



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

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The Honourable Don Toth
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

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Junor, Judy	NDP	Saskatoon Eastview
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Morin, Sandra	NDP	Regina Walsh Acres
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Norris, Hon. Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
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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]

The Speaker: — Before routine proceedings and pursuant to section 30 of the Ombudsman and children's Act, I'm submitting two copies of the child advocate 2010 annual report.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to the Assembly I'd like to introduce a good friend of mine seated in your gallery, Mr. Wayne McCord. Wayne is from Markham, Ontario, but Wayne still keeps a residence in Saskatchewan. He grew up in southern Saskatchewan near where I live, and he keeps his residency there. And I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that Mr. McCord is very in tune with Saskatchewan politics. So I'd like all members to welcome Wayne to the Assembly here today.

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

Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to the members of the legislature, I'd like to introduce two young women who are very important to me. My niece Lindsay, she's studying commerce at the University of Saskatchewan. She was born in Saskatoon, but her family moved to Maple Ridge a number of years ago. We're glad to have her back studying at the university. I know her father misses her a lot, but we're happy to have her in Saskatoon.

And my daughter, Allison. Allison's also studying at the university. She's almost finished her art history degree. Allison's keenly interested in politics, Mr. Speaker. Regrettably we don't often agree on politics in our family, but in any event, happy to have her here and she's still, notwithstanding that, still the light of my life, Mr. Speaker. So I'd ask everyone in the legislature just to welcome Allison and Lindsay to their legislature.

The Speaker: — Members, my apologies. I didn't read very accurately the child advocate report. I will hold it till Wednesday.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Junor: — Mr. Speaker, I rise again today to present a petition on behalf of Saskatchewan citizens supporting the maintenance of quality health care services:

The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Saskatchewan humbly showeth that the Government of Saskatchewan ought to recognize the need for timely

access to comprehensive and quality health care services for all communities within the province, including Wakaw and surrounding areas, and that the disruption of emergency services and in-patient services at Wakaw Hospital will not serve the needs of the residents in this community and surrounding area; and

That the cuts in access to timely and accurate diagnostic and laboratory tests within the community of Wakaw and surrounding area will also not serve the needs of the residents.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to commit to maintain quality health care services through the commitment of necessary funding to address critical recruitment and retention issues.

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

The many signatures on these petitions, Mr. Speaker, are from Saskatoon, Regina, Colonsay, Allan, Battleford, Yorkton, Tisdale, Weyburn, Moose Jaw, Estevan, and Wakaw. 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 signed by constituents who live in Hampton Village who are concerned about the need for a school for their children in the neighbourhood. The petition reads:

We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention the following: that Hampton Village is a rapidly growing community in Saskatoon with many young families; that Hampton Village residents pay a significant amount of taxes, including education property tax; that children in Hampton Village deserve to be able to attend school in their own community instead of travelling to neighbouring communities to attend schools that are typically already reaching capacity.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan cause the provincial government to devote the necessary resources for the construction of an elementary school in Hampton Village so that children in this rapidly growing neighbourhood in Saskatoon can attend school in their own community.

Mr. Speaker, the individuals who signed this petition live in Hampton Village. I so present.

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

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today to present a petition regarding restoring funding equity to Regina Catholic schools. Regina Catholic schools received \$275 less per pupil than Regina public schools

in the last fiscal year, amounting to a funding inequity of \$2.7 million in total. That funding inequity places program delivery and staffing levels at risk and, Mr. Speaker, those funding cuts are already having an effect on program delivery for the upcoming school year. The government of Saskatchewan has denied Catholic school boards in the province representation on the government-appointed committee mandated to develop a long-term funding formula for Saskatchewan school boards. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to address the funding inequity between Regina Catholic schools and Regina public schools that provides \$275 less per pupil funding for Regina Catholic school students, totalling \$2.7 million, and make known that the continuation for another school year of funding inequity places program delivery and staffing levels at risk in Regina Catholic schools; and in so doing, immediately restore funding equity to ensure that every student in Saskatchewan, whether enrolled in a Catholic or a public school, receives equitable resources to ensure every student in Saskatchewan has access to a quality education.

Mr. Speaker, these petitions are signed by the residents of Prince Albert and Regina. I so present.

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

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again, once again today, Mr. Speaker, to present a petition signed by citizens of Saskatchewan concerned about the detrimental effects that Bill 160 would have on our human rights law if enacted. And the prayer reads as follows:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan withdraw Bill 160 from consideration by the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan and hold extensive public consultations informed by a public policy paper before any amendments to the Human Rights Code, the law that supersedes all others in our province, are even considered.

Today the petition is signed by residents of Swift Current, Saskatoon, Delisle, Wynyard, Melfort, Warman, Lloydminster, Goodsoil, Weyburn, Moose Jaw, Viscount, Moosomin, and Hudson Bay. I so present.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions once again today on behalf of concerned residents from across Saskatchewan as it relates to the mismanagement of our finances by the Sask. Party. They allude to the fact that the Sask Party has both run deficits and increased debt at times of unprecedented highs in revenues, increasing debt over the past three years consecutively to a grand total of well over \$1.3 billion, and this year alone increasing debt to the tune of \$548 million alone here this year. 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 are signed by concerned residents of Saskatoon and Churchbridge. I so submit.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Heroic Rescue Prevents Tragedy

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to salute the heroic efforts of residents in my constituency who helped to save a man trapped in the Swift Current creek.

Last Wednesday morning, Mitzy Tait-Zeller and her family were visiting her parents' farm just south of the city of Swift Current. As they were leaving the farmyard, Mitzy's daughter saw a van stuck in the creek at a low-level crossing at Valleyview Road just south of town. The driver was in obvious trouble. The water was 4 feet deep and was up to the van's windows, Mr. Speaker. It was clear that the man would not be able to get out of the vehicle safely on his own.

Mitzy immediately phoned her brother Chad who is a volunteer firefighter with the local RM [rural municipality] and he made a quick call to 911. Within minutes, the Swift Current Fire Department responded, led by Deputy Chief Normand Beauchamp who was on the scene with a boat to rescue the man, pulling him out of the vehicle. Immediately after getting the driver out of the van, the van was swept away by the fast-moving current. And as the rescuers attempted to head to shore, even the boat took on water, and they had to swim to safety.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan spirit and quick action prevented the situation from turning into a tragedy. Today we honour and thank Mitzy Tait-Zeller, her brother Chad, the Swift Current deputy fire chief, Normand Beauchamp, and all of the firefighters from the city and rural departments and people on the scene who responded quickly to a neighbour in their time of desperation, a true example of what's best of Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Holocaust Memorial Day

Mr. Quennell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday was Yom HaShoah, or Holocaust Memorial Day. We remember, with deep sadness and lingering incomprehension, the genocide of 6 million Jews. Created by the Israeli government in the 1950s, Yom HaShoah, which means the day of Holocaust in Hebrew, begins at sunset of the 27th day of

Nisan in the Hebrew calendar. The day is close to the day of the Jewish ghetto uprising in Warsaw in 1943 and of course is an official holiday in Israel.

Today we remember not only the brutality and evil but also the courage and strength with which it was faced. Fewer and fewer survivors are left to tell the stories, and let's not let their memory fade. Too often brought here by tragedy and not receiving much of a welcome, Jewish Canadians have made our country stronger and more vibrant.

The Holocaust profoundly transformed our perception of humanity and what humanity is capable of. Unfortunately the cry of never again has not been successful, and therefore the threat and crime of genocide in a dangerous world continues to haunt us in the 21st century. Mr. Speaker, we must remain vigilant against anti-Semitism and all forms of discrimination. We must pursue the ideal of a multicultural Canada founded on respect and compassion, celebrating difference and diversity.

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

Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in this House today to mention that yesterday marked the International Holocaust Memorial Day. The full name of this day commemorated the victims of the Holocaust as Yom HaShoah, which means the day of remembrance of the Holocaust. Having lost 300 members of my family in the Holocaust, this day is particularly poignant to my family, Mr. Speaker.

Since the early 1960s, the sound of siren on Yom HaShoah stops traffic and pedestrians throughout the state of Israel for two minutes of silent devotion. The siren blows at sundown and again at 11 a.m. on that date. People of Jewish descent in North America observe Yom HaShoah in the synagogue as well as in the broader Jewish community. Commemorations range from synagogue services to communal vigils and education programs. The United Nations established International Holocaust Remembrance Day which urges every member nation of the United Nations to honour the memory of Holocaust victims and encourage the development of educational programs about the Holocaust history to help prevent further acts of genocide.

International Holocaust Remembrance Day rejects any denial of the Holocaust as an event and condemns all manifestations of religious intolerance, incitement, harassment, or violence against persons or communities based on ethnic origin or religious belief. I would ask that all members of this Assembly acknowledge Holocaust Memorial Day and keep the memory of those fallen in mind. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Movement for May Day

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, May 1st, several members of the NDP [New Democratic Party] caucus and I had the pleasure of attending the Movement for May Day. May Day, also known as International Workers' Day, marks the anniversary of the 1886 Haymarket massacre in Chicago.

During a general strike for the eight-hour work day, Chicago police fired on workers, killing several demonstrators. Ever since, it has become a day around the world to honour their courage and to stand up for working people, their families, and the marginalized.

Mr. Speaker, approximately 300 people from a wide variety of community organizations, students, workers, and citizens braved the cold wind and marched through the streets. They converged on the legislature to send a message to both levels of government that it's time to consult with the people in a meaningful way about the future of Saskatchewan. They condemned the government for its lack of accountability and devastated record on human rights. Movement for May Day participants and the Prairie Lily Feminist Society pledged their support for the many workers in Saskatchewan who are currently in a strike position. A wall of shame was constructed in front of the doors of the legislature that included approximately 70 messages condemning the laws and policies of the Sask Party and Harper governments. It was decided unanimously that the wall must fall.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to encourage all members of the House to congratulate the ongoing work of citizens of this great province who want to ensure that Saskatchewan is inclusive, welcoming, and respectful. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

Mosaic's Donation to the Children's Hospital Foundation

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last Friday the Mosaic Company demonstrated its commitment to Saskatchewan with a \$4 million donation to the Children's Hospital Foundation of Saskatchewan. This donation is part of the Be a Part of It campaign which aims to collect \$25 million from private donors to provide the hospital with furniture and state-of-the-art equipment. Norm Beug, senior vice-president of potash operations for Mosaic said:

... [Friday's] announcement is an investment in Saskatchewan's future generations — our children — and that's an investment that strengthens our communities, our company and our province.

Mosaic's donation has been designated as a gift to enhance maternal equipment, research, and patient care services at the new children's hospital of Saskatchewan. In recognition of this gift, the hospital's postpartum unit will carry the Mosaic name. Mosaic has always been a positive corporate citizen in this province. Their support is welcome, and we thank them for their generous donation.

In fall of 2010, our government announced that we would fully fund the construction of the children's hospital. Private donations such as Mosaic's will ensure that staff and patients will have the benefit of the best equipment available. As construction of this province's first and only children's hospital continues, I thank the people at Mosaic for priming the Children's Hospital Foundation of Saskatchewan's Be a Part of It campaign. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[13:45]

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

Remembering Nico Hawryliw

Mr. Taylor: — I rise today to inform the members of the Legislative Assembly of the passing of an incredible 19-year-old young man, Nicola Edward Kenneth Hawryliw. We knew him as Nico. Born on January 16th, 1992, Nico left us on April the 30th, 2011, after a six-year difficult but courageous and often hopeful battle to defeat his CNS [central nervous system] germinoma brain tumour. Nico leaves behind an equally courageous, dedicated, and very loving family led by his mother, Allison, his father, Lionel, and his sister Jane.

He faced many challenges, much pain, torment, frustration, and uncertainty, but Nico was very much loved. And in return he was a loving and generous person. He was intelligent and enjoyed school. He was unselfish and compassionate. He hoped to become a social worker after he had beaten his cancer. According to the family's formal notice of his passing, Nico "taught us how to love, to be courageous, and to never give up." In 2010 Nico was awarded the Canadian Cancer Medal for Courage. He was very proudly humbled by the honour.

The Battlefords and the province of Saskatchewan has lost a wonderful citizen. Anyone who had the chance to be in his company is a better person today because they were touched and influenced by this incredible young man. Because of who he was and how he lived his life, his memory will live with us for generations. I call on all members of the Assembly to take a moment today to think about the life of Nico Hawryliw, gather something from what you learn, and add it to the way you live your own life. We will all be better people for it. God bless you, Nico.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Wascana Plains.

Emergency Preparedness Week

Ms. Tell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Emergency Preparedness Week is an annual event that takes place each year during the first full week of May. During Emergency Preparedness Week, activities are organized across Canada to raise awareness of the importance of having an emergency kit, making an emergency plan, and identifying risks. These three simple steps can help Canadians prepare for all types of emergencies.

Mr. Speaker, during this time of year, emergency preparedness is at the top of the priority list for many people in our province. Over the last couple years, flooding has reached historic levels in many different areas within Saskatchewan. With a natural disaster like flooding, planning is necessary to ensure families remain safe. Every Saskatchewan household needs an emergency plan, and it will only take 20 minutes to make a plan.

Mr. Speaker, if an emergency happens in your community, it may take emergency workers some time to reach you. That is why an emergency plan should cover 72 hours from the time the disaster occurs. People should be prepared to take care of themselves and their families for a minimum of 72 hours.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that everyone takes the opportunity to go over their emergency preparedness plan with their family during this particular week. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Funding for KidsFirst Program

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, for 23 years the Circle Project has provided supports and programs based on an Aboriginal vision of wholeness, balance, and healing to inner-city Regina families. For the last eight years, they have partnered with the KidsFirst program to help vulnerable families in making healthy family choices.

On April 13th, the decision was communicated that Circle Project's KidsFirst funding was to be cut. This came after the community-based organization was told to fill staff positions, was given new computers, and received April funding for the new fiscal year.

To the Minister of Health: the Circle Project has provided valuable services to many families, vulnerable families and children for upwards of two decades. How was this decision made, and why?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I think we all know in this House, that the responsibility of delivery of many health care services throughout the province are the responsibility of the health regions. In this case there is an issue regarding the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region and their decision to discontinue the contract with Circle, Mr. Speaker, with Circle Project. That discontinuation does not say that there's any backing away of services delivered, and in fact all the services that were delivered by Circle Project will be picked up by other organizations. The same amount of service will be delivered, Mr. Speaker, just through various organizations.

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

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, we understand, when it comes to the health regions, where the buck stops with that government, and obviously it's in the Minister of Health's office.

As a result of the government's decision to cut the funding, 32 families and 75 children will have to find a new KidsFirst provider. The minister needs to understand that these vulnerable families and children are not commodities that can be thrown back and forth between agencies without causing even more problems for these families. Many of the affected individuals have been working with Circle Project for years, and there are many success stories. The families have built a sense of trust and security with the Circle Project. They have built a positive community which has now been stripped away and the families have no choice in the matter.

To the minister: does the government realize the impact this decision will have on these families? Why are these vulnerable families being made to pay the cost for that government's decision?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that the Circle Project had some difficulties complying with the terms of the agreement that were set out by the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region. As a result of that, the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region is not backing away from KidsFirst programming. All they're simply doing is reapplying the funds that were going to Circle first, reapplying those funds to other organizations throughout the city, Mr. Speaker, so that the same amount of service will be provided, not through this one organization.

I think it's the responsible thing that the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region or any other health region for that matter, Mr. Speaker, when they enter into an agreement and some of those terms aren't followed, they revisit that agreement. And if corrective measures can't be taken, those funds are then redirected into other organizations that can deliver the KidsFirst program.

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

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, the Circle Project provides drug and alcohol counselling, traditional parenting programming, family literacy programs, and a child care centre to families in Regina's inner city. Stripping the KidsFirst funding is a direct attack on the credibility of the Circle Project and the decades of good work that they have done helping families, children, and youth.

On April 15th, the Circle Project met with the KidsFirst program to ask why the funding had been stripped and if there was an opportunity to appeal the decision. They were told the answer was no. The decision was final.

To the minister: a direct attack on the credibility of the Circle Project has been made without meaningfully consulting them or giving them a chance at redress. Will that government and this minister give the Circle Project a real opportunity to address concerns and to defend and explain the exemplary work it does with kids and families? Will the Circle Project get something that halfway resembles proper process?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region remains committed to the communities that serve these kids, Mr. Speaker, and the KidsFirst program, as evidenced by its ongoing support of the north central shared family services centre, Mr. Speaker. The Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region delivers a lot of services through not-for-profit organizations. It will continue to do that, Mr. Speaker.

As I said, it's our understanding, through the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region, that the terms of the agreement were not being met. Now I don't know if the opposition is

saying, ignore that, Mr. Speaker, because that isn't the way the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region operates — thank heavens, Mr. Speaker. They have pulled the funding from that project but put the funding back into KidsFirst through other organizations, Mr. Speaker. I think it was a responsible move by the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region.

