment. Some of the comments recently have actually been infringing on rule 16(3) and (b), "No debate on any matter on or in relation to the petitions is permitted."

I would ask members to be mindful of the rule, and in future

days we will allow members just a quick, brief comment, and then go directly to the prayer. Thank you.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

World AIDS Day

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, the first international AIDS [acquired immune deficiency syndrome] Day was on December 1st, 1988. Twenty-one years later, 33.4 million people are living with HIV [human immunodeficiency virus], including 2.1 million children. Half the people who become infected do so before they are 25, and are killed by AIDS before they are 35. The theme of this year's World AIDS Day is universal access to HIV and AIDS treatment, prevention, and care, recognizing these as fundamental human rights.

Global leaders have given the pledge, translating this commitment into action at the local level. Action taken here in Saskatchewan means supporting programs that have proven successful, like the needle exchange program. Such programs answer the international call to fundamental human rights.

In Saskatchewan there were 174 new cases diagnosed in 2008, a 40 per cent increase in one year, a rise equal to a new case of HIV being diagnosed every two days. The Sask Party government's response to these numbers is to limit the needle exchange program, a program their own study determined was functional and in need of expansion.

In many African countries, people die of AIDS needlessly because their cultures deny basic protections from the disease. Fear and taboo play a large part in hindering proper treatment and programs. How is Saskatchewan different if they choose ideology over evidence?

Our focus must be on research and implementing models that will save lives. We have a choice. We can do what works or hang on tenaciously to ideology that doesn't. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Hickie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Fellow members of the Assembly, today, December 1st, is World AIDS Day. Today more people than ever before have HIV and new infections occur each year. Thirty-three million people live with HIV worldwide. In Saskatchewan last year there were more than 170 new cases of HIV.

Mr. Speaker, in recognition of World AIDS Day, the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health today announced a new HIV initiative — HIV point of care testing. HIV point of care testing is a new priority for the HIV program in Saskatchewan that will help with prevention, education, treatment, and support services for those affected.

Mr. Speaker, approximately 25 per cent of those infected with HIV are unaware of their infection. HIV point of care testing

will help individuals at risk to access testing in a timely manner. This in turn will allow opportunities for follow-up care and education and, most importantly, help reduce the rates of transmission, especially to newborn babies.

The Ministry of Health will continue to work on strategies to ensure more people have access to HIV testing and are aware of their HIV status so they can receive treatment and prevent transmission to others. As members of this Assembly, we can contribute by supporting initiatives that raise awareness about HIV and AIDS.

Mr. Speaker, fellow members, please join me in officially recognizing the World AIDS Day. Thank you.

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

Support for Producers

Mr. Furber: — Mr. Speaker, there are producers here in the gallery today that want to hear what this government has to say about Big Sky Farms. The government has been silent so far, refusing to offer support to the farmers affected.

In fact the member from Canora-Pelly has been pretty quiet on this issue since he rose to speak in 2001 after the opening of a hog operation in Rama. And what did he have to say about it then? Nothing but good things, Mr. Speaker, and I'll quote:

... this operation will employ 40 people year round in the Rama and Hazel Dell areas, with an annual payroll of \$1.4 million.

Local farmers will also benefit from this operation since about 800,000 bushels of feed grain will be required for a large feed mill being constructed at a seventh location also near Rama. Needless to say, this will be for the most part a benefit for my constituency.

If the members opposite know how important this operation is to farmers, why can't the government offer them anything now? The farmers are only asking for the government to fulfill its contractual obligation as majority shareholders. Saskatchewan Party government have become pros at talking only about good news. They like to play the cheerleader, pretend that everything is great, but when bad times hit like it has for these farmers, the government is suddenly silent.

Well the farmers that are here today want more than just cheerleading from the sidelines. And unfortunately this government's cheerleading does not pay for their fuel, their fertilizer, their land leases, or their co-op bills.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

Brain Injury Association Recognizes Volunteers

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is a very special day. Over the noon hour, the Saskatchewan Brain Injury Association hosted a volunteer recognition event here at the Legislative Building. The event recognized the outstanding commitment and contributions of 14 volunteers and community

contributors.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Dr. Gordon L. Barnhart, Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan, is a patron of the SBIA and was in attendance at the event. The SBIA is in its 24th year of operation. The Government of Saskatchewan continues to support organizations like the Saskatchewan Brain Injury Association and fund initiatives that help those who are most vulnerable in our society.

Mr. Speaker, it is estimated that approximately 2,200 people sustain brain injuries in Saskatchewan each year, but 150 of those people will need multiple services and lifetime support. Through a partnership with Saskatchewan Government Insurance, a strong network of service providers has been formed to reduce the incidence of acquired brain injury in Saskatchewan and to improve the quality of life of individuals with acquired brain injury and their families.

In 2009-10, approximately \$4.7 million was provided to acquired brain injury programs throughout the partnership. Members of Saskatchewan legislature, please join me in recognizing the work done by the Saskatchewan Brain Injury Association and their volunteers.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Volleyball Championships Held in Ile-a-la-Crosse

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to commend the organizers of a fantastic event this past weekend, the 3A provincial boys' volleyball championships held in Ile-a-la-Crosse. I'd like to thank all the teams that earned the right to compete for this championship: the Ile-a-la-Cross Huskies, hometown favourites; Wolseley Warriors, Redvers Rams; Dalmeny Cougars, Leader Saints, Waldheim Raiders, Wadena Blue Devils, Kinistino Blues, Langenburg Screaming Eagles, and the Neilburg Trojans.

I wanted to especially commend the Saskatchewan High Schools Athletic Association for their vision in selecting a northern community to host such an incredible event. The SHSAA [Saskatchewan High Schools Athletic Association] brought our province together as a result of this choice. I wanted to thank the staff at the elementary school and of the high school for their great effort in hosting the event. It must have been a challenge having all those young people around.

Our local high school team, the Ile-a-la-Crosse Huskies, were bronze medallists, while Wolseley took silver and Waldheim Raiders finished as provincial champs. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend Huskies coach, Glen Bouvier, and thank Hughie, the mascot — Hughie the Huskie — who put on an incredible show.

I want to thank our visitors who came and became part of our Ile-a-la-Crosse family. It's amazing what some of these northern communities can do when given the opportunity. The kids, the staff, our team, and all teams who participated showed great, true, Saskatchewan spirit last weekend and I'm proud of all of them, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cannington.

Saskatchewan Book Awards Gala

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The 17th annual Saskatchewan Book Awards Gala was held on Saturday evening. The evening showcased writers, publishers, illustrators, and was enjoyed by hundreds of people who just love books and reading.

This event reminds us what a strong literary talent we possess in Saskatchewan. Their stories are very often about the Prairie, Mr. Speaker. They characterize us. They relate our history and stories to readers throughout the world, often revealing our similarities and drawing closer global bonds.

Speakers at the gala included Mr. Rudy Wiebe, an internationally known author and two-time Governor General's Award winner. Mr. Wiebe has written a number of books, many of which reveal his proud prairie heritage and/or his Mennonite roots.

Some of the award highlights that evening were: Trevor Herriot, who won for his book *Grass, Sky, Song: Promise and Peril of the World of Grassland Birds*; Wilfred Burton and Anne Patton's book, *Dancing in my Bones*; and Karen Edwards won the Children's Literary Award for *One Cold Armpit* — an interesting title. The Award for Poetry went to Gerald Hill for *14 Tractors*, and the Book of the Year is *Legacy of Stone: Saskatchewan's Stone Buildings* by Margaret Hryniuk and Frank Korvemaker, published by Coteau Books.

Congratulations to the Saskatchewan Book Awards on a very successful year.

[14:00]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, representatives from our province and our country will soon be heading off to the COP 15 [Conference of the Parties] climate change conference in Copenhagen where world leaders have a fleeting opportunity to form a real agreement and together take action to fight against climate change.

Mr. Speaker, our province has a chance to be a leader on the world stage. We have the resource potential to tap into our renewable energies to combat our carbon footprint. We have the technology, the intellect, and the overwhelming public support to address climate change quickly and effectively, yet our Premier is offering no leadership, Mr. Speaker. The Sask Party government cut \$320 million from the Green Future Fund, have reneged on their campaign promise to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 32 per cent, and have offered little in the way of renewable energies.

Here we are only days before the most monumental climate change conference of our time, and the government has nothing to show for their two years in government. Instead our Premier is toeing the line of the federal government by following their embarrassingly modest targets.

Mr. Speaker, as Canada refuses to take action and continues to delay any progress in fighting climate change, our national reputation on the international stage is deteriorating. In fact dozens of developing countries walked out on Canada's address during recent climate talks in Thailand earlier this year, and yet this is the policy that the Premier is copying.

After seeing the bungling of this government on this file, the people of Saskatchewan think the climate that needs changing is which party is in government. Thank you.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Big Sky Farms

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, we have today in the gallery a number of farm families who have come here today because of the problems at Big Sky Farms, and the fact that they hauled grain to Big Sky Farms and are now out of pocket tens of thousands of dollars.

Now we know that the Government of Saskatchewan owns 60 per cent of Big Sky Farms through Crown Investments Corporation. We know that five ministers of this government sit on the board of CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan] and they appoint the board of Big Sky Farms. We see the management links and we see the financial links between the government and Big Sky Farms.

My question to the Minister of Agriculture is this: when did he know about the financial difficulties of Big Sky Farms, and why didn't he let the farmers know of this difficulty and that they might not be paid for the grain they were hauling there?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, we certainly empathize with the producers that have supplied feed to Big Sky and are caught in this situation. But having said that, we sympathize and empathize with all the creditors that are caught in this situation with Big Sky, as we are when any business goes down in the province of Saskatchewan.

The Leader of the Opposition neglected to say in his question though is who got us into this situation in the first place. It was the previous NDP [New Democratic Party] government. The previous NDP government, Mr. Speaker, invested into Big Sky, was picking winners and losers in . . .

[Interjections]

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

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if the NDP had not been investing in private business out there, we wouldn't be having this conversation today.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Agriculture. The minister can throw blame and yell and holler about who made the investment in Big Sky Farms, but there is a question and it's a question about responsibility and being forthcoming on this issue.

And I want to ask him the following question. Given the fact that the now Deputy Premier supported the building of the barn at Rama, and on July 5th of 2001, the member from Canora-Pelly stood here in this Assembly and said the following statement, and I quote, "Needless to say, this will be for the most part a benefit to my constituency."

My question to the minister is this: who has it right? Is it the Deputy Premier who supported the investment or the now Minister of Agriculture who says the farmers shouldn't be paid? Who's correct and who's wrong on this important issue?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I checked to see if the NDP, when they were in government for 16 years, had set any precedents to coming to the aid of creditors in any financial transaction where a business had gone under in the province of Saskatchewan. Do you know what I found, Mr. Speaker? Absolutely not once did the NDP government come to the aid of creditors in any business in the province of Saskatchewan, even though in many of those businesses they were investors and had put taxpayers' dollars at risk into those . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. There's a few opposition members that are making it difficult for even the guests to hear the response. I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to use the example of World Wide Pork in Moose Jaw, who closed its doors. And the members opposite had an investment of taxpayers' dollars, and a number of hog producers in this province had hauled hogs there. And when that plant went under, Mr. Speaker, the creditors got nothing.

Did the members opposite tell them that this was going to happen? Not for a minute. And did they honour any of those creditors' debts that were owed to them? Not one red cent, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are not putting more money into Big Sky — I want to make that very clear today — or any of Big Sky's responsibilities.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Let me make it clear that the opposition is not asking the minister or the government to put more money into Big Sky Farms. That's not the request. The request from the farmers who are here today is to be paid for the grain they took to Big Sky. That's what's being asked for and he shouldn't confuse it.

Mr. Speaker, the minister knew well in advance of the problems

at Big Sky because there were Sask Party ministers on the board of CIC who appointed the board members at Big Sky Farms. They would be getting daily reports, I'm sure. If they weren't, then it's gross mismanagement.

The question is, when the board of Big Sky filed for protection on October 26th, tens of thousands of bushels of grain were hauled after that date. How is it that the minister, who would have known that the farmers wouldn't be paid, allowed that to happen and didn't inform the farmers?

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Before I recognize the minister, I just want to remind our guests in the galleries that they're not to participate in any form or fashion in the debate. I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, Ernst & Young are the monitors here and are going through the CCAA [*Companies' Creditors Arrangements Act*] process out there. And we're hoping that producers out there, including all producers out there that supplied feed to Big Sky, get all or at least a large part of the dollars that they've got at risk out there right now. Mr. Speaker, we also know that Big Sky is topping up the price of barley and wheat, and I know this isn't going to solve many problems out there, but it may help somewhat.

But, Mr. Speaker, it's very hypocritical of the members opposite to say in this situation the present government should deal with it, even though we didn't for the 16 years we were in power.

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

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, what's hypocritical is the Deputy Premier saying he supports the deal and the Minister of Agriculture saying it was a bad deal. That's hypocritical.

Mr. Speaker, I think I heard the minister say that when it comes to creditors, that the farmers will be treated the same as the bankers when it comes to the settlement, if in fact it gets to that point. Is that clear, that the farmers will be treated equally to the bankers in the settlement when it comes?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — You know, Mr. Speaker, there's another side to this story. Every, Mr. Speaker, every taxpayer in the province of Saskatchewan has \$30 million at risk in this venture. Not just producers, not just the other creditors in this situation. Every taxpayer in this province.

