



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

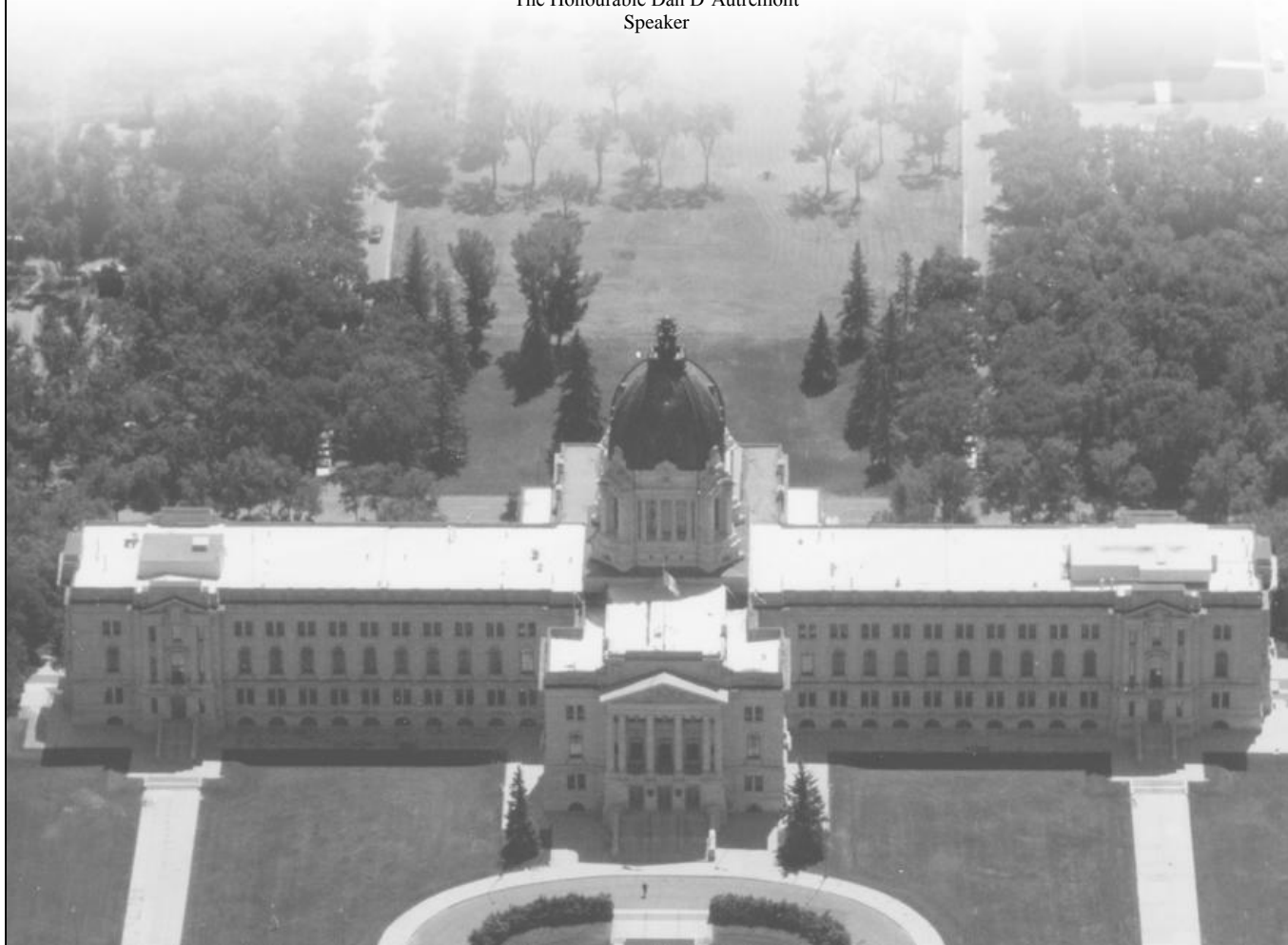
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Dan D'Autremont
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. Dan D’Autremont
 Premier — Hon. Brad Wall
 Leader of the Opposition — John Nilson

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Hon. Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Broten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Campeau, Jennifer	SP	Saskatoon Fairview
Chartier, Danielle	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Cox, Herb	SP	The Battlefords
D’Autremont, Hon. Dan	SP	Cannington
Docherty, Mark	SP	Regina Coronation Park
Doherty, Kevin	SP	Regina Northeast
Doke, Larry	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
Draude, Hon. June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Hon. Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Hon. Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harrison, Hon. Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Hon. Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Hutchinson, Hon. Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, Hon. D.F. (Yogi)	SP	Wood River
Jurgens, Victoria	SP	Prince Albert Northcote
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
Lawrence, Greg	SP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Makowsky, Gene	SP	Regina Dewdney
Marchuk, Russ	SP	Regina Douglas Park
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMillan, Hon. Tim	SP	Lloydminster
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Merriman, Paul	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Moe, Scott	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Hon. Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Greg	SP	Yorkton
Parent, Roger	SP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Phillips, Kevin	SP	Melfort
Reiter, Hon. Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Hon. Laura	SP	Regina Qu’Appelle Valley
Sproule, Cathy	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Steinley, Warren	SP	Regina Walsh Acres
Stewart, Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Tell, Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Tochor, Corey	SP	Saskatoon Eastview
Toth, Don	SP	Moosomin
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

[The Assembly resumed at 19:00.]

EVENING SITTING

The Speaker: — It now being 7 o'clock, the House shall resume. Orders of the day.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 26

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 26 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal Act, 2011*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As always, it's my pleasure to wade into the debate and discussion around the Bills that come before this legislature. And I'm happy to speak to Bill No. 26, *An Act to repeal miscellaneous obsolete Statutes* or, as it may be cited, the short form, *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal Act*.

So what does Bill No. 26 do, Mr. Speaker? Well in short actually, it does what it says it's going to do. It repeals five statutes that the government has said are obsolete. The five statutes are as follows. There's *The Collective Bargaining Agreement Expiry Date Exception Act*, *The Communications Network Corporation Act*, *The On-farm Quality Assurance Programs Act*, *The Soil Drifting Control Act*, and *The Special Payment (Dependent Spouses) Act*. So this Bill No. 26 will be repealing all five of these statutes.

I want to note that in the minister's remarks, I wanted to mention what he said on second reading here. So he said again, the purpose of the Bill is to repeal five statutes that are no longer necessary to retain on the books as these laws are obsolete or spent.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we would disagree on this side of the House that one particular statute should be repealed. And we believe that this came out of the privatization of SCN [Saskatchewan Communications Network] two years ago, actually, almost two years ago to date, Mr. Speaker, when the government announced on budget day — despite the fact it was a time of prosperity and things going pretty well — that they were going to have to reduce spending and had to . . . They had decided to take SCN, the Saskatchewan Communications Network, which was about 20 years old at the time, Mr. Speaker.

SCN, the Saskatchewan Communications Network, was Saskatchewan's television station, for all intents and purposes. It was the opportunity, the place where Saskatchewan filmmakers had the opportunity to share Saskatchewan stories with people here in Saskatchewan, but a much larger audience. There were many things that started out on SCN that ended up actually winning awards, Mr. Speaker.

So there were many, many problems with the privatization. Actually the initial news, released right after budget, Mr. Speaker, the government had said they weren't going to sell SCN. What they said, they were going to fade it to black. It was just going to drift off into the night, Mr. Speaker. But I think very quickly, between the public, the viewing public who really enjoyed SCN, and the film and television industry, there were many, many people who realized and said to the government, well do you have any idea what you are doing, what fading to black will do to the film and television industry that had already been beleaguered by the 2008 economic collapse?

So I don't think initially that the government knew the value of SCN to the film and television industry. There basically here in Saskatchewan were three pillars of this industry. There was SCN, the Saskatchewan Communications Network, which was . . . With a very small investment, it would buy local content or trigger licences that brought in much money, Mr. Speaker, from out of province. The film and television industry . . . So SCN was a big part of that.

The second piece, Mr. Speaker, was and still continues to be the sound stage. But the sound stage has sat empty for the last couple of years, Mr. Speaker. It has had very few shoots actually in the sound stage. And the government initially, after they had decided they were going fade SCN to black, and then they changed their tune and said, oh well we're looking for a buyer, the government then said, oh we're going to develop a film series incentive to try to attract, attract the film industry here. So that incentive involved making it affordable for one particular company, actually, at the time, to come in and shoot a pilot at the sound stage. But, Mr. Speaker, they didn't capitalize on that series incentive, which was a low-cost item, to continue to boost the film and television industry. So they've let the sound stage remain virtually empty, Mr. Speaker. A state-of-the-art facility that the people in Saskatchewan here own has basically sat empty.

So I do have some concerns actually, going forward, Mr. Speaker, with the plans that this government has for that sound stage. So I would just like to put that on the record here.

The third pillar of the film and television industry, Mr. Speaker, is the tax credit which, when it was first introduced, it was groundbreaking. We really were at the head of the pack when the government introduced the tax credit.

So those three things together, SCN which triggered other broadcast licences, and which is what you need to do in the film industry — you get a little piece of financing here, and then you get more financing here. It's an interesting industry, how they put together the financing for a production, Mr. Speaker. So SCN was key in that.

The sound stage is another very key part of the film industry here, the film and television industry. And they've let that languish and haven't used it to its fullest potential.

And then the tax credit. The film and television industry, Mr. Speaker, has been asking for several years for the government to look at ways to restate the tax credit, not necessarily paying more money out, but ways of marketing it in a little different

way. Many other jurisdictions, including Manitoba two years ago actually, when they saw that the film industry was incredibly beneficial to their economy, but also had been taken a bit of a hit with the financial crisis in 2008, Manitoba decided that they were going to do something with their tax credit.

So Saskatchewan under this government went from being front-runners in the film and television industry here in Canada, with production values alone for several years at well over \$60 million. That's just production values, Mr. Speaker, and those are mostly out-of-province dollars. It's new money coming into the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

So we saw a film industry, film and television industry that was doing incredibly well drop to \$11 million production. And I'm sorry I don't have the number at my fingertip for the latest number, but last year \$11 million. So it saw a drop from more than \$60 million in production values to \$11 million two years ago and hasn't seen much improvement since, Mr. Speaker.

So not only did the film and television industry bring in money from elsewhere but all the spinoff benefits that come in with TV or film production shooting here. You've got catering. You've got hotels. You've got wardrobe. You've got all kinds of professions or professionals who supported the film and television industry through their own businesses, and there was much economic spinoff there, Mr. Speaker.

So this government single-handedly has killed, very near killed the film and television industry. There are a few players who remain, but I personally know people who have had to leave the province, who called this place home. They came back, Mr. Speaker. This government talks about attracting creative and skilled employees back to Saskatchewan, and that's exactly what had happened with the film and television industry. At one point we had three what they call A-crews or crews that could staff any production and do an amazing job. They were the top of the class. And what I'm told now, Mr. Speaker, is it's hard to put together even one A-crew, Mr. Speaker. People came here or returned here or trained here and have now had to leave to make a living in their chosen profession, Mr. Speaker. So that speaks completely counter to this government's narrative about making sure that we're attracting and retaining the best and the brightest, Mr. Speaker.

We had an industry here that we could be incredibly proud of. There's many, many people in Saskatchewan who, and many wonderful industries, but there is something pretty unique about the film and television industry. And we all love to know that our province was making a mark, whether it was winning an award or whether it was knowing that *Corner Gas* was being seen in many, many, many countries around the world, the opportunity to tell our Saskatchewan story so people have the chance to learn a little bit about us.

So this government, as I said, has single-handedly, single-handedly trashed the film and television industry. And as I said, there are still some, very few people who are here who are still able to make a living, Mr. Speaker. And I think that that is an absolute shame.

When it came to, once the government realized that fading SCN to black on April 30th, 2010, was a very bad idea, that not only

would the space on the dial be lost but much more would be lost than that, they decided that they were going to try a buyer, Mr. Speaker. So they did in fact find a buyer, Bluepoint, which bought SCN, Mr. Speaker, for \$350,000. And we would call that a fire sale price. I know I've heard members on the opposite side say that wasn't a fire sale price. I've heard them heckle that across the Chamber, Mr. Speaker. But if you looked at the previous annual report from, I believe 2008-2009, SCN's assets were valued close to \$4 million, Mr. Speaker, not \$350,000. So if anyone is going to say that \$350,000 is not a fire sale price, I think perhaps they should look up the definition in a dictionary, Mr. Speaker.

I think the other big thing that many people are missing with the loss of SCN is the opportunity to tell Saskatchewan stories. And Bluepoint right now is in the process of selling SCN to Rogers, to Citytv, at which I know that there's many people at SCN who are glad that they will be able to keep their jobs, Mr. Speaker, but the whole concept of local content, local content and telling of Saskatchewan stories, is completely lost, Mr. Speaker. So yes, we're glad people still have the opportunity, trained skilled people at SCN have the opportunity to keep their jobs, but there's some big concern with the fact that the Saskatchewan story is going to be completely obliterated from this television network, Mr. Speaker — I think another thing to note about the last two years and the Saskatchewan Communications Network.

So shortly after the government decided to fade SCN to black, and then they realized they couldn't do that or shouldn't do that, then they decided to sell SCN. They convened a film and television task force, which — you know what? — I often get up in this Chamber and I am not very pleased with the government's ability to consult, but that was one. You talk to anybody who was part of that process. This film industry, film and television industry task force was excellent. They had big producers, small producers, all kinds of people who sat around that table.

And you know what, Mr. Speaker? They were told to come up with no-cost and low-cost incentives or ways to support the industry in light of pulling this one key pillar out of the film and television industry out. So they were told to come up with these low-cost and no-cost items. And you know what, Mr. Speaker? They did.

The film industry, film and television task force reported in October of 2010. And has this government implemented a single one of those recommendations? Not one. I've heard the Tourism minister, actually last year after his budget speech, say that, oh yes they have, but SMPPIA, the Saskatchewan Motion Picture Industry Association, would have begged to differ, Mr. Speaker. Not one single one of these recommendations from the film industry, the film and television industry task force, was reported. So apparently that was . . . Or was implemented. So apparently — not one, not one of these, Mr. Speaker — so apparently this was a whole big smokescreen, this task force, to try to calm everybody down in the film and television industry.

And you know what? They had to be hopeful. They were incredibly . . . It was devastating, actually. Getting rid of SCN was absolutely devastating to the film and television industry here in Saskatchewan. But the participants on that task force, as much as they were wary, the only thing that they had was a

little bit of hope. They had to pin some hope in this process. You talk to anybody who was involved in that task force, Mr. Speaker. They did pin their hope on this task force.

And what has their government done, Mr. Speaker? What has this government done to taxpaying individuals — creative, highly trained young people and more mature folks? What have they done to this industry? They have killed, for all intents and purposes, the vibrant film and television industry. And again I want to emphasize that there are still a few people who are able to hold their own, but this . . . By and large they have done a huge disservice to the people in this industry, Mr. Speaker.

So it will be interesting to see in this budget if there is anything for the film and television industry. I know that every budget, in the short time that I have been in this legislature . . . I guess I can't say that any more. It's two and a half years, but it's gone pretty darn fast, Mr. Speaker.

[19:15]

An Hon. Member: — When you're having fun.

Ms. Chartier: — As the member from Rosemont says, time goes fast when you're having fun, Mr. Speaker, which is true, but I've not seen . . .

Every time I've sat down with folks in the film and television industry, again, they are hopeful, and they walk lightly. They tread lightly because they don't want . . . They know where the industry was — more than \$60 million in production values. Again I want to state that this was just production values. This was not all the wonderful spinoff that comes from a film or television series shooting here, Mr. Speaker. This was just production value and mostly out-of-province dollars as well, new money to our province of Saskatchewan of which we should have been very, very proud, should have been doing things like other jurisdictions, like Manitoba, to continue to incent people to work in the film and television industry.

So I know that the film industry is ever hopeful and waits. I'm sure they're waiting and wondering what's going to be in this budget, but I think that there's already been a tremendous amount done by this government to a vibrant and exciting industry of which we all should have been very proud and should have been working to support, Mr. Speaker.

