



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

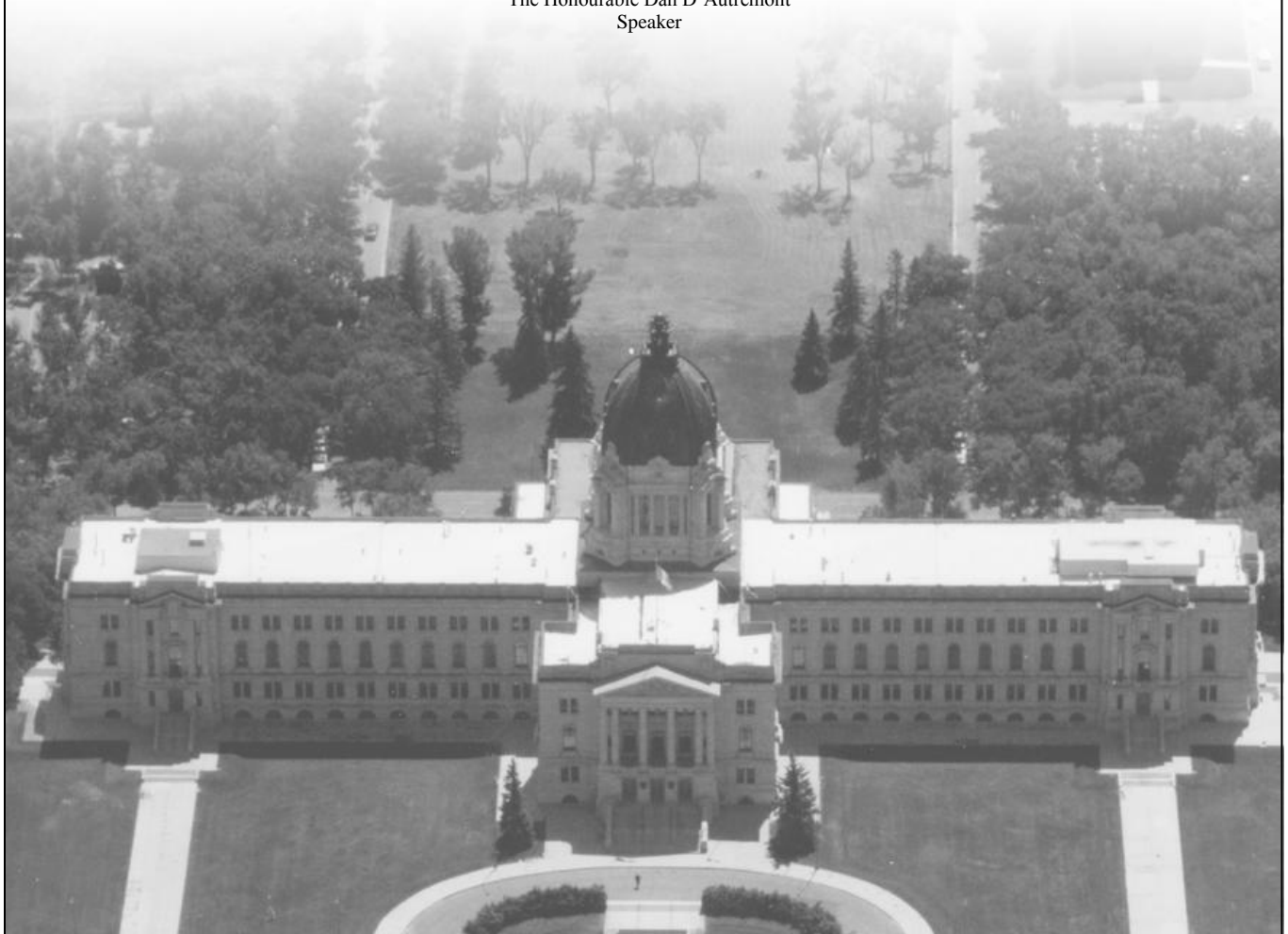
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
authority of  
The Honourable 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

<b>Name of Member</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>	<b>Constituency</b>
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 met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Since I was about in grade 1, Hitachi, that great international company, has been a partner of the province of Saskatchewan, significantly through SaskPower and increasingly as years went on in other ways. Mr. Speaker, today it's a pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, some senior officials who have joined us from Hitachi. Joining us today is Mr. Hitoshi Isa, he's the senior officer of thermal power plant business, Hitachi Ltd.; Mr. Yoshio Sumiya, general manager, Hitachi Power Systems Company, thermal power division; Mr. Masafusa Atsuta, general manager, Hitachi Power Systems Company, thermal power division; and Tom Kishchuk, president and CEO [chief executive officer], Hitachi Power Systems of Canada Ltd.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this day Hitachi has announced the amalgamation of its Canadian headquarters to Saskatoon from some operations in Ontario. They'll be operating under the name Hitachi Power Systems Canada. We're going to be hearing more about this development later in today's proceedings. But I want to say that it's another positive sign, Mr. Speaker, about the provincial economy and the ability of the economy to attract interest and support from partners from companies, literally international companies.

Mr. Speaker, Hitachi's role in the province is key in terms of our desire to lead in carbon capture storage and clean coal technology, Mr. Speaker. Their partnership is absolutely linchpin at the University of Saskatchewan nuclear research centre, and we look forward to that increased presence in the years ahead and an ongoing partnership with an excellent company. I want to welcome these officials to the Legislative Assembly here and thank them on behalf of the province of Saskatchewan for their partnership with Saskatchewan.

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

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to welcome the special guests from Hitachi here to the legislature on behalf of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. It's quite a number of years ago, when I was the minister of SaskPower, that we had a group of the senior executives from Hitachi at the Queen Elizabeth power station in Saskatoon. And that was important because that was the opportunity for Hitachi to bring their technology for the use in natural gas-powered turbines for SaskPower. And it was also at that time that the Hitachi officials said very clearly that this is a chance to see whether the North American market will be important for Hitachi power.

So I'm very pleased today to welcome you today because clearly the foresight of your leaders, probably about 14, 13

years ago, has borne fruit. I'm also pleased to say that I have a photograph of that particular event in my office that reminds me each day of how all of these things take some time but they work to build Saskatchewan. So thank you.

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a pleasure to introduce to you and through you three members of the Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation that are in our gallery today. I had the opportunity to table the annual report for the Gaming Corporation.

And we welcome today Twyla Meredith, who is the president and CEO. Twyla does an excellent job at Sask Gaming Corporation, and she was also named one of the 100 most powerful women for 2011 by the Women's Executive Network. So, Twyla, congratulations on that award. Also doing a great job at Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation, we have Susan Flett, vice-president of marketing and corporate relations, and Jan Carter — if you wouldn't mind giving us a wave — director of communications.

Mr. Speaker, Sask Gaming Corporation welcomes 3.5 million guests on a yearly basis. They have a thousand employees, 42 per cent of which are of Aboriginal descent. So, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to welcome these fine individuals to their Legislative Assembly this afternoon, and I ask members to do the same.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, lots of welcoming spirits on this side of the House. I'd like to join with the minister in welcoming Twyla Meredith and the officials from the Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation to their Legislative Assembly. A special word of congratulations joining with the minister to Twyla Meredith on the prestigious 100 most powerful women designation. You can almost feel the power exuding from the gallery, Mr. Speaker.

But again, these are people that work very hard on behalf of the Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation and provide a very positive return to the people of Saskatchewan. Please join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Doherty:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Assembly, seated in the west gallery is a good friend of mine named Rick Floer. I've known Rick since our days back at university. He's a proud alumnus of the University of Saskatchewan, College of Agriculture and agro. And Rick and I had the opportunity to work together.

Although he and his wife live out in beautiful White Rock, British Columbia now, Mr. Speaker, he gets home every year to help on the family farm down in Minton, Saskatchewan. And he tells me their family is celebrating the 100th anniversary of their family farm this summer, so congratulations.

And he also tells me he had the opportunity to meet the member from Regina Dewdney, that he still goes to all the Rider games out in BC [British Columbia], and still cheers for the green and white. So welcome here, Rick.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to rise today to welcome some very important guests in my life and folks that travelled all the way from Ile-a-la-Crosse to be here today. I want to welcome my uncle Gordon Aramenko. And with Gordon today are his granddaughters Bailey who's 13 and Brandy who is 5. Brandy's just sat up here. But, Mr. Speaker, you should know that these are very, very special people.

And Gordon runs a cattle operation up in Ile-a-la-Crosse. He's a great uncle. He's a great husband and a great dad and a great grandfather. He's also a good wrestling partner. You should know, Mr. Speaker, that I often put him down on the ground when I want. But as tradition in our Assembly, because Gordon comes from a Ukrainian background, I wanted to address him in his home language.

Mr. Speaker, to Mr. Aramenko:

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

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Highways and Infrastructure.

**Hon. Mr. Reiter:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to this Assembly, I have a handful of people in your gallery I'd like to introduce.

First of all, folks, just give him a wave when I introduce you, is a good friend of mine from Mildren in the Rosetown-Elrose constituency, George Hanna. With George are Marion and Michael McNulty. Now Marion and Michael are visiting here today from Wicklow in Ireland. Wicklow is about an hour south of Dublin. And the really great news, Mr. Speaker, is the reason they're here visiting today. They're visiting their daughter Katy McNulty and her partner Gus Robinson who are just, who have just moved to Mildren.

Mr. Speaker, Katy's going to be opening her own business. Gus is working for a local businessman. We're absolutely delighted to have them in Mildren and in the great province of Saskatchewan, and I'd ask all members to please give them a warm welcome.

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for greater protection for late-night retail workers by passing Jimmy's law. And we know in the early morning hours of June 20th, 2011, Jimmy Ray Wiebe was shot twice and died from his injuries. He was working at a gas station in Yorkton, alone and unprotected from

intruders.

We know provinces such as British Columbia and others have brought several safety precautions through law, including a requirement that workers cannot be alone during late-night and early morning hours if they are required to work. There must be protective barriers such as locked doors and protective glass. I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: cause the greater government ... cause the Government of Saskatchewan to immediately enact Bill 601, Jimmy's law, to ensure greater safety for retail workers who work late-night hours.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition come from the city of Moose Jaw. I do so present. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents from across Saskatchewan as it relates to education in our province. The prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that the honourable Legislative Assembly call on the Sask Party government to make education a top priority by establishing a long-term vision and plan, with resources, that is responsive to the opportunities and challenges in providing the best quality education and that reflects Saskatchewan's demographic and population changes; that is based on proven educational best practices; that is developed through consultation with the education sector; and that recognizes the importance of educational excellence to the social and economic well-being of our province and students for today and for our future.

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

These petitions today are signed by concerned citizens of Moose Jaw and Saskatoon. I so submit.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm presenting a petition on behalf of my constituents who live in Dundonald and Hampton Village concerning the need for a new school or schools in the neighbourhood of Hampton Village. And the prayer reads:

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I so present.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

**Mr. Vermette:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of trappers of Saskatchewan. The current regulations being enforced are creating challenges that are a concern for our traditional trappers. And the prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to recognize that the experience gained through practical experience be valued; and in so doing to cause the government to review the current legislation and regulations with respect to trapping regulations and firearms use in consultation with the traditional resource users.

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

It is signed by many good people of northern Saskatchewan. I so present.

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

##### Breakfast for Learning Volunteer Award Recipients

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today, I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate Saskatoon Centre constituent Dorothy Ross and her colleague Sylvia Woodward who received the National 2011 Breakfast for Learning Volunteer Award for inspiration and leadership. This annual award recognizes a person that is making an outstanding impact in the area of child nutrition by helping to ensure all children are well-nourished and ready to learn.

Dorothy and Sylvia were featured in April's edition of *Canadian Living*, where it was written, and I quote:

As much as the kids at Pleasant Hill Community School in Saskatoon love having Cream of Wheat and oatmeal for breakfast, it was the weekly treat of pancake Wednesday that left them looking for seconds. Dorothy Ross and Sylvia Woodward were responsible for providing a healthy start to the day for 50 of the school's 150 students who may otherwise have gone without their morning meals.

Dorothy Ross has managed the breakfast program at Pleasant Hill Community School for the past 28 years, and Sylvia recently retired from her role as a nutrition worker after 17 years of dedicated service. Their longstanding commitment to the nutrition program saw them serving several generations of

families at the school's breakfast and lunch programs.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating Dorothy Ross and Sylvia Woodward for receiving the National Breakfast for Learning Volunteer Award for inspiration and leadership. Thank you.

[13:45]

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

##### Junior Achievement Business Hall of Fame Awards

**Ms. Campeau:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, March 29th, I along with the hon. member from Saskatoon Southeast and the hon. member from Indian Head-Milestone had the pleasure of attending the 35th Annual Junior Achievement of Saskatchewan Business Hall of Fame Awards banquet. This annual event is an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of the students participating in the company program, as well as acknowledge the contribution of the company program advisors.

Some of the winners include: Jonah Hills and Alesi Lubchenko, they won the Spirit of JA [Junior Achievement] Award; Thomas Conway and Nimish Baswal, they won the Salesperson of the Year Award; and Travis Kinsella, who won the Production Excellence Award.

The night included the presentation of the Junior Achievement Lifetime Achievement Award to Pat Broberg. Pat, who has been involved with Junior Achievement in Saskatchewan for over 19 years, was recognized for her being at the forefront of evolution and management of JA through her years of service with the organization.

I would also like to recognize the two individuals being inducted into the Junior Achievement Business Hall of Fame, Mr. Bill Peterson of Creative Fire and Mr. Doug Gillespie of Saskatoon Fastprint. These two individuals have not only made significant contributions to Saskatoon by fostering successful businesses but also by being mentors to young entrepreneurs within their community.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join me in congratulating all participants in the Junior Achievement program and the volunteers who make JA possible. Thank you.

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

##### Caring for Our Watersheds

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to highlight Caring for Our Watersheds, an environmental education competition which rewards students for their creativity in identifying solutions to local watershed issues.

Each year Agrium, in partnership with Partners for the Saskatchewan River Basin, invites students to submit proposals that answer the question, what can you do to improve your watershed? The program recognizes students and schools who

come up with the most thought-provoking and innovative ideas to promote stewardship and sustainability for the Saskatchewan River Basin, an international watershed stretching over three prairie provinces and a portion of Montana.

The contest, open to students who live in the Saskatchewan borders within the South Saskatchewan River Basin, allows students to compete for \$6,000 in rewards. Participating schools are eligible for \$11,000 in rewards and students who implement their ideas are eligible for additional funding.

On March 31st, Mr. Speaker, the final competition was held at Saskatoon Inn, and I was one of the judges as was the hon. member from Saskatoon Fairview. I'm delighted to report that the submissions ranging in solutions involving composting, innovative sensor taps and filters showcased the exceptional hard work and resourcefulness of the students. And I'm pleased to note that one of the finalists, Alana Krug-MacLeod, is one of my constituents. She is doing Nutana proud, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to ask my colleagues to please join with me in congratulating the participants, teachers, community volunteers, partners, and finalists for engaging in this very worthwhile competition. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Estevan.

#### Company Consolidates Operations in Saskatoon

**Ms. Eagles:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise in the Chamber today to share some important news that is further proof that our government's efforts to create a positive investment climate in Saskatchewan are paying real dividends. Hitachi Ltd. has announced that they plan to amalgamate current Canadian operations into a single, newly formed entity called Hitachi Power Systems Canada, one which will be based at its existing manufacturing facility in Saskatoon.

Hitachi's decision to headquarter its Canadian operations in Saskatchewan is a natural one, Mr. Speaker, if you consider the long history that exists between this province and Hitachi. It is a relationship that dates back to 1970 when SaskPower purchased a Hitachi turbine for its Queen Elizabeth power station in Saskatoon. And that partnership has grown to the point where Hitachi is one of SaskPower's most trusted partners in plans to construct a \$60 million carbon capture test facility adjacent to the Shand power station in the Estevan constituency.

And of course, Mr. Speaker, Hitachi is playing an important role in SaskPower's \$1.24 billion Boundary dam integrated carbon capture and storage demonstration project in Estevan, supplying the steam turbine and generator for this world-leading project.

Hitachi's decision to consolidate its natural operations in Saskatoon proves that our government's plan to help grow the province's economy are working. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and welcome Hitachi.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Arm River-Watrous.

#### Judge of the Provincial Court Appointment

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you well know that I come from a fairly small town of Bladworth, yet that small town has produced professional football players, professional hockey players, a senator, MP [Member of Parliament], and then also an MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly], and now a judge.

The province recently announced the appointment of Inez Cardinal, QC [Queen's Counsel] to the position of Judge of the Provincial Court in Melfort. Ms. Cardinal was one of 11 children, daughter of Tony and Doris Cardinal of Bladworth. She received her diploma in renewable technology from the Kelsey Institute and her Bachelor of Law from the U of S [University of Saskatchewan]. In 1991 she joined public prosecutions in Regina. In 2006 was appointed Queen's Counsel responsible for environmental offences in Saskatoon. In addition, Ms. Cardinal is a sessional lecturer of human justice and indigenous studies at the First Nations University campus in Prince Albert, has been an active member of the Canadian Bar Association.

Also, on a personal note, it's quite common now for boys and girls to be playing on the same hockey team. But 40-plus years ago, my earliest memory of Inez is when she joined our boys' 10-and-under hockey team in Bladworth. And all I have to say to that is, if she's half as tough a judge as she was a hockey player, I wouldn't want to challenge her in a court of law. I would ask that members join me congratulating Inez Cardinal on her well-deserved appointment to the Provincial Court of Saskatchewan.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Regina Douglas Park.

#### Wascana Centre Celebrates 50th Birthday

**Mr. Marchuk:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, always just a little difficult to follow the senior member in front of me.

Anyway thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to recognize Wascana Centre's 50th birthday. For 50 years, people have made their way down to Wascana Park to enjoy the scenic beauty, visit with their neighbours, participate in countless sporting activities, and get a bit of exercise.

Created in 1962, the city, the province, and the University of Regina envisioned a beautiful site that would develop the seat of government, improve educational opportunities, advance the arts, provide recreation activities, and conserve our natural environment. Needless to say, their incredible vision continues to grow. Looking across the park at the over 100,000 planted trees, it's hard to imagine how it would have looked five decades ago. In my case, Mr. Speaker, I don't have to imagine.