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

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, it's a fairly well accepted principle that when charges are brought against you, you can actually know what those charges are and you can understand what the problems have been identified and how those might be redressed. Circle Project is asking for a clear explanation of what the problems were with their programming. They're asking for an appeal process where they can get a chance to defend the good work that they've done for 23 years, Mr. Speaker.

And it strikes us as quite strange, in the opposition, that if this government is concerned about proper management and due stewardship of public dollars, where was the progressive discipline in terms of Circle Project delivering this program in the first place? So Circle Project, the families that they work with, and the opposition is wondering, where is that due process and will they get a chance to defend their good name which has been built up over many years working with some very hard situations in the inner city?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Mr. Speaker, as I said, the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region found that the terms were not being met on the agreement. No money has been pulled away from inner city for the delivery of these services. Mr. Speaker, no money has been pulled away. That money is still there to address some of those issues on the inner city through a KidsFirst program. It is simply going to be redeployed to other organizations that will deliver those services.

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

Collective Bargaining

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, bargaining is supposed to involve two sides working together to achieve as fair a deal as possible for all involved. Apparently, Mr. Speaker, for this government, bargaining has been replaced with the government telling workers to take what we'll give you, no matter how unfair, and then go away.

Mr. Speaker, there are several examples right now where this government has tossed traditional bargaining out the window and is trying to force unfair deals down the throats of many Saskatchewan people. My question to the minister is: why is the government tossing fairness out the window and putting health care and education systems at risk?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are,

throughout the public sector, a number of contracts that have expired. It is the wish of this government to try and ensure that negotiations take place in an orderly fashion.

Mr. Speaker, we ought not debate contracts on the floor of the Assembly. I think we should urge all parties, whether they be an employer or SAHO [Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations] or other management, Mr. Speaker, that they get back to the bargaining table and that they should work as aggressively and as hard as possible to arrive at a satisfaction.

We respect and value very much, Mr. Speaker, the good work that is done by the public sector employees in our province. They are valued and respected by this government. And, Mr. Speaker, we are not going to be negotiating contracts on the floor of the legislature.

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, one group targeted by this government's mean-spirited bargaining is the health professionals of Saskatchewan represented by the Health Sciences Association. The government is offering these workers an increase of less than 2 per cent a year, a raise that'll easily be eaten up by gas, food, and skyrocketing housing prices.

Last week, the HSA [Health Sciences Association] pointed out in the *Leader-Post* that the understaffing of health professionals is putting the lives of Saskatchewan people at risk. Mr. Speaker, the situation will continue without proper government funding for health care workers. Why is the minister willing to risk the lives of Saskatchewan people just so he can deny the province's health care professionals a fair deal?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the former minister mentioned, that we will not be negotiating individual contracts on the floor of the House. But what I can say, Mr. Speaker, in three and a half years of negotiating with many of the service providers, health care providers and professionals across this province, number one, we've increased the number of nurses working in this province; we've increased the number of doctors working in this province; and we've increased the number of all health care providers working in this province in the last three and a half years. That's what this government has done, Mr. Speaker.

Not only to mention that we have settled with tens of thousands of workers in this province, whether it's the nurses, whether it's the doctors, whether it's the residents, whether it's CUPE [Canadian Union of Public Employees], whether it's SEIU [Service Employees International Union], whether it's SGEU [Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union], Mr. Speaker, this government has been getting it done. And I believe the contract will be settled with the Health Sciences very shortly, Mr. Speaker. I think they want it settled as this government does as well.

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, the minister misses the point. He introduces essential services legislation which ties the workers' hands and then calls that bargaining, Mr. Speaker, and calls that settling contracts.

Mr. Speaker, the people who help ensure we get the best health care possible are the only ones being treated badly by this government. No one can deny that our children are the future of Saskatchewan, and the people who help shape our children are our hard-working teachers. But this government doesn't think they deserve to be fairly compensated. Now the province's teachers have voted overwhelmingly in favour of job action because they feel it's the only way they will get fair treatment from this government.

Mr. Speaker, why is this government pursuing this destructive bargaining strategy and risking the education of Saskatchewan's children just so it can play petty games with the province's teachers?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Education has been a priority for this government, and that's why year over year we have increased the funding as well as made unprecedented investments in infrastructure in our school system. Mr. Speaker, we do value the teachers and the great work they do.

But it's interesting when the member opposite makes such statements because the last time the teachers took job action was when the NDP were in power. Was that because they didn't care about teachers at that time?

[14:00]

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

Mr. Iwanchuk: — Mr. Speaker, the teachers and professional workers at SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] have been without a deal for almost two years. This government is offering them less than 2 per cent despite the rising cost of living.

The government has threatened to lock these workers out and force a deal within 30 days if there is any job action, Mr. Speaker. This is not bargaining; this is dictating. These people help prepare people for Saskatchewan's workforce. Why is this government threatening and demonizing them, Mr. Speaker? It obviously makes no sense to us.

For the sake of SIAST teachers, schoolteachers, and health care workers in this province, will this government finally sit down and bargain with these groups fairly and honestly?

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Certainly we're very pleased with our track record, Mr. Speaker, especially when it comes to post-secondary education — \$2.8 billion invested in

post-secondary education. It's a record, Mr. Speaker, over the course of four years.

Mr. Speaker, regarding SIAST specifically, we've seen operating funding go up by 18.5 per cent, Mr. Speaker. We know, Mr. Speaker — I know this personally, Mr. Speaker; I began my teaching career actually at SIAST, Mr. Speaker — I know how hard, I know how hard, Mr. Speaker, those individuals work. That's one of the reasons that we want to make sure, Mr. Speaker, that there's a fair agreement, Mr. Speaker. And the best way to achieve that is to have the individual parties reach that agreement, not to be negotiated here on the floor of the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to make sure post-secondary education students, institutions, their instructors, and relating stakeholders continue to be a priority for this government, Mr. Speaker. That's why it's best for those parties to negotiate it and come to a fair agreement on their own.

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

Environmental Issues

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, the Alberta oil sands industrial plants are pumping more than 300 million pounds of gases into the air each year. And where do you think those gases go, Mr. Speaker? Seventy per cent of them land right here in Saskatchewan, negatively affecting our environment and the health of Saskatchewan people.

The people of Saskatchewan deserve to be compensated for having our wonderful province turned into a dumping ground by Alberta, Mr. Speaker. Will this government immediately take steps to develop a concrete action with the Government of Alberta to reach a fair compensation settlement?

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the member for her question. This was something that was raised in the early days of this sitting of the legislature, Mr. Speaker, when the member for North Battleford asked questions on two days. Mr. Speaker, I just want to correct something that that member said. On two occasions he said that the air that we breathe is poisoned in this province, Mr. Speaker, going so far as to say, and I quote, "If there's one thing we know, Mr. Speaker, we're being poisoned."

Mr. Speaker, I think that's absolutely irresponsible, particularly coming from a former minister of Health, to say that the air that the people of Saskatchewan breathe is poisoning them, Mr. Speaker. We are working to address issues that are coming from Alberta because of the oil sands through a boreal management strategy which we announced in this budget — \$1 million unprecedented — to test northern lakes in Saskatchewan as well as an agreement with Alberta that I look forward to signing shortly.

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

Ms. Morin: — What's irresponsible, Mr. Speaker, is 70 per cent of the air emissions from Alberta oil sands coming into Saskatchewan, directly affecting the Saskatchewan economy and people, and not having any compensation sought by the Sask Party government that's been sitting there for three and a half years, Mr. Speaker. That's irresponsible.

Mr. Speaker, just a few weeks ago, we asked this government if it's going to protect Saskatchewan people from excessive pollution coming out of the Alberta oil sands. Instead of standing up for the health of Saskatchewan people and province's environment, the minister has done nothing. But we know the oil sands are affecting us negatively now. Of that there is no doubt.

Why is this minister afraid to put Saskatchewan people first and seek the compensation the province deserves for the damage being done by the oil sands pollution?

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, if that member and her party believed what she says, why did they not take action when a study was published in 1996, Mr. Speaker, that indicated that 70 per cent of sulphur — not all emissions, but sulphur emissions — exiting Alberta enters the province of Saskatchewan? They knew this in 1996. Did they do anything about in '96? No. Did they do anything about in '97? No, Mr. Speaker, and so on.

Mr. Speaker, we have done a number of important initiatives in this province under three and a half years of the Saskatchewan Party government, including, Mr. Speaker, air monitoring all across this province, Mr. Speaker, investing in a boreal management strategy — \$1 million in this budget year alone, Mr. Speaker, far more than was ever done — and, Mr. Speaker, as I said, I look forward to signing an agreement shortly with the Government of Alberta.

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

Ms. Morin: — I find it interesting, Mr. Speaker, that the minister thinks reducing staffing in terms of monitoring the air pollution in Saskatchewan is moving forward, Mr. Speaker, but we'll let him believe that.

Mr. Speaker, air pollution is not the only way Saskatchewan is being harmed by Alberta's oil sands. Studies have clearly shown that contaminants have gotten into the water around the oil sands, and some of that water eventually flows into Saskatchewan, affecting our beautiful lakes and rivers. This is dangerous for Saskatchewan people and needs to be dealt with now. This affects traditional ways of life for Aboriginal people, tourism, health of Saskatchewan residents, and thereby ultimately the economy.

The Sask Party government introduced a Sask-first policy for Crowns. And yet with the government, the Premier and the Sask Party has an Alberta-first policy. When can the people of Saskatchewan expect compensation from the province of Alberta for the pollution that is being caused to the province of

Saskatchewan?

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, we are certainly committed to keeping our environment clean in this province, Mr. Speaker. To quote from actually a report that I believe that that member quoted from earlier in this session, the federal Minister of Environment report, oil sands advisory report:

We make but one overarching recommendation. We recommend that a shared national vision and management framework of aligned priorities, policies, and programs be developed collaboratively by relevant jurisdictions and stakeholders.

Mr. Speaker, that's why as a government we're working with the province of Alberta. That's why we're working at the federal and provincial ministerial table of Environment ministers on a Canada-wide comprehensive air management quality, air management system, Mr. Speaker. And that's why we're working on the acid rain task force as a province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite, when they were in government, to their credit they purchased the air bus, the mobile air bus. However, Mr. Speaker, they didn't have the staff to actually operate the air bus. So, Mr. Speaker, if you're concerned about the air quality in a parking garage used by the Ministry of Environment, then the NDP's your party. We're deploying that across the province.

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

Planned Highway Improvements

Mr. Taylor: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Highways has announced where highways improvements, upgrades, and repairs will be made this year. He said his priority list for the year reflects a safe and efficient transportation network that supports current growth and generates new economic activity. And yet the area that begs for greater safety, more efficiency, and increased support for a growing local economy has been left out. Of course, Mr. Speaker, we're talking about Highway 39.

Why has the minister again failed to allocate funding to this major and important Saskatchewan highway?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the member in the House the other day raised the prospect of twinning Highways 6 and 39 south of Regina. I explained at that time, Mr. Speaker, that our twinning priority right now is finishing Highway 11 between Saskatoon and Prince Albert. As that nears completion next year, we'll be making decisions going forward on the possibility of twinning projects or a combination of twinning and passing lane projects.

Mr. Speaker, I should point out though that last week or the week before when he asked the question the first time, he read

quotes from the Estevan paper he attributed to the member from Estevan. Mr. Speaker, I find it surprising though that he didn't finish the quote — took it out of context, Mr. Speaker; left people with the impression that the member had said that that project would be moving forward after No. 11 is done, Mr. Speaker. I read the rest of that article. That wasn't the case, and I would suggest that that member owes this House an apology.

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

Mr. Taylor: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I have more quotes to read to the minister. And, Mr. Speaker, I was listening carefully to the minister and I hear today, as I heard back on April 11th, that the minister continues to talk about his thinking as including not twinning but putting in passing lanes on this important highway, Mr. Speaker — something that the people along Highway 39 have completely rejected.

When we listen to people like Marge Young, who leads an organization known as the Time to Twin committee, she says, and I quote, "Everybody's in a hurry because it's oil. Everybody's in a rush. And that's what creates a lot of danger out there."

Why is the minister dismissing those concerns? Why has he not begun the important planning necessary so that this construction project can get under way as soon as possible?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm certainly not dismissing those concerns. I've had the opportunity to meet with Marge and her committee. I believe there's another meeting scheduled for sometime in the next few weeks. I certainly understand their concerns, Mr. Speaker. That is a heavy traffic highway.

When I'm referring to passing lanes, there is potential for passing lanes on a number of heavy trafficked areas in the province, not just Highways 6 and 39, but Highway 16 east of Saskatoon, Highway 7 west of Saskatoon, and a number of other highways as well, Mr. Speaker. Safety is paramount to this government.

Mr. Speaker, when we took office three and a half years ago, there was a massive infrastructure deficit in highways, Mr. Speaker. It's just simply a case of on one hand we're trying to plan for the growth in the new Saskatchewan. On the other hand, Mr. Speaker, we're still trying to recover from years of neglect on our infrastructure under 16 years of NDP government, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Taylor: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Last week Saskatchewan Power announced its plans to proceed with the carbon capture project at Boundary dam. They said that this project will be a major economic stimulus for the area.

The announcement of the project means that there will be even more industrial traffic on Highway 39 and the safety issue will be increased even more. Mr. Speaker, while they're cheering economic growth, they better not be cheering the increased

safety issue that that brings, Mr. Speaker.

If the minister is really serious about his priority to reflect safety, efficiency, and meet the needs of growth and economic activities, why isn't he moving quickly to ensure that Highway 39 is higher on the list so that planning can begin in earnest and people like Marge Young and the other members of the Time to Twin committee can really feel like their voice has been heard?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we're not shortchanging safety. We're extremely concerned about safety on highways in this province. All over the province, Mr. Speaker, we've taken a number of initiatives to ensure that our highways will be safer.

Mr. Speaker, our highways budget this year, \$556 million. Mr. Speaker, the four largest highways budgets in the history of this province have been under a Sask Party government.

Mr. Speaker, during the election campaign, we campaigned on a promise of \$1.8 billion over four years if we were given the privilege of serving as government in this province. And, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite criticized that. They said it was impossible, that we wouldn't be able to do that. Mr. Speaker, we not only did that; we did more. Over four years of government, Mr. Speaker, \$2.2 billion.

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

Mr. Taylor: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. In every corner of this province, increased resource activity is putting strain on municipal infrastructure, affordable housing, and provincial highways. The Sask Party is lagging behind community leaders and concerned citizens in addressing that issue.

We know that twinning of Highway 11 is nearing completion. Why can't the minister announce today that his five-year plan contains funding for the twinning of Highway 39 so that planning can begin and no further loss of life or injury will occur because of increased and more aggressive traffic filling the asphalt all along Highway 39?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the answer to that question is very simple. We want to make that decision — on the next twinning project or combination of twinning and passing lane project — we want to make that on the most current data available. We will make that decision sometime next year as No. 11 comes to a close.

Mr. Speaker, I realize that concept is foreign to the member opposite because he's absolutely right: that heavy traffic is a result of economic growth in this province as a result of the position taken by this party, by this government, Mr. Speaker. It's called economic development, something that member and that party knows nothing about.

[14:15]

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

Integrated Carbon Capture and Storage Demonstration Project

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise in the Assembly today to tell citizens right across our province, and in fact people right around the world who have expressed an interest in this recent initiative, about an important new initiative that SaskPower and our government are undertaking in co-operation, in collaboration with community groups as well as private sector groups.

It's an initiative, Mr. Speaker, which highlights a couple of things: the efforts of this government to become a world leader in the field of environmentally responsible electrical generation and, Mr. Speaker, as well our plans to put a sound foundation in place to support the province's growing economy and, of course, our thriving communities not just for today but for years to come.

It was my pleasure to be in Estevan on April 26th, along with key members of our SaskPower team as well as the member from Estevan, who also serves very, very well as our caucus Chair, as well as the Minister Responsible for CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan]. We were all there with a number of hard-working people from SaskPower and the local community, including the mayor and some councillors, to announce that this government has approved the construction of the SaskPower Boundary dam integrated carbon capture and storage demonstration project.

In partnership with SaskPower, the Government of Saskatchewan is committing to just over \$1 billion to the total cost of this \$1.24 billion project, with the federal government thankfully having contributed a significant amount — about \$240 million of this initiative. This will be the largest capital project in the history of SaskPower and certainly one of the most important. It will also be one of the largest construction projects in the history of Saskatchewan, providing a major economic boost to the Estevan area as well as to the rest of the province as a whole. In fact the project will generate more than 6,000 years of direct and indirect employment, with the local construction workforce numbering approximately 600 additional people working in and around Estevan at its peak.

Mr. Speaker, that's great news for our province's already strong economy, one of the strongest in Canada. And people across the country recognize Saskatchewan as a growth leader. And in fact it was the very strength of our economy that was one of the key drivers behind this initiative.