So for the fact of the matter, the government never should have privatized SCN. The budget savings, I believe it was a \$5 million annual budget savings, Mr. Speaker — \$5 million on 60 million, 60 million. I think I hear people on the opposite side saying that's a lot of money. Well you know what's a lot of money, Mr. Speaker? More than \$60 million in production value, new money here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Or you know what? I'm going to hold my tongue, Mr. Speaker. Anyway, Mr. Speaker, it will be interesting to see in the coming days what happens with SCN. I think the one big thing that people in rural Saskatchewan are going to seriously miss, their local content, and it's a shame that the government chose to go this route.

And you know, the interesting thing — which maybe there's members on the opposite side, especially some of the newer

members on the opposite side of the House, don't realize — but SCN actually was a Conservative creation. This wasn't created under the NDP [New Democratic Party] government, Mr. Speaker. It was a Progressive Conservative or the Sask Party's cousin, created SCN. So this wasn't some crazy lefty idea. This came out of Conservative values, and this was . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I can see that my last remark, Mr. Speaker, got some good laughs here tonight. But I can hear, I can hear some of the heckles that would come across the floor, what they would be suggesting that SCN was. But I'm sure there are members that don't realize that SCN was in fact a Conservative creation here in Saskatchewan. And I'd say that was probably one of the better ones. I won't say the only one, but it probably is one of the better things that came out of that Conservative government, Mr. Speaker.

So with respect to Bill No. 26, and the statute no. 3 in particular, *The Communications Network Corporation Act*, the repealing, we think this is a sad day. It was a sad day two years ago on budget day for the people of Saskatchewan who enjoyed Saskatchewan, the opportunity to hear Saskatchewan stories, and for filmmakers to tell our stories all around the world, Mr. Speaker. This is a sad day for . . . That 2010 budget day was a sad day for all kinds of folks. But it's just a sad reminder of how this government, Mr. Speaker, has put ideology, in this case, in front of common sense.

So with that, I know that I will have colleagues who will also wade into the debate on Bill No. 26, *An Act to repeal miscellaneous obsolete Statutes*. So with that I would like to move to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 26, *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal Act, 2011*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 9

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hutchinson that **Bill No. 9 — *The Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation Amendment Act, 2011*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to enter debate here this evening as it relates to Bill No. 9, *The Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation Amendment Act, 2011*.

The changes put forward in this Act all centre around the Community Initiatives Fund, or CIF, and that's where the bulk of my comments will be focused on here today. Currently the way it is structured, a portion of Casino Regina and Moose Jaw casino's dollars are placed into the hands of the CIF, the Community Initiatives Fund, for which they're then disbursed realistically across the province, Mr. Speaker. And that's certainly the intent of those dollars, to enrich and enable communities to be as strong as they can be.

And many of the projects that we're looking at that are funded are incredibly special and unique projects that really add to communities in rural and urban Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and they're important programs. And I know if we're looking specifically at certain aspects of this Bill we would look that some of these . . . just making sure that some of the changes put forward aren't going to compromise what good work this fund has provided in the past and what it can fulfil into the future, whether that's enabling and supporting sports or recreation or cultural enrichment or arts and the host of projects that have been supported.

When we look at the changes that are put forward, most of them relate specifically to the Community Initiatives Fund, and when I focus on the different areas, I'll just highlight maybe for people to understand what sort of grants are offered. First there's areas of human development, which are certainly important to Saskatchewan people and develop out, I guess, our most important resource in this province, and that being Saskatchewan people.

The second area would be youth leadership and Aboriginal inclusion, and these would include as well the urban Aboriginal community grant programs that certainly have provided some meaningful resources for special programs that have certainly made a difference in the lives of many in this province.

Another area that these support are that of physical activity and health and wellness. This is an important area and an area in many ways that we don't support enough as a province. And certainly we incur the costs of not doing so by way of our health of the general population and then the social costs of responding to those health concerns. But this kind of project here, number three, as it relates to physical activity, would include Saskatchewan In Motion and all sorts of activities that are supported again all across Saskatchewan.

A fourth area would be problem gambling and mitigation payment programs, which certainly is an important aspect. Certainly we look that for some, I guess, gambling is a recreational activity. For others it's an addiction and something that causes great harm within many families' lives here in Saskatchewan, causing great harm and pressures and challenges for far too many children and far too many families. And it's an important area of support.

And then number five is the community vitality program, and that would include small capital projects and milestone community celebrations which are really important as well in telling our proud history as a province, our cultural heritage and sharing that pride with respective communities and certainly with respective jurisdictions and the world at large.

In many ways this last piece connects to what the previous member was speaking of when she was speaking about concerns around loss of SCN when SCN was cut and our lack of ability to tell that Saskatchewan story, that unique and rich history that's so special, and to share that with the world. But certainly these dollars in this program are enabling some of that to be done at a very small level within communities, and those are important, important celebrations. They bring together communities.

I know lots of times if you'll go to centennial celebrations of a respective town or community, it brings together so many who built that community. And often I think it's fair to say that we forget how the institutions that we're proud of formed and how business and associations and activities, how they came together. And that's what's sometimes so special about those milestone-type events is that they bring together individuals who either played a role in the formation of communities or families played a role. And I know that's a special piece as well because it's always unique when you're at these events to see sometimes great-nieces or great-nephews or grandchildren of community leaders that played instrumental roles in putting together structures that influenced where we are today or where our respective community is today and the great pride in often young people learning what that contribution of their family was. It's special to see, and I think it's an important, important for us to understand or respect where we've come from.

When we look at other aspects of this Bill, we see some changes as it relates to governance. And the fund itself is managed by what's supposed to be an arm's-length, independent government-appointed board whose members have extensive experience in the community. And there's some changes within these provisions on this front in terms of appointments have been changed, structures and changes around quorum, structures and changes around remuneration for committee members. And that's all aspects for which we'll be analyzing as we move forward to make sure that this puts that committee and those members in the best position that they can be to serve Saskatchewan people with the role and function that they've been provided by way of sitting on that board and managing that fund.

It also provides, by way of some changes in governance, some authority for that arm's-length board to hire and manage some resources, and certainly that makes sense. And when we look at this whole piece, what we do need to make sure is that the governance changes that have been brought forward are in the best interests of the intended objectives of what the Community Initiatives Fund was all about, the CIF, and what the purpose of that fund was set out to provide, making sure that this is in fact not only consistent with those objectives but reinforcing and supportive and enabling of the good work that that fund has provided to the people of this province.

I'd certainly like to thank those members that have served that fund on the board as part of that governance structure and certainly any staff and resources as well. I'd like to offer a thank you for the work they provide to Saskatchewan people in making these decisions to allocate in a fair and independent fashion the resources that they do across our province for all the kinds of great projects that I've highlighted here tonight, Mr. Speaker.

There's also some changes, if I'm looking through here, to liability. And there's some change, I believe, to provide some protection to the board itself or to those that are part of the governance structure and also to workers or employees by way of some changes to liability protection.

And I see, if I'm just looking at some of the other changes that the minister has put forward here, there's some changes that were put forward as it relates to ministerial responsibility. And I

guess we might have some questions on this front about how this changes the minister's relationship with the fund, if that relationship is in fact the appropriate structure by way of this legislation, whether there is direct control, and whether or not that's what was intended when what's supposed to be an independent, arm's-length board for the greater good of providing important resources to community initiatives across Saskatchewan, whether or not that's going to in any way be compromised by changes to this Act.

We also recognize that there's been suggestions that there's been changes to modernization in the wording and that the minister suggested that this allows the fund itself to fulfill its mandate and for communities to receive the tangible and important benefits that they deserve. We want to make sure that that's the case. Certainly we'll be analyzing this Bill on this front and doing so in consultation with stakeholders across Saskatchewan, individuals that have experienced interfacing with the fund and with individuals of areas of expertise as it relates to both the Gaming Corporation but also the CIF.

[19:30]

So in short, Mr. Speaker, we have a lot more questions as it relates to this Bill. We really need to understand what both the intended consequences are because I think there's some questions yet on that front, and often in the case with this government, more importantly what some of the unintended consequences may be as it relates to this piece of legislation and making sure we have that thorough discussion with communities across Saskatchewan, with stakeholders who are impacted, to make sure that this in fact, this Bill, this legislation is in their best interests and that it allows them to fulfill the mandate of what's an important piece of, or an important function to the province supporting so many of the various programs.

And again I guess I go back and I highlight some of the work that this fund has provided in Saskatchewan and some of the enrichments it's provided in communities. It's very much the types of initiatives that we should be providing and resourcing broader support from government, Mr. Speaker.

When I look at some of the grants that go out as it relates human development, this is a key area for this province and really an area that we simply aren't doing enough on, Mr. Speaker, to get as rich of an outcome as we should be from Saskatchewan people and providing the resources needed and the training that's needed to optimize outcomes in the lives of individual people but also as it relates to the economic and social well-being of this province.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, certainly as it relates to these different fronts, these are the kind of items that connect. And it doesn't, they don't exist on islands or in silos. And we need to do a much better job as government and not rely just on sort of the goodwill offered through the Communities Initiatives Fund to do the kind of work that we know is in the best interest of our communities and of our future economy and of our economy today and certainly in the lives of individual people in this province.

I know the member from Cumberland who's here tonight

knows the kinds of circumstances that we can be improving both within his constituency and within his communities but also across this province. And this really, this human resource and human potential that just simply hasn't been supported to be as strong as it can be, to contribute as much as it can be, and to have as fulfilled of lives as so many could have. And we can't just, as I say, rely on the goodwill of good initiatives like the Community Initiatives Fund to do that work. It takes strong planning from government, central government, to be laying out plans in direct consultation with those who understand. People like the member from Cumberland and direct stakeholders on the ground and communities across Saskatchewan to be laying out the resources needed, the kind of programming that's needed, that's going to make a difference in the lives of Saskatchewan people.

And I know when we look at these sorts of examples we often talk about sort of the improvements that we can make in the lives of an individual child: a more fulfilled life, a more sustainable life or a sustainable life, a life that's immersed in the economy of Saskatchewan.

Now these are all admirable goals, but they also have a greater good back to society as a whole, strengthens our social well-being as a province. And if we can make significant gains on these fronts we can certainly as well reduce some of the social costs that we incur because of, in many cases, many of the failures on this front. We can do a much better job of enabling and supporting individuals and young people. We can reduce down the road significant costs and cost savings as it relates to our health system and our justice system and our social services costs.

So not only are we making meaningful improvements in the lives of young people who will grow and mature and lead fulfilled lives with strong families, but we also strengthen our economy as a whole and of course bring a greater social well-being to the province as a whole.

When I look at one of the second pieces here that this supports is youth leadership and Aboriginal inclusion, including the grant programs here in Regina and in Saskatoon and all across Saskatchewan. Again these are good programs and good projects, and I fully support the work of the CIF on this front. But again it shouldn't be sort of an ad hoc, one-off basis that we're supporting the kinds of meaningful projects that we know make such a difference in the lives of people in our communities and in our urban communities and in our rural communities. But in the case of the urban Aboriginal dollars working with, in many circumstances, quite a vulnerable population and it's simply correct to say that we're failing to make the strategic important investments that we should be to be bringing about better outcomes for so many in this province, and certainly better outcomes that we would then realize as a province as well.

The casinos as a whole have played an important role as it relates to economic development in Saskatchewan and skill training and training and job training for all Saskatchewan people. They've also played that role for First Nations and Métis people in this province. What we need to be doing is looking at how these casinos, studying their model a little bit and understanding that model and applying it other industries.

Applying that model that's found some success and duplicating and replicating and utilizing that for the broader good of Saskatchewan people across other industries as well, Mr. Speaker. But we also need to be looking at how we are we doing within the casinos themselves on this front as it relates to skills, training, and development. And are we hitting the marks that we're desiring to? Are we meeting our objectives and how do we know that? How are we measuring that? Can we make improvements on this front? So there is many aspects on that front as well that we should also always be considering.

So, Mr. Speaker, at this point in time I know it's important for us to engage with Saskatchewan people as it relates to this piece of legislation. And we'll continue to do that and we'll bring forward the questions that we are receiving to the committee structure moving forward. We'll bring them to the floor of this Assembly. We'll work co-operatively to seek solutions that are in the best interests of Saskatchewan people. We hope to have a willing partner in government to go forward with that process in a constructive fashion that serves Saskatchewan people in the way that it should.

And what you can count on, Mr. Speaker, is that as we go about that consultation, we'll be engaging those that are impacted, those that are affected, and those that have had knowledge of how this structure works, to make sure that we understand in a whole and full sense what the intended consequences of this legislation are and what the unintended consequences may be, making sure then that we have the chance to refine and make improvements and do so in a co-operative fashion.

But certainly as it relates to the CIF and those that have served the board and those that have worked to provide the resources back to Saskatchewan people, I simply want to say thank you. It's meaningful work. It's the kind of work that makes a difference in the lives of so many of our constituents — whether it's through school projects or community projects all across this province, whether it is a celebration of centennial anniversaries of respective towns in this province, whether it's been support for some of the sports teams in First Nations communities, whether it's been support for the arts in urban centres across this province — the contributions have been significant.

And all I would say, Mr. Speaker, is that we should go back and look at the kinds of initiatives that this is supporting. Skills training and development, supporting the development of human capital, enrichment of Aboriginal people across Saskatchewan, support for communities, bringing about healthier living and addressing physical fitness across Saskatchewan — these are all pieces that should be addressed, not just through the good charity of the CIF. They're aspects that should be central to a plan of government.

And unfortunately on this front, far too often, these are the kinds of aspects that make a meaningful difference, we know, in the lives of Saskatchewan people, in the communities here in Saskatchewan. But they seem to be overlooked far too often, Mr. Speaker. We'd urge not only for the good work of the CIF to continue to support these sorts of initiatives, but for a government to put forward a real plan that brings forward the real kind of change and progress that Saskatchewan people deserve.

But at this point in time, Mr. Speaker, it's been my pleasure to weigh in on debate here this evening. And I will move adjournment of Bill No. 9, *The Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation Amendment Act, 2011*.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of Bill No. 9, *The Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation Amendment Act, 2011*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 11

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 11 — *The Court Officials Act, 2011/Loi de 2011 sur les fonctionnaires de justice*** be now read a second time.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this time, to get in to make a few comments on this Bill, I would like to join with my colleagues that have made some comments on that. And I know there's a lot of straightforward answers that people will want to discuss and ask. And at this point in time I know there's more questions that want to be asked in committee. And at this time I'm prepared to move this Bill, Bill No. 11, *The Court Officials Act, 2011* to committee at this time, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General that Bill No. 11, *The Court Officials Act, 2011* 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 shall this Bill be referred? I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — I designate that Bill No. 11, *The Court Officials Act, 2011* be referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

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

Bill No. 12

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 12 — *The Court Officials Consequential Amendments Act, 2011*** be now read a second time.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again to join in on the debate on Bill No. 12, *The Court Officials Consequential Amendments Act, 2011*, just to give a few comments about it. And I again want to make it very clear, my colleagues have had a chance to raise some concerns in areas to make sure that we're going in the right direction. And of course we've moved the first one. This one is just some name changes that have to fill in, and there's a requirement to do that. So at this time we're prepared, and I am prepared, to move this one to committee. So I do that now, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General that Bill No. 12, *The Court Officials Consequential Amendments Act, 2011* 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 shall this Bill be referred? I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — I designate that Bill No. 12, *The Court Officials Consequential Amendments Act, 2011* be referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

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

Bill No. 16

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert that **Bill No. 16** — *The Correctional Services Act, 2011* be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to weigh in on debate and discussion this evening as it relates to Bill No. 16, *The Correctional Services Act, 2011*.

This Bill, certainly it's important for us too. It's a comprehensive Bill. It's a significant one of work, a significant amount of changes, and it's difficult to gloss over that here tonight in any sort of substantive way, but we will touch on some of the points.