The 2,300 acre Regina landmark has been a work-in-progress since 1962, and countless employees, board members, and volunteers have used their initiative and vision to transform the once bald prairie into a true, urban oasis. Wascana Centre includes six parks, all with different available activities from children's apparatus, football, track and field, tobogganing, skiing, barbequing, a game preserve, the bandstand, and of

course the Royal Saskatchewan Museum.

Years from now, the citizens of Regina will reflect, as we do today, on the great work and partnerships that created this unique urban getaway. Please join me in congratulating the Wascana Centre and all those that have made the park the provincial landmark it is today. Thank you.

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

#### Bank Donation to School of Business

**Mr. Tochor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Scotiabank Canada made a very significant announcement last night in Saskatoon, an announcement that will have a very positive impact on the Aboriginal community. The Deputy Premier, the Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations were pleased to be in attendance at the Scotiabank reception as their President and CEO Rick Waugh announced a gift to the University of Saskatchewan's Edwards School of Business in the amount of \$200,000.

Mr. Speaker, this announcement was made at the Scotiabank's annual general meeting, the first time it was ever held in Saskatchewan. This incredible donation from Scotiabank will support Aboriginal students pursuing a business education. Scotiabank is one of North America's premier financial institutes and Canada's most international bank. I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, there will be a brighter future for many Aboriginal students that will benefit from the generous contribution.

The Edwards School of Business has done a wonderful job supporting Aboriginal education, providing guidance and preparation for the next generation of Aboriginal leaders. In fact, Mr. Speaker, in 2008, our colleague from Saskatoon Fairview won the Scotiabank Aboriginal Business Education Award which partially removes financial barriers for these students seeking an M.B.A. [Master of Business Administration]. Scotiabank leadership is a prime example, Mr. Speaker, of the continuing growth in our province that contributes to the Saskatchewan advantage. Thank you.

#### QUESTION PERIOD

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

#### Combatting HIV

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last fall when the Sask Party laid out its agenda in the Throne Speech, there was not one mention of HIV [human immunodeficiency virus]. Two weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, when the Finance minister delivered his budget, there was no mention of HIV. Yet we know here in Saskatchewan we're facing the worst HIV epidemic in the country. One-quarter of all HIV-related deaths that occur in the country occur here in Saskatchewan. Now perhaps it's easy for us to keep our head in the sand on this issue, Mr. Speaker, but I can't understand why we would take that approach on something so serious. My question to the minister: does the Sask Party not recognize that we face the worst HIV epidemic

in the country?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, we in this government, as well as the Ministry of Health and health regions across the province, certainly know the importance of HIV, the increased numbers, Mr. Speaker, of infections. Part of that is due to the increased testing which is also part of the exact opposite of what that member implied about sticking our heads in the sand.

Mr. Speaker, in December of 2010, we and the health regions approved a Saskatchewan HIV strategy. Part of that strategy was to make sure that people were tested. Because what was happening is people with HIV didn't know they had HIV, shared needles, Mr. Speaker, and the spread continued. It's extremely important that we test to make sure people can know whether they've got HIV, and if they do, they take the proper precautions so that it isn't spread further on, Mr. Speaker.

That's only one part of a total strategy, Mr. Speaker. That total strategy talks about increasing capacity through front-line services, Mr. Speaker, enhancing capacity through training, engaging our communities to address the HIV/AIDS [human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome] prevention, education, treatment, and awareness, Mr. Speaker. This strategy is only a couple of years old. It will run to 2014. It is a far cry from sticking your head in the sand.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It ought to be a huge concern that we're facing the worst HIV epidemic in the country. And, Mr. Speaker, it ought to be a concern that one-quarter of the deaths that are HIV related that occur in the country happen here in Saskatchewan.

The government's own documents say this: "A conservative estimate of direct cost to the Saskatchewan health care system is approximately \$40 million per year." When you factor in the indirect cost, Mr. Speaker, that amount jumps to \$136 million, by the government's own documents. Yet the response by the Sask Party, Mr. Speaker, has been \$2.5 million per year. Those that are working on the front lines, Mr. Speaker, don't think that this makes sense and recognize that this is a simply a drop in the bucket.

So my question to the minister: why is the Sask Party failing to invest the proper resources to address this epidemic and allow the province to curb some of the costs associated with the human, the social, and the financial costs for our province?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, when we saw the increase in HIV numbers, that's when we put the strategy in place back in 2010. Also part of that strategy is to have an HIV provincial leadership team in place to work with facilities and implement the strategy. The HIV leadership team is working with the Ministry of Health, First Nations health authorities, regional health authorities, to address this issue, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize this is a very complex issue. This is a community that is very, very tough to get in front of, Mr. Speaker, and to change lifestyles. And that's what has to happen. But, Mr. Speaker, this government has seen the issue; we've reacted; we've put funding towards it. We've put into place a committee, Mr. Speaker. We're only two years into a four-year strategy. We understand the issues, Mr. Speaker. It's not quite as simple as that member may think it is to solve such a complex problem that other provinces have faced before.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, many of the steps that the minister identified are good, and I hope that they are very successful in addressing the epidemic that we see in our province. But it's also important to look at the resources being allocated by members opposite. And when we see a \$2.5 million response to an issue, by the government's own admission, is well over \$100 million in costs, I think that is a concern.

Those who are working on the front lines, Mr. Speaker, emphasize that prevention, treatment, and supports are very important. And, Mr. Speaker, they're not satisfied with the response that members opposite have put forward to date. But a common theme that one hears when speaking with front-line workers is that we need to properly address the social determinants of health. And that will be, Mr. Speaker, in the end, the most effective response in addressing this crisis. My question to the minister: does he recognize that the social determinants of health need to be properly addressed? And if he does, when will he start doing so?

[14:00]

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, we understand there's more work to do in this area. Every province is grappling with it, Mr. Speaker. But I too have met with front-line workers, Mr. Speaker. I've met with a couple of nurses that work in the front lines here in Regina Qu'Appelle. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I've been with those nurses at times when there's been the needle . . . the clean-up program. I have a fairly good understanding of what's being delivered, and have heard first-hand from front-line caregivers, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely they'll say there needs to be more done, and we agree with that completely. But they'll also say, Mr. Speaker, prior to 2010, Mr. Speaker, we could go back many years when there was HIV in this province and there was no strategy in place. This government has heard from front-line workers. We've also heard from the community. We're taking steps, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, he can question the resources that we put into battling HIV but, Mr. Speaker, I would just be so scared had they ever got into power — \$550 million more spending, Mr. Speaker. They were throwing money around out of the back of the wagon like they were drunken sailors, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — It's a bit of an unsettling tone, Mr. Speaker, for the minister to be using that type of language when we're dealing with an issue that is so serious and affects so many people here in the province.

Mr. Speaker, not only do we need to address the social determinates of health, but we need to do a much better job of treating those with addictions. And that also includes, Mr. Speaker, addressing issues of shared needles with injection drug use. We know that the vast majority of new HIV cases here in the province are due to injection drug use. So, Mr. Speaker, we need to improve addiction services throughout the province. And I would say especially that is the case in certain parts of the province, with the North included.

My question to the minister: does he agree that we need to do a better job of providing addiction services and treatment throughout the province, and if that is the position that he has, when will he start acting and improving addiction services throughout the province?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, in my previous answers I've laid out what we are doing on HIV since 2010. There was no strategy in place before, even including under the NDP [New Democratic Party], Mr. Speaker. Our strategy is two years in. We have more work to do.

As far as addiction services, Mr. Speaker, we are continuing to work on that front. I can tell you that up in Prince Albert there will be a new youth addiction treatment centre, Mr. Speaker, that has come to place under our government, Mr. Speaker. We understand there are issues throughout the province. We work closely with health regions to make sure they have the proper resources to deal with these issues, Mr. Speaker. And we are seeing it spread throughout the province. It's not just one area; it's not an isolated problem. It's throughout the area, out the province, Mr. Speaker. That's why we work closely with our health regions to ensure that they've got the proper complement of resources and the proper complement of health care professionals to deal with these very, very important issues.

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

### Federal Crime Legislation

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, Sask Party politicians have stated repeatedly that they just don't know the cost of the federal Conservative crime Bill. We've asked the Minister of Corrections. He has no idea. We've asked the Minister of Justice. He's been equally unhelpful, and I quote from yesterday: "We can pick numbers out of the air as long as we choose to."

Last night in committee, the Minister of Corrections again refused to answer the question. But he did say we should go and talk to the Minister of Finance. All this confusion despite the deputy minister of Finance saying in the budget day briefing, quite simply, that this government is expecting 200 more inmates as a result of the federal crime Bill.



To the Minister of Finance: does he stand by the information of his top official?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, at the present time we cannot accurately assess or determine the number of additional inmates that the effect of Bill C-10 will have. We know that the desire of Bill C-10 is to have a precise, measured, proportionate response to serious crime. We want to ensure that that Bill removes child sexual predators from our streets and people that are organized drug traffickers.

I can tell the House, Mr. Speaker, that at the present time we have in our province space for 1,575 inmates. Earlier today announcements were made to increase both the capacity of Pine Grove and also one of the male facilities in Prince Albert, which will increase it by the year 2016 by an additional 204 so that we will have spaces for 1,779 inmates.

Mr. Speaker, I can also advise the House that we know that we have pressures in the area of remand space and we will work our way through that as well.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, the question was to the Minister of Finance. That answer is simply not good enough. It raises some other concerns around what we're building as far as infrastructure in this province for this crime Bill. But the question was to the Minister of Finance, and the question merits a straight answer. The Corrections minister says he has no idea of the costs. The Justice minister says he'll pick numbers out of the air. Mr. Speaker, this is about the integrity of this budget, and a straight answer is required.

To the Minister of Finance: does he support the answer of his head official that this will add 200 more inmates per day to the correctional system? Quite simply, yes or no.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I answered the question earlier and I stated the number of beds that we have for the facilities that we have, what the plans are to increase them over the next two years. Mr. Speaker, those are the type of things that we can and will do.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, we have increased, over the last four years, the number of police officers in the province by 120. We are increasing them by a further number in this mandate, Mr. Speaker. We will go ahead and we will ensure that we have sufficient resources in our province to protect our people from child sexual predators, from violent people, people that are preying on our children. We will ensure that we have a safe, secure province for people to live in. We know that we will have additional demands placed on our correctional facilities. We've outlined what our plan is to deal with some of those. We cannot accurately assess or determine what the effect of the impact of Bill C-10 is because some sentences that would

have been conditional sentences may well become probation or other methods of disposition. Those are the type of things we cannot accurately determine, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, that's entirely unacceptable by way of an answer. And the question was to the Minister of Finance. His deputy minister was crystal clear in a technical briefing to the opposition that this Bill would add 200 more inmates — pretty specific, Mr. Speaker.

What adds confusion to the mix here, Mr. Speaker, is while the Minister of Corrections last night in committee wouldn't stand up for the Finance top official, he did share that an additional 100 inmates on a per-day basis or on an annual basis would cost at least 6 million per year. So we pieced together the information before us along with that of the top Finance official's information. This means Bill C-10 would cost taxpayers or will cost taxpayers at least \$12 million.

Mr. Speaker, people of Saskatchewan deserve better than piecing together of information. They deserve an answer from the minister, and they deserve a budget they can count on. To the Finance minister: what will the cost of Bill C-10 be? And why isn't it in your budget?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, we are a competent government, and we are not going to engage in wild speculation. We do not know what the impact is going to be. We do not know what the courts are going to decide. We do not know how charges are going to be laid. We do not know what matters will be dealt away by way of alternate plea bargains. And we are not going to engage in wild speculation. We are not going to spend money unnecessarily. We have indicated over the next three or four years we are going to increase the number of spaces in our correctional facilities by some 204.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, if the effect of this Bill requires us to increase the spaces further, we will deal with that in due course. But we will not plan for something that we do not know what it is, cannot accurately determine. We will wait and we will see and we will make an accurate, fair, reasoned determination. The federal government has indicated to us that this Bill may well be implemented in stages. They will give us reasonable notice. And we will work through with them, and we will look to the federal government for an investment in our infrastructure as well, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — We have no answer to the questions here today, and we're left with more questions than answers. The Minister of Finance leaves us with the suspicion that whether or not we can even trust what his government's putting forward as far as a budget. He won't stand up, he won't stand up for his own top Finance official who was crystal clear in a technical briefing to the Saskatchewan opposition on budget

day. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people deserve better than this. The question to the Finance minister: does he believe and stand up for those numbers put forward by his top official, Mr. Speaker, and if not, what's his answer to Saskatchewan people as far as how they can trust the budget put before us?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, the effects of Bill C-10 are complex. It does away with conditional sentences. It imposes certain minimum sentences for some offenders. We cannot with any degree of certainty determine what the effect of those are. We are not going to engage in unnecessary or inaccurate speculation.

We know that we will have an increase in our need for our correctional facilities. We have indicated that we have an increase of some 204 scheduled now and, Mr. Speaker, if there is need for more we will deal with it appropriately in time, but we will not go out and engage in unnecessary speculation, unnecessary planning. We will treat things with a proportionate, reasoned, and fair response. We will not engage in the type of things that that government did, that opposition did prior to the election where they planned and spent literally billions of dollars of expenditure that there was no basis for, no need for, and not something that was wanted for by the citizens of this province.

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

### Support for Culture and Heritage

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're hearing from many Saskatchewan people who don't understand the government's decision to provide a zero per cent increase in funding for Saskatchewan's Western Development Museum, causing them to close their doors on Monday.

A Saskatoon teacher has written, "They [the Western Development Museum] deserve to be supported when times are good in our province." Another individual points out that the WDM [Western Development Museum] has four huge buildings to heat, light, and maintain, along with parking lots and grounds to keep up and 80,000 artifacts to store, preserve, and exhibit. She asks that the budget allocation reflect the place the WDM holds in the hearts of Saskatchewan people. To the minister: how can this government have millions of dollars for three more politicians, yet no extra money to help the museums that tell our unique Saskatchewan stories?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport.

**Hon. Mr. Hutchinson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We welcome the member's question. The Government of Saskatchewan of course does value the preservation of our province's heritage and applauds the good work being done by the Western Development Museum. That's why in 2011-2012, that fiscal year, the provincial grant to the WDM was increased by \$60,000 or one and a half per cent to offset inflation. But more importantly, Mr. Speaker, in the last five years the

museum has received a 35 per cent increase to its budget, 35 per cent. Additionally the WDM has also received \$5.3 million in funding for special projects over the last few years.

Mr. Speaker, we do respect the work done by the WDM at their four locations. We understand their financial pressures, and we'll continue to work with them to develop the most efficient and effective program delivery possible within our balanced budget.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, that that minister's words make it all better for the Western Development Museum. The WDM is a source of pride for Saskatchewan people. It showcases the creative and entrepreneurial spirit of our province. The WDM is also a source of education. Not only does it teach our history; it also provides valuable skills training through courses such as blacksmithing that are not available elsewhere.

To the minister: how can this government talk about pride in the province, education, training, and job skills when it is handcuffing one of the very organizations that champion these issues?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport.

**Hon. Mr. Hutchinson:** — Thank you for the question, Mr. Speaker. Once again, Mr. Speaker, the Western Development Museum has received an increase of 35 per cent during the first term of this government. In 2008-2009, for example, the WDM received an \$830,000 increase to their base funding, followed by another \$154,000 the next year, and then just last year they received a further one and a half per cent as well.

Our government considers it a priority to conserve our heritage resources, which have environmental, recreational, and cultural significance as we understand. The WDM does a fine job of preserving and displaying our province's historical character. We do sincerely thank them for their work, and we'll certainly be talking with them in the near future about how to best manage their financial pressures.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's more than a little ironic that this government talks about growth and a booming economy, yet has no extra money for the Boomtown museum.

Not only is this government failing the Western Development Museum; they are also failing the Saskatchewan Archives. As a result of this year's budget, the archives will be cutting four full-time jobs and 10 part-time jobs as well as reducing their hours of operation. Students around the province use archives to do research and learn about the province's history. Genealogy is becoming more and more popular, and Saskatchewan people go to the archives to learn more about their ancestors and about themselves. To the minister: how does

he justify forcing Saskatchewan Archives to cut staff and hours of operation when they are already backlogged with requests for services?

[14:15]

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport.

**Hon. Mr. Hutchinson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again we thank the member for her question. The history of our province is indeed important to the people of Saskatchewan. We all understand that. The Saskatchewan Archives Board has the important responsibility of preserving and protecting our history for this and future generations. Mr. Speaker, we are aware that the Archives Board is experiencing staffing and capacity pressures, as is the same with many other organizations, no doubt. And they understand that the Archives Board is meeting to examine options for maintaining service levels.

In the meantime, Mr. Speaker, the 2012-2013 provincial budget provides the Archives Board with an additional \$174,000 to help with salary and in operational costs. We are confident that the board will make decisions about staffing and operations that will be prudent, cost-effective, and in the best interests of the people of Saskatchewan. And we'll continue to work with the board.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is a distressing pattern occurring with this government, Mr. Speaker. They've cut the legs out of the film and television industry. Mr. Speaker, as a percentage of overall government spending in this budget, the Saskatchewan Arts Board has dropped to a measly point zero five seven per cent. That's the lowest funding level in 25 years, according to the Saskatchewan Arts Alliance. And this government is failing to adequately fund the Western Development Museum, the province's archives, and other arts and cultural organizations. It's clear that arts and culture are not a priority for this government.

To the minister: When is he going to stop selling out the sectors he's supposed to represent in cabinet and when is he going to stand up for arts and culture here in this province?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport.

**Hon. Mr. Hutchinson:** — Once again, Mr. Speaker, we thank the member for her question. Let's talk about dollars for arts and culture and heritage, shall we?

The total of the NDP spend in their last four years for all of these activities, \$60.49 million. Our total for our first four-year term, \$81.4 million. Mr. Speaker, that's an increase of 20.

[Applause]

Mr. Speaker, everybody's enthusiastic about the spending on this side of the gallery, Mr. Speaker. The increase amounts to

\$20.9 million. Mr. Speaker, that's a 35 per cent increase in four short years.