We all know, Mr. Speaker, that SaskPower requires a new generation of projects to meet Saskatchewan's growing power needs. Mr. Speaker, over the past 10 years under the previous government, Saskatchewan's electricity demand had grown by an average of far less than 2 per cent. But in the current decade, with the growth projections that are under way, this is expected to continue to accelerate and jump to well over 2 per cent, and

in fact it's anticipated to be 2.4 per cent. Mr. Speaker, quite frankly, that means there's going to be continued increased demand for power right across the province. In response, the corporation has announced a multi-year, multi-billion dollar investment initiative to renew the province's electricity system, one that was closely scrutinized by the legislature's Crown and Central Agencies Committee just last year.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's a legacy of the members opposite that they did not invest adequately into the SaskPower infrastructure. So while demand is on the rise, Mr. Speaker, we need to continue to invest in the basic infrastructure and new infrastructure to ensure that people across the province have safe, reliable, and sustainable power that they have relied upon for decades.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has long depended on three coal-fired power stations: Boundary dam, Shand, and Poplar River to generate affordable, reliable baseload electricity. But with our government's commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions over the course of the coming years as well as anticipated federal emissions regulations, there is a very real risk that these coal-fired power plants would not be a part of future plans to help power our province and power the Saskatchewan advantage unless we could find a way to drastically reduce the greenhouse gas emissions. When you consider that Saskatchewan has about 300 years of inexpensive and easily accessible coal, it became even more evident and urgent that we find the place for coal-fired generation in Saskatchewan's future.

Given that challenge, a focused and dedicated group of SaskPower employees working alongside many of the world's leading researchers and practitioners in power, electrification, and emissions technology have come up with the first-of-its-kind solution. By 2014 Boundary dam 3 at the Boundary dam power station will be rebuilt with a state-of-the-art turbine and a fully integrated carbon capture system, a system capable of reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 1 million tonnes a year. That's the equivalent of taking more than 250,000 vehicles off Saskatchewan roads, about 25 per cent of all vehicles now registered in the province.

SaskPower will sell the captured carbon dioxide to oil companies to be used in enhanced oil recovery operations. The sulphur dioxide will also be captured and sold to companies who make sulphuric acid. These two income streams will help to offset the costs of the project, quite frankly help to pay for the project. With this project, Boundary dam will become the world's first commercial-scale power plant with a fully integrated carbon capture system.

This is a watershed moment in the history of SaskPower and in fact in the history of this province, one that holds the promise of securing a cleaner future for all of our coal-fired generating units and that has certainly captured attention of those from not just around North America, but in recent days we've been given full attention of the global interest that is being generated as a result of this announcement.

Mr. Speaker, to conclude I want to thank the many employees at SaskPower who have contributed thus far to the project as well as to the citizens of Estevan for their enthusiastic support.

Although there's a lot of hard work ahead and people are rolling up their sleeves, quite literally, within a couple of days the unwavering vision and unmistakable belief of everyone involved in this project has already proven that Saskatchewan can and is a world-class leader in excellence and innovation and that this government, in co-operation with the community and the private sector, has a bold plan to power a bright future for Saskatchewan today and for many decades to come, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd first like to thank the minister for providing me with a copy of the remarks previous to question period so as to better acquaint myself with what he has to say about this. Of course when the announcement was made to go forward, it's a bit of a mixed bag is how I would characterize this announcement, Mr. Speaker.

Carbon capture and storage certainly is the technology where if that circle can be squared in terms of, you know, the needs of Saskatchewan around a 300-year supply of coal that is available, if you can square the environmental impact side of that equation, Mr. Speaker, then this is a tremendous technology and is something that was pioneered right here in terms of the work that's been done over the past two decades, but on the one side, capturing and storing carbon, on the other side of the equation, using it in enhanced oil recovery and certainly work that was pioneered in the Apache Midale fields, Mr. Speaker, in the '90s.

I guess the concern part of the equation that we have here, Mr. Speaker, is the way that this government has had a habit of mismanaging or not being completely straight with the people when it comes to projects certainly related to carbon capture and storage. We saw the great fanfare and the shining of the belt buckles that took place when the Montana-Saskatchewan carbon capture and storage program was announced. The governor from the great state of Montana came to visit, and we had a great hoopla go on in the rotunda of this building, Mr. Speaker. But of course it came to pass that that announcement was all hat and no cattle, and all announcement and no action. And you know, it's sort of interesting, Mr. Speaker, the way that this government likes to hype things up on the front end and then the way it plays out on the ground.

So in terms of what's happened on this file in a general sense, that gives us some pause for thought and some concern, Mr. Speaker. I guess the \$240 million from the feds on a \$1.2 billion project, if this is indeed to be a world-leading project . . . And again this is in the context of a federal government that of course said to the people of Saskatchewan, when it comes to getting a fair deal on your natural resource revenues, Mr. Speaker, that they would sign a deal with the province of Saskatchewan worth at least \$800 million.

And of course when they reneged on that, the then government of the day launched into court action. And that court case was dropped by the current Sask Party government. And at the time the Premier said that, you know, this is not a problem. Such is our relationship with the Harper government that we're going to do as good or better than the \$800 million a year that that

commitment from the Harper government was supposed to be worth to the people of Saskatchewan. And we've seen how that's worked out, Mr. Speaker.

So on the one hand you've got the renegeing and the breaking of promises by the Harper government to their cousins here in Saskatchewan. But on the other hand, we see that a project that should be leading the world, and in many respects holds out that promise, Mr. Speaker, we see a project like that not getting the federal shoulder to the wheel, as should be the case. So that is something that we see as a concern.

We see as a concern the fact that before Christmas, in announcing the staged go-ahead with SaskPower on this project, that the president of the corporation stated in December that it would be "irresponsible" to go ahead without greater clarity on the greenhouse gas regulations from the feds. And certainly the minister has echoed that sentiment in various ways, up to and including the announcement of the SaskPower annual report in terms of the need for that clarity on the greenhouse gas regulations from the feds.

So what was deemed irresponsible by a very intelligent person, by a very knowledgeable person, by a very capable person before Christmas, Mr. Speaker, is apparently now just part of the cost of doing business. So that is something that we're also concerned about in terms of what changed that before Christmas it was irresponsible; now, after Christmas, it is not.

Something else that we're very interested in, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that in previous discussions on this file there were great assurances made in terms of the markets available for sulphur dioxide and carbon dioxide. And certainly the pioneering work that was done in the Apache fields, Midale way, would certainly hold out some promise for that in terms of CO₂ [carbon dioxide]. But in terms of sulphur dioxide, Mr. Speaker, and in terms of what the business case for this is going forward, the answer from the government of course is, just trust us because they of course are such great managers.

And again, Mr. Speaker, in terms of where we look at this from the opposition side, we have a lot of respect for the work of SaskPower, but when it comes to the political involvement of the members opposite and the way that they have oversight of these files, well we saw how that worked out on the Manitoba-Saskatchewan project being all announcement and no action. And then even the fact that that announcement wasn't worth the paper it was written on had to be ferreted out of the minister without a proper informing of the people of Saskatchewan.

So there are a number of problems that we foresee with this project, Mr. Speaker, not the least of which is that this was made on the eve of a federal election where it'd be hard not to think that this isn't about helping out their federal cousins, Mr. Speaker, in terms of having a good photo op.

But carbon capture and storage is something that should hold a lot of promise in terms of meeting the world's energy needs. We're going to be watching this project very closely, Mr. Speaker, and we'll see how the days unfold ahead. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Any further ministerial statements? I recognize the Minister Responsible for Energy and Resources.

Reopening of Prince Albert Pulp Mill

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise and advise the House that the Prince Albert pulp mill is open and moving towards a full restart. Paper Excellence has finalized the company's purchase of the Prince Albert pulp mill from Domtar. Paper Excellence will invest more than \$200 million to reopen this facility, and it comes with over 200 direct jobs . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Why is the member from Regina Dewdney on his feet?

Mr. Yates: — Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The member from Regina Dewdney has a point of order. I'd ask the member to state his point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I wish to rise today on a point of order. This is a previously announced on March the 7th, Mr. Speaker. I have a number of newspaper articles, Mr. Speaker. And one of the advantages of having an advance copy, I went through the minister's statement and checked off every single point that the minister's making in his statement appears in newspaper articles dated March the 7th, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, a ministerial statement is to announce a new, Mr. Speaker — a new — a new idea, program, or public policy, Mr. Speaker, not something that's been in the papers for more than two months.

[14:30]

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In response to the point of order to the Opposition House Leader, the Minister of Energy has not even had the opportunity to get to the point in his member's statement where the announcement is going to be made. I believe it's perfectly appropriate for the minister to be allowed to continue with the member's statement and get to the new announcement before the Opposition House Leader is able to make his point.

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I've listened to the point of order by the Opposition House Leader. I've listened to the Government Deputy House Leader's response. And I just remind the House that for the Speaker of the Assembly, it's difficult to determine or try to presuppose what the ministerial statement is going to be to even make a ruling in favour of the point of order. And the rules are ministers may or may not submit a copy ahead of the response. And it's been a long-standing practice that ministers have submitted a response. So before I could even make a qualified decision, I think it would be important for the minister to be allowed to make his response, and can certainly respond to the point of order after

the fact, or at a later time, once I've heard the ministerial statement. I recognize the Minister of Energy and Resources.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Reopening of Prince Albert Pulp Mill (continuedd)

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise the Assembly that the government will be providing new funding of over \$500,000 per year for the first two years to train new mill operators. Workers will be trained in the new processes before work begins at the facility.

Paper Excellence has an excellent track record in Saskatchewan as the operators of the Meadow Lake mill. In addition the government has worked with the parties involved offering the following provisions: the provision of an adequate fibre supply; an agreement that will see SaskPower purchasing electricity from the biomass power facility to be incorporated into the mill. That agreement calls for the purchase of biomass power at a price consistent with rates charged for this kind of project. In addition to maintaining the existing environmental liability for a period of time when the mill operated as a Crown corporation prior to 1986, the government will also ensure that new pension plan agreements will be in place that respect the obligations to previous employees.

Last week Paper Excellence announced they're embarking on an accelerated restart program with the goal of becoming operational in the next 12 months. Paper Excellence has also started hiring employees in Prince Albert, and its offices will be fully operational within a week. Paper Excellence expects that the new timeline will require major — the new timeline will require major forest harvest activity no later than this fall, Mr. Speaker. The company's discussions are advancing well within industry and First Nations partners, government, and a number of support operations. This is great news for the city of Prince Albert and the forestry sector here in Saskatchewan.

I would like to congratulate all groups involved who have worked very hard for the success of the finalization of this deal, including the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union, the city of Prince Albert, and our First Nations partners from the Agency Chiefs Tribal Council and the Montreal Lake Cree Nation and industry partners. Without everyone's involvement in this process, this important announcement could not be made possible.

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

Mr. Furber: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pleased to arise to respond to a point of order on the many points — in fact all of them — that were made on March 7th of 2011 . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. Order. Order. The member would be responding, I take it, to the ministerial statement, not to the point of order. And I ask the member just to go directly to the ministerial statement. The member for Prince Albert Northcote.

Mr. Furber: — Sorry, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. Now I would

like to congratulate groups involved, certainly the members of the CEP [Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada] in Prince Albert. They've been working very diligently on this project for a long, long time. The Agency Chiefs Tribal Council, I know they've done a lot of work on this. The Montreal Lake Cree Nation, the city of Prince Albert, and most of all, Mr. Speaker, additionally Paper Excellence because they are a major player in the province currently and have done some good work. And it's my understanding, through talking with many of the prospective employees out there, that they're happy to possibly be working again in Prince Albert in the industry.

Now if you want to talk about some of the details, Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that what we're talking about here now with this government is 28 per cent of the jobs that were existing previously at that pulp mill. And if you want to look outward into the rest of the forestry industry, Mr. Speaker, you don't have to go much further than Central Avenue in Prince Albert where the Forestry Centre of excellence has been entirely demolished and moved to Saskatoon.

So the people in the government here who are, and certainly the minister himself who is bragging about how he's involved in the forestry industry and that this is a great announcement for their government, it's absolutely false, Mr. Speaker. The credit is due to the people involved, as I've mentioned, certainly and to world global commodity prices of which the Saskatchewan Party has little control.

Now I appreciate the heckling from the Premier on this, however it's obvious that he had nothing to do with it either. So I'm not sure why, if he had a chance to say something today, he could've gotten on his feet and done that, but he's chosen not to, unfortunately.

So what happens, Mr. Speaker, is we are as a province blessed with an abundance of natural resources, and forestry is certainly one of them. But what's highlighted today, I would argue, is the need for policies where the benefit of those resources is maximized for Saskatchewan people. And we would appreciate if the government would move forward to doing that in more than just this case. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Any further ministerial statements?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 155

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Duncan that **Bill No. 155 — *The Natural Resources 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 pleasure to be able to get up and speak to Bill No. 155, *The Natural Resources Amendment Act*. There's a very high value to hunting and fishing in this province, Mr. Speaker, and through outfitting and many wildlife and nature organizations that are active in the province, Mr. Speaker, hunting and fishing alone is estimated to have an impact of \$100 million on Saskatchewan's economy. So one can see the importance that it holds for the economy of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, at first glance and having done some work on this Bill, Mr. Speaker, it seems somewhat innocuous. And even having spoken to some of the stakeholders, they're saying it seems somewhat innocuous when they first take a look at this Bill. So there are a number of questions that need to be asked about this Bill, Mr. Speaker, because there's still an uneasy feeling in those stakeholder organizations, Mr. Speaker. And that uneasy feeling of course stems from the Sask Party government's record on what it has done with respect to the preservation and continuation of wildlife in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we saw only last spring *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*, which was introduced under the Sask Party government last spring, Mr. Speaker. And what a colossal, colossal mess that was, Mr. Speaker, from everything from having introduced an Act which was absolutely unnecessary which pulled 3.5 million acres of wildlife habitat protected land out of legislation, Mr. Speaker, and put it into regulation. And for those that are watching and don't understand what implications that has, Mr. Speaker, what it means, Mr. Speaker, is that anyone can make application to the Minister of Environment and ask to be able to purchase that land, Mr. Speaker. And essentially when that land is placed, is taken out of legislation and placed into regulation, it can be sold basically at the stroke of the minister's pen, Mr. Speaker, without having any due scrutiny or due process of being questioned in the legislature, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what's interesting to note about *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act* is that it was introduced under a Conservative government, Mr. Speaker, a Conservative government, a true Conservative government that was not shady about what it stood for, Mr. Speaker, but was very clear and very open about what it stood for, Mr. Speaker, and wanted to ensure that their agenda was well known, unlike the Sask Party government which has no history, Mr. Speaker.

It was born out of the depth of the black of the night from a handful of Conservatives that knew that they would never be re-elected under that title again, Mr. Speaker, after the fiasco that happened in the '80s with leaving this province in a debt situation — matter of fact, bankruptcy situation — of \$15 billion, Mr. Speaker. So they renamed these five MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] out of the Conservative government and they renamed their group the Sask Party, Mr. Speaker. And that's what they needed to do to try and brush away their history, Mr. Speaker, and try and become elected under a different title. So, Mr. Speaker, that's what they did.

So what's interesting about that, Mr. Speaker, is that they changed their name. They have nothing that they stand for; they have no history. People have no idea what policies they have

because there's no policy discussion at their conventions, Mr. Speaker, absolutely zero at this year's convention, I believe it was four at last year's convention, and perhaps . . .

The Speaker: — Why is the Government Deputy House Leader on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — State his point of order.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Mr. Speaker, we are currently debating Bill 155, I believe, *The Natural Resources Amendment Act*. The member is clearly not speaking to the Bill, which is a long-standing rule of this Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. There has been a long-standing tradition to allow a very wide-ranging debate on the Bills, Mr. Speaker. This Bill has only been before the House with this Speaker less than one and a half minutes, Mr. Speaker, and the opposition Deputy House Leader is already rising on a point of order.

Mr. Speaker, if he would listen for a few minutes, just as in other debates, Mr. Speaker, other information, then you would hear the full entirety of the message that needs to be delivered to the Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Order. I have listened to the Government Deputy House Leader's point of order and the response from the Opposition House Leader and just want to remind the House that, yes, it has been a long-standing tradition that when we're debating Bills that the member that's on their feet should be referring to, or tying their debate to the piece of . . . or the Bill or the debate that is currently before the Assembly. However the Speaker needs a bit of time to as well determine if the member, whichever member it is, is actually tying the information to the debate.

So the point of order is well taken, but I would ask the members as well to also be mindful of the fact that in their debate to ensure that they are tying their comments to the specific piece of legislation. Currently we're debating Bill No. 155, *The Natural Resources Amendment Act*.