What's important for Saskatchewan people to know is that, as we move forward, consultation with stakeholders as it relates to this Bill is going to be most important. And like so many other Bills, we need to make sure that this Bill in fact is in the best interests of Saskatchewan people. So on that front we need to make sure we understand the intended consequences of government. Certainly there has been some statements from government as it relates to the changes put forward, a lot of which are from an administrative perspective, from a procedural perspective, from a perspective in some ways of structure. But we need to make sure that we fully understand and comprehend

the changes that have been put forward.

[19:45]

More importantly, we need to make sure that these are in the best interests of those that are impacted by this Bill — those that work to provide public safety across Saskatchewan and that are responding in a front-line sort of way to the pressures of community safety, working in our institutions providing safety — and making sure that we're dealing with the broad groups of stakeholders who are impacted by changes of the nature to the correctional Act. So that's going to be important, Mr. Speaker.

I know this Bill, if I understand correctly, is in response to a review that began a few years back. And this review, I believe, stemmed from a time where there was, I believe it was a jail break at that point in time, maybe in about 2008, 2009. I remember that the member from P.A. [Prince Albert] Carlton was the minister at the time, and in fact there was a fair amount of confusion from that minister and from this government whether or not there was any pressures in the correctional facilities as it relates to gang activity. I know, Mr. Speaker, that the minister's suggestion at that point in time was that there was no challenges of gang activity in Saskatchewan's correctional facility. That was the member from P.A. Carlton, then minister of Corrections and Public Safety, Mr. Speaker. Of course, nothing could be further from the truth, Mr. Speaker. And I say that in a disappointing fashion. But certainly there are immense pressures, immense challenges, and harsh realities that exist in communities across Saskatchewan and certainly within our correctional facilities as it relates to gang involvement, gang activity.

Now I do know after that mishap where the minister, I believe, came out afterwards and corrected his statement, that in fact there were pressures in the facilities because of gang activity. After he had consulted his officials and sought some, maybe had received some advice, I do know at that point in time it led to the review of the correctional system, and I believe this is a consequence of that. And if I recall correctly, the report was *The Road Ahead: Towards a Safer Correctional System*.

And I believe the goals itself to make improvements in the correctional system are important goals, admirable goals, and ones that in general that we would provide support to. However we need to make sure we understand all the changes that are being brought forward by this government at this point in time. And in fact we need to make sure that the changes that are being brought forward are in fact responsive and reflective of both that report but also the reality and pressures within Saskatchewan communities and some of the realities we face as it relates to our correctional facilities, but also crime and justice. So we will be reviewing those recommendations. We'll be making sure that these are consistent on that front. And we'll be making sure that, if so, that they're in the best interests of the system as a whole but, more importantly, Saskatchewan people.

I recognize that there's changes to providing about a professional code of conduct for corrections staff. Certainly that would seem to be something that seems important and something that we would support, something that could then be enshrined. What we'll be looking forward to is the process of seeing that process or that code develop, making sure that it's as

strong as it can be, that it can be as effective as it can be in serving Saskatchewan people and reflective of the realities that those workers are facing. And that's what a lot of this comes down to is public safety, the safety of communities, the safety of people, and then the safety and support and structures as it relates to workers, and government's response to that safety or to the concerns that exist.

I know one thing that does concern Saskatchewan people as it relates to public safety, and we're looking at some refinement, some of a modest nature, some with a bit more meat on them here, is that in fact, at a time where we're supposed to be prospering as a province, we actually have a government that's, by all signals, going to be cutting support for policing across Saskatchewan and putting on, I guess, onto the pocketbooks of Saskatchewan people the cost of providing the kind of public safety that Saskatchewan people deserve.

And I know this is something that Saskatchewan people certainly have concern with, Mr. Speaker, when we look at a time many of our communities are growing in a significant fashion. We have lots of activity and certainly we have community safety pressures. And it's certainly not the time to be pulling policing support from our communities as this government is signalling. We'll see on budget day, which is just a couple of days away. But right now the Premier has indicated that he's going to be asking Saskatchewan people to ante up, and if they want the level of policing in their communities that they've been used to, that they should pay more by way of their property taxes.

We think there's different routes to this, Mr. Speaker, and we know community safety and policing itself is something that's important to Saskatchewan families and communities — rural, urban, right across Saskatchewan.

Just looking through some of the other aspects of the legislation, I know that when we're looking at some of the changes to the Bill, what we need to understand as well is that, put it in this broader context of a fairly strained correctional system as it relates to facilities as it is, in fact we have overcrowding in many of those scenarios and in fact needs as it relates to physical infrastructure. And this is coming at the same time as we've seen this government support in a full way the new crime Bill that's coming federally, but fails to have any understanding of what the budgetary costs are for Saskatchewan people.

What we know is that, as a result of this Bill, there will be more people incarcerated, more people locked up in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. But what we don't know is the cost of this or the benefit or whether this is the best model to choose. And we find it incredibly disappointing that this government seems to accept any level of federal cost off-loading on to the books of Saskatchewan people and on to the provincial books and at the same time as we know that we've got pressures within some of our ministries, specifically in this case Corrections, Public Safety and Policing.

So we found it disappointing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to date, that this government can't define, can't articulate, can't explain the cost of the crime Bill, of the expansion of the correctional facilities. And so when we see what might be modest

refinements come forward by way of legislation here today, we I guess call on the government to understand the whole picture. And certainly that concept of failure to cost and understand the implications of changes to a crime Bill are consistent with many budgetary failures of this government. And it's no wonder, Mr. Speaker, that the expenses in Saskatchewan continue to grow but that there's many questions that emerge about value for dollar and what exactly it is Saskatchewan people are paying for.

And if we look at this as just another example of federal off-loading on to the books of Saskatchewan people, what we see is that Saskatchewan people are picking up the tab in a significant way, whether it's in Health, whether it's in Social Services, whether it's in Corrections, Mr. Speaker, for off-loading of the federal government.

And I think one example that connects to this so significantly is the off-loading which we . . . of expenditure on the social side by way of the consequences of underfunding First Nations education in Saskatchewan. Because we know the federal government has shirked its responsibility for many years on this front and that has failed to deliver a fair and equitable funding to First Nations education in Saskatchewan. And we know that the consequences are immense. And the consequences are in fact felt in the very ministry for which this Bill is making changes in, that being corrections and justice and policing.

What we know, Mr. Speaker, is that in failing to stand up for Saskatchewan people and in continuing to simply accept underfunding of First Nations education, we know that the costs will mount as it relates to expenditures in this province, the expenditures that Saskatchewan people are going to have off-loaded on to them. Those costs are real. They're significant, and they are in ministry after ministry. But significantly they're in Corrections, significantly they're in Justice, significantly they're in Health, and significantly they're in Social Services. And these are direct costs of the underfunding of First Nations education by the federal government.

So with action on that front and with that off-loading of responsibility or shirking of responsibility, Saskatchewan people are picking up a tab for very expensive programs and services. Moreover, Mr. Speaker, we could be making leaps and bounds of progress as it relates to economic and social gains if we would put forward a strategy to close the First Nations outcome gap in education. And certainly a large part of that is connected directly back to the unfair, inequitable funding that First Nations education receives, Mr. Speaker. So that should be a significant focus and priority of government. It seems to be something that's of fleeting interest to this government, but the costs are real. The costs of inaction, the costs of inequity, the costs of an unfair funding of education are real in the lives of children across Saskatchewan born into an education system that's underfunded and disabled from providing the kinds of outcomes that we should be providing to young people here in Saskatchewan.

Further than that, it's limiting what we can do and what we can be as a province economically and socially. And this is where we would be urging significant improvements that would certainly impact our Corrections ministry here in Saskatchewan as well. So open up all sorts of economic gains, in fact

articulated by economist Eric Howe, an \$80 billion economic gain if we could focus our efforts to close that Aboriginal education gap.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's fair to say this is a comprehensive Bill that's been put forward. There is significant changes that have been brought forward and there's going to be an awful lot of consultation as we move forward to make sure that this in fact serves Saskatchewan people in the way that it should be. But on all those other priorities that should be front and centre of government, we're going to continue to be urging of government to take the meaningful steps that it should and to make a priority closing the unacceptable underfunding of Aboriginal education and to be frank, the unacceptable consequences that it has on the individual lives of children in Saskatchewan, that next generation, the generation previous, and making sure that we can fulfill the kinds of outcomes that we should in the lives of that next generation.

Not just that, Mr. Speaker. In doing so we can bring about significant economic opportunity. Unlocking economic activity and growth to the tune of \$80 billion in this province is no small feat; more than the total sum of all potash sold in the history of this province, Mr. Speaker. So this is about significant economic development. It's about improving the lives of young people and it's about making significant social improvements, not to mention a direct reduction in what we're spending in Justice and in Health and in Social Services by making those sorts of changes.

So we see quite a few changes that have been introduced by the minister opposite when he put forward this Bill: new provisions to create the ability for an inmate to appeal a disciplinary decision in the loss of remission to an appeal adjudicator. We see the code of conduct. We see changes as it relates to the Provincial Ombudsman or the connect to the Ombudsman and the Human Rights Commission and Privacy Commissioner. We see administrative changes. We see changes as it relates to procedure.

And certainly as I read through, there's certainly aspects and goals for which we support within this Bill, but we need to make sure that this Bill is in fact reflective of the report that was commissioned and making sure that this is in the best interests of Saskatchewan people, that this is the most efficient and effective way of going at, addressing the challenges that exist. So that'll be the work that is before us as an opposition. Those discussions, that consultation, those committee meetings, those questions to the minister, that will all be occurring as we move forward but at this point in time I'd simply like to thank all the individuals who work so hard across Saskatchewan to provide public safety and provide the work in our corrections facilities, and that do all the work that they do to provide safety within this province.

At this point in time Mr. Speaker, I'd move adjournment of Bill No. 16, *The Correctional Services Act, 2011*.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of Bill No. 16, *The Correctional Services Amendment Act, 2011*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

[20:00]

Bill No. 17

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Harpauer that **Bill No. 17 — *The Child Care Amendment Act, 2011*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure here tonight to enter the discussion on Bill No. 17, *An Act to amend The Child Care Act, 2011*. What this Bill proposes to do, Mr. Speaker, is twofold actually. One of the things is to remove the reference to the family services board. As the minister pointed out in her remarks, family services board was meant to review decisions respecting child care licensing, but this board had never been created and there are other mechanisms for reviewing some of these decisions. The other part of this, Mr. Speaker, is allowing retroactive payments, whether it's on subsidies or grants, to be made to the next, to the fiscal year. What happens right now, says the minister here, "By amending section 27 of *The Child Care Act* a minister's order or an order of council will no longer be necessary." So it's not that retroactive payments didn't happen, but they needed an order in council. And now this piece of legislation will take care of that, Mr. Speaker.

I have to say, last fall when Bill No. 17 was introduced, as someone who's particularly interested in child care as a parent of young children, who knows many, many young people or many, many parents who also have young children, who are right in the thick of trying to figure out how you balance work and school and being a good parent as well, Mr. Speaker, child care is quite near and dear to my heart. I think my, obviously, my main responsibility here is representing the folks of Saskatoon Riversdale, but I think my perspective as a parent of a young child and particularly a mother becomes very relevant here in this debate, Mr. Speaker.

I was quite keen when I heard that Bill 17 was coming forward, *The Child Care Amendment Act*, and I was eager to hear what was going to be in this Bill. I was ever hopeful that it would be something, something more substantial. I know that I've stood in this Assembly before and said the one thing that we think here is missing is an overall long-term vision and plan for supporting families, Mr. Speaker, with a plan to implement that vision. So I was ever hopeful that that would be present in this Bill, but that is not the case.

Today actually, as a matter of fact, we happened to have in your gallery, we had about 14 directors of child care centres here who brought some of their concerns to the legislature. These are people who have been on the front lines of child care for many years. There was one woman here who's worked in the field for 23 years, I believe. So they know what child care looks like on the front lines.

And one of their big concerns is, it's great to create spaces, Mr. Speaker, but if you don't have the staff to support those spaces,

there's absolutely no point. Instead what you get is harried staff who doesn't have, who just can't do the work, Mr. Speaker. It becomes more and more difficult. And I know this is the one thing, when I've mentioned the need for a plan here, I've heard the minister or ministers get up and talk about the need or talk about spaces, but a child care plan is not just about spaces.

Here in Saskatchewan we have some huge issues around child care. One of them is the subsidy piece, Mr. Speaker, which is right now offered through Social Services. So actually I'd like to identify that as the first problem. When I asked questions about child care today, Mr. Speaker, we have two ministers who get up to respond — the Minister of Education and the Minister of Social Services — because the Minister of Education's responsible for child care while the Minister of Social Services is responsible for the subsidy portion. So I would point out that perhaps that's one of the first things that needs to change. Perhaps this should all be consolidated under one ministry. I might suggest perhaps a ministry for families, and that could support a broad range of areas underneath that, Mr. Speaker. But I would offer that that might be one of the problems here — not having a plan.

Around the subsidies, I'd like to talk a little bit about the subsidies. So right now a family with an income of \$1,640, which is not much more over minimum wage, someone working full-time and making not much more over minimum wage, \$1,640, you start to lose, with one child you start to lose your subsidy once you reach that rate. That's not a whole lot of money, Mr. Speaker, to not be able to be eligible for a full child care subsidy. And when we've had increasing costs over recent years here in Saskatchewan — we've had rents go up; we've had housing costs go up; we've had food and utilities go up — not changing that in many, many, many, many years is problematic, Mr. Speaker.

I know that one of the other problems, and I know this did change I believe in 2006, something called the exit threshold. So you can make a little bit more money and still be eligible for subsidies. And I do have some written questions in, I believe, on this particular topic, but so you might make \$50,000 and still be eligible for a very small subsidy. But I'm curious to know exactly what that subsidy looks like. But we have a whole host of problems with the subsidy piece.

And one of them we talked about earlier today, Mr. Speaker, was the bureaucracy involved with it. So you have child care directors who, every month for every family, fill out an attendance sheet with all the hours that little Johnny or Mary were in the facility. They handwrite all these. This is not an online process. It's a form that they fill out for every single family, and then they submit this form to the ministry. And the subsidy department then goes through these and enters them or does whatever they do with them. So we've got child care directors who are spending a whole bunch of time filling out paperwork. We've got people in the ministry filling out and attending to paperwork.

And then we've got families who have to scrape together or gather together all their forms every month when it comes to their earnings. So you've got all this paper shuffling in essence that happens, which may just result in a minimal subsidy or the loss of a subsidy when you make \$1,640, Mr. Speaker. I think

that that's problematic. And I'd wonder how much money we're spending on the paper shuffling part of it when we should in fact be investing this money directly into children.

And we need to recognize that child care is not . . . Child care serves many purposes here in Saskatchewan and elsewhere. First of all, it supports families. It supports parents to be able to be engaged either in education so they can become engaged in the workforce or it supports people who are in the workforce. It supports and provides opportunities for children. And it also is an economic development, economic development tool . . . I'm having trouble speaking here tonight. It is an economic development tool, Mr. Speaker.

And what that means is how can employers find, how can it make . . . We hear the government talk about needing to find more skilled workers here. Well we have skilled workers here. We have to make sure we provide the supports for them so they can be part of the workforce. And for anyone who has children, we all know that if you have had to venture out or if you do venture out into paid work, if you don't have child care that you can count on and feel good about, you are probably the worst possible employee you could be. If you are at work and you have insecure child care where you're not quite sure what exactly is going on or if your son or daughter is getting the same care or similar care that you would be providing, then how do you be the best possible employee?

And that's what we want people to do. We want people to be the best possible employees so they can contribute to our economy. But we want people to be the best possible parents too because, when we have children, Mr. Speaker, we want to do right by our kids and make sure that they have every chance to grow up to be fine, contributing citizens. And we need to invest in our young people to make sure this happens.

I know from my own experience actually, from talking to some people I know who are right in the thick of child care issues. I belong to a Yahoo moms' group. So an online group, a parenting group. There's probably 100-plus women; it's not a very big group. But I can tell you at least once a month, Mr. Speaker, there is a frantic post to that Yahoo group calling on all the moms in the group to try to help find a child care space because somehow child care has fallen through. I've seen . . . I've heard women on that group actually working on Ph.D.s, Mr. Speaker, who've had to withdraw from their education program because their child care, they couldn't find child care that worked with their education and worked for them.