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

### Plans for Forestry Operations

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, late last year, forest planners were planning cuts near Big River which are right next to their ski hill and other areas of local significance. This created uncertainty and confusion with local residents, trappers, and tourism operators because the minister is required to conduct a public review before any cutting is approved, which had not happened. Cutting plans are currently being done annually. The community is anxiously waiting for the required long-term planning process to be finally put in place for the Prince Albert Forest Management Agreement.

To the minister: can he reassure the people of Big River that the ministry will take their concerns into account while reviewing and approving these plans? And can he assure us proper plans are in place before the logging starts?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Energy and Resources.

**Hon. Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to Big River, we were very pleased a number of months ago to announce the restarting the facility after a lot of work with the forestry companies and First Nations leaders in the area to restart the facility. It's going to be started up sometime soon. They have submitted a plan with respect to logging operations. Of course, the ministry will be taking a very serious look at it to ensure that it meets the environmental standards as well as logging standards that are appropriate for the area. No plan has been determined at this point in time, I understand, but we'll be certainly awaiting the plan that's put forward and assessing it accordingly.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, as a result of the concerns raised by the local municipal authorities and citizens, a meeting was finally held last week in Big River with foresters and government officials. I understand that the meeting was attended by 120 people who were mostly upset and frustrated with the come-and-go format of the consultation and the poor responses they were given, both by forest company reps as well as government officials. The companies themselves were apparently shocked by the turnout and the level of unhappiness expressed.

There's absolutely no direction in the legislation or regulations as to what the ministry will do with these concerns. The local people are left holding their breath. To the minister: what does the ministry intend to do next? How will he deal with these legitimate concerns of the citizens and when will he let them know?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Energy and Resources.

**Hon. Mr. Boyd:** — Mr. Speaker, as always is the case, forestry companies submit a plan in terms of their forestry activities that they are planning in the upcoming year. The ministry takes a very serious look at it and determines whether it meets the requirements in the Act. Of course that will be the case in this situation as well.

I think the important thing to note is, is under the NDP the facility closed. Under this administration, the facility reopens and hires people back in the local area, increasing the amount of investment in a dramatic fashion. It's good, clearly, for the area. It's probably the reason why we see the member elected on this side again from the area. And I think it's very important to note that it is a facility that will create employment and investment in the area and it will be done with a forestry plan in mind.

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

#### Funding for Student Housing Project at the University of Regina

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, along with the member from Regina Douglas Park, I had the pleasure of participating in an event this morning at the University of Regina where an announcement was made that the Government of Saskatchewan, under the leadership of many people on this side, people who are connected to the community, as well as people connected to the campus, that our government's going to provide \$1 million through this budget cycle, the 2012-13 budget, for the initial planning of a new student housing project at the University of Regina. The proposed project includes a student housing complex, child care facilities, and other amenities including underground parking.

Mr. Speaker, the government is aware that our strong provincial economy is having an impact on the availability of student housing. And that's why, Mr. Speaker, over the course of our first four years in office, Mr. Speaker, we've increased funding for student housing by more than 3,000 per cent — 3,000 per cent, Mr. Speaker. What that means in tangible terms, Mr. Speaker, is that there are more than 1,000 new beds now available for students. And the announcement today demonstrates that we continue on this path for progress.

What this facility will mean, Mr. Speaker, is that more students at the University of Regina, where enrolments are on the rise, Mr. Speaker, are going to be able to focus more of their attention on their studies, ultimately being more successful in their studies and therefore more successful in their pursuit of a career right here in Saskatchewan where today there are more than 12,000 jobs open and available and we have the lowest unemployment rate in the country.

Our government also understands and has a solid track record regarding the significance of child care. And that's why we continue to make sure that there are investments under way, in this case looking at up to 90 seats within this new child care facility, Mr. Speaker. We know that's going to help out the campus community, but we also know it's going to serve to

help out the broader community in and around Regina.

Mr. Speaker, this is just one more example of our overall efforts to invest in and support post-secondary education. What we've done is ensure that we have invested more than \$3.5 billion, an all-time record, in post-secondary education here in Saskatchewan over the course of five years, Mr. Speaker. We know there's more to do. And, Mr. Speaker, we're going to do that with our partners at the University of Regina as well as private sector partners that are going to be involved in this initiative. I am very, very pleased to be able to announce this investment that's under way, and we just made that announcement with our partners today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I would like to begin by thanking the minister for providing his remarks earlier on in the day. I appreciate those being sent across.

Mr. Speaker, we know that issues of housing, issues of child care are most certainly important for the entire province. We know that is the case on our university campuses. And we know that the students at the U of R [University of Regina] and the administration have been calling for this project, and so it is good to see that steps are being made.

I note, Mr. Speaker, this is funding that has been provided now for planning. And I most certainly will be interested in the plans that are coming forward, especially around the issues of cost, but issues of how it will be paid for and what are the debt implications for either the university or the province. We've seen some recent developments especially as it relates to the Health Sciences building at the U of S, Mr. Speaker, where it's not totally clear from the minister how the debt will be handled in the years to come.

So those will be some of the questions that I'll have as we see the plans develop on this project, and I once again thank the minister for sending his remarks across earlier. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — Why is the Minister of Health on his feet?

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To make a personal statement with leave.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Health has asked for leave to make a personal statement. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

### STATEMENT BY A MEMBER

#### Withdrawal of Comment

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the end of one of my answers during question period, I referred to a commonly used metaphor, Mr. Speaker, that was probably inappropriate. I would apologize and ask to withdraw that

remark.

**The Speaker:** — I would caution members on both sides to choose their words carefully and cautiously as all members of this Assembly are deemed to be hon. members.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### ADJOURNED DEBATES

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 36

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 36 — *The Constituency Boundaries Amendment Act, 2011*** be now read a second time.]

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased to stand in the Assembly today and to offer my comments on the plan that this government has in relation to adding three more MLAs to the Assembly. And they're doing this through this particular Bill which is called *The Constituency Boundaries Act*, Mr. Speaker. And I wanted to explain a bit to folks that may be watching this particular exercise on television, or maybe they're looking through *Hansard*, that clearly from our perspective this particular Bill offers nothing but three more MLAs to the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And I think in general terms, the people of Saskatchewan do not want three more politicians when you see services being cut and we see programs being axed and when you see the amount of cuts in general to the many things that people in Saskatchewan treasure, Mr. Speaker. Whether it's the arts, whether it's the whole notion around the film and tax credit, these are some of the things that are really important to the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And what this particular Bill does, Mr. Speaker, as you would know, is that it really redraws the boundaries throughout Saskatchewan to accommodate what the Sask Party want. And they want three more seats and therefore three more MLAs.

Now we have stood up in the Assembly before, certainly myself, and I've offered our initial comments, Mr. Speaker, on how we perceive the purpose and the meaning of this particular Bill. And there's no question in my mind, Mr. Speaker, as I've said in previous statements, that if there is improved services, if there's greater opportunity for staff increases and so on and so forth, then in theory then obviously you would look at the option of adding more MLAs.

Now we're seeing, Mr. Speaker, that this is clearly not the case. This Saskatchewan Party government has cut programs. They have cut services. They have done a tremendous amount of harm to various sectors through the province and, Mr. Speaker, their answer to that particular group of people or those people in general is that we don't value your work because we want to

have more MLAs.

And I look to again to *Hansard* and to a number of other information that we've received on this particular Bill and, Mr. Speaker, nowhere does it say in their platform, nor have they said it any of their speeches when they ran in these elections, that hey, one of the biggest things we want to do is we want to increase the amount of politicians we have throughout our province.

And, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you one thing for certain: that the people of Saskatchewan don't want more politicians. They want to make sure that they have more workers to clear the roads. They want to have more, make sure they have more workers front line to battle against HIV. They want to make sure that they have more opportunities to protect the environment. And the list goes on as to what is much more important to the people of Saskatchewan as opposed to having more MLAs.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I find it absurd in many ways that they would bring some of these arguments forward because obviously it wasn't part of their election platform. And certainly now they're beginning to roll out this agenda of theirs where you not only have cuts, but obviously you're going to start going after the Crown corporations, and then you're going to start going after organized labour. And we're going to do something that the people of Saskatchewan want: we're going to add more politicians to the payroll that the taxpayers obviously are paying.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let us make it very clear that from our perspective as New Democrats, we don't in any way, shape, or form support the notion of having three more politicians. That is not what the plan is, Mr. Speaker. When you see the amount of cuts that these guys have done, they have not kept up with the opportunity to provide services, Mr. Speaker. They have slashed those services. And every single one of my comments, Mr. Speaker, when we initially spoke to this Bill, is we said, if in relevance they have more services and they have more programs, then that opportunity may exist, Mr. Speaker. But what we've seen is they've done totally opposite, Mr. Speaker, totally opposite.

[14:30]

Now I hear some of the chirping from some of the MLAs opposite, Mr. Speaker. And one of the points I would raise with them, that if they wish, one of the challenge I want to present today is that, let's have a plebiscite. Let's go back to the people of Saskatchewan. Let's have a binding plebiscite on this particular Bill and say, do the people of Saskatchewan want to see more politicians in this Assembly? And I don't hear very many voices chattering any more, Mr. Speaker. You know why? Because the people of Saskatchewan would give them a resounding absolutely not. They would say absolutely not. They don't want more politicians, Mr. Speaker.

So all of a sudden, the Sask Party benches are pretty quiet because they're afraid of a plebiscite. And that plebiscite would tell them, we don't want more MLAs as proposed in this particular Bill, Mr. Speaker. We want more front-line workers, as we initially pointed out, to do the things that the people of Saskatchewan wanted and that is to protect our interests in the

long term and build a growing, sustainable economy and a great province that is inclusive of all people when it comes to sharing benefits and making sure everybody's needs are met.

So again as I pointed out at the outset, that if the Sask Party is so solid in their beliefs that they need three more MLAs, then I challenge them today to have a plebiscite, a public vote for the people of Saskatchewan to see if they support that notion. Now, Mr. Speaker, it's very quiet over there. It's very quiet because I think the message is getting to them, Mr. Speaker, that the people of Saskatchewan are saying to them: where in your election document, where in your platform, where when you came to knock on my door did you tell us you wanted to add more MLAs, that you wanted more politicians at millions of dollars more, over time, and where was that that you told us? And, Mr. Speaker, it was very, very quiet.

So I'll say it again the third time to the Assembly and to the Sask Party and government, to the Minister of Justice, let us have — the person that is proposing this Bill — let us have a public vote, a plebiscite, if you will. If the people of Saskatchewan want three more MLAs, let's have a binding plebiscite where if they say, absolutely not, then you take this Bill and you put where it should be. And that's in the shredder or a garbage can, Mr. Speaker. Because people know this is not what the Sask Party were proposing when they ran, and there's nowhere in their platform did they mention they want to have three more MLAs.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that what they've done, Mr. Speaker, was they started cutting services. They started cutting front-line staff. They started reducing everything that's important to the people of Saskatchewan, like the film and tax employment credit, like northern forest fire protection workers, and like the highway workers. They haven't filled those positions. All these things, Mr. Speaker, are important to the people of Saskatchewan.

And what the Sask Party done was they cut all those programs. And they hailed this particular Bill as their bellwether Bill, saying look, we want to get more politicians. And the people of Saskatchewan feel betrayed. And they're starting to feel angry about this notion because that money could've been used better elsewhere. And certainly the people of Saskatchewan have been telling not only us as MLAs but the Sask Party MLAs as well.

So as I say it here today in this Assembly and I tell them right in front of the entire Sask Party caucus, come on, let's have a public vote on this. Let's have a plebiscite to see if your constituents wanted this. Let's have a binding plebiscite. Let's not be afraid to go back to the people of Saskatchewan and say to them, did you vote for this? Did you accept this? Did you want this? Tell us yes or no. Make the question very clear.

And, Mr. Speaker, we need to look at some of the arguments that some of the media have also joined us in this debate. And they point out some of the challenges behind why they can't defend what the Sask Party is trying to do. And you look at some of the examples. For example in Saskatchewan, we have an average of 17,000 voters per constituency or per riding. In Manitoba, in northern Manitoba, they have 21,000 voters for each of the ridings. In Alberta they have 43,000 voters per riding, and yet British Columbia has 51,000 voters per riding,

Mr. Speaker. And then you look at Ontario which has 120,000 voters per riding, Mr. Speaker. So the logic behind the Sask Party's quest for more politicians, it's just totally beyond the average person, Mr. Speaker. They're trying to figure, what is up with that? What is the game plan there, Mr. Speaker?

And again as I pointed out, these numbers certainly are numbers that the media have presented to the public, and the public is reading all this information. And I know that the Sask Party MLAs are getting that pressure because nowhere in their document and nowhere, as I mentioned, when they were knocking on doors, did they say, hey, guess what? As a footnote on your visit, on this visit, I'm going to tell you we're going to have a . . . propose a Bill that will require us to hire more politicians.

Imagine the voters now, Mr. Speaker, that feel betrayed because you see front-line staff members being cut. You see all these programs that offer significant value to the people of Saskatchewan — they're being cut, Mr. Speaker. There's questions on the integrity of the budget, everything from the debt at the U of S and now for the crime Bill that the federal conservatives are putting in place that's going to cost the provincial government money. Then you begin to wonder about the competency of this particular government, Mr. Speaker.

Are we going back to the days of deficits, Mr. Speaker? And how you do that is you begin to hide that debt in various forms and various locations. And all of a sudden the people of Saskatchewan will be left holding the bag several years from now. And, Mr. Speaker, we've seen that act before. We've seen this movie. And what the people of Saskatchewan don't want is a rerun of that particular shameful history where the people of Saskatchewan were saddled with a \$15.5 billion debt a number of years ago.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I go back to these numbers and I think these numbers are really, really telling in terms of what this government is planning to do in their political quest to add three more MLAs. And I go back to these numbers. I think it's really important that people remember these numbers. Again Saskatchewan has 17,000 voters per area or per riding. And you go back to Manitoba, they have 21,000 people per riding, and again to Alberta, they have 43,000. And, Mr. Speaker, I think what's important is that the 43,000 in Alberta is more than almost double of what we have in Saskatchewan. And yet they don't ask for MLAs in Alberta, Mr. Speaker.

And then you go on to places again as I pointed out, to Ontario that has 120,000 voters per riding compared to Saskatchewan's 17,000 voters, Mr. Speaker. So Ontario has 120,000 voters per riding. We have 17,000 voters per riding, Mr. Speaker, and this Bill says, okay, well based on that information, we need three more MLAs. We need more politicians in the province. To heck with the front-line workers. That's what these guys are saying. To heck with the people that help us protect the environment, people that pave or keep our streets safe and clean and clear, the people that keep our communities safe. All these resources, Mr. Speaker, are really important to the people of Saskatchewan. I don't know how many more ways I can tell you that this is really, really key to some of the arguments. And the points that we're hearing throughout Saskatchewan is that people think that this is a huge waste of money and that the Saskatchewan

Party got it totally wrong. They got it totally wrong when they proposed a Bill of this sort, Mr. Speaker.

Now what I want to point out as well is that we see there is always a devious presentation that . . . or a devious thought that I have when I hear something about when the Saskatchewan Party talks about democracy. Mr. Speaker, we have seen evidence time and time again of how they're trying to thwart the ability for people to vote, that they're trying to suppress the opportunities for many people to participate in the democratic process, Mr. Speaker.

And that democracy was won and hard fought by our veterans, Mr. Speaker. That democracy and the right to have a free vote was afforded to us by our veterans, the many people that fought in World War I, World War II, the Korean conflict. The list goes on, Mr. Speaker, of the thousands of people that sacrificed their lives and their freedom to go and do one thing, and that is to protect Canada and the democracy that we enjoy.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that's when I begin to get really angry and I get very upset as an MLA sitting in this Assembly, because I've spoken earlier in my career about the values that I learned from my father who was a World War II veteran. And, Mr. Speaker, he really, really loved this country and he was very, very proud of his service. And, Mr. Speaker, he told us every day of some of the challenges that he had as a young man going overseas to fight for liberty and for freedom, Mr. Speaker. Those are some of his words, you know, in terms of the sacrifice and the admiration he's had for his fellow troops and the fact that he's seen people out there that were very . . . he was very close to and they died on the battlefield. He spoke highly of his sergeant — I don't have the sergeant's name — but of how he admired that sergeant, Mr. Speaker.

And you listen to some of the stories of the other veterans in the community of Ile-a-la-Crosse and the communities of Beauval, of Buffalo Narrows, you know, where these veterans spoke with great pain at times, certainly, but with great memories of the people that they served with. And they're all there to do one thing, and that was to promote democracy and to promote freedom for their country. And they paid many times over, Mr. Speaker, with their lives, with their challenges, with their health problems as they aged with some of the challenges that they went through in the war. And, Mr. Speaker, what they clearly told us is that that's something that we need to appreciate more. That was the resounding message.

And I go to a lot of veterans' day activities, Mr. Speaker. They're a great opportunity for us to honour our soldiers, our veterans, and of course all those people that served in the military. And when I come to the Assembly today and I see some of the activity happening around this particular Assembly with that government, I begin to question the motivation behind all that work being done by the many veterans in our country as to why they would do certain things in certain fashions to thwart democracy, Mr. Speaker, to thwart the democratic rights of people to come out and express their willingness to support one party over another, Mr. Speaker.

Now we within the NDP certainly support the whole notion of having a booming economy, of having people moving to Saskatchewan, of building a strong, prosperous future, Mr.

Speaker. That's exactly some of the things that we spoke of and will continue speaking of, Mr. Speaker. We want to welcome the business community. We want to welcome the working families and the men and women that can really help build this province. And, Mr. Speaker, a big part, a big part of that is the youth and the children because they are going to be the promise of tomorrow, Mr. Speaker.

I spoke about my father who was a veteran . . . And this Bill also excludes anybody under 18 in doing their plan and assessing of where these constituencies go, Mr. Speaker. They are excluding those young people, Mr. Speaker, that could add so much. So in one fell swoop, the Saskatchewan Party excluded my grandchildren, and will exclude many other people's children throughout the province. I don't have any children under the age of 18. But this Saskatchewan Party government said, you don't count in this assessment because we're going to determine where the constituencies are. And unlike any other, the historical precedence here in the province of Saskatchewan, we're going to now exclude you guys for the first time. So anybody under 18 years of age no longer qualify as citizens under this particular Bill, Mr. Speaker. So they're not going to include anybody under 18.