I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Ms. Morin: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, as I was saying with respect to Bill 155, the Sask Party government doesn't have a good history when it comes to protecting wildlife in this province, Mr. Speaker, as I was just citing from the example from *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people don't trust the Sask Party government. And why is it that they don't trust the Sask Party government? It's because they have a bad record so far, in the three and a half years that they have been elected, on this particular issue, Mr. Speaker. And they have no history, as I was explaining, because they were born out of the black of night from five Conservatives who had to realize that they had

to rename themselves the Sask Party in order to become elected, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, what do we see with Bill 155? We see a potential repeat of what the people of Saskatchewan are weary of, and that is there are not enough details in this Bill, Mr. Speaker, for people to honestly know what exactly is being done here. I mean there are a number of questions that have been asked by a number of colleagues as to what is being done here, Mr. Speaker, and unfortunately we have not received any answers to any of those questions that have been asked so far in any of the debate that's taken place in the House on Bill 155. All we know, Mr. Speaker, is that, like I said, the Sask Party government doesn't have a good history on protecting wildlife in this province, Mr. Speaker, and the habitat areas that are so important to them.

In *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*, Mr. Speaker, as I said, the lands can be applied for sale to the Minister of Environment. The Minister of Environment can simply sell those lands with a stroke of a pen. Now the Minister of Environment will currently tell you, or the Sask Party government will currently tell you that, Mr. Speaker, there are conservation easements that can be attached to those lands. Well, Mr. Speaker, what's interesting to note about that is last spring, in conjunction with *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*, Mr. Speaker, that removed the 3.5 million acres out of legislation and put it into regulation, they also passed *The Conservation Easements Amendment Act*, Mr. Speaker.

[14:45]

And what does that do, Mr. Speaker? That Bill allows someone to make application to the Minister of Environment to have a conservation easement removed from a piece of land, Mr. Speaker. And then guess what happens when the conservation easement is removed, Mr. Speaker? The Minister of Environment has free capability to simply sell the land because there is no conservation easement attached to that land, Mr. Speaker.

Now what's interesting to note about that, Mr. Speaker, with respect to 155 is that again we see a Bill that's being put forward to this legislature. The main stakeholder organizations that would be contacted with respect to Bill 155 aren't really sure why Bill 155 is being put forward either, Mr. Speaker, except for a few small nuances, but have a lot more questions to ask. So again we see with Bill 155 and *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*, Mr. Speaker, there are many more questions than there are answers.

And therefore, Mr. Speaker, because of the bad history of the Sask Party government when it comes to protecting wildlife and their habitat in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, there's an uneasy feeling and a feeling of mistrust. Now that feeling of mistrust of course extends far beyond *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act* or Bill 155, Mr. Speaker. It extends to many and numerous other Bills, Mr. Speaker. Matter of fact almost every Bill that's been brought forward in this legislature, Mr. Speaker, has some dubious aspects to it, Mr. Speaker, that the Sask Party government still has not been held to account for, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, one of the interesting things about Bill 155, as well as many other Bills that are brought forward by the Sask Party government, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that they want to reduce the accountability of the government, Mr. Speaker. Now what's interesting about this is — because they love to align themselves so closely with the Harper Conservatives so we know, Mr. Speaker, that there isn't much distinction there, and the poor Liberals that got caught up in the name change of the Conservatives to a Sask Party government, they simply got caught up in that whole thing, Mr. Speaker — but Bill 155 clearly delineates the fact that they want to have less accountability yet again, Mr. Speaker.

Despite the fact that it is a conservative mantra, whether it's a Sask Party government, whether it's the Harper Conservatives, that they claim — and I'll use that word very clearly, Mr. Speaker, — that they claim that they are going to be more accountable. The irony is, Mr. Speaker, that it's exactly the opposite, Mr. Speaker. The Harper Conservatives and the Sask Party government are yet one and the same when it comes to absolute complete lack of accountability, lack of transparency, and lack of lack of responsibility to the people that they represent, Mr. Speaker. That is what the irony is, Mr. Speaker, is that they say one thing and do completely the opposite, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that we're having this discussion about 155 and the notion of accountability on today, May 2nd, which of course is the date of the federal election in Canada, Mr. Speaker. Because, Mr. Speaker, what are we seeing from Canadians all across the country, Mr. Speaker? We're seeing that they are coming out in record numbers, Mr. Speaker. They are engaging themselves in the political process, Mr. Speaker, because they are tired. They're tired of having a government that feels that it can simply snub the people of the province of Saskatchewan, snub the people of the country of Canada, Mr. Speaker, and do whatever it wants despite the fact . . . the promises it makes to the people, Mr. Speaker. In this province alone, Mr. Speaker, Bill 155 has a huge reflection because, like I said, we're talking about accountability.

So let's talk about the fact that this Harper government that is looking for re-election today, Mr. Speaker, promised the people of Saskatchewan \$800 million in terms of equalization payments to the province of Saskatchewan. What that means, Mr. Speaker, is that the people of Saskatchewan should see some financial benefit from the resources it owns. And what did the Harper government do when it got elected, Mr. Speaker? It cancelled that promise, Mr. Speaker.

So Bill 155 talks about being, again being less accountable, Mr. Speaker. It talks about being less accountable to the people of the province. And, Mr. Speaker, we're seeing that with other Bills that are brought forward by the Sask Party government. And just to name a few, Mr. Speaker, Bill 160 is going to dictate less accountability to the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Bills 153, 154, Mr. Speaker, are going to be again delivering less accountability to the province of Saskatchewan. Through *The Provincial Court Amendment Act*, *The Provincial Court Consequential Amendment Act*, and *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code Amendment Act*, Mr. Speaker, all of those Bills, Mr. Speaker, not to mention many, many others that I can name, Mr. Speaker . . . And it appears that the Minister for

Crown Investments Corporation I believe, Mr. Speaker, wants me to name all those Bills, Mr. Speaker. And so, Mr. Speaker, if I have the ability of time, I would be glad to do so, Mr. Speaker, because clearly they have forgotten that. They have forgotten which Bills are providing less accountability, Mr. Speaker, to the people of the province, Mr. Speaker. And Bill 155 is yet another one of those Bills, Mr. Speaker.

Bill 155 is talking about again changing the structure of how things are going to be evolved for the funds that are going to be administered under the Ministry of Environment, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, there are some good points that are being brought forward, Mr. Speaker, but like I said, there are many, many questions that still need to be answered. And the implications . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. I've been reading through the minister's second reading speech, and I'm having a difficult time trying to determine where the member's comments are leading to in regards to Bill 155. And I would ask the member to refer to the Bill directly and the intent of the Bill. I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, this Bill is talking about changing the accountability structure under the Ministry of Environment. And, Mr. Speaker, that means that there is a change to the accountability of the Sask Party government as a whole when it comes to being accountable to the people of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, when this Sask Party government talks about being less accountable to the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, that's when the NDP opposition starts making sure that the people of Saskatchewan knows about the fact that this government is yet again putting forward legislation that is going to provide less accountability to the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And that again is talking about less transparency, less accountability, and less, less respect, less respect, Mr. Speaker, for the people of Saskatchewan.

And what I find interesting, Mr. Speaker, is that we have members opposite who think this is funny. They think it's funny, Mr. Speaker . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I find no comments in regards to accountability. I believe we're talking Fish and Wildlife Development Fund and debate on that area. And I'd just ask the member to address the Bill, the specific arguments for the Bill. And so I'd recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Ms. Morin: — Well, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, this Bill No. 155 is going to change how the fund is going to be administered. And, Mr. Speaker, we're speaking directly about the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund and how those funds are going to be administered. Now that is a matter of accountability, Mr. Speaker, and accountability is not something that the Sask Party government has a strong reputation of doing, Mr. Speaker. And I said we can cite many examples. I can go through the number of Bills that this government, Sask Party government has put forward which is a clear record of lack of accountability. So, Mr. Speaker, when we look at Bill 155, we have many questions to ask. And one of those questions is, how accountable is this government going to

be by changing the accountability structure of the fish and development wildlife fund, Mr. Speaker?

So as I said, let's look at a previous example. Well one of those examples, Mr. Speaker, is one of the first orders of government that the Sask Party government wanted to raise, was discretionary spending with respect to a longer reporting period for Executive Council. They wanted to multiply that by seven times the amount that the previous administration worked under, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, they love to speak about the fact that the previous administration was there for 16 years. The NDP was in administration for 16 years, Mr. Speaker. But what they don't like to talk about the fact is that the previous NDP administration was able to operate those 16 years in a very accountable fashion, Mr. Speaker, without having to decrease accountability, and was able to do so with a smaller amount of money in terms of discretionary funds, despite the fact that those funds do have to be reported in the long term. But in the short term, Mr. Speaker, those funds do not have to be reported. And that's what they wanted to increase — not by doubling it, Mr. Speaker, not by tripling it, Mr. Speaker, but by increasing it by sevenfold, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, they're going to be complaining about the fact that they feel that I am not staying on topic. But the point is, Mr. Speaker, is that I'm exactly on topic. Because when Bill 155 changes the accountability structure of that fund, Mr. Speaker, we have questions that have yet to be answered, and therefore these debates take place, Mr. Speaker. And that's why so many of my colleagues have stood on their feet and asked the questions that they've asked about this Bill, Mr. Speaker, Bill 155, which I seem to need to mention more often than not because my colleagues across the floor seem to forget which Bill we're talking about because perhaps they're doing other things or having conversations, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the fish and development wildlife fund in particular is talking about, they're talking about introducing an advisory council. And, Mr. Speaker, an advisory council is something that obviously we support and endorse, Mr. Speaker, because this Sask Party government's record on consultations has been less, even more dismal, I should say, than its accountability in terms of how it's going to report to the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. They are not consulting with the people of Saskatchewan. They are not consulting with the stakeholders when it comes to bringing forward various Bills that have been brought forward in the legislature, Mr. Speaker.

And Bill 155 has been discussed . . . well I shouldn't say Bill 155. Aspects of Bill 155 have been discussed with some stakeholders, Mr. Speaker. But again when those stakeholders are contacted and consulted, even they're not 100 per cent sure about whether they should have concerns about this Bill, Mr. Speaker, because they too have questions. And as I said, Mr. Speaker, their concerns are raised and their — how should I say? — their level of anxiety is raised by the fact that the Sask Party government is deemed to be doing, and is not just deemed but is doing, less to protect the wildlife habitat in this province, Mr. Speaker, rather than protecting it.

Interestingly enough, Mr. Speaker, *The Wildlife Habitat*

Protection Act was introduced under the Conservative Tories in the '80s and then made stronger yet under the NDP administration from '91 to 2007. So the first government we're seeing now to dismantle *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act* from the protection that it enjoyed under legislation, Mr. Speaker, is the Sask Party government, Mr. Speaker. And they had to shove that through, Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that all the stakeholders, except with the exception of one, Mr. Speaker, that they named in their second reading with respect to *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*, all said that they weren't consulted and they weren't in favour, Mr. Speaker. But they pushed through it; they pushed the Bill through regardless, Mr. Speaker, because that's how the Sask Party government operates, Mr. Speaker. It's move forward willy-nilly regardless of the stakeholder expertise, regardless of the stakeholder comments and concerns, Mr. Speaker.

So with Bill 155, as I said, Mr. Speaker, the stakeholders that have been contacted themselves aren't sure if they're comfortable with it, if there are alarm bells because there are many questions that have yet to be answered, Mr. Speaker, and those questions have not yet been answered.

Now the organizations that receive support from the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund do very valuable work in the province, Mr. Speaker, in terms of retaining fish and wildlife habitat. They've done much of this work over many years, Mr. Speaker, and the opposition clearly supports that work, Mr. Speaker. We are very, very pleased that Saskatchewan is a province that is bountiful with respect to fish and wildlife habitat, Mr. Speaker.

And you know, it's interesting that the member from Cannington is commenting from his seat about something. I can't even . . . I can't quite hear what he's saying, Mr. Speaker. But what's interesting is that he seems very bitter about the notion of protecting fish and habitat, wildlife habitat in the province of Saskatchewan. And I don't understand why he would feel that way, Mr. Speaker, because people are clearly outspoken on the topic, Mr. Speaker. Whether they belong to the stakeholder organizations or not, the people of this province want to see the natural wildlife and habitat of this province, Mr. Speaker, preserved and also enhanced, Mr. Speaker, because this is one of the great assets for the province of Saskatchewan. And if anyone speaks to the tourism industry, Mr. Speaker, they will tell you how important it is for the tourism industry of this province, Mr. Speaker.

[15:00]

And most importantly, Mr. Speaker, most importantly, if they would take the time to have those discussions with the First Nations and Métis people of the province, Mr. Speaker, they would come to realize how important the fish and wildlife habitat protection of this province is, Mr. Speaker, for the natural way of life, the traditional way of life for the First Nations and Métis people in this province, Mr. Speaker.

It is absolutely essential that we don't just play lip service to it, Mr. Speaker, but that we actually do some concrete actions to ensure that that natural way of life, that traditional way of life, Mr. Speaker, is preserved for the First Nation and Métis people of this province who are needing that not only for their cultural

practices and heritage, Mr. Speaker, but also as a means of making a living, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, this is something that is being ignored over and over again. Bill 155 is yet just one of those concerns again, Mr. Speaker.

But I raised some questions in the House today with respect to pollution of the airshed, Mr. Speaker, and pollution of the waterways, Mr. Speaker, and how that's going to affect Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, I talked about how it's going to affect, how it is affecting the environment, Mr. Speaker, how it's affecting farm land, Mr. Speaker, how it's affecting air quality and thereby health, Mr. Speaker, and thereby also affecting tourism industry, traditional ways of life, and ultimately the economy, Mr. Speaker. When things affect all of these different areas, Mr. Speaker, it affects the Saskatchewan pocketbook, Mr. Speaker. It affects the cost to the health care system. It affects the cost to the environment, Mr. Speaker, and it affects cost to the economy in general, Mr. Speaker.

So again, as I said, Bill 155, you know, initially appears somewhat innocuous. But there are so many questions that are left to be asked, Mr. Speaker, because of the mistrust that people of Saskatchewan and the stakeholders that are directly involved with protecting the fish and wildlife habitat in this province, Mr. Speaker, have regarding Bill 155.

Now the government is talking about expanding the scope of activities that are going to be funded, Mr. Speaker, and this again raises some questions. Now the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund receives a portion of the proceeds from every fishing and hunting licence. The amount of money in the fund is dependent upon the level of angling and hunting activity in the province. So as long as the activity continues to grow, then the scope of activities funded can increase as well, Mr. Speaker. But what happens to the projects being funded if hunting and angling activities drop as it could potentially do, Mr. Speaker? What happens to the projects that are being funded currently, Mr. Speaker? What happens to the new funding that is being proposed under Bill 155, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker, Bill 155 is now proposing to allow the minister to allot funding as he or she sees fit, Mr. Speaker, and that again causes concern with respect to Bill 155 because we don't know what those variables are at this time, Mr. Speaker. Those variables, Mr. Speaker, could very well be the issue of a number of professionals, whether they're biologists or water specialists or other people with broad experience who currently work within the department, Mr. Speaker, who provide these services and then also manage the contracts that a ministry might have with some of the outside agencies.

Now with this amendment, Mr. Speaker, it appears that it could also allow for a number of these ministry jobs to be eliminated and transferred out to some of these agencies, and that those funds would then be allotted to pay for those positions within those agencies, Mr. Speaker. That's a very real possibility, Mr. Speaker. And that again is where the opposition has concern with Bill 155.

And, Mr. Speaker, I do believe that these concerns have already been echoed in some of the comments from my colleagues, Mr. Speaker. And as I said, unfortunately no answers to those questions have been provided by the Sask Party government or

by anyone else opposite.

An Hon. Member: — Go into committee and ask a question.

Ms. Morin: — Now, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Environment is yelling, well go to committee and ask the questions. And believe me, Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what is going to happen given that there have not been any voluntary answers given so far by the questions that have been raised in debate on Bill 155 to date, Mr. Speaker. Those questions will come up in committee and they will be asked. And I'm hoping, Mr. Speaker, that the committee will be afforded the appropriate answers to those questions, Mr. Speaker, that need to be asked and that need to be answered on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan and the very interested stakeholder organizations who themselves have some questions with respect to Bill 155 and the changes that the Sask Party government is proposing.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate because, you know, it seems that the Sask Party government would like the people of Saskatchewan and the members of the NDP opposition caucus to simply allow this Bill to proceed, allow this Bill to pass, and they're saying, trust us, Mr. Speaker. And it's unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, that the NDP opposition can't do that. We can't simply trust them, Mr. Speaker. For one thing, we wouldn't be fulfilling our duty as the NDP opposition or the official opposition in the House of the Saskatchewan legislature, Mr. Speaker, who is duly elected to scrutinize and consult with stakeholder organizations to ensure that their needs are being fulfilled and that there isn't anything nefarious, shall we say, contained in the Bills that are being brought forward by the Sask Party government.