Mr. Speaker, you never know where to take the Leader of the Opposition. One day he's an Alberta oil baron saying we're spending too many dollars on education tax reduction . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — The Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Mr. Speaker, on one hand he's saying

we're spending too much on things like education tax reduction for farmers, income tax reduction, things like that, Mr. Speaker. The next day, Mr. Speaker, he's a born-again socialist saying, get into private business and take a chance on losing more taxpayers' dollars in the province of Saskatchewan.

The Speaker: — The minister be mindful of some of the terminology and the references that could be used against members. I recognize the minister.

Mr. Lingenfelter: — Mr. Speaker, question to the Minister of Agriculture. For a number of weeks now, these farmers and many others have been trying to get meetings with the Deputy Premier and the Minister of Agriculture, and they haven't been able to get meetings. What I want to ask the minister today: the farmers are here; he is here. Will he agree to meet with them later today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker, and the answer to that question is, certainly I will. At any time I will meet with the producers.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think some of the things I want to reiterate to the members opposite, and I see the Leader of the Opposition just glowing out there, if I'd just got this province into a \$30 million mess, I don't think I'd be smiling, Mr. Speaker.

[Interjections]

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

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't take great pride in putting \$30 million of taxpayers' dollars at risk and watching them go out the window.

Mr. Speaker, if we had dollars like they lost in SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company] or Navigata, where I've got a list of three or four pages, or other ag ventures they got into that are all written off. Durafibre — 7.3 million NDP invested in that company, totally wrote off. Mr. Speaker, again, World Wide Pork — million and a half totally wrote off.

Mr. Speaker, this list goes on and on. At what point will the NDP admit they should never have got into private business in the province of Saskatchewan?

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

Supply of Physicians in Rural Saskatchewan

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, I'm holding the Sask Party 2007 election platform, and on page 9 they promise to increase the number of doctors working in rural areas. But on any given day, I can pick up a rural paper and read stories of doctor shortages and emergency services cutbacks in communities like Arcola, Redvers, Carlyle, Lestock, Shaunavon, Climax, and Frontier to name just a few. And today the health careers website lists 116 doctor vacancies, compared to 87 during the '07 election

campaign and 84 in the spring of '07. That's an increase, all right. It's an increase in vacancies.

My question to the minister: the government couldn't keep this promise during the boom times; how are they going to keep it when they now have a billion dollar deficit?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, we certainly knew when we were in opposition, and certainly now that we're in government, that human resources, the shortage of human resources that this province faces is significant. And it just didn't happen overnight, Mr. Speaker. This has been an ongoing issue.

Mr. Speaker, we've dealt with the nursing issue. There's more work to be done there, Mr. Speaker. We set a target. I realize that's foreign to the opposition. They would never set a target, Mr. Speaker. We're 75 per cent to that target in the first two years, Mr. Speaker.

But what I will tell you on the physician side of it, Mr. Speaker, is that after year after year after year after year of decline of physicians in rural Saskatchewan, this past year, Mr. Speaker, it's not a lot, but for the first time we saw more physicians practising in this province than we have for many, many years, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, the minister can say whatever he wants, but the fact is he's failing rural Saskatchewan, and they know it. Our offices are inundated with calls from people all across rural Saskatchewan telling us that health care services are being cut back in their hospitals because their doctor has left and no one is coming to fill the void.

People are telling us they have to travel one or even two hours to get emergency services. And now they're telling us that in places like Oxbow you have to qualify as an emergency by phoning the HealthLine. To the minister, Mr. Speaker: is this what it's come to in Saskatchewan under the Sask Party government? Why do people have to call the HealthLine to qualify as an emergency?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, a number of months ago I announced a physician recruitment strategy that is doing its work. Mr. Speaker, and I'll have more announcements as we move forward. In fact next week we'll have another announcement that will certainly address this issue . . .

[Interjections]

[14:15]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. I would ask the members placing the question to allow the minister the same opportunity to respond as the members on the opposite side allowed for the question to be placed. Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, and what I would tell you is that, for years and years the College of Medicine under the former government was at 60 seats — shamefully low. In fact it was the lowest attendance in the College of Medicine of anywhere in Canada, Mr. Speaker. That was their record.

Under our government, Mr. Speaker, in the first two years we're up to attendance record acceptance of 89 medical students, Mr. Speaker, with residency positions up to 100. It used to only be at 60 under that former government, Mr. Speaker.

Yes, it's going to take time for those changes to bear results in rural Saskatchewan, but at least we're addressing the issue. And they did absolutely nothing.

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

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, the minister's impassioned rhetoric isn't going to help the doctors in rural Saskatchewan that are there working 72-hour shifts. People are waiting two to four weeks for routine appointments, and communities like Shaunavon and Coronach are hiring professional recruitment agencies to help them find doctors.

Mr. Speaker, communities are being told to come up with their own incentives to attract doctors. The delay in the children's hospital is making it harder to recruit pediatric specialists. And the Sask Party has broken its promise to add an emergency helicopter to the ambulance system.

To the minister, Mr. Speaker: will he admit that his government's commitment to health care in rural Saskatchewan is nothing but budget cuts, broken promises, and angry rhetoric?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, I find it absolutely amazing that that critic would say rhetoric is increasing the number of College of Medicine seats from 60 to 89. It would be only the opposition that would say it's rhetoric when we increase the number of residency positions from 60 to over 100, Mr. Speaker. It would only be the opposition that would call that rhetoric because quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, people in Saskatchewan see the changes that we've made. They realize it's going to take time. And, Mr. Speaker, those changes will bear results.

Mr. Speaker, we are continuing to rely extremely heavily on foreign-trained grads. We want to change that and become more self-sufficient, training our own citizens right here in Saskatchewan so they can continue to practise here in Saskatchewan.

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

Education Capital Spending

Ms. Atkinson: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Sask Party tried to duck answering questions in terms of what's happening to educational capital in the province. So today we're going to try

again.

So last year when the money was still coming in, the government committed \$259 million to education capital. And the minister went around the province announcing project after project after project. He became the king of press releases. Now the minister has confirmed, in answers to written questions, that barely \$20 million has been spent to complete school projects in the past two years.

To the Minister of Education: are you going to use this \$259 million in education capital, which I understand is in a fund, to fund K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] operating grants next year?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in answers last week, the government, since we have become the government of the day, we have allocated \$303 million to school capital. Mr. Speaker, that covers a wide . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — I'd ask the Leader of the Opposition to give the minister an opportunity to respond. The Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, the very first amount of money that we allocated to then the NDP government's budget in '07-08 was \$13 million. Mr. Speaker, 12 million of that went to the two projects that I believe the member who asked the question announced in 2003, Mr. Speaker. We finished the two projects by adding \$12 million to those two projects, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, since then we have many projects under way. We have projects that are nearing completion. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated this morning to the SSBA [Saskatchewan School Boards Association] convention, I had the pleasure of cutting a ribbon at Norquay School, where nearly \$2 million was spent on the project in Norquay.

Mr. Speaker, there are many projects under way. Those are projects that are on the list. The member knows that. And her question, the written question is the projects that they had started that we finished.

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

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we're going to try this again. The minister has gone about the province issuing press release after press release. In fact he's issued a couple of press releases on dozens of projects. Now they sent money out the door last year into the education capital fund. I'm trying to understand what's happening to that fund.

Now we know that there are projects that are being designed and they're in planning and so on and so forth. But this government has a budget problem next year. I'm trying to understand. Is it the intention of this government to use that

fund, that has not yet been spent because some of those projects are just in the design and planning stage, to cover operating grants next year for K to 12 schools? It's a very simple question. Yes or no?

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

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, we're going to move forward with a number of projects. Mr. Speaker, the money is available. The money is available. The school boards know that.

Mr. Speaker, I can provide the member opposite with a list that will show her the 22 major projects that we've talked about in this Legislative Assembly. Mr. Speaker, the ministry share for that amount of our related costs is \$246.9 million, Mr. Speaker. That money is sitting in a fund. We have allocated a large portion of that out the door already.

She knows that, Mr. Speaker. She knows that there are projects under way, Mr. Speaker, including the first phase of the Nutana project, which, Mr. Speaker, the Nutana project and the E.D. Feehan project are \$12 million right in her backyard, Mr. Speaker. And she doesn't even know that those capital projects are under way.

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

Funding for Boards of Education

Ms. Atkinson: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I note the minister didn't answer the question. So we're going to try again.

Now, Mr. Speaker, last night I met with a number of school trustees across the province. And they're counting on this government to provide them with stable, secure, and predictable funding, as promised in their spring budget when they took away school boards' abilities to tax. But the Minister of Education this morning told them that they're not going to get a stable and secure and predictable funding arrangement until 2012.

Now when is that? I think that's after the next election. It's not deny, deny, deny, but it's delay, delay, delay, Mr. Speaker. So can the minister tell us what is taking them so long to get their act together that the school boards can't rely upon stable, secure, and predictable funding before the next election?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, isn't it interesting that that member was part of a government who gave in three successive years to boards of education minus four, minus two, minus four, Mr. Speaker. Is that predictable funding from that former government?

Mr. Speaker, we made a change, a very significant change to how schools are funded. Mr. Speaker, last year we provided an additional \$241 million to boards of education so that we could indeed meet the commitment to property owners, especially the agricultural communities, and make those changes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this morning the member was standing right beside me when I said, it's my goal to ensure that over the next two years we have a funding plan in place. But, Mr. Speaker, I am not going to put in place a funding plan that is not properly developed, that has not worked out all its kinks. And, Mr. Speaker, my plan is to ensure that in the third year, if we have to, Mr. Speaker, that we're going to put in place the plan that boards of education can count on, unlike that member before.

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

Municipal Operating Grants

Ms. Higgins: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister also needs money to go with that long-term funding. That's his biggest problem.

Mr. Speaker, budget day may seem like a long time ago, especially for the Minister of Finance, but let me remind him. On that day there was a number of claims that he and his government made, and one of those was that they had achieved their commitment and the promise of long-term revenue sharing with municipalities by putting 90 per cent of one point of PST [provincial sales tax] towards revenue sharing.

Mr. Speaker, the commitment this year is to move that to a full point. But fast forward to this week, Mr. Speaker, and the Minister of Finance is obviously stepping away and looking to break that promise. Mr. Speaker, to the minister: why is he breaking yet another promise to the people of Saskatchewan?

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I am happy to talk about the municipal operating grant program, Mr. Speaker, and remind the members that in our first year as government . . .

[Interjections]

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Our first year in government we increased municipal operating grants by ten and a half per cent, Mr. Speaker. Our second year in government we increased municipal operating grants by 24 per cent. Mr. Speaker, a 35 per cent increase in two years — \$45 million, Mr. Speaker, \$167 million a year to our municipalities. The highest number it has ever been, and something that the members opposite would never do.

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

Ms. Higgins: — Well, Mr. Speaker, over and over again we have heard the Minister of Finance chalk up all of this mismanagement purely to potash, the drop in potash revenues and the misplaced projections. But, Mr. Speaker, that's purely a red herring because this government has enjoyed huge revenues to the provincial government. It is barely under \$10 billion. And

you can look back at other budgets. You can look back at provincial accounts. That is historical revenues for the province of Saskatchewan. And the reason they're breaking these promises is because of their mismanagement.

And, Mr. Speaker, clearly this minister is just hiding behind this commitment, and he's going to dump this responsibility onto the municipalities. So why is he forcing municipal leaders to put in a place a price or tax hike, purely to cover their mismanagement?

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I can see that the premise of the member's question is entirely wrong. This government has increased municipal operating grants by 35 per cent — \$45 million over two years, Mr. Speaker — to \$167 million, the highest it has ever been. And, Mr. Speaker, I can . . .

[Interjections]

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Mr. Speaker, I can assure municipalities that it will be at least \$167 million going forward. And I'll tell you what we won't do, Mr. Speaker. We won't do what the NDP did which was claw back \$600 million in revenue sharing over the 16 years of their government and raise the PST. That's something we won't do, Mr. Speaker.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

Canine Drug Unit in Saskatchewan Jails

Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise in the House today to talk about a new initiative that will work to enhance public safety in Saskatchewan. Early today, in a first for the province, I signed a letter of understanding with the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] for the use of one full-time canine handler and dog to crack down on the use of illegal substances in our adult correction facilities.

Mr. Speaker, one of this government's platform promises was to crack down on gangs and drugs in jails. We understand that drug use and trafficking have become a huge issue in our facilities in the last decade, and we are committed to seeing improvements made in this area.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to say we have already made much headway on this promise over the past two years. Today all of the large adult secure correctional facilities have an institutional clothing policy which works to eliminate the wearing of gang colours, and to hamper drugs being hidden in street clothing. On top of that all men's secure custody facilities now operate under a non-contact visiting policy, ensuring that visitors are unable to slip drugs to inmates.

These moves have gone a long way in reducing the amount of contraband that ends up in our facilities, and today's announcement will only add to this progress.

[14:30]

Mr. Speaker, since late 2007, this government has been contracting drug dog services periodically for use in our correctional facilities on a casual basis. This new agreement with the RCMP is really about enhancing what is already in place and increasing capacity for drug suppression and enforcement in our facilities. By adding the RCMP's drug dog to existing drug search services contracted by the ministry, we have an additional tool to reduce drug traffic in our correctional facilities.

While there's still a few details that need to be worked out, what I can tell you is that the province will be funding a new canine officer and dog to be located in Meadow Lake. That officer and dog, along with others based out of Regina, Prince Albert, and The Battlefords will then be available to corrections for regular routine searches of our facilities. This new initiative will allow adult corrections to have access to a drug dog on a full-time basis which in turn will give officials the flexibility and support they need to ensure our facilities are a safe place for staff, inmates, and visitors alike.

