



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

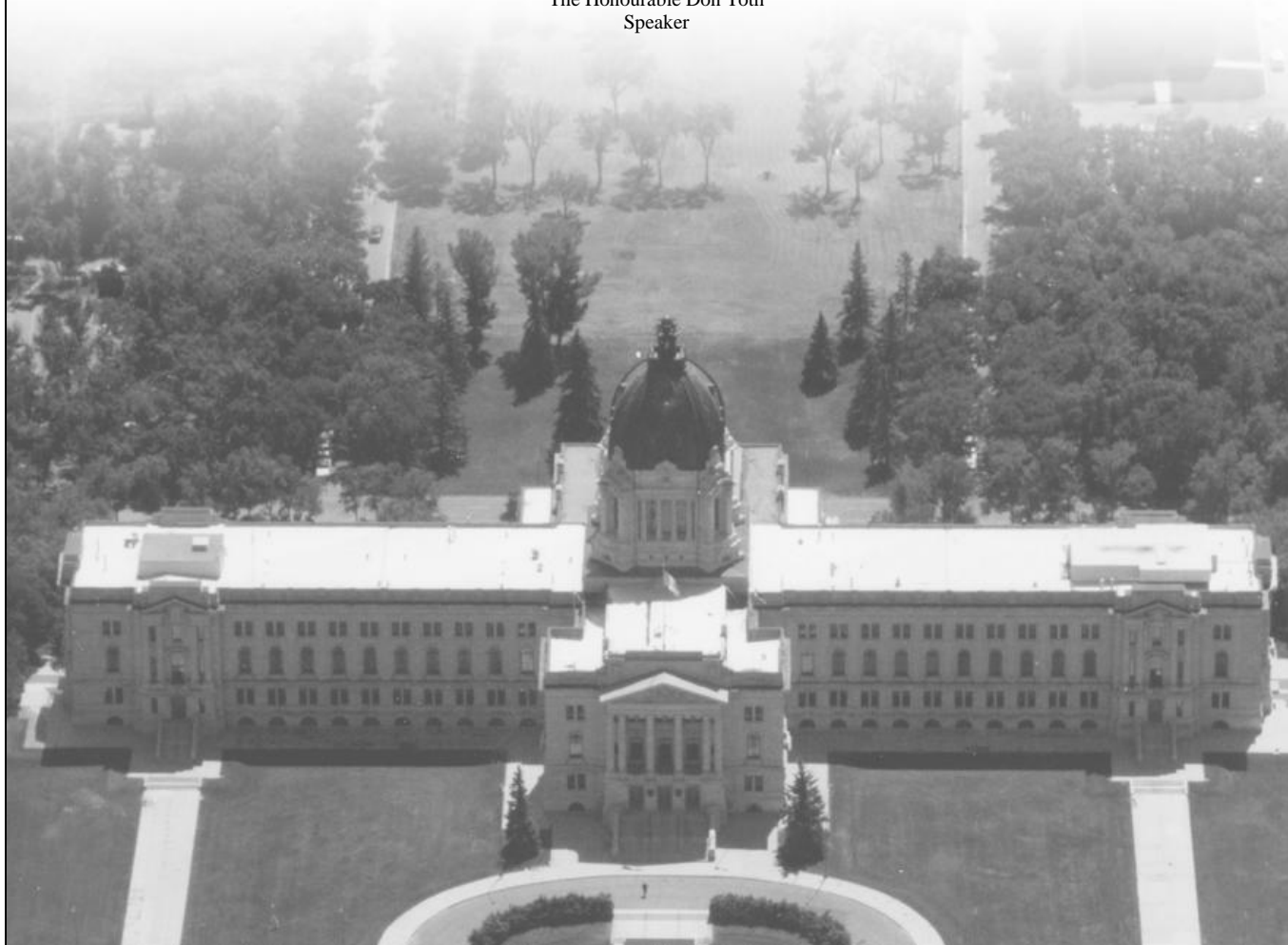
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
authority of  
The Honourable Don Toth  
Speaker



**MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**

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

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

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Hon. Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you I'm absolutely delighted to introduce a number of guests who are with us this morning to discuss the Women's Build, Regina's first-ever Women's Build.

We have with us today supervisor for the Build, Val Overend from Saskatchewan Women in Trades and Technology; Liana Wolf from Regina Construction Careers; and Patricia Fayant who is the instructor for SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] for Women in Trades. Could you give us a wave?

We have Karen O'Brian and Kama Leier from Deloitte & Touche. We have Tabetha Stirrett from North Rim; Pam Schwann from Saskatchewan Mining Association; and Vanessa Wood from SIAST. Paula Koch, Mandy McGregor, Cindy Covey, Trish — I'm going to say this wrong — Bezborotko from Habitat for Humanity. We have Nancy McEwen, a Mary Kay consultant and Pat Faulconbridge, the executive director of the Status of Women.

Thank you very much for attending today, and I ask all members to join with me in welcoming these lovely women to their legislature.

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

**Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the opposition I too would like to welcome everyone for the Women's Build. I was at the announcement this morning and we all look forward to the sod-turning in May. And I can pound a nail, so I'm looking forward to participating in it, as well as I'm sure many of my colleagues. So again, welcome to the legislature today.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister Responsible for First Nations and Métis Relations.

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We have a very special guest today seated in your gallery. It gives me great pleasure to introduce a good friend, Mr. Oliver Cameron — Oliver, do you want to stand and be recognized? — from the Beardy Okemasis First Nation. Oliver Cameron was the recipient of the Labour Force Development award at the 12th Annual Circle of Honour Awards.

Mr. Cameron, or O.C. to his friends, has been the director of labour force development for the Saskatoon Tribal Council for 24 years, demonstrating a strong commitment to improving the lives of others through training and employment opportunities.

I had an opportunity, Mr. Speaker, about 10 years when I was working with Western Diversification to work with Mr. Cameron on some early initiatives regarding First Nations in the workforce. He had a keen vision then. It's proven to be very successful. With his hard-working and professional manner, Mr. Cameron is a role model for the next generation of First Nations leaders in our province.

I look forward to meeting with him after question period. Mr. Speaker, through you to all members of the Assembly, please welcome Oliver Cameron to his Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to join with the minister to welcome O.C. to his Legislative Assembly. As the minister has touched on, Oliver's done a tremendous amount of work over the years.

The minister had given me a bit of heads-up that you were coming to the legislature today, Oliver. So I was googling you up, and there's some pretty groovy pictures from the *Saskatchewan Indian* circa 1976 of Oliver to be seen.

But in addition to the work with the Saskatoon Tribal Council, before that Oliver was there from the ground up with the Saskatchewan Indian Community College, the forerunner of the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology, which of course is a tremendous success these days, Mr. Speaker. And it goes to remind me that that work is something that takes years and decades to get to that kind of place of success that we see today. And certainly one of the people that played a key role, not just working for the college then but a stint as principal of the community college for a time, was Oliver Cameron.

So Oliver's always quick with the . . . He's gives you a very warm welcome, pulls your leg pretty hard. But it goes to the work that he's done over the years as a champion of treaty education, the right to treaty education, and the well-being of First Nations people and how that reflects on the success of all Saskatchewan people. So it was not a big surprise that Oliver got the Circle of Honour Award, and I was very, very proud to be there that night to personally congratulate him. But it's really great to see Oliver Cameron here today in his Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce to you a group of important people, a group led by Jen Britton, who are here. It's the Saskatchewan save our Crowns coalition. These are individuals who are concerned about the Crowns, are defenders, and understand how important the Crowns are both to keeping our utility rates low, creating thousands of good jobs in the province. And I just want to welcome them all here today to the Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Furber:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great

pleasure to rise today and introduce to the Assembly through Mr. Speaker, a gentleman by the name of Clay DeBray. Clay is a hard-working volunteer. He's a coach. He's a husband and a father, and is a proud leader in the Aboriginal community with youth engagement in recreation. He sits in the east gallery today looking at the proceedings. He's also hoping to be a nominated candidate for the New Democrats in the upcoming election in Rosthern-Shellbrook. So I'd like all members to welcome Clay to the Assembly today.

**The Speaker:** — I apologize to the member of Prince Albert Northcote. Any further introductions?

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Mr. Harper:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of concerned citizens of Saskatchewan who are concerned about the deterioration of our highway system. This particular petition pertains to Highway 310, and the petition states that the condition of this highway is a potential safety hazard to those residents who have to travel on this highway each and every day. Mr. Speaker, the prayer is as follows:

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 need.

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

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

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

**Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of over 150 people who have signed to bring to our attention that the Saskatchewan Seniors Association has approximately 180 senior centres throughout the province, with the vast majority of them located in rural Saskatchewan.

These centres provide much-needed recreation and social activities as well as important health clinics and workshops, and this contributes to an enhanced quality of life for many of the seniors who use them; and that due to the skyrocketing costs of utilities, insurance, taxes, etc., many of these centres will close within the next few months, and the closure of these centres will lead to the deteriorating mental and physical health of seniors, which will lead to additional stress on long-term care facilities and hospitals.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to cause the government of Saskatchewan to provide the much-needed funding to assist seniors' recreation centres to remain open and active within their communities.

And the signatures of these petitions, Mr. Speaker, are from communities of Blaine Lake, Leask, Morse, Herbert, Debden, Prince Albert, Big River, Saskatoon, Spiritwood, Lanigan, Jansen, Ernfold, Hepburn, and Shellbrook. 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 eliminating poverty in Saskatchewan. And we know that freedom from poverty is an enshrined human right by the United Nations and that all citizens are entitled to social and economic security. And we know that the income gap between the rich and the poor here in Saskatchewan continues to grow, and now one in five children in Saskatchewan live in deepening poverty. And unfortunately we also know that when governments reduce spending, supports for social programs are cut first. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read the prayer:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to act as quickly as possible to develop an effective and sustainable poverty elimination strategy for the benefit of all Saskatchewan citizens.

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

Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition come from Regina, Saskatoon, North Battleford, and Vanscoy. Thank you very much.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

**Mr. Vermette:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition in support of Highway 102. Highway 102 is the only road access for communities like Grandmother's Bay, Sucker River, Stanley Mission, Missinipe, and Southend. There is a substantial amount of traffic on this highway that involves the transportation of goods and services to and from the communities, as well as providing a vital infrastructure link for the mining and resource industries. The current road has huge potholes, ruts that cause a real danger to anyone who dares to travel on it. And this road is in dire need of repairs and upgrades. 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 recognize that Highway 102 is used extensively by the mining, resource, and tourist industries which contributes millions of dollars to the provincial economy every year; and that the people who travel this road must be able to travel in safety; and that in doing so commit to immediately providing the repairs needed to Highway 102 and paving the remainder of the highway to Southend.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, these petitions are signed by the good people of Southend. I so present.

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

Massey Place.

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to present a petition that calls on expanded hospice and palliative care here in Saskatchewan:

We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention the following: that all Saskatchewan people deserve quality end-of-life and bereavement care; that hospice and palliative care is known to help enhance the quality of life for those facing advancing illness, death, and bereavement; that a publicly funded and administered hospice and palliative care system, including residential hospices, would increase end-of-life options for Saskatchewan people.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan cause the provincial government to enhance and increase publicly funded and administered hospice and palliative care, including in-home hospice services and residential hospices, in order to ensure that all Saskatchewan people have access to high-quality end-of-life care.

Mr. Speaker, the individuals who signed this petition are from the city of Regina and Saskatoon. I so present.

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

**Ms. Morin:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise to present yet another petition from the residents of Furdale who are looking for a permanent solution to their situation, Mr. Speaker, and not just having it delayed by another year, potentially. A government ministry has directed SaskWater to cut off supplies of water for domestic use to Furdale customers. This same government ministry has directed that customers may no longer treat non-potable water using methods approved by Sask Health.

The Furdale residents, in dealing in good faith with SaskWater for over 30 years, have paid large amounts for their domestic systems and in-home treatment equipment, as well as for livestock and irrigation lines. And the alternative water supply being referred to by the government ministry is a private operator offering treated, non-pressurized water at great cost with no guarantee of quality, quantity, and availability of water. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to withdraw its order to cut off non-potable water to the residents of the hamlet of Furdale, causing great hardship with no suitable alternatives; to exempt the hamlet of Furdale from further water service cut-offs by granting a grandfather clause under *The Environmental Management and Protection Act, 2002* and *The Water Regulations, 2002*; and that this government fulfills its promises to rural Saskatchewan.

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

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

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise once again today to present petitions on behalf of Saskatchewan residents as it relates to the unprecedented mismanagement of our finances by the Sask Party. They refer to the two consecutive deficit budgets, the billions of dollars of debt growth, Mr. Speaker, both this year alone and the \$4.2 billion projected to grow over the next four years, Mr. Speaker, representing 55 per cent growth in our debt, Mr. Speaker.

Of course these deficits and this debt growth is occurring at a time where revenues are at all-time highs, Mr. Speaker, and this sort of mismanagement comes at a price to Saskatchewan . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. I ask the member to go to the prayer.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly condemn the Sask Party government for its damaging financial mismanagement since taking office, a reckless fiscal record that is denying Saskatchewan people, organizations, municipalities, institutions, taxpayers, and businesses the responsible and trustworthy fiscal management that they so deserve.

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

These petitions today are signed by concerned citizens of Regina. I so submit.

[13:45]

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

### Breast Friends

**Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today in the House to speak about a special group of Saskatchewan women. Breast Friends is comprised of Patti Hack, Cecile Halyk, Linda Helgason, Darlene Cooper, Jeannie Johnson, Val Helgason, Anne Reynolds, Nat Dunlop, Charlene Rokochy, and Jacquie Klebeck who works here in the building. They are a group of 10 seasoned women from Foam Lake. These incredible women continue to raise funds for cancer causes from the sale of their own self-published national bestselling cookbooks.

Just recently the Breast Friends cookbook was prominently featured in the November issue of *Gourmand Magazine*, published in Spain and widely distributed throughout Europe. The magazine features the latest in cookbooks and culinary news and features Breast Friends as an example of the new trend — cookbooks that support charities. All of the Breast

Friends' cookbooks are national bestsellers. *For the Breasts of Friends*, *For the Breasts and the Rest of Friends*, and *Breast Wishes* each contain over 400 tried-and-true recipes as well as pictures, cancer information, quotes, quips, and a generous helping of stories.

Mr. Speaker, I would like the Assembly to recognize the Breast Friends for their continued efforts in working for a cancer cure, raising more than 1 million for the fight against cancer via their fundraising cookbooks. Thank you very much.

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

### Climate Change

**Ms. Morin:** — Mr. Speaker, climate change is a challenge unlike any other the human family has faced. It requires us to work together to restore the health of our planet, and it is a task that falls on all of us everywhere on Earth.

Saskatchewan generates a significant amount of greenhouse gases. These gases are already contributing to warming in our prairie region that is occurring at a faster rate compared to the rest of Canada. The evidence remains clear and resounding that more must be done to reduce greenhouse gas emissions which lead to growing climate destabilization, producing dangers like more droughts, declining surface water levels, increased number of forest fires, and more severe weather like tornados and floods.

Unfortunately the Sask Party government chose to break its election promise adopted from the previous NDP [New Democratic Party] government to aggressively reduce greenhouse gases. After nearly two years of delay, the Sask Party alternative has not set any measurable targets and allows polluters to police themselves with a self-regulation-style model of environmental protection with after-the-fact enforcement by government. At the same time, the Sask Party government is draining the Environment budget with harmful cuts to Dutch elm disease management, cuts to forest fighting, cuts to watersheds, cuts to industrial environmental protection, cuts to climate change research, and even cuts to Saskatchewan's only UNESCO-designated [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization] biosphere.

New Democrats will continue to hold the Sask Party government to account for its mismanagement of our finances and our environment, Mr. Speaker. After all, the environment and the fight against climate change is something we simply can't afford to lose.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Biggar.

### Biggar and Area Fundraiser

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On November 27th I had the pleasure of taking part in an event referred to as the Blast from the Past. This event was a fundraiser sponsored by the Biggar Knights of Columbus Monsignor Tomb Council 6169.

Mr. Speaker, this fundraiser consisted of a wonderful meal

catered to by a long-time caterer Katie Sagon and her crew, entertainment by some local talent, a silent auction, and karaoke. It was an event that was enjoyed by over 200 people. The event was well organized and came together at the hands of two members of St. Gabriel Parish, Sheila Itterman and Lynda Kral, along with a number of helpers. This event raised thousands of dollars for the Knights of Columbus and will allow them to continue their charitable works. Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to say that the Knights of Columbus have dedicated one-half of the proceeds raised at this fundraiser to go towards the new long-term care home that will be built in Biggar.