So the experts, to me, Mr. Speaker, are the people who are in the field providing the services and the people who need the services. They're the best people to tell us what we should be doing as a government and the kind of supports they need to be the best possible employees, student, and students and parents. And I think that there's much benefit to be had to be reaching out and talking to some of these folks to see what they think a made-in-Saskatchewan child care strategy should look like.

Ultimately I think again this investment in our young people, our very youngest people and our employees, would reap much good, Mr. Speaker. I think that we are missing a lost opportunity by not putting together a long-term child care plan. That vision, developing a vision based on Saskatchewan values

— what child care providers and what parents and what child care educators are telling us — developing that vision and then putting down those markers saying, well we're going to get here by this time, and here by this time. And so people can measure and say, you know what? You are meeting your goals.

But this issue just around spaces, Mr. Speaker, and I know any time that there's ever any criticism around child care, I hear the ministers get up and say, well we're creating more spaces. Well unfortunately by the end of this government's mandate they've committed to 2,000 new spaces over the next four years, which really is a commitment to keep us near bottom of the pack, Mr. Speaker. So 13,000 spaces in Saskatchewan relative to a province like Manitoba with the same population which has close to 30,000 spaces.

Spaces are not . . . It's not just about spaces, Mr. Speaker. A child care plan is not just about creating spaces. I've heard people say that there's . . . Sometimes child care directors and people working on the front lines in child care centres and child care homes say one of the issues: so you create spaces; you don't have the staff to fill them because child care workers actually, on average, make about what someone working at Wal-Mart makes, Mr. Speaker, with no education and no student debts and without the heart-wrenching difficulties that can sometimes happen in a child care facility. So the people we're asking to be responsible for our children are being paid poorly, I would say. We are paying the people that we trust to care for our children; we are not valuing them. I would argue that actually we don't do a very good job here in Saskatchewan in valuing care work.

And I think whether it's looking at different ways to value parental leaves, Quebec has done an amazing job. Aside from their child care, the one thing Quebec has done, they have opted out of the employment insurance program in about 2006. And they offer their own maternity, paternity, and parental program which is better than the national program.

So again valuing care is about making sure we're valuing parents who provide care, but it's also about making sure we're valuing the care that child care workers are providing. And I think we do a very, very poor job in the job . . . We do a very poor job in valuing those who do care work here, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to point to a couple other provinces who have done a very, very good job. Prince Edward Island, a province much smaller than us actually, has decided that they need to do better when it comes to child care. Prince Edward Island actually has gone from near the bottom of the class as well, just like Saskatchewan, to close to the top. You've got Quebec, Manitoba, and then Prince Edward Island. How did Prince Edward Island get there? There was a political will to do things differently and to make sure the supports for families were in place so their citizens could be employed or be educated and feel good about the care that their children were receiving.

[20:15]

So if Prince Edward Island can do it, we most certainly should be able to do it here in Saskatchewan. We have record revenues. Actually if you look at over the last, including this upcoming budget, probably about \$50 billion, \$50 billion in revenue here

in this province. So please don't tell me that there aren't the resources there to be able to invest in our youngest citizens and ensuring that they are well cared for and that families have what they need to be the best possible parents to raise the best possible kids. So \$50 billion is a lot of money, Mr. Speaker, and I believe that the resources are there if the political will was there. If Prince Edward Island can do it, we certainly can as well.

Again I think I want to highlight one of the big things that the child care directors who were here today were talking about, and it's about recruitment and retention of staff. So you've got child care workers . . . First of all, we've got a bit of a mishmash across the system. You can make anywhere from \$10 to \$20 an hour if you work in the child care system. And there's no standardization of wages, and wages are abysmal, Mr. Speaker, but I've already talked about that a little bit.

So there's no standardization of wages. There's no standardization of what child care rates are paid, and there's some difficulty . . . Child cares are run by parent boards. So you might in one child care facility have a top-notch professional board with people who have much experience sitting on boards and administrating. And then in the next child care facility, they might not have the resources or the ability to manage a board quite as well. So we have a total mishmash across the board when it comes to child care. So I think this government needs to see this as a huge opportunity. This is a great way of saying to Saskatchewan citizens, we value the contributions you make, and we want to put in place the supports so you can achieve what you need to achieve.

I was chatting with someone a few days ago actually. The francophone child care in Saskatoon, Felix le Chat, right now has a waiting list of about 150 spaces. There are 150 people on the waiting list. One of those families, Mr. Speaker, are people who are new, new to Saskatoon. These are people who are new to Canada. They came to Saskatoon. They are professionals, francophone — French speakers. They've come to Saskatoon. They had wonderful job opportunities, and they were led to believe that there would be supports for them when they got here.

So these two professionals have a young family, and they've got here, and they realized that there's a 150-child waiting list for the child care that they need to get into. Their kids speak no English right now. And it's not that their children aren't going to learn how to speak English, but coming to a new country where a new language is spoken, they really want to be in this francophone child care. It would be the most comfortable and best place to help them integrate into the Saskatoon and Saskatchewan economy. So that's just one story, Mr. Speaker — 150 spaces at Felix le Chat in Saskatoon.

There are these cases all across the board. But again I want to emphasize, and I know the women, the child care directors here today, say this is not just about spaces. This is about the ability of child care centres to recruit and retain qualified staff, and retaining involves being able to pay them well. There are very few people who enter the child care field who actually stay. What ends up happening is when you're making about \$20,000 a year and you're trying to support your own family, you realize that that's not sustainable, Mr. Speaker, so you leave the field.

You may have gathered student loans while you were getting your education.

I think another thing to point out is there is very little difference between someone who does the first three months of training or the first year of training or the second year of training. There is very little incentive for employees to go on to do the second level of training, aside from of course that personal motivation which I believe child care workers have, but there is very little financial incentive to do that second piece of training, Mr. Speaker, which is I think a total shame.

So again with Bill No. 17, I was optimistic in the fall when this Bill came forward that this was the time that the government was going to tell us something big and bold about child care. They were going to fix the subsidy system. They were going to address wages and training, but sadly, Mr. Speaker, that did not happen. Instead we get the removal of the Family Services Board from the Act, and we get retroactive payments, which is great, but that was already happening through orders in council.

So I personally am very disappointed with this Bill and think it could do so much more. And I think it's up to government to do so much more, especially when we have the resources here and we have the economy that we do have. It's important to make sure that people have the supports to be the best possible employees or students and the best possible parents. Nobody wants to abdicate their role of being a parent when they're at work. But you want to make sure you have the supports in place so your mind can be focused and so you can do the work that you need to do and then you can come home and be the parent you can be, and you weren't stressed out all day thinking that your child wasn't safe or secure or happy and loved in the care that they were receiving.

So again I'm disappointed with Bill No. 17. It could have been so much more. And I know the people here today would like to see, would love to see, would implore the government to seriously look at overhauling the whole child care system. Let's take a look at the subsidy system. Is it working? No. What it is, it's a whole bunch of paper shuffling for parents, for child care directors, and for ministry staff. So overhauling and reviewing, reviewing and overhauling that subsidy system, making sure we're paying staff well so they can do their job well and will stick around in the field.

Child care workers do this work because they love to do it, but that shouldn't mean that they shouldn't be paid well to do the work of caring. So with that again, I just want to say I'm disappointed about Bill No. 17. And I look forward perhaps in two days from now, the budget, the government will come forward with a really great child care proposal. I hope so, but I'm not holding my breath. But we'll continue to talk about this in the legislature and elsewhere, Mr. Speaker. And with that, I would like to move to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 17, *The Child Care Amendment Act, 2011*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 18

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Norris that **Bill No. 18 — *The Degree Authorization Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to enter into the debate on Bill No. 18, *An Act respecting the Authority to Provide Degree Programs and to Grant Post-secondary Degrees and making consequential amendments to other Acts*. That's quite a handful, the title there. It's an important piece of legislation that we have a good debate about this because as I read through it and I read some of the documents that we've got and some of the feedback that we've been able to do, I'm not sure what the purpose or the need is. I understand what the outcome will be, but is this a solution in search of a problem?

I think that when the minister got up and he gave actually it was one of the longer ministerial speeches to enter the second debate, I think that . . . second reading. I find it very interesting as I read through it, and it was quite long — it was, like I say, a two-parter; it was before and after supper — and it was . . . I'm not sure whether that helped the understanding it further. But essentially what he's saying when he got up and spoke was, and I'll quote, "This legislation holds three key tenets. One, it is meant to bolster accessibility for students in our province." It goes on to talk, ". . . population and economy continue to grow, so too do the needs of the province to meet an increasingly vibrant labour market . . ."

So he's talking about the needs of the province. He flipped to that from what the students had as needs for accessibility. I want to talk a little bit later about what accessibility could and should really mean for students. But he's really then, I think he sort of flipped to what the economy needs or what employers are looking for, and that's not quite the same thing. That's not quite the same thing. He also slid in the fact that — and I don't know whether this was the minister freelancing because I know he tends to want to go in this direction — but he says essentially the Act is meant to help ensure we are addressing a public policy void that this government has inherited that other Canadian jurisdictions have worked to address over the course of the last several years.

So there lies in I think what people are generalizing as, here is a solution in search of a problem. He's got a policy void. Nobody's been talking about this policy void, but somehow it's come up and he's going to solve it, no matter whether we like it or not. And he's got an answer, but we don't know what the problem is. But he says it's about accessibility, so we'll talk about that.

Then he says, then he goes on to say the second key tenet . . . Because he's got three. The first was the accessibility. Second, it ensures a robust quality assurance process. And he talks about how other groups are doing this kind of thing, but again that doesn't talk about a need. It sort of talks about a characteristic of the solution, the solution you're going to have, these other institutions being able to give degrees. And you have quality assurance, so that's good to know. But we haven't yet decided

whether we're going to do that or not, but I guess if we're going to do it, then that's good to have. But I'm not sure that's a reason. That doesn't sort of fall into, this is why we need it. We need it because we're going to have a quality assurance program? Well it's good to know, but I'm not sure that that's a pressing need, doesn't fill the pressing need category.

And then third, it talks about that the legislation protects the long-standing reputations of the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan. It talks about how we're going to make sure that that happens, protecting the word university, protecting the word varsity. It's going to talk about how we are going to ensure that these degree-granting institutions are legitimately Saskatchewan, based in Saskatchewan. Even if it's only a post office, as least we know it's here.

And that's all fair and well, but the question is again, why are we doing, what is the need? And when you kind of leave the need out, then you get into an issue of you have a real problem with unintentional consequences because you're really trying to do too much.

I'll talk a minute about issues around accessibility and why students . . . And it's always good and it's always worthwhile to be talking about how we can help students get their best possible education here in Saskatchewan. That's a very laudable goal, very laudable goal, but we haven't heard the need. We haven't heard students — and the minister has not demonstrated at all that he's been pressured because of access — students are feeling there's just not enough degree-granting institutions in this province.

Again it sort of fits into that three-more-politician rule of thumb these guys on the other side have — that they've got a solution, but nobody asked for that solution. They are looking for a problem to fit their answer. They want three more politicians; now they want degree-granting institutions. So I don't know. They are getting things kind of upside down here. Three more politicians, more degree-granting institutions.

Today we heard, for example, about the child care issue. The child care issue. What really people, when they go to school and they get their . . . And I don't even know if it makes a difference to them whether it's a degree or a certificate. All they want to know is, when they do their work that they get paid well enough that they can pay their rent or pay their mortgage and have enough money to make ends meet. That's what we're hearing people talk about. And I think people are talking about that and I think if the government really seemed to care about these issues, they would be thinking about those kinds of things and not going down this road of degree-granting programs.

And maybe it is the thing, but you know when I looked through it, and it's quite a thorough piece of legislation and it is very interesting, but I know that they hired this fellow, Alex Usher, a consultant. His company is called Higher Education Strategy Associates and the government . . . There's some fanfare now. I have to give them a little bit of credit because at least they did consult on this as opposed to the three new politicians. No consultation on that, but on this they did.

[20:30]

But again the minister's speech does not line up with this. In fact actually when I read through this, there is no talk about students wanting more access to degree-granting programs. In fact actually, and I guess that some of the students were invited to this but really from my read of this, they don't really talk. They're not quoting students or any kind of, and I hate to call a student a consumer, but nothing from the consumer point of view here saying, this is what we need. This will keep the marketplace of learning vibrant and I can have more choices and it'll match up to the kind of careers I want to have. It really doesn't talk about that. It sort of flips it around, as I said, to really being something driven by, in this case, the minister who really has a mission to fill his policy void which nobody has been talking about. And he hasn't proved that anybody's been talking to him about it and saying, hey you've got a real issue there you have to resolve.

No issue. Nobody's raised it and in fact from what it seems from this report by Mr. Usher, that in fact it caused more concern because people said, so why are you doing this? Why are you doing this? Aren't the two universities good enough? Aren't they doing enough work? Aren't they innovative enough? Aren't they meeting the needs? And we do have the First Nations University and the Saskatchewan Institute of Indian Technology and Gabriel Dumont. Aren't those working well? And of course, SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology]. Aren't they working well enough? What is the real need? There has not been a real case made for this.

And you know, I think this is a real problem because you do get into situations where, say, you're creating a situation where you're going to have some unintentional consequences or something's going to happen. And I think that we have to be very careful. We have a lot of faith in our two universities and I actually happen to have . . . New journalists I see up there. Anyways, I happen to be alumni of both universities, so I feel really good about the two universities and I think they're wonderful institutions. And they've been able to adapt to the 21st century in an amazing way, in an amazing way. And so I'm not actually seeing the real, real need here.

And I think that when we're having government pressures, and we're going to be seeing a budget in a couple of days where the government's going to be delivering this budget of mixed messages about austerity and prosperity, here we have the situation where we're going to be talking to some institutions that create these new programs. And I imagine, and usually this is the case, a degree program usually costs more than a certificate program. So you're going to have that scenario out there.

But I think that it's going to be one of mixed messages here, because then they say, and I just want to talk about this for a minute, because they talk about this quality assurance program or process and he outlines it quite well in the Act. It's part IV — how it's going to be worked out, the body, the terms of appointment, the quorum, all of this stuff, how you're going to get paid and the fact the ministry will pay for clerical assistance; it's the law. I found that kind of interesting that it's the law that the ministry will pay for clerical help. You would think they'd be able to organize that. In fact I would even suggest that I would even think that it would be one of those

situations where you would want to have an association of higher learning and they would, in fact, look after this by fees themselves and it would be administered by them at an arm's-length process, much like a professional body is.

You know, I know from my own experience with the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation], they administer their quality assurance program themselves. It's not administered by the Ministry of Education. They have a way to make sure it's done well. It's set up in the STF Act in fact. And so it can be done, but in fact it's the teachers who pay for it. It's not the Ministry of Education that pays for it. And here you have, it sounds like the Government of Saskatchewan's going to be paying for all the parts of this, the degree-granting program by these other schools. And I don't have a problem with the other schools, but I think it's part of doing of business that they should be paying for their own quality assurance, much like any other professional organization. We don't pay for the quality assurance of teachers. We don't pay for many others. And so why are we now paying for the quality assurance of some of these other bodies? I don't know. I think that's kind of a new thing, and I don't think it's been really well thought out.

The other part of this though too is I think that — and I really did want to speak to this — is the fact that when we talk about quality assurance . . . And we've not really talked about what happens when a student has a complaint. What is their process now? And I know that it's in the university Acts because we debated this a couple of years ago when this same minister had brought that forward in terms of, in his view, it was updating the old appeal processes. At the universities, it was called the visitor. And a visitor was someone you could appeal to when a student felt that he had been done wrong by the university. University of Regina had a visitor. University of Saskatchewan had a visitor. And now that's not the case, and it's all done internally. Fair enough, but I'm not sure that's been addressed in here, and I think that's a critical part.

So I think that this is . . . There are some questions I have, some questions. And it'll be very interesting that when we eventually get to the committee on this. If the minister is willing to give some straight answers, we'd be very, very interested here.