But what's even more disappointing, Mr. Speaker, is that the people of Saskatchewan simply can't trust the Sask Party government when it comes to Bill 155 or many other Bills, Mr. Speaker, because that trust, Mr. Speaker, that trust has been broken on so many past occasions that the trust factor has been long gone, Mr. Speaker — long gone.

Long gone is the trust factor with respect to further enhancement of protection of *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act* in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Long gone is the trust of the people of Saskatchewan that the Sask Party government would make voting processes more enhanced and simpler in this province, Mr. Speaker, rather than encumbering voters in this province in a further fashion from being able to exercise their democratic right, Mr. Speaker.

Long gone is the notion that this is a government, a Sask Party government, that truly believes in democracy, Mr. Speaker. Because as I've said on many occasions before, there is a Conservative party that exists in the province of Saskatchewan that would like to be able to participate in democracy and in the fall election of November 2011, Mr. Speaker. But unfortunately the \$3 million that they have in a trust fund is being held by . . . well there's been an accusation of some Sask Party members including the Premier and Deputy Premier . . .

The Speaker: — Order. Order. Order. The Conservative trust fund has nothing to do with the current debate that is taking place in the Assembly, the Bill 155, *The Natural Resources*

Amendment Act. I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Ms. Morin: — Mr. Speaker, it goes to the issue of trust. It goes to the issue of trust that people in this province have about whether or not people can trust the Bills that are being forwarded by the Sask Party government, including Bill 155, Mr. Speaker. It goes to the issue of trust on so many occasions and on so many topics. And I know this is a topic, Mr. Speaker, that I get shut down on almost every time I rise to my feet, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Order. Order. I would just ask the member to address the Bill that is currently before the Assembly, the wildlife natural resources amendment Act, 2010. I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Ms. Morin: — So, Mr. Speaker, as I said, the people of Saskatchewan and the stakeholder organizations that are interested in Bill 155 have no reason to trust the Sask Party government on this Bill because of their past history, Mr. Speaker. Their past history speaks volumes, and therefore there is no element of trust that can be had with respect to Bill 155, *The Natural Resources Amendment Act*, Mr. Speaker.

So that's why the scrutiny that needs to take place, has to take place, Mr. Speaker, in such a comprehensive way that we've had so many speakers on the NDP opposition side speaking to this Bill, Mr. Speaker, asking questions on this Bill, seeing various scenarios that could be created under Bill 155, Mr. Speaker, because there is an absolute lack of trust in the Sask Party government. A lack of trust with respect to the Bills that have been brought forward so far under the Sask Party government, and therefore there's a lack of trust with respect to Bill 155 as well, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we are also, as I'd mentioned before, concerned about this government's growing propensity to reduce accountability for how government funds are spent, Mr. Speaker. This Bill appears to give additional authority to the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund advisory council to decide how money in the fund is spent.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that council, advisory council, in making . . . in giving counsel, I should say, to the Ministry of Environment is something that we certainly encourage and would like to see the government to move forward on. But when that council has the ability to make decisions on how those monies are spent, Mr. Speaker, direct decisions, that is not accountability on behalf of the government, Mr. Speaker. That is them again wanting to shirk that responsibility. That is them again wanting to offset that responsibility of accountability, Mr. Speaker, and be able to say, it's someone else's doing; it's not ours.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is a pattern that we're seeing on a continual basis with the Sask Party government. It is their constant, constant, constant excuse for why decisions are being made in this province, Mr. Speaker. Whenever the decisions are good, they want to be able to claim responsibility for that, Mr. Speaker. But whenever there's any criticism of those decisions, Mr. Speaker, whenever there is any lack of accountability on those decisions, Mr. Speaker, that's when the Sask Party government says, well it was my deputy minister, Mr. Speaker,

or it was people within my ministry, or it was a completely different agency that is making those decisions — despite the fact that those decisions are having direct impact on the financial numbers and the debt, or liability, shall I say, for the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And so once again we're seeing an offsetting of accountability, Mr. Speaker, that raises some concerns. It raises many concerns, Mr. Speaker. Why are they wanting to, why is the Sask Party government wanting to offset accountability yet again? So what nefarious plans do they have in the future that will then be able to be claimed as not their decision-making processes, Mr. Speaker, but rather that of the advisory council? And so, Mr. Speaker, once again we have, we have some concerns and some questions about how all of this is going to transpire with respect to the proposed changes to *The Natural Resources Amendment Act*.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the members of the legislature were elected by the people of Saskatchewan to make decisions. And, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan are always, are always hoping that those are good decisions on their behalf, on how taxpayers' money is going to be spent, Mr. Speaker. It's completely reasonable to seek advice and expertise from outside government to inform the decisions of the government with respect to spending taxpayer money, but the final responsibility rests with the elected members of the government, Mr. Speaker. And so, as I said, there are some serious concerns as to how the accountability and responsibility of the Sask Party government is going to move forward under Bill 155.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there is a number of changes to Bill 155. And I just want to read some of what I've been researching here, Mr. Speaker. Again, as I said, there's some changing of the language, even though I want to read what the present law states, Mr. Speaker. It states that the assets of the Fish and Wildlife Development Fund can be used for:

the acquisition, by purchase, lease or otherwise, of any equipment or materials or the retention of any services that the minister considers necessary to restore degraded fish populations or fish habitat, to create new fishing opportunities or to manage fish habitat or wildlife habitat.

Mr. Speaker, the assets can also be used for "the design, development and operation of facilities to enhance fish habitat and fishing opportunities." It can also be used for "the acquisition of fish for fish stocking projects," Mr. Speaker.

[15:15]

And I know that that's something, Mr. Speaker, that is of great interest to the fishermen in this province, especially, as I said, in the areas where the fishing industry is a traditional way of life, Mr. Speaker. Because obviously we want to see those fish stocks replenished and we want to see the various fish species maintained, Mr. Speaker.

Now the fund can also be used for "the assessment or evaluation of any waters in Saskatchewan for their fish or fish habitat potential or any land for its wildlife or wildlife habitat potential." Now, Mr. Speaker, that's the law as it currently exists. And it's work that's being done through this particular

fund, the Saskatchewan wildlife and habitat development fund, Mr. Speaker . . . Sorry, the fish and wildlife habitat development fund.

Now, Mr. Speaker, and, you know, one would hope that a lot of that had been done over the years in conjunction and in partnership with other groups that have expertise in this area, Mr. Speaker, and that would be, for instance, the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, the Nature Conservancy of Canada, Ducks Unlimited, and many other groups, Mr. Speaker, as well as Saskatchewan Environmental Society. There is a wing, I understand, of that organization and many others, Mr. Speaker, that would have some expertise and direct knowledge about what should be done in these areas, Mr. Speaker.

So what's interesting is that that's the way the law currently exists; that's what it currently reads. And, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of good work that could be done under the law as it currently exists. So what we're seeing now is that Bill 155 is changing the nature of what's actually going to be done with these funds without necessarily explaining what's going to happen, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the blanket clause that I was talking about — and I want to quote that blanket clause, Mr. Speaker — which is the one that's somewhat troubling, is the one that "the engagement of any other services that the minister considers necessary to manage the fund." And then further, "the payment of the expenses of the council." So, Mr. Speaker, it does change how the fund is going to be administered with respect to the advisory council. It does change the fund in terms of what the fund is going to be funding, Mr. Speaker.

So currently, Mr. Speaker, the fund is addressing various projects and, as I stated, either the restocking of fish habitat or the preservation of fish habitat and species, Mr. Speaker. But this leaves it wide open to what I stated before, Mr. Speaker, the potential for taking expertise out of the ministry itself, assigning it to the agencies, Mr. Speaker, or having those individuals with that expertise picked up by the agencies, Mr. Speaker, and then having that funding allocated to the agencies.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if that takes place, Mr. Speaker, what in fact happens is that there will be less funding available for the projects that are currently being undertaken with these funds, Mr. Speaker, because these individuals that could end up having to be paid with respect to now having the expertise coming from the agencies are currently being paid out of the Ministry of Environment. So, Mr. Speaker, we can see how there's going to be an offsetting, Mr. Speaker. And we can see how those funds could then be stretched yet even further in terms of that potential.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we've not had anybody confirm or deny that, Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that this point has been raised numerous times in debate on Bill 155 by various colleagues and there have been many, many questions asked. So, Mr. Speaker, all we can do at this point is speculate as to what's going to be happening with that fund. And, Mr. Speaker, the sad part is, is even if there is reassurances given at this time that that may not be the case, that doesn't mean that it won't change into the future.

We know with *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*, Mr. Speaker, that to date there hasn't been any land sold. Now, Mr. Speaker, what we don't know is what's going to happen, let's say, in the spring of 2012, Mr. Speaker, if the Sask Party gets re-elected. We don't know what's going to happen if the Sask Party is re-elected and decides to simply claim open season on the selling off of those wildlife habitat protected lands, Mr. Speaker. Because right now they're keeping things very hushed, and I can understand why they would want to do that. If I was the Sask Party government, I wouldn't want to be raising alarm bells on *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act* given that it received the negative publicity it did for them, Mr. Speaker, in 2010 and still is, Mr. Speaker. So I would want to keep a lid on that, Mr. Speaker, and I'm sure that's what the Sask Party government is thinking at this point too.

But, Mr. Speaker, we don't know what nefarious goings-on are going to happen if they see re-election as a government, Mr. Speaker. No different than even if they make promises, Mr. Speaker, because those promises are easily broken just within weeks, Mr. Speaker. We saw essential services legislation being passed two weeks after they got elected, Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that the Minister of Health said two weeks prior to the election date that they would not be passing essential services legislation. So really their word unfortunately doesn't mean anything, Mr. Speaker.

So we don't know what's going to happen with Bill 155 even if promises are made or reassurances are given that the questions that we have about 155 with respect to how the funds are going to be altered, in terms of where they're going to be allocated, would be made, Mr. Speaker.

So that unfortunately is now cold comfort because, as I said, it speaks to the trust factor, Mr. Speaker, and the trust factor with the Sask Party government has been lost. It has been lost for a significant period of time and, Mr. Speaker, it only grows worse with their ongoing policies and changes that they're making to laws of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. The people of Saskatchewan have many concerns and they seem to be falling on deaf ears because the Sask Party government simply seems to think that they can be dictatorial in that realm, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we also see that there is a concern about what's going to happen with respect to the further acquisition of lands for wildlife habitat purposes with respect to this Bill, Mr. Speaker, because if those funds are depleted . . . And like I said, if those funds are currently supporting various programs and the acquisition of protecting wildlife habitat, Mr. Speaker, those funds will be stretched to a point, Mr. Speaker, where there won't be a lot of acquisition of further protecting the wildlife habitat, Mr. Speaker.

And as I said, there's also the variable of hunting and angling activity potentially dropping in this province, Mr. Speaker, which is how those funds are derived, from those fishing and angling licences, Mr. Speaker. I mean hunting and angling licences, Mr. Speaker. So if that happens, that of course diminishes the capacity that the fund would then have because it would diminish the amount of funds that would be going into the fund, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the irony is that the minister on his second

reading states:

The Fish and Wildlife Development Fund provides the money necessary to secure habitats to support a diversity of fish and wildlife species. To date the fund has acquired, through purchase or donation, approximately 212,000 acres of land for wildlife habitat purposes, with many acres under joint title with various partners. Aside from the obvious benefits to hunters, anglers, and outdoor enthusiasts, it is important to note that much of this land continues to be made available to local communities for haying and grazing.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is ironically exactly the same thing that the Sask Party government was saying with respect to *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*. It said, don't worry, everyone; everything's fine because a lot of those lands are currently being leased to individuals to use for haying and grazing, Mr. Speaker. And what's interesting is that despite the fact that those lands were at that time available to lessees to be able to lease that land, Mr. Speaker, for those purposes, it still decided that it needed to rip that 3.5 million acres of protected lands out of legislation and put it into regulations so it can be sold at the stroke of a pen, Mr. Speaker.

So what we're seeing here is that we again see lands that are also currently being made available to local communities for haying and grazing, Mr. Speaker, and yet we're seeing some significant changes as to how that fund is going to be administered, Mr. Speaker, and because of the significant changes to how that fund's going to be administered, also how those funds then are going to be able to acquire more lands for protection of that habitat, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I said, there are many questions about further acquisition of habitat lands. There's many questions about how the dollars are going to be stretched in the event there is going to be a lack of . . . a loss of expertise, I should say, in the Ministry of Environment that will then have to be picked up by stakeholder agencies, which can then look to have additional funds given to them to be able to pay for those positions, Mr. Speaker, because the minister will have discretion yet again.

So what we see, Mr. Speaker, is that there's a pattern. There's a pattern between the wildlife habitat protection, the amendments to *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*, the amendments to *The Conservation Easements Amendment Act*. Those two Acts were passed by the Sask Party last spring. We're seeing the same connection or the same coincidence with Bill 155, the Act to amend *The Natural Resources Act*, Mr. Speaker, with respect to giving more authority and more discretionary authority to the Minister of Environment himself, Mr. Speaker, which again we're talking about less accountability.

So the lesser amount of accountability that one has with respect to any decision-making processes and the more power that is given to one individual, Mr. Speaker, being the Minister of Environment, that's a decision that the Sask Party government has made with *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*, with respect to *The Conservation Easements Amendment Act*, and with respect to *The Natural Resources Amendment Act*, Mr. Speaker. There's a constant desire by the Sask Party government to allow

more discretionary authority by the Minister of Environment to make very important decisions with respect to how monies will be dealt with within the ministry, Mr. Speaker.

And that is of great concern because you're reducing accountabilities, Mr. Speaker. The Sask Party government is reducing accountability to the people of Saskatchewan. The Sask Party government is reducing accountability to the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And the Sask Party government is reducing accountability to those that have the greatest interest with respect to how these particular issues are being dealt with, Mr. Speaker. And I absolutely fail to see why a government thinks it's okay, why the Sask Party government thinks it's okay or all right to become less accountable to the people of Saskatchewan that it has promised that it would be more accountable to.

So clearly, Mr. Speaker, what we're seeing is lip service. We're seeing lip service to the people of Saskatchewan with respect to accountability and transparency. And what we're seeing is a constant change or constant changes to the laws and Bills that they're bringing forward, Mr. Speaker, that will provide less accountability and less transparency to the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Now I mean as I stated before, I can go on and give examples, but apparently they don't want to hear the examples. I'm sure that they know of them themselves. But I would be glad to provide those examples if someone would tell me that they'd like to hear them.

But, Mr. Speaker, it's no laughing matter. It really isn't a laughing matter. The people of Saskatchewan want to see an increase in accountability. They want to see an increase in transparency. And what they're getting from the Sask Party government is exactly the opposite.

And Bill 155 allows itself to be open to that speculation as well, Mr. Speaker, because we are not seeing a Bill that is strengthening that accountability. We're not seeing a Bill that is going to provide more transparency on these issues, Mr. Speaker. We're seeing a Bill, yet again, that is going to be able to hide things behind the minister's closed door or, you know, the Sask Party cabinet's closed door or the Premier's closed, the closed door of the Premier's office. That's where those decision-making processes lie now, Mr. Speaker, if Bill 155 proceeds in the way that it does without answering some concrete questions.

And as I stated, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately even if those reassurances are given, there is very little trust that the people of Saskatchewan can have in those reassurances because unfortunately those promises and reassurances have been offered and issued on so many topics before and have been broken, and the Sask Party government has proved themselves to do quite the opposite when it came to making those promises and reassurances to the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

[15:30]

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to bring my remarks to a close because there are many more questions that have to be asked and will be asked in committee, Mr. Speaker. And so I'm going

to allow those questions to be moved to committee, Mr. Speaker.

And I thank the House for their patience with the questions that I've brought forward today. I thank my colleagues for their support on this Bill and asking the many good questions that needed to be asked on this Bill, Mr. Speaker, because the scrutiny by the NDP opposition, Mr. Speaker, is something that I'm very proud of. I'm very proud of the dedicated and diligent work that the NDP opposition is putting into all of the Bills that are being brought forward in the House, Mr. Speaker, and I will close with my remarks. Thank you very much.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is that the motion by the Minister of the Environment that Bill No. 155, *The Natural Resources Amendment Act, 2010* be now read a 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: — Second reading of this Bill.

The Speaker: — To which committee does this Bill stand referred? I recognize the Minister Responsible for Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — To the Committee on the Economy, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The Bill stands referred to the Committee on the Economy.

Bill No. 172

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 172** — *The Victims of Crime Amendment Act, 2011/Loi de 2011 modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur les victimes d'actes criminels* be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Broten: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure this afternoon to join in on the discussion on Bill No. 172, *An Act to amend The Victims of Crime Act, 1995*. And yes there is a French title, Mr. Speaker, but I will spare the listeners at home and members seated in the gallery my attempt at reading that at this time. But of course there is a French title as well.