So not only have they thwarted democracy, Mr. Speaker, they're putting something in place that the people of Saskatchewan don't want in this Bill. And I want to go on the other point of how they've excluded many, many young people in doing their population assessment as to where these constituencies go.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that the young people in the province of Saskatchewan, First Nations, Métis, non-Aboriginal people, people of all kinds of ethnic backgrounds and from different cultures and different countries, you know, they all make up what Saskatchewan is. I think the provincial motto is, "from many peoples, strength." And the last time I looked under a dictionary, "people" also included youth and children, Mr. Speaker. They also included youth and children. And this particular government has said, no, we're not going to include them. And of course, you know, their argument is, of course, we value them.

Well if you value them, you include them in the political process to determine which seats and how many seats we have in the province. You don't exclude them, because they have to be part of the equation for the future of . . . the formula for the successful future of our province as a whole.

[14:45]

So again, Mr. Speaker, I look at what is happening here and look at whether it's the boundaries document that we're speaking about today — the boundaries Bill — or whether it's the voter ID [identification] Bill that was put in place earlier by this particular government. These are all plans and efforts to simply thwart democracy, Mr. Speaker.

And I've said it once and I'll say it again, that I challenge any member across the way in the Saskatchewan Party caucus — including the Premier — that if he wants to have this issue moved forward, let's have a public vote. Let's have a plebiscite on this issue. Will he do that, Mr. Speaker? Will he agree to

having a plebiscite on whether the people of Saskatchewan really support this particular Bill that sees us increasing the number of seats in the Assembly, therefore the number of MLAs by three, thereby wasting millions and millions of dollars over the term of this government simply to have more politicians and less workers, Mr. Speaker?

That is a crying shame when you see the action that they have done to hurt different organizations, to hurt different groups and workers and yet turn around and saying we're going to replace all these quality people with more politicians, Mr. Speaker. That's not what the people of Saskatchewan want.

So again I point out in the document . . . and I want to do these numbers again, Mr. Speaker. I think these numbers are very telling, are very telling to the people of Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan has an average of 17,800 voters per riding. Manitoba has 21,200 people per riding. And you look at Ontario. They've got 51,765 voters per riding. Alberta has 43,000 voters per riding, and of course Ontario, as I mentioned earlier, has the highest number. I got my numbers mixed up, but the highest number in the country is Ontario which has 120,000 — 120,000 — voters per riding, Mr. Speaker, compared to Saskatchewan's 17,000. And yet the Saskatchewan Party says, oh we need more politicians. Less workers, less front-line staff, less programs, less services, less opportunities for a number of different groups, but they're going to give us more politicians.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would say again, I would say again, let's have a plebiscite. Let's have a plebiscite on this particular Bill where you would see three more MLAs added, three more politicians at the expense of many front-line working staff throughout the province, Mr. Speaker.

And again you can hear absolute silence from across the way because, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party knows, they know exactly what the problem is. The people of Saskatchewan don't want this, this Bill through, that adds more politicians to the payroll and less workers and less programs, Mr. Speaker.

Now I spoke a bit about the young people being excluded in their assessment, and how they're going to redraw these boundaries and add more MLAs. And I think that's shameful, Mr. Speaker, because many parents — and there's a lot of parents throughout our province, and grandparents and aunts and uncles — that encourage and foster a different kind of positive attitude within the younger generation. And yes, some of them may tell them, you know, for example you might want to look at politics in the future, or you might want to be part of the public policy process, or you might want to work for government. But until you're 18 years of age, under the Sask Party game plan here, you don't count. And I know that upsets a lot of parents and grandparents that say you have no right to do that. You come knock on my doorstep; you're going to do this Electoral Boundaries Commission, and what you're going to do is you're going to exclude many of my children and my grandchildren in the process. And why in the heck didn't you tell us that before the election, Mr. Speaker?

I'll tell you why they wouldn't say that before the election — because they'd get a lot of doors slammed in their face. Because this is actually against democracy, against the many things that many people fought for over the years to bring that

here to Saskatchewan. Now what happens, Mr. Speaker, is now it's now being turned into a political game as opposed to the value of democracy. It's now a political game for the Saskatchewan Party.

And that's what gets me so upset, Mr. Speaker, is that you see these kind of activities happening within the Sask Party on a continual basis. And I think the people of Saskatchewan are starting to get the message that these guys are going to manipulate, as much as they can, the political process for their own purposes. And that is shameful and that's certainly a challenge to democracy and freethinking, Mr. Speaker. And we don't expect the people of Saskatchewan to know this on the first few months. But they'll certainly hear about this over the next few years, as I think the Saskatchewan Party MLAs are also hearing it now, and they'll continue to hear it.

So any Sask Party MLAs that go to any assemblies or any gathering or any meeting or any forum, I tell the people of Saskatchewan, approach them and ask them, we don't remember you telling us you're going to hire three more politicians there in the campaign. Why are you doing that to us now? That's what I'll ask the people of Saskatchewan right now to do, is to approach their MLAs, their Sask Party MLAs and say, why are you guys supporting this Bill? This Bill was not well thought out, and it is contrary to a lot of things that we believe is valued in a democratic and free world. And that, of course, is to stop the manipulation of a political process to better that particular party overall, Mr. Speaker.

Now I find that some of the other activities that we see happening within the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker, is that you look at all the arguments that we have made on this particular Bill, and yet when we hear the request, the request of us as opposition to have a public vote on this . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . The member from Kindersley keeps chirping from his seat. Will the member from Kindersley agree? Let's have a public vote. Let's have a plebiscite on this issue, and let's have a binding plebiscite. If the people of Saskatchewan say no to you, sir, if they say no to you, then drop the Bill.

And, Mr. Speaker, the member from Kindersley's pretty quiet now. You know why, Mr. Speaker? Because the member from Kindersley knows that that plebiscite will be a very strong message delivered in that plebiscite saying, you guys got it wrong, and here's the message that nobody wants more politicians. They want more front-line workers. They want more programs, and they want more fairness. And above all, they want accountability from all those Sask Party MLAs that were knocking on their doorstep asking for their vote last fall, and they didn't tell them about this particular plan, Mr. Speaker.

The other part of the Act that I really get upset about, Mr. Speaker, is some of the activities that this particular government has undertaken. This Bill is one problem, but there's other Bills, Mr. Speaker, as I'd spoken about earlier, where you have to have voter ID to go and vote, Mr. Speaker. You have to have a voter ID to go vote in these certain ridings. And I found that really, really, really surprising, coming from this government that's supposed to be accountable and respectful to their people, Mr. Speaker. They are not. They are absolutely not because nowhere did we see in any of the



election where there were some major problems with people that have traditionally always voted in their particular area where they had to show ID.

Many senior citizens walked to some of these polling stations, Mr. Speaker, they walked to some of these polling stations, and when they got there they said, hello, I want to vote. And they said, okay, we know who you are, but we can't let you vote unless you have a photo ID of yourself. And, Mr. Speaker, the old people are saying, well I don't have a driver's license, or the people that obviously come from different backgrounds or may have moved to Saskatchewan, well we don't have a photo ID right now. Well you can't vote. Well, Mr. Speaker, that is absolutely silly.

A declaration is there for people to sign and to declare that they're eligible to vote at that station, Mr. Speaker. And many of those people that have worked in these elections, Mr. Speaker, many of these people that have worked at these elections, they've worked there for a long time, and they've worked through many elections, so they know generally which people are allowed to vote. And if they have any questions, they ask for information. They're asked to sign a form, and generally they are allowed to vote. But these guys don't want that to happen. They don't want the free vote to occur, Mr. Speaker. And that was a shameful attack I think on a number of different groups, and I think it's areas especially in the Aboriginal community, Mr. Speaker. I think there was some major, major mistakes made in that regard.

And one of the examples I would use, Mr. Speaker, is that one time we were pushing very hard. I think the member from Cumberland was arguing very adamantly that there be a system allowed where a band administrator or a band-appointed person could sit at the voting station, and they can actually confirm if that member is a member of their band and is allowed to vote without having a photo ID, without having a photo ID. And, Mr. Speaker, I think that due to the pressure from some of the First Nations communities that the government said, yes, I think that's an acceptable process.

Well, Mr. Speaker, a lot of the other groups, like the Métis, wanted a similar process where somebody sat in the hall, and they could verify for hundreds of people that they're from the community, they've lived there, and that that they're allowed to vote at that particular poll, Mr. Speaker. That was not afforded to the Métis communities, and it was really stringently discouraged over process to the First Nations as well.

So the First Nations and Métis people were trying to fight back to let their people vote, Mr. Speaker. But all these rules and regulations and barriers that this particular government put in front of them was intended to do one thing. And it worked very well when people got discouraged, walked out of the hall and said, well I'm not going vote. I'm not going to go back home and find my ID to come back and vote, and you know who I am, and so on and so forth.

And one of the things that's really important, Mr. Speaker, is that when I went to vote in Ile-a-la-Crosse, Mr. Speaker, I walked into the polling station, and the lady that was at the front there said, well hi, Buckley, how are you? I said I'm fine. I came here to vote. Well, I need to see your ID. I said well —

because I had mentioned this before in the Assembly — well I am Buckley. I'm here to vote. I'm the candidate. No, no. I'm sorry, we can't give you a ballot unless we see your ID. We can't give you a ballot unless you have your ID.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that's got to be the silliest notion I've ever heard in a free democratic world of our country of Canada. Got to be absolutely silly. And the reason why they've done that, Mr. Speaker — the question was asked, why did you do that? — they said, oh there was some discrepancies. That was what the Premier said. Well we asked, what discrepancies? Can you explain to us what discrepancies? Oh there are these discrepancies, and that was it.

So, Mr. Speaker, clearly it runs right to the top in terms of what is happening in terms of voter suppression. And part of the voter suppression tactics is to insist on photo ID from different groups and organizations that have a difficult time providing that. And that includes the elders. That includes many people that don't have licenses. That includes people that have disabilities that walk a long way. They aren't going to come back because it takes a lot of work to get to these polling stations. And this government was very effective at suppressing those particular votes.

And to me, Mr. Speaker, that is a great disservice to the people and the women and men and many other people that sacrificed their lives to bring democracy to the country called Canada, Mr. Speaker. We fought against this thing in different world wars, Mr. Speaker, and we're very proud of some of the service of some of our elders and some of the people in our community. And in this fashion, in this fashion, to be treated like that by this government in suppressing our vote and discouraging the people from coming out and expressing who they wish to support, I think is very, very shameful, Mr. Speaker.

Now you add that, Mr. Speaker, you add that to a different type of treatment that different groups got from this particular government, and now you throw in this whole new notion of having three more MLAs when nobody else wanted it. So, Mr. Speaker, we see the agenda of the Saskatchewan Party at work.

And I ask the question today if they would agree to a public vote, a plebiscite on this particular issue, and not a peep from the members across the way — not one peep. You know why, Mr. Speaker? Because the people of Saskatchewan would give them a resounding no. You didn't bring that forward during the election. You have no right to bring it forward after the election. And we know on this side, it's all about manipulation of the political process. We know what they're up to, Mr. Speaker. We know what they're up to, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And that member will yap from his chair as well. Why doesn't he stand up and say yes? Say yes. Say yes to it. Say yes. Say you'll accept the challenge. Say you'll accept the challenge.

And all of a sudden they're pretty quiet, Mr. Speaker. They will not accept the challenge of having a public vote, Mr. Speaker. They sink in their chairs, and they're going to sit back and watch this thing unfold. And I think that's shameful, Mr. Speaker. They're going to watch it unfold when they know that the people that helped get them to where they're at did not support this notion. They know it, and we know it, Mr. Speaker.

And that's why today, when we stand up and challenge them to a public vote, a plebiscite, a binding plebiscite, they're all very quiet, Mr. Speaker.

And the reason why is I don't think half of them support this Bill at all. But, Mr. Speaker, they're told what to do. They're told when to say what they have to say, and that's it. So I would say to them today, if the backbench hasn't got no backbone, then don't be yelling across the way on this particular Bill with advice for us in the opposition because quite frankly those words ring hollow, and there's no truth to them, Mr. Speaker.

[15:00]

So again I ask the question: a public plebiscite, will you accept that challenge on this particular Bill that sees us adding more MLAs? Do I hear a yes over there, Mr. Speaker? Do I hear a yes over there, Mr. Speaker? Pretty quiet over there, Mr. Speaker, pretty quiet because, Mr. Speaker, they know that this Bill is not what the people of Saskatchewan value, what the people of Saskatchewan want. And this is something that the people of Saskatchewan wouldn't mind having a vote on or a say on in terms of whether they support this or not.

And that's why, from my perspective, I support the notion of having a plebiscite, a binding plebiscite to say, what do you guys think? You want this Bill that excludes our children from being counted? You want this Bill that adds more politicians and less front-line workers and programs? And, Mr. Speaker, what the Saskatchewan Party's afraid of is they'll be told, absolutely not. That was the wrong thing to do, and we're quite frankly going to tell you that, and we'll do it by way of a binding vote called a plebiscite.

And, Mr. Speaker, they won't accept that. They won't accept that challenge today. And that's the important point to note on this particular Bill, Mr. Speaker. And that goes to my argument and my point that this is an affront to democracy, that they're not allowing the democratic process to unfold, and to go back to being accountable to their constituents, Mr. Speaker.

And that's why we don't in the opposition support this Bill in any way, shape, or form, Mr. Speaker, in any way, shape, or form, when you're seeing them doing exactly opposite when it comes to cutting services and cutting programs that were essential to many people and certainly impacted many people's lives and livelihood, Mr. Speaker.

Now I go back, and I want to do it one more time. I think it's important for people of Saskatchewan to hear these numbers again. These numbers are important. Saskatchewan has an average of 17,000 voters per riding. Manitoba has 21,000 voters per riding. Alberta has 43,000 voters per riding. BC has 51,000 voters per riding. And of course Ontario has 120,000 voters per riding.

But you know, Mr. Speaker, what happened when this Bill was introduced? I think they brought up, Nova Scotia's done this. That was what they compared Saskatchewan to in terms of population and distribution of seats. They said, oh sorry to tell you guys, but we're doing this because Nova Scotia's done this. And on one hand, they want to be partners with BC and Alberta, and yet on the other hand, when it comes to doing this

seat analysis and determining how many MLAs we need, oh, we're going to go all the way to the East Coast there, and oh, there's Nova Scotia here. This is how they do it.

And that's part of the silliness of this Bill, Mr. Speaker. The absolute silliness of this particular Bill is that (a) they never asked the people of Saskatchewan if they wanted this, and they're afraid of a public vote on this. Secondly, Mr. Speaker, they're also trying to thwart democracy in many ways. And I attach the other Bills to this particular Bill because they all do the same thing in suppressing the vote from certain particular groups. And these groups know who they are. And I also point out that when they do the comparative analysis of which other jurisdictions do this, they've got to go all the way down to the East Coast of Canada to find some other province that does this. And, Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate, but that's exactly what the Saskatchewan Party's about.

Our party warns the people of Saskatchewan what would happen, Mr. Speaker, and a lot of our projections are coming true. And people are beginning to see the error of their ways in terms of believing these guys were going to do something different. Mr. Speaker, I think they betrayed that trust. And that's why I think that the vote should go back to the people of Saskatchewan and tell them, do you want more politicians at the cost of millions of dollars more — yes or no? Make it very clear. Yes or no? And I can almost guess, Mr. Speaker, that the vote would come back 99.999 per cent in favour of not having more politicians. You might get 49 votes over there for it, but that'll be the 0.001 that would be supportive of that, Mr. Speaker. And that's shameful. That's absolutely shameful.

So the headlines from the media, the headlines that are screaming across the province: "Do we really need three more MLAs?" And I think the resounding answer is no, Mr. Speaker. The resounding answer is no. And, Mr. Speaker, as long as some of the members from across the way won't accept the challenge, I say to them, that's another example of how they're thwarting democracy. That's another example that we on this side of the Assembly look for. And, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to that particular aspect of making sure, of making sure that the people of Saskatchewan have the opportunity to vote on these particular Bills, these guys say no to that. And that's why it's very quiet over there, Mr. Speaker, and I'll tell you, I'd be very quiet too if I'd done something totally different than the people of Saskatchewan asked during the election campaign and while I was knocking on their doors.

Now again the question we have, the headline that's screaming across Saskatchewan: "Do we really need three more MLAs?" And the answer is no. And if you don't believe it, let's have a public vote. Let's have a binding plebiscite, Mr. Speaker. Let's have a binding plebiscite and to see if the people of Saskatchewan want that. And if the people of Saskatchewan say, yes, we want that, Mr. Speaker, then guess what? We accept what they're saying. But the only problem we have is the Saskatchewan Party will not accept that challenge, Mr. Speaker. They will not accept that challenge.

And the challenge was made very clear. It was made on numerous occasions. It was quite, I think, straightforward and, Mr. Speaker, all we were met with is silence. And you know why, Mr. Speaker? Because it supports our notion that they are

here to thwart democracy and manipulate the process for their own political benefit. And that is a great, great challenge to democracy.

And their names will live in infamy, Mr. Speaker, because history will be judging us, not each other. History will judge who done what, when, and where. And I pray that those names are just really big in terms of who's responsible. And I think, in general, history will say, well this occurred during this time and these were the people that were in charge of that particular exercise, Mr. Speaker.

And as we get older and as we age, and one thing I'm going to say when I'm sitting . . . I hope I'm sitting around when I'm 75, 80 years old, and I could tell my grandkids and other people, no, we didn't try and suppress votes. No, we didn't try add more seats for political purposes. And no, we didn't try and exclude certain groups from the process, Mr. Speaker; we didn't do any of that. But those guys will have a tough act or they'll have a tough way of explaining how they were responsible putting these kind of Bills forward, Mr. Speaker.

So I'll say again, the answer we're getting from the people of Saskatchewan, no way. They don't want more politicians. No way do they want more politicians, Mr. Speaker, and that's what this Bill does. They're saying, we don't want more politicians. Now try and get it through the Sask Party's head. They don't want more politicians, so pull this Bill and put it in the garbage can where it belongs, Mr. Speaker. Or better yet, put it in a shredder where it'll never be pieced together again for eternity, Mr. Speaker.