Funding for this initiative will total 185,000 in the first year and 130,000 per year on an ongoing basis. And depending on staffing within the RCMP, the dog and handler could be available to adult corrections as early as March 2010.

Mr. Speaker, earlier today at our announcement we met a German shepherd named Maverick who did an impressive demonstration for those in attendance. I'll tell you this: he was definitely not an animal I want to mess with any time soon. And I'm confident in these dogs' abilities to get the job done.

In closing, I would like to reiterate that this government is incredibly pleased to partner with the RCMP on this very important initiative and for the first time ever to have access to our very own drug dog on a full-time basis. We believe this is yet another significant step in achieving our goal of a safer and more secure province for all Saskatchewan people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Trew: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the minister for sharing this with me just before the session came in this afternoon. It's generally viewed as good news. Anything we can do to enhance public safety and enhance the safety of the many good people working in corrections, and of course to help inmates, people that are in these secure facilities, help them to lead better lives and improve themselves as well.

The minister said, Mr. Speaker, that the devil is in the details, or words to that effect. There's a few details to be worked out yet. I really genuinely wish that there was more effort made at helping inmates with affordable housing and jobs and educational opportunities and the things that will help people break the cycle of being in and out of jails, Mr. Speaker.

Again I say on the dog issue, on this issue it's genuinely viewed as basically good news. I will say, Mr. Speaker, that I had some

surprise as I was reading this because I've long thought that the first dog would be a tracking dog to help the minister find some of the inmates he's let out early or even a bloodhound to help the Sask Party to track down whistle-blowers.

Mr. Speaker, many people are asking if this minister's legacy is going to be that he will be known as the minister responsible for who let the dogs out. Thank you.

The Speaker: — Any further ministerial statements?

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 126 — *The Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases Act*

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

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 126, *The Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases Act* now be introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — The Minister of the Environment has moved first reading of Bill No. 126, *The Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

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

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be considered a second time? I recognize the minister.

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Next sitting of the House.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 127 — *The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 2009*

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

Mr. Harrison: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 127, *The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 2009* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — The Minister Responsible for Municipal Affairs has moved that Bill No. 127, *The Assessment Management Agency Amendment Act, 2009* be now read the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — When shall the Bill be considered a second time? I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — At the next sitting of the House.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 128 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Labour Mobility) Amendment Act, 2009*

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 128, the miscellaneous labour mobility amendment Act, 2009 be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — The Minister Responsible for Advanced Education, Employment and Labour has moved first reading of Bill No. 128, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Labour Mobility) Amendment Act, 2009*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of Crown and Central Agencies.

Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

Mr. McMillan: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to present its eighth report. I move:

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

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Chair of the Crown and Central Agencies:

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 545 through 561.

The Speaker: — Questions 545 through 561 are tabled.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 111

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Harrison that **Bill No. 111** — *The Northern Municipalities Consequential Amendments Act, 2009/Loi de 2009 portant modifications corrélatives à la loi intitulée The Northern Municipalities Act, 2009* be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise on debate of Bill 111, *The Northern Municipalities Consequential Amendments Act*, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, just a few opening remarks on this Bill. This legislation amends three Acts including *The Interpretation Act* to replace references to the former northern municipalities Act with *The Northern Municipalities Act, 2009*.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it's worthwhile to note perhaps that not only with this part of the Bill but there's a French portion, Mr. Speaker, that will be amended as well.

It is interesting that this Bill comes forward now because this Bill, as we all have seen, simply covers changing amendments, as I mentioned, in three Acts and then including *The Interpretation Act* after other Acts are passed, Mr. Speaker. Since those Acts, that Act is not yet passed, it becomes somewhat interesting that this Bill appears at the time that it does.

But that be it as it may, Mr. Speaker, I would think that in order that we all perhaps understand this Bill, the Bill 111, *An Act to make consequential amendments resulting from the enactment of The Northern Municipalities Act, 2009*, that I would read this Act into the record. But unfortunately I'll not be able to read the French portion. But, Mr. Speaker:

HER MAJESTY, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows [Mr. Deputy Speaker]:

Short Title

This Act may be cited as *The Northern Municipalities Consequential Amendments Act, 2009*.

S.S. 1977, c.A-18.011 amended

2(1) *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act, 1997* is amended in the manner set forth in this section.

(2) **Clause 48(2)(a) is amended by striking out** “as continued by section 3 of *The Northern Municipalities Act*”.

(3) **Clause 49(2)(c) is amended by striking out** “*The Northern Municipalities Act*” **and substituting** “*The Northern Municipalities Act, 2009*”.

(4) **Clause 99(2)(c) is amended by striking out** “*The Northern Municipalities Act*” **and substituting** “*The Northern Municipalities Act, 2009*”.

(5) **Clause 100(a) is amended by striking out** “as continued by section 3 of *The Northern Municipalities Act*”.

And then we go to:

S.S. 1995, c.E-0.2 amended

The Education Act, 1995 is amended in the manner set forth in this section.

Section 296 is amended by striking out “*The Northern Municipalities Act*” **and substituting** “*The Northern Municipalities Act, 2009*”.

Subsection 296.1(2) is amended by striking out “clause 192(1)(e) of *The Northern Municipalities Act*” **and substituting** “section 231 of *The Northern Municipalities Act, 2009*”.

Clause 304(3)(b) is amended by striking out “*The Cities Act* or *The Municipalities Act*” **and substituting** “*The Cities Act, The Municipalities Act* or *The Northern Municipalities Act, 2009*”.

Now I did have the opportunity, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to speak yesterday on one of those Acts. And again, as I mentioned earlier, this Bill appearing as it does on the order paper now is difficult, in fact, for us to act on because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the other Acts are not passed, if the Act is not passed, then it makes these changes . . . There would be no changes, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I know one of the Bills I spoke to yesterday, and I again could repeat what I said there but, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the issues there in terms of what the minister was saying to us, in terms of the criminal checks — that we talked about, that I talked about yesterday — the criminal checks and how they were not dealing with those for everyone, but in fact being somewhat particular or choosing, choosing who would deal

with them or not. And then in fact being very . . .

In fact there was a lack of vision on that particular Bill, as I remember, Mr. Deputy Speaker, lack of vision where they talked about how we would have to put in our conflict of interest on . . . and that that would be the same as the MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for municipal politicians. And that was okay because there was a, sort of a straightforward approach to that. But again as I mentioned, that was not when it came to criminal checks.

Now I know we also talked about *The Northern Municipalities Act*. And here yesterday there was much discussion on that Act and a lot of issues raised regarding consultation, transparency, and how these were all going to be dealt with. Now it does cause me great concern, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to see that now we have Bill 11, *The Northern Municipalities Consequential Amendments Act* and now again that this Bill amends three Acts including *The Interpretation Act* to replace the . . . with *The Northern Municipalities Act*.

As I say, the three, the Acts that are being amended here as . . . And perhaps I could put into the record again what the deputy leader on this side of the House had to say on this, and she said, “Mr. Speaker, *The Northern Municipalities . . .*” The member from Moose Jaw Wakamow had this to say:

. . . *The Northern Municipalities Consequential Amendments Act* hits on the three Bills that the minister has just spoken to, makes the changes that are appropriate with the implementation of *The Northern Municipalities Act*.

Again, so it hits on the three Bills that the minister just spoken to, makes changes that are appropriate with the implementation of *The Northern Municipalities Act*. So we need *The Northern Municipalities Act*. And you heard the members yesterday, particularly the members from Athabasca and Regina Northeast, speak on that particular Bill and raised very good points on that Bill. And again we then see that how are we going to act on Bill 111 when in fact those other two Bills haven't been passed?

[14:45]

Now I know you're probably waiting to hear what else the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow had to say. And I'll just read to you what she did say. She went on to say that:

The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act has changed, also *The Education Act* and *The Interpretation Act, 1995*, just to be brought in line with *The Northern Municipalities Act, 2009*.

Mr. Speaker, as of yet, of course . . .

She went on again as much as similar as I did. She wasn't going to comment on the French interpretation, and I could understand that. And, Mr. Speaker, I would do likewise.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it is again as I mentioned, there have been many speakers on *The Northern Municipalities Act, 2009*. And this Act is known as *The Northern Municipalities*

Consequential Amendments Act. And as we heard again from the member from Athabasca and Regina Northeast put very good points on the record, points that I think we all have to review and have a closer look.

I know there are issues regarding consultation in those Bills, issues of transparency. Who did the government speak to? Did they speak to anyone, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are questions I think that were raised. Did they actually speak to anyone? And particularly, we know their record on northern issues. We know their record on northern issues and where they stand on that.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is very difficult for us, at this time on this side of the House, to say that Bill 111 — again is the short title for the Act — *The Northern Municipalities Consequential Amendments Act*, would go forward. I think you would agree with me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that it is difficult at this time, knowing the difficulties we have with *The Northern Municipalities Act*, being here and talk on the issues that were raised by the members who entered this debate yesterday and the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow who made the opening comments on behalf of the opposition.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the history of Bills coming forward before us, in terms of where there are consequential amendments as a result of the Acts, have been in most cases been dealt with once the initial Acts are passed. And it is somewhat to me . . . perhaps is I find it a bit disconcerting that we are having to deal with this Bill now. So I am not certain why this Bill comes in the order that it does without the other Bills being, with the initial Bill being passed. But we find that that's in fact the case here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Bill . . .

Now again there are people that perhaps could look at that, and perhaps we have to look closer at the Bill. I've just simply made these opening remarks regarding my concerns, as I have said, my concerns that there are members who have spoken out on the lack of transparency, consultation issues regarding *The Northern Municipalities Act*. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this one runs, flows from that Act.

And so having dealt with that, I think what we have to also look at is, we would have to check are the clauses correct? Mr. Deputy Speaker, these are the kinds of things that we would have to check. Are the numbers correct? Are we actually making the changes that are necessary here? And so I think there is probably some value in going over the Bill prior to being, Mr. Deputy Speaker, trying to determine whether the numbers and in fact the accuracy of the amendments are correct.

Now those we will be going over yet, and we will no doubt be needing, on these Bills, to do the due diligence that we need to. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is important that we do this.

Now unlike, as I mentioned I think, the members opposite, in terms of the experience that they have in northern Saskatchewan, we have heard many of the comments and the lack of knowledge. And it is, I think, one of the points that we would be looking at before we would even think of agreeing with Bill 111, that we would look at *The Northern Municipalities Act* and take that into our discussions as we move forward on this Bill, Bill 111.

Again this Act is *The Northern Municipalities Consequential Amendments Act*. But my main concerns, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are that there are so many outstanding issues in the North, so many issues that need to be dealt with, and particularly the consultations and whether those have been done. And we see over and over and over again here, the members and how there is a lack of consultation. And they move forward without careful . . . doing the due diligence.

And we've had many, many examples of Bills having to be withdrawn and resubmitted. And this is a concern if we were to pass this Bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that all of a sudden that we would find that they had to withdraw a Bill because they found something that was wrong. And that speaks of a record, a record over there that becomes more dismal as the time goes on.

And we now see that sort of spilling over into the financial. First it was just simply the Bills. When the money was all there to spend, and weren't we having a good old party spending money that was put together by the former NDP government. And now we see that the record on finances is no better than the Bills that they have been putting forward and withdrawing and resubmitting Bills.

So I'm reluctant, Mr. Deputy Speaker, reluctant, very reluctant to have our side look at a Bill of this nature and just simply say, this is fine and we should move this forward. There's much to do here. As I mentioned again, we would be at the very least reluctant to see this passed today because the initial Bill is not yet passed. So it comes in an order that comes as a bit of a surprise to me as to why this Bill would be here now. But it is before us, and for whatever reason, the government wants us to debate this now.

But I've also, I think there are more things I want to say about the northern . . . their lack of understanding the North. But for right now, I think we would have to go over . . . We would have this on paper. And I've read the amendments for this Act into the record so that we can all see it in the future and so that we are all on the same page, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when it comes to this Bill.

Now requiring more time on this Bill to do the proper due diligence in terms of making sure the amendments, the numbers . . . We all know how important that is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we go in here, that it's best to catch those kinds of errors now as opposed to later.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the things that we should not forget though, the things that we should not forget, is again this government's, what they have shown in terms of putting forward Bills, in terms of their track record on that, in terms of their track record.

And now as I've mentioned, now the people of this province who were enjoying, enjoying what they called a boom. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that boom has turned into a bust. And daily as we sit here and listen, that boom has truly turned into a bust. And daily we find each department . . . and it's getting worse. And those members, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you can tell from the looks on their faces that this is bad for Saskatchewan. This is really bad for the people of Saskatchewan who worked so hard to build up an account. The \$2.3 billion, if you can

imagine, Mr. Deputy Speaker, gone out the window.

And now we have to pull back money and meanwhile saying to everyone that there's tax cuts. They're not tax cuts, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They're not tax cuts. These are now . . . They're getting back and they're going back and they're taking away from kids and schools so that they can give tax cuts to other people. Now what a shell game that is — taking away money from children and schools and being happy and telling people that they're having tax cuts.