Also many thanks to the Friends of the Lodge, a group of dedicated volunteers from throughout the catchment area that have come together to educate and inform the communities that will benefit from the long-term care home and assist in raising funds to ensure that the lodge is developed and furnished adequately. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all those who were involved in putting this fundraiser on and those that made it a success by taking part in it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

### Veterans Memorial Hall

**Mr. Vermette:** — Mr. Speaker, on November the 11th, I attended Remembrance Day ceremonies in Cumberland House. Mr. Speaker, the community celebrated the grand opening of the Cumberland House Veterans Memorial Hall.

The hall was built to accommodate the many community activities such as community meetings, weddings, and wake services. Mr. Speaker, the Veterans Memorial Hall was constructed through the capital grants program. And the community is continuing to fundraise for kitchen appliances and equipment. They will continue to do many other community fundraising activities to complete this wonderful project.

It was a very proud day for the community, Mr. Speaker, as Cumberland House has a long history of community members volunteering for both war and peacetime service. I was honoured to take part in the official ceremony with Mayor Andy McKay and council, Chief Lorne Stewart of Cumberland House Cree Nation, Grand Chief Ron Michel of PAGC [Prince Albert Grand Council], Leonard Morin, area director for Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, and several other officials. I was also pleased to bring greetings on behalf of the official opposition.

Many of the community veterans are displayed on a floor-to-ceiling painting by local artists and is on display in the hall.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating the community of Cumberland House on the official opening of their new hall.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Martensville.

### The Salvation Army

**Ms. Heppner:** — Last week, Thursday, December 2nd, I had

the opportunity to volunteer at the Salvation Army's Christmas dinner at the White Buffalo Youth Lodge in Saskatoon. This is an annual event for the Salvation Army, and the three separate seatings were well attended by local residents. The Salvation Army folks made sure that it was a festive event. Volunteers were decked out in red aprons and had a choice of Santa hats or reindeer ears. There was a band and singers who sang Christmas songs during dinner, and every table was decorated for the season.

I thought it'd be a good idea to bring along my nieces. Jasmine is 16 and Sharmaine is 13. Their friend Ingrid asked to come along as well. This was a first volunteer experience for all of them. All three girls jumped right in and did whatever was asked of them or whatever was needed. And before we left that evening, they all asked if they could come back and help out next year. I'm so very proud of these young girls and their willingness to help others.

Mr. Speaker, the Salvation Army is an amazing group of men and women who do so very much for our communities and for our province. Just a sample of what they do on an annual basis: serve over 80,000 meals, provide over 17,000 beds, have over 100 emergency food hampers provided, and have provided over 4,000 people with free clothing. Their community service centre consists of two shelters, a drop-in centre, a meal program, family services, a church, and many other services. I want to thank the Salvation Army for their efforts to bring Christmas cheer to the lives of so many in Saskatoon last week and to thank them as well for what they do on a day-to-day basis. They do it quietly and without much fanfare, and they deserve our recognition and respect.

And, Mr. Speaker, as we leave this place for Christmas, I would hope that we can all find something to do to reach out to others who need a little bit of extra help. Thank you.

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

### Crown Corporations

**Mr. Trew:** — Mr. Speaker, over the years, our Crowns have delivered utilities and service at modest cost while providing high-quality jobs. Under the NDP, every Saskatchewan person had enjoyed the lowest cost utility bundle which guaranteed Saskatchewan people paid the lowest price in Canada for the utilities we use daily. This made Saskatchewan a more attractive and affordable place to live.

The Sask Party government's first action was to scrap the lowest cost utility bundle. Then they raised the natural gas rates. Then they raised the power rates, then the gas, then the power. Then they introduced the first rate increase in a decade at SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance]. Then the Sask Party introduced their Saskatchewan-first policy forcing Saskatchewan Crown corporations to sell off profitable investments in other provinces.

The results — utilities have never cost us more. Saskatchewan people pay and pay. The Sask Party government can't be trusted with Saskatchewan's Crown corporations. They pretend to have dropped their policy of privatization of the Crowns

while they privatize by slices. The Premier continues to lead their philosophical charge to privatize.

New Democrats will continue to defend our Crown corporations from the Sask Party privatization attacks for the benefit of all Saskatchewan people.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Cannington.

### A Candidate's Brochure

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, some voters in Regina South recently received a brochure from the NDP candidate. It's actually not a bad brochure. It contains none of the usual vitriol and the running down of Saskatchewan that we've come to expect from the NDP.

But there is also something else that was noticeably absent in this brochure. There was not one mention anywhere of the current leader of the Saskatchewan NDP — not one picture, not one mention of his name. It's almost like he doesn't exist. In fact, in the brochure the candidate mentions that he ran to be the NDP leader, but he never actually mentions the individual who did become the leader.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP have a big problem. Candidates are running for the NDP, but they're running away from their own leader. I can understand why a candidate would want to run away from a leader with a 12 per cent approval rating, and I think the voters of Regina South will see through this. Mr. Speaker, when the NDP candidates are trying to distance themselves from their own leader, it's no wonder that the voters of Saskatchewan feel the same way. Thank you.

### QUESTION PERIOD

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

### Financial Management of Crown Corporations

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, as I indicated earlier, in the gallery, in your gallery is a group of save our Saskatchewan Crown Corporations coalition who are here today because they're very concerned about what this Sask Party government is doing to the Crowns in the province. One of their biggest concerns is the fact that every penny of profit has been stripped out of the Crowns this year, and what this will lead to is much higher debt and higher utility rates while the government is trying to hide the debt that they're running because of their mismanagement.

My question to the Premier is this: in light of the fact that many people in this province are worried about the Crowns, how is it that he continues to pretend that he is the saviours of the Crown? And does he intend to take 100 per cent of the profits in next year's budget from our Crown Corporations?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to report to the Assembly that it looks like, as a result of some excellent performance from SaskTel, that we're going to actually need less of a proportion of the dividend from, in terms of the total

revenue, from the Crowns.

I would also say this, Mr. Speaker, that under our administration we have made significant investments in the Crown Corporations, Mr. Speaker. Tens of millions of dollars invested in SaskTel to provide better cell coverage, Mr. Speaker. To also provide 100 per cent Internet coverage across the province, that's the objective of the government. That's the objective. We continue to make those investments. We make investments in SaskPower so that the country continues to lead in terms of clean coal and sequestration technology, Mr. Speaker. SGI continues to flourish, Mr. Speaker, as a Crown Corporation in Saskatchewan as well. And the same is true for SaskEnergy.

Mr. Speaker, this government will continue to invest in our Crown Corporations. Those Crowns will continue to provide excellent service at a low cost for Saskatchewan people.

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

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, the save our Crowns coalition is worried of course about the stripping away of the cash from the Crown corporations and using the Crown corporations as a cash cow.

They're also worried about the privatization and the contracting out in many, many areas of the Crowns. Things like SaskTel operator service and the Max Internet interactive TV installation, email, high-speed Internet, all of those being contracted out; privatizing and selling off SCN [Saskatchewan Communications Network] and The Ag Dealer as well as the Hospitality Network; and, most importantly, the privatization of a large part of SaskPower's production with the signing of a deal with Northland Power, where all of the profits will go to an Ontario company, leading to higher utility rates and fewer jobs in the Crowns.

Can the Premier explain why this is good for the people of Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, first of all just some factual misstatements by the hon. member in his question. SCN for example, not a Crown corporation. Additionally I would say, Mr. Speaker, that the example of engaging with private sector suppliers of power was an example set by the NDP when they were in power. I believe that hon. member sat in the cabinet when they sought to do a deal with SunBridge, a private supplier of wind power, Mr. Speaker; also the Atco cogen deal done by that government, also the Crown corporation buying from a private supplier.

So if privatization is happening today because of the Northland deal that the people of North Battleford like, if that's what he calls privatization, Mr. Speaker, it was him and his government that set the example and began that kind of privatization, Mr. Speaker.

I would also say that what we will see in Saskatchewan going forward is the government continuing to invest in our Crowns. What we will not see, as we did in 2001 when he sat at the

cabinet, is the stripping of equity to the tune of 181 per cent of the earnings of the Crown for his government. You won't see that, Mr. Speaker.

[14:00]

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

**Mr. Lingenfelter:** — Mr. Speaker, a question to the Premier. The Premier will know that last year his government stripped \$1.3 billion from the Crowns to cover up for their mistakes in the Department of Finance and to cover up a deficit that his government is running at the present time. We all know that.

We also know that he is privatizing, this government is privatizing big pieces of SaskTel, of SaskPower. This will lead very directly to fewer jobs in our Crowns and much higher utility rates. Why is it that the Premier has this as a legacy for the families in the province?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, with Saskatchewan doing so well today in terms of its position, national leadership, with Saskatchewan performing so well economically, and with by and large, as the Opposition Leader has noted, the people of the province of Saskatchewan being very satisfied with the direction, it shouldn't surprise anybody at all in this province that they're going to engage in a nonsensical fear campaign about the future of the Crown corporations.

Mr. Speaker, we are investing in our Crown corporations. In SaskEnergy, 46 million in transmission, 24 million in distribution. At SaskPower, 307 in transmission and distribution, 148 million in new generation. That's just to list a few. In SaskTel, next generation wireless network, 129 million; 44 million in access and core network growth; Max enhancements of \$30 million, Mr. Speaker.

The Crown corporations are strong today. They'll continue to be strong. They'll continue to provide great service to the people of the province at a low cost, Mr. Speaker. What they won't do is go off on investment jaunts in Nashville and in Georgia and get involved in potatoes. That's what would risk the future of a Crown corporation, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Children in Care

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. A pattern is developing with this Minister of Social Services. When concerns are raised, she diminishes them or she ignores them. The Provincial Auditor says she's failing to protect children and doesn't even know how many children are in her care. And what does she do? She attacks his methodology, questions his findings. And over the last couple of weeks, a well-respected individual in the social services field has tried to raise serious concerns related to child protection with the minister, but the minister has ignored her.

My question is this: why does the minister refuse to listen when



people raise serious concerns about the protection of children in our province?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

**Hon. Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, first of all I have to assure the members opposite that we've been listening very carefully to the concerns that he's been bringing forward, and we've been talking about all the work that we've been doing as a government. We understand that when we became government that there was a lot of attention needed to be given to a lot of areas.

We had areas where government had not looked at seniors' income for decades. We had not looked at the rental supplement for decades. We had not increased money for people on social services for decades. CBOs [community-based organization] needed an increase. It wasn't looked at for decades. The members opposite wanted to pretend that they were there for the poor and for people who needed help, and they didn't do anything.

Mr. Speaker, we have put money, we have put \$45 million more into assistance for people on welfare, 106 per cent increase for child and family services. There's more work to be done, Mr. Speaker, but I assure you we are ignoring no one.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Mr. Speaker, we know much of what the minister said is not accurate at all. Mr. Speaker, Carol LaFayette-Boyd is in the gallery today. She retired from the public service in 2005 after training many social workers and foster parents and helping to develop many of the policies and protocols that are in place today. Now she's assisting families that are caught up in the child welfare system.

And over the last couple of weeks, she's tried unsuccessfully to meet with the minister to discuss serious concerns about policies and protocols that are being broken. Families are being unjustly torn apart and children are suffering as a result. Because she was ignored, Carol wrote a letter to the minister and to the Premier in which she writes, "Child welfare within your ministry is in chaos."

To the minister: why does the minister refuse to listen to Carol's very serious concerns?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

**Hon. Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, the number of children in our care and the concerns of our system has been brought forward many times. In fact that's one of the reasons why we had things like the child welfare review panel. I'm looking forward to releasing the results of those recommendations in the next few days, in the next little while, Mr. Speaker.

And we do know that there's more work to be done. Some of the people that call my office have been getting attention from people that work not just in the ministry but within my office. I assure you when they bring forward concerns, it's looked at by a whole host of people who are professionals.

There are people in this ministry, Mr. Speaker, who are dedicated individuals. In fact I dare to say that there isn't one person working in the Ministry of Social Services who doesn't do it because they like their job. It's not for the money. It's because they care about what they are . . . about the people in our province.

Mr. Speaker, I assure you that when we're looking at issues and dealing with children in care of this province, Mr. Speaker, it's our top priority.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Here's another quote from Carol's letter to the minister and the Premier. And I quote:

The public has a right to know how deliberately your ministry disregards policy and treats the families and children in care with total disregard. It is in the public's interest to know whether or not your government is unable to bring order back to child welfare or that the minister and this government will take measures to correct blatant misconduct, gross breach of policy and law within their ministries.

Mr. Speaker, these are serious concerns. And when children and families are being hurt, we need to act quickly.

My question is this: in light of these concerns raised today which corroborate the findings of the Provincial Auditor, will the Premier agree to establish a special all-party committee to urgently examine the crisis in our child welfare system so that the concerns of Carol can be properly heard?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

**Hon. Ms. Draude:** — Mr. Speaker, this is about the third time this week that the member opposite has asked to have a special committee dealing with something. Do you know what we have to do? Mr. Speaker, what has to be done is looking at the reports that have already been implemented. We have just got . . . The Pringle report is going to be released within the next two weeks, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to meet with the individual that the member opposite is speaking about, and I'd also like to assure the people that we find the Provincial Auditor's findings very concerning. The problems in the child and welfare system have been ongoing for 25 years, and I know we can't solve the problems overnight.

We've implemented a new foster home database. That's something that was very important. The members opposite didn't have a clue where their children were because they were all paper children.

Mr. Speaker, we're implementing the database, and we'll have an opportunity to release the report from the Pringle report in the next time. Mr. Speaker, we're looking forward to future work.

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

### Personal Health Information

**Ms. Junor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this week, the Health minister admitted that he misjudged public opinion on the government's new regulations allowing health regions to share people's personal information with fundraisers. He said, and I quote, "I probably did for sure."

But in the face of overwhelming public opposition, the minister is still sticking to his guns. He said, "We're going to let this play out a little longer and see what happens." Well, Mr. Speaker, I can tell him what's going to happen. People aren't going to like it six months from now or a year from now. They just don't like it. They're not going to like it ever.

To the minister: why is he ignoring the public's clear message? Why doesn't he just admit he was wrong and repeal the regulation?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first of all I want to point out to the Assembly the amazing work the foundations do across the province. I had the opportunity to be in Yorkton not too long ago to a stroke rehabilitation therapy opening, Mr. Speaker, and the foundations had put a yellow ribbon around all the equipment that they had bought to put into this facility. And it was amazing the amount of money that foundations raise throughout the province.

When we moved on the regulation, a regulation that the opposition had thought of when they were in government, when we moved on this regulation, Mr. Speaker, we knew that not all health regions were going to follow along. There are some health regions, for example Five Hills, that the foundation sends to everyone within the city of Moose Jaw, for example. But we knew that some health regions were interested, very interested. They were asking for it. Foundations were asking for it. I know a number of patients that were very pleased to give, Mr. Speaker.

Since that time, we've seen the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region decide not to pursue it. But there are other health regions that are working on it, Mr. Speaker, with their foundation to make sure that if they move forward, that the patients of the province know all their options. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Junor:** — Mr. Speaker, the minister did a very poor job of consultation before this came in. The public was not asked and the public has clearly indicated what they think of this. This information doesn't belong to the minister or the government. It belongs to the patients. And this is something the Sask Party government doesn't understand.

Mr. Speaker, many Saskatchewan people choose to keep the fact that they were in the hospital or that they receive treatment private, even from their families or loved ones. And there's a very real danger, Mr. Speaker, that because of this and because

people know their information will be made public, they won't seek treatment in a timely manner.

So, Mr. Speaker, why is the minister pressing ahead with the plan that could prevent some patients from seeking the treatment that they need, and why is he so determined to violate patients' rights?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, if you look at other provinces, this is not unprecedented across the country, Mr. Speaker. There's other provinces that have this very regulation and allows foundations and health regions to share name and address only, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it's up to the health regions now. If they so choose to move forward on this, Mr. Speaker, they certainly can. They can work with the foundation within their area and with the Ministry of Health to make sure that all the proper information is given to patients prior to and post, Mr. Speaker. Those details are being worked out between health regions and foundations that want to pursue it. If the health region chooses not to pursue it, Mr. Speaker, that is their decision, Mr. Speaker.

We've given them that decision-making power. We could have, I guess, dictated to them. It's not ours to dictate. The health regions make the decision.

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

**Ms. Junor:** — News flash, Mr. Speaker, the minister gave the health regions the authority to do it. So now they have the authority to do it on his doing from passing the regulation. So he can't dodge it now. The public will know who it came from.