So I would point out again that this is one of the reasons why, from our perspective as an opposition caucus, we look at this and we make reference to this thing on numerous occasions. Because people of Saskatchewan are beginning to realize and they're saying one thing, that the trust that they gave a lot of MLAs on that side has been betrayed by this Bill that's asking for more politicians, less workers, and less programs, Mr. Speaker.

And that's why I think it's important that people in Saskatchewan know that the Sask Party put this in place. The NDP are opposing this and we would ask for your support, in not only writing letters or calling for a public vote on this, calling for a plebiscite, but to also talk to the Sask Party MLAs at their next function or their next walk to you. Or if they send you one of those householders — you know, have any comments? — just put, we don't more MLAs. I think maybe they'll get the message from you and if they don't, then come 2015, you can send them a good message, Mr. Speaker, a message that says, democracy is something that we cannot mess with, we cannot manipulate, nor can we try and gerrymander for our own purposes. That is not what is proper and that's why I'm encouraging the media to continue focusing on this particular issue.

And it's going to be with a great amount of scrutiny, Mr. Speaker, to see what the next level of what this Bill is going to do. We're going to look at who they appoint, Mr. Speaker, and whether there's any connection there; how they appoint, if there's a fairness and if there's a neutrality to all the people that they appoint. We're going to look at that aspect as well, Mr.

Speaker. That's the next round of fights that this caucus is going to undertake.

And the first round of course is to challenge the Sask Party government right to the top, the Premier and the cabinet ministers and the backbenchers. Tell them right now, the challenge is to have a public vote. Let's have a plebiscite on this and see if people of Saskatchewan want it. And I can tell you right now the answer will be a resounding no. And that's why they won't do it, Mr. Speaker, and they won't do that plebiscite at their own peril because the people of Saskatchewan don't like this Bill at all.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to rejoin the debate on Bill No. 36, *An Act to amend The Constituency Boundaries Act, 1993*. And I have to say my colleague from Athabasca raised some very interesting ideas about a plebiscite because clearly these issues were not brought up in the election. And we all knew, we all knew the census was coming. And we knew that the boundaries, *The Constituency Boundaries Act* would have to be revisited, but we never anticipated and nobody thought they'd be seeing the addition of three more MLAs. And actually nobody has actually raised this. And the government has failed, I think resoundingly, to make the case for why we should have three more MLAs.

We know the population is growing and we all think that's a wonderful, wonderful thing, and people are coming to Saskatchewan because this is the place where the economy is doing very well. And we think this is wonderful. But what we want to see and what people are thinking they would prefer to see spent with the money that's going to be going to these three MLAs, by which the government's own people are saying will cost some 240, \$250,000 a year each — so that's easily millions of dollars over their first term — people think they can see a better use of this money, clearly a better use of this money. And so, Mr. Speaker, we have some real concerns. We have some real concerns about this, Mr. Speaker.

We have seen this before where the government has . . . You know, and they take a lot of pride. They say that they keep their promises. But that's one thing. But then when they don't say anything, and then people vote for . . . I mean this happens. Sometimes you vote for a party, and then all of a sudden they start to do other things that you never thought would happen, you never thought would happen. Because I think most voters use, as a rule of thumb, common sense. They use common sense as a way to measure, who should we vote for? And the common sense rule is people make a list of promises, pledges, commitments to what they will keep when they are elected.

And this government has made a big deal, the Sask Party has made a big deal for many years now, and even going back prior to 2007, that they would be transparent and accountable, both transparent and accountable. And I don't know what's being transparent in this because nobody mentioned anything about three more politicians, and nobody mentioned anything about the millions of dollars it would cost. And nobody mentioned the fact that young people, younger than 18, would not be taken into account when drawing the boundaries of the new

constituencies.

And some people might say, well that's just a thing that we want to do. Well it's a little bit more ethical, more important than just a shrug of the shoulders. I think this is a change that, as my colleagues talked about, that we should have a plebiscite. Many other provinces, when they're considering this kind of change, would at least consult with the public. We know this happened in British Columbia when, just a few years ago, they were considering whether or not they should raise the number of MLAs they have. And they went through it because their population is also growing and they thought . . . And they have many more constituents than we do per riding. They thought they should ask that question. But clearly the answer resoundingly was no, we think that we should keep it the same. So the very least BC did was they had a consultation process.

There is nothing here about a consultation process. There's no choice going to be made about how many MLAs there are going to be. That will be the fact. The only thing this government or the commission that will go out will be consulting about is the size of the riding, the makeup of the riding. We will know how many MLAs there will be when this Bill is passed. And I think that's very unfortunate.

[15:15]

Now I've said that this seems to be the track record for this government. You know, I think back to the last term of the government when . . . after it was elected in 2007. I just want to highlight four things that nobody had any idea were going to take place. But clearly this government had its mind set, and people were clearly surprised.

One was Station 20 West in my own riding. Right after the election in 2007, this government pulled its funding. That caught everybody by surprise, caught everybody by surprise because we all thought this was a good idea. And in fact actually my colleague from Massey Place raised the issue around HIV and how we have to deal with the social determinants. And Station 20 West was really going to be a real initiative that would address those kind of issues. But this government in its short-sightedness decided that the first, one of the first things it would do in its first budget was to cancel that project. Five or \$6 million was yanked away — 5 or 6. It might even have been 8 million. I'm not sure of the numbers right now. But I know that it turned back to the community to have to raise that money itself. And they did. And the Station 20 West is now becoming a reality.

So when this government does things like that — and it seems to be continuing that pattern of not consulting, not giving people advance warning of some of its more drastic measures — people will react; people will remember. And this is what my colleague was saying here, that when you add three MLAs, do not think this government should not be thinking that people are just going to quietly go into the good night and just forget about what government did this. They will remember that they had to make some choices when it came to what are the priorities of this government. There were choices that were made. And this government chose to have three more politicians.

But they also chose in that same year to increase drug costs to seniors by \$5. Now I think if we were to go out and ask the public and do this plebiscite and say, so what do you think are common sense choices we should have in a province that's doing as well as we are? Should we be charging seniors five more dollars per drug prescription or should we have three more politicians? I think the answer would be very, very clear. So, Mr. Speaker, I think that's one example.

And another example — and this one actually we're dealing with the ramifications this year and will be for the next several years — and that's Bill 5, the essential services Bill that has been struck down by the Court of Appeal as having severe flaws. And this government did not campaign on an essential services platform in 2007, did not say anything about that. And it was one of the first Bills that was introduced. And we're seeing now, we're dealing with the fallout of that very problematic piece of legislation.

Clearly if they had done more work in preparing that and had given some advance notice that this was going to be a significant issue and that they wanted to address it, then people would have taken a common sense approach to it and said, what can we do? What can we do? But this government was caught up in ideology that it would take on labour, and we are now paying the price for that. And I think that this mirrors, this Bill before us, Bill 36 mirrors that same kind of ideology, that it will not listen to common sense, it will not listen to what the people on the street and people in the towns are thinking about what's really, really important. So I have some real concerns about that.

Another one, and this one was really a pretty major storm in this House, was *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act* where once again this government did not consult, did not consult. And people, they thought it's just a common sense thing that you would take out thousands of acres out of *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*, change its kind of protection. Well people were very concerned about that. And I think that it just shows, it just shows, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the kind of government that when these folks get elected . . . And they were elected to form government, and we completely acknowledge that, but we expect the kind of leadership that will listen to all people, do some consultations beforehand, and say, so what's really important?

And as I've said earlier, Mr. Speaker, if we were going to do this, if we were actually going to do these two things, the most appropriate way to have done this would have been about two years ago, before the last election, and it could have been, it could have even been done in a bipartisan nature to have a bit of a committee to go out and say, our population's growing. Because we've known the population's been growing now for about five years. And we could make a chart and do some predictions. And there's no reason to doubt that the population will drop. And ask the public and say, what do you think? Do you want more people sitting in this House? Do you think that access to your MLA is hampered by the number of MLAs, or is there some other way to make sure you can contact your MLA?

That would have been the time to do it, two years ago. And then, I think, we would have all been informed by the response from the public. And we could have also talked to young people

to say, so what do you think about the idea of not counting young people? What do you think about that? That's a change; that's a shift. We should be aware of it. Is it a right thing or a wrong thing? And we could put forward the arguments and say, so what should we do? What should we do?

And I really think the public has a right to be heard in this. The public has a right to be heard. And I think everyone has a right to be heard, not only those who actually have the ability to vote but those who get services from their MLAs. Because it's kind of an odd thing here: on one hand, we're arguing about access to MLAs. That's why we want three more MLAs. But then we're then saying, but only those who vote count. Only those who vote count.

And I know, I don't think I'm alone in this, but I represent everyone in my riding, and I serve everyone. And I think, I would actually think most members if not all the members in the House have the same value that I do, that we represent and we work for everyone in our riding. And in fact we all, actually many, we actually work for each other too. When we have constituents come into my riding who don't live in my riding, I let them know who their MLA is. And I say, you might want to talk to them and develop a bit of a relationship with them because, in the long term, this is who your MLA is. And we follow up to make sure we let the MLA know that this is happening.

I think this is very important. This is critically important. And I think that this government has missed the mark on this Bill. It should have been something done two or three years ago, laying the groundwork for finding out what does the public, what does the Saskatchewan public want. They should be the ones making the choice on this because this is a fundamental change.

And if we get into this habit of adding an MLA every time our population goes up by 20 or 25,000 . . . And the odd thing again though, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is when we add them by that number, we haven't yet figured out how many of that 20 or 25,000 are young people who are not voters. We don't know that yet because we haven't seen the census with that specific demographic information. I understand it comes out in May, and so it should be out fairly soon. We know what the population is, but I don't know if we know exactly what the demographics are.

So I really think that this Act, I would have to say I agree with my colleague from Athabasca yet again. I would shred it, and I would recycle it. I wouldn't throw it in the trash, but I would make sure that . . . This is not something that we would be proud of in the years ahead to come because it's setting a dangerous precedent in terms of not consulting with people. And we have done that, you know, and it's been a major thing.

I think about Premier Romanow in the early '90s in response to some of the gerrymandering that were going on in the '80s and some of the court battles that happened. In fact there was quite a strong public consultation about where do we go, where do we go? And in fact Mr. Romanow at that time had to reduce the number of MLAs significantly because people felt strongly, people felt strongly that they would prefer to have services and not have more MLAs. It just wasn't that critical, that there were ways of connecting with your constituents.

So, Mr. Speaker, you know, as we've gone on, and I've had the opportunity to quote some of the academics in this area who have talked about the issues around the challenges of when you have . . . When you don't count, when you eliminate those who are 17 and younger from the formula, the impact on communities can be quite profound. But when you take older communities, in a sense their votes become more meaningful, the numbers are more solid. And when you take a younger community — and a community is younger because they have more young people, those younger than 18 — it can have quite an effect. It can in fact skew the results that you may think everything's fair and there's a sense of equity, but in reality it's not. In fact the results can be quite skewed.

And I think in many ways the term gerrymandering comes to mind. Because I think, in effect, you have some questions that need to be addressed in terms of we all have services. We all have needs. And a senior's needs are very different than a young mother's needs who has two or three or four children. Unfortunately those children are not taken into account. Some may argue, well they shouldn't be taken into account. But the fact is that they will indeed someday play a major role in our society, and hopefully they feel engaged.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that we do an awful lot to encourage young people and we often hope that young people will be involved and feel connected and engaged in the democratic process. And I worry an awful lot that this signal to young people that they're not important, that they simply don't count is the wrong message that we are sending. And I don't think anybody wants to be sending a message that we have to explain, well you don't count here, but we really do think you're important.

No, I think when they did count, and there's no reason to not count them, no good reason, then we should keep counting them. It's very important.

And as I said, we often have school groups come to the legislature here. And they'll be in the galleries and we will get up and we will say wonderful things about them, and then we will say, welcome to your legislature. But in fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I've said earlier, that we will all be hypocrites if we are . . . say that. Because it's not their legislature. They're not part of the formula that figured out how did we come to be in this Chamber? Today they were part of that formula. So today it is a fair thing to say, but in the future, once this Bill's passed, and after the next election, they will not be in the same category because they just were not taken into account.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's a couple of editorials that I think are important that we put into the record because I know many people will be looking at this. And it will be kind of after the fact, but I do hope that there is still time. And we've seen how this government has responded to some of these past Bills. Bill 5, you know, we've seen the Premier and the Minister of Labour acknowledge that, the fact that they were incorrect and that they should've rethought these, and we're back to the drawing board on this. So why don't we do the same thing now with this Bill before we go too far?

We saw that with the super ID Bill that the minister, the then minister of SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance], had

presented a few years ago, withdrew it because of some of the concerns that the Privacy Commissioner had. A very wise move because it was going to be problematic. We see now that this was going to be problematic. And we would really recommend the government do that.

But I want to read into the record parts of these editorials because I think that they're instructive for us all to be thinking about. And I want them to be part of the record because as we will be looking back to this time and saying, why did, why did this Chamber allow three more MLAs, three more politicians at the cost that they will incur, and what kind of choices were made in the spring of 2012?

[15:30]

This one, the first one is from March 13th, 2012, published in the *Leader-Post*. And it's an editorial, a column by Murray Mandryk and the headline is "Do we really need three more MLAs?" And so I want to quote:

So when's the last time you've had to travel to your MLA's office to deal with an issue? "Never," say the vast majority of you? And why would I even ask such a silly question?

Well, Premier Brad Wall is now saying we need to increase the legislative assembly by three seats, to 61, (including one more specifically in rural Saskatchewan). The premier argues that the province's overall population of 1.05 . . . and the physical growth of some rural ridings makes it necessary to address the long drives some constituents have to make to see their MLAs.

No, as a matter of fact, I haven't met anyone outside the premier's inner circle who thinks adding more MLAs is a good idea. And, no, I have no idea why he didn't mention all this in the November election. But that's a good question, too.

Well, I'll continue:

What's that you say? You've never had a need to be in an MLA's constituency office in your life and can't imagine any business you would have that you couldn't conduct through electronic communication in today's modern world? Yes, as far as I know, all our MLAs carry cellphones and can operate a fax, telephone or e-mail. And even if they can't, they all have constituency assistants who can. You can even contact some of them through their Twitter accounts.

So there you go. We're talking about a modern world. We're talking about a modern world. And I think this is a very important thing. So I want to continue again:

So why - even in the inconceivable event that you would need access to your local MLA - is there any reason to think they are much busier now than they used to be, you ask? Well, if they are busier, it's not likely busier working at government business. In fact, the Saskatchewan legislature actually sits fewer days than it did 20 or 25 years ago, so there's arguably less committee work for

them than back in the late 1980s or early 1990s when the assembly swelled to 64, then 66 seats (before the Roy Romanow government, post-Grant Devine, had the good sense to scale it back).

Come to think of it, there are even more backbenchers with time on their hands because all Saskatchewan MLAs are paid as if this is a full-time job and there are more backbenchers because cabinets are smaller.

Now there's a couple of points in there that I think are very important. Yes, we are full-time. This is what we do for a living. It's our business, our business to make sure we connect with our constituents in whatever way we can. It's not like any of us are part-time because we are paid a very good full-time wage. And I think this is important. So I think that the columnist makes a very good point.

And the other point that he makes, and I don't think a lot of people in the public know this, but this is why we go back to our constituencies on Fridays — to work. We've set up the committees now so they work back-to-back. You and I have both started in the day when there was only one committee at a time, the Committee of the Whole. We went through the estimates all in this Chamber and we would sit long hours and we would have some pretty long days and we would go into July to get the budget passed. But we have smartened up an awful lot since then because we know there's a lot of value getting back to our constituencies on Friday and getting out of here earlier on Thursday because we start earlier in the day. And that was because of good planning from the MLAs here, good basic common sense planning about how can we do the job that's needed here, the proper oversight, the discussion around budget, Throne Speech, Bills. How can we do that in a way that allows us to do the good work here but also make sure we get back in our constituency to do our work on Fridays, Saturdays, and even Sundays sometimes?

You know, now we have a bigger time span to be back there and then to be back here for Monday to get back to work. So things have changed over the last . . . even in my time here. In the 10 or so years that I've been here, we've become much more efficient, much more effective. How can we make our job easier but more effective? And so I think this is important.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to go on and just read the last couple of paragraphs here because I think this is a well-written column, and I quote:

What's that? You say the need for MLAs to be closer to their constituents is a particularly ridiculous argument because your MLA lives in Regina anyway? Well, I can't argue with you there.

Now many of us spend time in Regina but I think that most of us live in our ridings or close to them.

What's that you say? You also can't figure out why they are adding five per cent more Saskatchewan MLAs at time of "austerity" and when they've already set targets to reduce the overall civil service size by 16 per cent in four years through attrition. Yes, you're right, this wouldn't seem to make much sense given that you are far more

likely to need the services of a government employee than that of an MLA. No, MLAs haven't taken on any additional roles as service providers that justify this need.

What's that? You're concerned the budget might be cutting money for your local RCMP detachment or your school while the government is adding MLAs? No, I really don't know why this government thinks more MLAs are more important than more cops.

End of quote, end of column. So I think again I think he adds that final argument that we think is so right on. We're making choices here. We're making choices. This choice is going to cost us millions of dollars. When we add these three MLAs, it's going to represent a choice of do we want to have more police, do we want to have a better drug plan for seniors, do we want to have a film tax credit, all of those things. And so this has clearly been a choice, clearly has been a choice. And I think a poor choice has been made. I think a poor choice, and I can tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I know many, many people agree that this has been a very, very poor choice.

We hope that the government takes some time over the next few weeks because the talk is we've got a few weeks left in session. So we would hope in the next week or two that we would see some signals from the government that they are actually going to withdraw the Bill. It's very important, parts of the Bill . . . I mean it's not a long Bill anyway, so I would just recommend that they — well actually — probably would be just as well to throw out the Bill and put it through the shredder. I think that's the best thing to do.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I said, there were a couple of editorials that were printed, and I think I want to read into record the one from the *Star Phoenix* from the day before, March 12th. The editorial board put these thoughts out for the readers in Saskatoon. And the headline is "Poor rationale for more seats." And I quote:

The Saskatchewan Party's plan to increase the number of MLAs suggests this motive isn't to improve representation as much as it's to gain some [political] partisan political advantage.