I want to just draw your attention, Mr. Speaker, there's an article in *Maclean's* magazine. Now it is from April 2nd, 2007 so it is not quite four years, but it raises some of the issues that I think we should think about in terms of this. And it goes, and I want to quote this:

When contemplating education options, it's important to understand how your degree will be viewed after graduation. Canada has no national accreditation body. Each province has its own system for awarding the right to grant degrees, as well as separate systems for private institutions. This has led to inter-provincial inconsistencies, and confusion for students.

And so we know, and the minister has . . . End of quote. And we know that when the minister made his remarks, he talked about how this falls in line with other provinces, but he neglected to say which other provinces and what percentage of the Canadian population. It might be the four Atlantic provinces which make up, I think, about 3 or 5 per cent of the Canadian

population. But he's probably talking about Alberta and BC [British Columbia] — I'll assume that's what he's talking about — which is much more significant. So they have their systems out there, but I know in BC, and this article talks about there were only four degree-granting schools in BC in 1989 and now it's 14, and some have been rolled in together to become a university. And of course this is the concern that our two universities have here, because they have national, in fact they have international reputations, and the problem is that if you get other universities involved from the province, it might seem appropriate when you're enrolled, but then when you graduate, you say, so what do we do with this degree?

And so then what happens is that students who are graduating with a degree from some of these other places, these newly granted schools that can give out degrees, what's happening is that they're not being necessarily recognized when they want to go into post-graduate work. And this becomes a problem because . . . And the schools will say, well we don't want to recognize your program from institute A because we're not sure, even though it says you have a degree, we're not sure that it has the same rigorous approach to academics as, say, the University of Regina or First Nations University or University of Saskatchewan.

And so they're saying, so based on that, we're not going to admit you to a post-graduate program, whether it be your master's or PGD, a post-graduate degree, or whatever. Now in this article, people might say this amounts to academic snobbery. And now I know that you have academic snobbery and you have academic . . . Oh, what's the . . . incestuous relationships when you go to the same school for your three degrees, and that's a problem too. But what's he really talking about? What they're talking about in this article is the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, often referred to as AUCC, and this is an advocacy organization that represents 91 public and private not-for-profit universities.

And so in many ways this article talks about the fact that because there's no national accreditation body, many registrars use the AUCC membership as a de facto accreditation, and I believe that's the situation for the U of R and the U of S, that they are members of AUCC. So if there ever was a policy void that I think that our minister should be working on, is maybe this national accreditation should be the thing that would make sense for all our students as they move across the country. I can think of my own daughter who ended up going to school here at the U of R, went to school in Nelson, BC, went to school . . . And then she finally ended up in Halifax.

Students love to travel around the country, and it's a wonderful way of getting your education. But you have to have some consistency as you go across the land. If you are just going and you're assuming . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes. Yes, I can relate to that: who pays? That's right. And so you want to have some consistency. You want to know what you're getting when you do this, and it's a wonderful opportunity for young people.

So this is something I think that we need to really think about is so . . . I really want to acknowledge the good work of AUCC. But if they are being used as a de facto accreditation body, that's not necessarily their role either. And I think it's important that we may want to think about encouraging the minister really

to take a look at what AUCC does. And I think that in this Bill, it really . . . You know, and the minister in his remarks refers to having people with expertise in this area, but he doesn't really, he doesn't really mention AUCC. And I think this is an important area that we would be asking questions about. What does AUCC feel about this? What can they do to make sure there's quality assurance? And I think this is really incredibly important. So I think this is huge.

Now I do want to just let you know of course in our role as, in opposition, that it's our hope and our . . . What we set out to do is, when we receive these Bills, of course we send out letters to stakeholders and ask them, so what do you think? What do you think about this? And we did get some responses, and I just want to let you to know that we did get one from Gary Tompkins, the Chair of University of Regina Faculty Association. He wrote back to our question about the Bill No. 18, *The Degree Authorization Act*. And he responded, and it was very interesting what he had to say. And I will quote:

I felt that as a public policy exercise, the committee's actions were backward, having identified a solution (increase the number of degree granting institutions) [that was in brackets] while trying to identify a problem the action would fix.

[20:45]

And so here you had a . . . And he goes on to say:

It appeared to me that the expansion of the number of institutions with degree granting authority was a "done deal" when no specific problem was identified. This feeling was strengthened by the circumstances surrounding the meeting — we received very short notice, there was only one meeting in Saskatoon, and it was scheduled during the university examination period.

So this is a real issue. And he goes on to talk about, you know, universities are characterized by having two fundamental characteristics: academic freedom — how does that play into that whole discussion? — and bicameral governance. So that's really, really important.

And so I think there's some really important . . . You know, and I think this is and I have to say while, you know, sometimes we think people who work at universities have really complicated answers, his answer to the situation around access was really straightforward. I believe, and I quote, "I believe the best way to improve post-secondary access for students is to adequately fund public institutions of higher learning." And there you go. If there's a problem, then I think we can find it within our current public post-secondary system, but it's all about appropriate funding. And I think this is really true.

And so I think that I do have some questions about this Act. And I think that while I look through this report by Mr. Usher, I have to agree with Mr. Tompkins that it's a solution in search of a problem. And if there really is a problem, of course the problem hasn't been really well documented, then there are other ways that we can deal with it.

And I do want to refer to another piece of a . . . another report

that came out because now maybe the minister's talking about accessibility in a way I'm not catching. But usually accessibility for students means either it's costs, or distance, housing, and waiting lists — can they get into the program they're trying to get into in a timely fashion? — all of those things. And all of those things can be documented, and there can be a case well made.

And I was just asking some of my colleagues before I got up and, Mr. Speaker, you'll remember the debates in 2004 to 2006, even earlier, about waiting lists at SIAST. And we really haven't heard that much. Maybe I haven't . . . Maybe I've been, you know, I've been on other issues, but I haven't really heard that much about the waiting lists. And that's a very good thing. That's a very good thing. And if that's the case, then hats off to all the people who are making that happen.

And I know for example in my own riding, SIAST has done a fantastic job of moving off Idylwyld and going down to Mount Royal Collegiate. And the programs they're teaching out of Mount Royal is phenomenal. And so they're really moving to increase access. So that's what I'm thinking access means. Maybe, maybe I missed out on what that definition of that word is. But if that's the case, then we'll have that discussion in committee. But I think that even then, we're talking about degrees. We're not talking about certificates. We're not talking about journeyman papers or anything like that. We're talking about degrees.

And so I have not heard . . . You know, we've had students come here. We have our annual delegations where we have students in the building, and I know last year in March we had students here, social work students talking about the high cost of housing. And I think that's well documented. But not many have said, we need more degree-granting institutions or spaces. Maybe they're missing out. Maybe there is a waiting list for some of the programs that are, you know, five people, ten people, but not enough to create a new need for a degree.

And it would be interesting to know — and this is what I'd like to know — is what would those degrees be? And are they ones that really are priority interest of the Government of Saskatchewan? So what are those degrees that we're really talking? Are they social work degrees? Are they nursing degrees? Are they theological degrees? What are they? And this, the information we have . . . And of course the work by Mr. Usher doesn't give that, give that information.

And I think that if they're not of priority interest to the economy and the Government of Saskatchewan, then my question earlier about who's paying for all of this, around the quality assurance program, why should the Government of Saskatchewan be doing that? Because we'll be hearing in a few days more about the lean initiatives of the Government of Saskatchewan, where over four years they were cutting the civil service by 4 per cent each year for 16 per cent, and then at that same time they're creating another bureaucracy, the quality assurance body, to ensure that these degrees that are granted out to some schools are valid.

And I don't . . . And on one hand you can't argue with that. But on the other hand, you go, is it really the business of government? Isn't this a professional issue that if a professional

organization of degree-granting institutions should be able to monitor themselves? Maybe they can't. I don't know. But I don't know why in these times of austerity that we'd be going down this road. I have a real problem. Maybe that's the idea. We're going to get three new politicians; they would be the three that would work on this quality assurance program. And wherever they . . . Number 59, 60, and 61 get appointed to the quality assurance program maybe. I don't know. You've got to find something for them to do.

But I wanted to bring up the fact that, I just wanted to say that while I've been talking a lot about the degree-granting status, this report by Mr. Usher, there's been other reports that have been done about accessibility. And I think this one is really, really quite well done. It's by Paul Gingrich, talking about *After the Freeze: Restoring University Affordability in Saskatchewan*, and I think this is really, really key. You know, I think that one, it talks about tuition, fundraising, how tuition at one point was much more affordable in Saskatchewan and today it's not — it's something that more we could be doing — and how it's increased by 10.6 per cent since 2009. And I think this is something that really needs to become an issue, and I think this is very important.

You know, but he just says here there's some really interesting stats here. By 2009 the cost of tuition was, compared with average income, was 30 per cent greater in Saskatchewan than in Manitoba. All right? So there's some real issues here. Here you have university revenues from all sources — tuition and fees, research grants, and provincial funding — has greatly increased in the past decade while undergraduate student enrolment has declined. So I mean that's an interesting statement. Massive revenue growth in the past 5 years have benefited university administrations and non-academic programs, but student and faculty members have not benefited proportionally.

So I think that's one dimension of access that we should really be focusing on. We're putting more money into the universities, but student enrolment is actually, according to this report, has declined. So what's the issue here in terms of access? Are there students because it's more expensive? Then that's what we should be dealing with. That's what we should be dealing with, not the fact that you need to have more degree-granting institutions. I don't think those two link up unless I'm missing a connect. And then in this case, the minister, it would have been interesting to hear more about what he would have said about this.

The other interesting issue is the whole issue around living costs. And this is interesting:

Among Canadian provinces, Saskatchewan has the largest proportion of students living outside commuting range of universities. Distance is a key factor in increasing costs of attending university and inhibiting attendance.

45 per cent of University of Regina and 60 per cent of University of Saskatchewan students must find rental housing during the academic year.

And of course we know how much rents have gone up. "Since 2006 average rents have increased by 53 per cent in Saskatoon

. . . and 43 per cent in Regina . . ." He goes on to talk about this. So this is huge.

A 2010 estimate of average spending of Canadian students for wireless devices was \$52 per month; the average for telephone, wireless and internet services, and cable TV was \$93 . . . [And this adds up] to \$744 over eight months.

So this is really interesting. And so this is something that again, if we're talking about access, the issue of living costs, and particularly in Saskatchewan, and you would think with a government who really in many ways takes pride in the fact that it has a lot of MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] who are outside the two major cities of Regina and Saskatoon, would have said, hey, if we're doing this Bill 18, maybe we should do more to help our students with the costs of living because our kids from rural Saskatchewan or small town Saskatchewan or from one of the smaller cities have to come into town, into the main cities, and the high cost of living is something that needs to be addressed.

And I think, like one of the things, and I will say is that this government, in terms of the new housing, student housing at the University of Saskatchewan, and it just opened this fall — very good, very good. And I think that it addressed the needs of 400 students. We always have this grand debate whether it is 400 students it's helping out. I won't say 400 units though. We always have that debate. But it's a good thing. It's a very good thing. And in fact actually I think there's even more coming on stream in the near future. So that's a step in the right direction, a very good step. But it's one that really is a small step when you talk about accessibility. And in terms of priorities between Bill No. 18 and student housing, I would come down on student housing pretty much every time.

And now what it really talks about, and actually this report actually does congratulate the government for creating the 400 spaces at the University of Saskatchewan which is, as I said, a very good thing. But we need to see much more in terms of that, as we said. And I didn't realize these stats until tonight, how many out-of-town students there are at the U of R and how many are out of town at the U of S — huge numbers. And so really a housing strategy for students is a significant one. And particularly, you know, people coming, students coming from out of the city, but also the First Nations and Métis students. That's a huge issue. And foreign students — very, very important.

And he also goes on and talks about financial assistance and how this is an important issue and something that we need to do more about. So again the debt that students have is phenomenal. And I'll just read a little bit of this. The average size of student loan for Saskatchewan undergraduates increased from 8,000 in 2003-04 to 9,800 in 2005-06 and has remained over 9,000 every year since. A student who took out the average loan each year for a four-year program would graduate with a debt load of almost 40,000. Now there's an issue around accessibility because it's limiting what you need to do after. And if there's some way of reducing that, that would be great.

Now it goes on to say, "One-half of all Saskatchewan . . . students graduate with a student debt of \$10,000 or more." The percentage of Saskatchewan post-secondary students graduating

with more than \$20,000 in debt has increased from 27 per cent in 2003 to 39 per cent in 2009. So here's a real issue, a real issue students are facing: their financial debt afterward.

So, Mr. Speaker, he goes on and he talks about high barriers to attendance, and probably this is the key piece in terms of access. And number one:

Family income continues to be a key factor in determining who attends university in Saskatchewan and across Canada. Low-income youth are more likely to encounter all the barriers to post-secondary studies, often skipping post-secondary education.

[21:00]

So the question goes back to when the minister talks about the first tenet of this Bill No. 18 is about access. And here we'd have to talk about family income being the case. "From a 2009 survey of Saskatchewan high-school graduates not attending university, 17 per cent of the respondents cited financial and affordability issues as the primary reason for their decision not to pursue post-secondary education." They did not mention the fact that there wasn't enough degree-granting institutions in the province. "First generation university students — those from families where no one has attended university — [can] find attending university difficult. They are twice as likely to rely on government student loans."

And I want to go on talking about Aboriginal "... individuals reporting Aboriginal ancestry have lower attendance rates at post-secondary educational institutions than do non-Aboriginal students. From a mid-2000s cross-Canada survey, by age 21, 30 per cent of Aboriginal youth had attended university, as compared with 47 per cent of non-Aboriginal youth." So I think that this is really . . .

And then the other one I want to talk about, and one that was just highlighted today, the issue around child care. We know that more mature students are coming back to school, especially women who have children, and are looking for child care. And I think this is a critical piece that we should be able to address and somehow if we don't address that issue at that particular time in their lives, it could be limiting what those young people could be doing in terms of getting education. And again that's an access issue and it's a very important issue. And I'm just not sure in terms of where the minister talks about access being an issue, this is important. And in fact this author talks about more child care spaces for students with children and this just needs, needs to happen. This is important.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I think that we're clear that we have lots of questions about this. We know that this minister can get on a bit of a cause when he sees a policy void and he wants to fill it no matter what. And so is this one that's really critical? Is it one that's really important? Is it one that, if we do this now, that we'll solve a lot of problems or will it create more problems down the road? I'm not sure. We know that there are many questions here.

And I just want to review this, that we have some questions about the proposed legislation. And again, you know, talking about Mr. Usher, and it was interesting, you know, from Higher

Education Strategy Associates from Toronto. He did this, and the government made the announcement in spring 2011. But why a consultant from Toronto? Why wasn't it a made-in-Saskatchewan solution? And again the question.

And I really do think that for us in this province, we are so proud of our two universities right now, that they've done a phenomenal job in educating our students and their challenges. And in the words of this government, there is more work to be done, but they're up to it. I have complete confidence in them, particularly when it comes to dealing with the true issues of access and the true issues of, what are the student barriers here, and the true issues of both academic freedom and liberal arts.

We have to maintain that integrity, or else what does this society become if you don't have that kind of education? And we're very proud of that kind of educational tradition in Canada, liberal arts education. But at the same time we're very aware that people are looking for meaningful careers. Students are looking for meaningful careers, whether it's in the arts or whether it's in the trades, whether it's in engineering, whether it's in the professional realm.

Again the question really becomes, is this the pressing need for this government at this time? It's sending mixed messages about the necessity of this Bill, the priority of this Bill. And yet at the same time students are facing some real challenges, whether it's finding child care, whether it's finding a good place to rent, whether it's the cost of tuition. And this may be kind of in that ivory tower realm of, is this really what people were looking for? How many people were looking for this?

It would be very interesting for this government to develop a paper in some way around the true dimensions of access, because I think the minister is correct in saying that we should be dealing with the issue of access. But I think he's really missed the mark in terms of saying we just need more degrees.

I think that it's like this government here saying — and I think people, we all heard this on the doorstep when we were out knocking — saying we need better government. And so what is the government response? Three more MLAs. That's how there will be better government? I don't think that's what they meant. I think when they meant better government, they meant better services, more responsive leadership, more consultation, but they didn't mean three more MLAs.