Over half the health regions in this province have already announced that they plan to opt out, and they know that the patients see this as a violation of their privacy. People have spoken and they're speaking everywhere in every forum.

Mr. Speaker, it's interesting though that the government is pressing ahead with this. They see no problem in violating patients' privacy, but they're using privacy legislation to justify redacting 1,800 pages of information about an insider deal in the health sector that could cost taxpayers millions.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: why the double standard? Mr. Speaker, why is it acceptable to share a patient's personal information with fundraisers, but not acceptable to share with taxpayers how their money is being spent?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, when the HIPA came into effect, Mr. Speaker, *The Health Information Protection Act*, prior to that, this information was shared. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I would say for about 10 to 15, 10 years at least under the former government, under the NDP government this information was shared.

Mr. Speaker, we've allowed health regions to make that

decision if they so choose, to share name and address with a health region, with a foundation. They can do it. Many health regions are opting out, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, but I will tell you that foundations take this very, very seriously . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. Order. I'm trying to hear the response from the minister. I'd ask the members to allow the minister to respond to the question. I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, foundations and health regions take this very seriously. That's why you haven't seen any of them move quickly on it, Mr. Speaker. You've seen one health region, Regina Qu'Appelle, say they're not going to move on it. We knew that other health regions, many of the smaller health regions wouldn't be doing it, moving on the regulation. We'll see what some of the other health regions, be it Saskatoon or P.A. [Prince Albert], decide to do in the upcoming months.

[14:15]

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

**Ms. Junor:** — Mr. Speaker, it's hard to say that the minister takes this seriously when the Privacy Commissioner, who's an independent officer of this legislature, has said no to this. And he simply ignores that. He ignores the public opinion. People are talking about this; they don't want it. The Privacy Commissioner said no. We, when we looked at it, also said no because of those very concerns. But obviously when the minister consults with whoever he consults with, he didn't hear this. He didn't obviously reach the right people or he ignored what they said.

My question to the minister is, why did he do this in the first place?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, as I said, health foundations do amazing work. They raise millions and millions of dollars that go into the health care system each and every year, Mr. Speaker, be it in Regina, be it in Indian Head, be it in Fort Qu'Appelle, be it in any small community or large community across this province. Health regions and foundations were looking at how they could perhaps increase the amount of fundraising by targeting people, not for 60 days after they had been at a hospital stay, Mr. Speaker. Name and address only would be exchanged from health region to foundation, Mr. Speaker.

So when the member asks why did we move in this direction, health regions had been asking for it. Foundations had been asking for it, Mr. Speaker. A number of patients thought it was a very good idea, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Regina Qu'Appelle has decided not to move on it, and I absolutely respect their right and view on this, Mr. Speaker. We're going to see how some of the other health regions, whether they move forward with their foundations into

the future.

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

#### Arrangements for a Long-Term Care Facility

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This morning I had an opportunity to review the Ministry of Health's website, and here is the Ministry of Health's website's definition for an affiliate:

Affiliates are those not-for-profit organizations that operate hospitals and special care homes. Typically these facilities are owned by faith-based organizations or other community groups with their own board of directors.

A very simple question to the minister, and I think the public would appreciate an answer: why is Amicus not an affiliate?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, I answered this question yesterday. The member was going on about whether it was an affiliate or talking about an affiliate. I said yesterday that health regions enter into agreement with a number of organizations — some are classed as affiliates, some are classed as non-government organizations, Mr. Speaker, some are classed as health care organizations.

Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite is saying we shouldn't enter into those agreements, I would ask the member opposite why did they enter into an agreement with Extencare that provides long-term care throughout the province? It isn't an affiliate, Mr. Speaker, but under the NDP it was fine to enter into that agreement. Mr. Speaker, this is 100 new long-term care beds that will be in her backyard, Mr. Speaker. I'm quite frankly amazed that she would throw the brakes on it.

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

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, a health care organization is defined as an affiliate, or prescribed persons that receive funding from a regional health authority to provide health services. Well, prescribed persons that receive funding — this is their definition — from a regional health authority include for-profit special care private ambulance operators as well as organizations providing mental health and addiction services.

Mr. Speaker, why isn't Amicus, a faith-based organization with a board, not an affiliate?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, as I said, health regions enter into agreements with many organizations. Some are looked at as affiliates. Some are health care organizations, Mr. Speaker. Some are NGOs, non-government organizations, Mr. Speaker. In fact even health regions will enter into agreements with third-party deliverers such as the surgery centre in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, and the facility in Regina that is seeing hundred and hundreds of procedures going on.

Mr. Speaker, if we ever go back in this province to the NDP, they'd be ripping up those agreements, and there'll be hundreds and thousands more people waiting for surgery, waiting for long-term care in this province. Mr. Speaker, we can never go back to the old NDP.

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

**Ms. Atkinson:** — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, health care organizations as prescribed in *The Regional Health Services Administration Regulations* describe these organizations such as Backlin's Ambulance Service, Blaine Lake ambulance service, Canadian Mental Health Association, Canora ambulance service, Cenaiko Enterprises Corp., Creighton Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council, Crestvue Ambulance Service, Crocus Co-op, Cupar Lions Volunteer Ambulance Inc.

Mr. Speaker, it's a very simple question, and the minister is trying to divert us away from the answer. Why is Amicus not an affiliate, given that it comes from a faith-based organization and has a board of directors?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, the member has been asking questions for six weeks, Mr. Speaker. We know that she would absolutely throw on the brakes, Mr. Speaker. She doesn't like the agreement. She doesn't like the deal. But I can tell you for 60 patients, 60 residents in acute care centres in Saskatoon, namely City Hospital, they're going to love this when they get to move into a facility that's appropriate for them at the end of their life, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, under the NDP they closed hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of long-term care beds. That is why, Mr. Speaker, for the first time in 20 years, Mr. Speaker, new long-term care beds are going to be built in this province, Mr. Speaker. If it was under the old NDP, they'd rather have them live in an acute care centres. And to the Sask Party, it's just not acceptable.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

### Women Build Program to Construct Habitat for Humanity Home

**Hon. Ms. Draude:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to inform the House about an exciting new construction project due in the province to the Status of Women and Habitat For Humanity that will see one more Regina family receive the gift of a lifetime — a home to call their own. I'm proud that this affordable housing project will be led entirely by women and that it will be a first of its kind in Regina.

This initiative will enable a family to experience home ownership for the very first time. It's a win-win situation for everyone. Established by Habitat for Humanity, Women Build is a program that promotes and encourages women's leadership and participation in construction and skills trades, an

occupation group in which women are clearly under-represented. In 2009 for example only 1,200 women, as compared to nearly 42,000 men, were employed in construction and other trades in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity to recognize the Habitat for Humanity volunteers, for men and women who willingly devote their time and energy to build communities, one home and one family at a time. As our government embarks on a new road, we are extremely proud to encourage and support Saskatchewan tradeswomen and students in their work to help a Habitat for Humanity partner and their family come home.

Since 2009 we've dedicated \$2 million in funding for Habitat for Humanity affiliates in Regina, in Saskatoon, Yorkton, Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, and Lloydminster to help build 40 new homes across the province. To date we've committed 1.4 million of \$2 million in grant funding available to Saskatchewan Habitat for Humanity affiliates to develop 28 homes.

This investment is a concrete demonstration of our commitment to increase the supply of quality affordable housing across Saskatchewan and to encourage Saskatchewan women to lead and to learn skills, skill trades. There is work to be done, Mr. Speaker, and we are committed to doing it.

It will be my privilege in the next months ahead to keep the house appraised of the Status for Humanity-Women Build project and of this government's ongoing work in the area of affordable housing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you very much to the minister for the advance copy of her statement. And I too want to join in congratulating Habitat for Humanity-Regina Women Build for this project. We know every home that's built is very meaningful for the family who will receive it. And if you could add on the value of having women bring an awful lot to projects like this, especially in the skill development, I think that's very important. And we know that Habitat for Humanity as an NGO is very innovative.

I think about in Saskatoon the work they've done in terms of providing high school students with the opportunity to learn skills, and often there would be young women involved in that. I think about Bedford. E.D. Feehan had innovative programs, and now they're at Mount Royal because of the investments that we made in terms of providing funding — some \$17 million — for the Mount Royal expansion. So this is very important, and I just want to emphasize the congratulations to Habitat for Humanity Regina Women Build.

But I do want to draw a line there when we talk about the work that this government has done around affordable housing in Saskatchewan. We know the waiting lists have grown over the last couple of years from 1,100 to 2,300, and that's very, very serious. And what we need most than anything for this province is a provincial housing strategy about how we're going to meet the crisis, the short-term crisis of people and emergency

shelters tonight, the long term about making sure people have homes like this one, so everybody has a safe place they can call home when they go home at night. Thank you very much.

**An Hon. Member:** — Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I ask the member to state his point of order.

### POINT OF ORDER

**Mr. Yates:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The minister just rose on a ministerial statement, Mr. Speaker, that doesn't meet the definition of a ministerial statement. Ministerial statements are to bring forward new direction, new policy, or significant changes in the government's direction, Mr. Speaker.

This member's statement did none of these, Mr. Speaker. This is simply a matter of her re-announcing what she announced today and already held a press conference on, Mr. Speaker, of a continuation of a program where the government helps Habitat for Humanity build homes, Mr. Speaker. This is not new direction, new policy, or a significant new direction for government, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't meet the definition of a ministerial statement, Mr. Speaker, and I would like you to rule on this matter.

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

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on the point of order, the minister was announcing a new partnership with Habitat Saskatchewan that was building a home, particularly by women, Mr. Speaker, which was entirely new. Mr. Speaker, the government continues to partner with organizations, NGOs such as Habitat, Mr. Speaker, and this is an important initiative that needs to be communicated and recognized, Mr. Speaker, and is something that is very worthwhile in the province of Saskatchewan. And the minister made the announcement this morning, just prior to coming into the House.

**The Speaker:** — I've listened . . . Order. Order. Order. I've listened to the point of order by the member from Regina Dewdney, the Opposition House Leader, and the Government House Leader's response. In the past, Speakers have ruled that announcements or ministerial statements that are relating to issues that are long past have been issues that it has been felt have already been released to the public. But we've also recognized announcements made earlier in the day and the first opportunity in the Chamber. We have recognized those opportunities. I will, however, take the opportunity to take a close look at the statement to ensure that we're following the guidelines that we have established.

### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Chair of the Economy Committee.

#### Standing Committee on the Economy

**Mr. Stewart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm instructed by the

Standing Committee on the Economy to report that it has considered certain estimates and to present its eighth report. I move:

That the eighth report of the Standing Committee on the Economy be now concurred in.

**The Speaker:** — The Chair of the Standing Committee on the Economy has moved:

That the eighth report of the Standing Committee on the Economy be now concurred in.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried. I recognize the Chair of the Economy Committee.

**Mr. Stewart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on the Economy to report Bill No. 148, *The Animal Protection Amendment Act, 2010* with amendment.

[14:30]

**The Speaker:** — When shall the Bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

**Hon. Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this Bill and that Bill and its amendments be now read the third time.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Agriculture has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 148, *The Animal Protection Amendment Act, 2010* with amendment and that the Bill and its amendments be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried. When shall the amendments be read a first time?

### FIRST AND SECOND READINGS OF AMENDMENTS

#### Bill No. 148 — *The Animal Protection Amendment Act, 2010*

**Hon. Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that the amendments be now read a first time and a second time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the minister that the amendments be now read the first and second 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 and second reading of the amendments.

**The Speaker:** — The minister may proceed to move to third reading.

### THIRD READINGS

#### Bill No. 148 — *The Animal Protection Amendment Act, 2010*

**Hon. Mr. Bjornerud:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that this Bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Agriculture that Bill No. 148, *The Animal Protection Amendment Act, 2010* with amendment be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Chair of the Economy Committee.

#### Standing Committee on the Economy

**Mr. Stewart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on the Economy to report Bill No. 156, *The Freehold Oil and Gas Production Tax Act, 2010* without amendment.

**The Speaker:** — When shall this Bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister Responsible for Energy.

**Hon. Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I request leave to waive consideration in the Committee of the Whole on this Bill and that this Bill be now read the third time.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister Responsible for Energy and Resources has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 156, *The Freehold Oil and Gas Production Tax Act, 2010*, that the Bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — The minister may proceed to move third

reading.

### THIRD READINGS

#### Bill No. 156 — *The Freehold Oil and Gas Production Tax Act, 2010*

**Hon. Mr. Boyd:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that this Bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 156, *The Freehold Oil and Gas Production Tax Act, 2010* without amendment be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

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

#### Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report that it has considered certain estimates and to present its 11th report. I move:

That the 11th report of the Standing Committee of Crown and Central Agencies be now concurred.

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

That the 11th 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:** — Carried. Before orders of the day . . . Order. Why is the member on his feet?

### MOTION UNDER RULE 59

#### Children in Care

**Mr. Forbes:** — To seek leave under rule 59 to move a motion of urgent and pressing necessity in light of the concerns raised today in question period, which corroborates the findings of the Provincial Auditor late last week, which showed that this

government is currently failing to adequately protect children in its care.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to move a motion that will propose an establishment of a special all-party committee to examine this important issue. I have provided the government . . . I'll briefly read the text of that motion now:

That this Assembly immediately establish a special all-party committee to consider the Pringle report and to review the situation of children in care in Saskatchewan and to make recommendations to the Legislative Assembly, and

That the committee have the power to sit during the intersessional period, and

That the committee have the power to send for a person's papers and records, to examine witnesses under oath, to receive representations from interested parties and individuals, to engage such advisers and assistants as are required for the purposes of the inquiry, and to hold meetings away from the seat of government in order that the fullest representations may be received without unduly inconveniencing those who desire to be heard, and

That the committee be instructed to submit its reports to the Legislative Assembly on March 7th, 2011, the first day of the spring period of the fourth session of the twenty-sixth Legislative Assembly.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — The member has asked for leave under rule 59 to move a motion of pressing and urgent nature. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**Some Hon. Members:** — No.

**The Speaker:** — Leave is not granted.

#### STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

##### The Same Question Rule

**The Speaker:** — Before we move further in orders of the day, I have a statement. Order. I would like to draw to the attention of the members that this Assembly, order, that this Assembly had under consideration two Bills which, through the process of amendments, ended up with provisions of substantially the same purpose — Bill No. 148, *The Animal Protection Amendment Act, 2010* in the name of the Minister of Agriculture and Bill No. 617, *The Protection of Service Animals Act* in the name of the member from Saskatoon Centre. Both Bills propose means to protect service animals from abuse.

According to Erskine May, *Parliamentary Practice*, 23rd Edition, page 578:

There is no rule or custom which restrains the

presentation of two or more bills relating to the same subject, and containing similar provisions. But if a decision of the House has already been taken on one such bill . . . the other is not proceeded with if it contains substantially the same provisions . . .

This Legislative Assembly has numerous precedents on the subject of the same question rule with respect to Bills. Speakers have consistently ruled that if the Assembly has agreed to one Bill that contains similar provisions in another Bill the Speaker must then prevent any further consideration of the second Bill.

Today Bill No. 148, *The Animal Protection Amendment Act, 2010* was reported back to the Assembly with amendments. The Assembly agreed to the amendments and third reading. Given the decision by the Assembly to adopt the amended Bill, it is my duty to ensure that the Assembly does not come to two different decisions on the same question. For this reason, it is necessary that I order that item no. 4 under private members' public Bills and orders, second readings, Bill No. 617, *The Protection of Service Animals Act* be removed from the order paper.

#### 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 633 and 634.

**The Speaker:** — Answers to question 633 and 634 are tabled.

#### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

**Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel:** — Committee of Finance.

**The Speaker:** — Committee of Finance, I do now leave the Chair.

#### COMMITTEE OF FINANCE

##### Motions for Supply

**The Chair:** — Order. Now I will call the Committee of Finance to order. I will recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Chair of Committees. Be it:

Resolved that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain charges and expenses of the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2011, the sum of \$443,173,000 be granted out of the General Revenue Fund.

**The Chair:** — Is the Assembly ready for the question? Question before the Assembly is no. 1:

Resolved that towards making good the supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain charges and expenses

of the public service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2011, the sum of \$443,173,000 be granted out of the General Revenue Fund.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried. I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I move that the committee rise and that the Chair report that the committee has agreed to a certain resolution and ask for leave to sit again.

**The Chair:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Finance that the committee rise and that the Chair report that the committee has agreed to certain resolution and ask for leave to sit again. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Chair:** — Carried.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

#### FIRST AND SECOND READING OF RESOLUTIONS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Chair of Committee of Finance.

