



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

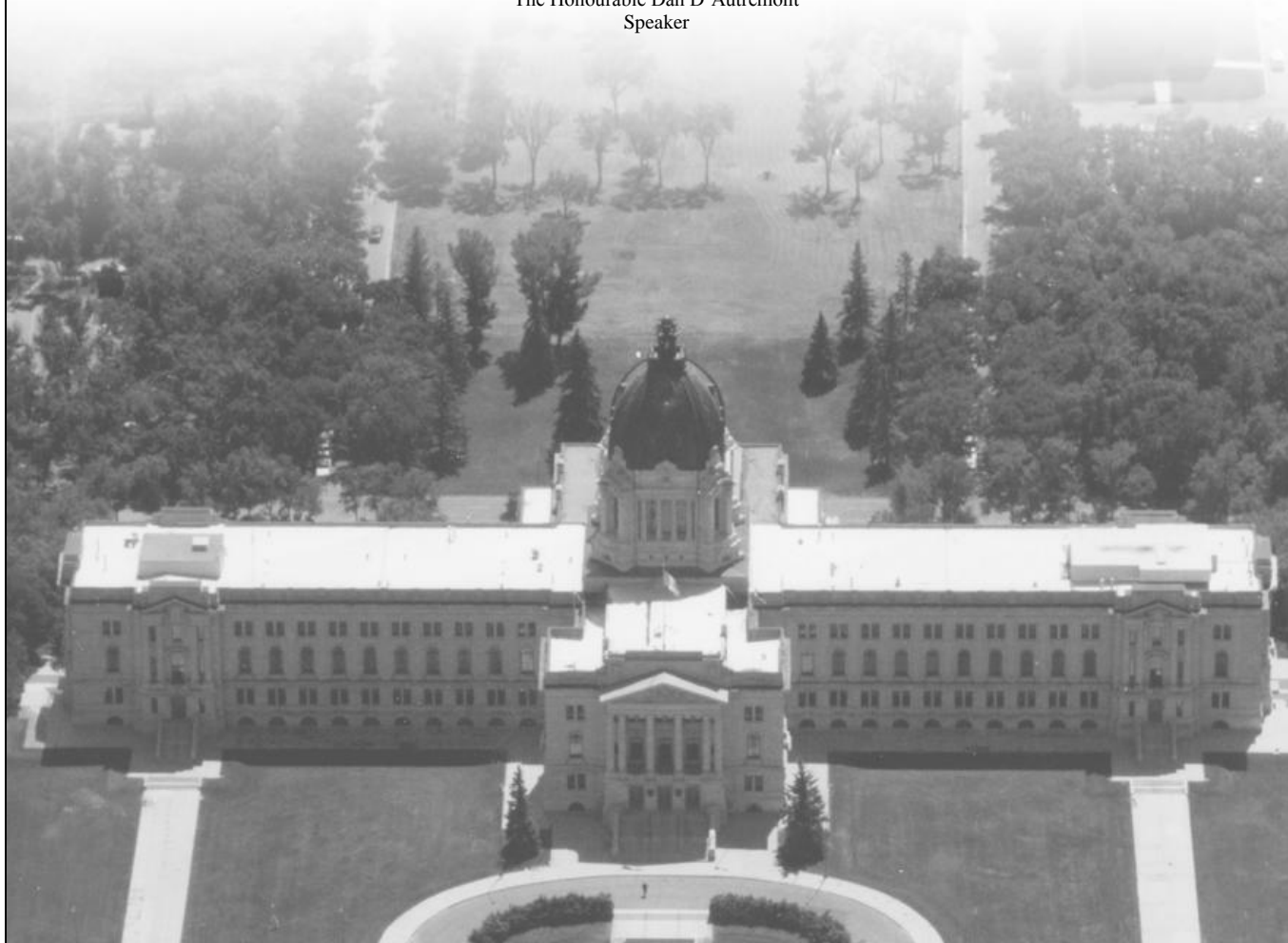
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

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



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

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

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave to ask for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — The member has asked leave of the Assembly for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, colleagues. Next Monday, April the 9th, is the National Day of Remembrance of the Battle of Vimy Ridge. Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 95th anniversary of this four-day battle that led to the capture of the German-held high ground in northern France by the Canadian corps.

This fateful Easter Monday marked the first time that Canadians fought together. It took them four days to gain control of Vimy Ridge. Mr. Speaker, of the 49 battalions that were there for the fight, four were recruited in Saskatchewan. They were the 5th, the 28th, the 46th, and the 1st Canadian Mounted Rifles.

Mr. Speaker, Quartermaster Sergeant Leonard James Chase with the 5th Battalion Corps of the Canadian Railway Troops was one of those brave men present during those four days. In your gallery, Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to have his daughter, Mrs. Gerri Moen of Regina, and her sons, Richard and Keith Moen with us here today — if you'd just give us a wave, please. And they are accompanied by Gwen Jacobson.

Mr. Speaker, in order to commemorate this anniversary and the sacrifice and bravery of those that fought alongside of Quartermaster Sergeant Chase, a display of artifacts has been placed in a glass case in the front entrance of the Legislative Building and will remain on display for the public until April 20th.

Mr. Speaker, the actions of these soldiers define the character and strength of our country and province. We owe a debt of sincere gratitude and must never forget the defining contributions of those who served, those who came back and helped continue to build our nation, and those who never returned home to enjoy the freedom for which they fought so bravely. So in their honour, Mr. Speaker, on April 9th, flags on the Saskatchewan Legislative Building will be at half-mast.

I encourage everyone to take a moment today and on Monday to honour their legacy and reflect on their deeds and dedication to the people of our province and country. Please also take a

moment to view the artifacts on display. Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join me and welcome these very special guests to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I ask for leave for an extended introduction as well.

The Speaker: — The member has asked for leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I, too, on behalf of the official opposition want to welcome Gerri Moen and her sons, Richard and Keith Moen. There's no question that we're very proud of their history. And also to point out that Gerri being the daughter of Quartermaster Sergeant Leonard James Chase who fought on Vimy Ridge with the 5th Battalion Corps of the Canadian Railway Troops.

And, Mr. Speaker, I wear this pin to honour him and the many veterans that served the country. This pin commemorates the victory at Vimy Ridge on April 9th, 1917. The pin shows the towers of the Vimy Memorial in France, and the four coloured bands represent the four Canadian divisions made up of 100,000 men who fought as a great force. The red band is for First Division, dark blue is for Second Division, grey-blue is for Third Division, and green is for the Fourth Division. The Battle of Vimy Ridge was Canada's bloodiest day in history with 3,598 Canadians being killed.

Mr. Speaker, my father was a veteran, spoke very highly of his love for his country and for his service, and taught all of our family the value of serving their country as a great honour. And I have an incredible amount of respect for the families that have gone through this. That respect carried on to a number of my siblings — several brothers and sister and my young daughter who also served in the military. So from our family to yours, we honour you, we respect you, and we thank you for your great service because we understand what it took to make Canada what it is today and to fight half a world away and go through that great sacrifice.

So, Mr. Speaker, I too join in honouring our guests and to tell all the people of Saskatchewan, this great country, to take a moment next week and to remember our great veterans and the love of the country that they fought for called Canada, and the peace we enjoy today. So I thank you again. God bless you and have a safe journey home today. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Yorkton.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I ask leave to introduce a . . . extended introduction for guests.

The Speaker: — The member for Yorkton has asked for leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Yorkton.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In your gallery, I would like everyone to join with me in introducing and welcoming three very significant community leaders from Yorkton: two have been community leaders for quite some time, and one is quite new but very significant.

Before I introduce them, just a few comments. On July 1st in Yorkton, it was a devastating day — a historic flood. With those challenges, there were many challenges, but with those came opportunities. And as it's been said in the Bible, all things work together for his good. And they did. The most devastated area is being developed into a flood catch basin by the city. Then there's opportunity for green space. Then a greater idea: how about a permanent concrete skate park? A local businessman who was involved with the insurance industry was aware of a community grant program through the Aviva insurance company. The top prize was \$150,000, and if only we would be able to access some of that money, it would go a long ways for this project. The plan was set in motion. Local and social media promotion campaigns started endless work by those involved, particularly these three. And, Mr. Speaker, the Yorkton Aviva skate park, bike, and walking path idea won the main prize of \$150,000.

With us today in your gallery are three, again, very significant people from the Yorkton area. Dave Nussbaumer — just give us a wave, Dave — is with Farrell Agencies and the mastermind behind this idea, although he's very magnanimous. He would never take very much credit for that.

Along with us today is Nathan Grayston, the skateboard, I guess, aficionado. He's with the association. He's an avid volunteer and a social media wizard, second to none I would say. Just give us a wave there, Nathan. He was offering to maybe do a demonstration out front later. He's got his boards with him.

And also with them is Lisa Washington, the community development manager with the city of Yorkton and also my cousin. So we are very happy to have them here today.

Last week was also very exciting for this project, Mr. Speaker. The city of Yorkton and the New Line Skateparks hosted the first of two skate park design sessions for the new concrete skate park plaza on Brodie Avenue. They are hoping to break ground at the end of May and have skaters in the park by this fall.

As Mr. Nussbaumer said when he had found that this project was being awarded some funding, a community is only as strong as its volunteers, and Yorkton is a very strong community. Lisa Washington added this: "And I would like to add that it is a microcosm of how strong our province is. There was province-wide support for this project that helped it become a reality."

So, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members to not only congratulate our visitors today but welcome them to their Assembly and thank them for their very much hard work.

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As a government we are always looking for partnerships, especially with First Nations people across Saskatchewan, partnerships that can enhance the entrepreneurial spirit of First Nations. Today we have the privilege of welcoming to the Legislative Assembly two First Nations chiefs, Chief Robert Head of the Peter Chapman First Nation — give us a wave — and Chief Calvin Sanderson from the Chakastaypasin First Nation.

And usually when I see the two of them, we see a third chief, Wally Burns from James Smith Cree Nation, but Mr. Burns is under the weather a little bit so he's left it to his two other colleagues who will be meeting with some of my colleagues and myself later today. Ladies and gentlemen, please help me in welcoming the two chiefs to their Legislative Assembly this afternoon.

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

Mr. Parent: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you and to all members of the Assembly, I would like to introduce 41 of grade 8 students and their teachers, Sarah Myers and David Pratte, and chaperones, Judy Yahnke, Yvonne Sawatsky, and Michael McIntee from Saskatoon Caswell Community School, seated in your west gallery.

Mr. Speaker, 100 years ago the children of the first classes at Caswell Community School played games at recess among the cows in Robert Caswell's pasture. I can remember that. Today the Caswell neighbourhood is well known for its character homes and quiet side street.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all members to welcome these students to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations in welcoming our honoured guests here to the legislature. Chiefs Sanderson and Head, it's good to see you here. We give our best, of course, to Chief Burns in a speedy recovery.

It's always good to see somebody from Chakastaypasin in the gallery here at the legislature. I wish you all the best in terms of the negotiations with the provincial government. May it be prosperous both for the people of James Smith and for the people of Saskatchewan.

Again, I ask all members to join to me in welcoming these individuals to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to join with the member from Meewasin to welcome the kids from Caswell School here. I have a special place in my heart for Caswell School. It's only a

block from where I live on 29th Street. But I taught in this school and actually taught the grades that are here today. My own kids graduated from Caswell School, so I really feel a real keen affection for the kids from Caswell. And I want to welcome their teachers as well.

And I know my colleague from Massey Place — there's three MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] who actually represent Caswell — also would like, probably want to say a few words in welcoming the kids from Caswell too. Thank you.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for 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 two times and died from his injuries. He was working at a gas station in Yorkton, alone and unprotected from intruders.

But we know that from positive statistics, that they show that convenience store and gas station robberies are down by one-third since 1999, largely due to increased safety practices including two people working together on late-night shifts. Mr. Speaker, 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 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 good city of Moose Jaw. I do so present. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on behalf of the trappers of Saskatchewan, whom I often call the conscience of the land. The current regulations being enforced are creating challenges that are of a concern to our traditional trappers. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

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.

Mr. Speaker, it is signed by many trappers and community members. And this particular petition is signed by the good trappers of Sandy Bay and of course their supporters. Mr. Speaker, I so present.

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

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

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your 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 residents of Saskatoon. I so submit.

[13:45]

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand today to present a petition calling on the Sask Party government to support and pass the Saskatchewan seniors' bill of rights:

We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention the following: that many Saskatchewan seniors live on fixed incomes and are victims of physical, emotional, and financial abuse; that Saskatchewan seniors have a right to social and economic security and a right to live free from poverty; that Saskatchewan seniors have a right to protection from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan enact a Saskatchewan seniors' bill of rights, which would provide seniors with social and economic security and protection from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Mr. Speaker, I so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Rosthern-Shellbrook.