And this reminds me of this Bill and the Bills that they have passed, and particularly the order of this Bill coming as it does now. Because what does that say, Mr. Deputy Speaker? What does that say about a government who many are finding hard to trust, Mr. Deputy Speaker? And so as I go out and I talk to people about perhaps Bill 111 or any of the others, this is sort of symptomatic or this is an example of how they bring forward legislation.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Bill 111, I think I've made the arguments of how we are having difficulty to deal with this. I've talked about the finances and the mishandling of finances in this province. They complain today that they cannot help farmers because this is going to cost them. Yet they run up a debt of \$1 billion over and above that, the money that was coming into the coffers at that time.

Wasn't it a party, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Wasn't it a party? And some people were having a good time and now some people are going to pay for that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They're going to pay for that. And a lot of people are saying this reminds them of the 1980s. It reminds them of the Devine era and how things worked then. They just can't wait to get their hands on the purse and start spending that money and . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — With leave to introduce a guest.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has asked leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I thank the members for allowing me to introduce a guest. I am pleased to introduce to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and through you to all members of the Assembly a guest seated in your gallery, my older brother Dallas Duncan.

Mr. Speaker, Dallas lives in Medicine Hat with his family. And he's in for some business, Mr. Speaker. And I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that he works in the alternative energy business where the company that he works for does a number of things such as geothermal wells and other things like that, Mr. Speaker. And he's very happy with what this government is doing in this province, Mr. Speaker.

And I can tell you that he certainly has been listening intently to the member's speech. And his comment from the gallery was that if the members think that it's a bust in Saskatchewan, they should try living in Alberta right now. So I would ask all members to welcome me introduce my brother, Dallas.

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

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 111 — *The Northern Municipalities Consequential Amendments Act, 2009/Loi de 2009 portant modifications corrélatives à la loi intitulée The Northern Municipalities Act, 2009*
(continued)

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the other things that the monetary situation or the budgetary situation we find ourselves in Saskatchewan is that it reminds me of somebody finding a wallet, finding a wallet and spending the money. Now a lot of people would return the wallet, or they would be mindful of, it was there, would go through procedures. But what is the feeling there when you just find a wallet of money and you spend it? And you spend that money? That is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, not a position that I would want to be in. And then running into the owner of the wallet and explaining what it was that has happened here.

So here we've gone from boom to bust. And we put in Bills. We take Bills out. We change Bills because they're not correct. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the provincial government wonders, or the Sask Party government wonders why people are losing faith in them, are losing faith. And some have lost faith. Some have lost faith in them. And they propose . . . And it starts from the simple things. And as I mentioned before, it wasn't simple, but in terms of proposing Bills, where they proposed Bills, they had to withdraw the Bills because they were improperly put forward.

And so now we have to go over Bills like Bill 111 with care and with scrutiny so that we make sure that we understand what is in those Bills and the impacts that they might have. So we go down to the minute details, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I read the Bill into the record so that we would have the actual Bill read into the record, and we have it on paper so that we would have to discuss it. But I think also that point, and the order of the Bill has come forward on this important issue.

But first the importance here is northern Saskatchewan, northern Saskatchewan and what that means. It means it's . . . The North is resources. The North is a wonderful people. The North is about wide open spaces. The North is about hunting and fishing, and that's what comes to mind, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And the understanding from the members opposite, and there's a concern here as to what their understanding truly is.

[15:00]

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so from our side we have had a

member from Athabasca speak on this, whose constituency is in there, and his comments. And that those members should pay special attention to the comments that he made, the comments that he made about the North, and to the member from Regina Northeast who travelled as well in the North when he was working on amendments to *The Labour Standards Act* and the questions that he asked. And it is of some concern to me whether members from the Sask Party government have in fact done that kind of work.

I think in terms of a Bill that I had the opportunity to speak on yesterday, Mr. Deputy Speaker, just yesterday the Bill that I had an opportunity to speak on, Mr. Deputy Speaker, *The Municipalities Amendment Act* and the issues around *The Municipalities Amendment Act*, and how the minister in speaking to that Act. Mr. Deputy Speaker, how he spoke and said, well what we want is to allow the municipalities to have people who run for public office post criminal records.

It was an innocent enough statement or a good statement, but it was what followed afterwards which was just a bit disconcerting. So he said that it was especially that this would be something that would add to elections in municipalities, that something that he was — it sounded from his words — that he was supporting and would be in favour of. Then he said he gave the municipalities the choice to do that. And then he said he wouldn't force them to do that. Now that was very, very interesting. I'm not sure people reading that who are councillors, what exactly they would be thinking he was saying. Mr. Deputy Speaker, what was he actually saying to them? So, many concerns about Bill 111.

Many concerns that we have be that in the fields that are out there. We learn daily in the Education for example that the money is not there, Mr. Speaker, and it is very disheartening to hear those kind of things. Because as we went around the province, everybody was cheering and saying, here we come. We're spending the money. It was like the found wallet I talked about earlier, the found money, and we were very good at spending money.

And then it comes later and now we have to say that . . . And now we hear that in fact perhaps the money will roll, but it will roll after the election. After the election it's going to roll now. So now it's 2012, and now the money won't come till after the election. Now that's disappointing, I think, to the students that we hear. And I wonder what the Willowgrove school will, in Saskatoon, what'll happen there, that this will be very interesting to see on that.

So these are concerns as to . . . That we have to have faith in this government when they propose a Bill 111 that in fact that they are . . . Because they can say things. And then will they be pulling them back? And we've seen this in many Bills where they proposed Bills, and they've pulled them back in and then had to resubmit. So we wonder if this is the same thing now.

As I said before, is that this started with Bills when the money was flowing and now it's . . . We've worked our way to the finances of this province where now the money's there and now it's gone. It's a shell game that we have going on, and we wonder if the Bills are still . . . if we can still have faith in them as they propose the Bills that they have done the due diligence.

And actually we're after transparency and consultation, and there was nothing of that that we . . . In the minister's statements, there was nothing in the minister's statement surrounding whether or not the due diligence had been done.

In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it might be worth reading into the record what the minister had said here, and he said, Mr. Speaker, "I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 111, *The Northern Municipalities Consequential Amendments Act, 2009*." He said, the Act represents, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he said:

The Act represents changes that are being made to bilingual Acts as a result of the introduction of *The Northern Municipalities Act, 2009*.

The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act, 1997, *The Education Act, 1995*, and *The Interpretation Act, 1995* are the three Acts amended in this Bill. All other consequential amendments are contained within *The Northern Municipalities Act, 2009* itself.

So that's what the minister . . . And the minister went on: "The changes being made to these statutes, as in all other consequential amendments contained in *The Northern Municipalities Act, 2009*, primarily do the following . . ." And this is what he said that they would do: ". . . replaces references to *The Northern Municipalities Act, 2009* . . ." And that would be because of the changes in 2009. Mr. Deputy Speaker, ". . . updates the various . . . municipal definitions and other statutes as defined in *The Interpretation Act, 1995*," an Act which comes into play in a lot of changes.

Now accordingly, he went on to finish, accordingly, Mr. Speaker, he moved the second reading of Bill 111, *The Northern Municipalities Consequential Amendments Act, 2009*.

So again, the minister was straightforward, as this Bill is as straightforward in terms of what it had to say, what Acts it was changing. And I guess one might say that we should not be overly concerned, that this is a straightforward Bill, and that perhaps we're making a bit more of it than should be.

But I think from what we see across the way that due diligence needs to be done on every piece of material that we see from their Bills and otherwise because the record, the record has now . . . What we see from the other side, the record is not something that I don't think anyone would be holding forth as something to be very proud of. And I think we see . . . We'll all be looking forward, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to more news from there as they muddle their way through this.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that there are probably more members willing, wanting to get in on this debate. And it's an important debate, Bill 111, again making the consequential amendments to this Act, the Act to make consequential amendments resulting from the enactment of *The Northern Municipalities Act, 2009*. It's amazing that a Bill or a piece of legislation of this sort and the ramifications that it can have on this legislature, and I know that there are many other members wanting to speak. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will thank you at this time.

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

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm extremely pleased today to enter into the debate on Bill No. 111, *An Act to make consequential amendments resulting from the enactment of The Northern Municipalities Act, 2009*.

Now, Mr. Speaker, many people would think that this particular piece of legislation because it makes consequential amendments to other Acts would be very minor in nature, Mr. Speaker. But if you understand the legislative process and the work that is undertaken to ensure that when we change one piece of legislation that the impacts and references in other pieces of legislation are also changed, is a very large undertaking.

It requires many, many members of the civil service, who work in the legislative branch over at the Department of Justice, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to spend time reviewing those Acts to ensure that as we change one Act we make the necessary changes to any other legislation that in fact mentioned in that Act, Mr. Speaker.

So we have people who specialize in that in the Department of Justice. They ensure every single time that an Act is amended or changed that if there needs to be consequential amendments made to other Acts, that is in fact undertaken.

Mr. Speaker, consequential amendments in other Acts may affect one Bill, two Bills, three Bills, 25, 30, 40, maybe 50 or 60 Bills, Mr. Speaker. In any given session of the legislature, we may amend upwards of 50 to 60, and I've seen as high as 100 Bills amended in a single year between new legislation and amendments in legislation.

So, Mr. Speaker, when you undertake an amendment in a Bill like *The Northern Municipalities Act, 2009*, then you have to look at does it impact other pieces of legislation. Now, Mr. Speaker, this particular Bill No. 111 indicates that it does in fact make changes in three other Bills. And we need to understand, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what those implications are on those particular pieces of legislation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we look at this Bill and it seems a relatively simple Bill. It's a bilingual Bill, Mr. Speaker. It has amendments in both French and English, consequential amendments. But it does undertake to make amendments in three other specific Bills, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I'd like to spend about an hour, maybe a little over an hour, talking about what those amendments may be and what the impact on those amendments could be and are on the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to talk about the amendments, consequential amendments, being made to *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act, 1997*, Mr. Speaker. So when you make amendments in *The Northern Municipalities Act*, we have to look at what impacts it has on other legislation. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it makes amendments to *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act, 1997*.

And what does it do within that Act, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Well in many places within *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act*,

1997, it makes references to the current northern municipalities Act, Mr. Speaker. So anywhere within, contained within that piece of legislation where it currently makes reference to *The Northern Municipalities Act*, it now has to be amended to make reference to *The Northern Municipalities Act, 2009*, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, there are several places within *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act, 1997*, that in fact references the previous Act, *The Northern Municipalities Act*, that now have to be amended to make reference to the new Act, *The Northern Municipalities Act, 2009*.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to understand what the impact on those particular pieces of legislation and these changes are, one would have to reference that piece of legislation in detail. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is a process which officials in the Department of Justice undertake very carefully to ensure that there are no unintended changes, unintended consequences as a result of making the amendments and changes in the consequential amendment Act.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are going to spend some time this afternoon going over this very important piece of legislation. Many people may think it's unimportant, but it's often pieces of legislation like this to make consequential amendments that can have unforeseen consequences, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, we need to fully understand what those implications are.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, although my colleague just a few minutes ago talked at some length about this particular Bill and its impact on *The Northern Municipalities Act*, I'm going to deal with that later on in my speech. I'm first going to deal with the impacts on the three Bills that the consequential amendments impact directly, Mr. Speaker.

As I indicated, the first one is *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act* of 1997, Mr. Speaker. In four different places within the Bill, there are amendments made to *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act, 1997*. So in four places, after consideration of the current legislation in place, the current northern municipalities Act, it was determined that those changes were necessary to make in order to keep *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act, 1997* current and relevant. But, Mr. Speaker, that is contingent upon, naturally of course, passing *The Northern Municipalities Act, 2009*.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to spend a few minutes talking about the second piece of legislation that is amended here, and that's *The Education Act* of 1995. It's amended in, Mr. Deputy Speaker, three places, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and again these are references to the current piece of legislation that need to be updated in order to be relevant and to be current if in fact *The Northern Municipalities Act, 2009* were to pass, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, these particular references in *The Education Act* make reference obviously to schools in northern Saskatchewan, a very beautiful place, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where I hope the children enjoy their education. There are beautiful communities in northern Saskatchewan like Ile-a-la-Crosse, La Loche, La Ronge, Creighton, Sandy Bay, Buffalo Narrows, just to mention a few, Pinehouse. Mr. Deputy Speaker, these are communities where children in northern Saskatchewan go to school, that they depend upon changes in

this legislation to ensure that they get a quality education in their communities, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The schools in northern Saskatchewan are represented by the Northern Lights School Division, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a school division that looks after schools in the northern part of Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with the exception of Ile-a-la-Crosse which has an independent and separate school division, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

[15:15]

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the amendments that are brought forward in this piece of legislation are to help ensure that the quality of education in northern Saskatchewan, for those residents, is being adhered to, that we are delivering the best quality education we possibly can in those northern in communities, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that in fact that the legislation remains relevant and current so that as amendments are made to *The Northern Municipalities Act*, the reciprocating and necessary amendments are also made in *The Education Act*.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it clearly indicates that there needs to be three amendments made in order to keep *The Education Act* relevant, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and to ensure that, in fact, the intent of the new provisions in the northern municipality Act apply within *The Education Act*.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we also, we see a number of changes being made in *The Interpretation Act — The Interpretation Act* of 1995, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And in this particular case, we see again the same changes being made that are being made in both *The Education Act* and *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act* from 1995. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we see in indications where the reference to *The Northern Municipalities Act* has been there in the past, now a reference to *The Northern Municipalities Act* of 2009.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, *The Interpretation Act* is a general piece of legislation that is used to interpret . . . to define how other Acts and pieces of legislation are interpreted and regulations are interpreted by government on a broad, very broad base, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So *The Interpretation Act* is a very important piece of legislation. So it's absolutely important that you continue to ensure that it's both relevant and updated and current. That as you make amendments to other pieces of legislation that would be reflected in *The Interpretation Act*, that in fact you would make those amendments in *The Interpretation Act*, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So as I started my speech some, you know, 10, 15 minutes ago talking about the importance of this piece of legislation and how some would see it as being a very simple and maybe irrelevant piece of legislation on the surface, it is actually a very, very important piece of legislation that demands that we take adequate time and consideration as we look at legislation, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We need to understand those impacts on both those three particular pieces of legislation on the people of the province of Saskatchewan, in particular northern Saskatchewan, and the impacts on future . . . or the impacts on that legislation moving forward.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to, before I get back to

talking specifically about these changes, spend a few minutes about the legislation, northern municipalities Act, that drives these consequential amendments, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because it's linked very clearly. And there's a number of key provisions being changed in *The Northern Municipalities Act*, but there's one or two I think that should have and do deserve some consideration.