**Mr. Brkich:** — Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Finance has agreed to certain resolutions, has instructed me to report the same, and to ask for leave to sit again.

**The Speaker:** — When shall the resolution be read a first and second time? I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that a certain resolution be now read the first and second time.

**The Speaker:** — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion that the . . .

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Agreed. Carried.

**Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel:** — First and second reading of the resolutions.

**The Speaker:** — When shall the committee sit again? I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Later this day, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Later this day, I recognize the Minister of Finance.

#### APPROPRIATION BILL

**Bill No. 163 — *The Appropriation Act, 2010 (No. 2)***

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly, I move that Bill No. 163, *The Appropriation Act, 2010 (No. 2)* be now introduced and read the first time.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Finance has moved that Bill No. 163, *The Appropriation Act, 2010 (No. 2)* be now introduced and read the first time. Is leave of the Assembly granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — 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 read a second time? I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, by leave of the Assembly and under rule 72(2), I move that the Bill be now read a second and third time.

**The Speaker:** — Is leave of the Assembly granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Leave has been granted. Moved by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 163, *The Appropriation Act, 2010 (No. 2)* be now read a second and third time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

#### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 161

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 161 — *The Election Amendment Act, 2010*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Ms. Morin:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my



privilege to be able to enter the debate on Bill 161 with respect to *The Election Amendment Act*. Mr. Speaker, this is something that many of us in the opposition, actually the entire opposition caucus, take very seriously and have great concerns about given how it will affect the voting procedures of the next provincial election and also municipal elections, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, any time there is any changes made to how the voting procedures change, those changes, Mr. Speaker, should be of a very positive nature and should be therefore something that are very inclusive versus exclusive, Mr. Speaker.

It is no small secret that the voting percentages, the people, the amount of people that come out to vote in either a federal, provincial, or municipal elections, let alone other types of elections, Mr. Speaker, has steadily been on the decrease, Mr. Speaker. And any time you see a decreasing percentage of voters in any capacity, Mr. Speaker, it's two things. It's obviously very disconcerting because these people don't feel that they have a voice that needs to be heard or a voice that needs to be represented or that they're feeling entirely disenfranchised.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's a threat to democracy itself. And that alone is something that we should all be very, very, very wary of, Mr. Speaker, because one thing we have in Canada, one thing we have in Saskatchewan is this precious thing. It's a very precious thing to have the democratic system that we do, Mr. Speaker. There are many countries in the world that do not have that immense privilege, that right to be able to express their democratic opinion, Mr. Speaker, through the right to vote in a democratic process.

[14:45]

And, Mr. Speaker, it wasn't too long ago that even in Canada, even in Canada, Mr. Speaker, women didn't have the right to vote in Canada, Mr. Speaker, up until a few decades ago, Mr. Speaker. So we understand especially, especially the women in Canada understand, Mr. Speaker, how important it is to ensure that all people feel that they have that inclusive right to vote and to be heard and to exercise their opinion, Mr. Speaker.

Now I find it very interesting when one looks at what the Minister Responsible for Municipal Affairs is quoted saying as recently as December 1st of 2010, Mr. Speaker, and I'm quoting from the *Leader-Post*. And it says, "We're going to make sure we continue consulting with the stakeholder groups to ensure that we have all the avenues covered off to be more inclusive versus exclusive," says the Minister for Municipal Affairs.

Now what's interesting about this, Mr. Speaker, is two things. It's one quote from the Minister for Municipal Affairs for the Sask Party government, but there's two things that are very interesting in this quote. The one, Mr. Speaker, is obviously the issue about how the minister talks about being more inclusive versus exclusive, when this proposed legislative change, Mr. Speaker, does precisely the opposite, Mr. Speaker.

Any time you make the voting process more complicated, more difficult, that is not a warm and inviting and fuzzy-type feeling for the voter to be engaging in, Mr. Speaker. It's quite the

opposite. It causes the voter to say, gee, to heck with it. Why should I bother? I don't have the proper identification at the moment. I just moved. You know, I don't have the means to be able to afford a voter . . . I mean a photo identification or whatever it is, Mr. Speaker. But those means are precisely that — they are exclusive, not inclusive, Mr. Speaker.

So I'm not sure what the Sask Party government is reading. I'm not sure what they're understanding. We in the opposition certainly know that the voter turnout is decreasing on an annual . . . I mean on an ongoing basis, I should say, depending on what type of an election is taking place. And we have great concerns about that and we'd like to see the processes addressed. We have no issue with making amendments to *The Election Act* with respect to the voting process, Mr. Speaker. But we want to see those issues actually address the problem of voter complacency, voter turnout. We want to see those processes try and increase the voter turnout and not further decrease voter turnout.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the other part of the quote from the Minister of Municipal Affairs that I found very interesting, very interesting was, "We're going to make sure we continue consulting with the stakeholder groups to ensure that we have all the avenues covered off." And then he goes on to say . . . End quote.

Well what's interesting about that, Mr. Speaker, is we again see the modus operandi of the Sask Party government which is: let's throw out some legislation; let's roll things out first and then we'll consult.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the normal process of any government would be to consult on whatever legislative changes one wants to make first, and then bring those legislative changes forward, Mr. Speaker. But, Mr. Speaker, this is yet an ongoing process that the Sask Party government seems to engage in, which is, bring things to the floor of the legislature regardless of whether it's good, bad, ugly, or whatever and then we'll consult with the people of the province.

Now you know what's interesting about that, Mr. Speaker, is if they were doing that in terms of bringing forward legislation and consulting with people of the province and then actually listening to what they heard, you might be able to say, okay, they operate a little differently, but hey, you know, we'll go with how they roll. But, Mr. Speaker, what's interesting about that is it's not even that that is the case.

They roll out legislation. They bring it to the floor of the Assembly. They say, and I'm going to use that expression loosely, they say that they're going to enter into a consultative process after they brought legislation forward. And yet they don't heed what they have heard, Mr. Speaker.

And I just go back to question period which was — what? — a mere half hour ago, Mr. Speaker, where the opposition Health critic asked if the Minister of Health is going to pull back the regulations that he put into place with respect to releasing confidential information about people who stay in the health facilities that we have in this province and releasing that information to fundraising organizations.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we know that that passed through the House, the legislature. We also know that, from the opposition — phone calls and letters and emails that we receive — that this is something that the Saskatchewan public absolutely does not want to see happen. We also know that, Mr. Speaker, from the blogs that one can read . . . which I know the Sask Party is very enthusiastic about going to the blogs, Mr. Speaker, and the polling and things like that. And one can see from the comments that are on the blogs, Mr. Speaker, one can see from the information that they've collected and they've received in terms of the individual MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] or the minister's office himself, that they know that the public does not want this confidential information to be released to the fundraising organizations without their express consent, Mr. Speaker.

So we even have the Minister of Health, Mr. Speaker, who has now admitted that yes, by golly, he made a mistake. I don't know if he's actually admitted that he's made a mistake, but he concedes the fact, Mr. Speaker, that he misjudged the public. There we go. So he's saying that he misjudged the public. He misjudged the outcry from the public that they do not like this process happening of releasing confidential information to fundraising organizations.

And yet, what is the minister going to do about that, Mr. Speaker? He is not going to do anything. He's taking a wait-and-see approach. A wait-and-see approach as to what? As to whether a health region does release that information to a fundraising organization or a wait-and-see approach to see whether the Saskatchewan public changes its mind? It's hard to say, Mr. Speaker.

So when the Minister of Municipal Affairs says in this quote with respect to Bill 161 that they "want to continue consulting with stakeholder groups," Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure why because it doesn't change anything, Mr. Speaker. Nothing changes. They go forward with the legislation that they want to go forward with regardless of what the opposition says, regardless of what third party stakeholders say, regardless of what the public says. They rule simply because they want to rule regardless of whether or not it's the right thing to do, Mr. Speaker. If the Sask Party government wants to steamroll forward with it, the Sask Party government is going to steamroll forward with it, Mr. Speaker. And so the ruse of holding stakeholder consultations after the fact is exactly that. It's simply a ruse, Mr. Speaker.

So the other thing that's interesting to note, Mr. Speaker, is how this is going to affect other organizations and other voting processes, Mr. Speaker. So we have the chief executive officer from the Saskatchewan association of urban municipalities, SUMA, [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association], his name is Laurent Mougeot. And he says his organization will want to be part of the discussions around what ID [identification] is going to be acceptable Mr. Speaker.

Now it's interesting that the chief executive officer for SUMA is saying that they want to be part of the discussions around what ID is acceptable. And he goes on to say, "If the preparation to go to the polling station is such that you have to go to an extensive process, I think it might be discouraging to some people," Mougeot said. Now here, Mr. Speaker, we have

one of those stakeholder organizations that should have been consulted prior to the legislation coming to the floor of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, and perhaps they were. But obviously they have concerns, Mr. Speaker. They have concerns. They have concerns that if there is some sort of cumbersome process for people to prepare for in terms of going to the polling station to be able to vote, that it may be discouraging to some people.

And I'm very, very glad to see, Mr. Speaker, that SUMA is concerned with the fact that there is low voter turnout, Mr. Speaker, and they don't want to see that happen, Mr. Speaker. SUMA wants to see a way of getting people engaged in the voting process, Mr. Speaker, because they know that that provides the best outcome for their organization as well, Mr. Speaker. So they want to ensure that this is not going to be something that's going to be cumbersome to the voting public of Saskatchewan.

Now there is also other issues to address such as ensuring people who work at polling stations know what is appropriate, the same gentleman said. And you know, Mr. Speaker, when we look at that point, of the people who work at polling stations, I mean we're very fortunate that we have these individuals that are willing to sit these long hours and do the process that is necessary to make sure that people are eligible to vote, and then sit at the polling stations and ensure that those polling stations can go forward in the way that they should in a responsible manner, Mr. Speaker, in a manner which is acceptable to the Chief Electoral Officer and to ensure that there is guidelines that are being followed, Mr. Speaker.

But we do, Mr. Speaker, of course have situations where there are what I would deem some overzealous workers in these polling stations who sometimes make things difficult for the voting public when in fact those demands didn't need to be made, shall we say, in those particular situations.

And, Mr. Speaker, I have now been through two elections and needless to say have heard some of those stories that have come to me as an MLA and as a candidate in those elections. And so when we already see some of those idiosyncrasies coming forward in these past two elections that I've been part of, and now we're looking at making things even more difficult for the voting public, I'm very, very concerned, Mr. Speaker, about how the voting public is going to react to that.

Because I know in the situations that I've been told of so far, it basically caused people to say, you know what? To heck with that. I can't be bothered or clearly my voice doesn't matter. And, Mr. Speaker, I would say it's quite the contrary. The voice of every single individual citizen who is eligible to vote, Mr. Speaker, is important in every election that takes place, every single election, Mr. Speaker. And we want to ensure that everyone feels that they are invited to do so and that they are eligible to do so in a way that is not something that is cumbersome to them, Mr. Speaker.

So we don't want to see an overzealous interpretation of the rules, Mr. Speaker, and that there's a very real danger that some of that could happen with causing further encumbrances on the voting public in terms of their participation in an election, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice was also quoted in the newspaper article from the *Leader-Post* on December 1st. I found it also very interesting what the Minister of Justice had to say because he said, well it says here that the Minister of Justice doesn't think the move will disenfranchise voters. And then it goes on to say:

If you plan your affairs you should have no difficulty voting. But if you think you're going to go out at five minutes before the election time without anything, you're not likely going to be able to vote.

Mr. Speaker, this is the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Justice who is saying that people have to make sure that they engage in all sorts of preparations to be able to go out and vote, besides being enumerated, essentially. And if they, you know, lead very busy lives, if they're busy driving their kids to basketball and volleyball and skating . . . And maybe they're doing volunteer work. Maybe they're helping out at Habitat for Humanity. Maybe they're helping out at the local food bank because those two organizations are seeing a serious increase in need, Mr. Speaker. Maybe when those people are so busy with their lives that they've not recognized the fact that they've had the opportunity to be enumerated and that the election is taking place that evening, heaven forbid. The Minister of Justice is saying, too bad, so sad. You don't get to vote. Well, Mr. Speaker, that's not acceptable. Mr. Speaker, that is absolutely not acceptable.

[15:00]

Every eligible voter in this province should be able to vote, Mr. Speaker, without any future encumbrances that are being imposed upon them by this Sask Party government who is trying to make life more difficult for Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. They are not doing anything that they said that they were going to in the last election, which they said they were trying to make life better for people in Saskatchewan. It's quite the opposite. They're making life more difficult for people in Saskatchewan. They're making life more expensive for people in Saskatchewan. And they are going to make life difficult for the future of Saskatchewan because the fact that they're running deficit budgets and, again, accruing debt at a rate that is unconscionable, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, we see again, we have the Minister for Municipal Affairs, who is saying that, you know, we're going to consult after the fact. And he actually thinks, Mr. Speaker, by adding more encumbrances onto the voting procedure that it's going to make things more inclusive versus exclusive. And then we have the Minister of Justice saying that well you know what? If you don't make all the necessary preparations, too bad, so sad. You don't get to vote. Now does that sound like a government who is trying to make things more inclusive versus exclusive, Mr. Speaker? I think not. Not by my definition, not by the definition of this NDP opposition do we think that making things more difficult for the people of Saskatchewan is being inclusive, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, the right that people should be able to exercise in a free and democratic society, not just the comfortable or the privileged who are doing relatively well under the status quo, is something that the Sask Party government should be

addressing, not making it more difficult for marginalized groups and the people who have no voice to be able to exercise their privilege of being able to vote in an election, Mr. Speaker.

And the list of people, Mr. Speaker, that the Sask Party government has failed is growing ever longer, Mr. Speaker. It is lengthening on a daily basis. We can see as you can see, Mr. Speaker, from the amount of people that are writing to us and coming to us and phoning us and visiting the legislature, that the list that the Sask Party government is leaving behind is growing.

Of course the only list that the Sask Party seems to be growing is the list of the people that are either friendly with the staff in the building or the people that work within the Premier's office or those that are directly related to some of the MLAs and ministers on the Sask Party side. That list is also growing, Mr. Speaker, in terms of who's getting the money and who are getting the contracts in this province, Mr. Speaker.

That list is growing as well because once again we're seeing that despite the fact that there is public dollars being used, Mr. Speaker . . . As a matter of fact in Amicus it's \$27 million of public money that is being used to guarantee the project called Amicus, Mr. Speaker. Was there a public tender done on that, Mr. Speaker? No there wasn't. Were the contracts given to their friends, Mr. Speaker? Absolutely — their friends from the Premier's office, the relatives of ministers, Mr. Speaker, and of course large donors to the Sask Party itself, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when we look at Bill 161, *The Election Amendment Act* . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And I'm so glad that one of the members on the opposite side is cheering my speech, Mr. Speaker. It's nice to see that there is at least a few people that are listening, Mr. Speaker, because they obviously are not in agreement with their party that they belong to on this Act. So that's why they're obviously cheering me when I'm making my points here today, Mr. Speaker.

So it's quite relieving for me to know that there are some people on that side of the House, Mr. Speaker, that are concerned about the low voter turnout and are concerned that this Act is actually going to disenfranchise more people than it's going to invite to vote, Mr. Speaker. So I do appreciate the vote of confidence that I've received from the Sask Party government as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, there are a lot of people that are being left behind, like I said, and those people especially want to be able to exercise their privilege to vote in the next election and in other elections, Mr. Speaker. One of those groups obviously are seniors, Mr. Speaker. They're struggling to cope with the rising cost of living in particular, Mr. Speaker — rising rents, and the rising cost of electricity. They're frustrated by the government's broken promises on health care. And many seniors are telling us that they feel let down, even betrayed by this government, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is a group of individuals, the senior citizens of this province, that would have a lot to say with respect to any election that's taking place, Mr. Speaker, and would certainly want to be able to exercise their vote, Mr. Speaker, in the next election. And what's interesting is at a time

in their lives when so many of them no longer have driver's licences, Mr. Speaker, the government is wanting to demand that seniors present photo ID when they vote, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you know, if they're no longer driving, it's no small wonder that they may not own photo ID and you know, might have gotten rid of their driver's licence because of the fact that they're short of their documentation because of the fact they're no longer driving. And not everyone is going to be aware of the fact that they can spend the \$10 to have the photo ID authorized for a certain period of time, Mr. Speaker.