Remembering Vimy Ridge

Mr. Moe: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Battle of Vimy Ridge has great significance for Canada. It was the first instance in which all four Canadian divisions, made up of troops drawn from all parts of the country including four battalions recruited in Saskatchewan, fought as a cohesive unit. In four days of fighting, Canada suffered over 10,500 casualties, yet the battle was hailed as an important Allied success in the war.

Each year Canadians commemorate April 9th as a national day of remembrance to one of the most important military engagements in Canadian history. Looking forward to the 100th anniversary of Vimy Ridge in 2017, the Vimy Foundation has been actively working with Canada's youth to share the story of Vimy Ridge with a new generation of Canadians. Mr. Speaker, in honour of the sacrifice made by our soldiers, the nation of France granted 107 hectares of land at Vimy Ridge on which to build and maintain the Canadian National Vimy Memorial, Canada's largest overseas war memorial. Canada suffered 60,000 fatalities through the First World War, and Vimy Ridge Day encourages our citizens to preserve the memory of Canadian Expeditionary Force members killed in action.

On behalf of this House, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the memory of those Canadians whose sacrifice and bravery resulted in the great freedoms that we enjoy today. Let us never forget those who fought so bravely. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Pink Shirt Day

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today in recognition of Pink Shirt Day, a yearly event led by community partners to raise awareness amongst citizens of this province to send a strong signal that we will not tolerate bullying in our communities and schools. As you are well aware, Mr. Speaker, students and residents across Saskatchewan have been and will continue to participate in activities of Anti-Bullying Week this week.

We wear pink, Mr. Speaker, to show solidarity. And when we wear pink, we spread the message that bullying, violence, and discrimination — motivated by ignorance, intolerance, and lack of understanding and respect — are simply not acceptable. Mr. Speaker, on a personal note, this is particularly important. Having worked as a teacher with students, I have witnessed the harmful impacts of bullying on our youth.

Discrimination is a social disease that affects the way everyone lives, works, plays, studies, and treats one another. It creates barriers to success by fostering prejudice and hate. Pink Revolution is more than just a symbol against bullying. It's a commitment to celebrating diversity, learning from one another, being understanding of our differences, and seeing the unique abilities that every person can share when we work together.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join with me in thanking community partners and in promoting diversity, preventing bullying, and taking action to make our world a safer place as part of the Pink Revolution. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Clerk Celebrates 25 Years of Service

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to stand and recognize an individual who has served this Legislative Assembly for 25 years. That individual, Mr. Speaker, is none other than our Clerk, Mr. Gregory Putz.

Greg joined the Legislative Assembly Service on April 1st in 1987 as Clerk Assistant. In 1994 he became Deputy Clerk, and five years later he became the Clerk of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, you would certainly know that he also played an integral role in revising and redoing the rules of this Assembly and our committees. He was your adviser, and the former member from Regina South. The three of you visited a number of legislatures in the Commonwealth, and as a result of the good work done by the three of you, we now have our committee systems, we have a legislative calendar, Mr. Speaker. And I think, as all members would agree, this House operates much more efficiently and more effectively.

Mr. Speaker, in my short term as Deputy Speaker, I have learned that you should always take the advice of your Clerk. And he's been very helpful and I think I'll continue to operate in that fashion.

Something that members of this Assembly probably don't know is that Greg has a real passion for airplanes and airports. And he designs airports on computers with the help of a Microsoft program and is becoming quite well known in Canada, and I believe in North America. So, Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join with me in thanking Greg Putz for 25 years of service and dedication to this Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Tartan Day

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today as a Canadian citizen of Scottish extraction in recognition of Tartan Day. To start, I'd like to offer a sincere vote of thanks to Chief McPherson and all the great Scots with Camp Balmoral of the Sons of Scotland for treating us to some fine pipes and drums earlier today here in the legislature's rotunda.

The significance of Tartan Day is that on April 6th, 1320 at Arbroath Abbey in the east of Scotland, the nobles, barons, and freeholders, together with the whole people of the realm of Scotland, pronounced the Scottish declaration of independence. This became known as the Declaration of Arbroath and it was proclaimed under the kingship of Robert the Bruce.

Mr. Speaker, Tartan Day is an ideal way to highlight the unique cultural traditions of the Scots and to bring the world's attention to their creativity, innovation, heritage, and canny business acumen, as well as the lovely Scottish people themselves, Mr. Speaker, and perhaps to even have a dram or two. I'd encourage that on April 6th people across Saskatchewan and Canada don their tartans and partake in local events to commemorate the contributions of the Scots and their descendants to the fabric of our society. To my colleagues and fellow citizens, as the Scots might say, lang may yer lum reek, or rather, may you live long and keep well. Slàinte mhath, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Thunder Creek.

Mr. Stewart: — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to recognize Tartan Day. Tartan Day is celebrated to mark the

signing of the Declaration of Arbroath in 1320, signed at Arbroath Abbey. This declaration marked the beginnings of modern-day democracy. And this model was used by Americans in drafting the Declaration of Independence. Tartan Day has been celebrated as a way to recognize all good things Scottish — the people, heritage, history, culture, and their amazing legacy to the world.

Oddly enough, the first Tartan Day was celebrated in Canada. Then in 2004, Americans declared April 6th as National Tartan Day to recognize the contributions of Scottish Americans to the United States. Three years ago, Scotland joined in. Scots are very humble people. The celebration took on a life of its own and now is a national day of celebration in the home country.

Celebrations begin on March 30th and last until April 8th, allowing people from all backgrounds to share experiences and inspire future progress. Tartan Day benefits many different groups and provides an opportunity for citizens to put on diverse events, network with friends and neighbours, and have some family fun.

I would like to ask all members of this honourable Assembly to join me in applauding the great contributions of Scottish people all over the world and wish them well during their week of celebrations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Distinguished Alumni and Awards Night

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week on Thursday, March 29th, I had the pleasure of attending the second annual Kinesiology and Health Studies Distinguished Alumni and Awards Night on behalf of the Minister of Health. This event recognizes the achievements of U of R [University of Regina] alumni and student achievement in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies.

The students at the U of R who decide to enter this faculty take pride in wanting to serve the public and create healthy opportunities right here within their own communities. As one of the award recipients stated, “I’m constantly asked what am I going to do with a kinesiology degree.” Her reply is always, “to try and ensure that everyone within my own community lives a healthy life.”

The winner of the Undergraduate Award, Chantal Poirier, commented on how she’s very excited to receive her education and then return home to make her small town a healthier place to live.

This year’s recipient of the Distinguished Alumni Award is Dr. Gordon Walker who completed his studies from the U of R in physical activity studies in 1990. I had the opportunity to sit with Gordon and his family and friends, and his lifelong commitment to health and physical fitness is a great bar that we should all strive to live up to.

In addition, the Outstanding Graduate Award was presented to Katherine McLeod, an outstanding undergraduate student who went on to pursue her master’s and is nearing her completion.

This young lady’s commitment to health is truly inspiring.

Mr. Speaker, to all the winners, congratulations. Thank you for your contributions to increasing the health of our province.

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

Saskatchewan Budget

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the province of Saskatchewan has the distinct pleasure of being the only balanced provincial budget in the Dominion of Canada. Yesterday the Finance minister of Nova Scotia unveiled his 2012-13 provincial budget, continuing on their four-year plan to bring their province back to a balanced budget — yet another Canadian province attempting to balance their budget.

Here in Saskatchewan, this is not the reality. Here in Saskatchewan, the Canadian Homebuilders’ Association states, “2012-13 budget keeps the momentum going helping communities grow.” Here in Saskatchewan, Colin Craig of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation states, “Saskatchewan taxpayers will benefit from one of the best budgets in Canada this year.” Even the esteemed columnist Murray Mandryk stated, and I quote, “The Sask Party should be credited with presenting Canada’s only balanced budget this year.”

Mr. Speaker, the province of Saskatchewan is not immune to uncertainties of global markets. But in times of uncertainty, having your financial house in order is of the utmost importance. Mr. Speaker, this government is focused on the present while preparing our province for the future. It is focused on keeping the Saskatchewan advantage.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Funding for University of Saskatchewan

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was a packed house yesterday at the University of Saskatchewan’s town hall. Individuals in the university community are rightfully concerned about what is happening. First there is a significant gap in the request of the operating grant, which was 5.8, but what the actual increase was was 2.1.

Second, Mr. Speaker, the university requested \$104 million in capital projects but did not receive capital funding. Instead what we see, Mr. Speaker, is the Sask Party shifting debt onto the University of Saskatchewan’s books, especially for the health sciences project at a total of \$72 million.

I know the minister has problems answering direct questions in the Chamber as well as in scrum, so I’ll make my question very specific. To the minister: does he agree with the administration’s assessment of the debt being shifted to the University of Saskatchewan, that this will nearly max out their borrowing capacity? Yes or no?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Advanced

Education, Employment and Immigration.

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to report to the people of the province, including to officials at the University of Saskatchewan that we work very closely with, that over the course of our first five budgets, Mr. Speaker, this government has invested more than \$1.5 billion at the University of Saskatchewan. In fact what we've seen, Mr. Speaker, in this budget alone would be more than \$304 million going directly to that institution.

Mr. Speaker, since 2007, the last year of the NDP's [New Democratic Party] government, we've increased funding at the University of Saskatchewan by 46.3 per cent, Mr. Speaker. So I challenge the member opposite, Mr. Speaker, as far as the actual figures that he's offering because what the University of Saskatchewan officials also said yesterday is they made specific reference, not simply to the 2.1 per cent, Mr. Speaker, but they also made specific reference to the additional dollars. All of this, Mr. Speaker, this kind of investment, record investment, all within a balanced budget, Mr. Speaker.

[14:00]

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the specific question was whether or not the borrowing capacity of the University of Saskatchewan will be nearly maxed out, and the minister did not respond to that part of the question at all.

Yesterday also stated in the town hall meeting, Mr. Speaker, was that the debt per student ratio on campus will skyrocket. As the university said yesterday, they will soon be moving to the top half of the pack when it comes to the debt per student ratio on campus. My question to the minister: does he agree with the administration's assessment on the impact of his decision that the university on a debt per student ratio will be moving towards the top of the pack? Yes or no?

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, let me provide a little bit of information for everyone, Mr. Speaker, regarding a fundamental aspect of the University of Saskatchewan. I'd like to just highlight a little bit about enrolments. Mr. Speaker, what we've seen since 2007, since the NDP, the last government, Mr. Speaker, is that enrolments at the University of Saskatchewan have gone up by 1,200 students. Mr. Speaker, 1,200 students — 500 at the undergraduate level, 700 at the graduate level.

The significance of this, Mr. Speaker, is that while the members opposite were in power, at the University of Saskatchewan there were increases in tuition of the range of 99 per cent, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, when we look at enrolment figures between 2003 and 2007 we actually see that they dropped, Mr. Speaker. So under the members opposite, at the University of Saskatchewan enrolment went down. What we see, Mr. Speaker, enrolment continues to go up as investments have gone up on behalf of this side of this House, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the specific question was about the debt per student ratio, and the minister did not answer that question. The university administration also said yesterday, Mr. Speaker, that the provincial government will be paying the principal and the interest on the \$72 million of debt for the Health Sciences building. My question to the minister: is this true? Yes or no?

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, it's important for us to get some comparative data, Mr. Speaker. In fact a Stats Canada report has recently come out and said that the University of Saskatchewan is ranked fourth — that is fourth best funded out of all Canadian universities, Mr. Speaker, in the medical doctoral category, Mr. Speaker. This is reflected and reinforced by the rankings of *Maclean's*, Mr. Speaker, *Maclean's* 2011, that also ranked the University of Saskatchewan fourth among 15 medical doctoral universities, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we know that the dollars have gone into the University of Saskatchewan. We know how hard the University of Saskatchewan administration is working to ensure that these dollars are used effectively and efficiently, Mr. Speaker. And from within our budgetary context, Mr. Speaker — the only balanced budget within Canada, Mr. Speaker, with these kind of investments in the post-secondary sector — \$3.5 billion to date, Mr. Speaker. We know how important the success of our students will be, Mr. Speaker, in their studies but also in their careers right here in Saskatchewan with the fastest growing economy in the country.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the specific question was about whether or not the government will be paying the principal and the interest on the \$72 million for the Health Sciences building that it is forcing the university to assume. Again from the minister, no answer. On the \$72 million of debt for the Health Sciences building and paying the principal and interest, it's the university's understanding, according to the administration, that the province will be paying it. And I understand it in this budget there is some for one year perhaps, based on the comments the minister made at the end of a very lengthy scrum two days ago.