One is the issue of criminal record checks for those who are seeking public office in municipalities in the North, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that is a new direction, a new policy direction put forward by the government. That policy direction leaves a number of questions unanswered at this time, Mr. Deputy Speaker. If it's adequate and important enough to have for northern municipalities, why isn't it just as important for those of us who sit in the provincial legislature, Mr. Deputy Speaker, or for that matter, all municipal officials across or individuals seeking municipal office across the province? Why so important in northern Saskatchewan?

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that people of Saskatchewan do have a right to know who's running for them in public office. I do think they have a right to hold accountable those who have been elected to public office. And I personally believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we should have criminal record checks and total transparency on all those who are seeking public office.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the things you have to understand when you run for public office is that you're giving up some of your privacy. You're giving up some of your ability to be, for lack of a better word, hidden or non-transparent, Mr. Deputy Speaker. When you seek public office, the people who elect you do expect to know and understand not only what you stand for, but what you've done in your past.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that criminal record checks are good for all citizens of the province who seek public office. I think there should be open and accountable public disclosure of any past criminal activity. I think that that should be a given. I think the citizens of the province have a right to know. I think the citizens of the province should know.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that the introduction of this particular amendment in *The Northern Municipalities Act* is a foot in the door to a much broader and, shall I say, I think, a progressive step in public policy in addressing the issue of public disclosure. I think that public disclosure and transparency is important today. We live in a world that many, many of our citizens, particularly our younger citizens, our young adults, university graduates do most of their research on the Internet. They spend a great deal of time on the Internet and do a great deal of research and study about issues and topics before they come to conclusions or make decisions.

Well it should be no different in deciding which way they want to vote. They should have the ability to look both at the policy directions and ideologies of the people they're voting for. They should look at the accomplishments and the goals and what the individual stands for and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they also should have the right to know what they have done in their past and what they, Mr. Deputy Speaker, maybe should be and have been held accountable for in the past.

So criminal record checks I think are a good thing. I think it's a natural step in moving to an evolution of greater transparency, more accountability. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that we should all be both encouraging that and supportive of greater transparency and accountability, because good government and good public policy comes through greater transparency. It comes from being willing to accept that you don't always do the right things, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It comes from being willing to say that you've made mistakes. But when you've made mistakes, learn from them. Make sure you don't make them again.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is nobody in public life who hasn't, like every other citizen, made a decision they wished they hadn't made the day after they made it. But unfortunately when you're in public life that should be transparent. The public have a right to know. They have a right to know what you stand for. And in particular, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if that mistake was of a criminal nature, I think the population of the province definitely have a right to know.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, *The Northern Municipalities Act* is a piece of legislation and the Act before us, amendments to the Act, pardon me, are an attempt to update the legislation to make it relevant to the current situation of northern municipalities. It's trying to reflect the requests and needs of the northern municipalities and their officials, who from time to time bring forward their concerns to government and asking for amendments.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's the way it is. Governments are there for the people. Governments aren't an entity unto themselves. They are there for the people. They're there to reflect the needs of the people. And they're there to attack on behalf of the people, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So it's very, very appropriate that today we're talking about a piece of legislation that in fact has been brought forward on behalf of northern municipalities, making amendments. And then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as in the case in Bill 111, the consequential amendments to other very important legislation to northern communities, to northern citizens. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, those northern citizens are very, very important citizens and people in our province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, because of their proximity to the seat of government here in Regina, many of them feel that often we forget about them, that we don't care enough, or we aren't concerned about the issues of northern Saskatchewan. Well I'd like to share with the people of northern Saskatchewan, you have two very, very fine representatives — my colleagues both from the constituencies of Cumberland, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . My colleague from Cumberland very, very clearly works hard to represent his constituents. And I can tell you, day in and day out, the representative from Cumberland brings forward the concerns of his constituents to our caucus table. The representative from Cumberland cares very deeply for the people of the North and the things that affect the people of the North.

And that very same sentiment is shared by his colleague and mine, the member from Athabasca, who has served in this legislature for more years than I have but has served the northern communities which he represents with enthusiasm, but

with determination as well, to ensure that their best interests are brought forward on a day-to-day basis, both within this legislature, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and outside this legislature when they're talking to others about the importance of people understanding the issues of northern Saskatchewan and the impact of decisions we make within this Chamber on the people of the North so that we're not making decisions without understanding what those implications are, what the impacts are on the people of the North, and that we take into consideration the importance of the impact on the people of the North.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think this legislature is served by two very capable and confident and competent members of the legislature, both from Cumberland and Athabasca. And on a daily basis they undertake to ensure that myself and other members of this legislature understand, understand the impact of the decisions we make in this room on the people of the North.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, should more be done? Most definitely. Can more be done? I'd say most definitely. We happen to have a government today that's ignored the North. I know that my northern colleagues bring concerns on a daily basis to our caucus about things that the government is ignoring in northern Saskatchewan. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we undertake to raise those issues in this legislature. We do it when we talk about pieces of legislation like this. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know for a fact that in one of the communities in northern Saskatchewan today, they're concerned about a number of things. They're concerned about no cellphone tower that they were promised. They're concerned about the quality of the road that they were promised would be fixed and isn't fixed. I know they're also concerned about the availability of long-term care beds for their parents and grandparents, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They're concerned because these are very vitally needed services in northern Saskatchewan that the government's ignoring.

So my colleagues from the constituencies of Cumberland and Athabasca are bringing up those concerns. They're here to ensure that those concerns are being met, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I just want to . . . If anybody from those communities of the North, at Ile-a-la-Cross, La Loche, Buffalo Narrows, Sandy Bay, Creighton, La Ronge, Mr. Deputy Speaker, understand that these members — the two northern members of the legislature from the constituencies of Athabasca and Cumberland — do care, do raise their issues and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, work on a daily basis to try to improve the lives of their constituents in northern Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to now spend a few minutes talking about this particular piece of legislation, Bill 111, and a little bit about the processes that a Bill would go through, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in its development. Because Bills that deal with consequential amendments are unique in the sense that they are the result of another piece of legislation. They are not necessarily . . . They are not designed, as an example, to make a policy change or implement a policy decision. They are consequential to a policy decision and the implication of that policy.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Bills like Bill 111 often get very little or no discussion in the legislature, often get little or no debate,

Mr. Deputy Speaker. So for that reason, my colleague, the member from Saskatoon Fairview and myself and previously the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow, want to make sure that on Bills that are important to the people of northern Saskatchewan, that we're spending adequate time, adequate consideration of the Bill prior to its passing, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And for that reason, we are spending what some people may think is an exceptionally long period of time on a very minor Bill. But it may be minor in some people's estimation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but its impact is significant.

As I had indicated earlier, this Bill amends three other pieces of legislation. It amends *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act, 1997*. It amends *The Education Act, 1995*. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it amends *The Interpretation Act, 1995*. The amendments on the surface may seem to be minor. It may seem to have little or no impact but, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is the furthest thing from the truth.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, these particular amendments, as are many amendments in legislation dealing with consequential amendments, are important because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they are important to the people of northern Saskatchewan because they directly affect the application of services and benefits provided by government to those citizens in northern Saskatchewan.

[15:30]

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've seen in the last number of months a government that many in northern Saskatchewan believe has forgot them. As I indicated a minute ago, a single community in northern Saskatchewan, represented by my colleague from the constituency of Cumberland, is concerned about three very important things. They're concerned about they were promised a cellphone tower in their area, Mr. Deputy Speaker; it's not been delivered. They were promised, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that they would have long-term care beds. Not delivered, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they were also promised that they would have their road improved.

And these things in northern communities can be extremely, extremely important, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That road can be the lifeline to hospital services, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It can be a lifeline to perhaps the only place in which to buy groceries and other vital staples that they need to live.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in northern Saskatchewan there are fewer roads than there are in other parts of the province. Many people live at the road's end with only one access in and out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and they may be two or three hours from available services and have to drive for a considerable period of time to reach those services. So many of us in the South don't fully understand or appreciate the impact of decisions made on northern communities.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I indicated earlier, my colleagues have spent considerable time trying to educate people in this Assembly about some of the challenges the communities in northern Saskatchewan face because of their unique geographic isolation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the difficulty they have in recruiting professional services to communities that are by and large a great distance from a large centre, Mr. Deputy Speaker,

and that the children that live in those communities are every bit as important as any child in the city of Regina or Saskatoon, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And my colleagues from both Cumberland and Athabasca have worked very, very hard to try to ensure that the members of our caucus and the members of the legislature fully understand the implications.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I indicated earlier, one of the Acts that the consequential amendments are made is *The Education Act*. And in northern communities, education is every bit as important — in fact maybe more important — than it is in some southern communities, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because like smaller communities in southern Saskatchewan, often your centre of your community is around your school. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, therefore consequential amendments to *The Education Act* in this particular Bill are very, very important to the community.

Many of the community's sports activities and sport teams centre around the school. It provides activity for children both during the school day but also it becomes the centre of activity both in evenings and weekends, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And in many northern communities, the options that children have for recreation are not . . . When I say recreation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm talking about structured recreation. There are many things to do in northern Saskatchewan. It's a very beautiful part of the province with great forests, lakes, and opportunities, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But structured activities, many of them are structured around the school, so making the education system, your school, so vitally important in your community.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we can't forget that. And as we look at this particular piece of legislation and amendments to *The Education Act*, we have to be sensitive to what those impacts may be on the education in those very remote communities in northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Those children in those communities should have every right to a quality education as any child in either the city of Regina or Saskatoon would have.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to conclude my remarks over the next five minutes or so talking about the impact of this legislation in a broader context of *The Northern Municipalities Act*. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have before the legislature amendments to *The Northern Municipalities Act*, *The Cities Act*, and the rural municipalities Act as well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, all these Acts are very, very important. But in particular, *The Northern Municipalities Act* is of utmost importance at this period of time in our development because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, northern Saskatchewan is reaching its own potential. We're seeing huge economic development in northern Saskatchewan. We're seeing opportunities for jobs and growth. We're seeing development in the oil industry in northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the uranium industry, and gold development, gold mining.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, all these things not only offer opportunity and jobs to northern communities, but in fact it offers opportunities for northern Saskatchewan that haven't been there

in the past. It offers both financial opportunities, but it also offers opportunities to improve their social structures within their communities. These things are regulated, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by their northern municipalities, by their communities.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the North is unique in some ways in that in many communities you have both an urban municipality and you may have a reserve right down the middle of a community. The rules are different in the division sometimes right within a community. As an example, in the community of Sandy Bay, you will have lots owned by the village of Sandy Bay and next door you'll have lots that are owned by, or across the street, by the reserve. And those children have different rights and provisions based on which lot the house that their parents own is on.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's why it's very important to have progressive legislation for northern municipalities so that those children, regardless if their parents live on a lot owned by the reserve or a lot owned by the municipality, those children should have access to the same opportunities within that community. They should all have quality of education. They should all have the ability to have the recreation that's available through that educational facility, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And so for many reasons, because of the uniqueness of northern Saskatchewan, it's important to have very relevant legislation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's kept up to date, that is reviewed on a regular basis, that is reviewed regularly and consulted with, Mr. Deputy Speaker, those various communities that have to live by that legislation.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at this time after taking a few minutes to consider Bill 111, Mr. Deputy Speaker — and I understand that many of my colleagues want to spend a considerable period of time talking about this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker — I would take my seat to allow others . . . Pardon me. I would like to adjourn debate on this Bill.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Regina Dewdney has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 111, *The Northern Municipalities Consequential Amendments Act, 2009*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 112

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 112** — *The Justices of the Peace Amendment Act, 2009/Loi de 2009 modifiant la Loi de 1988 sur les juges de paix* be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today to talk about Bill 112, *The Justices of the Peace Amendment Act, 2009*. Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the justices of the peace are integral parts of our justice system in

Saskatchewan. They're not technically judges but they perform many roles that are extremely important in our judicial system. And I think it's important that we understand what it is that we're trying to do here and understand the role that the justices of the peace have within the judicial system.

And so, Mr. Speaker, let me go through and outline some of the duties that justices of the peace have. And I'll give a fairly extensive listing of this, but not an absolutely conclusive list. This'll be some of the things that they do. One of their first roles is administering oaths for criminal charges laid by the police or the public. And so this is a role where they are assistants in initiating criminal charges and most often this is done when police officers would lay charges.

Another area where they have responsibility is confirming or cancelling police-issued process. So, for example, if somebody enters into a promise to appear or appearance notice or something like that, these can be dealt with by justices of the peace and revised or eliminated or dealt with in some other fashion.