So it's interesting that a group of citizens of this province, the senior citizens of this province who would have so much at stake in terms of exercising their voice through a vote, Mr. Speaker, would be further disincluded. Further, further, further disenfranchised, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the voting process and would therefore not necessarily be able to exercise their vote in an election process that's taking place.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, it's really disconcerting when you see that and when you hear that because the senior citizens that are contacting us as an opposition caucus and the senior citizens that are contacting me as an MLA have a lot to say, Mr. Speaker. And, you know, they should be the individuals of this province, just like the elders of this province who are respected, Mr. Speaker, are respected for the contribution that they've made to the province, should be respected for the knowledge and education and experience that they can provide to others in the province, Mr. Speaker.

And what we're doing is saying to them, you know what? As the Minister of Justice pointed out, hey if you don't make all the necessary preparations, if you don't purchase that photo ID, and if you don't, you know, try and find someone to get you to where you need to go to be able to make that purchase, and if you can't make your rent . . . But you know we're still going to force you to buy that \$10 photo ID, Mr. Speaker, because we expect you to have that come election day, Mr. Speaker, if you want to exercise your right to vote.

Mr. Speaker, and there are other people that the government has failed. For instance students are angry about the rising cost of tuition and rent and utilities and car insurance, Mr. Speaker. These are very real concerns for the students of our province, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, if anyone thinks that the students of the province aren't concerned about Bill 161 and the changes that are being proposed by the Sask Party government, Mr. Speaker, you'd better think again. Because the students of this province are watching this, Mr. Speaker. They're watching this, and they're wanting to see what the government is doing, what the Sask Party government is doing to be more inviting in the electoral process rather than being more complicated in the process, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, the First Nations and Métis people are especially angry about the lack of consultative process that the Sask Party is taking part on with respect to any legislation that they're bringing forward, Mr. Speaker. And of course one can only look at the spring session and see what happened with *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*, Mr. Speaker.

This is only one example of where the First Nations and Métis people had to exercise their voice in such a demonstrable way that they actually came to the legislature and stood at the front lawn of the legislature to ensure that . . . Since the Sask Party government was using those groups as groups that validated that, the changes to *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*.

And despite the fact that there were letters written to the contrary and despite the fact that there were numerous emails and letters and phone calls saying no, we weren't consulted; no, we don't agree with the changes, they actually went to the trouble, Mr. Speaker, of coming to the front lawn of the legislature to ensure that they are not just heard but seen, Mr. Speaker, because for some reason, the Sask Party government finds it very easy to ignore the voices of people when they express their concerns. They find it very easy to ignore people when they simply throw out their names as having been consulted but not having really told them about what changes they're going to bring forward, Mr. Speaker. So these individuals decided to make the trek all the way to Regina and make themselves seen on the front lawn of the legislature, not to mention on the front steps of the legislature in a very, very visible way, because Mr. Speaker, this was something the Sask Party government then could not ignore.

So what's interesting about that, Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that they couldn't ignore it, they didn't pull the Bill to take the 3.5 million acres of wildlife habitat protected land out of legislation. What did they do? They decided that, well, they're going to put a few consultative processes in place, Mr. Speaker, in terms of having a few bodies, a few groups that they can talk to when there's a process of consultation to take place.

So, Mr. Speaker, one can see that when we talk about consultation on this particular Bill 161, that the consultation, despite the fact that it's taking place after the fact, doesn't change anything anyways because it didn't change anything when these people were standing on the front steps of the legislature or on the front lawn of the legislature, Mr. Speaker. That Bill still went through. Those 3.5 million acres of protected land were still pulled out of legislation, Mr. Speaker, and are now open to the discretion of the Minister of Environment or the Premier of the province of Saskatchewan or the Deputy Premier perhaps or whoever else might have the lucky pen on that lucky day, and they can decide to sell those lands at their whim, Mr. Speaker. So one can see that regardless of whether consultative process takes place, after the fact or not, it doesn't change anything anyways, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, another group of people that I have great concerns about with respect to *The Election Amendment Act* is the homeless people, Mr. Speaker, the homeless people in this province, which now, for the ones that have actually been counted, is estimated at 2,200 people in Regina alone, Mr. Speaker. So that's what I'm saying. I mean we know that there's approximately 2,200 people in Regina alone that have actually been accounted for as being homeless. And, Mr. Speaker, they're angry enough that the Sask Party government has done nothing in their plight and in their situation to find a roof to put over their heads, Mr. Speaker.

These are people that are being affected the hardest by the rising cost of utility rates, by the rising cost of living, Mr.

Speaker, and of course the rising cost of housing, Mr. Speaker. And these are certainly individuals who in large part don't own a vehicle, Mr. Speaker. They don't own a vehicle. They are the individuals that rely on the public transit system. And that's why, Mr. Speaker, it is so essential and it is so incumbent upon us, as municipalities and as a provincial entity and provincial government, to ensure that the public transit system is as good as it possibly can be for those individuals who don't have other means of transport, Mr. Speaker.

Now these individuals, Mr. Speaker, don't have vehicles, so they certainly don't have drivers' licences. They're homeless, Mr. Speaker, so for them \$10 means a lot, Mr. Speaker. It means exponentially more than it would to you, to me, and to others perhaps in the province, Mr. Speaker. Ten dollars is a lot of money for these individuals to look at. So on a day when they don't know how they're going to feed themselves or perhaps their dependants, Mr. Speaker, they're going to look at that \$10 bill, Mr. Speaker, and they're going to look at themselves and say, gee, you know, in a week there is an election. I can take this \$10 and I could go buy my, you know, photo identification, Mr. Speaker, or I can take this \$10 and I can potentially buy — who knows? — 10 boxes of Kraft Dinner or, you know, a jar of peanut butter and a few litres of milk, Mr. Speaker, or whatever it is.

[15:15]

But, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you when someone is going hungry and when someone has no means to put a roof over their head or they have to rely on public transportation or they have to literally turn over every penny that they have on a monthly basis to ensure that they have enough food to get through the month, Mr. Speaker, they're going to look at that \$10 bill and that whole notion of being able to vote is going to go down the drain for those individuals, Mr. Speaker, because their bellies are going to speak louder than the notion of being able to exercise a vote that they feel disenfranchised about to begin with, Mr. Speaker.

So again, Mr. Speaker, instead of being more inclusive like the Minister of Municipal Affairs claims that the Sask Party government wants to be or versus the Minister of Justice who talks about the fact that you have to do all the necessary preparations if you want to vote, Mr. Speaker, they're forgetting a segment of society for whom that just isn't so simple and for whom it is even less than just so simple but ultimately impossible to do, Mr. Speaker.

These are individuals that are barely making it from day to day and in some cases aren't making it from month to month, Mr. Speaker, and that's why we're seeing the increased usage of food banks, Mr. Speaker. And that's why I'm so proud of the Regina Food Bank for having commissioned a study to get some real numbers and some tangible facts as to what is driving individuals to have to use the food bank on a more frequent basis, on an increased basis, Mr. Speaker. I'm so very glad that they've done that so that there is information for the government to study and for the opposition to study. So these individuals especially will want to be able to exercise their right to vote, but disenfranchising them and making things more difficult for them to vote, Mr. Speaker, is not the way to go about this, Mr. Speaker.

Now, you know, Mr. Speaker, this is also a government that vetoed the selection of a bipartisan committee for the Chief Electoral Officer, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, their record on the whole voting structure, on the processes for voting in the province of Saskatchewan, on the notion of fairness, equality, transparency, accountability is very grey, Mr. Speaker.

When you have a bipartisan committee that brings forward a recommendation and all of a sudden that recommendation is then overturned by the Sask Party government's ability to do so, Mr. Speaker . . . One has to question why the Sask Party government, through the bipartisan committee, would even have those discussions, would even enter into the discussions about the filling of the position of a Chief Electoral Officer if the Sask Party government is then going to veto the recommendation that has been made.

So one has to wonder the sincerity of the Sask Party government in their actions and especially since they haven't exactly been forthcoming with their reasons for having vetoed that recommendation, Mr. Speaker. So I'm sure that . . . I know that the opposition caucus is very interested to learn about what the reality is of that situation, Mr. Speaker. There are many people in the province that are interested to learn about what the reality is of that situation, Mr. Speaker. And I'm sure at some point it'll all come out in the wash, so to speak, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, again the people of the province that are concerned about the fact that the Sask Party government vetoed the recommendation are also people that would want to be able to exercise their vote in terms of how they feel the situation was handled by the Sask Party government, as would another political party in this province, Mr. Speaker — namely the Progressive Conservative Party in this province — because they would like to be able to enter into the democratic process, Mr. Speaker.

Unfortunately there are some encumbrances again from interference as we've heard from across the way with respect to accessing those funds and being able to compete on a level playing field, Mr. Speaker. So again this is something that the opposition is watching in terms of how the Sask Party government is interfering in that part of the political process.

So the notion of wanting to say that they want to engage more voters in the electoral process through Bill 161 and yet doing something quite opposite in terms of allowing those voters to be able to exercise their vote for their political party of choice, being the Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, seems suspect. It seems very suspect. So you would think that, if they were truly interested in wanting to engage voters in the voting process, they would want to assist the Progressive Conservative Party of Saskatchewan to be able to access the millions of dollars that are currently in a trust fund that has some implications for the Sask Party members, Mr. Speaker. But it's quite the opposite. We're seeing, we're seeing a lot of interference by the Sask Party itself in terms of how these things are proceeding through the courts, Mr. Speaker.

And so it again seems suspect as to why they would now talk about wanting to engage voters and yet seem to be doing quite the opposite when those voters don't have the means of being able to engage themselves in the political process and vote for

their political party of choice, Mr. Speaker. So again Bill 161 seems suspect in terms of them talking about wanting to engage more voters and yet disenfranchising voters through making the encumbrances that they are making in terms of making voting more difficult for the Saskatchewan public, Mr. Speaker.

And you know, there are other examples too, Mr. Speaker. For instance there is Bill 43 that was introduced in, what I believe was, a spring session. Time flies, Mr. Speaker, and sometimes it's hard to keep track of when these Bills have been introduced. Perhaps it was the session before. But, Mr. Speaker, Bill 43, again it inhibited people's ability to exercise their democratic right to free speech and hold protests, Mr. Speaker. Now generally speaking, the democratic process to free speech and to hold protests happens with respect to organizations that people are involved with, that they're not happy with. But for a large part of the time, Mr. Speaker, a lot of these protests are taking place in opposition or in concern with the processes that are taking place on a provincial level and on a federal level, Mr. Speaker.

So you know, Mr. Speaker, when one looks at a lot of those democratic rights being hindered and that those protests may be hindered through this legislation that the Sask Party government brought forward and had passed through — which is Bill 43 — it again further disenfranchises people from voting because they see that, if they want to exercise their voice through these processes, the government will bring forward legislation to hinder their ability to do so. So, Mr. Speaker, it further disenfranchises people from voting, and therefore putting more restrictions on that voting process makes it more difficult for those individuals to cast their ballots as well.

Now you know, Mr. Speaker, the government talks about the fact that they're trying to harmonize the rules in Saskatchewan to make them more like other provinces or at the federal level. But what's interesting about that argument, Mr. Speaker, is simply this. Why would the Sask Party government use that as the impetus for making the ability to vote in Saskatchewan more difficult and using the excuse that they want to bring Saskatchewan in line with some other provinces and with respect to how things are done at the federal level, when the federal legislation is currently being challenged in the Supreme Court of British Columbia by a coalition of organizations including, Mr. Speaker, people with disabilities, seniors, renters, and people who are homeless?

Mr. Speaker, this speaks exactly to the groups that I have just spoken about. We're talking about people who are the most vulnerable people in our society for the most part, people who have the least voice in terms of an organized voice, Mr. Speaker, the least ability to challenge what is happening with their government processes, Mr. Speaker. And there are organizations now that are taking on these individuals, these groups and these individuals, and taking their voice forward and challenging the federal legislation in the Supreme Court of British Columbia. So why is it that when this legislation is being challenged in British Columbia as we speak, would the Sask Party government want to adopt something that is potentially going to be challengeable? It makes no sense, Mr. Speaker.

Wouldn't it make more sense for the Sask Party government to

see what the outcome is of this Supreme Court challenge in British Columbia and see how that washes out and see how that proceeds and then decide what they're going to do here in Saskatchewan? That, Mr. Speaker, would make a lot of sense. Unfortunately once again we see the Sask Party government doing something that makes no sense. And unfortunately that seems to be the MO [modus operandi] for this government as well, Mr. Speaker.

So like I said, using that as the reason for wanting to bring forward the changes to Bill 161 is nonsensical.

Now they talk about, the Sask Party government also claims that people will not be disenfranchised, pointing to measures included in the legislation that give people alternatives. Well, Mr. Speaker, those alternatives would be then at the discretion of a returning officer. And as I've said, Mr. Speaker, returning officers can, you know, can be overzealous in their interpretation of what their role is, Mr. Speaker. And there's no question that there could be situations like have happened in the past — without these extra rules being in place, Mr. Speaker — of turning away potential voters, Mr. Speaker, because the returning officer deems that to be appropriate. So when you leave things to be subjective like that, Mr. Speaker, it is cause for concern. And there is certainly a danger of misinterpretation being made, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, one of the other issues is obviously with the renters, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, renters change addresses frequently. And quite frankly they're changing addresses more frequently now than ever before, Mr. Speaker, because rent increases are happening very rapidly. We've heard from the opposition critic for Social Services that rents now, it looks like the average cheapest rent is \$900 a month, Mr. Speaker, which is unimaginable for people who are working minimum wage jobs or are on very minimal means of income, Mr. Speaker. So you know, they tend to move around a fair bit. Because if it's \$900 a month when they move in, but they're given notice that it's going to increase to \$1,000 within a month or two, Mr. Speaker, that extra \$100 a month can make or break whether or not those renters can actually stay in that rental unit or rental housing situation, Mr. Speaker.

So we see much more frequent changes of addresses for renters, Mr. Speaker. So it would be therefore that much more difficult again for them to be able to prove where they currently reside at in terms of a given address because of course those processes take a lot of time. Depending on where they're going to get those fixed addresses from, that documentation from, Mr. Speaker, it can take a month or more for that to take place. And in some cases, Mr. Speaker, there are mistakes that are made, and it can be multiple months before they have any of that documentation.

So again, Mr. Speaker, we're seeing a situation where it's causing further encumbrances, problems for people to be able to exercise their right to vote with something as simple as a fixed address because these are individuals that are having to move frequently to be able to keep their head above water, Mr. Speaker.

[15:30]

So you know, what if they have recently moved and not yet received their updated documentation? Has the government, has the Sask Party government decided on what they're going to do about those situations? And what if they haven't received mail yet from a government agency? What is the Sask Party government going to do about that?

But again, Mr. Speaker, we're looking at individuals who are barely able to keep their head above water, are in a fairly desperate situation. Usually they have dependents, Mr. Speaker. It's not top of mind for them to ensure that they have everything in place so that they can be able to exercise their right to vote. That usually comes about as an aha moment — oh my goodness, you know, tonight's the election, tomorrow's the election. I don't have anything with a fixed address on it yet in terms of my current address. What am I going to do? So, Mr. Speaker, one can see that it further hinders people from being able to exercise their right to vote.

And again, Mr. Speaker, I talked about seniors and how important it would be for them to want to exercise their right to vote. But a lot of them have mobility issues, Mr. Speaker, and so we have mobile polling stations to be able to accommodate that, Mr. Speaker. But again if they're not able to get the identification they need by means of a photo identification, then how are they supposed to be able to exercise their right to vote, Mr. Speaker, if they have mobility issues? So it again, it's nonsensical that on one hand we've got mobile polling stations that will allow the voter to be able to vote without having to go through extraordinary means to deal with their mobility issues, but yet on the other hand we're saying, you know, do whatever you have to do to be able to get your voter identification so that you can exercise your right to vote. The two don't mesh, Mr. Speaker.

And then of course, I mean, I talked about renters not having a fixed address. Well then we have an issue of course with people who are homeless and are couch surfing and don't have any documentation that would have a current address, Mr. Speaker. And what is the Sask Party government doing to invite those individuals to be able to exercise their right to vote? Because, Mr. Speaker, Bill 161, from what I can see, is not addressing that situation at all. And that's exactly what any changes to *The Election Amendment Act* should be doing. It should be addressing changes to engage more people in the voting process, rather than making it more stringent for them to be able to exercise their right to vote.

So we can see that the government's making it harder for certain groups of people to vote. We can see that the government has shown no leadership to make it easier for people to vote and to invite more people to vote, Mr. Speaker.