The question remains however, Mr. Speaker: is the government, is this minister pledged . . . does he pledge today to pay the entire principal and interest on the entire amount of the \$72 million for the entire duration of the financing of which we don't know whether it's 10, 15, or 20 years. Does he commit to making that entire payment today?

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, as part of the \$3.5 billion that this government has invested in post-secondary education, specifically at the University of Saskatchewan \$1.5 billion in

five budgets, an all-time record, Mr. Speaker. We know this about the Academic Health Sciences building. We know that is was first announced by the members opposite in 2003. Mr. Speaker, they managed to get out a bit of a press conference and a photo op by 2007, Mr. Speaker. But that delay, Mr. Speaker, saw a project that was anticipated to cost \$120 million, Mr. Speaker. We saw that window close. And as the cost continued to escalate, Mr. Speaker, we know what it's meant for taxpayers in the province. We also know what it's meant to the University of Saskatchewan.

This government, Mr. Speaker, has invested more than \$200 million. Mr. Speaker, we're pleased to work this year with the University of Saskatchewan to try an alternative funding mechanism, Mr. Speaker. We're going to continue to work together to ensure that this is successfully concluded so that we can make sure that we continue to train doctors right here in the province.

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

Mr. Broten: — Again, Mr. Speaker, the very specific question was whether or not the minister and the Sask Party government pledges to pay the entire \$72 million amount. And again we heard no answer from the minister.

One of the individuals who was at the town hall meeting yesterday on campus sent me this message. And the person said:

The mood in the room was sombre. It honestly felt like we live in a province that is in the midst of a drastic recession and undertaking sweeping austerity measures. What lies ahead for the university is worrisome: huge cuts, more debt, and higher tuition. And all this is happening in a province with record revenues?

Mr. Speaker, it's bad enough and challenging enough for the university to not get the operating grant increase that they requested, but what is most worrisome, Mr. Speaker, is that the fact that this government is choosing to put \$100 million of debt onto the university's books, nearly maxing out its borrowing capacity, having huge implications for the campus.

Mr. Speaker, when they had the news release in September and pledged support for the Health Sciences building, there was no mention at all, Mr. Speaker, about forcing the university to take on \$100 million of debt. My question to the minister: what could possibly be his reason to shift \$100 million of debt onto the university's books, if not only to make the provincial books look better?

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, we know how precious public dollars are, Mr. Speaker. We know the infrastructure deficit that we inherited as a government as we came in, whether we're talking about highways or health care, whether we're talking about education or post-secondary education, almost every portfolio, Mr. Speaker, you can point to specific examples. Mr. Speaker, what we're doing, Mr. Speaker, is

actually drawing on an instrument that was utilized, that was established and utilized in 2003 by the members opposite. Mr. Speaker, that is some debt financing.

Mr. Speaker, we're working with the University of Saskatchewan. And regarding the specific project of the Academic Health Sciences building, Mr. Speaker, had the members opposite not simply made an announcement in 2003, we'd probably be cutting the ribbon, Mr. Speaker, and have it complete by now. But instead they didn't do a thing, Mr. Speaker. They know that. This, Mr. Speaker, has seen costs climb, Mr. Speaker. More than \$200 million have been transferred to the university. Progress is under way, Mr. Speaker. This is helping to secure and ensure that we'll continue to train doctors for the people of this province right here at the University of Saskatchewan.

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

Support for the Film Industry

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This week Mark Wihak, head of the department of media production and studies at the University of Regina, posted a letter on the official university blog site. The letter reads:

The destruction of the Film/TV/Digital Media industries will have serious consequences for students and alumni of the University of Regina, who will be forced to leave the province to pursue careers in these industries.

To the minister: he has had no good answers for people who are already involved in the film and television industry. What does he say to people who are currently enrolled in film and associated programs or to those who are about to enter programs offered right here in our province that they believed would lead to careers right here in our province?

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

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As members will know, we had a very productive meeting with representatives of the film industry a few days ago. And as a follow-up, Mr. Ron Goetz, SMPA [Saskatchewan Motion Picture Industry Association] president, sent a letter to his members reporting on the results. Here's an excerpt:

Yesterday, I received notice that the tax credit application deadline would be extended until June 30 and that there was a desire to find a new funding program for the industry. There was a desire to look beyond just another tax credit model but a more comprehensive plan that would include industry control of the sound stage, non-refundable tax credits, SaskFilm and other issues. This extension helped two fold. First to give us breathing room to work on a new plan for our industry and second to ensure that as much of this year's production season could be realized [as possible].

Mr. Speaker, we agree wholeheartedly with Mr. Goetz's sentiments, and we look forward to the results of his good work.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Cutting the legs out from under the film industry will affect more than just fine arts students and alumni at the U of R. A University of Saskatchewan grad has this to say:

After receiving my B.Com. from the U of S, I chose to stay in Saskatchewan even though the majority of my fellow graduates were heading to Ontario and Alberta to work for Proctor & Gamble and other large multinationals. As luck would have it, I found a career in an industry that allowed me to use both my strength with numbers and my creativity — film and television production and finance.

To the minister: did he consult with any post-secondary institutions here to find out what the impact of the elimination of the film tax credit would have on their students or on the long-term viability of the programming they offer?

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

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have to recognize the context of that comment. That comes from a province with the strongest population growth and the strongest economy in the entire country, and the only one — and the only one — to deliver a balanced budget this year, coast to coast to coast.

Mr. Speaker, there's a counterpoint to this particular discussion. Here's a letter from a man called Brian Olson who lives in Fort Qu'Appelle. It appeared in the *Leader-Post* a couple of days ago.

First of all, [he says] the film employment tax credit covered up to 45 per cent of eligible labour costs and up to 50 per cent of the entire production budget of a film. A better term is a government "grant" for the production as it was not tied to any corporate tax paid, if any.

Film companies could and did set up shell companies in the province, received the government grant, shut down the shell company and left with our taxpayers' dollars.

He goes on to say:

Saskatchewan manufacturing shipments were \$10.9 billion in 2010 and \$3.7 billion of these shipments were exported. In 2010, this industry employed 30,500 hard-working [people] . . .

I am sure all business owners would love to have the same government funding of 45 per cent of their employment costs . . .

We agree with that statement, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess the answer was no. There was no consultation with anybody, Mr. Speaker.

The government's decision to kill the film tax credit is short-sighted. It will result in job losses and a loss of revenue to the province in economic spinoff. And to quote again from the letter on the U of R blog, a generation of skilled talent will leave the province. The government has already backtracked and bought itself some time by extending the tax credit until June and has said it will work with the industry to come up with other options. But talk is one thing, Mr. Speaker, time is of the essence.

To the minister: can he tell this House the concrete steps he has taken since announcing the extension of the tax credit until June to work with the industry on a solution to the problem his government has created?

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

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again we welcome the member's question. And we also welcome this opportunity, once again, to correct a very significant misunderstanding about this issue which has arisen.

As we have said, all industries create economic activity and employment, but not all industries create significant tax revenues for our province. This is important, Mr. Speaker. Most of the film employment tax credit is paid out to companies that don't even pay income tax in our province. In fact over 98 per cent of the funding is paid out as a direct grant and less than 2 per cent is paid out as an actual tax credit.

Mr. Speaker, as we have mentioned, our goal is a win-win program that supports the industry by reducing taxes for Saskatchewan film companies.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Tourism Saskatchewan

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, last week when I questioned the minister about the government's decision to turn Tourism Saskatchewan into a Crown corporation, he referenced a review from 2009 as the basis for his decision.

Mr. Speaker, page 35 of that review says, "One of the key areas of agreement among all parties to this review is Tourism Saskatchewan should remain an arm's length organization from government."

My question to the minister: why is he ignoring this statement?

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

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have talked a lot in this Assembly about the tourism review, and rightly so I think. My ministry has already responded to one of the tourism review's key recommendations by funding Tourism Saskatchewan's brand new quality assurance program.

The review also encouraged us to establish a single point of entry for tourism, within government, to develop a long-term strategy and a plan for major events as well. All of these activities will in fact become top priorities for the new tourism Crown. But even more important than that, Mr. Speaker, we are responding directly to the review's question: is government in or out of the tourism industry?

As mentioned in this House on several occasions, Mr. Speaker, we are most definitely in and are demonstrating leadership by turning an organization that already relies on government for 99 per cent of its funding into a fully fledged Crown corporation that will take the tourism industry to the next level of performance.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, the government decision caught members of Tourism Saskatchewan and the tourism industry off guard. Shortly after the budget, Tourism Saskatchewan sent out a survey asking for input. Within two days they received over 640 submissions from members, business people, and partners. Mr. Speaker, the results were crystal clear. Almost 70 per cent want Saskatchewan Tourism to remain an arm's-length agency. My question to the minister: why does the minister have such a blatant disregard for input of the tourism industry and its members?

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

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are of course aware of the survey that the member has referenced. Mr. Speaker, there will always be a number of people express concern about the implications of change. This is a natural human reaction. We understand that. But I'd like to assure the industry that, while the structure of the organization may change, the funding it receives, the services and programs it offers, and its relationship with the stakeholders will remain the same.

This is simply an administrative change to allow our government to bring more focus to tourism as a driver in our economy. Mr. Speaker, it's essential to recognize that virtually every other province in the country has already brought support for its tourism industry back into government, typically by creating a Crown corporation. We're simply following their good example.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, members are clear. They have benefited from the involvement and input in Tourism Saskatchewan as an arm's-length agency and they are worried about the change. The executive director of Saskatchewan Bed and Breakfast Association writes, "It seems that we and all of the industry partners of Tourism Saskatchewan are being evicted so that your government can take full control." Mr. Speaker, why is the minister trying to take control of the tourism industry when it has successfully benefited its members and the province for so many years?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Tourism, Parks,

Culture and Sport.

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we have acknowledged, change always causes some concern and hesitation. It's perfectly understandable. But you know, Mr. Speaker, it also inspires people who are looking forward to the positive results change can bring. Here's what some visionary leaders in Saskatchewan's tourism industry are saying about the creation of a new Tourism Crown:

I would like to pass along the congratulations for the development of the new Crown corporation that will host Saskatchewan's tourism interests. This is a very positive move forward for Saskatchewan, and it's been a long time coming. Keep up the good work.

Says Chris Brewer, president and CEO [chief executive officer] of the Saskatchewan Snowmobile Association. And this one from Mr. Greg Dionne, Chair of the northern Tourism Saskatchewan region. He says:

I would like to pledge my support to the Government of Saskatchewan for the bold step they have taken and to help make tourism in Saskatchewan what it should be: a leader in economic growth.

Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what we're doing.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, the government cut the film tax credit without consulting industry members. The government is taking over Tourism Saskatchewan without consulting with members. I have received several letters, emails from Tourism Saskatchewan members objecting to the takeover. Mr. Speaker, will the minister agree to leave Tourism Saskatchewan as an arm's-length agency and work in good faith with the members to grow the tourism industry in Saskatchewan?

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

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Tourism Saskatchewan is already a government agency, Mr. Speaker. It receives 99 per cent of its funding from government. The change to a Tourism Crown will simply make that 100 per cent. With respect to the changes that we're proposing, there will in fact be input from industry members as well as other key stakeholders.

Tourism Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, has done great work on behalf of the industry over the years, but we need to provide more support for outdoor products like sport fishing. We need to focus more on events and festivals. Mr. Speaker, other provinces have realized that if they're funding their tourism agency, they ought to have more ability to set priorities on behalf of their people. We certainly agree. That's what the new Crown corporation will allow us to do on behalf of the people that we represent.

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

Plans for Forestry Operations

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last July a massive windstorm caused serious damage across the North. Thousands of trees were blown down over a large area of land, including the Big River area. The mills have no economic interest in harvesting the felled trees, so it seems they will remain on the forest floor as a serious fire hazard. There are many innovative opportunities that present themselves, such as green biomass energy projects, if the ministry takes a proactive approach.

To the minister: what, if any, plans are being developed to properly deal with the thousands of trees felled by that windstorm and any similar storms in the future?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to take the question from the member and inform the House that the Ministry of Environment is currently looking at a number of different options to deal with the blowdown that occurred in parts of the forest area this past year, Mr. Speaker. We have had discussions with forestry companies to look at some of those options including, Mr. Speaker, options around providing credits against the dues that forestry companies pay. Mr. Speaker, we are also looking very closely, though, at what any of these options would have an impact on softwood lumber agreements, Mr. Speaker, and so those discussions are taking place right now.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A year ago this government put \$2 million into a project to help develop the tourism sector in Big River. The problem is that now the government is being asked to approve tree-cutting plans that will negatively affect the tourism sector in the same area. It makes no sense to fund tourism on one hand and then damage its chance of success by allowing cutting on the other hand.