Saskatchewan already easily boasts the fewest average constituents per riding among the western provinces and Ontario, so the Saskatchewan Party's plan to add three more seats in time for the next election makes little sense. Padding the legislature by adding three [more] MLAs at a cost of . . . \$225,000 each per year flies in the face of the government's preaching about fiscal restraint, and even its decision to trim the civil service by four per cent a year.

Now it is interesting because this government while they've been trimming 4 per cent per year for four years . . . and we've talked about the lean process, and we had a good discussion last night in estimates. But the government has not yet done that within its own Executive Council. And they don't seem in any mood to give up any of its employees that helps them do the work. They're just saying that no, they need them, but yet others will just have to get by. Now I will continue in the quote here:

Given its low numbers of constituents per MLA, Saskatchewan should be the envy of comparable provinces that have large geographic areas, growing cities, and declining rural populations.

Saskatchewan has an average of 17,817 voters per riding, compared to 21,198 in neighbouring Manitoba. The difference is even greater when compared to Alberta, with 43,919 voters per riding, [and] British Columbia with 51,765, and Ontario, which has 120,110 voters per riding on average.

So again, are we way out there in terms of too many constituents per riding? Not at all. In fact we're at the very low end, quite close, much closer to the Maritime provinces. But the larger provinces in the West and Ontario, we don't have any issues at all in terms of the number of constituents. We are very fortunate, and I think we can continue to be that way even with the population growth that we're seeing.

I want to continue to read the last couple of paragraphs and I quote:

Premier Brad Wall's plan to base future ridings on number of voters rather than total population also warrants some serious thought. With four years to go to the next election, it makes little sense to count only those who already are 18 when those who are close to age 14 will be eligible to vote when the writ is dropped. Seats also could be shifted away from areas with a high First Nations population that consists mostly of young people.

These substantial changes being proposed just months into a new mandate carry a whiff of gerrymandering by a political party that didn't make a campaign issue of the need for better representation.

So I have to say, a lot of these comments I have some concerns about, and it's not just us. It's people in the media, people who are thinking about this.

Now we have not seen any flood of letters saying whoa, you know, this is a great idea. Let this one go through. This has got to go through quickly. People, on the other hand, say I can't believe this. Where did this come from? This is not something we've heard of before. And we have to say, no, we didn't hear about this either.

We knew, as I said earlier, that there would be a Boundaries Commission. There is a census. That happens every 10 years. But this three more politicians that will end up costing millions of dollars, when we've made some choices that people have some real concerns . . . and we saw the galleries full of people last week around the film tax credit. And we heard questions about the Arts Board. We heard questions today about the WDM, and what does that mean? And you know, people have some serious concerns about some of the priorities, seniors' medication. So I have some real concerns, and I think this is very, very important.

And as I said, you know, for a Bill that's so short, that is so thin, one page, it will certainly carry a lot of punch in terms of the future years of what this province may look like in terms of

democracy and the fact that we've added three MLAs without any consultation, any campaigning, anything for the public at large to say, yes, that's a good idea. And my colleague from Athabasca, a very good idea about a plebiscite — I think that would be a very interesting idea that this government should do.

But unfortunately, it's a little too late. This should have been done about two years ago when we had some inkling this was going to be coming down the line because we knew the census was going to happen. We knew the population was growing. This is what you'd call good planning, good planning. And we could have said, we could have said, and it could have been a committee from the legislature saying, so what should we do in Saskatchewan? We know the population is growing. What do you think? We saw that happen in BC, and the results were clear. Yes, we're growing, but we'd prefer to see the money spent on services. We know the MLAs can think about how can we do this more effectively.

I mean the irony is, and we heard this in the committee meetings last night, where . . . You know, and it would be something interesting to think about, you know. The minister from Municipal Affairs went on talking about how some of the red tape or that they'd really cut through some of the red tape and reduced some of the times and some of their work from 80 days down to 30 days and improving some of the subdivision work that they have to do. And we thought well that's great. So how did you do that? Well they just took another look at how they did.

[15:45]

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's what we did. We did that in terms of our committee work now, when we work back to back and we handle the estimates that way. And we have a published calendar so that we know when we're going to be out of the Chamber and when we can be back in our constituencies. That published calendar is on the legislative website, and so we know, we know very well what our timelines can be. And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it just speaks volumes that we can plan, we can figure out how we can be much better MLAs. And that can be on both sides of the House.

This isn't a partisan thing about how do you connect with your constituents. We all try to do the very best, and we work on that. And we work on that through our CPA [Commonwealth Parliamentary Association], our Canadian parliamentary association, in terms of how do we represent our constituents the very best ways that we can. That's not about a partisan interest. It's about just doing our job as well as we can. We think we're hired to do that. We think we're paid as full-time employees, that we should be able to make the time to do our job well.

And I recognize that some of the ridings are huge. I represent one that's very dense, but I have my own challenges. We have challenges in the very small ridings. We have challenges in the big ridings too. And so I think that doing this kind of thing is wrong-headed.

And I think that when we see the choices of not counting the 17 and younger is that . . . And I think *The StarPhoenix* made a very good point, that you're actually even discounting some of

the people who will actually be voting. You know, here you're making the case, the government's making the case they want to count only the voters. But here you have a group that will be voting. And you probably should even go down to the 10-year-olds because by the second election the 10-year-olds will be voting.

So you know it just doesn't make any sense. It just doesn't make any sense. So you're saying only those who vote in the past election, in the past election, count. But the future election, we're talking about the older voters. I mean, like you're discounting people that shouldn't be discounted at all. And it doesn't make a lot of sense, and I think this is something that's clearly ideologically driven.

You know it'll be very interesting to see the report from the Boundaries Commission when it comes out — and that'll be in a few short months — and the impact of this. I will be very interested in seeing. And we know that some ridings are very hard to enumerate. Mine happens to be one that is hard to enumerate. It was hard to get people identified for the vote. In fact the Chief Electoral Officer had to have other special people come in to help enumerate my riding just because some of the people live in difficult circumstances. Many don't have ID, and so they have their own unique challenges. They may not be far away from each other, but they're very hard to get to in a different way, you know. They don't have phones, and they have doors that aren't very welcoming. And yet that's a different kind of challenge that I face in my riding. Unfortunately, in many ways there, it's almost too dense for some people.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that this Bill is . . . Well, we'll be voting against it. That's absolutely for sure. But we think, we would hope that we would never get to that point, that in fact that we will be having people . . . Having the government withdraw it would be actually the very best thing that we could do. And just let the other Bill go forward in terms of setting up a commission, and we'll be back to how people expect it to be done in Saskatchewan like it's being done in the vast majority of Canada.

So, Mr. Speaker, I know that other members have things to say and I'll be taking my seat in a minute. But I do want to say that again the three more politicians issue, I have really serious concerns about. And the fact that we have people 17 and younger discounted, I have a problem with.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise again to speak to Bill No. 36, the last Bill of the legislative agenda of this Assembly, and certainly the first one on the schedule every day these days. So I'm pleased to rise to speak to it.

This Act is an Act to amend an Act from 1993 called *The Constituency Boundaries Act*. And that particular Bill from 1993 established the division of Saskatchewan into constituencies for election of members of the Legislative Assembly. So when this Act came in — the original Act came in in 1993 — it established a number of rules and procedures



relating to constituency boundaries.

First of all, the first thing the Act did was to establish the commission itself. So it established the Constituency Boundaries Commission, and they were to start dealing with the census taken in 1991 and then each census taken every tenth year after 1991. So the original Bill has survived two censuses, and it's now coming into its third. And this is the first change to the Act since the 1993 Act was established. And the purpose of the commission was to consider and report on readjustments of the representation of population in Saskatchewan in the Legislative Assembly, to be made based on a census. So that was the direction to the commission at that time.

There's various rules in section 4 of that Act dealing with the timing of the establishment of the commission. So the Clerk of the Executive Council would get a copy of the census showing the total population as soon as possible. And that's what's happening now, in 2012. And they also have to establish a commission within 30 days of receiving the notice, or the Lieutenant Governor in Council is required to establish the commission. In this case, we've had an extension already from the Lieutenant Governor in Council to establish the commission. No reason was given by Executive Council, although I'm sure there were good reasons for doing that, they just haven't been shared with the rest of us. So we know that it's already been extended 30 days under the provisions of this Act.

And the Clerk of the Executive Council has to also get the copy of the part of the census showing the total population from the Chief Statistician of Canada as soon as practicable. And then the Clerk is to establish the commission within 30 days. So who is on the commission? That's an important part of this Bill. And what it says is it consists of a chairperson and two residents of Saskatchewan. So the law requires that the Lieutenant Governor in Council shall appoint as the Chair, there's three choices here: either a Judge of the Court of Appeal who would be nominated by the Chief Justice of Saskatchewan, or a Judge of Her Majesty's Court of Queen's Bench for Saskatchewan nominated by the Chief Justice after a consultation, or the third one is a resident of Saskatchewan nominated by the Chief Justice of Saskatchewan.

So in the original Bill that established the boundary, constituency boundaries, there was direction there for establishing who was on the actual committee itself. And then following that the Chief Justice would make a nomination pursuant to that subsection only when requested to do so by the Clerk of the Executive Council. So it appears that process is unfolding right now for this particular census.

And then how do you choose the other two members of the commission? What's required by law is that the Lieutenant Governor in Council has to consult with the leaders of the Opposition and any recognized members of the Legislative Assembly and have to appoint members that are either residents of Saskatchewan, and they can't be ineligible pursuant to a subsequent clause. They're allowed to produce or appoint a deputy chairperson. And then there's rules on vacancy if any member of the commission is not able to act for any reason.

Who's ineligible? Well there are three groups of people that are

ineligible. First of all, all of us. None of us can be appointed to the commission — no member of the Assembly, no member of the House of Commons, and no member of the Senate. So that excludes a number of people from appointment, which makes sense.

There's provisions for allowances. And then how the commission will function is established in the next part of the 1993 constituency boundaries Act. And there the Clerk has to give them a copy of the census, so that's the first thing they are given. And then once they get it, they have to prepare an interim report and a final report with the recommendations respecting constituency boundaries. So that's the basic process.

In this particular iteration of the Bill, it's clear that the commission has to divide the area of Saskatchewan north of the dividing line into two constituencies. So that was established by the Bill. And then the bottom was to be divided into 56 constituencies. And then in their final report they would just recommend boundary descriptions for each constituency and the proposed name. So they actually get to pick the names of the constituencies as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in case you were wondering how constituencies were named.

The quotient that exists in the current Bill reads like this. So it's the constituency population quotient. You'll see that CPQ [constituency population quotient] referred to in a lot of these discussions. So the quotient that they would establish is TP, which is total population, minus NP, the northern population, and then it's divided by 56. So they take out the northern population because that's established in other areas of the Bill and then the rest is divided into 56. Pretty straightforward, pretty clear. So that's how they determine the quotient of each constituency.

Then there's a number of rules for fixing the boundaries found following that. And they have to ensure that the population is as nearly as possible equal to the constituency population quotient. So it's a total population — no exclusion of anyone whether they're eligible to vote or not eligible to vote either by virtue of citizenship or age. So that's pretty clear that in this Bill it was intended that everyone who was living in the province was eligible to be counted as far as the establishment of the constituency boundaries.

Some departures from the formula are allowed in this Bill. And it is indicated the reasons that they could deviate from the quotient was if there were special geographic considerations including sparsity, density, or relative rates of growth of population in varying regions. So that's already in the Bill in terms of the growth of population, so there is no need to make any changes there. And then accessibility to the regions mentioned in subclause (i), so those are those sparse regions or the shape of the regions.

They also allow for deviations on a special community of interests or diversity of interests of persons residing in regions south of the dividing line . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Some interesting noises coming from over on the other side there, Mr. Speaker.

The commission should ensure that the population of each constituency south of the dividing line, however, would remain

within 5 per cent of the CPQ or the constituency population quotient.

So it goes on with a number of clauses, and there's actually an ability for hearings if people are interested in making representations to the commission. And then the interim report has to be prepared within three months after the date of the commission is being established. So we will know within three months what the interim report would look like, and then following that there could be further hearings after the interim report. They will provide copies of the report for public inspection after those hearings, and then finally we get the final report within six months after the date of establishment of the commission.

So we will know by the end of this calendar year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, how these new boundaries will look. And they will take the CPQ and do their recommendations, have their hearings, and then the final report would be adopted by the Legislative Assembly once it's ready and ready to go.

So the new Bill or the Act to amend the Bill, Bill 36 — again last on the legislative agenda for this session, but first in the hearts of the government — it shows up every day first thing on the list. It's a simple Bill. There's only eight clauses, and the thrust of it is found in clause, basically, clause 6 and I guess clause 3. So I'll speak to clause 3 first and that's of this Bill.

What the clause 3 is going to do is amend the definition found in the original Act. In the original Act, the definition was population. And back in 1991, population meant "... total population of Saskatchewan as determined pursuant to the census that a commission is established to consider." So that's it. Total population — that's the way we've doing it for 20 years. And now that is being changed by adding a clause that says:

... **after** "total population of Saskatchewan" [it says] ...  
"that is 18 years of age or older"

So here's the wedge, Mr. Deputy Speaker, here's the somewhat absurd change that I think is being proposed for this Bill, and it's one that I think is kind of disturbing on a number of levels.

I have two sons. And my oldest is 18, and he voted for the first time in this election and was very excited about it. Now of course his mother was running, so that was kind of exciting too I think, but overall he's quite engaged. He's very socially conscious. He's very concerned about issues facing the world today. He's very concerned about environmental issues, and he's very curious about how things work and how the world operates. And he asks a lot of questions, a lot of questions about how things go. And it was very important for him to be able to cast his ballot, in fact he even worked for the electoral officer and did when they actually signed ... [inaudible interjection] ... enumerate, thanks to my colleague. He was an enumerator, so he got a really good sense of how elections work. And I think he sees it's not a perfect world, in his view anyways, but it was an exciting and engaging process for him. And I'm really glad that him and his friends, they helped me put up signs, and they were really engaged in the election this year provincially. And even federally now he was really interested in the results of our party's recent leadership convention in Toronto, and he

wanted to talk about that.

[16:00]

I have a 14-year-old who will be able to vote in the next provincial and federal election. He'll be old enough. And what this Bill will do if, well if he wasn't old enough, if he was 13, he wouldn't be able to vote and he would be counted out. If it comes in right now though, sorry, in the calculation of electoral boundaries, he will be excluded. If this definition is changed to add 18 years of age or older after the total population of Saskatchewan in the definition in the original Bill, my son who will be able to vote will not be counted. And there's something wrong with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I just think we're sending the wrong message to our youth. And we know we need them to be engaged in democracy and that voter interest is declining every year. That's of concern to everybody here, and I think also in the House of Commons, that if we don't have an engaged populace who are articulate and educated about the electoral process and the rules of democracy and how our House operates, how the House of Commons operates, why it is we live in a democratic country, what the essence of federalism is, how our constitution works, all those things that are critical to an understanding of what we do here and why we're here.

And if we're telling young people that there's no point getting engaged because even though you're going to vote in the next election, if you're 14 years or older, you're not going to be counted in the boundaries, it sends a really mixed message to those youth who are just starting to become politically aware and active. And I think that's a wrong message to send, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But it goes further than that. I mean this is insidious in a number of ways. And I think many of my colleagues have commented on this too. But there's demographics involved here and what is the true goal of this change in definition of population because there's a number of impacts it will have. And first of all, if you have a population area where there aren't a lot of people under 18, it actually gives them a better representation. It's not total population anymore. It is people that don't have the right to vote. If they're not citizens, they're counted. And again that's a bad message to be sending to children if we can say people who are not even citizens of Canada are counted in the calculation, but we're not counting our own children. There's something really ... A message there that just doesn't sit well with me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I think it's something to be gravely concerned about.

So we have typically, I think some of the numbers show that the number of children that this is excluding, based on the previous census is the 2006 census, shows that there was 233,000 people in Saskatchewan under the age of 18, or if you want to calculate it in percentage, it's 24.2 per cent of the population. So what is the goal to exclude 24.2 per cent of the population from the calculation when we're forming electoral boundaries?

Now the government has said that they've got good reasons for doing that and it has to do with ... Let's see, I know one of our political commentators has indicated what the Premier is looking for. And he says that the Premier is saying, we need to

increase the Legislative Assembly by three seats for population reasons. And then the argument about the younger children is, he says, that by eliminating those under 18 from the formula, the commentator said it "... might be advantageous to preserving Sask Party rural ridings (with fewer children) at the expense of the more-inclined-to-vote NDP urban seats (with more children)."

So that's one political commentator's take on that. And there's other comments as well that we've received from the press. It says the Premier's:

... plan to base future ridings on number of voters rather than total population also warrants some serious thought. With four years to go to the next election, it makes little sense to count only those who already are 18 when those who are close to age 14 will be eligible to vote [which is what I talked about earlier, and] when the ... Seats could also be shifted away from areas with a high First Nations population that consists mostly of young people.

And again, that's borne out in the numbers, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because from the 2006 census, we see that the Aboriginal population in Saskatchewan was 141,000. That's 14.9 or 15 per cent of our total population was Aboriginal, and of that group, over, about between 50 and 60,000 were under the age of 18. We have the age of 15. There were 50,000 under the age of age 15 and 66,000 under the age of 20. So I'm not sure where the age of 18 cut-off is for that, but if you do a quick math, that's almost half. It's probably like 40 per cent of the Aboriginal population is under 18. So it sends an even stronger message to any of the First Nations or Métis people that are living in Saskatchewan, interested in electoral reform, interested in democracy, interested in participating in the electoral process, and they are being told that they don't count.

And our colleagues have said, when classes come here to the legislature to see what's going on and learn about their government and learn about democracy and learn about the process by which we arrive here and how laws are made and how the parliamentary system works, and then they're being told, but, you know, when we create boundaries for constituencies so that your representatives can represent, that you're not counted. I just totally think it sends the wrong message and it's something that I am sure that members opposite are concerned about as well.

They have given some justifications for this reason and part of it, they're saying, is some members in rural ridings have to drive ... constituents have to drive a long way to get to their MLA. I just wonder how that applies in the North, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because surely if that was the driving reason for the changes to this Bill, this government would have introduced changes to the North as well because certainly I think everyone would agree that the most difficult place to get to in terms of constituency offices would have to be the two northern constituencies.