And of course there are changing technologies that are being used and experimented with in different places in North America. I was privileged to be able to see first-hand one of those systems which was computer voting, Mr. Speaker, and that was in South Carolina a few years ago. And I'm not saying that that is necessarily going to be the panacea in terms of the voting process. But, Mr. Speaker, these are things that the Sask Party government should be examining, not how do we make things more difficult for people to vote and how do we further disenfranchise those who are already the marginalized and

disenfranchised voters of the province and who, quite frankly, have the most at stake in terms of having their voice heard, Mr. Speaker, but looking at other ways to engage people to vote and increase the voter turnout.

Now, Mr. Speaker, obviously there's still very much to go through in terms of the comments that were made on second reading by the minister and some of the other concerns that we have as an opposition caucus, like for instance providing photo identification free of cost so that individuals don't have to incur the fee of having to pay for that photo identification if they don't have the means to do so. But unfortunately we haven't heard any of that from the Sask Party government yet, Mr. Speaker.

And I'm hoping that for the first time since the Sask Party government has been elected that we may see something new and different. And, Mr. Speaker, I guess I'll express one of my Christmas wishes. And one of my Christmas wishes, Mr. Speaker, is to . . . Well my truest Christmas wish would be to see the Sask Party government actually engage in a comprehensive and meaningful consultative process on any changes it would like to see made in the province of Saskatchewan. That's one of my true wishes.

But if I give you the watered down version of that wish, Mr. Speaker, it would be that the Sask Party government, once it brings forward a piece of legislation or any changes that it wants to see done in the province of Saskatchewan and then finds out from the people of Saskatchewan through the feedback that they receive — like the Minister of Health referred to, he didn't anticipate the feedback from the people of Saskatchewan — once they see the feedback from the people of Saskatchewan, once they engage in a consultative process after the fact after they brought a proposed change forward, Mr. Speaker, that they would actually heed what the public is saying and make those changes that should be made, make the appropriate accommodations that should be made.

And, Mr. Speaker, you know, trying on something really crazy and different, maybe even take on some of the suggestions that are made by the opposition caucus as to how to truly engage the voting public in this province to increase the voter turnout in the elections that are taking place, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I said, there's so much more to investigate with this Bill. And the opposition caucus is just in the process of doing so. And therefore I'm going to adjourn the debate today, Mr. Speaker, and allow the rest of my colleagues to make comments on the research that we as an opposition caucus are doing with respect to Bill 161. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Regina Walsh Acres has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 161, *The Election Amendment Act, 2010*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hickie that **Bill No. 162 — *The Local Government Election Amendment Act, 2010*** — be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Harper:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is truly a pleasure for me to enter into this debate, the debate on *An Act to amend The Local Government Election Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts*, and to do so on behalf of the fine people of Regina Northeast. It's always a pleasure to be able to represent those good folks in this fine Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's interesting and perhaps even most appropriate that I have the opportunity to enter into this debate and to be able to share some of my thoughts, having had the privilege — and I consider it a privilege as well as an opportunity — to have served in local government for 10 years. I had the privilege of serving as the councillor for division 5 in the RM [rural municipality] of Clayton for 10 years. And it was certainly an enlightening opportunity. It gives you an opportunity to get first-hand knowledge of the role that local government plays in our society and in the development of our economy and the functioning of this province.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, many, many of those individuals in Saskatchewan here who have perhaps not had the opportunity to have first-hand experience at local government often perhaps take local government for granted and often perhaps overlook the importance that local government serves in the servicing of our residents of our great province and the servicing of this province. Because local government, I think, is a very important institution and an institution that certainly needs to be supported and identified every possible way of strengthening local government. Because I think local government is the people who are on the front lines, and often the people who face issues each and every day and make the decisions as to what is in the best interest of those folks they represent.

Now I'm sure that there will be those out there who will say local government should be revisited and perhaps the institution itself should be reviewed. And I'm never against change, Mr. Speaker. I'm never against looking at ways and means to be able to identify efficiencies and to make sure that changes that do come about are changes of progress and the changes that would certainly support and enhance the role of local government. Because I think local government is a very important cog in the governing wheel that operates Saskatchewan, and other provinces I'm sure, but certainly operates Saskatchewan on an ongoing basis.

Mr. Speaker, the right to vote is the principal fundamental principle of our democracy. Democracy, Mr. Speaker, is the most efficient and effective way of governing. I think we've seen throughout our history where we've had struggles to ensure that democracy remained to be the way that our forefathers saw as the direction to move as far as establishing a governing structure was concerned. And then we look at history. History is full of tales of struggle to ensure that democracy was alive and well.

And, Mr. Speaker, I believe that should be the role and the principle of any government of any political stripe, is that of ensuring that everything is done that can be possibly done to strengthen democracy, to make sure democracy is the tool that will continue to be the tool of government of us in Saskatchewan, us in Canada, and those around the world.

Mr. Speaker, the right to vote, the right to vote is the fundamental principle of our democracy. And I believe, Mr. Speaker, it should be the role of government to look at encouraging all of those people who are legally eligible to vote in an election, encouraging them to vote. And I'm saying, Mr. Speaker, I believe it should be the role of government to set aside partisan politics to ensure that implementation of the rules and regulations, review of the democratic process is done in the light of trying to develop a system here where more and more people will take part because that is the right of individuals, the right of individuals to choose their representation whether that representation be as an individual or whether that be a political party.

I think what we need to do as a society and as those in this legislature that are making up the rules which govern the operation of our democracy is that we should be looking at ways and means to enhance and encourage people to take part in democracy, for it is the participation that makes democracy strong. It's when you have a lack of participation or you isolate people or you discourage people from voting is when you have a weakening of democracy.

And that, Mr. Speaker, we have seen that example happen in other jurisdictions around the world. If we study our history at all, we'll recognize that in other parts of the world there are those people who have struggled perhaps a lifetime to try to establish a free and democratic system within their country. We've seen people who have given up their lives in that struggle. We've seen people who have, perhaps for generations, have carried on that struggle. And we have seen cases, Mr. Speaker, where a democracy, although it did not fully take hold, but democracy was established and was starting to grow, but because of certain manipulations by those in power at the time, caused democracy to die, caused democracy to be isolated because of those . . . they were restricting the participation of individuals in the voting process and it simply caused democracy to wither on the vine and die.

Mr. Speaker, that is certainly not the role of any government. For any government it should be to look at ways and means to enhance, to improve the system, to encourage people to participate, to encourage people to take part in an election, to encourage people to vote.

That's why I say, Mr. Speaker, the right to vote is a fundamental principle of our democracy. And yet, Mr. Speaker, we see a suggestion here by the government that is moving, I think, in the wrong direction. The government is suggesting that photo ID become a mandatory method of identifying people at the polls when it comes time for local government to hold an election.

[15:45]

And I find that strange, Mr. Speaker, because I have



participated in five, took part in five municipal elections and, Mr. Speaker, never did we have a problem. Never was there ever a problem in any of the elections that I took part in. There was never a problem of someone ineligible to vote come into a poll and insisting upon voting. That was never a problem, Mr. Speaker.

We never had a problem of identifying those people who were eligible to vote because, quite frankly, in the RM's case it was a landowner who had the right to vote. Most of them, most of them were the friends and neighbours. Most of them you knew almost on a daily basis. Certainly you recognized them because they were someone who lived just down the road.

There were others, less in number, but there were others who were perhaps not residents of the area, not residents of the community. They owned land. Perhaps they had inherited that land. They may have lived in other areas and they would have the right to come back and vote and some of them did. Some of them took the election of the local government serious enough that they would leave, you know, they would leave their job in Yorkton or perhaps even in Regina here. I know some individuals who owned land out there, who inherited land out there who would certainly take the day off and come out and vote at election time because they felt strong enough that they needed to have good representation locally to ensure that their wants and their needs were being first represented, and then hopefully met.

So, Mr. Speaker, when we see that this government is looking at ways and means of not . . . I don't believe enhancing the process of voting. I don't think that this encourages people to vote. In fact I think it's the opposite; it discourages people.

And I say that because I can identify some people in my own mind here, out in my old area there of division 5 in Clayton, who I think because of age would find it difficult to have a picture ID, a photo ID to be able to vote. And in fact, I don't believe that they even operate a vehicle any more. I think, if my memory serves me correctly here, I think that they're probably to the point that they don't feel comfortable in operating that vehicle any more. Therefore they don't own or operate a vehicle and therefore have no need for a driver's licence or a photo ID, which you and I would take as granted as the mechanism to use our driver's licence to be able to use our photo ID to identify ourselves.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's one group alone — the senior citizens who no longer are eligible to drive and therefore, nor no longer feel the need to drive at least, and no longer have a photo ID, a driver's licence photo ID.

There may be those people out there, Mr. Speaker, who perhaps have never had a vehicle and therefore never had a need for a driver's licence and therefore simply don't have that as a photo ID, and therefore would find it embarrassing perhaps to go to a poll. The fear would be that going to the polls without having the photo ID, the driver's licence or other such photo ID . . . And they have no need for it. They don't have one and therefore they would feel perhaps embarrassed if they go to the polls when they're asked to produce a photo ID, although they may know each other. They could still be asked to produce a photo ID and if they don't have that, then would feel

embarrassed by not having it and perhaps even feel embarrassed by . . . Those people gathered there would, you know, make them feel awkward. Therefore to avoid that, to avoid that, they simply don't go to the polls. They simply don't take part in the election.

So, Mr. Speaker, there are certainly issues around the belief by this government that a photo ID is required. Because like I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, I participated in five municipal elections and never once, never once did we have a problem there of anybody coming to the polls that the returning officer, the poll clerk, or the scrutineers weren't able to identify and didn't know who they were or certainly no requirement to produce any type of documentation to clearly identify who they were, because it was a belief that these folks didn't and weren't eligible to vote in the election process. That was certainly not an issue and never was an issue, and I fail to see, Mr. Speaker, how this could possibly, possibly be considered as a need here, Mr. Speaker. So when we see this we can't help but bring up some, I suppose red flags, if you want to put it that way.

As I've said, Mr. Speaker, I spent 10 years in municipal local government with municipal politics. And during that period of time I know that there's the opportunity for government to ask for or carry out reviews, and perhaps carry out a review on the election process within local government or ask for input from local government as to what those people who are elected, who are on the front lines, who deal with these issues each and every day, and ask them what changes that they would suggest need to be done to improve, improve the ability for local government to be able to encourage people to participate in the election process.

So immediately, Mr. Speaker, arises in my mind the question of, who asked for the changes? Who asked the government to bring this particular amendment or make this particular amendment to this Act? Who was it that approached government and said this would be a good thing? Who was it? Was it an individual? Was it individuals or was it groups? Mr. Speaker, there's no evidence and the government has not provided us any information to support the reasons why the government is recommending and bringing forward a Bill that would cause these changes to take place.

That, Mr. Speaker, one has to raise a concern or a red flag around that when one wonders why, why is the government proposing these changes? Why is the government bringing forward these amendments in this particular Bill? And are they doing it because they have been requested to do it by an authority, that one would say is an authority, that would have the right to ask that such a question? And that would be, of course, say the Association of Rural Municipalities or SUMA. Any of these government representations would probably have the authority to do it, because they would have, you know, a motion made at their convention or they would have had representation from municipalities or something calling for these changes. But we don't see any of that, Mr. Speaker. We don't see any of that coming forward from this government. We simply don't see this government supporting any reason why or providing any information as to who might have asked for these changes. We don't see that, Mr. Speaker.

What we also don't see, Mr. Speaker, is how was it determined

that these changes were needed? How was it determined that these changes were needed? What are the cases, what are the cases or the examples that the government could put forward supporting these changes? Are there a list of circumstances and various elections of municipal governments throughout this great province over the last decade — I will even go that far, Mr. Speaker, over the last decade — that would indicate that there was a real need for these changes, that these changes would address a real problem that was existing out there that local officials were having to deal with on a regular basis at election time? Mr. Speaker, I don't think so.

I follow the local government elections out in my old area that I was born and raised in and used to represent at one time, and I follow those municipal elections really closely. And we've just gone through a series of these elections this last fall, and I did note in the process of candidates who were announcing their intentions to be seeking the position of a councillor or perhaps the position of reeve for local government, and they did their announcements. Some of them bought advertising spaces and bought little ads in the local paper. And after the elections took place, the local paper would report the outcome of the election or the results of the election as to who won, who lost, and usually they indicated, you know, the votes gathered by each candidate.

And, Mr. Speaker, nowhere, nowhere in any of those stories reported in the local papers out there of the results of the local elections, nowhere was it reported that there was any problems at the polls, there was any situation that arose at the polls that caused a controversy, that caused a candidate to be concerned about the eligibility of voters, caused the candidate to be concerned about the eligibility of that vote being cast. Nowhere. There wasn't one story about that, Mr. Speaker.

So then when you see the results, the actions of local government and how it operates and how well and how efficient their election process is and then you see these amendments — amendments which are now going to require individuals out there, although they may know each other for 50 years, are still going to have to produce a photo ID in order to participate in the election process — you have to wonder, Mr. Speaker, how was it determined these changes were needed? There is no evidence, Mr. Speaker, that these changes were needed. Certainly no evidence has been put forward by this government. There's been no evidence of these changes being needed that I have seen personally in watching the local government election process as it unfolds.

Mr. Speaker, one wonders why. Why is the government doing this? Again who asked for it? And why would it have to be done? What has happened? What incidences have happened that would cause these changes to be necessary? Mr. Speaker, one can't wonder what the government's hidden agenda is here when they want to make these changes without any support as to why these changes are necessary.

Mr. Speaker, how does the government know these are the changes that's required? How does the government know that these are the changes that are required? What consultations were carried out by the government? Who did they consult with? Who did they talk to about this? Who made representation to the government? Who was it that called for

these changes?

How was the consultation done? Was the consultation done by a group that travelled around, that talked to local governments, local government officials? Or was it done by officials carrying out a form of communications with local government? That communication is either by letter, perhaps email, maybe even a fax? Was there a questionnaire sent out to glean the information required by the government to determine that (a) the changes needed to be done, (b) these are the right changes, and (c) what are the results of these changes?

That, Mr. Speaker, is what can't help but be a question that one asks. What consultations were carried out by the government? What did they do? Who did they talk to? Or did they talk to anybody? Or did they simply bring these changes forward because they believe that it is in their best interests politically to limit the participation in democracy by limiting the number of people who will come out and vote, making it more difficult for those people who feel embarrassed perhaps because they don't have a photo ID or simply don't have a mechanism to be able to identify themselves in a clear and concise way. And they feel uncomfortable about this, and therefore they would rather stay home and avoid taking part in the democratic process. And if that is the case, Mr. Speaker, then what we see is a weakening of democracy, not a strengthening of democracy.

Mr. Speaker, if this government did do any consulting, then my question would be who did the government consult with? Who did they talk to in this whole process? Who did they talk to that gave them the information that led them to believe that these changes were, first, necessary but secondly that these were the correct changes to be able to meet the needs out in a local government election process? Who did the government talk to, Mr. Speaker? That is the question.

Did they talk to groups? Did they talk to certain groups? Did they talk to individuals? Did they talk to elected people in local governments? Did they do so through a consultation process, by having it open to the public and allowing the public to be able to participate in these discussions? Did they have town hall meetings? Did they have a town hall meeting in Canora, or did they have it in Kindersley or perhaps even in Maple Creek? Did they have a town hall meeting there, where the public would be able to come out and be able to participate in these discussions and would be able to put forward their ideas, put forward their experiences, and their suggestions so the government could take that back and mould that into changes that would enhance democracy, improve democracy, encourage people to participate because in order to have a strong democracy you need to have strength in participation.

[16:00]

It is the death of democracy when you limit the amount of people that can take part in the democratic process. You wither democracy on the vine. You shorten, Mr. Speaker, the ability for people to be able to express their opinions and make their own selection of their representation, which is the basic principle of democracy — the right to vote. The right to vote is the basic principle of democracy, and I believe any government should be encouraging people to vote, encouraging people to come out. They should be providing people information and

providing the ease of that information, so people can make an informed decision when they make their choice of their representation, Mr. Speaker, because that's the way democracy simply works.

Mr. Speaker, if this government did do consultation of some form, the question is then, what was the reaction of those who were consulted with? Whether it be individuals or whether it be groups, whether it be organizations or whether it be elected bodies — what was the reaction to their proposals from those groups? What did those groups have to say? What was their reaction to the suggestion of a photo ID in order to be eligible to vote?