Will the minister ensure that whatever cutting his ministry approves in Big River area will not waste the \$2 million this government has already spent to support the tourism sector?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in regards to the question, Ministry of Environment officials are engaged on this file, Mr. Speaker. We are consulting not only the community, but also the forestry company — Sakaw in this case. Mr. Speaker, we want to make sure that we involve the public. Public meetings are being proposed to facilitate further discussion with the local community. And my understanding, Mr. Speaker, is that the company that has the allocation to harvest this timber has put a hold on harvesting any of the timber until this takes place.

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Congratulations to Clerk on 25 Years of Service

The Speaker: — Before orders of the day, I would ask for

leave of the House to make a statement of interest to the Assembly. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Thank you. Today we have the privilege to convey our congratulations to a tremendously important member of the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Gregory Arthur Putz. Together we celebrate Greg's 25 years of service to the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly. Greg was born in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan and has resided in Saskatchewan for the major portions of his life. He obtained his post-secondary education at the University of Regina, convocating with a B.A. [Bachelor of Arts] with honours history in 1982 and an M.A. [Master of Arts] in history from the University of Ontario in 1984.

A very important part of Greg's life are his two daughters Abigail and Emily and his step-children Laura, husband Mike Schmeling, Derek and Ryan, and of course his partner, Pam Scott.

Greg's legislative career in Saskatchewan started in 1987 when he was appointed as Clerk Assistant where he worked until 1994, at which time he moved into the role of Deputy Clerk. And in 2007, Greg was promoted to the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

Greg serves as a member of the Association of Clerks at the Table in Canada, and the Canadian Study of Parliament Group. He's also a member of the Canadian Aviation Historical Society and is the former president of the Roland Groome chapter in Regina and a member of the national board of directors of the Historical Society.

Greg has great respect for the institution of parliament and its rules and traditions. His advice is always about preserving the integrity of our system and about keeping the members out of trouble. Greg is an instrumental part of, was an instrumental part of the development of the new rules we operate with as an Assembly, and especially the new committee system.

Andrew Thomson, Ron Osika, Greg Putz, and I made up the steering committee to develop the new Assembly and committee rules. Greg accompanied us as we investigated the rules and committee operations of various jurisdictions. The quality of our rules reflects Greg's impact and involvement. Other jurisdictions are now looking to emulate our procedures.

As Speaker, I get the chance to work every day with Greg. In the past, I have spent time with Greg on committee work. The troubling part of this is that when flying with Greg, you had to be at the airport at least two hours before everybody else. Not because Greg has trouble getting through security, but because he wants to take pictures of all the different airlines and get pictures of all the aircraft call signs. If you want to make Greg happy, if you want to make Greg happy, bring him pictures of obscure airlines.

Greg tells me that in his aviation enthusiasm, he plays Microsoft Flight Simulator and likes to fly in and out of airports around the world. In fact, he creates his own airports for use in Flight Simulator. Just remember, Greg only does simulations,

so don't let him near any real airplanes.

Greg has served this Legislative Assembly in Saskatchewan well in the past, and I look forward to working with him in the future as he continues to provide Saskatchewan with good service, good advice, and keeping us all out of procedural quagmires. Thank you, Greg Putz, for your good work, and I'm sure we all look forward to continuing to work with you. Thank you.

I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Very well said. It really is a great honour to stand and be able to honour you, Greg, on 25 years of dedicated service to our Assembly.

Greg is a great parliamentarian. I've only been here for five years, but in that period of time have come to recognize Greg as somebody who's truly committed to this institution, truly committed to the institution of the legislature and the institutions and history of parliament. I know, talking to Greg on a number of occasions, he'll say, well you know, back in 1965 this ruling was made and you might want to consider that. This is just off the top of his head, Mr. Speaker. It's really quite extraordinary.

And, Greg, we really do honour you and thank you for your service. I actually didn't know until Mr. Speaker indicated your passion for gaming. I know Mr. Speaker himself shares a similar passion, and perhaps the Clerk and Mr. Speaker could figure out how to actually fly some aircraft with enough practice. I'm not sure I'd want to be on those aircraft.

But thank you so much, Greg. On behalf of the government, we really do want to congratulate you and thank you for your service to the Assembly.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise and add a few words of congratulation to Greg as our Clerk. When I arrived in the legislature, Greg was at the Table. And much as Greg's face doesn't always register what's going on, if you've been here long enough, you can usually figure out if there's something wrong by looking at Greg. And that's an important feature to have as a Clerk or even as a Speaker, but the Speakers change. Greg's been there as a real solid person to provide this kind of advice.

I also studied history, and so Greg and I have had some pretty interesting conversations about different things over the years. And I also studied historiography, which I know is part of the study of history. And it's very interesting to get advice from the Clerk because of the fact that he puts it in context. And I think that the House Leader just made that point, that part of what is so valuable for us in this legislature is your ability to bring the stories about different events over many decades and sometimes over centuries to inform what we do here.

[14:30]

Mr. Speaker, I think that we also need to say thank you to all of

the people who work with Greg because he couldn't do this job for 25 years without having a team of people both who he followed and also who are now following him, who provide the advice but, more importantly, provide the conversation. Because so much of what happens in this legislature is as a result of conversations where people try to sort out problems. And it's much like a legal career in that way. And so I often am amazed about the kinds of advice that comes after a collaboration with all of your colleagues, including the Speaker of the day.

So thank you very much, Greg. And we really appreciate 25 years, and we'll wish you many more years till you can get to some of your passions, as we've heard about. Thank you.

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 Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and to join in the debate on Bill 36 and give some, I guess, more comments that I wanted to share with the Assembly and some of the concerns that we're hearing out there.

Bill 36 will impact young people out in our province. Anyone under the age of 18 will not be included when the boundaries are being looked at, and we have a growing population out there of young people. We want to make sure that we involve the young people in the boundaries.

For instance, you know — some of my colleagues have talked about it — you have some young people who are 14 years old right now. By the time it comes to an opportunity to vote, they will be 18 and will have a right to vote, but they will not be included as residents to look at the boundaries, as residents of our province. And I think some of my colleagues have expressed the concern, and they have put that through, Mr. Speaker, very clearly where their concerns are coming from. And we're trying to make sure the government understands, to rethink this Bill, to make sure.

Do we want more politicians? Is that what truly the people of our province are asking for in a time . . . And I understand that we're trying to keep our finances under control and spending and, you know, we've had a large increase of spending. I think it's 30-some per cent over the years that the Sask Party has been in power, you know, but we've also had record revenue — record revenue. No government has had an opportunity at the resources and the revenue coming in that this Sask Party government has had, whether it was the rainy day fund or

inheritance that they, you know, inherited money in the bank. There's all these things that come into play.

But I want to go back to why people are concerned and I think why my colleagues have expressed their concern with Bill 36 and what it's trying to do or what we're perceived it's trying to do, and how it will affect a lot of Saskatchewan residents and how it will impact them with not including them in boundaries. So we may have some areas after the boundaries are looked at that a large population will be 18 and over and allowed to vote. And you haven't included those individuals in the boundaries. And again if something is not broken, why does this government constantly want to try to fix things? And people are wondering, why is that? And they're starting to question about being consulted, about sharing their views and their input. How come they're not asking? They just clearly go out and they have their agenda, and they're pushing forward on that.

Now the people of this beautiful province have made it very clear that they want to make sure that everyone's taken care of. And that includes anyone under 18 years of age, young people in this province. And I want to make it crystal clear that those individuals should be counted, whether they're my grandchildren, my friends' grandchildren, or children out there in our province, anyone else's grandchildren. They should be included. All residents of our province should be included in the boundaries.

If it isn't broken, why try to fix it — again I go back to that — unless there's another plan? And some people are saying that maybe there is another plan. Maybe there's something else in store for people out there. Maybe we want to make sure there's an advantage for a certain party, whether it's to stay in power, to make sure it's beneficial for them. And that is very concerning to a lot of people. People are very clear. And there's areas of our province are doing well, and they'll say that. But there are citizens like our seniors, young people that will have increased costs for prescription drugs in the budget, ambulance costs. There are individuals who may see more tuition costs because of some of the stuff going on in the budget.

What I don't hear them saying, clearly, is that they want more politicians. And go back to some of the backbenchers. You're out there. You're talking to your constituents. You were out campaigning. And you got elected here to represent the province — not just your own constituency, not just the people who live in there, but they asked you to represent and do what's best for our province.

And to the members and the backbenchers, you may not be in cabinet but you must know for sure that people in our province are not asking for three more politicians who would cost them millions of dollars. I don't believe that some of you members there believe this. I really believe that there are members on the backbench that don't believe this. I know the nine members on this side don't, but there is members on that side, I'm sure, know. It doesn't sit well with them, more politicians when we're asking people to do without, when we're asking individuals out there, well we have to make cuts.

I really think that people out there are watching this and are going to watch this. And if you go into the grocery stores . . . And I run into a lot of people. I listen to people's conversation

and they're talking about it. More politicians, why do we need more? If we were expecting our Saskatchewan people, and they hear our economy, the advantage, and you know, that is out there; everybody talks about all the different things that are going on. Well if there's such an advantage, how come so many are not feeling it? And those that aren't are wondering, do we need more politicians to represent us? And I think some of my colleagues have shared very clearly that Saskatchewan population is represented. We have one of the smallest populations that are represented by MLAs compared to other provinces with larger numbers that they're responsible to constituents.

So I say to you, we have to question what's going on here and what is the priority of this Sask Party government. Is it truly about our seniors, about our young people? There are so many issues that are facing Saskatchewan residents, whether it's housing, whether it's addictions. Why spend more money? Take that money and use it to assist people with suicides, mental health. Put the money to better use. That's all the people are asking.

There's some sectors, whether it's HIV [human immunodeficiency virus], whether it's suicides, addictions, whether it's seniors' drug plan where they don't have to pay the extra \$5 prescription. Some of them cannot afford this. They're already making it very clear. Some of my colleagues have made it very clear that some seniors are not receiving the proper medication because they can't afford to purchase them every month. So you're putting more on them. So what do they get? Less medication. What doesn't get paid at the end of the day? And when you talk to some of the seniors out there, our elders, they are struggling.

When we talk about a province and we talk about a government, a government should be humble. This government is not humble in the actions that it's doing. And I know deep down that members opposite, some of them must be looking at this, wondering what's going on. You must not all agree with what the ministers and around the cabinet . . . Speak up. Speak up for the individuals that are out there who have asked you to represent them. Go back home and ask them: do you want more politicians? Would you like more politicians? Do you think we should include all residents of our province, or do you think we should take out anyone under 18? I think you're going to be getting a very surprising answer from them. You will know that they're not happy.

So that's that area. So we go into the different areas. And there's always been questions about the way, the way legislation is introduced. And we've seen how the past election went on. The minister introduced a Bill. We needed photo ID [identification]. And I mean that caused a lot of grief out there, Mr. Speaker, a lot of concerns for people.

But I'm amazed that some of the leadership out there from the First Nations and the Aboriginal communities and the municipalities were very concerned and criticized the Bill about photo ID. And I was glad that the people that I represent, and a chief, came forward saying, no, this needs to be corrected. We have to allow our members to vote. An attestation was something that came forward. And I'm so happy and proud of our First Nation leaders to come forward and saying, it isn't

right; let's fix it.

And a solution was found with the Chief Electoral Officer of our province. He seen the right thing and a way to fix this problem. And I'm very pleased to say it was good to see it was fixed. Was it perfect? No. It shouldn't have been, this Bill shouldn't have been introduced. But having said that, we see that. With no consultation, they introduce Bills, legislation.

Bill 36 has been introduced. Who did they consult before the election? They didn't put in their nice brochures, oh yes, we want an . . . [inaudible] . . . I'm sure none of them went on the door saying, we're going to go after getting three more politicians, cost of millions of dollars. I don't think any of them, then door knocking, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe any of the members opposite . . . I know I didn't go around saying, do you want more politicians? They're introducing . . .

So it's a little surprising, overwhelming. And if you think about the tourism sector, again, and I have been asking questions about it, and they're concerned. There are so many groups, the film industry, there are so many groups that are frustrated because they are not consulted. Their input is not taken in. They're not even asked for input. They're blindsided. They're feeling disrespected. They're frustrated because they're not being included in this province, and they have a right to be included.