Another area where justices of the peace have an important role is in reviewing and signing court-issued process. So that could be a summons or a warrant for arrest or an undertaking. And so you will often see a signature of a Justice of the Peace on these types of documents and many of these people who function in that role actually are people who work within the court system and also have a role as a Justice of the Peace.

Justices of the peace also have a role of reviewing and issuing subpoenas compelling witnesses to attend court. And obviously the issuing part is the fairly straightforward part. It's reviewing the information and the evidence that's available that would allow for the subpoenas to be issued which is the important role. And this takes people who have a sense of fair play, but also a sense of good judgment and an understanding of circumstances, and making sure that processes are properly followed.

Justices of the peace also have a role in administering oaths for affidavits, affirmations, and declarations. And this is a role that can be used in many different places.

Another area where they have a role is in considering applications for search warrants. And once again this is an important role in our society, where we value privacy but we also value the ability of investigation of criminal activity. And so in considering and balancing the interests there, clearly justices of the peace have an important role.

Another important area is where justices of the peace can release people under conditions after they've been arrested and are being held in custody. And this is often the role of the justice of the peace that is quite demanding, especially in rural communities. They may get calls in the middle of the night to go to the jail to find out or listen to see whether it's possible that somebody could be released after they've been arrested — or they may have that role in the following morning or on a Monday morning — but dealing with people who are held in custody and assessing whether they should remain there or whether they should be released into the community.

Another area where they handle some fairly difficult issues sometimes relates to conducting show-cause hearings, or bail hearings as they're more commonly called, to see if somebody should remain in custody until they're dealt with by the law. So these are some of the duties that justices of the peace have. And as you can see, they're clearly an integral part of a criminal justice system.

Justices of the peace also have a role to perform in the absence of a Provincial Court judge. And this can be quite crucial in a province like Saskatchewan where we don't have Provincial Court judges in every corner of the province. And so often the justices of the Peace will handle some of the judicial activities that are there. And examples of this would be accepting guilty pleas from an accused person and then ultimately sentencing them with an offence that would be punishable on summary conviction. So they're able to deal with summary conviction offences and accept guilty pleas. Obviously on the indictable or more serious offences, they are not in a position to do that.

[15:45]

Another thing that the Justice of the Peace can do is receive an accused person's election of their mode of trial. This is often the second or third stage in a criminal proceeding where a person has received legal advice, and there are some choices as to whether it should be a trial by judge, a trial by judge and jury is one example, or some other things. And so practically, that decision has been made and it's a procedural step. Then often a Justice of the Peace can do that in the absence of a provincial court judge. Another thing that they can do is grant adjournments of matters where the provincial court judge is not available.

Now these are activities that are especially true when taken outside of Regina and Saskatoon, and I think you can say in many ways the whole criminal justice system in Saskatchewan would have difficulty functioning without justices of the peace, especially in rural parts of Saskatchewan.

In Regina and Saskatoon, there's another role that justices of the peace serve. And these are specially designated ones and also they're specially trained. And these are senior justices of the peace who effectively act as the decision makers on a number of specific types of offences. So for example in Regina and Saskatoon, you may appear before a Justice of the Peace where there's a trial where the offence is under a provincial statute like a traffic Act or liquor licensing or wildlife offences, all of those kinds of things which are provincial offences. It is possible that you would have this case heard by a specially designated and trained Justice of the Peace.

Another area — and this may be the area where most people actually run into justices of the peace — is related to offences under various municipal bylaws. And so that's traffic tickets, parking tickets, noise, and domestic animal violation kinds of issues. Those are held before a Justice of the Peace. So you get a bit of sense of this role of a Justice of the Peace.

What we have in Saskatchewan, and I guess in Canada, is an interesting situation under our constitution where provinces are not authorized under the constitution to enact criminal law. And that has many advantages for us in Canada in the sense that we

have the same Criminal Code for the whole country. Just have to go to our neighbours to the South and understand that they have state crimes and federal crimes, and it often ends up being a little more complicated.

But one of the aspects of this is then which kinds of matters are dealt with by the various courts and by the various judges. Justices of the peace fit into that system, and over many years, we have developed mechanisms for responding to changes as they develop within the administration of justice.

Now I want to quote from a recent book that has come out, I think, just a little earlier this year, 2008. I guess it was the end of last year, and it's called *Saskatchewan Politics: Crowding the Centre* and edited by Howard Leeson. But in this book, there's quite an interesting article written by John Whyte who is now teaching at the law school in Saskatoon and Thomas Gusa who I think is now a practicing lawyer in Edmonton. And they've written an article on the administration of justice in Saskatchewan. And I want to read this, not because it specifically goes, talks about justices of the peace, but it talks about why one changes aspects of the judicial system in response to how the community is changing. And so I'll just read from page 95:

Our legal system's prestige — perhaps even its majesty — rests on its transcended quality, existing above, and avoiding corruption by, the exigencies of daily demands and passions. Its constancy is its strength. Its content and its processes have developed slowly over time and are not to be battered by the demands of our current situation. And, yet, it seems that our legal system responds to our needs, including our need to see justice done, so imperfectly. The administration of justice faces no greater challenge than to preserve the rigor and impartiality in the way that law works in our society while subjecting it to the changes that will make it an effective social instrument for all people in all their vastly different social contexts and with all their vastly different social needs. Certainly two places where this adaptation must take pace is in having the legal system available to all on a more equal footing and in the response to social disorder through the administration of criminal justice.

Law, after all, is manifestation of the self-determination ideology that has shaped both our political system and our sense of personal entitlement. Both as individuals and as a political community we can make choices with the confidence that when those choices are expressed in law they will be honoured and that these attempts to shape our future condition will be vindicated. But if law is in this way so closely tied to our public and private integrity it must itself have integrity. That is to say that law — the mechanism of justice — must itself meet the underlying conceptions of justice which are: the right of all to be treated with dignity (with respect for personal capacity and not to be enslaved through poverty, poor health, low status, or dispossession) and the right to equal treatment. Law's challenge is to reflect in its operation the political values that led to its development, values of respect, dignity and equality. These values ground the connection between people in our political society and govern the way we act and develop as a political community. When

law is not serving these values, either because it is not available to some or because it is detached from the reconciling and restorative function it is meant to perform, then it has become hollow and sterile and our political community is vulnerable to the diseases of low commitment, resentment over tyranny and bitterness over being rendered invisible and insignificant. When we worry about inadequacies in the administration of justice we are doing nothing less than worrying about the future of our community.

Now I've wanted to make reference to that particular long quotation to explain why it is that we are so careful when we make changes to our justice system because as John Whyte and Thomas Gusa say, when we are concerned about the integrity of how our justice system works, we're then also concerned about how our community works. And it's very important when one makes changes to any piece of the judicial system that we are doing it with that in mind.

And so, Mr. Speaker, when we are looking at changes to how we function as it relates to the justices of the peace, whether they be minor changes or more major changes, we always have to keep in mind that what we are affecting is the integrity of how we treat each other as citizens in our community and how we are setting up the proper protections for them in the processes that we use.

Now this particular piece of legislation is quite interesting and in some ways straightforward, but it does make some changes that we need to talk about a bit before we allow it to proceed to another stage. And I'm sure there'll be some of my colleagues that may actually want to add some comments as well.

But the minister when he introduced this legislation, he basically said it was about a simple point of increasing the age of retirement of justices of the peace from 65 to 70. Now this is not uncommon legislation in these ages as we end up having a much longer life expectancy. And also, I think, roles for people in the community who have developed wisdom and sort of sagacity are basically to be revered and honoured. In a way, we're making use of some of our elders and making sure that they get a chance to use their life experience or the experience they've had in a particular profession to assist in the overall justice system.

And I think all of that does fit with the points that I made from the quote, which is what we're concerned about . . . is the integrity of the overall justice system.

So what we have here — and I think it'll be important to go through and look at some of the clauses — is that we are making amendments to *The Justices of the Peace Act*. Now one of the sort of . . . amendment goes through all of the clauses that are here, relates to eliminating the word “presiding justices of the peace” or “non-presiding justices of the peace.” Basically we're going to talk about all the justices of the peace in the same way, and get rid of that term throughout the legislation.

I think that's probably a reasonable thing to do given that there appears to be much more direct supervision now as set out in section 10 of the amending Bill. This section talks about section 13 of the Act itself and that which is *The Justices of the Peace*

Act, 1988. And section 13 is repealed and replaced, and it ends up then talking about the role that the chief judge of the Provincial Court has in providing the general direction and supervision over the duties and sittings of the Justice of the Peace.

And this is not necessarily a dramatic change, but it is clarifying the roles and the responsibilities within the judicial system. What happens by eliminating the word “presiding” and the other clause of “non-presiding justice of the peace” also, I think, further clarifies the responsibility and the interconnectedness of the whole judicial system. So we have a number of clauses that do that, and you'll see if one goes to the legislation that some of the references are basically making sure that that effect is shown right throughout the Bill.

I'd also point out that — and I think I'm correct in saying — that in this discussion now we're also looking at the French version of the Act because this is a bilingual Bill, and there are basically the same changes being made in both the French version and the English version as we proceed.

Now another area that one gets into is I think one that is interesting and probably has some historical background, and that is basically section 5. What happens in this amending Bill is that section 5 says that sections 5 to 7 of the existing Bill from 1988 are repealed, and some new sections are placed in their stead. And so basically the new sections do this.

[16:00]

The old section had a very direct statement, or the old section, the existing section, the one that's in effect right now. It said that:

Unless otherwise provided by law, no barrister or solicitor shall be appointed or act as a justice of the peace during the time he continues to practise as a barrister or solicitor.

So effectively what we had was a practising lawyer was not allowed to be a justice of the peace.

The new legislation ends up making some changes on this, and it effectively removes the prohibition on practising lawyers acting as justices of the peace. But it does go and, I think quite logically, sets out some of the things that a justice of the peace cannot do, which effectively removes the kinds of conflicts that the previous, or the existing provision is concerned about.

So the new legislation will make it clear that a justice of the peace, while they're in their office as a justice of the peace, that they're not allowed to practise criminal law, they're not allowed to act as a lawyer, legal counsel for or against the Government of Saskatchewan or the Government of Canada, or that they're not allowed to be in a position of conflict with their duties as a justice of the peace.

And once again, this goes back to the integrity of the whole judicial system. The point being that as individuals who may come into a situation dealing with especially the criminal justice system, it has to be not only justice done but has to be justice seen to be done. And so any kinds of conflicts are to be eliminated.

Now there are further restrictions on who is actually in a conflict of interest and — this is important to note — the kinds of people that cannot be justices of the peace under the new plan that is going to be set out when this particular Bill takes effect.

And so some of those people who would be deemed to be ineligible because of a conflict would be an employee of the Government of Saskatchewan or a Crown corporation, so those people cannot be justices of the peace. Or you can't be an employee of a police service within the meaning of *The Police Act*, so in other words Regina, Saskatoon, Weyburn, Moose Jaw, P.A. [Prince Albert], a couple other places in the province, or the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Also you'd be in a conflict if you're a member of the Corps of Commissionaires. And you're also in a conflict if you're a member of a board as defined under *The Police Act* — so in other words one of the municipal police boards in the province — or if you are a member of a council of a municipality. So that means you cannot be a Justice of the Peace if you're a councillor in one of our cities or towns or if you're a reeve or a councillor in a rural municipality.

And it makes it quite clear once again, to preserve the integrity of the system, that any person who might be a Justice of the Peace and then is elected or becomes one of these other conflicted positions, the appointment may be cancelled immediately. And so those points of integrity of the system are preserved.

Now it is also set out clearly in the new legislation that people who are court officials under *The Court Officials Act* can be appointed as justices of the peace. In other words, the traditional role of court clerks being also justices of the peace to allow them to do various steps within the judicial system, that role is being preserved and . . . But clearly those roles have to be done within the regulations that are set out within the various court Acts and *The Court Officials Act* in Saskatchewan.

So we have a change here which is allowing for practising lawyers to do this role, but it quite clearly adds many restrictions. And there probably wouldn't be too many practising lawyers who would qualify without getting into one of the conflicts that's mentioned. So it ends up being an interesting change, but I think one that is positive.

Now the next section in some ways is the core of this legislation, and that relates to the term of office. And basically section 8 is repealed and they put in a new section 8, and it ends up setting out when a person can reach the age of retirement. And the old legislation had the term, 65 years. This one has the age of 70 years as being the retirement time. And so that will obviously add some more years of experience for people who are still able to provide this service.

I think it also reflects the fact that sometimes people get into these roles of justices of the peace as they've retired or gone into some second career, and they'll end up doing this as a contribution to their community, especially in some of the rural areas. And often they gain experience, say from age 55 to 65 or from 60 to 65. And under the present system, all of a sudden when they really feel comfortable in the role, their role is

finished. And so what this legislation I think will do is allow for another five years of experience from people who have the energy and the wisdom to continue in that role. And so I think that's a good idea.

It's also a reflection of the changing community that we live in, which is that our elderly population can serve great roles within the community much longer than what we had thought in other generations. And so, so this will end up with a continuance of the role until age 70, if a person is able to do that.

Now I think the other changes that we see in the legislation make changes around gender issues so that it's got gender neutral language throughout the legislation and that's obviously an important factor as well.

And then I think practically, we end up with legislation that effectively modernizes some aspects of this 1988 legislation, extends the retirement age to age 70, and also I think adds some new ability to administer the whole area effectively.