Did they jump up and salute the idea, or are they saying, well oh no, maybe this was not a good idea? Maybe this was not a good idea. Maybe a photo ID and the requirement to have a photo ID before you participate in an election process would limit the number of people who would actually come out and take part in local governments.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, it's fair to say that we have noted in the past, not in all elections but in a number of elections in local government, that the participation is low, is low. And that is not something that is good. It is not something that builds democracy, something that strengthens democracy. In fact that is something that we should be working against. What we should be doing is encouraging, encouraging more and more people to take part in election campaigns, encouraging them to get out and vote, encouraging them to become informed before they go out and vote so that they can make informed decisions of the individual or groups or political parties that might be their representation into their future.

Mr. Speaker, often we need to — whether we're in government, elected individuals in this Assembly in debate — we need to look at measuring sticks, measuring sticks that can identify whether these changes are positive changes or whether the changes may have negative effects. So, Mr. Speaker, one of the measuring sticks that I would suggest that any government should use would be the measuring stick of how will these changes, how will these changes affect the people of Saskatchewan? How will these changes affect the people of Saskatchewan? Will these changes improve the ability for people to participate in our election? Will it make it easier? Will it encourage them to come out and vote?

Will it encourage people to come out and vote, or will it cause certain groups within our society to be reluctant to come out and express their opinions at election time — seniors perhaps who no longer have a photo ID, no longer have a driver's licence, no longer have a photo ID, those individuals within our communities who perhaps have never had a driver's licence? And I know some folks who have never had a driver's licence, Mr. Speaker. They have relied on public transportation to meet their needs, are satisfied with that, and they don't see the need to (a) to have a driver's licence and (b) they're probably in a financial situation where affording a vehicle and maintaining and operating vehicle would be tough for them. It would probably cause them to make a choice in many cases between putting some gas in the car or buying some groceries. So they have certainly eliminated one of the costs they believe they can live without, and that is the vehicle. And therefore they don't

have a vehicle. They never have had a vehicle. And I believe they don't even have a driver's licence because they just simply don't have a reason for it or a need for it.

Certainly once again, here's a case where the cost of the driver's licence, the cost of the photo ID might be prohibitive to their ability to be able to maintain their family's standard of living.

So certainly, Mr. Speaker, we want to see that what we should be looking at was ways and means and making changes to the Act that would encourage people to come out and vote, would not make roadblocks or stumbling blocks for seniors who no longer have a photo ID or people who never had a photo ID or people who find themselves perhaps disabled and don't drive a vehicle and therefore don't have a photo ID . . . would have the ability to come out and vote without any hindrance.

And unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, I think these changes do just the opposite. They do just the opposite. They make it tougher for people to participate. They make it tougher for people to want to come out and participate in the elections at election time, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh you've got to be kidding.

There's a real danger, Mr. Speaker, a real danger that a clear preference in the photo ID could lead to some people being simply no longer allowed to vote. And that would be certainly, Mr. Speaker, something that goes against the principles of democracy. And I think it's fair to say that we've seen in the past where elections are held and because of a lack of good turnout, a very small number of people or a small percentage of the eligible voting public that does show up does cause a narrow band of ideas to be put forward and to be accepted because it's a narrow band of people who're actually participating at election time. And therefore it's their ideas that get representation and not the ideas of the masses or the general public which, quite frankly, don't vote because they felt they were prohibited in some way or other. So, Mr. Speaker, it simply decays democracy.

And I think you and I would both agree that there are many examples around the world where we've seen democracy. And throughout our history, it has showed us many examples around the world, even some today, some in our history where democracy was in its very infant stage, was taking hold and starting to be developed. It was being nurtured and was being supported by those people who really wanted to see a democratic system work.

But it was eroded by individuals, unscrupulous perhaps, individuals who gained political power through the democratic process to gain political power. And then they used that power to erode the democracy of our country by eliminating or reducing the number of people who were eligible to vote and therefore causing a narrower, narrower group who were able to cast their ballots and therefore restricting it to those groups or those individuals perhaps who supported the powers to be. And what happened then? You would see democracy and free elections being postponed, not being totally shut down but being postponed until at some point in time they're postponed out of existence. And that, Mr. Speaker, would certainly be a sad and unforgivable thing to allow to happen.

After all, history has showed us that democracy has its pitfalls, and it has its shortcomings, but at the end of the day it's certainly the best system available to govern human beings. I believe it was Winston Churchill, I believe it was, who once said that democracy is not the best form of government, but it certainly beats whatever's in second place. And I think we've seen that.

I think the history has shown that we have travelled down that road of attempting to use other forms of governance. And those forms of governance have not been as effective as democracy, as the government for the people by the people. It certainly has proven to be the, at the end of the day, the best form of government to ensure that it benefits all people, and benefits all people, I wouldn't say equally, Mr. Speaker, but allows all people to participate in the society, allows all people to participate in the economy, and allows reasonable, reasonable opportunity for people to be able to enjoy their time spent in our society, in our economy, and to do so in a productive way and to allow them the comfort of knowing that they will have — in some cases, municipal politics I believe is every two years, I think, and certainly provincial politics every four years — the opportunity, the opportunity to be able to express their opinions and be able to, in the case of a government going into election, be able to pass a report card on the government, being able to grade the government.

The government member will come out and make the representation. The government will go to the polls and the people will have the opportunity to grade the government. Will they give them an A, saying they've been a good government, an excellent government, and give them a passing grade? Or will they perhaps say, well they've been a reasonable government but not a good government and therefore we won't give them an A, but maybe we'll give them a C. They'll still be the government, but they'll be reduced in numbers.

Or will they say, no, this government has not been a good government. It has failed the people of Saskatchewan. It has failed me personally or it's failed my group or it's failed my family. It failed people of Saskatchewan. Enough people feel that way, they give the government an F, and they're out of power.

And that's the way the democratic system works, Mr. Speaker, and that is good. That is what we want to see happen. We want to see more and more people participate in the democratic process to be able to grade government, to be able to grade a government, to say, yes, it's been a good government or no, it's been a government that has failed. And in that case, Mr. Speaker, we have the ability to change government. And when that happens, to change direction.

And that's what the democratic process is about. That's what people enjoy in a democratic system. That's something that we should be looking at improving at every opportunity. We should be looking at ways and means that we can improve democracy, improve the way that democracy operates so that people will participate. The best way to do that is to encourage, encourage as many people as possible to participate and to do so as informed voters.

So what we want to do is look at making changes when

necessary to the electoral process that would, that would make it easier for people to get involved in the system, for people to be able to take part in elections. And you want to encourage people to take part in elections.

As I have said, we have seen in the past where the turnout at election times hasn't been as great as perhaps we would like to see it. And each time we see less and less people involved in a democratic process, really what we're seeing is a weakening of our democracy. And that's a scary thing, Mr. Speaker, because we have, I think, a wonderful, wonderful opportunity when we have suggestions through political parties. Suggestions of, here are the issues; here are the problems facing our province. And political parties will make suggestions as to how they would go about addressing these problems.

Really, the difference between political parties is that the problems are the same. The problems are the same. The difference is how would we address the problems? Political parties will pick different routes or different ways to address those problems. And that's what the democratic system's all about.

We go to the public. We give the public out there the opportunity to make a choice, make a choice in which vehicle will be used to address the problem, which route will be chosen to address the problem, and which way would it reflect in the best interests of Saskatchewan people.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, those are some of the concerns that I have here with the suggested changes to the Act, because I would not want to see anything that would limit the ability for democracy to grow. Not just to stay stable, but to grow in strength. Because a democracy, and the foundations of democracy, is something that we lay not just for ourselves, but we lay for the future; we lay for future generations. And the stronger the foundation you lay for democracy, the better off, I think, future generations will be.

So I think it's important that we be very, very careful on the changes that we make when we take in due consideration, because we don't want changes that's going to weaken that foundation. What we really want to do is work towards strengthening the foundation of democracy.

[16:15]

Mr. Speaker, one more measuring stick, I think, is required when you look at these changes that are being put forward here or suggested here by the government is that, how will these changes improve? The question that I would have for this government is, how would these changes improve the welfare and the lives of Saskatchewan people? How will the changes, how will the suggestion of photo ID that's going to be a must in order to participate in the local government election process, how will that improve the lives of Saskatchewan people? . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Mr. Speaker, the minister is adding his comments. And I'm sure that the minister would have a lot to say about this particular Bill. And I think that, Mr. Speaker, that the minister should be in a position to be able to inform the legislature as to how these changes, how these changes to this particular Act, how they would really improve the welfare and the lives of Saskatchewan people.

And I'm hoping that during this debate, before this debate concludes in total, that the minister will give us the opportunity of giving us 10 or 15 or 20 minutes worth of his wisdom and his experience on this particular Bill to be able to describe to us how these changes, how it is that having a photo ID, making a photo ID as a must requirement in order to vote at a local government, how that is going to improve the process of democracy, how that is going to encourage people to come out and take part in the elections.

How will this work, Mr. Speaker, when we say, in order to participate in an election you must have a photo ID? And if you don't have a photo ID, you might not be able to vote. How is that going to improve the lives of Saskatchewan people? How is that going to encourage people to come out and take part in an election, to express their opinions, to share with us their thoughts so that we can strengthen democracy and make those decisions that are informed decisions, Mr. Speaker?

I'm looking forward to hearing from the minister, who has obviously a lot to say because he's been adding to my comments on a regular basis here. And I'm looking forward to hearing what he has to say on this particular piece, Mr. Speaker, because I would like to know. I would like to know, once again, who asked for these changes? The minister would know that, being the minister. The minister would know who it was that asked for these changes, that asked for these changes that resulted in the introduction of this particular Bill, Bill 162, *An Act to amend The Local Government Election Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts*, Mr. Speaker.

That's one of the questions I would like to know, was who asked for these changes. And I'm sure the minister has a long, long list of individuals and a long, long list of groups that have been knocking on his door, have been ringing his phone, have been sending him emails asking for these changes, insisting that the government makes changes to include having a photo ID as a must document in order to participate in elections in local government.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the minister can also help us in telling us how it is, how it was, how he and his department, his officials determined that these were the changes that were necessary, that these were the changes that were needed, needed to ensure that democracy would be strengthened in our great province of ours. I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what the minister is talking about when he is chirping from his seat and wanting to add to my comments on a regular basis.

And I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that I'm looking forward to, at the first opportunity the minister will have, he will get to his feet and he will share that knowledge. He will share that wisdom with the rest of us so that we can all be informed as to how it was that these . . . it was determined that these were the changes that were necessary — the necessary changes to improve democracy, to improve the voting process, to allow people of Saskatchewan in greater numbers to participate in local governments. That, Mr. Speaker, is something that I'm looking forward to hearing from the minister, Mr. Speaker.

But that, Mr. Speaker, would be an attitude that I'm sure that the minister would have no problem to share with us a long, long list or the very, very thick file that he has on what the

consultations were that were carried out. How were they carried out? How were these consultations done? Who did they talk to? What groups did they talk to? What individuals did they talk to? What representation has the minister had, in growing numbers I am sure to his office, from those groups across this great province of ours who are virtually demanding that these changes take place? That they want to see a photo ID put into place in order to have people participate in an election process?

Mr. Speaker, I am looking forward to hearing the minister enlighten us on that, because I know that the minister must have a very, very thick file of the names and addresses and the contact people in various groups that have been knocking on his door, have been ringing his phone, have been sending him emails or writing him letters on an ongoing basis that has just caused the minister to say that this has to be done and it has to be done as soon as we can get it through the legislature so that the democracy will be protected, so democracy will be improved, so democracy will be enhanced by having more and more people participate in elections rather than having less and less people take part in local government selections, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, that's just some, that's just some of the questions that I have. And I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, that when we have the opportunity to have the minister get to his feet in this debate and share with us his knowledge, to share with us his experiences, to share with us his list of those people who have been after the minister to make these changes, we will all be quite enlightened when that day comes, if the day comes.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude my remarks. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to join in the debate this afternoon on Bill No. 162, *An Act to amend The Local Government Election Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts*. And it's a pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to follow the member from Regina Northeast after he made his comments about Bill No. 162. A pleasure, Mr. Speaker, because I enjoyed the opportunity to hear the remarks that the member had to make about this Bill and, judging from the extended applause from the other side, it's clear that members opposite appreciated his remarks as well. And I would like to echo the comments of the member. Certainly I too look forward to hearing from the minister at some future opportunity to answer some of the many questions that the member from Regina Northeast presented, some of his thoughts about what this Bill potentially means for access to the democratic process for many individuals.

When we look at this Bill, Mr. Speaker, Bill 162, *An Act to amend the Local Government Election Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts*, we see this, Mr. Speaker, as part of another Bill also introduced by the government which would require individuals to have photo identification in order to vote in an election. This piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, applies to the municipal level. There are other changes in addition to the photo ID requirement, other changes that I will address also in my remarks. But the main

point that the member from Northeast and individuals who have spoken before me have addressed is the point about the photo identification and implications that has for the democratic process here in our province. And as I said, this Bill 162 addresses the municipal level, and there's been other legislation has been presented before this House to address it on a provincial scale.

When we think about the democratic process, of course voting, the right to vote — the ability for individuals from a variety of backgrounds, individuals regardless of where they come in life, how rich they are, how poor they are, what sort of occupation they may have, whether they come from a large family or a small family, whether they've recently moved to this province and are eligible, or whether they've been here for many generations — Mr. Speaker, the right to vote is the basis of our democratic process. It's so essential and vital to the vitality of the democratic system that we have here in Canada and in the province of Saskatchewan and in our cities, towns, and RMs that we may live in.

Not too long ago, Mr. Speaker, here in the Assembly we took time around Remembrance Day to remember the sacrifice that men and women from our country and the free world all over, Mr. Speaker, have made to bring us that right, to bring us the privilege of being able to vote and to live in what is designed to be a fair and equal society. Individuals that have sacrificed in the past through paying the ultimate sacrifice, or through service in the armed forces or in other support capacities. And, Mr. Speaker, it's important to remember that many individuals continue to serve at home and abroad, giving of themselves, making sacrifices in the area of family life and other goals that they may have and things that hold near and dear to them in order to defend the right that we have in Canada, in Saskatchewan, to live free, to participate in free and fair elections.

And, I think, Mr. Speaker, around Remembrance Day of course we take extra time to stop and pause, but throughout our city and on the legislative grounds here there are other reminders that we need to look at throughout the year to remember how it is that we, as elected members, get to this Assembly and how it is that we are held accountable for our decisions by the masses, by the individuals who vote for us when election time comes around, whether that is at the municipal, provincial, federal level.

When we look at the issue of elections and holding the values of our democracy paramount, there have been some actions, Mr. Speaker, that we've seen from members opposite that I know leave many people in the province rather uneasy about their commitment to free and fair elections and their commitment to maintaining the standards of our democratic system.

I'll recall, Mr. Speaker, that it wasn't too long ago that the issue of the role of the Chief Electoral Officer and who that individual is was a major discussion that we had here in the Assembly. And it's still a discussion that deserves a great amount of attention, I think, by members in the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, in order to have free and fair elections that would occur, as suggested in perhaps in elements of Bill 162, it's

important, Mr. Speaker, that the elections that occur — whether they at the provincial, municipal, or federal election — it's important that they be free and fair. And in our democratic system, what we've established is a process where there is a non-partisan individual, the Chief Electoral Officer, who oversees, who oversees the conduct of elections, does all the planning outside of the election period because of course an election can be a very focused and narrow window of time in a three or four year election. But there's a tremendous amount of work that occurs before and after an election in order to maintain the democratic system that we have.

Well when we're looking at Bill 162 and changes to *The Election Amendment Act*, we have to ask ourselves what other actions have taken place by members opposite that would allow us to have, on the opposition benches and people in the broader public, a high degree of confidence that members opposite are putting forward the changes that they suggest in Bill No. 162 in good spirit, good faith, wanting the best for the electoral system, the democratic process here in our province.

When we look at some of those actions, Mr. Speaker, the one issue — there are many — but the one issue that stands out to me as the clearest and most troubling action that they've taken in undermining the democratic process was the tremendous amount of politics we saw from the Premier and the government benches when it came to the selection and the endorsement of a Chief Electoral Officer.

What we saw, Mr. Speaker, that there was a decision made, a recommendation put forward that an individual would be selected as the Chief Electoral Officer, that that individual would be the permanent person. And, Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, this individual has a very important role in the democratic process because it's up to him or her to ensure that the work is done — before an election, during an election, and after an election — the work is done to ensure that things are done fairly and honestly.

So, Mr. Speaker, a recommendation was put forward by a committee that makes the recommendation, an all-party committee, that a certain individual should in fact be the permanent Chief Electoral Officer here in the province of Saskatchewan. Well, and this decision, Mr. Speaker, I should add was endorsed by the Minister of Justice, someone who is bringing forward very important legislation and someone who should have, at the centre of his convictions and centre of his actions, a desire to have the democratic process and the rule of law and due process strengthened, not weakened. And this decision was endorsed by the Minister of Justice.