If you're going to go and affect an industry that is doing so good, like Tourism Saskatchewan and the tourism industry, they are moving forward. They are doing positive wonderful things. If it isn't broken, if a review is done and it says, do not mess with this, then why would a government do it? Well because I guess there might be some manipulating going on. They want to get a message. It's a big advertising agency, I guess, doing amazing things. So maybe they want to have more control. I think that's what the minister said. He wanted to have more control of the tourism sector.

Well yes, he's going to take . . . Truly I think he's doing that, and we're hearing that from the industry. Whether it's members of the tourism industry, whether it's from the industry or Tourism Saskatchewan, we are hearing they're very concerned, very concerned, at the direction this government has taken without talking with them, without consulting with them. They just announce it. Here it's going to go.

It's very concerning, Mr. Speaker, when you see situations that are developing because of a government that doesn't consult, doesn't take the input, doesn't take the advice of the people it says it's going to be in partnership with, Mr. Speaker — partnership. They talk about partnerships. Well I think they should make sure they understand a partnership means input. It means communicating. It says, consult with the group.

When you're going to make changes, all the industry is asking is to allow them to have some input. And, Mr. Speaker, we look at so many areas of this government. Yes, you got elected 49 members on that side. And you know what . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . That's right. That's right. That's right. Yes, you can very well . . . You can clap and cheerlead on that. That's right. The people gave you 49 members. But remember this: do not take them for granted, what you've been handed.

[14:45]

And I'll tell you something. They're starting to question. They're starting to see things. And we'll wait and see what happens. Keep on, keep on treating people the way your government . . . without consulting, without making sure they're giving input. Keep making decisions that are affecting our Saskatchewan people, and they will give you an answer. You may not like it, but you may get the answer.

And you can talk about being humble, a humble government. Well excuse me. I've seen some things here when we talk about needs of people, of industry, changes that you're doing without consulting. I know, I know that some members opposite, the members on this side, we may not always agree on everything. And that's fine. I understand that. But at the end of the day, the people that elect us here expect us to do what's right. Do the right thing. And I know the backbenchers back there, some of these things and decisions that are going on, cannot sit well with you. They cannot. You see a push, and you must hear it.

So again I go back to saying, very clearly, people are frustrated. The industry are not feeling that they've been consulted. So there's changes going on, that this government's got its mandate and it's going to push ahead with its plan, agenda, whatever you call. So let's make it very clear. Why are we sitting here today even looking at a Bill that's going to come like . . . that wants to look at adding more politicians when . . . a time when we don't need more politicians. You have 49 members. How many more members do you want on that side? Do you want 100? You want 100? Is that not enough? You will manage to do.

So let's be very clear. Yes, I know that the people have spoken. And I've said that before. We're sitting here. We're Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition. We have a role to do and a job to do. And I'm proud of the nine members over here, nine members speaking up for Saskatchewan people, speaking up for the tourism industry, speaking up for the groups that this government will not listen to, will not take input.

And you know, you talk about bullying. You know, here we all wear pink, and we're all saying about bullying. Bullying happens in many different forms, let me tell you. And some people are scared to bring their concerns forward. Scared. Why would that be? Why would they be scared? You know, some are nervous. Some of them are concerned. They really don't want to raise their concerns. Why is that? So you could sit there and say, well, I think the questions are very clear. So we talk about bullying. Well there's different forms of bullying. So let's get rid of the bullying. So let's have input with people. Let's open up the communication lines.

So the government could open up the communication line and say, we want your input. We'll protect you. I mean we've seen different things going on. We'll make sure that no harm should come to anyone raising concerns, whether you have contract, whether you do business, whether you're getting grants or anything else. People should be comfortable to say what it is they want. People should be able to say, it is a democratic right to speak and to say things that we want to say. We want to share our frustrations. If we agree with the government, we say the government can do a good job. That's great.

But we also should allow residents and organizations to criticize a government and not to feel a backlash or to feel intimidated about bringing concerns forward to a government saying, we don't agree with your philosophy. We don't agree with the direction you're going. We don't agree with this. It isn't right for us. It isn't right for Saskatchewan people. It may be what you want as your agenda and your plan. I understand that. There is an opportunity to do that. But the government needs to start opening up its communication lines to people that it's impacting. And that's all they're asking for.

So again I go back to this, saying, Mr. Speaker, people want to be talked to. They want input. They want their government to listen. But listening doesn't mean you listen and not act. They want meaningful conversations. They want a government that listens but then takes action on their advice. Leaders want that. Community members want that. Parents want that.

There's so many challenges out there in our province. And there are good things going on, Mr. Speaker. We know that. There are a lot of good things in our province. Our province is doing well. There's a lot of areas that are doing well, and people are feeling happy about it. I have nothing wrong with saying that. But there's a lot of areas that people aren't happy and are not doing well. And they're trying to get the government and the opposition to hear their concerns, and we are doing all we can. As Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, we have a role to play, and we are doing that role by raising the concerns, by talking and debating these Bills to make sure: is it good legislation?

At this time, Mr. Speaker, I'm prepared to, I have a motion that I would like to move. And so, Mr. Speaker, for these reasons I will move a reasoned amendment to this Bill which shall read:

That all the words after the word "That" be deleted and the following substituted therefor:

"this House declines to give second reading to Bill C-36, *An Act to amend The Constituency Boundaries Act, 1993* because

The Bill excludes, in determining constituency boundaries, the count of the young people of Saskatchewan, who deserve to be counted to determine the representation within this Legislative Assembly; and further

That the Bill increases the number of members of this Legislative Assembly by three, which is an unnecessary increase of politicians to represent the people of Saskatchewan."

I so move.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Opposition Whip:

That all the words after the word "That" be deleted and the following substituted therefor:

"this House declines to give second reading to Bill C-36, *An Act to amend The Constituency Boundaries Act, 1993* because

The Bill excludes, in determining the constituency boundaries, the counting of the young people of Saskatchewan, who deserve to be counted to determine the representation within this Legislative Assembly; and further

That the Bill increases the number of members of this Legislative Assembly by three, which is an unnecessary increase of politicians to represent the people of Saskatchewan."

Is the Assembly . . . I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to also rise and offer a few comments on the proposed amendment. And certainly I want to say to the people of Saskatchewan, that's exactly what is the desire of the opposition, is to hold this government to account on some of the issues that they're trying to bring forward without the people of Saskatchewan knowing full well what's at stake here, Mr. Speaker.

The Bill really talks about a number of issues that, I think, are really important though, like the primary issue in which they have excluded many of the children and the youth throughout Saskatchewan in counting how they would determine these boundaries. For those people that are listening, I'll very quickly summarize what I believe, what I think is the problem here. Generally there's jurisdictions throughout the country, the different territories, and the provinces. When they determine their boundaries, they usually take into account all people in the boundaries, the total population. And what happens, Mr. Speaker, is they include the youth and the children and so on and so forth, and that's an important aspect in making sure that everybody counts in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And when you see that the province of Saskatchewan through this Bill is saying, well hold it, we're not going to include children, nor are we going to include youth in the Bill. What we want to do is just simply include those that are of voting age. And, Mr. Speaker, what that does, it clearly excludes many people's children and grandchildren and youth within their family. And what you want to do as a government is not send the wrong signals to the youth and to the young children that they don't count.

So what this government is doing is they're excluding the children, Mr. Speaker, and the youth of each of these areas when they do an assessment as to how many constituencies that they want, and it also allows them to also gerrymander a number of the constituency boundaries, certainly to their benefit, Mr. Speaker. And we've seen a lot of evidence of that over the past. It's something that the Conservatives done with their federal ridings and something that the people of Saskatchewan ought to be very, very careful of and pay very close attention to.

So I would point out that the primary purpose of the amendment and certainly the challenge to the Bill is to talk about why and what the logic is behind excluding all the children and the grandchildren and the youth of our province when they determine how many constituencies we have in the province and certainly how the boundaries are redrawn.

Now I tell the people of northern Saskatchewan when they talk about the boundaries in general, many people in the northern part of Saskatchewan always question why we are included in some of the communities. As a good example would be in my riding of Churchill, why we were included in places like Meadow Lake and certainly places like Big River. They're all part of our federal riding, and why don't we have our own northern riding?

That's some of the questions we got in terms of having a riding in northern Saskatchewan where we'd have one federal riding for the whole region known as the northern administration district, Mr. Speaker. And that was a question that I certainly researched. And people across the North are saying, why can't we have our own federal riding? Because we respect the people of Meadow Lake area, we respect the people of Big River; these are great folks. But we have totally different lives, totally different issues. And there's just a confusion in terms of how these federal boundaries were designed, Mr. Speaker.

And what I tell them, it's very important we pay attention to not only how the federal ridings are designed, Mr. Speaker, but more so how the provincial constituencies are designed because there are a lot of folks out there in politics that will try and do things differently for their advantage without the people knowing. And by the time all this comes into effect, then many people of course are not advised or not informed, and sometimes they do get upset.

So what I'll tell the folks out there that wonder why we don't have our own federal riding in northern Saskatchewan is that process in terms of determining all the federal ridings, I believe, is going to be happening within the next short while. I would encourage people out there to begin to organize and to begin to petition and to begin to plan for that process so, when they do have these hearings, we can actually tell folks out there that there are differences.

When you look at the federal riding of where I live, there are differences, and stark differences and a stark contrast of, say, an agricultural base out of Meadow Lake area versus a trapping base out of Sandy Bay — that there are significant language differences; there are significant socio-economic conditions. There are different traditions and customs. There's just really, Mr. Speaker, a whole world of difference in terms of lives within northern Saskatchewan and those that are in the forestry fringe.

So one of the things I would point out to folks out there is I would say to them, pay attention to the commissions that come your way that determine federal riding boundaries, and of course, with this particular Bill, the provincial constituencies commission that's going to go around telling folks, this is how we're going to design our constituencies.

And, Mr. Speaker, what the Sask Party is trying to do is they're trying to manipulate that process and, hopefully to their advantage, do two or three things, is to create a constituency that may add to their support base. And, Mr. Speaker, that's contrary to democracy in general.

Now I would point out that they have . . . This Bill talks about putting . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — And what's your point of order?

[15:00]

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Mr. Speaker, there is a point of order with regard to the reasoned amendment moved by the members opposite. I would refer Mr. Speaker to Marleau and Montpetit, 2nd edition, page 749, which reads:

For a reasoned amendment to be in order, it must observe the following rules:

. . . It must not be a direct negation of the principle of the bill. The procedure to be followed when a Member does not agree with the principle of the bill and wants to reject it is simply to vote against the motion for second reading of the bill.

Another condition: "It must" . . . When "A reasoned amendment" . . . Sorry.

It must not attach a condition to the adoption of the second reading motion.

A reasoned amendment which is merely a statement of opposition to portions of the bill is not admissible.

I would ask Mr. Speaker to review those provisions and rule whether that amendment is in order. I would submit that it is not.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Obviously I disagree with the Government House Leader. This motion was developed in close consultation with the Office of the Clerk and was tabled as such. We think that this is entirely in order and speaks to the need for the debate to continue on in this House. I would so submit, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I would like to thank the Government House Leader and the Opposition House Leader for their comments on the point of order. On pages 749 of second edition of Montpetit — O'Brien and Bosc — different book, and I will read this:

Today, a reasoned amendment generally takes the form of a proposal that the House decline to give a bill second reading, for a specific reason. The reasons put forward in recent practice fall into two broad categories:

The reasoned affirmation of a principle adverse to or differing from the principles, policy or provisions of the bill;

Those reasons were provided in the amendment. There are three kinds of amendments that are possible: a reasoned amendment, the six-month hoist, and a referral to committee. The purpose of all three is a purpose to defeat the Bill.

So after consultation and examination of the proper procedures, this amendment stands acceptable.

I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to again reiterate the comments I made earlier about making sure, making sure that the people out there are aware of how these constituency boundaries are drawn up, not only in the federal perspective, Mr. Speaker, but certainly in the provincial perspective as this Bill certainly would indicate that.

Now the people out there that are listening, I think it's important that they pay very close attention to what is happening here. What is happening, Mr. Speaker, is that this Bill is trying to determine constituency boundaries. Right now I think we have 58 constituencies. The Sask Party wants to increase those constituencies and therefore the number of MLAs in Saskatchewan by three, Mr. Speaker.

So what happens now is you're going to have three more politicians. And the fundamental belief and the principle that we have in the opposition is that you don't need three more politicians, Mr. Speaker, especially in light of the fact that that government is certainly cutting back on services and certainly cutting back on programs, programs that the people of Saskatchewan love dearly, Mr. Speaker. And we saw evidence of that with a number of groups and organizations coming this way and certainly coming to the Assembly to certainly protest what the Sask Party is doing to their respective organizations and industries, Mr. Speaker.