So Bill No. 172, Mr. Speaker, as I said, *The Victims of Crime Amendment Act*, this piece of legislation is an amendment to address how the release of information occurs in situations where there has been a crime, where there is a victim, and that the victim-based services are operating out of a police station or

a detachment. And this piece of legislation addresses how the information flow should be done, can be done, and ought to be done, Mr. Speaker. So it's a piece of legislation that is seeking, as I understand it in reading the second reading speech by the minister, to address a certain situation.

We know, Mr. Speaker, when we are talking to constituents, when we're talking to people in the community, that crime is something that is on the minds of Saskatchewan people and of Canadians. It's something that does affect many people in the province. We know, Mr. Speaker, whether it's through door knocking we may do in our own constituencies or whether it's through visits through our constituency office, whether it's through run-ins that we may have with people at community events in our home communities or outside of our home communities, we know that the issue of crime is something that is brought up by individuals.

And when we hear, Mr. Speaker, from victims of crime, we know in hearing those first-hand stories, we know how life altering and how significant the experience of being a victim of a crime can be for people. And that's completely understandable, Mr. Speaker, when we think of the tragic and the life altering types of incidents that can occur with many people when they are a victim of a crime.

I think, Mr. Speaker, of some incidents I've had with individuals in the community and talking with them about how crime affects them at the local level. I think of meeting an elderly woman who lives in my constituency in Westview, meeting her on the doorstep and talking about her perceptions of the neighbourhood safety, and hearing from her about how she doesn't like opening her door at night because she's concerned about who might be on the other side or what might be going on, concerned about her own safety and concerned about the safety of others in her neighbourhood.

So instead of answering the door if there's a knock or a doorbell that is rung late at night, she prefers to stay in her bedroom or her living room and simply let the situation pass. And I think, Mr. Speaker, that is a sad statement. I know it's not an isolated incident for many people in the province when experiencing incidents where they've been a victim of crime. It certainly has a significant effect on individuals.

And, Mr. Speaker, even if the vast majority of people in society don't experience the effects of a crime, Mr. Speaker, the fact that it does occur in certain instances, that feeds a larger perspective in our community that crime is a problem. And certainly crime is a problem for many parts of the province, in many cities, in many neighbourhoods, in many towns, and in rural areas. We know that crime is an issue. And how the government chooses to respond to crime is an important issue that certainly needs to be well-thought-out. And, Mr. Speaker, as I said, while not everyone may experience crime, if individuals are aware of or know of victims who have been wronged through a crime, that feeds a larger atmosphere or a larger attitude of mistrust with fellow citizens, and it feeds into the fears that people have.

I can think, Mr. Speaker, a few months ago I was out in my own neighbourhood taking my dog for a bike ride late at night, Mr. Speaker. It was dark. It wasn't super late at night. And there

was a woman who had just had her front window smashed in her veranda in our neighbourhood. And while I believe our neighbourhood is safe and a very good neighbourhood, having that incident happen — she had just moved into the neighbourhood and was renting a house in the area — it altered her perception of the neighbourhood and of everyone in the community. And that was a problem because I think we have a strong community with many positive things occurring, with many good people living in it, and neighbours who truly do look out for one another. But when an individual experiences something like that, even if in this situation no one was injured, there was no long-term harm done to the property or to the person, but it still instilled an atmosphere of fear within the community. And I think that is, Mr. Speaker, a sad thing when it happens.

Now the example I gave, Mr. Speaker, of a window being broken on a veranda by some young kids out in the neighbourhood, certainly that's not insignificant. It's a crime against property, and it instills fear within the broader community. When we look at Bill No. 172 and look at it's *An Act to amend The Victims of Crime Act*, Mr. Speaker, we can think of many other crimes that would occur in the community that would have long-lasting effects on the people who are the victims.

And in this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, it's making some amendments to address how the information flow occurs between a law enforcement agency and the partners who may be providing services to the victims who are a victim of the crime. And we know, Mr. Speaker, that sometimes the crimes that occur in the province are very serious and are very significant and certainly change individuals and families and communities for a very, very long period of time, Mr. Speaker. If it's a crime of a violent nature or a sexual nature, Mr. Speaker, we know that these types of crimes change a person's view on life for many, many years. We know that they're very significant and that they in some instances can really tear apart families and can cause a huge amount of personal turmoil for an individual.

So when we know that there are these types of incidents that occur, Mr. Speaker, in the broader community and in society, it's very important that we have a response as a collective, as the broader community we have a response that helps these victims of crime recover to the best possible ability that they can. It's important that we have a response that allows these individuals to deal with the consequences of the crime in the best possible manner. I think it's important that we have a response that allows us to help these individuals pursue justice in the best possible manner, that they can feel that justice has been served, that someone is held accountable for the crime that has been committed, and that the individual who has been wronged is able to bring some degree of closure and deal with the violation that has occurred and move forward in a positive way.

And, Mr. Speaker, that type of change and that type of progress isn't something that happens overnight. It's something that takes a very long process. And it takes the help of professionals and it takes the help of volunteers, Mr. Speaker, in order to deal with the crime that someone may be, the results of crime that someone may be experiencing.

So when we look at Bill No. 172, and we look at possible changes that could affect how services to victims of crime are delivered, it's important to ensure that we have a thorough examination of the proposed changes. And it's important that we ensure that the changes, Mr. Speaker, are in fact for the better, that they are constructive, and that they will help the individual move forward and have a better chance at recovering from the crime. And it's important, Mr. Speaker, that the actions also support the collective recovery as a community, that individuals within the broader community know that positive steps are being taken in order to reduce the amount of crime and to deal with the effects of crime that may be experienced.

In looking at the minister's second reading speech, Mr. Speaker, the minister states that the Ministry of Justice provides funding for 18 police-based victim services programs. He goes on to state that the staff and workers in these programs work closely with the police and assist victims in the immediate aftermath of a crime or a tragedy and throughout the criminal justice process. So we can see, Mr. Speaker, that the services that are provided through the police-based victim services program, they are there, as I stated, to help individuals from the early stages to more of the midterm stages with dealing with the effects of being a victim of a crime, whether it's the initial aftermath immediately following the incident or whether it's some of the process that occurs in the days and weeks following, Mr. Speaker, or whether it's the preparatory work and the assistance that is provided in going through the legal system, Mr. Speaker.

We know that can be a very trying and difficult time for families because often they're reliving the incident of the crime, and the experience can still be very raw. And even, Mr. Speaker, if the healing process has started or some degree of closure has occurred, we know that going through the legal process, at times that can reopen the wounds of the experience and it can become very real once again for the victims. So it is, Mr. Speaker, in my opinion, appropriate that the police-based services that are provided throughout the province and that are funded through the Ministry of Justice, it's important that those services are available through different steps of the process, different steps of the healing process and the judicial process that occurs following a crime, Mr. Speaker. And I think that's a very positive thing.

And once again, when we're looking at how legislation may be changed which could affect this process, it's important that we do so in a thorough manner because all members in the Assembly — I am sure, Mr. Speaker, there is no disagreement on this fact — want the best for Saskatchewan citizens, especially coming out of an experience where crime may have occurred and a victim may have been wronged in a very serious manner.

Mr. Speaker, there's other services that are provided through these police-based services. They include crisis intervention, information, support, and referrals to other specialized programs and services. And the services are provided by staff and a team of volunteer victim support workers. So once again, Mr. Speaker, we see the types of services that are provided through the police-based programs.

But it's not isolated simply to those programs. Through the volunteers and the professionals who may be working within those programs, they have the knowledge of other services and agencies in the community who can assist victims of crime in dealing with the results of being a victim. And we know, Mr. Speaker, that while there are 18 police-based programs, we know that in many circumstances in many communities the need may be greater. So it's most certainly appropriate to rely on other agencies and other professionals who can provide assistance to the individuals who are victims, Mr. Speaker.

[15:45]

Mr. Speaker, the minister goes on to state that these amendments seek to address a disclosure issue that has arisen with the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] across Canada. And the minister goes on to state, despite the RCMP's support of timely delivery of local victim services, they need greater local clarification that this information can legally be disclosed for this specific purpose.

So, Mr. Speaker, the minister mentions that there is a disclosure issue that has arisen within the Canadian context that has provided a degree of uncertainty for law enforcement officials with respect to the provision of information to some of the individuals that are active within the police-based victim services programs. And this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, is seeking to provide a legislative framework or basis for the actions that I would assume, Mr. Speaker, are currently under way or have been under way for a period of time.

I am curious, Mr. Speaker, the minister did not elaborate too much on this in his second reading speech, but I am curious about the disclosure issue. What is the root cause or what is the basis for this disclosure issue? I'm curious, Mr. Speaker, if individuals in Canadian jurisdictions have made a complaint that information has been shared in a way that they were not supportive of or were not aware of. That's perhaps one possibility that I would be curious to have more information from the minister on, as I think that would be appropriate to see if this is complaint-based or complaint-driven. Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, it's more substantial than that. I don't know if there's a lawsuit perhaps that has been initiated because of this sharing of information and if that's occurred in a different jurisdiction or not.

That's another question I have, Mr. Speaker, and also, Mr. Speaker, if the complaint originates out of concerns about privacy. We certainly know that when dealing with personal information, it's so very important to have the strictest guidelines around the control of that information because people are very protective, and rightfully so, of their personal details and their personal stories.

And, Mr. Speaker, we've seen in recent weeks, it's a related issue certainly, Mr. Speaker, where we see the accidental or the negligent care of medical information that has been available in the broader public. And we know that when it comes to privacy and when it comes to individuals' personal details, individuals are protective. They are concerned, and they want the highest standards in place in order to ensure that their information is protected, that their information is safeguarded, and that their information will not accidentally fall into hands of individuals

who should not have access to that information. So, Mr. Speaker, we know, it's commonly accepted and commonly known and believed, I think, by the public that when it comes to medical records, we want high standards and we want protection of personal information.

Mr. Speaker, and people have that feeling because the nature of medical issues are very personal, are very at times sensitive. Individuals might not want that information broadcast. They might not want that information available to the broader community. And there can be a number of factors which would motivate an individual to take that position. Maybe it is fear of consequences from family members or other individuals in the community, or maybe it's just a privacy issue. Some people are very private when it comes to their personal matters, and they don't want information broadcast. Other individuals are more readily willing to put it up on Facebook or send it out on Twitter and have the world know about a personal situation. But for many people, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to personal information, they want to ensure that there is the highest level of control and the highest level of integrity of handling that information.

We know, if that holds true for situations of a medical nature, we know most certainly, Mr. Speaker, that when it comes to details of a crime where a victim is involved, it's maybe even a higher level of control that is needed and desired by Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to comes to crimes that individuals have experienced. And when they are truly a victim, there are so many emotions that are present through that process. Sometimes individuals will blame themselves. Sometimes members of the community will blame the victim and not cast the blame on the offender where it is most certainly deserved. So when we think of those situations, Mr. Speaker, if individuals want the information held with the highest level of privacy and if they want that information secure and protected, we can understand how, when we're talking about the sharing of information as it relates to specific crimes, we can understand how they would be very concerned and would want the highest levels of protection of personal information.

So when the minister in his second reading speech suggests that this piece of legislation, this amendment is seeking to address a disclosure issue that has arisen with the RCMP across Canada, it would be interesting, Mr. Speaker, to have a bit more context on that — if it was a specific case, if it is widespread. In what jurisdictions is this occurring? Is there a lawsuit involved, or is it simply a complaint based on one's high desire to have the best levels of privacy possible? So I think that's very important, Mr. Speaker.

As the minister suggests in his second reading speech, this piece of legislation applies to individuals who must be engaged in the delivery of police-based victim services. So this is addressing individuals who are working and active within the context of police-based victim services. So this piece of legislation as I understand it, Mr. Speaker, it's not being applied to or being . . . it's not suggested that it will be applied to the other community providers, whatever type of community-based organization that may be or what other types of professionals may be present and working in this field, Mr. Speaker. In my earlier remarks I talked about the very important role that other

community-based organizations can play and serve with the delivery of services to victims of crime. That's very important. But as I understand it, Mr. Speaker, through this piece of legislation, the minister says, "To be designated under this section, the person must be engaged in the delivery of police-based victims services." So that is an important point to state for individuals listening at home who might have some potential concerns about this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker.

What's also important, Mr. Speaker, which I noted in the minister's remarks is a following paragraph where the minister states:

. . . the Act specifically limits the purposes for which the information may be used to firstly contacting the victim and secondly providing or facilitating victims services. If an individual declines these services, no further contact will be made. The designated victims services provider will be required to destroy the information that was required under this Act.

So what we have, Mr. Speaker, is some clearer statements being made about how this information can be used, with two examples being provided in the proposed amendments through the minister's second reading speech. And also the component, Mr. Speaker, where it says, "The designated victims services provider will be required to destroy the information that was required under this Act." So what we have, Mr. Speaker, is the statement that information will also be destroyed and not be made available and that information will be handled properly or it ought to be handled properly, so that that's the idea. I think that's very important, Mr. Speaker.

We know that when victims are dealing with providers of care after they've been a victim of a crime — again these are very delicate and very concerning matters for the individual — and when they are dealing with those providers, when it's in a professional relationship between the victim and whoever the professional provider may be, there's certainly a high degree of trust there, Mr. Speaker, through that relationship where the victim is in a very vulnerable position. And the person providing the services is in a different position. They know detailed personal information. The victim may be opening up and sharing details and facts with the provider, so it's important to have tight guidelines for how that information can and cannot be used.

And I certainly see it as perhaps it could be a challenge, Mr. Speaker, in some victims' minds if they're dealing with a provider who's providing services, since they are a victim, and then they're also dealing with law enforcement agencies, as they ought to and should, how the different roles, Mr. Speaker . . . It's important to clearly delineate the different roles and how the flow of information can and cannot occur in order that the victim can have the best possible relationship with the provider of the important services for the person.

We know that, as I said, when dealing with crime, when someone is a victim of crime, it's a feeling I would imagine, Mr. Speaker, that you sort of have to live through it in order to fully understand what the feelings are. I know I've communicated with a few people in my constituency who have been victims of very serious crimes and heard first-hand about

how it's affected their family. And I've seen first-hand the tears that are shed and the pain that is experienced and the different ways that that can manifest itself in a family relationship, going through a variety of emotions from rage to deep sorrow.

So we know that when one is a victim of a crime, it can have a life-altering effect on the person. And it's so very important that the services we're providing through the state, through funding through the Ministry of Justice, and through the police-based victim services providers, Mr. Speaker, it's so very important that we get it right and have the services that are available for the individuals so that they truly can, to the best of their ability, address the issues that come out of the experience, try to deal with them, handle them in the best possible manner, and, Mr. Speaker, seek to stop any sort of continuing cycle or magnification of the problem so that when there has been an issue, it can be addressed and it does not feed itself and it also does not feed other crimes and other incidences that have a negative affect on Saskatchewan people. And I know that's certainly what all Saskatchewan people would want, and it's what all members of the Assembly would certainly want, Mr. Speaker.

We do see . . . So while, Mr. Speaker, this piece of legislation, some might address it as housekeeping because it's more or less providing some clarification, as with any piece of legislation while something may appear to be of a housekeeping nature, when we look at the issues that are involved and the implications or consequences of a particular piece of legislation, it's important to remember that legislation affects people in their everyday lives. So when we're as elected members discussing proposed amendments, it's important to ensure that we do our job in examining all the intended consequences and perhaps some of the unintended consequences or implications that may come out of the proposed piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, in this piece of legislation, it addresses something very serious. It addresses how victims of crime are able to receive services from police-based victim services providers. I think, Mr. Speaker, that all members would recognize that when a crime occurs in a community, it's horrible for the person who is a victim. But, Mr. Speaker, it also has broader implications. It has a broader rippling affect through the community. And whether that's something minor, whether that's an unwanted piece of graffiti on a garage in an alley, or whether that's something very serious where an individual loses their life because of a violent crime or has to live with a disability, an acquired brain injury, for their entire life, Mr. Speaker, because of an incident, we know that the effects of crime are very real and are very important and that the fear that can be instilled in a community is a bad thing for our society.

We know, Mr. Speaker, that as elected members and as a broader provincial government, it's important that we take an approach that assists these individuals to the best possible level in addressing the pain that they have experienced and being able to move forward and move beyond the incident. We would ask, Mr. Speaker, that through the services provided that the incident of the crime would not define the individual, would not define the victim, Mr. Speaker, but that it would be one step or mark on a longer and a more positive life journey that individuals are on.

[16:00]

So we know, Mr. Speaker, that this piece of legislation is seeking to provide some clarification to the law based on some experiences that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police have had in different jurisdictions within the country, as it has been stated. In order for the police-based victim services providers who, as I understand, Mr. Speaker, would operate within a police station or a detachment in most instances in most communities, it's important, Mr. Speaker, that the proper legislative framework and guidelines are in place in order to ensure the proper and the appropriate release of information but also the proper control of information as it is provided from law enforcement officials to care providers. And knowing that crime and that victims of crime have very real concerns, Mr. Speaker, there of course has to be the proper checks in place about the information flowing the other way, back to law enforcement officials, in order to maintain the appropriate level of trust between victims and care providers. I think all members would agree that that is an important consideration when looking at any piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker.