And so when students were calling for better access, they weren't calling for more degree-granting places. They were looking for affordable tuition, better housing, more child care, that kind of thing. And so I think the government's really missed the mark in terms of this piece of legislation. And so it will be interesting to hear the minister in committee on this because I know when he gets on a policy issue he really likes to get into it. So we will be listening to that.

But, Mr. Speaker, at this point I'd like to move adjournment of Bill No. 18. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of Bill No. 18, *The Degree Authorization Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 20

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hickie that **Bill No. 20 — *The Planning and Development Amendment Act, 2011*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and it's with great anticipation that I've been waiting for my chance to speak to this Bill, Bill No. 20, *An Act to amend The Planning and Development Act, 2007*. It's a good Bill, Mr. Speaker. It's one that has made some wide-reaching, far-reaching changes to the existing planning and development Act. And I think there's some interesting policy here on the part of the government that we've taken a look at, and I'm going to provide a few comments tonight in relation to those policy changes.

In the minister's comments when it was introduced on December 14th, he indicates that the goal of the Bill is to update the municipal planning framework. And certainly municipal planning is a keystone of the efficient operation of municipalities in the province, both urban and rural, and certainly it's a concern across Canada. And we know that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities has done work across the country on this type of work. And I'd also have to say that in my experience with First Nations and First Nations planning, that municipal planning at a First Nations level on Indian reserves is also a very active area in the federal sphere and certainly one that intersects quite intricately with the provincial sphere. So I'll be making further comments about that as we go along here, Mr. Speaker.

Now the minister stated that community planning engages the public to build a vision founded on values and assets of a community and then articulates the vision in a plan. And I think basically that's the goal of community planning and certainly there are a number of professionals and consultants who are actively engaged in this type of work.

One of my concerns with community planning is that if engagement isn't meaningful and if the public isn't fully understanding of the process, quite often you end up with a consultant who's been paid a lot of money to prepare a plan, but in the long run the community doesn't accept the plan. It often gets put on a shelf. And because if there isn't meaningful engagement on the part of the community, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it becomes something that just sits on a shelf, like we see with royal commissions. And we see that with other organizations who do a lot of work on the planning but don't fully integrate it into their own community personality. It's easy to hire someone to do the plan for you, but I think it's really important for community members to feel that they're part of the plan, and then ultimately that there will be adequate funding at the other end to implement the plan. Because I can come up with a great plan, but if I don't have the resources needed to implement it . . . And I've had that experience in many community

organizations I've been involved in. It's easy to have big talk but it's hard to put it into action.

So I think the goals here are lofty in this particular Bill. There's been extensive stakeholder consultations, according to the minister, and there's been a request for legislative amendments to do a number of things, including increasing transparency of fees, the way fees are collected.

And I think the big goal of this particular Bill is to provide for arrangements between municipalities so it's not just individual municipalities any more. And certainly *The Planning and Development Act*, right from the get-go, was interested in cross-municipal relations, so we see planning and development commissions around the larger urban areas. There's certainly a large one in Saskatoon and also in Regina. And these commissions are charged with the orderly integration between the rural area and the urban area. And as you can well imagine, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's not easy. It's complicated, and the goals and visions of both types of municipalities are often hard to reconcile.

One of the things the Minister didn't talk about a whole lot in this description of the Bill was the interplay with First Nations as neighbours. And I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that in my years as working for the federal government on the treaty land entitlement framework agreement and implementing that, quite often we saw issues arising between First Nations and neighbouring municipalities. A number of concerns from the municipal level on things like tax loss, which was dealt with fairly comprehensively in the framework agreement, but still concerns from the municipal level about how their land base was going to be impacted when lands were removed from their tax base and added to First Nation reserves.

So what I saw happening throughout the years that I worked on the implementation agreement was that these parties found a way, because of the pressing need between them, to come to an agreement on their own. And you know, it was orderly, neighbourly communications that brought these First Nations and municipalities together. Things like garbage and pest control and weed control and RM [rural municipality] roads and all those things that interplay in a community. And where First Nations were moving in to rural municipalities and acquiring land pursuant to the agreement, there were a number of very well thought-out and negotiated agreements between First Nations and rural municipalities to deal with those types of issues. So really it's just neighbours working together.

And in this case, the First Nations are new neighbours because they're moving in to the rural municipality, and they were able to come to a reciprocal agreement that suited them. Not always perfect, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There was often areas where there was concerns and disputes, and in that case, sometimes mediators were called in. And in other cases, no agreement was reached. But ultimately I think the lesson of treaty land entitlement is that when you have neighbours that have mutual needs and mutual concerns, that getting together and talking is really the simplest solution, and it's often the only solution.

Legislation like this, *The Planning and Development Act*, attempts to formalize and structuralize those types of relationships. It gets complicated when you do that, and it is

also sometimes, like I said earlier, imposed in a way that isn't meaningful to the members of the community. So care has to be taken when we create these kinds of structures because the validity of the agreement . . . it's kind of like the Russian constitution was one of the best human rights pieces of constitution in the world, but human rights abuses still occur. So it's I guess it's as good as the paper that it's written on sometimes, and it's the will of the people and the will of the communities to make it work that drive the success.

Like I said, in the organizations I'm involved in, there's often a lot of people with really big ideas and big visions, and those are great because you have to start somewhere. But as we know, the devil's in the detail. And in those kinds of circumstances, if the community doesn't pull together and see the vision and incorporate it into their daily, I guess, expression of community, then it becomes meaningless, and they do become shelved.

[21:15]

And I've seen a number of them shelved in that way in the work I've done, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because simply, the people that are going to make it happen may have gotten swept up in the grandiose, big-talk kind of ideas, or they simply weren't part of it all along. Sometimes a very, you know, motivated consultant — but one that may not understand the community fully — can come up with a glossy, shiny plan, but it doesn't always work on the ground.

The minister indicated in his comments that:

The amendments are designed to provide additional flexibility for municipalities to jointly plan and manage areas of common interest, improve the mechanics of decision making for large district planning commissions, [and] provide the minister with the ability to delegate approving authority status to a district planning authority . . .

So, oh and there's a few other things he's indicated: incidental housekeeping items, dispute resolution processes for these district planning commissions, and municipal flexibility to service and cover the cost of development.

In some ways, I suppose this is an attempt to provide for consolidation of municipal operations in a meaningful way. Certainly we know, as particularly rural municipalities are suffering depopulation, that it's becoming more difficult for them to manage as an entity in themselves. And it makes a lot more sense for them to create partnerships with other municipalities.

Again, I'm not sure where First Nations fit into this picture because it wasn't really addressed, although he does make a reference to an organization called WaterWolf which apparently has 35 municipalities and one First Nation. That's not something I'm familiar with, Mr. Speaker, and will want to look into that more to understand how that model is being reflected in this Bill.

So there's ways under . . . This Bill has attempted to provide some flexibilities around where there are local plans or community plans, official community plans in place and where

there aren't. Or you may have a situation where one municipality has an official community plan, the other one doesn't, and yet they want to do some district planning. So the Bill sets out a number of ways to do that.

Another interesting aspect of the Bill is that it provides for these district planning authorities to be granted approving authority status. So this DPA, or the district planning authority, is a corporate body and they are able to make planning . . . they're authorized to make a planning district on official community plans' zoning bylaws. So it's giving some pretty great powers to these district planning authorities, much as the current Act does for planning and development commissions. So I think that's part of the intention that the minister is looking at.

It also, as another part of the Act, the amendment Act, Bill No. 20, is to provide municipalities with varieties of tools to recover the costs of managing and servicing new development. This is a sort of a different section of the Act, and it will allow amendments to ensure that the fees are rational and transparent and that changes to the levies and service agreements will give them flexibility to enter into agreement on lands outside their jurisdiction if they're directly servicing a subdivision or developments.

So it just gives them more tools and flexibility. And you know, as you can imagine, rural municipal lines and urban-rural municipal splits are drawn already and development occurs around them. So it's important for the municipalities to have the ability to deal with the realities of expansion and subdivisions even when the lines of the municipal areas are established. I know some situations, again with First Nations, where town boundaries have impacted economic development plans of First Nations through their treaty land entitlement acquisition. And through negotiations with the urban municipality, they were able to rearrange the town boundary to suit the needs of all the parties.

So there's ways to do this. As I said, it doesn't require a law for people to get together and make a plan. Certainly that's been the way people operate all along. Whenever there's a community, there's plans that are being made. But this does provide some formalities that will provide structure for municipalities. So if we want to take a look at the Bill itself, it's a fairly lengthy Bill, and there's a lot of changes to it.

I guess the first and most important change is the definitions again. We always seem to start at the definitions. So the first definition change that we're looking at is the definition of district plan and district planning authority. So this is a new definition. And district plan is basically the plan for a planning district that's adopted pursuant to section 102. So this is something I will be addressing in a minute, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And then the next change would be the definition of district planning authority, which were not previously defined. So the goal of these changes, according to the notes, is to improve clarity. And I think that's been achieved.

Next change is clause 12(a), and it's allowing the district planning authority to be the approving authority. I spoke to that earlier, and in this case, the approving authority is a council or a district planning authority that has been declared pursuant to 13(1). And 13(1) itself has been repealed and the changes in the

repealed section expand the provisions to allow for district planning authorities to be the approving authorities providing, of course, that they meet the requirements.

So 13(3) has been changed as well to require that the new approving authorities have to adopt an official community plan or district plan and employ or retain a professional community planner. I've met a few community planners in my work, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and these people are very valuable to assisting communities with a positive, go-forward plan for community development. So although I can imagine it's a burden for some smaller municipalities to have to employ or retain a planner, in order to have a plan, you have to have a planner. It just makes sense. Otherwise the fears and I think the reality is that it will end up on a shelf somewhere. So the notes explain that having the plan and the expertise, those two go together, and it provides capacity necessary to manage the land use and the development as approving authority.

So that's the first few changes. The next ones we looked at is section 15, and 15(1) and (2) have been changed to clarify that district planning authorities may delegate power and duties to a development officer. So that's just a delegation clause providing for some flexibility in the planning authority.

The next change is section 17 which was repealed and replaced, and this is the fees provision. So what it reads now is that fees for subdivisions can vary based on several considerations, and this makes it consistent with the ones we will find in section 51. So basically the approving authority can prescribe a schedule of fees for processing subdivision applications and applications to reissue a certificate of approval. There is a maximum cap on the fees. They cannot exceed the cost to the approving authority of processing the application. So you can't charge 50 bucks if it's only going cost 20 bucks to process the applications. Fees have to be fair and reasonable, which is all good.

Section 23, there is a very basic amendment to it that I don't need to comment on.

And, of course, 24(1)(a) is amended simply by adding district plans. So it's making sure that all of the terminology is correct now that we're talking about district plans in addition to official community plans.

One of the major new changes is a new section called 30.1(1). And what this clause does is provides the minister the ability to require a district planning authority or a DPA or the municipalities affiliated in it, to prepare or amend a plan. So it's consistent with provisions under 30 which allows an individual municipality to prepare an official community plan. This just extends it further to the district planning authority or the municipalities therein. So the goal of the section is to achieve consistency with the provincial land use policy or statement of provincial interest. And the minister can direct that they prepare their plan or that they prepare an amendment to the plan. There's various other subclauses in this new section that deals with the minister's requirement for the plan.

It just reminds me of some of the other work I've done with planning and development commissions. And this was something that was interesting that came out of the Great Sand Hills, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when a few years ago there was an

area that was set aside as protected right within the heart of the Great Sand Hills. And that's an important, ecologically sensitive area in the province. But in addition to the areas that were set aside and restricted from development, there was buffer zones around that area that were brought into *The Planning and Development Act* of the day. And what that did is gave local municipalities the ability to create environmental plans and differing degrees of environmental protection.

So one of the areas I did some work in, which was subsequently added to a First Nation reserve, was in that area. And there, I actually counted the number of people that worked on that file to get that land added to the reserve. It was Crown land. And it was over 200 government officials that were involved in one addition to First Nation reserve. So it was fairly complex.

But in that case, the rural municipality that was responsible for the . . . They had passed a protection plan, environmental protection plan under *The Planning and Development Act* and worked very closely with both the federal government and the First Nation to ensure consistency when the lands were added to reserve. That was of great concern to the people in the area because the fragility of the surface was of concern. And so things like ice roads had to be built in the winter in order to make sure that there weren't big ruts created in the grass, because there's so much sand there that the grass wouldn't hold unless there was proper protection when the trucks came in.

So I think that's a good example of all levels of government working together. There was the rural municipality, the Crown on surface and subsurface, there was the federal government with agencies both in Ottawa and Calgary in the oil and gas development side, and also the First Nation themselves. I think it was a way that, a good example of how these types of community efforts, where there's different interests and sometimes competing interests but interwoven, and neighbours talking to each other, and it did come to fruition and was a success as far as I know.

So back to the Bill itself. The next changes that we see, a new section that's of interest is the contents of the plan, and that's section 32.1 which talks about intermunicipal development agreements. And in this clause we get into the meat of what these district planning authorities are able to do. It's a new concept as far as I understand, and it's one that I think serves the needs of municipalities that need to do this kind of sharing, both where you have the urban-rural interconnect or intersect or conflict, or in areas where various rural municipalities are needing to consolidate some of their services — that they're just too small, they don't have a large enough tax base any more to be able to manage on their own, and there's consolidation that's needed. So it's a form of consolidation, and the contents of the plan have to have the following.

So they have to have several statements of policy. The first statement of policy is "sustainable current and future land use and development in the municipality." Further, they have to have a statement of policy with respect to current and future economic development, the general provision of public works, the management of lands that are subject to natural hazards, including flooding, slumping and slope instability. Here's the one I was referring to earlier that's rephrased here for these district plans — "the management of environmentally sensitive

lands.”

Also they have to deal with source water protection, and we know that water is something of great concern, given the weather that we’re having today. I saw a jogger in a T-shirt and short pants today, and the No. 1 Highway is closed out by Maple Creek. So you just don’t know what the weather’s going to bring. And water protection is something that I think is of grave concern to all municipalities given the vagaries in climate that we’re seeing these days. It’s flooding, drought. You know, the ranges of weather and implications for water is immense.

Also we were talking earlier today about using water for production in the solution mines, the solution potash mines and those kinds of things, like Buffalo Pound Lake is being impacted, Katepwa Lake. So when these communities get together and start developing these plans, they’re going to need to also sit down with the province and make sure there’s enough water for all of the plans.

[21:30]

And then finally, one of the things that has to be in there in the community plan, the official community plan, is the means of implementing. And I think that’s probably the hardest one, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because often, like I said earlier, it looks good on paper, but implementing is quite frequently where things break down.

So there’s a number of also optional things that could be included in an official community plan, and this is the previous section as it existed, and now we’re talking about the intermunicipal development agreement. So that was section 32(1). We’re now adding 32.1(1). So I’m going to move into that now.

So this is where two or more municipalities can, by bylaw, enter into an intermunicipal development agreement. And this case, in the new section, the two municipalities can provide for joint land use planning and development matters, mechanisms for resolving disputes, and specific services, infrastructure or facilities that are covered by the agreement.

So you can imagine any number of things where two municipalities may want to get together and have joint services or infrastructure. It may be community . . . I would think in most cases, I’m thinking landfills would be a perfect opportunity for municipalities to get together and discuss efficiencies by integrating their services.

It also deals with the proportion of funds that each municipality is required to contribute. So of course the funding is the important part there. And then processes and procedures for amending and terminating agreements. The second part of the subsection talks about, if this intermunicipal development agreement contains provisions that limit or control the development of land then the individual municipality councils have to amend their own official community plans and zoning bylaws to reflect those provisions. Makes sense. I mean, if you have an OCP, an official community plan that’s going to be in conflict with the district plan, then those have to be amended to be consistent.

And then finally, the last part of the new intermunicipal development agreements clause indicates that after 30 days after it’s entered into, they have to file a copy of it with the minister. So the minister’s kept up to date on the development of the new intermunicipal development agreements. So that’s section 32.1(1).