So again the motion that was made today by my learned colleague from Cumberland, I think it's really important that people out there realize that this is going on and that they have to pay very close attention to what is happening. Now what we're arguing about on the New Democratic side of the House is that this Bill certainly smacks, it smacks the face of democracy in many ways. One of the most significant ways is that they're going to not only increase the amount of boundaries we have or the amount of constituencies in Saskatchewan; they're going to also exclude people that are younger than 18, which is contrary to what was being done before, Mr. Speaker.

So when you have a population base, say in any region, you look at all the people within that region, and you determine, based on the fact that there's many young families, there are many youth in these constituencies that are not 18 yet, but typically what the government does, it includes everybody when they do up a map to determine exactly how many constituencies we have. They have to look at the population of every area. And in the past, in the past they looked at all the different folks that were in that area, which included youth and children and so on and so forth, Mr. Speaker.

But not the Sask Party Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. They have made an effort to say in this Bill that the children and the youth do not count under this plan. When they redraw the constituency boundaries, they're going to only include those folks that are 18 and up, that are of voting age, Mr. Speaker. And that certainly is going to hurt a lot of people, and those are the people that we encourage, Mr. Speaker, to be part of the democratic process.

Now this Bill obviously is going to be in effect. The next election, I'm assuming, is 2015 or 2016, and many 14-year-olds now today that would be excluded in the count to determine which areas would be a constituency, they would become eligible to vote, Mr. Speaker. But guess what happens? Today they're not counted, yet they're going to be able to vote when they're 18. And that's exactly our point, is how do you encourage young people to be part of the political process when you don't count them? And the only time they have any value to you, when you're a Sask Party member, is when they turn 18, and hopefully they'll come your way, Mr. Speaker. And that's something that I think is contrary to ethical constituency boundaries work. I don't think it's very fair, I don't think it's very proper, and I don't think it's democratic at all, Mr. Speaker.

So I think the amendment made today by the member from Cumberland certainly shows that there's a lot of people out there that (a) didn't want more politicians, that (b) did not pay a lot of attention to this Bill. And our job as the official opposition, as the member indicated, is to make sure that people knew exactly what the Bill was proposing to do.

So I would say again, Mr. Speaker, that this is not something that we should proceed with without the conclusive support of the people of Saskatchewan. I suggested yesterday we have a referendum or if you want to have a public plebiscite on this particular issue to determine whether the people of Saskatchewan support having more politicians as opposed to more front-line workers.

We challenged the Saskatchewan Party, the members, yesterday. That challenge was met with a great amount of silence and not too many words from that side, Mr. Speaker. So I think the fear of going back to the people on this particular Bill is something that they do not want to have happen. And again that flies in the face of democracy. And certainly people out in Saskatchewanland will certainly want to have a say on that. And this is the whole purpose of our debate today, is to tell them that you should have a say, and you should contact your Sask Party MLAs as they're the ones that are advocating for that, Mr. Speaker.

The other point I would raise is that, when I talk about the young people being excluded and the general public not being advised of this and the fact that they didn't run on this particular issue during the campaign, that that all is unfair, Mr. Speaker. And that's exactly our point that we're telling people out there. We're appealing to the people of Saskatchewan. When you have this kind of activity by a government, it should not be tolerated. It should be put in check, Mr. Speaker. And they should get the message. And that's my point I am trying to make today while I stand here and support the amendment made by my colleague from Cumberland.

Now yesterday I also indicated that I would encourage people to come to the Assembly, but we'd also encourage people to write letters. We'd also encourage different municipal councils or school boards or different organizations out there to actually bring forward a position, whether it be a petition or whether it would be a statement against that kind of activity. I think that municipal councils can indeed do that because it's not something that we would say is not your responsibility.

If you feel, as a municipal leader or as a school board leader or as an organization leader, that this is not good for the people of Saskatchewan, that this is not what you wanted, then I encourage you to speak up. Speak up by way of going on the radio and make sure that you let these folks know exactly what is happening with this Bill and exactly how they feel, Mr. Speaker.

It's important to note that when you look at the constituency boundaries per se, that there is a lot of discussion back home, as I mentioned when we talked about the federal boundaries. People did not take advantage of those opportunities, Mr. Speaker. They did not take advantage of the opportunity to tell people out there that they shouldn't have these kinds of breakups in terms of the federal ridings. There's many examples of how this was gerrymandered throughout time.

And you look at the examples, and I would use my example, Mr. Speaker, in northern Saskatchewan. We've long advocated for having our own federal riding. You know, you look at the old DNS [Department of Northern Saskatchewan] line, the northern administration district of Saskatchewan, that we'd have our own federal riding.

Because we are, whether it's in Cumberland House or whether it's in Turnor Lake, Mr. Speaker, or whether it's in Camsell Portage or whether it's in La Ronge, we all have a similar lifestyle in terms of being active within the community, in terms of having Aboriginal people in and around your community, of being really part of the land and being a northerner. It means a lot, Mr. Speaker. It means a lot to people in the northern part of Saskatchewan to be called a northerner because we understand each other, and many of our communities are very similar. Some may be more economically advantaged than others, but others are more culturally advanced than others. But there's a lot of respect between all these communities, Mr. Speaker.

And that's why it's important for people to know, it's important for people to know that when the federal ridings were determined, what happened was we got lumped in with some of the communities to the forest fringe and south of us, places like Meadow Lake, as I mentioned at the outset, and Big River, Mr. Speaker. And you can see that we wonder who draws up these boundaries. Like how are these boundaries designed? And who influences them? Who has the final say as to who is going to be, who is going to be doing all this work, Mr. Speaker?

And quite frankly, I tell the people in my area that there was not enough attention paid to the detail of how that federal riding commission, when they came out, and who was involved and who done what and when, where, how. All these questions were not answered, Mr. Speaker. And that's what this Bill is prepared to do as much to inform people in terms of letting them know exactly what is happening. This Bill doesn't articulate that in any way, shape, or form. So once again we're at that stage. And I tell the people of northern Saskatchewan is, you've got to pay a heck of a lot more attention to how they're designing our federal boundaries.

[15:15]

And now with this particular Bill, how the Sask Party is trying to design new constituencies to their advantage, and, Mr.

Speaker, we're going to make sure we yell this as high and as loud as we can from the highest mountaintop in northern Saskatchewan to the radio stations and certainly to all the regions of Saskatchewan because this is important.

And so I would tell the social media folks out there and the media, the daily newspapers and the weekly papers, to pay attention to this Bill, Mr. Speaker, to pay attention to this Bill to see exactly what is being proposed here, Mr. Speaker, because this is really, really important to the future of Saskatchewan. It's so vitally important that they read all the details and they look at this Bill to see exactly what is happening here, Mr. Speaker. And that's the important message that I have today.

And once you begin to see what is being done, the exclusion of our young people, Mr. Speaker, the gerrymandering of what I think is going to happen under their watch under this particular Bill, and, Mr. Speaker, most importantly is the fact they're not advising people exactly what is going on and what is happening to this particular process in this Bill.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to again inform the Assembly, and certainly the people that are watching, what the amendment, what the amendment to the Bill shall read. And the amendment is:

That all the words after the word "That" be deleted and the following be substituted therefor:

"this House declines to give second reading to Bill C-36, *An Act to amend The Constituency Boundaries Act, 1993*, because

The Bill excludes, in determining constituency boundaries, the counting of the young people of Saskatchewan who deserve to be counted to determine representation within this Legislative Assembly; and further

That the Bill increases the number of the members of this Legislative Assembly by three which is an unnecessary increase of politicians to represent the people of Saskatchewan."

So this amendment, I think, Mr. Speaker, is really important that the people of Saskatchewan pay attention to that, Mr. Speaker. And that is something I think overall that we need to make sure we tell folks out there why this Bill is so unnecessary and what the motives are for the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker.

I also want to read out again for the record — and I know I done this yesterday, and I'm going to continue doing it ad nauseam — in terms of the rationale for more seats. That's what the Bill says. The Bill says that.

And the people out there that are listening to this particular debate should know that in the number of provinces that have similar processes in place, I want to point out — and I just need to make sure I get this right — that our province of Saskatchewan, as I mentioned yesterday, has an average of 17,817 voters per riding. The neighbouring province of Manitoba has 21,198 per riding. And when you look at Alberta,

it has 43,919 voters per riding. BC [British Columbia] has 51,765 voters per riding. And Ontario, as I mentioned yesterday, has 120,120 voters per riding, Mr. Speaker. That's how the number of people out in these particular ridings, or these particular provinces, those are the ones that have the higher numbers than Saskatchewan.

And yet the Saskatchewan Party is advocating for more MLAs and more constituencies when they have the lowest amount of voters per constituency compared to Alberta, compared to BC, compared to Manitoba, compared Ontario, Mr. Speaker. And all the Western provinces, Mr. Speaker, all the Western provinces are much, much further in terms of the numbers of people that they have in each of the ridings. Saskatchewan is not even close, and yet this Saskatchewan Party government is trying to increase the seats based on their rationale that they need more MLAs, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to run through those numbers again. You know, folks back home, remember these numbers. These are really important. Saskatchewan had 17,800 voters per riding. Manitoba, 21,198 per riding. And look at Alberta with 43,900 voters per riding. BC, 51,785 voters per riding. And of course Ontario, 120,110 voters per riding, Mr. Speaker. And those are amazing numbers. Those are amazing numbers. And the people of Saskatchewan are saying, well what's going on here? Like why are we asking for more MLAs? Is there any reason behind this? Is there any purpose behind this?

And, Mr. Speaker, what I think is important is to tell the people of Saskatchewan, if these guys, if the Saskatchewan Party begin to exclude the young people in their assessment as they're proposing to do, how do these numbers go down? Will the 17,000 go down dramatically, Mr. Speaker? And I would suggest to you that they perhaps will. These are numbers from the history perspective in terms of what has been done so far. Well what these guys want to do from the past, what these guys want to do, Mr. Speaker, is they now want to exclude everybody under the age of 18. So those numbers will be going even more dramatically down in terms of the voters per riding here in the province of Saskatchewan.

And it was with a great amount of chagrin and certainly laughter from the opposition side when they made a reference to PEI [Prince Edward Island]. This is how Prince Edward Island does it, Mr. Speaker. That's what they said. And of course all of us on the opposition side started almost bursting out laughing. And some of us just couldn't believe they're using PEI as an example — I think it was PEI — and yet they wouldn't use their neighbouring provinces as an example. And that goes back to saying to what we believe, Mr. Speaker, that this is more of a political agenda at work than trying to be fair, Mr. Speaker, and trying to make sure that this is done properly.

Now I think what's important if you look at the example that we used over time, Mr. Speaker, is the notion of excluding young people. And I know some of my colleagues spoke about this, which I think is really, really important, that all the points that we keep reiterating are points of fairness and certainly points that need to be expressed.

And people ought to know what this Bill is all about. And I would say, Mr. Speaker, you look at some of the points that

were raised in terms of one of my colleagues suggesting that the impact on First Nations communities could be negative as well. Because many of the First Nations people in the communities in Saskatchewan, or in the First Nations communities, and they have a large proportion of young people. Some of the amount of young people under the age of 16 is probably maybe 40, maybe 50, maybe 60 per cent, Mr. Speaker. Are they arbitrarily saying, the Saskatchewan Party saying to these young people and to the First Nations leaders, that when we do our politics that your young people on First Nations land do not count? That's what they're saying in this particular Bill, Mr. Speaker.

And that's not what the Saskatchewan NDP stand for, Mr. Speaker. And that's why we're standing up today to tell you that this is wrong. It is wrong. It is not something that should have been done at all, Mr. Speaker. Why would they do that? Why would they do that? Why would they exclude young people, Mr. Speaker? What is the logic behind all that?

And if they don't explain to the public, if they don't explain to the people of Saskatchewan why they're doing this, the NDP will certainly take their opportunity to explain what we think and the reason why they're doing this, Mr. Speaker. And we think that it is all about gerrymandering the next election, Mr. Speaker, and working with those numbers to do a constituency boundary redesign, Mr. Speaker, so they can take more of what was done federally, take the lessons from the federal riding work to certainly do that. So the advantage would be in their court if they're excluding First Nations youth, Métis youth, and the non-Aboriginal people's youth in terms of looking at the numbers as to which areas deserve more constituencies. And thus the population, I think overall, would be poorly served if this government continued down their path, Mr. Speaker.