So this piece of legislation seeks to provide some greater clarity for the variety of service providers that are police-based within the province, Mr. Speaker. As the minister stated, there are 18 police-based victims services programs that are funded by the Ministry of Justice in one way, shape, or form, where there may be employees or volunteers working and operating, helping victims of crime deal with the consequences that they have been subjected to by no choice of their own in most instances, Mr. Speaker.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I have raised a few questions that I have had around the area of, what was the disclosure issue? What was the nature of that issue, and where was the location of it? And what was the extent of the concern? And it'd be interesting, Mr. Speaker, to see if other jurisdictions are having to pursue this type of legislation in order to address the problem. That is a question I have, Mr. Speaker.

I am also, Mr. Speaker, pleased to see that there are guidelines in place that will require information to be destroyed. Because we know from the experience of medical records, we know that people closely guard their medical information and take great care in all types of personal information. So if we know the care that individuals have around their medical records, most certainly when it comes to the details associated with an incident of crime that they may have experienced, we know that they also hold that in a very high level of privacy and desire a great level of control over that information. I think that's a very important thing to remember, Mr. Speaker.

So those are many of my comments, Mr. Speaker, with respect to Bill No. 172, *An Act to amend The Victims of Crime Act, 1995*. I know that there are other members on this side of the House who would like a chance to share some of their views and concerns and questions before this goes to committee. So at this time I will not be sending it to committee, but I will move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 172. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Massey Place has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 172, *The Victims of Crime Amendment Act, 2011*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly

to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

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

Mr. Trew: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today of all days to be talking about an election Act. Isn't it an amazing democracy that we live in?

Of course everyone knows that we've seen some history happening. Yesterday Osama bin Laden was killed in a sanctioned death by the Government of the United States of America, and I think it's safe to say that in most of North America, Americans and Canadians alike say that the world is a somewhat safer place today than it was yesterday. So we had that happen yesterday. Today we have a historic general election right across Canada.

And this ties right in to Bill 161, *An Act to amend The Election Act, 1996* because, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan election Act changes are mirrors. They reflect what the federal Conservative government put in place with its election Act. And the problem, if I can put it this way, Mr. Speaker, is this election Act is a solution to a problem that frankly doesn't exist. It's a way for government to do something. And let me say that if you went and talked to your neighbours and friends . . . And I know that you do. I know that, by its very nature, all of us in this Assembly talk to our neighbours, our friends, our families. And strangers, quite frankly, when they find out we're elected, always or often have an opinion. And this is a good thing about our democracy.

But in all of the people that I've ever talked to about elections, not once have people said, you know, you've got to fix it by making it more difficult for people to vote. Not once has anybody said that. I have had lots and lots of discussions with people about the voter turnout going down, and what do we do to encourage people to vote in elections? What do we do to get the participation up? Again I say, Mr. Speaker, not one time has anybody ever said, you know, to fix this imaginary problem, you got to make it more difficult for people to vote. You got to require two pieces of ID [identification]. You've got to take away from people that might have simply just moved and haven't established their residence, no ability to prove their residence, you take away the right to vote from them.

Nowhere has anybody suggested that that is in the interests of democracy. Nowhere but right here on the floor of the Saskatchewan legislature have I seen that. Nowhere have I seen that . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And the Premier says, what about NDP nominations? Well you know what? And the Premier will know this. New Democratic Party has nomination rules, and we're pretty proud of the way we conduct our

nominations. In a democracy, occasionally you may have some dispute, and we have always tried to handle the disputes to the best of our ability. Nowhere have we tried to make it impossible for people that are homeless to vote. It just is not on.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill 161 actually attacks, I know I'm talking about people who have just moved, but it attacks a very significant portion of our population and that is people that not only have just recently moved but are moving and moving and moving. I'm talking about the more than 2,200 people in Regina alone that are couch surfing. Not all of them. In fact a fair number of them are too young to vote. But when they get to be voting age and otherwise qualified to vote, it doesn't seem to me that the way to bring people into the mainstream of our society is to say, we don't want your opinion. We don't want you to participate. We don't want you to be able to do the most fundamental thing in a democracy, and that is have a say in who is going to form your government and what your government is going to stand for.

Mr. Speaker, a democracy is far better served when we have politicians willing to stand up, as Jack Layton has federally, and said, this is what I believe in. Not saying that every one of us should, as Canadians, should follow blindly and believe in the things that Jack Layton or Mr. Ignatieff or Stephen Harper the Prime Minister believe in. But in our democracy . . . or Elizabeth May for that matter, the leader of the Green Party or any other leaders.

But in our democracy we should have the opportunity to hear what they have to say and then to pass judgment on days like today where we have a federal election that is following, by and large, the rules that are being proposed right here. The shame of today nationally is going to be . . . If we pass this Bill here without amendment, the shame of our national government is that it's going to disproportionately leave out homeless people or people that have either very recently moved and can't establish a residence that they're eligible to vote under the rules of this election Act. Or people who are even a step further or one or two steps further down the socio-economic ladder in our great nation, and can't afford a home so they're living with this relative this week, this friend next week, and somewhere else the week after that. And because they can't afford to rent a place to live, to call home, they obviously can't establish a permanent residence, and if you can't establish a permanent residence under *The Election Act*, you can't vote.

But, Mr. Speaker, just as sure as any of us in this Assembly are citizens of Canada, just as surely as any of us deserve the opportunities to try and help ourselves and improve our lot in life, these very people I'm describing need more of a hand up rather than to be pushed away and told that they're totally without value. That's a shame in 2011 in Canada. It's a shame that we're doing this.

This election Act also of course is going to be disenfranchising some senior citizens, Mr. Speaker. I don't want to overstate the importance or not of senior citizens, of one group versus another, but let me simply say that as we get longer in the tooth, as we age, we tend to have more reasons — I'll put it that way — not to be in control, in care and control of an automobile. And once we've determined in our own right or someone has determined for us that we're unfit to be in care and control of an

automobile, there's no reason to have a driver's licence other than for the blessed photo ID that we need and will need in Bill 161, Mr. Speaker.

Again this election Act amendment is a solution for the problem that never was. It's a solution for a problem that doesn't exist. And why would a government be so determined to fix something that isn't broken? Why wouldn't the government, instead of doing all kinds of training and public education on how it is that we can vote, why wouldn't a government take the million or so dollars that it takes for that, why wouldn't it put that into an ad like some young people have done nationwide that said things like I've heard in this election, you know, you don't have . . . your opinion doesn't count unless you vote; you don't have a say unless you exercise it — things like that that are more encouraging of people to get out and vote. It seems to me that our democracy would be much, much, much better served.

And, Mr. Speaker, absolutely in a non-partisan way, I want to tell you that in every election that I have fought where my name has been on a ballot, I've run into people that say, well I don't vote. And I'm always profoundly disappointed in that. And I won't say invariably because I would be recounting every single conversation. But when I get the chance, I say to someone that says they're not going to vote, I say look, I wish you would vote. Even if you're voting for someone else, for one of the other parties or the other candidates, I wish you would vote. Because if you vote, you have a right to have some say in how our government operates. You have some right to complain to whoever becomes your MLA, in this case me. If you don't vote, I don't really want to hear from you if you just simply chose not to vote. I do say that. Of course, I can't make that stick. If somebody doesn't vote and then comes to me, of course I'll try and help them. Through my constituency office, I'll try and help sort out whatever their problem is.

[16:15]

But my theory has always been, Mr. Speaker, that if I can get someone to vote for the first time, they're much more likely to vote a second time and a third time. And they don't have to — again I say in a totally non-partisan way — they don't have to vote for me; they just have to vote. And then in our democratic process, we have a chance to communicate with them. And once they're tuned in to the fact that politics does make a difference in our daily lives, then you have an opportunity to encourage people to vote in subsequent elections.

It is on that front very important that — just to finish with my seniors, I got sidetracked — it is very important just as we encourage young people to vote for the first time and get them into the loop of voting then, it is arguably even certainly as important that we would include seniors and their ability to vote.

When I went and voted this morning, Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you there was a steady stream. This time of day, not surprisingly, it wasn't people that are working at a grocery store or are, you know, running a 7 Eleven or running a service station. It was seniors, and you know some of them getting to that polling station with some physical difficulties. But I was filled with admiration for their determination to participate in the electoral process, the great thing in Canada we call a general

election and the great thing that in Saskatchewan, when the time comes this November, we will call a general election in Saskatchewan.

And I just want to tell you, I so admired the seniors that made the extra effort when it would have been so much easier just to watch it on TV and say, you know, I participated in these darn votes for 50 years or 60 years, in some instances even longer; it's time for me to just take a pass. I'll just watch the news tonight and find out who's forming the next government. But these senior citizens remember what the two great wars were about, certainly the Second World War. What we're told it was all about was our ability to have a democracy, our ability to have a say in our governments. These people take that really, really seriously.

Many of them lost brothers, occasionally sisters, uncles, aunts, friends, lovers, in the war. Some of them said goodbye to a lover and the lover never came back from the war. How tragic. What missed opportunities that were. But these seniors are the people that have lived it and understand the importance of getting out to vote, Mr. Speaker.

And then we have an election Act, Bill 161, *An Act to amend The Election Act* that says, but you've got to have photo ID. Never mind that you maybe can't drive, as was the case with one out of three of the people that I saw voting this morning. One out of three were brought to the polls by typically a neighbour, another elderly person, but someone that was able to drive.

I think of my late mother-in-law who never held a driver's licence. You know, if she were alive, why, you know, she'd need to get a driver's licence so she could have a photo ID so she could vote in a general election, something that she did all her adult life. I don't think, I don't believe that my mother-in-law ever missed a vote. Or my own mother, you could say the same thing, except my own mother had a driver's licence.

But, Mr. Speaker, the simple thing that the government should do is take out the parts of this election Act that make it more difficult for people to vote, the things that disenfranchise poor people, that disenfranchise homeless people, and that disenfranchise seniors. Take those offending parts out of this Bill 161, and you know what? We might have the nucleus of a decent election Act. And I say, might have.

The caveat that I put on this, of course, is the little piece of history that, the simple fact that we have a system in Saskatchewan where we have an all-party committee that casts about for the next Chief Electoral Officer. And the all-party committee in Saskatchewan made a unanimous recommendation as to who that should be, and the government rejected it. The government rejected it, a unanimous recommendation, when the government had their person on the committee as well. Three out of four they had, and they took a recommendation for the Chief Electoral Officer forward, and it got rejected by the government, either cabinet or caucus. I'm not privy to who it was but the fact is, rejected.

Now that leads to all kinds of questions, Mr. Speaker, as to the commitment of the Sask Party government to running a fair

election, to having an independent officer of the Legislative Assembly, which is what the Chief Electoral Officer is supposed to be, is an independent appointed by all parties. We had signed off on that Chief Electoral office nominee. We'd signed off with . . . If we'd had reservations, I can guarantee they were made at the committee level and once we said yes it was yes, and we wouldn't be slip-sliding away, as the song goes, Mr. Speaker. We are good to our word and frankly we still think that the selection was a good one.

Mr. Speaker, we've got an election Act that is being put forward by a Sask Party government, a government that quite frankly we had a . . . Recently we had a by-election in Saskatoon. We had a by-election there in which one of the Sask Party ads that was used had a clip out of this very legislature, used a clip in its partisan advertising from this very legislature, a clip that it should be known to everyone — it certainly should be known to the government — that's not, not allowable without getting agreement from the people in the Chamber to use that clip. And that agreement was never granted, Mr. Speaker. And yet, and yet the government used it for their electoral purposes in the recent Saskatoon by-election.

I'm saying this simply to set the gold standard, if you like, that we have a government that can't be trusted with elections, and the reason is . . . I mean just take their actions, Mr. Speaker. Take what they did in the recent Saskatoon by-election. Take what they're doing in this election amendment Act, Bill 161, where . . . And it's not, just for the Minister of Advanced Education's edification, it has nothing to do with whether I liked or didn't like the election results out of Saskatoon. It has everything to do with following the law which the Government of Saskatchewan passes and is obligated to follow. It has everything to do with following the law, sir, and has nothing to do with the result.

And I know that members opposite, I've hit a nerve here, Mr. Speaker. And you know what? If it feels like I hit a nerve, there's a simple way to miss it. There's a simple way. Just follow the bloody law. That's all we ask. Just follow the law as it's written, as you're charged with upholding, Mr. Speaker. Follow the law and we're a bunch of happy campers.

We are the ones that say, let democracy rule. Let the electorate decide. Absolutely, at every turn, let the voters decide. But if you have a law, for heaven's sakes, follow it. It just . . . Common sense dictates that you have to do that, or else why have a law? If it is just might is right, well then let's have at it. Let's take the gloves off and really go at it and see if anyone is left standing at the end of the day.

It's not a democracy that I would cherish or value and indeed I think it's one that Canadians are rejecting today. I think Canadians are saying no. They want upbeat politicians. They want people that will put forward positive suggestions. And they're letting the values dictate what's going to, who we're going to elect rather than anything else.

So you know, we're seeing a decline in votes, a decline in voters, and yet we see a government that's trying to discourage people. I've talked about that. We see seniors being discouraged. We see young people and poor people being discouraged from voting. And you have to ask yourself, why is

it that the government is so determined in Bill 161 to do that? We have a government that I've outlined bending the rules or disobeying the law — take your pick — but bending the rules when it comes to the selection of the Chief Electoral Officer, and even worse when it comes to the by-election recently in Saskatoon.

I can't be a whole lot clearer in my objections, Mr. Speaker. The problem with Bill 161, *An Act to amend The Election Act*, is the fact that it disenfranchises too many people. It's a government solution to a problem that the electorate certainly doesn't recognize. The problem that the government is trying to fix with this Bill 161 is, the problem is it's trying to fix elections. It's trying to disenfranchise people that historically have been more apt to vote New Democrat. And the government's saying well okay, we've got a problem there. How do we resolve it? Well let us simply move out homeless people and say their opinion isn't welcome; they can't vote.

Let's disenfranchise renters. And rent . . . For heaven's sakes, the Leader of the Opposition has proposed that we have rent control. The Premier has said no to rent control. Well guess what? Most renters are going to be taking the view that when rents are going up by a third in a year, that they're going to take the view that the Leader of the Opposition has the more reasoned and reasonable approach to a problem with rising rents and all of the issues around there. Because the status quo isn't working well for people that are having to move to lower and lower standard housing or apartments because they can't afford the increased rents. So when you move and you haven't got your photo ID updated or you haven't got your electrical bills yet mailed to your new address but you have moved, you're effectively disenfranchised in Bill 161, disenfranchised from voting.

So renters, by the very nature of renting versus owning, whether it's a house or a condo or, you know, whatever you own, duplex, whatever you happen to own, you tend to stay there a bit longer than if you're renting. Rent is typically month to month, and renters, again by nature, move more often. So it's just obvious from that very statistic that renters will get caught out when a general election is called, and more effectively disenfranchised. And I say shame on any government that has any concern at all respecting democracy.

Mr. Speaker, this is the second time I've spoken on this Bill, and I actually want to wind up my remarks. I want to wind up my remarks simply by making the plea to the government to take out the changes to what it takes to being able to vote. Take out those changes that make it more difficult for people to vote. Let people simply swear in.

[16:30]

In most polling stations across Saskatchewan, I can bet big dollars that people know who is coming to vote. They'll recognize them. They've seen their neighbours; they've seen their friends. In many of the small communities in Saskatchewan, they know them. They greet them by first name on a daily basis. So don't, don't do Bill 161, which is the government's solution to a problem that the voters don't see or don't believe exist. It's a problem of how people vote.

Mr. Speaker, I've spoken at some length on this Bill. I really do wish the government would reconsider just the parts that deal with how you qualify to vote. I'm urging that the government do that. But at the end of the day, all I can do is be a modest voice, and that's the voice that I have tried to be. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I conclude my remarks and thank you for your attentiveness.

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

Mr. Yates: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased this afternoon to enter into debate on Bill 161, *The Election Amendment Act*.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most fundamental responsibilities we have as citizens is to vote and to choose a government, Mr. Speaker. And we have a long history in our province and in our country, Mr. Speaker, of electing governments and electing representatives of the people in an open and very forthright way, Mr. Speaker. We have a history also in this province, Mr. Speaker, that when Acts, or changes to *The Election Act* are made, Mr. Speaker, that it's been done through consultation, it's been done through working with the political parties, to ensure that any changes to *The Election Act* are fair. Fairness is one of the things that is absolutely fundamental in our system of government, Mr. Speaker, in our ability to elect a government that is seen by the people to be truly representative of the people.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have today before us amendments to *The Election Act* that we're a little bit confused where the stimulus for the changes came from, Mr. Speaker. Because in the past when *The Election Act* was amended, Mr. Speaker, the political parties would have got together, they would have talked about the problem that the people of Saskatchewan had with the current electoral system, they would have sat down, and they would have talked about how you fix it. But, Mr. Speaker, that meeting didn't occur. We didn't have a meeting talking about what the problem was and what we needed to do to fix it.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in the past I've participated in changes to *The Election Act* under previous governments, Mr. Speaker. There was consultation. There was the ability for all the political parties, those who are represented within the Legislative Assembly and the other political parties, to have input to those changes, Mr. Speaker, to bring forward concerns, rationale, needs that they felt were important in a change to *The Election Act*.