Then we’re moving into the fee section. In section 51 there’s some basic changes here that clarify that the cost of regulating a development can be included within the established fees. It’s intended that these be true costs and the true costs are to provide for planning, approval, services, enforcement, and they should be recoverable as well.

There’s an addition to the section 51(2). It allows the municipality . . . So 51(2) is repealed, and the new one says that the municipality can recover — where are we here? — the real costs of managing development processes in 51(1) rather than the lowest cost. So there’s a classification that can be set out in the bylaw and that schedule of fees then, with the bylaw, shall set out the rationale for the fees as well. So they have to justify the fees that they’re planning.

The next change is to section 73(1)(a), and this is just a little cosmetic, actually, change where they’re adding “colour and texture and type of material” after “architectural detail.” So it’s added some detail to that subclause.

Then we’re into section 97. It’s repealed and it’s kind of rejigged, so there’s new numbering there. But what this clause does is ensure the affiliated municipalities address dispute resolution mechanisms in the planning district agreement. And again, Mr. Speaker, I don’t think we could say enough about the importance of appropriate dispute resolution clauses because, as I mentioned earlier, the devil’s in the details. So these types of dispute resolution clauses are important, and we don’t want to end up in court on these types of disputes. So it’s important that the commission itself has the ability to do that.

Section 97(1), although it hasn’t changed a whole lot, it does provide for what needs to be in the agreements. And there’s a number of points there that are addressed. And it’s a fairly lengthy clause. I won’t go into all the detail on that one. But the new 92(2)(b) gives a process to amend a district plan where the impact of the amendment is limited to land in only one municipality.

The next changed clause is clause no. 99. Again there’s just a very simple correction there to the renumbering in the clause. The next change is a change to clause 100(b). And what this does is just recognize that the affiliated municipality may have a district plan as well as an OCP. So it provides for both levels of planning. The next change that we have is in section 101 and again it’s just a removal of redundancy, or the changes remove the redundancy that was built into the clause.

Then we’re looking at the next change is to section 102, again an extensive clause that has been repealed and replaced. And what it does is it adds district plans as a distinct statutory document, so they have to be mentioned separately throughout the Act. The new provisions provide for a district plan to function as a broad regional policy document. So that’s the extent of the changes to 102.

Section 103, again there's cosmetic changes. And section 105, we have a change in terminology again from OCP to district plan, so it's cleaning up some of the language there. And then section 105(2) has been changed. Oh, that was the one I just mentioned. I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker, or Deputy Speaker.

Section 106 is now repealed as well, and that is the termination of affiliation of municipality. And 106.1(1) is a clause that's quite interesting, and it's the dispute resolution clause. So this addition gives flexibility in the approach to dispute resolution. This draws in the Saskatchewan Municipal Board. So what happens here now is the Saskatchewan Municipal Board can be referred to if there is a dispute. And they have complete control over the resolution of the dispute, and they can direct the parties to follow any method that the Saskatchewan Municipal Board considers appropriate. So I think the parties need to be serious if they're going to the Municipal Board because at that point then the Municipal Board is directing it and is in charge of the type of dispute resolution that can be chosen.

It's also binding on the parties, so it's a serious clause. They have to be sure that they're needing that level of assistance in resolving the dispute. And I think certainly the ideal is when people can resolve disputes amongst themselves rather than needing to resort to a third party resolution. But it's there for when it's needed, and I think that sometimes encourages people to find a resolution rather than going to the third step because it often heightens the dispute and raises the profile of it. So in the end run, it may be the only solution, and if it's necessary, it's there. So that's a good thing.

Next section that's been amended is section 107 of *The Planning and Development Act*. And basically here it just gives the minister discretion to approve or refer a request to dissolve a planning district to a dispute process under 106. So I guess if things are really going not too well, there's a way to dissolve the agreement as well.

Section 108 has had some small amendments to it, several just clause renumberings and things like that. So there's not much to comment on in that point. And then section 109, just a few small changes to section 109 as well, just adding "district plans" after "official community plans."

Section 122(1) just gave me a little pause to think about it, and it ties in railways because what they're doing is adding a new clause after clause (h) in subsection 122(1). And what it talks about here, if I can look at the clause itself, it says, section 121 doesn't apply to . . . So there's a whole list of things it doesn't apply to. And we're looking at the addition of a subdivision approval exemption to the extension of an existing rail line that's being developed in the general interest of Canada, such as federal railway development. I just found this somewhat ironic, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because I think the trend in Saskatchewan for sure is quite the opposite. We don't see a lot of federal railway development here these days, and indeed we're seeing less and less railway development and the shutting down of a lot of shortlines, you know.

And the whole viability of shortlines is, I think, being called into question by some of the people who are concerned about the dismantling of the single desk for the Canadian Wheat Board because I think changes in grain transportation, even

since the abolishment of the Crow rate, have negatively impacted the bottom line for farmers here in Saskatchewan and certainly the viability of shortlines. So when we hear about shortlines being shut down and more consolidation in the main railways of Canada, it's interesting to see a clause in *The Planning and Development Act* that worries about extensions of railways and building of railways. So I'm not sure why that's there and why it's needed at this point in time. Maybe I'm not reading the clause entirely correctly, but I just found that quite interesting to show up in something like this.

So onward we go. The next clause that's been amended is 128(1)(b), again just adding "district plan" before "official community plan." And section 168 has also seen a minor amendment. Section 169, again a number of minor amendments. This does talk though, section 169 does refer to the fees and the types of levies that can be applied. So there's a clarification and removal of redundant wording in that particular subsection that make it easier to read.

The next one that's being amended is section 172, and in particular there's a few changes in 172(2) and an additional clause added to 172(3) after clause (e). So we now have (f) which talks about land available pursuant to section 172.1 that they may require for the location of a public work or public utility or expansion of those works.

So then another new clause that we see in this Bill is section 172.1(1). And it's added to provide legislated structure and authority for municipal utility parcels to be negotiated as part of the servicing agreement. So in this case, there will be municipal works that are being surveyed and how those parcels are going to be dealt with. So there's a whole host of . . . I think there's eight or nine changes here or additions to that subsection to deal with municipal utility parcels.

We have changes to 173(d) as well. And then 176 is repealed, and there's a new section there. This one's interesting. There's appeals on the development levy or servicing agreement. So it's how appeals will be conducted in the event that there's a dispute regarding development levy. Again it can end up with the Saskatchewan Municipal Board in subsection (3), and there's other procedural directions here for the municipality when there is a dispute as to the levy for the development. And again any decision of the board or the development appeals board is going to be binding. Or sorry, it may be appealed to the Municipal Board. So there's a whole process set up there for the appeals when the levies are disputed by individuals.

Section 189(1), Mr. Deputy Speaker, is public lands dedicated by the minister. And the changes here extend the power to dedicate Crown land managed by any ministry as environmental or municipal reserve. So of course, the dedication would occur in consultation with the minister responsible for the land, but it will give flexibility to dedicate environmentally sensitive, hazardous, or flood-prone lands managed by the ministries — Environment or Agriculture or any other agency of government — prior to its being transferred to the municipalities. So this is again flood-prone land, environmentally sensitive land — these are all issues of concern to municipalities, both urban and rural. And certainly having the support of the ministries — Environment, Agriculture — when those lands are designated that way assists municipalities in

managing those types of areas.

[21:45]

Section 201 has a very minor amendment to it. And then we're looking at section 207, notice of proposed bylaw. And what this . . . The changes to this existing clause just provide a written description of the location effective . . . It requires that the bylaws give a written description of the location of affected properties and a map or electronically published map delineating the location of the affected properties. So this is just to make sure the public has necessary information so that they can comment on the proposed amendments.

There's some changes to subsection 215(1), and this is about the makeup of the boards and to make sure that councillors or employees in the municipality do not sit on the development appeals boards because then they would be hearing appeals of their own decisions. So that appears to be a fairly reasonable proposal.

There's just one other further change, and it's a transitional change on 248.1 that recognizes the change in terminology from a district OCP to district plans. And again that's just keeping everything in line so that we have these district planning areas.

So as the minister indicated in his comments on December 14th, there is a number of housekeeping issues that the consultation identified since the original planning and development Act was issued. So they're attempting to address those.

And I think the minister indicated that not all the requests of the people that were consulted were included in the provisions here. In particular the cities and SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] and SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] wanted an expansion of the lists of fees and levies to include fire suppression infrastructure and facilities. The minister gave reasons for not doing that although he has indicated it would be in future discussions. It's of concern when fire suppression infrastructure and facilities haven't been included in these types of provisions because those often cost a lot of money.

So we'll see what happens in the budget. Maybe there is going to be provision for those kinds of things for . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Maybe there won't though, I guess. That's right. My colleague indicated that there might not be funding for those kinds of things because we have to cover three new politicians. So that's a few million dollars there that we're not able to turn over to the planning people in *The Planning and Development Act* agencies. Decisions have to be made. I guess we're living in austere times, or at least we think we might be depending on what area or who you're listening to on what day, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But it's interesting when we hear talks of those extra costs being thrown at it all the time.

At any rate, Mr. Speaker, I think it's enough of me going on about these proposed amendments. I'm pleased at this point in time, I think, to pass on the torch to my colleagues, so I would move to adjourn the debate on Bill No. 20, *The Planning and Development Amendment Act*. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Nutana has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 20, *The Planning and Development Amendment Act, 2011*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 23

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 23** — *The Occupational Health and Safety Amendment Act, 2011* be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. McCall: — Finally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Bill that I've certainly been waiting for, and I'm sure it's been faced with certain anticipation in the House. I see some slow, thoughtful nodding from Douglas Park back there, Coronation Park. They're very excited about this speech as well and well they should be, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I don't know if they're going to move in any sort of detrimental way on occupational health and safety grounds as I conclude these remarks, but, you know, it's early in the intervention, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But we'll see what we can get done.

In all seriousness, I am quite happy to rise and participate in the debate on Bill No. 23, *An Act to amend The Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993* because this is of course pretty serious business, all kidding aside, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Certainly Saskatchewan has a history of occupational health and safety legislation, I believe one of the first occupational health and safety Acts in Canadian jurisdictions.

And one of the sort of pioneers of occupational health and safety legislation in the province is a fellow by the name of Bob Sass. And for those that have been following the news of late, Mr. Sass has come forward with another individual calling for an asbestos registry for public buildings in the province, and certainly it's one more act in a life that has been devoted to the safety of workers. And certainly that we have occupational health and safety legislation in the province period, Mr. Deputy Speaker, has a lot to do with the thoughtful work of someone like Bob Sass.

Occupational health and safety has a fairly well-defined regime of review and renewal. Periodically you have fairly extensive consultations that take place with both employers and employees throughout the province, which is as it should be, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And in some regards, if the kind of across-the-table work that is done in the case of occupational health and safety legislation review, I think we'd be . . . If you could extend that kind of co-operation across the workplace generally, I think the province would be well served.

But certainly the current iteration of legislation comes from a call for comment that went forth last spring fairly close to this time of year by the current government, and the committee of review, I think, also had their opportunity to weigh in. And

anyway the two sides . . . It's not completely reflected in this work, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but obviously there was kind of ongoing consultations very much inform what we see here.

So the consultation piece that went out across the province to stakeholders in April of 2011 said:

Dear Stakeholder:

To improve the standard of occupational health and safety (OHS) in Saskatchewan workplaces in support of our government's goal to eliminate all work-related injuries and illnesses, I am pleased to advise you of the launch of the following consultations.

Consultations on the proposed amendments to the OHS safety Act, OHS Act, 1993; questions around the adequacy of penalties for the OHS infractions; sufficiency of the current levels of penalties; whether or not alternate penalty types would be beneficial; and "whether the revenue collected from these penalties should be partially re-directed towards furthering public education and prevention efforts."

And I guess that set the table for a fairly extensive bit of consultation that went on and let alone what had taken place previously with the Occupational Health and Safety Council in 2006. I guess one of the things that is pointed out in the minister's second reading remarks of December 14th wherein he stated that the aim is being for the legislation to improve workplace health and safety in the province by supporting the government's goal of eliminating all work-related injuries and illnesses. Again that's an important goal and certainly is one that we support in the opposition.

And I guess we do well to remember that this is about workplace safety, and just reading the paper today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, seeing the way that this can . . . The most tragic consequence of a lack of workplace safety of course, the way that can translate is sometimes in death on the job. And it should never be the case that . . . It's a sad, sad circumstance to have people that go out the door in the morning, head off to work, and then never come home.

And certainly that was the case at the Agrium potash mine at Vanscoy. And there's currently a court proceeding engaged on a situation that had taken place there not too long ago where there were some things that should've been, steps that should have been taken to secure the safety of the employees in that mine that were not, and for which an employee paid with his life — a gentleman in his 50s. And if you think about the trauma and the shock for that family, Mr. Speaker, that in and of itself should be a cause for action, let alone the way that these kind of losses translate into loss of productivity and loss of value, but the first and foremost value of course being human life and health. And if we can do a better job in the workplace for workers, it makes so much sense from a number of perspectives.

The minister in his second reading speech cited the efforts around focused education campaigns as well as stepped-up enforcement measures. He cited a 500 per cent plus increase in the number of OH & S [occupational health and safety] prosecutions between 2007-08 and 2010-11.

Again, one of the sort of qualitative pieces on that, Mr. Deputy Speaker — and I'll get into that a little bit later on in my remarks — is again it's good to have law on the book or laws on the books. It's good to have penalties on the books, and it's good to have stepped-up prosecutorial efforts. But again if these things are out of whack, if you're not according the kind of severity to different of these incidences under the legislation, then of course you can make an argument that, well we've increased our prosecutions. But if those prosecutions result in something less than adequate punishments for infractions under this regime, then obviously that paints an inaccurate picture, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And again in a province where, again as is admitted by the minister in the second reading speech, wherein Saskatchewan still has the second highest workplace injury rate in the country and wherein each year about 40,000 injury claims are made to the Workers' Compensation Board, the minister goes on to state that that's unacceptable, and we in the opposition benches certainly agree, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We welcome efforts such as Mission: Zero, launched on behalf of the Workers' Compensation Board in conjunction with the Department of Labour. But the fact remains that, again, being second in terms of workplace injury rates in the country is definitely not a distinction that we would like to have as a province. But again most importantly at the base of that, Mr. Speaker, is the fact of the injuries that have been sustained and the loss of life that has been sustained, and the tragic way that it plays out in the individual families involved, the communities involved, but also how that plays out in an economic sense in terms of lost productivity and the way that that impacts an economy.

[22:00]

One thing that we are heartened to see in the minister's remarks is the citing of an increased number of inspections, and again, you know, the fact that the general sort of arrow is pointed in the right direction in terms of reduction in the time loss workplace injury rate. But again, the fact remains that we're second worst in the country, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and the fact that there's a lot of work to be done.

One of the things that is further cited by the minister — again to quantify some of the economic costs involved in the situation as it stands in Saskatchewan — the fact that over 500,000 days of productive work being lost each year in Saskatchewan, and the fact that annual claim costs exceed \$200 million. And again, that's just with those two indicators alone, Mr. Speaker, let alone what that means for the loss of productivity overall in the economy.

So the legislation is something that we're interested in, and we know as well that we're not alone in that interest, Mr. Speaker. I did have this conversation with yourself, Mr. Speaker. It's not something that just the official opposition is interested in. It's not just something that the members opposite, the Minister of Labour is interested in. It's something that the Provincial Auditor has been interested in. And in the 2011 report, volume 2, Labour Relations and Workplace Safety came in for a fairly interesting overview and study in chapter 18 of that volume 2.

And I guess off the top, the way that the ministry relates to the legislation in terms of processes that did not comply with the OHS Act 1993, and again citing the fact that Saskatchewan has the second highest rate of workplace related injuries — that it is decreasing but again still second highest in Canada — is not where we want to be or should be. And I guess the way that methodology and process on the part of the department impacts their ability to drive change in the department and the call from the Provincial Auditor for a more complete analysis of noncompliance and its causes, and it's the fact that the Provincial Auditor is also calling for a more consistent use of ministry policies and better follow-up of noncompliant workplaces.