So if what the Sask Party is saying is true, what this government is saying is true is that they want to have more access for rural constituents, then they are definitely leaving the North out and they forgot to include that in this Bill. So they may want to reconsider that as well. If they're going to properly

deal with the issue of distance to constituent offices, then I think the northern formula, we might need a few more constituencies in the North as well if that's the true concern of this government.

That's the second part I'm going to talk about now, is the changes to the quotient. So currently, as I indicated, the constituency population quotient is a simple total population count. And now we're eliminating those that are younger than 18 years old. And I don't know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is something that may have serious repercussions for our electoral reform and for engaging young people in the future. So on the young people side, on the elimination of children and youth that are under the age of 18, I think that's not a well-formed public policy and it certainly shouldn't be part of this legislation.

And then there's the second change that we've been talking about, which is in the proposed clause 5 of the Bill, which suggests that clause 12(2)(b) of *The Constituency Boundaries Act, 1993* be amended by striking out the number 56 and substituting 59. So this is the clause where the government is suggesting that we need three more politicians to effectively govern this province. And many of my colleagues have commented on this, as certainly *the fifth estate* has as well, and there's a lot of concerns about that proposal. Particularly first off, as indicated by my other colleagues, is that it wasn't part of the election campaign. The people of Saskatchewan never got an opportunity to vote on this. They weren't informed of the changes. There was no consultation. There was no discussion. It just showed up at the end of the first session in December as Bill No. 36, as I say, the last Bill to show up on the legislative agenda. If it was that important for the Sask Party, they may have wanted to include it in the election and talk to people about it and get some feedback and see if people really wanted this. And then secondly, it might have shown up a little early on the legislative agenda, but it showed up as 36 and now it's number one in their hearts. So we're commenting on it today.

The change from 50, well 56 to 59, I'd like to just talk a little bit about what the numbers, what those numbers will look like. So we have some statistics here about the average size of ridings. And again one has to really question the logic here when other provinces haven't gone this direction at all.

Currently Saskatchewan has an average of about 18,000 voters per riding. So you've got 18,000 voters per riding here. I haven't done the math to figure out how much it will actually drop when we add three more. But if, you know, we can easily do the math and we could see what that turns out. I know it will drop. I mean obviously that's the math. The number will drop from average of 18,000 to a lower number, depending of course on how the boundaries are structured. But we know the directions to the commission are that the quotient shouldn't vary more than 5 per cent from the average. So it's going to definitely drop. Let's say it drops 2,000 per riding. So we're down to 15,000 instead of what other provinces have.

So if this is so urgent and necessary, we have to look at our neighbours. We often look to our neighbours and certainly this government often looks to our neighbours for inspiration when making policy decisions. So let's look to our neighbours. Right now in Manitoba, the average is about 21,000. So we'll be looking at least 6,000 less voters per riding than Manitoba,

which has a large rural population as well and a large northern population. So obviously that was considered when this Bill came into being.

The next difference we have . . . And our neighbour to the west is Alberta. And in Alberta the numbers are quite a bit higher. They have about 44,000 voters per riding. So we will have 30,000 less voters per riding than Alberta. And it makes you wonder how Alberta's managing then if the worry and the main concern that this government seems to have is the distance for voters to get to the MLA's office. With 44,000 per riding in Alberta, I don't know that they have a whole lot more seats. I don't know the number of seats that they have, but obviously the number of voters per riding is not of concern in that way as much as it is for this government.

Then well okay, so we now have about 30,000 more in Alberta. Let's look at British Columbia. British Columbia's average number of voters per riding is 51,000 voters. So if we drop down to 15 or lower, we're now looking at — you can do the math — 35,000 more voters per riding in British Columbia. Okay, let's take one more look. What about Ontario? In Ontario, there's 120,000 voters per riding on average. So I don't know about the size of the ridings in Ontario, but it's a vast province, a huge province, and I assume there's a lot of rural ridings as well there. But for whatever reason, the numbers will not add up, and they certainly don't seem to be any justification for adding three more seats.

I know that the members opposite have often commented on the fact that there's more people living in Saskatchewan. Even with the increase in population that we've seen since the last census, we will nowhere at all get close to the averages of those other provinces that I mentioned, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So it really is beyond me why the increase in population is driving this. I think one thing that we might want to look at a little bit too, and this is something that's commonly used in electoral boundary creation, and it's a concept called gerrymandering. And it's funny because I think I was in maybe grade 7 or 8, many, many, many, many years ago, and it was a social studies report, and I remember doing a report on gerrymandering. And in fact the whole notion of the word gerrymander, which I'll talk about in a minute, is the idea of the salamander shape that this particular electoral reform created. And I remember drawing that salamander in my report, and it had a little map of what had happened. But it happened in the United States, and that's where the name came along.

So we describe gerrymandering as a practice that attempts to establish a political advantage for a particular party or group by manipulating geographic boundaries to create partisan or incumbent protected districts. And the resulting district is then known as a gerrymander, although the word can be referred to as the process as well.

And gerrymandering can be used to get electoral results that are desired for a particular party or it can be used to help or hinder a particular demographic. So those are the types of things where gerrymandering has been used. And when it's used to allege that a given party is gaining disproportionate power, the term has very negative connotations, Mr. Deputy Speaker. However, it can also be used for some purposes that are positive. And

they've used that in the United States to create the voting district boundaries that produce the majority of constituents representative of, say, African-American or other racial minorities. So it's been used in the United States for what has been perceived as a positive use.

So this is the etymology of the word though, and I find it very interesting. The word gerrymander was used for the first time in *The Boston Gazette* on March 26th, 1812. And it was used then to, the word was created in reaction to a redrawing of the Massachusetts state senate election districts under the governor, Elbridge Gerry. So that's where the gerry part came from the word. He signed a Bill in 1812 that redistributed Massachusetts to benefit his Democratic-Republican Party. And when the map was created, one of the contorted districts in the Boston area was said to resemble the shape of a salamander.

[16:15]

So the exact author of the term, gerrymander, may never be definitively established. It is widely believed by historians that the newspaper editors instigated the word, but there's no historical record that gives definitive evidence as to who created the word for the first time. So certainly that's the establishment of that particular term.

And if you look at the two aims of gerrymandering in the electoral boundary reform process, are to maximize the effect of supporters' votes and to minimize the effect of the opponents' votes.

The first strategy they talk about is packing, where they concentrate as many voters of one type into a single electoral district to reduce their influence in other districts. So for example, if you don't count children and children are a large proportion of the people living in those particular districts, then it could be considered packing in terms of how this political term has evolved. And so that can be done, as I said earlier, to get representation for a community of common interest, rather than diluted over several districts to a point of ineffectiveness.

But there is a second strategy and it's called cracking, so it's the opposite of packing. And in this way, the gerrymandering would involve spreading out voters of a particular type among many districts in order to deny them a sufficiently large voting block in any particular district. And I know there's some sentiment about the federal boundaries in Saskatchewan where that's indeed what has happened, and it may be seen as an effort to use the cracking version of gerrymandering.

The strategies are typically combined, creating a few forfeit seats for packed voters of one type in order to get even greater representation for voters of another type. So the article . . . This is from Wikipedia, and the article says:

Gerrymandering is effective because of the wasted vote effect. By packing opposition voters into districts they will already win (increasing excess votes for winners) and by cracking the remainder among districts where they are moved into the minority (increasing votes for eventual losers), the number of wasted votes among the opposition can be maximized.

So this is a very well-recognized term. It's a well-recognized practice, and it's well decried, obviously, by opposition parties wherever it's being utilized. And this is one area I think that we need to look at closely here. What is the true intent of this Bill? If it's to indeed bring voters closer to their constituency office, then we would have seen significant changes in the North. We would have seen a number more of constituencies created in order to make it accessible to the constituency office. So it doesn't appear to me that the closeness to the constituency office is really driving this Bill because otherwise the northern boundaries would have been changed substantially.

The idea that the population is growing and that we just need more politicians because we have more people doesn't add up. Because in this case we have our neighbours to our east — our neighbours two provinces to the east, Manitoba and Ontario — our neighbours to the west, both in British Columbia and Manitoba, have not reacted in the same way to the increasing population numbers. So it simply doesn't wash on that level either, Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And so in this case, one is only left with the notion that the true intent of this Bill, as expressed by the way it's drafted, is to provide an advantage to the government to ensure that they secure more seats. And that's the only conclusion I can come to, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And it's sad to see that this is being utilized in this way by our government, especially, especially when no one was informed of this. There's been no consultation. There's been no inkling of it in the election. Our members opposite often say that, you know, the public chose this on November 7th. They didn't choose this. They weren't even asked. It wasn't part of the platform. It wasn't discussed. And no one, when I went door knocking, certainly there wasn't a single soul that told me that what this province needs is three more politicians.

Then on top of that, you have the problems that are going to present themselves with the costs that are associated with all these offices and new politicians. And as we've said, it will be in the millions. It certainly will be. After, you know, the first four years, we'll be well into the millions, maybe 3 million by then or two and a half. And it goes on and on because as long as these new seats are there, it's going to cost money. So that's a concern as well.

And I think my previous two colleagues who spoke said that, you know, if this is something that is really seen as important and valuable, then it should be put to the people. We could easily at least do an opinion poll, if not a full referendum. But there's lots of ways to find out what the people think about this. And I would challenge the government to actually just see what people are saying about this particular Bill. You know, as I said, it's not something that people have had a chance to weigh in on. And certainly I don't think anyone, even on this side or that side, heard people saying during the election that they really thought we should get some more politicians.

Excited about population growth? Of course we are. That's something that's a good sign for our economy and our province. But it doesn't mean that we need to increase the representation of people in this legislature. There just isn't, there's no correlation between those two thoughts.

So at that point, I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think others of my colleagues are looking forward to commenting on this Bill again. And I think I will leave those comments for now. I don't have anything further I wish to say at this time, so I'll pass it on to my colleagues.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure this afternoon at 4:20 to join in on the discussion on Bill No. 36, *An Act to amend The Constituency Boundaries Act, 1993*.

The piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, as some of the speakers who have had the chance to speak today have spoken, is not an especially long piece of legislation. The actual Bill itself is just one or two pages, so it's not that long when you look at the amendment that is being proposed here by the Sask Party government. And in fact the explanatory notes are not all that long either, just two pages of explanatory notes.

But, Mr. Speaker, despite the short length of the proposed legislation, the amendment, and despite the brief explanatory notes that accompany the piece of legislation, this piece of legislation that's been proposed by members opposite is a very significant piece of legislation. And it's a piece that has a number of problems with it, as I see it, based on what members opposite are proposing, what they want to accomplish, or what they think they might want to accomplish. And, Mr. Speaker, I think there's a difference between what they actually want to accomplish in their heart of hearts, in their plans, and what their public statements have been about this piece of legislation and how there may be a bit of a disconnect between those views.

And I have to say the member from Nutana, who just spoke, I think very well explained and stated the contradiction in how the public words that we hear coming from members opposite about this piece of legislation may not exactly be what their true motives are with the piece of legislation — why they're bringing it forward, when they are, how they are, and what they are saying about it in the public domain.

Looking at Bill No. 36, Mr. Speaker, the piece of legislation here isn't too long as I said. The short title is that the Act may be cited as *The Constituency Boundaries Amendment Act, 2011*, and then it says:

*The Constituency Boundaries Act, 1993* is amended in the manner set forth in this Act.

**Clause 2(k) is amended by adding “that is 18 years of age or older” after “total population of Saskatchewan”.**

And, Mr. Speaker:

**Subsection 3(2) is amended by adding “total” before “population”.**

**Clause 12(2)(b) is amended by striking out “56” and substituting “59”.**

**Subsection 13(2) is repealed and the following substituted:**

“(2) The constituency population quotient is to be calculated in accordance with the following formula:

$$\text{CPQ} = \frac{\text{TP} - \text{NP}}{59}$$

where:

CPQ is the constituency population quotient;  
 TP is the total population; and  
 NP is the northern population”.

So I read that, Mr. Speaker, to give an indication to people at home or people who are looking at this at a later date through *Hansard* that — despite the short text, Mr. Speaker — the results of this piece of legislation are certainly greater than what may appear by the few characters that are put down on this page in front of me representing Bill No. 36, *An Act to amend The Constituency Boundaries Act*.

Mr. Speaker, as the member before me addressed, there’s two main components to this piece of legislation that’s being proposed by members opposite. The one component, Mr. Speaker, has to do with what consideration is taken for the population when determining what should be the appropriate size of a constituency when doing that calculation. To date, Mr. Speaker, the practice as of late over the last number of terms has been that the total population is taken into consideration. So this includes people under 18 years of age.

What members opposite here are proposing to do is to exclude, to leave out, to not count all of those individuals who are under 18 years of age. And the member from Nutana in her remarks spoke about the effect that that can have on young people in our province with respect to how they view our political process and with respect to how it can encourage or discourage them to get involved politically — whatever party it may be, Mr. Speaker — and take on an active role in their province.

And that’s really the goal of what we want for the youth of our province. We want to have a youth population that is engaged, that is fully informed and active in civic matters, receive a good, sound foundation of information and education through our educational system with respect to civics and with respect to one’s role in a democracy and some of the rights and responsibilities associated with that. That’s what we want, Mr. Speaker. That’s what we want for the future of this province as we think about how we want people engaged and how we want people participating in the electoral process.

What we don’t want, Mr. Speaker, is to give signals and to put up barriers that would suggest to young people that they don’t count. And I know, I know, Mr. Speaker, that’s what we all say when we talk in the Assembly. But it’s important to look at actions. And in looking at the actions here from members opposite with respect to changes in how boundary populations or constituency populations are calculated, members opposite want to leave out young people.

The best example I think, Mr. Speaker, as to why this is a . . . or a sound example as to why this is a poor approach, and it happens so often in the Assembly at the beginning of every day here in the House after there’s the procession of the Speaker

and the Clerks and the Sergeant-at-Arms and after the opening prayer is said, Mr. Speaker, which is a reminder of why we’re here and a reminder of the history and the responsibility and how we fit into the broader story of the province and, I guess, history as well. The first thing that we do after that prayer is introduction of guests, as Mr. Speaker will know very well. And this is a time when members on either side of the House have a chance to give a special hello, to give a special recognition to individuals who have come to the legislature.

And the reasons that people come to the legislature can be varied. Sometimes, Mr. Speaker, it’s someone who’s had a personal connection with the MLA, they’ve been . . . Maybe they are a constituent and they simply have an interest in politics, so they want to come the Assembly and see what’s going on. Sometimes, Mr. Speaker, it’s a group or a delegation related to the events of the day, whether that be the topics in question period or whether that be some sort of ministerial statement or some sort of announcement that the government members are making. Those are some of the reasons that people choose to come to the Legislative Assembly. And they can sit in the Speaker’s gallery, or they can speak in the east or the west gallery.

The idea, though, is that this is a House, this is an Assembly that is open to the public, that is welcoming of the public. And, Mr. Speaker, perhaps some of the brightest days, when it comes to introductions, are when we as MLAs come to the Assembly and we see that bright pink paper on our desk. And when that bright pink paper is on the desk that means, Mr. Speaker, there is a delegation of a school group.

And I know some of us have more school groups come than others just based on one’s proximity to the legislature and how easy it is for the school group to make it to Regina. Sometimes, Mr. Speaker, groups also have financial barriers in coming to Regina, so I know I’ve spoken with many teachers who want to bring their young people, their students to the legislature but simply can’t come up with the resources to charter the bus and bring them to Regina. Some schools have been able to fundraise or have an expectation that families pay. And in certain instances, Mr. Speaker, school boards have also contributed. I know at one occasion when I invited a school group for budget day, the division or the principal somehow they scraped together some money and made it possible for a school group to come. And I hope it was a highlight for them.

[16:30]

But it’s so important, Mr. Speaker, when we have those days that we have that, not a pink slip but that pink notice on our desk, telling us that students are here in the Assembly. It’s a highlight because if, when you’re out on the street . . . And this happens when you meet people later on in life, when they’re adults. And they’re here in the Assembly for whatever reason — maybe it’s a reception from a CBO [community-based organization] or an interest group of some sort here in the legislature or it’s some individuals who have come to the legislature for whatever reason — often I always like to ask and say, when was the last time you were here in the legislature? And without fail, the majority of the time people say well it’s been many decades since I’ve been in the legislature, but I remember coming here in grade 4 or 5 or 6 or 7, and I

remember seeing the legislature, and I remember the heckling and the theatrics that occurred in the Chamber.

And these are the things that stick out in people's minds because this is, Mr. Speaker, a very impressive place. And it's not impressive simply because the building is a beautiful one; not impressive simply because we have this beautiful red carpet in the Chamber, at least for awhile; not impressive, Mr. Speaker, because of the marble; not impressive because of the statues, though I hear a new one is coming to the Assembly; not impressive, Mr. Speaker, because of any of the art that is placed in the galleries. It's impressive, Mr. Speaker, because here in the Chamber is where democracy takes place. Here in the Chamber is where elected representatives, through a free and a fair and an honest electoral process, are selected by local constituencies, come to this Assembly. And yes, Mr. Speaker, it's not a perfect system. Government is not perfect. Opposition is not perfect. It is, in many ways, a flawed system, Mr. Speaker, but it is a great system, and there are many advantages to it.

So when young people come to the Assembly, what we say to young people, we say this is your Assembly. This is where we want you to become engaged. This is where we want you to understand that, if you have a concern, that if you have an issue that matters, you can contact your local representative. Look down from the gallery; you can see one of the 58 members — 57 plus the Speaker, Mr. Speaker — that are here, that are able to take your concerns from your constituency and bring them forward for consideration at the provincial level and advocate for the province in a federal context.

So we say that, Mr. Speaker, we place such a strong, such a strong emphasis on the value and the importance of young people coming to the Assembly, because we understand what it means for the future of our province to have young people engaged in the political process, aware of what's going on in the political process. And, Mr. Speaker, of course, of course not every young person in the province is going to get the political bug, get the political bug and become an active participant in a local constituency association whatever side of the House it may be on. But, Mr. Speaker, what we want to instill in the young people that come to this Assembly is an appreciation for this place, an appreciation for our democratic system and, Mr. Speaker, an appreciation for the value, the importance of voting.