Mr. Speaker, in a fair and democratic society, something as fundamental as your electoral laws should have the support, should have the support, Mr. Speaker, of all the political parties. Changes to *The Election Act* should not be brought forward by a single political party without consultation of the population, Mr. Speaker. It should be done in consultation with the representatives of the other political parties, Mr. Speaker, and to solve an identifiable problem that the population sees as a problem, not a single political party in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Now, Mr. Speaker, we didn't have that opportunity here for the first time that I can recall.

And I had the opportunity to ask the Chief Electoral Officer

about past processes, and in the past, yes, there was consultation. Yes, all political parties were involved in bringing forward the changes. And yes, there was meaningful dialogue before a Bill was entered into the House, and in fact the changes to the Bill had agreement of all the political parties. Well, Mr. Speaker, we don't have that today. We have a change being proposed in our electoral Act, in our elections Act, that's brought forward by a single political party without consultation of the others.

Mr. Speaker, that does raise serious concerns, and I think the people of Saskatchewan have a legitimate right to have those concerns, Mr. Speaker. Because when a change to the rights of your ability to elect your government are changed without the ability of the dialogue and consultation and co-operation of all the political parties, it looks like you're doing it for your own self, for your own advantage, your own self interest.

And, Mr. Speaker, our election Act should represent fairness for all the people of the province of Saskatchewan, and it should be seen and viewed by all political parties and the people of Saskatchewan as being a legitimate and appropriate change that they in fact agree with. That is what a fair and democratic society would want. That's what the people in a fair and democratic society would want. They would like to have an electoral Act that all the political parties agree with.

To have changes made to the elections Act without consultation of the other political parties, Mr. Speaker, without the ability of those political parties to have input, means that there is not the support of the majority, Mr. Speaker. There isn't the support of the majority of the political parties in the province of Saskatchewan because we have five or six political parties and only one agrees. Mr. Speaker, it may have the support of the majority of the members of the legislature, but that is then suggesting that other political parties don't have a right to fairness. They don't have a right to representation. They don't have a right to a point of view and, Mr. Speaker, they don't have a right to a say.

Mr. Speaker, we've long had a democratic process in our country that ensure that the political parties in our province had a right to a say. We've had a practice and process that ensured that political parties had a right and a say. Mr. Speaker, today we have before us a Bill that's being put forward by one political party without the consultation of any of the other political parties and, Mr. Speaker, a Bill that could fundamentally affect the outcomes of a provincial election.

Now, Mr. Speaker, you put those two things together — a Bill being put forward by a single political party and a Bill that could affect the outcome of the electoral vote in our province, Mr. Speaker — and that does fundamentally question the fairness of such a piece of legislation to the people of the province of Saskatchewan and to their representatives and the people who put their name forward on behalf of other political parties in our province. Now, Mr. Speaker, that's a serious issue. When a government without consultation wants to change the electoral process of our province without consulting the other political parties, for that matter without consulting the other political party represented in the legislature, Mr. Speaker, and, Mr. Speaker, to disenfranchise people's rights to vote, that's a serious issue. And it is a Bill that really should be

withdrawn by the government. It's a Bill that the government should be ashamed of.

Mr. Speaker, they should go back to the drawing board. They should consult with all the political parties in the province of Saskatchewan. They should consult with the official opposition, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, before they make the changes, if they want to do it unilaterally, Mr. Speaker, before they make a change they should go back to the people of the province of Saskatchewan if they're going to do it unilaterally and have the electorate determine if they want their government to unilaterally change the electoral laws because, Mr. Speaker, they didn't run on a platform that said they would change the rights of citizens to vote. They didn't run on a platform that said they would disenfranchise the right of any citizen to vote, Mr. Speaker. Yet they're doing it.

And, Mr. Speaker, they're doing it without an identifiable problem to fix. Because if there was a legitimate identifiable problem, Mr. Speaker, they wouldn't be afraid to bring it to the other political parties in our province, Mr. Speaker. They wouldn't be afraid, Mr. Speaker, to have it as a process by which all the political parties had a say and agreed to, Mr. Speaker, because we'd all be able to see a problem. Mr. Speaker, we can't see a problem. We don't see a problem.

And we've never had an opportunity to talk about it, Mr. Speaker, before the government introduced a Bill in the House that they're going to ram through, which will change the outcome, which will change . . . I'm not going to say potentially change, Mr. Speaker. It will change the outcome in the next provincial election because if it disenfranchises one single individual or citizen of our province and takes away their right to vote, Mr. Speaker, that wanted to vote and intended to vote, Mr. Speaker, it has changed the outcome of an election. And, Mr. Speaker, that is inappropriate, Mr. Speaker. That's not fair, Mr. Speaker, and it's not what the people of Saskatchewan would want.

Mr. Speaker, our fathers and grandfathers fought in the First and Second World War for the right to have a free and democratic society, for a democracy, Mr. Speaker, and to keep those fundamental values that we as Canadians have. But, Mr. Speaker, we are eroding that fundamental right today. Because, Mr. Speaker, when this legislation passes, if a single citizen doesn't get the right to vote that wants to vote and is entitled to vote, Mr. Speaker, then we in fact have taken away a guaranteed right in our constitution, Mr. Speaker — the right to vote. And, Mr. Speaker, that's not right. And it's being done without the appropriate consultations and agreements that the people of this province would want their elected government to undertake.

Mr. Speaker, what is wrong with bringing forward an idea to an all-party committee on something as fundamental as our electoral process and looking for agreement, looking for an agreement to move forward? It's worked in the past. It actually has worked in the past, Mr. Speaker. And when I questioned the Chief Electoral Officer, Mr. Speaker, during estimates about this very process, he acknowledged it has worked in the past, Mr. Speaker. So why aren't we following a long-standing process that shows both fairness, it shows openness, it shows accountability, Mr. Speaker? Why are we not prepared to

follow that process today?

Mr. Speaker, I'm just going to — in the next few minutes if I may — talk about a few situations where individuals may be disenfranchised, where they may not be able to use their right as a Canadian citizen to vote.

Mr. Speaker, I'm going to start with those who don't have any fixed address, Mr. Speaker, those who, although they are citizens of our province, cannot afford to rent an apartment because of cost today or rent accommodation, Mr. Speaker, those who have no home, don't own a home, who — for lack of a better word — may have to live in a shelter or may have to live in a friend's place for a short period of time, moving from friend to friend. Mr. Speaker, those are still citizens of our country. They still have the right, under our constitution, to vote.

Mr. Speaker, we're taking away their right to vote. If I could just take a minute or two to explain how, Mr. Speaker. We're taking away the right to vote because those very people don't have photo identification with an address on, Mr. Speaker, because they don't have a fixed address. Mr. Speaker, they don't have a power bill or a utility bill to show they live at an address because they don't have any utilities in their names, Mr. Speaker.

So what we've done with those people, the least fortunate in our society, Mr. Speaker, is we've taken away the one thing they do have, one of the fundamental rights guaranteed in our constitution — the right to vote. Mr. Speaker, why would we want to do that? Why would we want to take away the right to vote of any Canadian citizen? Well, Mr. Speaker, if we had legitimate problems that needed to be fixed, we could have talked through them. We could have looked at those problems jointly, as we have in the past and looked for solutions that don't disenfranchise citizens from the right to vote.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about another group of people, a group of people who may, for health reasons, not have a driver's licence photo identification in our province, Mr. Speaker, because they can no longer drive. If they have epilepsy or they have other medical conditions that they can no longer drive, Mr. Speaker, why would they pay for a driver's licence? So they don't have photo identification, Mr. Speaker.

They may not have a bill in their name. They may not have a utility bill in their name because in many households one of the spouse or husband or wife have utilities in their names. Or, Mr. Speaker, lo and behold, if you had two or three families, six adults living in a house, you may have four or five people in that house that don't have a utility bill in their name, Mr. Speaker. They can't prove residence in that home. They don't have picture identification, Mr. Speaker. But yet, as a neighbour, I would know they live there. Other people would know they live there. But, Mr. Speaker, without the proper identification, they can't vote.

[16:45]

Now, Mr. Speaker, under the federal system, you can vouch for one person. If you live in the same voting poll, you can vouch for a single person. But if there's six people, six adults live in a

home, Mr. Speaker, you can vouch for one. So we're disenfranchising at least two or three people who live in that home, taking away the right to vote although you and I could easily prove, you or I can easily prove they live in that home. But the rules, as we have established, wouldn't allow those individuals to vote. So why do we want to do that? Why would we construct rules to take away the right of a citizen to vote?

Well we'd only do that if we wanted to marginalize people and take away a fundamental right guaranteed under our constitution, Mr. Speaker. My question is why would any government want to do that? Why would a government want to limit a citizen's ability to exercise what is their most fundamental of all rights, the right to vote?

Well I can tell you why, Mr. Speaker. It is because there are citizens within our society that are more likely not to have, not to have the identification required to vote, and those are those that are homeless, Mr. Speaker; those that are sick or ill, Mr. Speaker; those who can't drive; the elderly, Mr. Speaker; First Nations individuals; people from the far north, Mr. Speaker.

So why would we want to limit those people's ability to vote? Mr. Speaker, if a single problem had come forward that was verifiable, that was proven, then we might have a situation to at least examine the various ways we could fix it. But we don't have that before us. We never had that debate. We never had that discussion. We never had that opportunity to work collectively towards improving our electoral system if — if, Mr. Speaker — there is a need.

Because this government chose to take a path not taken by other governments, Mr. Speaker. It chose to take a path of playing big brother, deciding what's best for everybody without consulting anybody, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I don't think that's what the people of this province want. I don't think it's what the people of Canada would want. Mr. Speaker, the people want a government that's for the people. They want a government that believes including the people in their processes is more important than excluding them. Because the government is there for all the people, Mr. Speaker, not just those with photo identification.

So, Mr. Speaker, I hope the government will reconsider this legislation, put it aside till after a provincial election, Mr. Speaker, and then start over with some meaningful consultation and dialogue between the political parties, Mr. Speaker. You know, Mr. Speaker, you know the members opposite are chirping about I'll be starting over after the next provincial election. Mr. Speaker, if they're trying to in some way intimidate that they'll use this legislation to get people not to vote, well then they're just proving why this isn't good legislation, Mr. Speaker. They're proving their case. And if the Minister of Health wants to chirp that, he can. But it's highly inappropriate, Mr. Speaker, and it shows the nature of the intent of the government, Mr. Speaker. And it's unfortunate because the people of this province deserve a government that cares more about its people and less about its own self-interest.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the people of this province should all have the right to vote, and any government should work to maximize the potential for every citizen to exercise their right to vote. whether you agree with any political party or not. The rights of

our citizens should be the foremost in our desire to change legislation, Mr. Speaker. It's not about those of us who are elected, Mr. Speaker; it is about the people.

We as elected representatives are not here in our own self-interest. We're here for the people, and we need to be here for the people. And only through working for the people do you get a government and do you get actions out of a government that reflect the true interest of the people.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's reasonable that members of the legislature are not always going to agree on things. We all have a role and responsibility in our democratic system and that role though, in the end of the day, should be focused on one thing; that is delivering the best possible outcomes in each and every case for the people of the province of Saskatchewan. Now we can disagree what those are, but in some things as fundamental as the electoral laws and the rules in which allow us to elect a government, there should be agreement.

We should never, never move forward on changing the election laws in our province without agreement of the political parties, Mr. Speaker, that those citizens represent. Because, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't matter if you've got a 20-seat majority government or a two-seat majority government or you're a minority government, Mr. Speaker, you should always act with the same interests of the people of Saskatchewan as your barometer to move forward. And, Mr. Speaker, on something like electoral laws, it is most appropriate that there be agreement; it's most appropriate that we work together collectively in the interest of all the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, no one political party is ever government for ever. No one political party has all the answers. But on some fundamental things . . . And that's why we have a Chief Electoral Officer that's independent and an office that's independent of any one political party, so that our system is fair, so that our system is more difficult to be manipulated by a single political party, Mr. Speaker. And it's constructed that way in the interest of a fair and democratic process, Mr. Speaker.

And when we do anything, when we do anything in this legislature that in any way slants that fair and democratic process, Mr. Speaker, then we should be ashamed of ourselves, and we should do everything in our power as citizens of this province to prevent it from happening.

Mr. Speaker, we see today . . . It's kind of ironic we're talking about this Bill today, a day when we are seeing a federal election take place where we may see historic change in direction in our country, Mr. Speaker, where we may see significant changes because people want open and accountable government; they want transparency; they want government to work together with all of the opposition parties, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, our government is more important than any one of us in this Assembly or more important than all of us combined as well. Mr. Speaker, our democracy, our system of government has to be for the people. It has to be fair, it has to be transparent, and it has to be accountable to the people. And, Mr. Speaker, unilateral changes to our electoral laws do little to promote that concept of fairness, openness, and accountability that I think the

people of Saskatchewan want us all to demonstrate day in and day out.

Mr. Speaker, I wish the government would reconsider and withdraw this Bill, bring it back after the next election, bring back the concepts they'd like to see changed for a meaningful dialogue and discussion, Mr. Speaker, done in the way it's been done in the past, Mr. Speaker, respecting the rights of all the political parties and all the representatives. Because, Mr. Speaker, there are individuals who vote for parties that never get a representative in this House, but they still have a right to a say within our democratic process, Mr. Speaker. Whether you're a member of the Green Party or the Liberal Party or the Conservative Party of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, you have rights. And our electoral laws must represent your interests as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, to have changes made that disenfranchise anybody and takes away the right of anybody to vote, Mr. Speaker, is not appropriate. It is shameful, Mr. Speaker. And it's not in the best interest of our democracy, which are people, the people of Saskatchewan, my friends and neighbours and yours, the friends and neighbours of every member of this Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, it's important to them. It's important to have clear, open, transparent, democratic processes. It's important to feel and know and understand that what changes may be proposed are in the best interests of the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, not in the best interest of a single political party, Mr. Speaker. Not in the best interest of a single member of the legislature, Mr. Speaker, but in the best interest of all the political parties in Saskatchewan. But most importantly, Mr. Speaker, in the best interest of the people of Saskatchewan because we're not here for our own political parties' interests. We're not here for our own self-interest, Mr. Speaker. We're here for the people of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe what we have before us meets that test of fairness, Mr. Speaker, meets that test of impartiality that changes to *The Election Act* should meet. Mr. Speaker, if we believe in the institution in which we are a member of, this Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker, if we believe in this institution, Mr. Speaker, I don't know how you can vote for this piece of legislation. If you truly believe in why we're here and the institution in which we are part of and the fact that we represent all the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, I don't know how you can vote for a piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, that's been without consultation, that is clearly in the best interest of a single political party, Mr. Speaker, and, Mr. Speaker, is not, is not fixing any identifiable problem.

Now members of the government say there's been lots of consultation. With who? I've checked with the other political parties. The Conservatives weren't consulted. The Liberals weren't consulted. The Green Party wasn't consulted. We certainly weren't consulted. So who did they consult? Their own executives? The people who are supportive of them only, Mr. Speaker? That's what it appears, and that's exactly what the members opposite are saying if they say they consulted people because, Mr. Speaker, we can't find anybody they consulted about changes to *The Election Act*. They didn't consult the

Chief Electoral Officer before they made the changes. They told him what changes they were making. They didn't ask his opinion because I can tell you, from asking questions in this Assembly, his opinion doesn't agree with this legislation, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, our democracy is fragile, Mr. Speaker, and we have a responsibility to uphold the best interests of all the people of the province of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, this legislation doesn't do that because there hasn't been that meaningful consultation. There isn't the perception of fairness. It's perceived that a single political party wants to drive forward a self-interest agenda, Mr. Speaker. And how does that best serve the people of the province of Saskatchewan?

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have several hours more of debate on this issue, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure over the next few days I will have the opportunity to speak at least once or twice more on this issue, Mr. Speaker, because this is a fundamental issue to our democracy, fundamental to the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and it is very, very important that there is a clear dialogue about the problems with this particular legislation that the people of the province of Saskatchewan have a right to examine.

So, Mr. Speaker, with that and knowing I will have additional time at other dates, Mr. Speaker, I would move adjournment of debate at this time.

The Speaker: — The member from Regina Dewdney has moved adjournment of debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To facilitate committees, I move to adjourn the House.

The Speaker: — The Government Whip has moved adjournment of the Assembly to facilitate the work of committees. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:59.]

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