One other or a couple other areas that I'll comment on that I think it's important to look at. One of the areas where they do make some changes is in clause 15(d) which . . . clause 15 is the regulatory or the regulation-making clause and subsection (d) relates to, right now, prescribing a schedule of fees and allowances that may be paid to justices of the peace.

This has been somewhat of a difficult situation as more and more is being asked of the justices of the peace within local communities. Some of the original ways of remunerating the justices of the peace were — what would I say? — I guess they were somewhat parsimonious. They would end up costing the people who were involved more money to actually drive to a community to actually get somebody out of jail or do that, than what they were getting paid. And so this made it harder and harder to recruit people to do the job.

And so what this change will do in section 15(d) is that it sets out the way of allowing for the chief judge, obviously with some advice from the minister and staff, the methods of remuneration so that people are properly paid for what is being done. And so I think this is a positive step. It gives some more flexibility. And it possibly can recognize that in certain communities, the ways that justices of the peace are paid need to be changed to reflect that fact.

It's kind of like, sometimes they would pay per document signed or per appearance of an accused in their presence. And that might have worked if you didn't have to travel very far and if there was quite a volume of them so that you would end up getting paid an appropriate amount. But in some areas where you might only handle one or two or three cases, that method of remuneration was not fair at all. And so this will allow for that kind of a change.

Another provision that they're making in this legislation is just to, I guess, make it clearer how a retiring Justice of the Peace transfers their records and documents to somebody who succeeds them. And I think once again that's important, because as the roles and responsibilities of justices of the peace are increased or expanded, then the records that they have and the information that they have needs to be protected in a more

formal way. And what that does is, once again, preserve the integrity of the overall system and provide, to those of us in the community who are concerned about our rights, another piece of confidence in the system.

So we know, we also know that any of the changes that are going to be made in this new legislation will continue the roles of the existing justices of the peace, because it's obviously important that the experience that they have is brought forward as we continue to make changes that, once again, preserve the integrity of the judicial system.

Mr. Speaker, it was my pleasure as minister of Justice to work with justices of the peace and with the judicial system in general for quite a number of years.

And I want to end my comments here. And I will, I think, adjourn debate when I finish these comments because I know some of my other colleagues may want to speak to this another time. But what I would want to say is that the individuals who put their names forward as justices of the peace within our system in Saskatchewan have done a very good job in responding to the pressures that are on them in their local communities.

[16:15]

And I know it's often a bit of a difficult task. We ended up eventually in the Justice department advertising for these jobs in the local community because sometimes it was hard to find enough people who would volunteer. And even with advertising, it wasn't always that easy to get people to do the job because often they would be called in to deal with their friends or their neighbours in some very, very difficult situations.

But I guess what I would want to say is that the people we have in Saskatchewan who have stepped forward to do these jobs, right on the front line of the criminal justice system primarily, have done very good service for all of us. And anything we can do to enhance their jobs, protect their jobs, make sure that they're an integral part of the system, but that they also preserve the community integrity — that's the kinds of things that we want to support.

So I know that some of my colleagues also want to comment on this legislation. And hopefully some of the comments that I've made here will assist as we move forward. And so I will adjourn the debate. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The member from Regina Lakeview has moved adjournment on debate on Bill No. 112. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed. Carried.

Bill No. 113

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 113** — *The Justices of the Peace Consequential Amendments Act, 2009* be

now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Harper: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, once again it gives me a great deal of pleasure to have the opportunity on behalf of the fine folks of Regina Northeast to take part in the debate in this House, and to do so on this particular Bill, Bill 113, *An Act to make consequential amendments resulting from an enactment of The Justices of the Peace Amendment Act, 2009*.

And, Mr. Speaker, at first glance you can see that the Bill is a fairly short Bill, a Bill of only nine clauses. And that would lead one to think it's probably really not having a huge effect on the operation of a government or the delivery systems of justice to our fine folks in Saskatchewan here because it's a short Act. But it is I think kind of an important Act because it does affect seven other Acts. So it's the old case, as many of us in government have realized, the longer we've been here, the more we realize that all the legislation of government in one way or another is hooked together. It interacts with each other. And in this particular case, when you're making one small change in the Act, it affects several other Acts.

So it's sort of like the, somebody once said, the domino effect. You make one small change here and it affects various Acts throughout, down the system here. So this is why when those changes take place, it is very important that they be well studied before they are implemented, and to ensure as much as possible that the effects on the other Acts are not negative effects but are positive effects.

Or if there is going to be the negative effect on, somewhere along the line, on an Act somewhere, that there's the opportunity for government to address that and make the necessary changes within that Act, so that it cushions that effect, cushions the negativity of it. Perhaps changes can be made to where it can actually be made neutral so it doesn't have a negative effect on Saskatchewan people. Or perhaps, even more fortunately, going into the Act even deeper, the necessary changes can be made so it doesn't have a negative effect any more but it has a positive effect.

And that is why, Mr. Speaker, it is very important for the opposition members to have access to these Bills as early as possible so that we can do the due diligence, do the study to ensure that these are nothing but positive effects as it works its way through the system. And in order to do that, you need to talk to those who are affected by those changes.

And in this case, it was having an effect on seven Acts — fairly broad then. It's fairly broad and a number of various individuals, a number of groups may be affected by this change. And it's the responsibility of the opposition, once they receive a copy of the Act from the government, to contact these various groups, contact these individuals out there as best that we can identify and share this with them as to whether or not this particular change is going to be negative upon them or upon their group. Or do they see this as perhaps a positive change or, at the bare minimum, sort of a neutral change and it's basically not too much more than housekeeping.

And I note, Mr. Speaker, one of the Acts here that's being affected is *The Emergency Protection for Victims of Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Act*. And, Mr. Speaker, that raises some memories in my mind of times gone past when I had the opportunity as a government member to serve on the committee that did the consultations across this great province in regards to that particular issue.

And that committee, Mr. Speaker, was co-chaired . . . It was an interesting committee because it was an all-party committee. But the committee was co-chaired by Mr. Peter Prebble, the then NDP member from Saskatoon Greystone, and Arlene Julé who was a Sask Party member from Humboldt. And they were the Co-Chairs of the committee that I, along with a couple of my colleagues here and a number of members of the government, then opposition, also participated in that committee as we did a very thorough job of reviewing that particular issue. At least in my opinion very thorough, because we certainly held meetings here and hearings here in the Legislative Assembly, and we had various individuals from the community, various groups come down and testify before the committee on this particular issue.

And we, I think the committee generally, were in total agreement that we wanted to do a thorough job reviewing the particular issue that we were entrusted with, so we certainly advertised. I know we advertised in all the daily papers throughout the province that these hearings were being held, and the time that these hearings were being held, and the method of contacting the committee through the Clerk to set up appointments and opportunity to appear before the committee and provide evidence or statements before the committee.

And that was certainly taken up by the community. It was very well done. The community certainly reacted to that opportunity. And we had a good turnout of witnesses from the community before the committee here in the legislature. I know that we sat a number of days. And we heard a lot of information coming to us, to the committee members, from folks, from the front-line folks, that experienced this issue. Some victims, certainly my hat's off to them for having the courage to come forward and to share with the committee some of their experiences and some of their stories.

But the committee wanted to ensure the fact that we had ample opportunity to everyone or gave ample opportunity to everyone in the province here to have access to the committee. Now we realized that not everyone had the financial ability to travel down to Regina, to maybe stay here for two or three days while they waited their turn or while they provided evidence and statements to the committee. So we felt it was necessary that the committee should go on the road and take our hearings to the people, rather than waiting for the people to come here because simply it wouldn't be fair, but in many cases it wouldn't be possible, for those folks to come to the hearings here.

So we went on the road, and we held several meetings throughout the province. Certainly we held meetings here in Regina and we had a good turnout here, but we also went to Saskatoon. And we had hearings in Saskatoon where local people from the community of Saskatoon were able to appear before the committee and give us their testimony, give us their witnessing. And certainly that was informative and was, for me

as a member, it was educational.

But we also wanted to see what effect may be in northern Saskatchewan, so we had hearings in La Ronge and then we travelled the rest of Saskatchewan. I know we had hearings in Fort Qu'Appelle and in Yorkton. I'm just working from memory here, I think North Battleford, if I remember right and, I believe, in Lloydminster. So we travelled throughout the province. And we had plenty of opportunity, I suppose, for folks to come forward and provide us with their experiences, a testimony of their experiences, the witnessing of their experiences on this particular issue.

And it was very, very well received, I think, by the people of Saskatchewan. And as a result of that, the government was able to put together with the co-operation of the opposition, because as I said it was an all-party committee, a committee that worked together very, very closely and I think very co-operatively.

It was an issue which was, from my own personal point of view, and I think all the members that were on that committee would agree, that it was a very emotional, emotional issue. Because quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, it was a part of society we heard about and a part of society that I suppose we all knew was out there, but we just really didn't pay much attention to it because it was something that was easy to put out of mind. But it was a very emotional issue.

And I think all the committee members were touched by many of the people who came forward, many of the victims who came forward and offered testimony, but also many of the people who work on the streets each and every day out there. And they shared with us some of their experiences and some of their thoughts and some of their concerns and, thankfully, many of their recommendations.

And I know that the government took, and the committee took these recommendations to heart, put it into a report, and tabled the report here in this House. And from that, the government was able to take the information that was included in that report and put together a Bill that was supported by both the opposition at the time and the government members. And it was a Bill that was an example, I think, of what can really happen when both parties, both opposition and government parties, work together for a common cause.

And there's no question that that was a meaningful process, and a process that I think was really appreciated by the people of Saskatchewan, particularly those who participated and those who gave witness, because it was done in an air of co-operation. There was no political bickering back and forth. Certainly there was issues to be decided, and we often had in camera meetings, but those in camera meetings resulted in a decision where we all agreed to.

And it was an experience that I will carry with me all my life because it was something that I learned a lot from. And it was an experience that I think it shows — for those of us in this Assembly here, often we see this as a bit of a competition back and forth — but it shows that when there's a greater cause at hand, that elected people can work together for that common cause and find a solution that works in the best interests of Saskatchewan people and do so collectively in a co-operative

atmosphere.

So I think that, Mr. Speaker, was something that was accomplished. And I'm pleased to say that I was a part of that. It was a very emotional issue. I know it was one that would cause you — cause me, at least, on occasions — to lay awake at night. And in a lot of ways to thank my lucky stars for the good fortune of the life that I had been given, and to wonder what I could do as a human being to help those others who maybe find themselves less fortunate, and if there was a role that I could play in some small way to improve their lot in life. And I'm sure that there is, and I think probably on an ongoing basis there's roles that we could all be playing.

But, Mr. Speaker, this, as I said, this particular Bill has an impact upon seven other Bills. And it is one that we need to review quite closely to ensure that these impacts are not that of a negative nature, and that the people of Saskatchewan who may find themselves impacted by these Bills don't find themselves on the wrong end of it and find themselves being hurt or being victimized or being misplaced in some manner, shape, or form because of the changes to the Act.

Now I'm assuming, Mr. Speaker, that the government has done its homework before it introduced these amendments. And I would hope the government has at least. And I'm kind of hoping that at some point in time here before this Bill is passed into law, that we'll get that assurance from the government that they did carry out a meaningful consultation process, and that they did talk to good folks out there to ensure that those who are involved in the implementation of certainly the Bill, *The Emergency Protection for Victims of Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Act*, those people who are implementing this program on a daily basis on our streets, have they been contacted? And do they see . . . These changes here, do they have any impact upon their ability to continue the programming, continue the good work that they do?

[16:30]

And I would hope the government had that consultation, had those discussions with those people and those groups out there to ensure that these changes don't have a negative impact upon their ability to continue to do the work that they do. Because that work is very, very important to us as a society and certainly to us as a province because they provide some very valuable, valuable support to people out there who find themselves in need of that support.

And it goes on to say that the designation of the justices of the peace here in section . . . Like well the, "**Section 15 is repealed and the following [is] substituted**". And it says:

Designation of justices of the peace [and]

15(1) [of the Act] Notwithstanding subsection 13(2) of *The Justices of the Peace Act, 1988*, the chief judge of the Provincial Court of Saskatchewan may designate a justice of the peace to hear and determine applications pursuant to this Act.

So, Mr. Speaker, that in itself is something that, you know, we need to ensure that that system is in place and that system has been certainly working. If it is working, is it working well? And

is there any ways and means that we could improve upon that system to ensure that the justices of the peace have the tools that they need in order to complete their work, to do their work? Is there a way we can streamline that so we can lessen any backlogs perhaps of cases that they may have or the work that's before them? Is there a way to improve that system so that it can flow much easier through the system here and we can have perhaps a quicker turnaround on these cases? That's some of the questions I would have.

I mean have we given the justices of the peace the tools that they need to work with? Or is this an opportunity perhaps . . . Here's an opportunity now that the Act is open, here's the opportunity to have those discussions with the justices of the peace and make those changes now that the Act is open. Make those changes so that they do have the tools, they do have the tools that they can facilitate their roles in our justice system in a manner and shape so that we can perhaps speed up the process.

We can perhaps reduce the backlog, or perhaps even, if we're lucky, eliminate them so that when they're called upon to do their jobs, the justices of the peace have the tools to be able to do them in an efficient and an effective way.

And I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that the government officials had looked at this as an opportunity, with the Act being open, to be able to fix those things. Sometimes they're just small things. Sometimes they're just little things. But if they're fixed, they make life so much easier for those officials who have to carry out their responsibilities as designated through our court system.

And it says if the Chief Justice designates a Justice of the Peace to hear applications pursuant to this Act, the Chief Justice shall specify ". . . the place at which and the period during which the justice may hear those applications."