So again I would, I would point out. They made a reference today which was kind of nice in terms of what they perceive as the ever-astute media folk, person, Murray Mandryk. They made reference to him. And Murray Mandryk wrote an article here. And Mr. Mandryk . . . The headline screams, as I mentioned out yesterday: "Do we really need three more MLAs?" Big question mark, Mr. Speaker, big question mark. And according to Mandryk's article, and I'll read this out. And I quote:

No, as a matter of fact, I [meaning Murray] 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 [during] the November election. But that's a good question, too.

So I have a lot of information that I want to go through here for the next several hours to make sure people out there know. And I'm going to say this over and over again so they know these numbers. Because according to a number of media folk that we deal with, they tell us that if we don't mention these numbers 15 to 16 times, people will not register it in their minds until you go through that process that many times.

So, Mr. Speaker, in many ways I'm going to mention those figures from time to time to tell you why this Bill is a poorly designed Bill and why the people of Saskatchewan are going to be getting angrier and angrier over this Bill. And the big question is, why are the Saskatchewan Party government, why

is the Saskatchewan Party government doing this at this time? What is the logic? What is the reasoning? And we'll certainly give you our perspective, Mr. Speaker.

Now I notice that you look at some of the points that we would raise from the perspective of being fair, about being a democratic province. I think Saskatchewan is one of the great provinces in terms of leading a lot of national efforts, Mr. Speaker. We are famous throughout the land, and we're very proud of our history. And you look at the birthplace of medicare. That was, of course, Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We brought the whole notion of medicare to the country of Canada, and Saskatchewan has been known as the birthplace for that particular effort. And that's something that we should be proud of.

Now when you see activity of this sort, that certainly takes away from that pride, Mr. Speaker. It takes away from that pride, and that's unfortunate. And what I want to point out as well is that when you look at the examples that we use, and we look at the New West Partnership that this government touts, and they talk about being on par with Alberta, they talk about working with BC and continuing building this new West, but when it comes to their political posturing and their political mandate, they make references to PEI — well, PEI does this.

You know, Mr. Speaker, you can't pick and choose the arguments that you have to your advantage. The people in Saskatchewan are a heck of a lot more intelligent than that. And when you put Bills forward of this sort, when you put Bills forward of this sort, you're insulting the people of Saskatchewan's intelligence because they know exactly what your plan is. And, Mr. Speaker, that is not fair. That is not proper. And I think that's unbecoming of a government, Mr. Speaker, because people out there need to be told exactly what is going to happen with this Bill, and I don't believe that they have been told properly.

And I think what's happening was the Saskatchewan Party were hoping that they would be able to sneak this through, gerrymander the process, go through the process of having this commission in place, and at the end get what they want, and all the while taking apart the whole principle of including young people, Mr. Speaker, when they do that assessment. And that is not fair. That is not proper. And every single member of the Saskatchewan Party government needs to wear that. And that's something that I think, at the doorstep, people will certainly begin to bring those issues forward.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think, from our perspective, when I said we would give you our point as to why we think they would do this, I think the point is clear. When we look at some of the points that were raised during the elections, I think one that the Premier talked about, a fixed election date. I don't think he said fixed election process — I think he said fixed election date.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what we're saying in the NDP, now we're seeing evidence that there's going to be fixed elections in the future. And this Bill lends credence to that argument, Mr. Speaker. Because what they want to do is they want to manipulate the process and the constituency boundaries to try and add three more MLAs at millions of dollars of cost, and they're going to do this and they're going to fix the process so

that they are the benefactors of any redesign and certainly any redistribution of voters to make sure that they get their way.

So I would point out, Mr. Speaker, that there is a lot of problems, Madam Speaker. There's a lot of problems with this particular Bill, and we are going to make sure that we continue holding this government to account.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to do another quote from Murray Mandryk's article, and I think it's important to note that the media in general, the columnists that I'm talking about, is not part of the NDP. They're not part of the Saskatchewan Party. They certainly sit up in the press gallery and they monitor what goes on in the Assembly. There are some days that Mandryk is kind to us and other days he's kind to the Saskatchewan Party. But in general, media are viewed as being very, very neutral and just simply trying to report the facts as they see it and to be as neutral and professional as they can, Mr. Speaker.

[15:30]

And that's something that I think people out there ought to know because when they make comments as to what this particular Bill is all about, they're not doing it to be politically influential. They're doing it from the perspective as they see it and they certainly put it down to pen and paper. And I've learned a long time ago that you can't argue with somebody that buys ink by the barrel, and certainly with the media you have to work very closely with them.

But then again, I want to make sure I also quote from Murray's article. And I go on to quote:

What's that? You say . . . [you] need . . . [more] 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.

This is Mandryk's article:

What's that you say? You also can't figure out why they are adding five per cent more Saskatchewan MLAs at a 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 . . . make much sense given that you are far more likely to need the services of a government employee than that of an MLA.

So, Mr. Speaker, that's the other point I think is really important. And I think Mandryk hit the nail on the head. How could you ask for more MLAs at a time that you're preaching austerity? How could you ask for more MLAs at a time that you're firing civil servants, and I think the amount is 15 per cent over time. How could you ask for more MLAs when you're cutting programs and services that people so desperately need, Mr. Speaker? It just doesn't make any sense. And that's what this Bill is proposing to do and that's what the people of Saskatchewan ought to know.

So again, Mr. Speaker, I think whether it's the media that are making comments on this . . . And I go again, I go again on Murray Mandryk's article when he says, he makes a point:

No, it can't be that Saskatchewan MLAs are busier than their counterparts in other provinces, either. With the possible . . . [exemption] . . . of P.E.I. and maybe one or two other Atlantic provinces, Saskatchewan MLAs already represent fewer per-capita voters than virtually any other provincial politicians in the country.

Mr. Speaker, so again, they're using PEI as an example. And that was what the most amazing part of this particular Bill from our opposition perspective because we were arguing about the Bill saying, you don't need more MLAs. And wasn't the Premier talking about this New West Partnership with BC and Alberta, and we're going to really build and go on and look forward to the future and this continued prosperity — all that great language, Mr. Speaker?

Oh, but hold it. In terms of our political agenda and this Bill, we're going to go see PEI, you know, out on the East Coast. And of course the people on the opposition benches say, what's that about? Well that's exactly the point, is that this is an affront to democracy. And it's amazing that the Minister of Justice is proposing this Bill. That's what is most incredible about this process, Mr. Speaker, is the Minister of Justice is proposing this Bill.

So, Mr. Speaker, what pre-empts the Minister of Justice from making sure that this is a fair and just process, Mr. Speaker? And that of course is the political plan and the political directives that he has been given, Mr. Speaker. And that is unfair. That is unfair not only to his post but to the people of Saskatchewan.

So again I go back to my particular point that the people of Saskatchewan did not want three more MLAs. They have a resounding message to this government: they don't want more MLAs, especially if you're laying off civil servants that could be working and helping people in general in everyday life, especially when you have programs, especially when you have services being cut, Mr. Speaker. And how could you justify, how could you justify adding more politicians to the payroll at millions of dollars of cost, and at the same time talking about austerity and at the same time cutting programs left and right, Mr. Speaker? It just doesn't make any sense, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't make any sense to the average person. It doesn't make any sense to the principal of democracy, and it certainly doesn't make any sense to the official opposition.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a bit about my grandchildren if I may. I've been blessed with some really good grandchildren. You know, I'm a lucky guy because I've also mentioned that in my family I've got, you know, a really nice, supportive wife and who I nickname as gorgeous. You know, she's a very nice-looking lady, but she's also very in charge of her family. God blessed me with three wonderful daughters, and every day I hear people back home saying they were so glad that they look like their mother, and I silently second the motion. And certainly from my perspective, Mr. Speaker, I am also glad that they look like their mother.

And two of the older girls gave me four beautiful grandchildren. And I think this is important that the Assembly know this as well, and the Assembly should know that those four children are Métis children. You know, they are born in a Métis family

and they're all . . . There's one that's seven, another that's six, one that's two, and one that's 10 months. And, Mr. Speaker, those four grandchildren of mine are not counted under this particular Bill.

And I find that very, very shameful. They're not counted under this particular Bill, and yet they're Saskatchewan residents, and yet they live and work and they're proud to be a part of the province. And those four children are not included in this particular Bill, as many other children and grandchildren throughout the province are not included as well. Why is that happening in this day and age, Mr. Speaker? It is for a political agenda. That's what it's all about. And from our perspective, Mr. Speaker, as an opposition, we want to make sure that people out there know that that is not fair. That flies in the face of democracy. And everywhere you go, every person under 18 under this particular Bill doesn't count, and that's compliments of the Saskatchewan Party government, Mr. Speaker.

This has not been done before. It has not been done before in the history of Saskatchewan where young people are excluded when you do the electoral boundaries, Mr. Speaker. Every person counted before, and now today under this Bill, everybody over 18 are the only ones that count. They're the only ones that count, Mr. Speaker.

And while we're excluding the kids, we're also going to fire some people that have worked for the province for years. We're also going to cut programs, and yet this is an austerity budget. This is all what this is all about, Mr. Speaker, is a political plan, Mr. Speaker.

So I want to point out as well that . . . as I talk about my grandchildren, as I speak about my grandkids. There's the oldest one. Her name is Meika, and Meika is seven years old. She's in grade 1, and she's a very astute and good-looking girl. And guess what? When Meika turns 18, she wants to vote. But she wants to be able to be counted now as a person, as a person, a Canadian person, as a Saskatchewan resident, as a Métis person. Meika wants to be counted, Mr. Speaker, she says, because she has to know that she counts.

And then you have Brodey. Brodey's six years old, and Brodey's a handsome guy. He looks more like his grandma than his grandpa, and thank goodness for that. I'll second that motion as well. And Brodey's also a very proud Canadian citizen. He's also very proud to call Saskatchewan his home, and he's also very proud that he's Métis. And, Mr. Speaker, Brodey wants to be counted too. And that's what's really important; he wants to be counted as well.

And now we go down to Nixon. Nixon is two years old, and Nixon's a handful, Mr. Speaker. And Nixon Taylor Phillip Magnus is going to be one solid guy when he gets bigger because he's got that temper, of course, but he's also got that humour, Mr. Speaker. And guess what? Nixon is two years old. He doesn't know that he's proud to be a Canadian but as he gets older, he'll be told he's proud to be a Canadian. And he'll certainly be happy with that. He'll be proud that he's a Saskatchewan person and, Mr. Speaker, what's important is he's also going to be proud that he's Métis. But guess what? I'm pretty sure Nixon at his age of two years old wouldn't mind being counted in, you know, in terms of being part of

Saskatchewan, that he should know that he counts.

And the final one I want to speak about is little Mila. Mila's only about eight, nine months, you know, and she's just a handful. And she's a really happy little girl, and she's what I think is going to be one of the biggest blessings in the province of Saskatchewan. She's going to be one fantastic grandchild and, Mr. Speaker, the only problem with her is she's got these really big cheeks, you know, and that's where she stores all her food. So we're trying to get her on a cheek diet because that's all you see when you look at Mila is just pure cheeks. And she's very pretty and she's very astute and she likes to smile, but we've got to work on those cheeks to make sure that they're proportionally the size they should be when it comes to the rest of her pretty face.

So, Mr. Speaker, we know that those challenges exist. But, you know, Mila is at that age where she's just looking. She's looking at things and picking up things. And one of these days I hope Mila knows that she counted, even the day that she was born, that she counted in Saskatchewan, that she counted in many, many ways, but more so from the political, the economic perspective, and just building Saskatchewan as a whole.

And what you have, Mr. Speaker, with the four grandchildren, and I speak of them fondly because I love them all and I love them very, very evenly. And I share a lot of opportunity and times with them to explain what the value of life is, and I'm blessed in that regard because whether it's Meika or whether it's Mila or whether it's Nixon or Brodey, I'm one lucky grandpa because I get to spend a lot of time with them.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think as a parent too, if I had children under the age of 18, I would also be very, very concerned because what's happening under the Sask Party Bill, this particular Bill, is that any child and any youth under the age of 18 don't count when you look at determining the makeup of our constituencies. This government has changed that rule.

When you do an evaluation of your population to say how many constituencies we have and should need, they're saying, uh-oh, hold it. We're not counting the children. We're not counting the youth. Anybody under the age of 18 do not matter, you know. And they're not saying that they don't matter, Mr. Speaker. They're saying they're not being counted in this regard. And to me I think that does a great disservice to not only my grandchild or my grandchildren, but all of the grandchildren throughout the province, Mr. Speaker, and more so to the youth that are of that age where four years from now they get to vote. But right now in determining the constituency boundaries, which is part of their political agenda, that young person doesn't count, Mr. Speaker, that they have no value to the Saskatchewan Party unless they're 18 years of age and over. And that is very, very shameful, Mr. Speaker.