So often during elections, Mr. Speaker, we've all been to those doorsteps where people answer the door and they maybe don't always say the kindest things. And, Mr. Speaker, that's not only directed at one party. That can be directed to politicians in general because, Mr. Speaker, there can be a feeling that politics doesn't matter and that the political process doesn't care about them. And so I think by taking this step here, where we start excluding those under 18-year-olds from the calculation with respect to sizes of constituencies, I think that is sending the wrong signal. I think it's sending a signal, Mr. Speaker, that is not in any way consistent with the flowery speeches that we make here in the Assembly, the flowery, glowing statements we make here in the Assembly during introductions of guests, when it comes to welcoming youth, welcoming school groups here to the Assembly.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I would ask members opposite, those that care about the school groups that come, I would ask members opposite, those that see the value of treating young people with respect and see the value of including them in the process, to maybe talk to some of the front bench members, Mr. Speaker, opposite who are really pushing for his piece of legislation.

Another reason, Mr. Speaker, why I think it's an error to exclude those that are under 18 has to do with the work that we as MLAs do. And again, whether we sit on the opposition side or the government House, we're all here to do the best for our constituents and to help them with concerns. And, Mr. Speaker, those concerns are very often not restricted to those that are 18 and above. Very often the concerns have to do with those that are 18 and under — minors, Mr. Speaker — those that, even though they can't vote, they still matter so much to the political process, and they are so greatly influenced and feel the effects of what we say and do in this Assembly when it comes to the decisions that are made.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we don't have an age question when we answer the phones in our offices or when we deal with emails or when we welcome someone into the office. We don't ID them as if it were a pub or a bar, Mr. Speaker, and say, oh well, actually you're 16, or say to the grandmother, well actually this concern here has to do with your grandchild who's a minor, so if you don't mind, could you just wait till your grandchild turns 18 and then come back to me? And I'd be happy to help you out in however many years that would be. None of us say that, Mr. Speaker, because we know that would be wrong. We know that would not be helpful, and we know that would not be a respectful way of treating those that are not 18 in the province. And so, Mr. Speaker, I would ask members opposite to provide that same consideration to young people when we look at the constituency boundaries. I think it is only appropriate, and it's the right thing to do.

Mr. Speaker, so the one component of this piece of legislation deals with the 18-years-of-age aspect, members opposite suggesting that those who are not 18 should not be factored into the calculation with respect to constituency populations and boundaries. I think that's not the right approach, and I have appreciated the chance to make a few remarks about 18.

However, Mr. Speaker, there's another component to this legislation that I want to address. I don't think the 18-year-of-age requirement is appropriate, and, Mr. Speaker, I don't think the aspect of adding more MLAs to the Assembly is appropriate in any way. And I say that, Mr. Speaker, because, well, I say it because I actually think most members on the opposite side of the House actually believe it. And I think they actually believe that it's not appropriate to add three members to the Assembly. Yes, Mr. Speaker, there are the vocal people who will talk the points and say why we need to add three more MLAs. But I actually think perhaps the silent majority over there, Mr. Speaker, I think the silent majority, especially some of those members on the backbench, they know in their heart of hearts that adding three more politicians to the province is not what Saskatchewan people want. They know that is not the wise approach.

And, Mr. Speaker, colleagues who have spoken before me have commented about constituency sizes for population, how

Saskatchewan compares to other provinces, whether it be Ontario, BC, Alberta. Mr. Speaker, we know that those sizes are already not comparable. We know that in Saskatchewan, here we are representing less people than in other places.

So the argument to add three more MLAs or three more politicians to the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, members opposite know that this is an idea that is not supported by the broader public. And, Mr. Speaker, they did not mention this in their campaign that occurred in November. They did not mention this, Mr. Speaker, in their Throne Speech. They clearly wanted to try to slip this one in and hope that no one was paying attention and that the piece of legislation would go forward without a hitch.

The catch is, Mr. Speaker, is the contradiction that we've come across now in that last couple weeks with the delivery of the budget, where we see so many examples where members opposite are asking Saskatchewan people, whether it be seniors or young people or students, to pay more, to give more money, to have higher fees, high increases in tuition, whatever the case may be, increases in drug expenses. And the government is saying that the government's rationale for that decision is that, well, we don't have the resources to support those programs or those decisions as we thought we once did, and therefore we're making Saskatchewan people pay more. So that's the talk, Mr. Speaker, that's occurring out of one side of the mouth.

Then at the exact same time, we have members opposite that are more than happy to put forward this piece of legislation, Bill No. 36, that calls for the spending of millions more on supporting more politicians in the province. And it's a contradiction, Mr. Speaker, that simply does not sit well with so many Saskatchewan people.

I can think, Mr. Speaker, of the seniors in the province. And last week in question period on a number of occasions we talked about how seniors are being asked to pay more. For example, for prescription drugs they're being asked to pay more. And for many seniors — those on fixed incomes, those that are on multiple prescriptions and those that are on a couple — for many this could be a substantial and a significant increase for monthly expenses on what is already very tight, especially when you take into consideration increases that have occurred with housing, with groceries, with gas.

I'm shocked, Mr. Speaker, every time I go to the grocery store. The prices are higher, and the quantities in the bags or the boxes are smaller. So we know that people are feeling pressures on a number of fronts.

Today in question period, Mr. Speaker, today in question period . . . Well, I'll back up one second. On seniors, there's prescription drugs. There's also ambulance fee increases where members, senior members in the province are being asked to pay more, and those in long-term care facilities, for hygienic supplies, Mr. Speaker, are being asked to pay more for hygienic supplies.

And then at the same time, while the government is saying we need you seniors to start paying if you're in a long-term care facility; we want you to start paying more for hygienic supplies — and members at home can guess what some of those

hygienic supplies would be in a long-term care facility, Mr. Speaker — at the same time they say, we don't have the money. We don't have the money, Mr. Speaker, to support those programs, but we've got millions more for more politicians in the province. That is a contradiction. I think that those are two positions that do not jibe, two positions that are not appropriate, two positions that are not appropriate.

Today, Mr. Speaker, we talked about the issue of HIV in the province. And we know, Mr. Speaker, we have the worst epidemic in the country. We know that one-quarter of all HIV-related deaths in the country happen here in Saskatchewan, and we know, Mr. Speaker, we don't make up one-quarter of the population. So we know we are experiencing the real, raw, and hard reality of HIV here in Saskatchewan and its related symptoms and in many sad situations, death. We know this is real.

We know, Mr. Speaker, that members opposite have committed on an annual basis \$2.5 million to address the issue. Now, Mr. Speaker, on the one hand, members opposite are saying we have \$2.5 million for this issue on an annual basis. That's all we can afford. I assume that's what members' position would be, or else it would be higher. But then they say, we have more money for politicians here in the province. We're happy, Mr. Speaker, to spend more on politicians and at the same time leave that funding for HIV here in the province at 2.5 million on an annual basis.

To me, Mr. Speaker, that's a contradiction that's not appropriate. We all, Mr. Speaker, have local issues that matter to us. We all have local concerns, and it's something that we all try to promote as local representatives. If it's government backbenchers, people, when it's time for a government, for a budget speech or a Throne Speech, people highlight local priorities and concerns. And we do that in the opposition sometimes a bit more frequently because many of us are on our feet a bit more often.

And one concern, Mr. Speaker, that really matters to my constituents is a new school for Hampton Village — new schools for Hampton Village, a public and a Catholic. Mr. Speaker, I know that my constituents would much rather have the money that the government wants to spend on more politicians, the millions that it wants to spend on more politicians, they would prefer that that money be directed into education capital projects. And, Mr. Speaker, last night in Education estimates we talked about the needs in the province, and I know there are needs throughout the province, but I know my constituents who live in Hampton Village and Dundonald would rather have money going towards education as opposed to more money for politicians, especially when one takes into consideration the fact that the numbers that we represent here in Saskatchewan are less than other places in the country.

[16:45]

The one other issue, Mr. Speaker — this will be one of the last points that I make — it has to do with the film tax credit. We, Mr. Speaker, saw a government in recent days that was happy to kill an industry, do their part in killing an industry here in the province by the elimination of the film tax credit. Despite government members' happiness, eagerness, and willingness to



appear on *Corner Gas* episodes with cameo appearances, despite their eagerness to do that, Mr. Speaker, they are not prepared to provide the film tax credit.

Mr. Speaker, people in Saskatchewan, I think a good, large percentage of the people in Saskatchewan understand that the film industry is important and understand that Saskatchewan's role in the broader context of film production here in the country, understands that the film program that had been in place was an important one and a very good one because, Mr. Speaker, it makes cultural sense — we've talked about the arguments behind that — and it makes economic sense. We know about the spinoffs for small businesses. We know about the young people that are pursuing their training here in the province that want to build a life.

And, Mr. Speaker, this issue is actually, the film tax credit, I think, Mr. Speaker, is very similar to this issue of adding three more MLAs because I actually think if we had a secret poll of members here in the Assembly, of the 57 members on the floor of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, I actually think there are many members on the opposite side who actually think that the decision that members opposite made about eliminating the film tax credit was a wrong one. I actually think there's a good number of members, mostly on the backbench, maybe even as you get closer towards the front, I think there are members of that Sask Party caucus, Mr. Speaker, that did not and do not agree with the decision that the caucus, that the cabinet, that the Premier made with respect to eliminating the film tax credit.

The problem is, Mr. Speaker, I think it's many of those same members that didn't support the decision around the film tax credit, I think it's many of those same members that see the folly with adding more politicians in the province while at the same time pleading poverty for so many programs. Whether it is for seniors, whether it is for HIV programs, whether it is for initiatives in the North, whether it's initiatives around education, there are, Mr. Speaker, I think members on the opposite side who understand that adding more politicians is not the wise, not the proper decision.

I think members opposite on the other side understand that, but the problem is, Mr. Speaker, those members need to be vocal. Those members need to be have a strong voice in their caucus. They need to be willing to speak to the inner circle who's pushing the decision around the film tax credit, who's pushing the issue around three more politicians, Mr. Speaker. They need to speak up. They need to insist on being heard. Because we come to this Assembly, we come to this Assembly and we are expected to operate according to our convictions. And I know members opposite, Mr. Speaker, I know many of them are convicted that adding more politicians to the Assembly is not about the reasons that members opposite have stated with respect to representation. It's about something else. And other members on this side of the House have talked about what some of those other motivations may in fact be.

Those individuals, I encourage them, Mr. Speaker. At your caucus meeting tomorrow, have the courage to speak your mind. At your caucus meeting tomorrow, speak truth to the inner circle. Speak to those that are pushing this issue and say, adding more politicians is not what Saskatchewan people want. Those individuals can say, I know what Saskatchewan people

want because, yes, I was out door knocking too and I heard from many people in my constituency, and they weren't calling for three more politicians; they were calling for priorities X, Y, and Z. There are members opposite who understand this, and they need to speak that truth to the inner circle that's pushing this decision to add three more MLAs and exclude those that are under 18 from the calculations. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

**Mr. Vermette:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To join in the debate on Bill. 36, *An Act to amend The Constituency Boundaries Act, 1993*.

My colleagues before me have expressed concern. And I think the concern they're expressing, I think, is from community members. We're hearing from seniors; I guess the media. We're hearing a lot of discussion about more politicians and people are asking, in a time when a province says, yes, there's growth but then also the province says, we want to have balance. And if they want to use that word "balance" and balance the books and however they want to spin it to the public, that's the way the government's going to spin it.

But actually there's so much concern right now with cuts. And I'll be honest with you. If you look at the cuts that departments, whether it's the public service sector, whether it's the fishing industry, the freight subsidy being totally cut from the commercial fishermen in our province, seeing closure of some of the offices for conservation in Pelican, in Cumberland House, and the list goes on. And I think my colleagues have expressed it very well. They've talked about the concerns, whether it's the cost of prescription drug for our seniors, families, the cost of ambulance care — all these costs are going up and people are asking, why can we cut? And why can the government come up with a plan that affects, I guess, that affects their life, their budgets? How come we can have more politicians? And why is it acceptable not to consult the public?

And the government says it wants to make sure, you know, it talked to the community members. Well there's a lot of community members out there who are not feeling like they had any input, say. They're asking for that. And I think it's made very clear that when they were out campaigning, they didn't say, you know, what do you guys think about . . . We sure want your support, and if I get your support and we form government again for another four years, we're going to get three more politicians. I don't think they would have heard that response, and I don't think they would have met a positive response from voters out there.

People ask their government, and they trust their government. They want their government to do right by programs, by allowing our Saskatchewan people that are proud of our province, to allow them to make sure they have a voice. And they get a voice by electing MLAs, whether they're with the government or opposition. The opposition has a role to play, and we've very clearly expressed concern about Bill 36. We haven't expressed only our views on this, but the views of many people in the province are concerned.

Why is it we can have a priority — and the Sask Party

government has a priority — of more politicians versus some of the other, I guess, priorities of Saskatchewan residents? Who have they consulted? Who have they talked with? It's very clear by . . . You look at the media. You look at the letters we're receiving. You're looking at the conversation in the grocery stores. We mustn't be the only nine MLAs, over here on the official opposition, that are hearing this. They must be hearing this back home — have to be — from some of the seniors concerned about the cost, the cost of living.

You see all the different areas that are being . . . whether it's a tax by this government, very clearly, the concerns. And it isn't us trying to go out there and fearmonger and play around. It's a process, and they're making sure there's schools that they want to keep open. They want to make sure there's conservation officers and the offices that serve the people in these communities to make sure they're there. The right choices, it's picking and choosing in a budget. A government's elected, and the people give them trust. And the people say, yes, we elected you to treat us fairly, to take care of the monies in the bank, to take care of all residents in the province. That is you're handed, and people do that and I mean this, that they sincerely think the government will take care of their best interests. And when you see what this government has gone on to do and legislation that they want to push, is it truly consulting with the community members out there? I don't think so. Very clearly we're getting that message and they must be getting that message as well.

So we see the frustration from some people who are feeling the cuts. Some people will be losing their jobs. And if you're somebody who's not going to be having an opportunity at an income and you see the government talking about more politicians . . . And I think some of my colleagues have made it very clear. You look at the numbers in other provinces versus the numbers in Saskatchewan, and the numbers are very low in Saskatchewan versus our population to MLAs. And I guess at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, it's very clear people want input. They want input, they want services, they want programs. They want to make sure that, I guess, they're getting their views heard, their concerns dealt with by their politicians. Whether it's the official opposition or the government MLAs, people feel they have a right and they put a trust in all of us that we will do the right things.

This legislation should be part thrown in the garbage. If you want to go back and truly ask the people, you have an opportunity. It's not late. It's not too late to say, whoa, you know maybe we've made a mistake. Maybe there's a chance to fix something. Maybe we should consult more with the Saskatchewan people before we go ahead. With the cuts that have been introduced in the budget maybe, you know, it's time to rethink this. And there's nothing wrong with going back and reviewing something.

And I look at the different cuts, whether it's forest fire management, whether it's about three-point-some million that was cut. There's always different cuts. Why is it? And people are very frustrated. And I think some of them are concerned. Why is a government have a priority of more politicians and less services when they say, well we're booming, the booming economy advantage? Some of the people that are being affected by more politicians and the cost to it are saying, how is that an advantage in my household? How is that an advantage to me?

How is that? Am I going to get served better? Are you saying the MLAs haven't been serving the constituents? I think all MLAs try to do a good job. I wish there was more NDP MLAs, more New Democrats. That would be the great thing.

Unfortunately the people have spoke. We trust that. But they also said they're going to watch and they will hold all of us to account, what we did, whether we are backbenchers in the government that raise the concerns for the people back home. That's all they want. And they're going to say that whether it's the opposition that raises the concerns. I want to make it very clear from our side, we are raising concerns. We have tried to express the views of the people that are approaching us, whether it's letters, whether it's individual members, whether it's groups, the young people saying, this legislation is too much. It's very short and sweet, but it has a lot of damage that it can do. And people are very concerned, Mr. Speaker.

So at this time, getting to the time, and I know we have more work to do, and I know more people want to get in on the debate, I'm prepared, Mr. Speaker, to adjourn debate at this time.

**The Speaker:** — The Opposition Whip has moved adjournment of Bill No. 36, *The Constituency Boundaries Amendment Act, 2011*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In order to facilitate the work of committees this evening, I move that this House do now adjourn.

**The Speaker:** — The Government House Leader has moved that this House do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried. This House stands adjourned till 1:30 p.m. tomorrow afternoon.

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:58.]

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Wall .....	927
Nilson .....	927
Cheveldayoff .....	927
McCall .....	927
Doherty .....	927
Belanger .....	928
Reiter .....	928

#### PRESENTING PETITIONS

Forbes .....	928
Wotherspoon .....	928
Brotten .....	928
Vermette .....	929

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

##### Breakfast for Learning Volunteer Award Recipients

Forbes .....	929
--------------	-----

##### Junior Achievement Business Hall of Fame Awards

Campeau .....	929
---------------	-----

##### Caring for Our Watersheds

Sproule .....	929
---------------	-----

##### Company Consolidates Operations in Saskatoon

Eagles .....	930
--------------	-----

##### Judge of the Provincial Court Appointment

Brkich .....	930
--------------	-----

##### Wascana Centre Celebrates 50th Birthday

Marchuk .....	930
---------------	-----

##### Bank Donation to School of Business

Tochor .....	931
--------------	-----

#### QUESTION PERIOD

##### Combatting HIV

Brotten .....	931
---------------	-----

McMorris .....	931
----------------	-----

##### Federal Crime Legislation

Wotherspoon .....	932
-------------------	-----

Morgan .....	933
--------------	-----

##### Support for Culture and Heritage

Chartier .....	934
----------------	-----

Hutchinson .....	934
------------------	-----

##### Plans for Forestry Operations

Sproule .....	935
---------------	-----

Boyd .....	935
------------	-----

#### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

##### Funding for Student Housing Project at the University of Regina

Norris .....	936
--------------	-----

Brotten .....	936
---------------	-----

#### STATEMENT BY A MEMBER

##### Withdrawal of Comment

McMorris .....	936
----------------	-----

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### SECOND READINGS

##### Bill No. 36 — *The Constituency Boundaries Amendment Act, 2011*

Belanger .....	937
----------------	-----

Forbes .....	943
--------------	-----

Sproule .....	948
---------------	-----

Brotten .....	953
---------------	-----

Vermette .....	957
----------------	-----

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