Again, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the debate we're in right now on Bill No. 23, again it's well and good to have legislation on the books, but if the enforcement regime is not equal to the task at hand, then you can have all the fine legislation in the world that you want but it won't matter a whit.

Similarly if the punishments aren't adequately . . . If they aren't appropriate to the infractions at hand, that as well makes it difficult to get an accurate picture of what is happening and whether or not . . . You know, it brings to mind the old line about statistics from Mark Twain and again if, statistically speaking, you can make something look good that is on the ground, something less than good. So again if this is painting an accurate picture, that is borne out.

But that's why we take a great interest in the work of the Provincial Auditor and the kind of work that was done in chapter 18 of the 2011 report, volume 2. I guess one of the interesting things from page 363 of that report, Mr. Speaker, in conjunction with some things around the recommendation that the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety sign a shared service agreement with the Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Immigration, again trying to keep the form up to the changes that have been made or the related fact of recommending that the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety establish an agreement with the Public Service Commission for providing payroll services that clearly assigns responsibilities for key payroll activities, again, Mr. Speaker, it's not anything more than just trying to keep the form of the authority chain in line with changes that have been made to the department.

Where we take a particular interest is with regards to implementation of past recommendations that is needed — again this is starting on page 363 — and the outstanding recommendations that apply to the new ministry.

In page 364 of that report and on through, the first recommendation concerning the HR [human resources] plan that is needed for the Department of Labour Relations is partially implemented. The number of other things in terms of controls and processes, again, partially implemented. And I guess the one that we're most interested in are the processes for addressing workplace non-compliance. And again, this audit is concerned with how the ministry enforced the Act and regulations, and so I think this is worth quoting into the record, Mr. Speaker, from page 365 of Chapter 18 of the 2011 report volume 2:

It is difficult to overstate the importance of healthy and safe workplaces. There are over 370,000 people employed in Saskatchewan workplaces and this number is rising as the economy expands. In addition, at over 40,000 workplaces in the agriculture sector, workers are often self-employed or working on a farm.

In 2010, 38 Saskatchewan workers died due to working conditions on the job.

To say that again, Mr. Speaker:

In 2010, 38 Saskatchewan workers died due to working conditions on the job. In 2010, 8.7% of Saskatchewan workers were injured at work and 3.12% of workers had more serious injuries resulting in time away from work (time-loss injuries).

So again, nearly one in 10 affected in some way through either time loss injuries or injured on the job, Mr. Speaker.

Saskatchewan continues to have the second highest workplace injury rate in Canada, after Manitoba, and its injury rate remains well above the Canadian national average. At the same time, rates for time loss injuries are decreasing in Saskatchewan, and again the ministry telling the auditor that a decline in industries is consistent with strategies it introduced in 2003. And again it's . . . To point out, to underline that, Mr. Speaker, if I can parenthetically, in 2003, and again targeted measures have been ongoing since then.

Moving through the chapter, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting looking at the way it's broken down between industries as to the highest number of injuries. So from page 366 of the report, industries in Saskatchewan with the highest number of injuries included: health authorities, hospitals, care homes, where 5,034 incidents were reported; construction, 3,928 injuries reported; grocery, department store, hardware, 1,617 injuries reported; commercial, industrial production, 1,552 injuries reported; municipalities, 1,399 reported; and transportation, courier, commercial bus, 1,385. And again it's important to know where the injuries are happening and where the sort of anomalies are or where the calls for . . . is particularly urgent for accelerated enforcement and activity, Mr. Speaker.

I guess I'd also like to quote the breakdown as provided of industries in Saskatchewan with the highest rate of time-loss injuries includes: light agricultural operations, which is 2.8 times the average provincial rate; dairy products, soft drinks, 2.7 per cent times the provincial rate; iron and steel fabrication, 2.3 times; mills, semi-medium manufacturing, 2.2 times; transportation, courier and commercial bus at 2 times; health authorities, hospitals, care homes, 1.9 per cent times; residential construction, 1.8 times; and municipalities, 1.6 times. And again, when you've got a better sense of where the problems are, you can more closely target your efforts, Mr. Speaker, and that's important.

So the auditor's discussing that information with an eye to providing a more precise, a more detailed analysis of where injuries are happening and what is provided for opportunities for action. So under the enforcement of the Act and regulations, the auditor on page 367 of the chapter states:

Saskatchewan's occupational health and safety legislation sets minimum requirements to limit health and safety hazards found in workplaces. The Act outlines the rights and duties of employers and employees, sets out penalties for offences, and mandates processes that must be used (such as the use of workplace occupational health committees). The related regulations focus on specific types of risks and related requirements. For example, the regulations set out requirements for scaffolds, compressed gases, felling trees, abrasive blasting, using explosives, precautions when using certain chemicals, and noise control. The Act and regulations define the duties of both employers and employees to keep the workplace safe and healthy.

Again it cites the fact that the ministry becomes aware of workplace health and safety issues through inspections and complaints, that the ministry as of the time of the writing of this chapter employs 55 occupational health officers including 12 officers specializing in particular health conditions such as . . . [inaudible] . . . Jeez Louise, Mr. Speaker. I'm having trouble with this one. Ergonomists, we'll call it that. Hygienists, toxicologists, and radiation specialists, as well as seven mines inspectors — and again each of these deployed within a particular area of expertise.

And again the auditor goes on to state that the ministry focuses on workplaces in which an employer hires workers, reflecting the Act's focus on employers' responsibilities. Again in that there's a different approach, one based primarily on education for family-run or self-employed businesses such as family farms.

[22:15]

So in one of the really interesting exhibits in the report, Mr. Speaker, set out on page 368, it provides some detail on the different sort of trends in inspection, contravention, and stop-work orders. So in 2011 or 2010, 2011, there were 4,851 workplace inspections conducted. Contraventions that were issued including cessation of work, notices, and compliance assurances, there were 6,592. Of those ordered or issued, Mr. Speaker, stop-work orders, there were 463; files sent to Justice for review, 81; prosecutions initiated for non-compliance, number of defendants where charges were laid, 74; and convictions, 52.

And again there shows over time the basic sort of trend line around the conduct of workplace inspections shows that number increasing fairly steadily from '06-07 at 3,621 to '07-08, 3,658; '08-09 at 3,851; a significant jump in '09-10 to 4,785, and then a bit of a levelling off at 2010-11 at 4,851. So again providing sort of a context or a shading or a . . . I guess we'll stick with context for the current enforcement regime.

So when the auditor looked at these facts and figures and looked at the current process around assurance engagement within the enforcement of the Act, they concluded — and again this is on page 369 of the report — that from April 1st, 2010 to August 31st, 2011, the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety had effective processes to address workplace non-compliance with *The Occupational Health and Safety Act* and related regulations except for the following: “the ministry

requires a documented, comprehensive risk-based approach to address workplace non-compliance.”

Moving further on in the page, Mr. Speaker, page 370, “the Ministry should undertake more complete analysis of non-compliance and its causes” and “the ministry should require more consistent use of Ministry policies and better follow up of non-compliant workplaces.”

Again, I'm not here to sound churlish about this, Mr. Speaker, but certainly the auditor provides this information to improve the work that we do around public policy. And I fail to see how that is adequately . . . Those things that are called for by the auditor, I'm not entirely clear how they're brought forward in the legislation, or the connection between the auditor's recommendations and how that has informed Bill No. 23 as it has come forward and how that is . . . you know, what measures are intended to again live up to the recommendations of the auditor, who is recommending how to improve the legislation for the people of Saskatchewan.

And to go back on that, Mr. Speaker, again calling for a documented, comprehensive risk-based approach to address workplace non-compliance, to undertake more complete analysis of non-compliance and its causes, and requiring a more consistent use of Ministry policies and better follow up of non-compliant workplaces.

It would have been good to see a discussion of that in the minister's speech, which of course introduces the legislation to the public and to this Chamber. And again, we'd like to see how those sound recommendations of the auditor are borne out in the legislation before the Assembly.

So again the auditor expands significantly on the key findings and recommendations. So again on the need for a structured response to workplace non-compliance, quote — this is from page 370 of the report — quote from the auditor:

We expected the Ministry to establish a documented, comprehensive risk-based approach for addressing workplace non-compliance. Such an approach would assist the Ministry to consistently:

- [a] assess risk of harm (likelihood and impact of injuries)
- [b] set priorities to address non-compliance
- [c] communicate priorities

Carrying on to quote from the report:

We found the Ministry set and communicated priorities but needed to assess risks using a more comprehensive, systematic approach.

Carrying on from the report, Mr. Speaker:

The Ministry's processes for setting priorities included work with other organizations at the provincial level and some internal planning processes. The ministry participated in a formal partnership with WCB called WorkSafe Saskatchewan. This partnership used a risk-based formula to identify workplaces where the most injuries and deaths occurred and created lists for the “top” 50 and 400 employers — that is, those with the worst

records. The Ministry set some priorities using these lists. For example, it asked its officers to inspect “top 50” workplaces in their geographic areas. In our sample . . . [they] found about 9% of the Ministry’s inspections were at identified “top 50” workplaces during April 2010 to August 2011.

The auditor carries on to discuss that:

The Ministry’s planning documents (strategic plans and annual work plans) communicated priorities for safety and for healthy work conditions. The safety priorities included protection against collapsing trenches, preventing falls, and requiring knowledgeable supervision on the work-site. The healthy work condition priorities included ergonomics, exposure to asbestos, lasers, and industrial contaminants.

The ministry conducted meetings to communicate these priorities and work plans, and by weekly staff meetings. The ministry documented a few increasing risks in its annual work plans but did not document the rationale for most of its priorities or for how to assess risk. So not a bad job done on the one hand, Mr. Speaker, but certainly more work to be done on the other.

A further recommendation from page 371 wherein the auditor recommends that the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety document and use a comprehensive risk-based approach to address workplace non-compliance with the OHS Act 1993 and related regulations. Again flushing that out more precisely, wherein by the analysis of the auditor, the ministry had processes to communicate workplace non-compliance promptly. The ministry’s policy and procedures manual instructed officers to issue reports as soon as possible and no later than two weeks after the inspection. The ministry delivered most notices of contravention promptly and within policy guidelines, 92 per cent within the sample conducted by the auditor. The remaining 8 per cent were not timely, including 4 per cent of notices where workers were not protected against falls and the officer did not issue an immediate stop-work order as ministry policies required.

The files, again according to the work of the auditor, did not contain explanations about why officers did not issue stop work orders. Protection against falls was a ministry priority. But again, the auditor’s calling for better documentation of why different things were done, and again, the more knowledge that you’ve got, Mr. Speaker, goes to better deployment of resources and better deployment of enforcement efforts. Again, I think fair points to make.

So again, Mr. Speaker, moving towards conclusion of the kind of consideration I wanted to make sure was on the record in terms of the work of the auditor, there are other recommendations that we could go into at this time. But I think the last thing I would say on this score, Mr. Speaker, of the seven total recommendations that are provided by the auditor, there’s, I think, some good work there in terms of recommendations that would better calibrate, better focus the efforts of the OHS branch and work that . . . recommendations that again, I think, if we’d seen a better sort of connection made by the minister in terms of how these recommendations from

the auditor, which are fairly well considered and I think make good sense, how they would be reflected in the actual Act itself. But I guess we’ll have to wait the conduct of hearings with the . . . as this legislation moves to committee and perhaps under the consideration of the actual auditor’s report itself — again, 2011 volume 2, chapter 18.

Some of the interesting critiques that we’ve seen of this legislation from other parties — particularly those again in one of the most injury-laden sectors out there covered by the OHS Act ’93 — one of the interesting things, concerns brought forward by SEIU-West [Service Employees International Union], again where they’ve got concerns around what was brought forward under preliminary matters, part I in section 2(1)(d), definition of project owner, formerly referred to as the contractor, wherein SEIU-West agrees that the contractors who hire employers to complete a job and therefore are not directing the activities of the project or the workers should also be held accountable under the OHS Act. However simply changing the name from contractor to project owner does not accomplish this. In fact what needs to occur is the current definition of contractor needs to be expanded. That would seem to be a fairly common sense recommendation on the part of SEIU-West, and again it’s something that we look forward to a more fulsome discussion of with the minister.

Section 2(1)(u), definition of owner. You know, why is this change being brought forward, and what are the possible unintended consequences? Changes to section 2(1)(ff), definition of worker, wherein the OHS Act should protect all workers. But there’s an outstanding query regarding the suggested change from SEIU-West, where they ask that the rationale suggesting the Lieutenant Governor in Council by regulation may prescribe a person or category of persons as workers within the meaning of the Act, yet the example provided, such as a volunteer firefighter, is not in keeping with the definition unless they are paid. So again, the need for greater clarification between those two categories, Mr. Speaker. And could that not possibly be achieved through the addition of a paragraph under section 44 of the Act? Again fairly well-considered suggestions coming forward.

Section 30(1), the renaming of notice of contravention as a compliance order. You know, what are the implications of this change? The notice of contravention should not be interpreted as a compliance order when indeed it is an offence of the Act and/or the regulations. It must remain legally defined as a violation for which a penalty and/or remedy shall ensue and may entail prosecution. As such, the suggested change would inevitably weaken enforcement and protection for workers. It is important to identify breach of legislation as that is the intent of the notices of contravention as laid out in the existing section 30(1). Again, we’d like to get a better response to that, Mr. Speaker.

And I’m not sure if I heard the member from Kelvington-Wadena calling attention to the clock, but perhaps I’ll do that myself and look for it.

The Speaker: — It now being after the hour of adjournment, this House stands adjourned to 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

[The Assembly adjourned at 22:30.]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EVENING SITTING

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 26 — <i>The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal Act, 2011</i>	
Chartier	627
Bill No. 9 — <i>The Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation Amendment Act, 2011</i>	
Wotherspoon	629
Bill No. 11 — <i>The Court Officials Act, 2011/Loi de 2011 sur les fonctionnaires de justice</i>	
Vermette	632
Harrison (referral to committee)	632
Bill No. 12 — <i>The Court Officials Consequential Amendments Act, 2011</i>	
Vermette	633
Harrison (referral to committee)	633
Bill No. 16 — <i>The Correctional Services Act, 2011</i>	
Wotherspoon	633
Bill No. 17 — <i>The Child Care Amendment Act, 2011</i>	
Chartier	635
Bill No. 18 — <i>The Degree Authorization Act</i>	
Forbes	638
Bill No. 20 — <i>The Planning and Development Amendment Act, 2011</i>	
Sproule	644
Bill No. 23 — <i>The Occupational Health and Safety Amendment Act, 2011</i>	
McCall	649

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. Brad Wall
Premier of Saskatchewan
President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Bob Bjornerud
Minister of Agriculture
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Crop Insurance Corporation

Hon. Bill Boyd
Minister of Energy and Resources
Minister Responsible for SaskTel
Minister Responsible for The Global
Transportation Hub Authority

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff
Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations
Minister Responsible for Northern Affairs
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Gaming Corporation

Hon. June Draude
Minister of Social Services
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women
Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission

Hon. Dustin Duncan
Minister of Environment
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Corporation
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated

Hon. Donna Harpauer
Minister of Education

Hon. Jeremy Harrison
Minister of Enterprise
Minister Responsible for Trade

Hon. Darryl Hickie
Minister of Municipal Affairs

Hon. Bill Hutchinson
Minister of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport
Minister Responsible for the Provincial
Capital Commission

Hon. D.F. (Yogi) Huyghebaert
Minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing

Hon. Ken Krawetz
Deputy Premier
Minister of Finance

Hon. Tim McMillan
Minister Responsible for Crown
Investments Corporation
Minister Responsible for Information
Technology Office
Minister Responsible for Information
Services Corporation
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Government Insurance
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Liquor and Gaming Authority

Hon. Don McMorris
Minister of Health

Hon. Don Morgan
Minister of Justice and Attorney General
Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety
Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan
Workers' Compensation Board

Hon. Rob Norris
Minister of Advanced Education,
Employment and Immigration
Minister Responsible for Innovation
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Power Corporation
Minister Responsible for Uranium
Development Partnership

Hon. Jim Reiter
Minister of Highways and Infrastructure
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Transportation Company

Hon. Laura Ross
Minister of Government Services