[16:30]

Well we learned, Mr. Speaker, that when the Minister of Justice's colleagues heard about this recommendation, when it went to the broader caucus of the government benches, for some reason there was a great amount of concern and trouble with the recommendation, even though members from both sides of the House had made this suggestion that the individual should be put into the position even though the Justice minister endorsed the position as well. But the individual that was mentioned, Mr. Speaker, was described as the ideal candidate. A person who would do the job very fine.

So when we saw the . . . I don't know if it was outrage. I obviously wasn't in the government caucus room when the discussion occurred. But I imagine the Justice minister was put in the hot seat about why he would go down this path because for some reason, members opposite had a problem with this decision.

So when we're looking at motivation as to why members opposite would put forward a particular piece of legislation that affects the democratic process such as Bill No. 162, *The Local Government Election Act*, I think it's important to look at it within the context of broader government actions that have occurred on this front.

And I think the example of the interference, the political interference, by the Sask Party caucus on the selection of an individual who is described as the ideal candidate to fill the position and do the job duties that are required to ensure that we have a strong and vibrant democratic process on the provincial level. When we see that kind of interference on that decision, it causes me to have great concern about what the motivation is on Bill No. 162. Because both of these decisions, both of these actions have a tremendous amount to do with the democratic process and the right of individuals to participate in the democratic process.

Now members before me, Mr. Speaker, have commented on what we have seen in a number of recent elections where we've seen voter turnout decrease in certain elections, Mr. Speaker. I think all members of this Assembly, whatever side we sit on, would agree that that is a bad thing and that we want to work as a society to have higher levels of participation in the democratic process. We want to work to ensure that individuals who may not feel like they want to participate for whatever reason, that they see the value in participating in the democratic process in a free and fair way.

We can think of many examples around the world, Mr. Speaker, where there are individuals who are struggling for that right to be able to vote in elections, the ability to vote in a process and know that their vote counts, their vote matters. And, Mr. Speaker, I know that's a concern for many people. So I think when we look at the members opposite suggestion of requiring photo ID at the municipal level, as suggested in 162, Mr. Speaker, we have to ask what is their motivation for doing so? Is it consistent with other actions we've seen, especially the actions that we saw around the selection of a Chief Electoral Officer when the government caucus rejected a decision that was put forward by an all-party committee and endorsed by the Justice minister.

We know, Mr. Speaker, it's been a topic of question period on a number of days, where we've talked about the shortage of affordable housing for many individuals and how the need for affordable, quality housing for people has caused many individuals in society to be moving around to different locations on a fairly regular basis as they seek out a safe and affordable place to live. And we know that ties in to this issue of photo ID and that is a concern as well.

There are other aspects to Bill 162, Mr. Speaker, that go beyond the direct issue of photo ID. One change that is suggested, Mr. Speaker, is an extension of the term from a three to four year

for elected officials at the municipal level. And based on the minister's remarks, I understand that this has happened. This has occurred in consultation with SUMA and SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities]. And that of course is a good thing when consultation does occur.

We certainly know that in too many occurrences we've seen the opposite occur, where consultation has not occurred on a variety of issues. So it's my sincere hope that the consultation that occurred on the term limits included other aspects and was not narrow in its focus in the consultation that occurred.

I think, Mr. Speaker, extending the duration of the term from three to four years, in my opinion, it makes decent sense. Certainly a lot of the work that municipalities do, there requires a plan that extends more than one or two or three years and beyond four years as well.

But I think the opportunity to have a four-year term makes sense to me. It allows newly elected individuals to become familiar with the position, go through the different annual cycles a few times to gain a better understanding of their role, what the issues are, and how they can respond to their constituents' needs in the best way. And it also provides perhaps a bit more duration for the establishment of positive relationships, Mr. Speaker, between municipalities and other levels of government and/or organizations that are active in the community that would have interaction with the municipality.

There was also a discussion or some sections of this Bill, Mr. Speaker, that . . . Well I'll frame it this way. There's also, we know, other changes that are perhaps a good idea when it comes to encouraging greater participation in the electoral process. One issue that has been talked about has to do with the hours that polls are open for voting.

We know in . . . Well in urban and rural areas, people live very busy lives, and people are juggling many different commitments and might be at many, many different places in one day. And so having polls open an appropriate length of time allows individuals the flexibility to get to the voting station as they need to. We also know in many rural areas that people are working, perhaps maybe they're living on a farm but working in a nearby town or city. That of course too, that may involve a significant amount of driving and amount of time of being on the road during the day. So I think when we're looking at the hours that polls are open, it's important to keep those considerations in mind, Mr. Speaker.

So with that, I've appreciated the opportunity to share a few of my thoughts and views on Bill No. 162, *An Act to amend The Local Government Election Act and to make consequential amendments to other Acts*, especially happy to do it, Mr. Speaker, after the member from northeast who has been elected more than once and has served as an elected official for some time and has some very strong and important points that he made in his speech . . . so I was happy to follow the remarks that he had to make.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, on Bill 162, I would now move to adjourn debate on it. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon Massey Place

has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 162. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

### Bill No. 159

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Norris that **Bill No. 159 — *The University of Regina Amendment Act, 2010*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Quennell:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to *An Act amending The University of Regina Act*, Bill 159, before the House. Mr. Speaker, the Bill in a nutshell . . . And my remarks might be a little larger than that, but they will be relatively brief, I think. But the Bill in a nutshell really, Mr. Speaker . . . And I think when you boil it down, the minister's second reading remarks, this is what they say . . . is that the governance procedures, some of the governance procedures — particularly around the election of chancellor and the senate — are different now for the University of Regina than they are for the University of Saskatchewan because those procedures were changed in an earlier sitting of this Legislative Assembly. And the effect of this Bill, *The University of Regina Act* Bill, is to make those procedures consistent between the two universities. And that in a nutshell is the purpose of this legislation as far as I can determine.

I'm not sure that that is necessary, and I'm not sure that it's necessarily desirable. The universities are different in many ways. I think the province is strengthened by having two universities that serve different functions, do different jobs, and do them well and complement each other.

I'm not arguing that the governance should be not identical. For a long time, it's been the consistent practice of successive governments that the governance of the two universities would be similar, if not identical. I'm not arguing that they shouldn't be. But I'm not sure, since the government did not bring forward changes to *The University of Regina Act* at the time they brought forward the changes to *The University of Saskatchewan Act*, I'm not sure that the government thought that they needed to be identical. And I wonder, for the purposes of this debate and this discussion that will probably carry on into the spring, as to whether in fact the governance had to be identical for the two universities.

But it would be the effect of this Bill, as I understand it, to make those governance procedures identical, as least as far the elections, and to change the inconsistency that now exists in the way the institutions choose certain offices and, specifically, the chancellor and the senate.

In this respect, the news release of the Government of Saskatchewan, November 24th, 2010 is, I believe, misleading. And I'm sure not intentionally so, but I think at least potentially fairly misleading in this respect. The news release states that

amendments to the Act have the effect of “enabling the university to adopt new processes for election of the Chancellor and Senate representatives.” And that's not what the Act actually does because the news release suggests that the university is being given some discretionary power to choose how the chancellor and how the senate is elected. They will be enabled to adopt new processes. That's not what's happening, Mr. Speaker.

I'm not saying that that should happen. That would be interesting. It would be unusual, and it would certainly be inconsistent with what this Assembly did in the case of the University of Saskatchewan. But what the Bill does is it has this Assembly adopting a new process and mandating a new process for election of the chancellor and the senate.

I hope that is the only misleading part of the news release, Mr. Speaker. But when the government goes on to say that this search for consistency was not on the behest of the government, which, you know, if you read the implications of the press release, did not care that the University of Saskatchewan, University of Regina are governed the same way, but at the behest of the University of Regina, is that accurate, Mr. Speaker? Because the description of the Bill is not quite accurate, is the process that's set out for consultation here, is that accurate, Mr. Speaker? And perhaps it is.

As I said, I'm sure that the clumsy or inaccurate wording of the press release to what the effect of the Bill is was not intentional. But whether it's intentional or not, misleading is misleading, Mr. Speaker.

And we would want to assure ourselves that in fact the university and the participants, the stakeholders in the university community, did see some difficulty with inconsistent legislation governing the two universities or saw some advantage. And I think the minister referred in his remarks to the cost advantage of changing how the chancellor and the senate are elected.

[16:45]

And did that initiate with the university? And was the university just, as sometimes happens here, not as concerned about the issues of how these elections were conducted as the University of Saskatchewan was, but seeing that the University of Saskatchewan had made these submissions, that the Assembly had passed the legislation, said well we might as well catch up and we should catch up? There are advantages to catching up and having a consistency. Is that what happened? Perhaps, Mr. Speaker. And if that's indeed the case, I don't imagine that the opposition in the long term would have a lot of difficulty with agreeing with this legislation and making the two institutions consistent in how they elect the chancellor and the senate.

As I said, I'm not sure. I'm not sure that we were concerned when *The University of Saskatchewan Act* was put before this Legislative Assembly that there was no corresponding University of Regina Act. Perhaps some members raised that concern, but I don't remember that in the debate. And I don't remember that in the minister's second reading remarks on *The University of Saskatchewan Act* that, well we're reluctant to do



this without having similar presentations made by the University of Regina, but we're going to go ahead. I don't remember any remarks along those lines, Mr. Speaker. It didn't seem to be too pressing in fact to do this, and perhaps it's not, Mr. Speaker.

And in any case, I'm sure the Assembly won't finally deal with this matter in the two days that are still in front of us or the remainder of one day and one more day, Mr. Speaker, in debate. I'm not sure we'll finally deal with this.

The governance of universities is not a small issue, and it can be a very controversial one. Universities are amongst the oldest surviving institutions in our society — not quite as old as the Catholic Church but as old, perhaps older than parliament itself, Mr. Speaker. Universities have been around for a long time. And in some cases, in the conflict between church and state that shapes a lot of English and European history, universities found themselves in conflict with both those powerful institutions in trying to maintain their independence, both from the church or from the state.

And as we move forward, Mr. Speaker, if indeed that's what we do over time is move forward, as we've moved through time and perhaps move forward, Mr. Speaker, into an industrial society, an education became increasingly important and not education in the sense that education existed at the time — the founding of universities hundreds of years ago, arguably for an elite — but mass education because increasingly our society realized in human capital and productivity that comes from technology, but also just from human skill and human ability, human creativity, and human innovation the universities played a far different role in modern society and became far more public institutions.

And so the conflict that existed in the ancient institutions of universities now has a new face to it, Mr. Speaker, a conflict between government that sees universities as a tool and instrument of developing human capital, developing skills for a modern industrial economy, and a university potentially that sees itself in a broader, more humanistic, not entirely economic role in serving society, serving humanity.

That's a conflict that's not always apparent. And when we can not have that conflict, it's a good thing, Mr. Speaker. When we can serve the purposes of our economy and the broader goals and visions of universities as they have developed over the centuries, that's a good thing. But that conflict does arise.

And as the members will know, I served on the board of governors in the University of Saskatchewan for some seven years and as Chair of that board of governors for three years. And one develops perhaps a more nuanced view of the broader goals and purposes of a university there than members of government might otherwise bring because it's a different view, a more nuanced view perhaps than members of the public would usually have. And there has been over time a lack of understanding, I say we'd had a lack of understanding about the role of the university, all the roles of the university in our society, on the part of government.

We recently had condolence motions in this Legislative Assembly for a number of former MLAs who have passed

away. And one of them was Senator Davey Stuart, not a literally towering figure, but a towering figure in Saskatchewan politics and Saskatchewan political history . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I'm glad I'm amusing the member from Regina South.

And one part of a big part of Mr. Stuart's history was the sense of, the belief of the Liberal government of the day that the universities of Saskatchewan were too autonomous, too independent, not directed at the priorities of the economy and the priorities of the government, and that the universities were largely funded by the public.

And in those days — we're talking about the '60s more so than now, Mr. Speaker, more so than now — students increasingly pay a greater proportion of their education than they have. I mean, the time of the greatest subsidy was probably in the '70s. Some of us, some of us were born then, but some of us in this Assembly received their university education in that decade and in the early '80s and were the beneficiaries of that sort of high point of public funding of post-secondary education, that we benefited from that.

Now today we are again getting to levels that we haven't seen since the '30s in student funding of their own education. And in the case of an art student, a liberal arts student, arguably close to 100 per cent of the cost of their education is being paid by them. Certainly with some other faculties and sciences requiring a large capital costs and very skilled and expensive faculty, much, much lower percentage.

But across the board, Mr. Speaker, we were the beneficiaries — and not my generation — of a time of high public funding by the universities and relatively low public funding by the students themselves. And at that time the governments may feel even stronger that they were paying most of the way and they should have more control and direction over how universities conduct themselves and what they do and what their priorities are, even to what they teach. I mean that's actually when you get to the nub of it, what is taught because what skills, what knowledge, what needs to be imparted to people? Should it be directed primarily at human productivity and the economy or should have it a broader purpose? And what should research be? I mean how much pure research, how much research should we be able to see some economic benefit from in the very near future?

And these are the kind of conflicts between universities and governments, and not unique to the days of Davey Stuart and Ross Thatcher. Different ministers responsible for universities over the years have believed that the university should be more like a polytechnic, more like SIAST, more controlled by the relevant ministry or department of the day that's responsible for the university — less independent, less complex and serving more primarily an economic role in an industrial society.

I suspect that, although never involving governance of the university per se, given the experience of the current minister responsible, that there may be a more nuanced view in the minister's office of the role of the university than there has been at some times in the past in Saskatchewan. I'm not sure that that view extends much beyond the minister in this government, but I expect that that may very well be the case, Mr. Speaker.

That is all to say that the issues that are raised by the Bill about governance are very important issues for our society, not just for our economy. Universities play an important role and perhaps a more important role now that they've become somewhat mass institutions to which many people attend and many people are served, not just the students but as members of the public, that the role that universities play in our society continues to be important.

Their independence and respect to deciding about what should be a matter of research or what should be a matter of teaching, what should be a matter of outreach is important, and very likely not to be appreciated as much by members of the public and including members of this Assembly as, Mr. Speaker, one might hope. And that's understandable. That's completely understandable, Mr. Speaker. But I think those of us who have perhaps a broader view of the university need to raise these issues when we have the opportunity, as I do today in the House, and comment on these matters.

When I was Chair of the board of governors of the University of Saskatchewan, I had occasion to make some remarks to members of the faculty, to the council that governs the academic matters of the university, the board of governors governing the financial matters. And I freely admit, Mr. Speaker — and this is one of my concerns about legislation and decisions and policy decisions around the university — that I managed to obtain two degrees from the University of Saskatchewan without ever giving much thought to how the institution was governed.

But being part of the government of the University of Saskatchewan, I did have some occasion to give some thought to it. And I was trying to explain, and I think in a critical way, the difficulty that the university has explaining its mission, its broader mission to government. Even though I was appointed by that government of that day to the Chair, to the board, elected to the Chair by the board.

My children were younger then, Mr. Speaker. And I said, my children like to have their vegetables, their potatoes, their meat, everything so they can avoid the food they don't like and so none of their food contaminates the other food. And children don't like casseroles, Mr. Speaker, because you never know what you're going to find buried in there. They don't like finding food in their food. And government's a bit like that, Mr. Speaker. Government doesn't like finding food in their food.

And the university is a complex institution with a complex, complicated history. It has a role in the development of citizens. It has a role in the ongoing transmission of culture. It has roles and concerns and mandates and historical rights and privileges that go beyond purposes of government and certainly the concerns of government over a four-year term, Mr. Speaker. And it's this autonomy of the university that doesn't get very much voice.

I think, in institutions like this, Mr. Speaker, there's nobody really mandated here to rise in the Assembly and say, if not the minister, but some ministers perhaps haven't had much appreciation — I'm not saying this minister, Mr. Speaker, I think I've said otherwise already in my remarks — much appreciation or concern about that broader purpose for the

university. But nobody is specifically mandated to do it. The university is lucky if it has defenders in this institution. And when it does have defenders, the defenders, whether they're in government or they're in opposition, should rise and speak.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I did want to take this opportunity in discussing this Bill and this particular legislation, I wanted to take this opportunity to talk about, set a broader context in which this Bill is enacted. And that is the governance of the University of Saskatchewan or the governance of the University of Regina. whether or not they should be identical or not, and why that governance is not direct . . .

**The Speaker:** — Being now 5 p.m., the Assembly is adjourned until tomorrow morning at 10 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.]



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