So there you go, Mr. Speaker. Is this an opportunity here to streamline the system, to make it operate smoother? Is there an opportunity here to ensure that the — once this Act is opened — to ensure that the changes made here are the right changes that give the proper tools? I would even go so far as to say modernize tools to ensure that our justice system works efficiently and effectively with our justices of the peace. Are we giving them what they need — the support that they need, the resources that they need — in order to effectively carry out their responsibilities?

Again, Mr. Speaker, that's one of the questions that we here in the opposition are wondering and are asking and I really need the time in order to talk to the people who are on the front lines of this particular issue to find out if this couldn't be an opportunity to make the necessary changes as they see them, as they recognize them because they're the front-line people. They're the ones with the issues. They're the ones that have the answers to those issues. And perhaps this is an opportunity to make those necessary changes to streamline the system, make it work more efficiently and more effectively for all people in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the Chief Justice may:

. . . delegate the exercise of the power to designate a

justice of the peace to hear applications pursuant to this Act to a supervising justice of the peace appointed pursuant to *The Justices of the Peace Act, 1988*, and the exercise of that power . . . [may be supervised by justices of the peace] is deemed to be an exercise by the . . . [Chief Justice]”.

There you go, Mr. Speaker. Once again, is this a smooth operating system? Is this the most efficient way we can do this? And perhaps it is. But has those discussions been carried out? Has the officials of government looked into this and have they asked those people, those people who work in the justice system each and every day, is this the best way of doing it? Is this the best way of doing it? Or can there be changes made to make it more efficient and more effective?

And that’s the role, I think, of government, is to make things work in the smoothest, quickest, most efficient way possible, yet effective and fair. But we want to make sure that we can do it as efficiently as possible because we want to (a) certainly be able to meet the needs of those people who find themselves in the justice system.

But we also want to be able to meet the needs of the taxpayer to ensure that they’re getting full value for their tax dollar being spent, they’re getting the services that are required, and they’re getting it in a manner and shape that is efficient and effective — and they’re doing so because we are giving them the tools to provide that service.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if those tools aren’t there, if the justices of peace feel that they don’t have the powers — this is perhaps the powers that they need to be effective and efficient in their jobs — this is perhaps the opportunity to take a look at that. Here’s the opportunity.

We have the Act open. We’re making changes to the Act now. The government’s making changes to the Act. And this is an opportunity to make sure that those changes are the right ones, the correct changes, so that it provides efficient and effective services to give the tools to the justices of the peace so that they can provide and do their job to the best of their ability and do it in a very efficient and effective way. And this, Mr. Speaker, I don’t think can be repeated too many times because this is what I think we want to achieve.

Mr. Speaker, as we go on, as we look at section 7 as amended — it’s clause 3 in the Act — it’s *The Homesteads Act, 1989*. Now, Mr. Speaker, it is being repealed, or a section of it is being repealed, and the following is being substituted: “a justice of the peace appointed or continued in office pursuant to *The Justices of the Peace Act, 1988*”.

Now, Mr. Speaker, *The Homesteads Act* is a long-standing Act in this province. I believe it was brought back in probably by, I think 1944-45, something like that, the first version of the homestead Act was introduced. And it is a very valuable piece of protection. As you know, Mr. Speaker, it protects the homestead or the home quarter. As far as farmers is concerned, it protects the home quarter. And it doesn’t allow a farmer to, without consultation of his spouse, to be able to go out and mortgage it or put it up for security for loans that may be at risk. The homestead Act requires that the spouse give consent before

that happens. And I think that’s a very valuable tool because I think to some degree it protects the family. It gives second sober thought before the home quarter, the very home that people live in and the family’s in, could be put up for risk.

And I think that’s certainly an Act that is a very important Act in this province and has served this province well over the last number of years. And does it need to be reviewed every once in a while? Yes, it does. Like all of our Acts, we need to review them every once in a while to make sure that they’re relevant and they pertain to the situations of the day. And as our economies change and our society changes, we need to review these Acts to make sure that they’re still relevant.

But at the same time, Mr. Speaker, I don’t think we want to lessen the intent of the Act. We want to make sure that that’s not the case. And that would be one more of the questions I would have of government.

Have they done this study? Can they give the opposition the assurance that these changes to *The Homesteads Act* certainly doesn’t change the intent of the Act, and doesn’t change the level of the protection the Act provides to families across this great province? If they can, then I would like to know how they arrived at that assurance. What comfort level do they have that it hasn’t changed the Act and hasn’t changed the intent of the Act? And how did they arrive at that comfort level? And by what vehicle did they obtain that information and how much time was spent gathering it? Who did they talk to? How was the consultations done?

Those are many of the questions that I would like to have answered and, Mr. Speaker, and if we can’t get those answers from government, I guess we’ll have to get it from the groups that are affected by the changes or potentially affected by the changes to *The Homesteads Act*.

As we go on, Mr. Speaker, we look closer at the Act, we notice clause 4 is *The Local Government Elections Act* and as it is set out, the amendment is in the manner set forth in this section and, Mr. Speaker, once again we look at the local government.

Local government’s a very, very important part of our governing system of this province, and I had the opportunity to spend 10 years in local government as the councillor in the RM [rural municipality] of Clayton, 333. And certainly every level of government has its role and has its responsibilities and I think that local government certainly has that, certainly has that responsibility too. They have certain services and certain responsibilities that are entrusted upon the local government to be able to address on a local level. Quite frankly I think it’s fair to say that nobody knows the local areas and local issues as well as the people who live there. And that’s because they are experiencing those issues on a regular basis.

And one example, Mr. Speaker, was this government’s introduction of a bounty on coyotes. I think that was ill thought out, Mr. Speaker. I think it was one of, once again, it was the government’s knee-jerk reaction to an issue. Is there areas of our province that have problems with coyotes? Yes, there is — there’s no doubt about that — but there’s other areas of the province that don’t have.

So this would've been an issue that would've been much better handled by local government. Certainly the municipalities would've been in a much better position to be able to determine what was the effect of that coyote problem in their area. Were the people in their area, the ranchers or farmers in the area, being affected in a negative way by the coyote population? If it was, they would have the tools under their powers to be able to deal with it. And they would have been able to put on a bounty, or they would have been able to arrive at some mechanism to address the overpopulation of the coyotes in that municipality, whereas in other municipalities it may not be the case. The coyotes may not be a problem.

And yet now we have a bounty right across this great province of ours that simply doesn't balance off with the need. We have areas that don't have a coyote problem but there's a bounty on them too. So is there a level to ensure that those producers out there who perhaps are experiencing that coyote problem, is there a way of ensuring that they are being able to be provided with the information necessary so that they can address their problem?

And there's probably the same thing could apply to gopher problems and who knows what else? Coyotes, there's all kinds of things that can fall into play here.

So what we want to do, Mr. Speaker, is make sure that the changes this Bill brings to *The Local Government Election Act*, how does that affect, how does that affect the local government and their ability to carry on their duties and how does that affect their election process?

I've had the experience of going through an election process on — what was it? — five occasions, I guess it was, in municipal government. And it was a two-year term. As a councillor, you were elected for two years, and I suppose that there are pluses and minuses to that. There will be those who say that two years aren't really long enough because, as a councillor, two years doesn't give you much time to start to receive some of the results of the work that you've put in because in a lot of cases you invest time. You invest work. You invest ideas. And it takes more than two years before you see the turnaround or you start to see the effects coming back.

So there will be those who say, well two years isn't long enough for a councillor, that the term should be longer than that, and that it would give then the councillor the opportunity to be able to receive, start to reap some of the rewards, I guess you would say, of their efforts that they've put in in the first couple of years.

And that's true, Mr. Speaker, but I think you'll see, when you take a close look at rural Saskatchewan particularly, that you won't see too many times where a councillor only serves two years. If that is the case, there's a real reason for it, I would think, because my experience is that the general population are willing to give a councillor a little time to prove him or herself and to see if their willingness to work and their willingness to improve the area — in this case a division, municipal division — if that is the case, then they were willing to give them the time to be able to invest the thoughts, invest the processes, invest the time into the process to reap some positive rewards,

not for themselves but for the people that they represent in their district.

[16:45]

So I would think, Mr. Speaker, that a two-year term is a reasonable amount. That's something that we have become accustomed to. And you know, I'm certainly open to the idea of the discussion, of looking at changes to that. But I would want to hear from those people who are today serving in our local governments before I would move in that direction.

And that would be one thing I'd like to know, you know, what is the changes here in this amendment? What effect do these changes have on *The Local Government Election Act*? And does it have a positive effect or a negative effect? How is it seen by the people who are serving today in our local governments, whether it be in municipal or whether it be in urban? This probably would have, probably would — does — have an effect on both of them. And I'd like to know how they feel about this effect. I mean, is it a meaningful effect? Or is it an effect that they see as being disrespectful and not being supportive of their particular role?

The question is, were they consulted? Did this government talk to the local government officials out there? Did they talk to the local government officials or just their superstructure? Did they talk to just the leadership or did they actually talk to people who serve on a day-by-day basis on our local governments? That's one of the questions I would like to have an answer to is, to what extent was the consultations carried out with local government. And in what way were those consultations carried out? Were there meaningful discussions by groups of people? Or was it a letter sent out, perhaps looking for information? Or is it just an assumption? Or was it just information passed down from the governing body, their leadership, the governing body?

Those are some of the questions that would bear asking, and those are some of the questions that I would like to have answers to because those, as I say . . . and maybe I'm, you know, a bit biased because I have served on municipal council. But I really believe strongly in the role of local government because there is a meaningful role for local government to play in our system, in our society. I think it could be enhanced. I think there's a lot more responsibility local government could carry. And I think they could carry it very efficiently and very effectively.

And I think that's something that perhaps here's an opportunity. Here was an opportunity with the Act being opened up and certainly *The Local Government Election Act* being opened up to accommodate the changes here.

Perhaps this was an opportunity to look at . . . can we expand the roles of local government? Can we expand the roles of the Reeves? Can we expand the roles of the councillor? Can we expand the roles of the aldermen and the mayors? Can they be more effective in doing their job? Is there tools that we as a provincial government could provide them and give them the opportunity to be able to become a larger player as far as providing the services to their constituents and to their ratepayers.

And I've often wondered, Mr. Speaker, why we don't sit down in a meaningful way with local government leadership particularly and explore those possibilities. Open that door. Let's take the top off the box and say, let's think outside the box for a minute. Is there some legislative changes that we can make? Is there some opportunity that we can provide greater levels of powers or greater levels of authority to the local government that would give them the ability to make decisions on their own and be able to finance those decisions and be able carry out those decisions that are their decisions? And quite frankly they may be in the position to make that decision because they are the local people; they are the local government. They're right there. They're right on the front lines.

And I've often wondered why that wouldn't take place. I think if the officials, the leadership of local government was approached with the ideas . . . Let's take a really good time, to take a meaningful time to take a look at the role of local government, the role of the provincial government and how the two work together, but how changes could possibly be made to improve the role of local government, to improve the ability for local government to be able to make decisions that are in their best interest, their decisions, and be able to finance those decisions and implement those decisions with their own financing without having to rely on government grants and government handouts from all levels — both provincial and federal levels.

I often wondered why we wouldn't be willing to look at empowering the local governments with a greater ability to raise revenue, to be able to finance the issues, finance the wants and the desires of their community. And that's something that I wondered when I was in local government, I wondered when I was in . . . part of the government and now of course in opposition. Why wouldn't we do that? Why wouldn't we provide the local government with some type of secure, long-term funding that they could rely on so that when they're making their plans for their future, they could plan beyond just next year. They can plan into the future. They can make a 5-year or a 10-year plan and work towards it.

And they would be able to do so with the knowledge and the security of knowing that they have a certain level of income that they'd be able to rely on that because it'd be difficult to make decisions — program decisions and capital decisions — if you don't know what level of income you may have in the future. And I think we've all experienced that in some manner, shape, or form. But if you have an idea, if you had an idea at least of the level of income that you can expect into the future, then you can make those decisions long term and in most cases in the best interests of the local taxpayer because you can make those decisions in an efficient way and that you know that you're going to have that level of income.

For example, when the government made a commitment to the local government to fund them at 1 per cent of the PST . . . that is something that I noticed in a story in today's paper. There's some suggestion that government may be backing away from that promise now, maybe breaking that commitment that they made to local government. And I noticed that our mayor here in the city of Regina said that he expects the government to live up to their commitment. They had made that commitment in good

faith, and the local governments have based their future plans on that commitment, and he does expect the government to live up to that commitment. And I would hope the government would because, as I said before, local government is a very important mechanism, is a very important vehicle that provides service to the people of Saskatchewan.

It's the same constituent, whether it be the constituent to the city, the constituent to the province here. It's the same constituent. In this case, it's the same taxpayer. So we want to see, Mr. Speaker, that the government fulfills that commitment to local government to ensure that local government has a stable flow of financing, so that they can make those long-term decisions based on that security of knowledge, that they will have that level of income on a regular basis here.

So, Mr. Speaker, there is a number of other, number of other parts to this Bill that certainly needs close examination. But I see the Government House Leader is anxious to move things along, so with that, Mr. Speaker, I will move adjournment of debate.

The Speaker: — The member from Regina Northeast has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 113. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. Gantfoer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In order to allow the Standing Committee on House Services, Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice, Crown and Central Agencies, and the Economy to meet this evening, I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The House stands adjourned until tomorrow afternoon at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:54.]

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