So not only is this an affront to democracy in many ways. It is also very disrespectful to our families, to the grandchildren, to the children under the age of 18. And, Mr. Speaker, that's all compliments of the Sask Party government, Mr. Speaker. That's all compliments of the Sask Party government, and people ought to know that.

Now I want to do those numbers again for the different

jurisdictions. I want to do the numbers again for the jurisdictions throughout the country. And for those that just joined us, Saskatchewan has an average of 17,817 voters per riding compared to Manitoba that has 21,198 voters per riding. Alberta has 43,919 voters per riding. BC has 51,785 voters per riding. And Ontario has 120,110 voters per riding. And out of all these provinces, there's only one that wants to increase the amount of politicians they have. And guess which one that is, Mr. Speaker? That is the lowest amount of voters per riding, and that, Madam Speaker, is the province of Saskatchewan led by the Saskatchewan Party government, Mr. Speaker.

So we spoke about some of the challenges in terms of why would you need more MLAs. We spoke about how they have excluded grandchildren like mine, grandchildren like the many other grandparents that enjoy out there . . . that have grandchildren, that enjoy these grandchildren. They don't seem to count to the Saskatchewan Party.

And the whole purpose of that, the reason why they've arbitrarily excluded those children and those grandchildren in your lives is because they have a political agenda at stake. They want to be able to gerrymander the numbers to create more constituencies, to again to look at how they're able to weaken some of the constituencies with larger families, with more of a family base, so they can put more of their support base in that same constituency. You can start seeing how, you can begin to see how they want to have the process become very, very cloudy and confusing. And at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, what they want to do is, quite frankly, position these three new MLAs and position these three new constituencies to accommodate their political agenda. And they're doing that in a most unfair manner, Mr. Speaker, in a most unfair manner.

I look at the process for the commission, the commission itself. I understand what's supposed to happen is they're supposed to get people that are neutral, people that don't have any vested interests in how they're going to design these constituencies, Mr. Speaker. And that's another principle that we think that they're going to fall flat on their face on. They're going to be very aggressive. They're going to make sure that they have friends of theirs on these provincial commissions to make sure that they're able to influence those friends and say, look, this is what we need done, this is what we need done. Can you work within the parameters of this Act to make sure it happens?

[15:45]

So the guy goes and he says, okay, I'm neutral. But then all these rules and regulations of this Bill pretty much dictates to what that person can or cannot do in terms of their recommendations of new constituencies. You know they're looking at the numbers. And that's why the numbers in this Bill are really, really important. Because they're going to make sure that, based on what we say in this Bill, the commission that they're going to establish, which they'll claim is going to be independent . . . Guess what? That independent commission will not have any room to do anything independent, based on all the rules and regulations and the obstacles that this government put in place.

So you might as well have, you might as well have three folks that are probably going to be very, very astute people and going

to be very, very impressive people. Well those three folks will all of a sudden quickly realize that their work is also being gerrymandered, Mr. Speaker, and that their work will be compromised an incredible amount based on all the rules and regulations of this particular Bill.

This Bill will indicate the fact that we're going to have three more constituencies and where they want those three more constituencies made and organized and drawn up. They will get their way, Mr. Speaker. So this whole process of having this independent commission, the opposition don't buy it. We don't buy it, not because we question the integrity and the abilities and the skill of the commission members, Mr. Speaker. We don't buy it because the Bill itself dictates and indicates what exactly the parameters of their work is. And the parameters of that work is going to fulfill their political agenda, not rely on the independence nor the ethics nor the professionalism of those committee members, Mr. Speaker.

And that again in itself is an affront to democracy. And people out in Saskatchewanland, they know what is happening. And that's why, from the opposition perspective, we're going to continue harping on these numbers. We're going to continue harping on the process. We're going to do all we can to educate the people of Saskatchewan. It's the same principle behind the federal ridings when these were designed a number of years ago. The same principle applies now, today, Mr. Speaker, with this Bill and with this provincial constituencies boundaries Act that's being introduced by the Minister of Justice, Mr. Speaker.

So I want to put my attention again to the whole notion of the First Nations communities and the Métis communities. As we know, Mr. Speaker, as we know, this government is on the attack. They're going to war with the First Nations and Métis people and the Aboriginal people in general. They are going to war. This is another shot, Mr. Speaker, another shot against the First Nations and the Métis people. Why? Because this Bill recognizes, those folks over there know, that the vast majority of people that live on First Nations lands or the Métis community, the huge amount of those people, the huge amount of those people are under the age of 18.

And I go back earlier to my statement of 40, 45, 55, 60 per cent of the First Nations and Métis communities are all young people, Mr. Speaker. There's a ton of young people in First Nations lands and a ton of young people in the Métis communities, Mr. Speaker, all under the age of 18. There's a huge amount of people. This Act does not include them. This Act does not include them. So if you look at that, at their perspective, and you're a chief or a band councillor or a mayor or a Métis leader, and you're being told by this Act, look, you've got 100,000 First Nations and Métis people — if they're not 18 and over, from this Act's perspective they don't count. They don't count.

So what you've done is that you made it more of a problem for the First Nations and Métis community because of the huge amount of young people that they have within their communities. And, Mr. Speaker, it's a greater number than in the non-Aboriginal community. If you look at the makeup of Saskatchewan in general, the First Nations and Métis people have a ton of young people that are under the age of 18. And the numbers are just phenomenal, Mr. Speaker. Sometimes they're

as high as 60 per cent under the age of 18. And this is an amazing amount of young people, Mr. Speaker. And this Bill has a more dramatic negative effect on the First Nations and Métis community because of those numbers than it does on the non-Aboriginal community. And we're not saying that it's lesser, Mr. Speaker. It has a more dramatic effect on both groups and that's very shameful and that is very, very unfair.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would go on to say that we have had a discussion in terms of how we approach this particular Bill as an opposition caucus. And we're seeing that a lot of folks are really relying on trust and faith and confidence when they approach politicians to deal with issues that they want dealt with. And, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you right now, a lot of folks out there don't want any more MLAs, especially the manner in which the Sask Party's hoping to achieve the advantage when it comes to those three new MLAs. They don't want to see this process unfold at all. They know that it's unfair. They know that this is not the proper way to do this. They know that when they make reference to PEI as one of the other areas that do it . . . And yet we want to be partners with Alberta and we want to be partners with BC. You see the difference in numbers between those two provinces. They aren't doing what Saskatchewan is doing. And the moment we challenge the Sask Party on that, they say, oh look, this is what PEI is doing.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that is just plain silly. You don't do those comparisons in that fashion, in that manner, and that obvious. That's the point, that obvious. So the people of Saskatchewan aren't going to scratch their heads and say, okay we buy that. The vast majority of people are saying, that's shameful, that is almost embarrassing and, Mr. Speaker, that is downright foolish.

And that's the point I would raise with a lot of people out there that are listening to this particular Bill and getting information on this particular Bill, is that the NDP opposition don't like this for a number of reasons. And one of the biggest reasons, Mr. Speaker, is that we know that we don't need more MLAs. We know that, especially when we see what the government has cut and what the government has done to hurt a number of industries and programs.

Mr. Speaker, let me talk a bit about those programs, if I may. The film employment tax credit, you know we talked about that today. And we listened to the minister, his answers, the Minister of Culture. And, Mr. Speaker, as far as I'm concerned, the answers that he gave were very, very, very . . . answers that were just monotone. There was no responses in them. There was nothing articulate about the answers. And it was more like a robo-answer than anything else, Mr. Speaker, and just going through his notes and reading what he was told to read and don't deviate from the script because this is our plan, Mr. Speaker.

And that's exactly, that's the whole notion, that the film employment and tax credit that we're talking about, Mr. Speaker, that's one of the programs that were cut. That was one of the programs that were cut, and that was made by the Saskatchewan Party government, Mr. Speaker. And we sat there and we listened to the answers and, Mr. Speaker, the monotone answers and there's nothing exciting at all. And that's why from our perspective we can pretty much read in opposition in the

next cabinet shuffle who is going to be in, who is going to be out, Mr. Speaker.

And I think what's going to happen to a few of those members over there, that their post is toast because the fact of the matter is, is they're told to do this. And you're going to be thrown under the bus, Mr. Speaker, in terms of if there's a problem with that file and we make a decision as a government and you have to wear it for a few months, after that we will fire you as a cabinet member and then you will go back to being a backbencher. And they'll put somebody new in there and hopefully try and fool the people again by saying, oh, that was a bad guy and we fired him from cabinet. So here's a new cabinet member; he might be better. But the reality is the program is gone.

Now, Madam Speaker, I think one of the things that people out there ought to know in terms of the amendment is we have . . . And I think it's important we read what the amendment says. And the amendment made by my learned colleague from Cumberland:

That all the words after the word "That" be deleted and the following substituted therefor:

"this House declines to give second reading to Bill C-36, *An Act to amend The Constituency Boundaries Act, 1993* because

The Bill excludes, in determining constituency boundaries, the counting of the young people of Saskatchewan who deserve to be counted to determine representation within this Legislative Assembly; and further

That the Bill increases the number of members of this Legislative Assembly by three which is an unnecessary increase of politicians to represent the people of Saskatchewan."

So I think what's important is that the points that we raise under Bill C-36 is that you shouldn't exclude the young people. That's really, really important. And secondly is that you shouldn't increase the amount of MLAs when nobody is asking for more MLAs. I haven't heard a single, single person phone my office. And I asked my colleagues if they phoned . . . Nobody in Prince Albert phoned. No, nobody has called.

And some of the members say, well nobody's called me to complain about three more MLAs. No, but the point is they didn't call you to ask for more MLAs. And that's our point over here: that wasn't a pressing issue. When we answer the phone in our office, we don't say, hello, do you want more MLAs? You know, and that's the point, Mr. Speaker, is that they didn't do that.

And they get it all wrong because one of the points raised by one of the members: well I never got any calls on this. Well of course you're not going to get any calls because they're upset with you, first of all. And secondly the point is, did they phone you to say, hey, there's about 100 of us out here that think having more MLAs is a great idea? You never got those calls because people don't think it's a good idea. They don't want

more politicians. They don't want more politicians when they see the environment being compromised, Mr. Speaker, when they see programs being cut, when they see services being threatened, Mr. Speaker.

And it's an amazing amount of work that I see on the other side in which they're managing people, not the issues. And that is unfair, Mr. Speaker, again, to what's important here in the Assembly.

So I want to again add some of the comments that I think is really important, that when we talk about the population — this is an important point that I would raise that we got from a gentleman out in the East Coast — and they talked a lot about how the First Nations people would be negatively impacted. And it's something that I spoke about earlier, and I just ask the people of Saskatchewan to understand one thing. As you look through the makeup of your community, whether it be a First Nations or Métis community or whether it's a village or whether it's a city or whether it's a section of the city, you look at the families enjoying the parks. You look at the people that are out having supper together. You look at people playing sports. Many of those young kids and children that are out in your community and the families that we're talking about, they won't count, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They won't count under this Bill. Why? For one simple reason. Before this Bill comes into effect, they would have counted in terms of determining how many people are allowed to live in any constituency. They would have counted.

This Bill is saying, oh hold it here. We're not going to include those young people that are playing softball. We're not going to include those youth that are putting together a drama presentation. We're not going to include the children and the grandchildren of some of the grandparents that are watching them participate in community activities. Why? Because it doesn't fit our political agenda, Mr. Speaker. That's why. That's why.

And that's why, from our perspective in the opposition, this is an important amendment that they're making to this Bill by telling the people of Saskatchewan that absolutely every young person in this province, whether it's a grandchild or a youth member or a young adult in your family, that they should count when you look at constituency boundaries and when you determine the boundaries, Mr. Speaker.

How more blatantly obvious can the Sask Party get when they put together this Bill to exclude young people so that their political agenda could be fulfilled. And that is a shameful act, Mr. Speaker. It is a shameful act, and people across Saskatchewan simply don't want to see that happen.

So the NDP are quite clear as to what is important: (a) we reject the notion of having more MLAs. We don't think that's a very good idea, Mr. Speaker, primarily because of the numbers I'd spoke about earlier, Mr. Speaker, primarily because you look at places — and I need to go through those numbers again and I will — and I think the numbers here are quite clear. I think people have to know those numbers, and I've got them right here. Again, the numbers are quite clear. We don't want to see more MLAs because in Saskatchewan we have an average of 17,000 voters per riding compared to 21,000 in Manitoba,

compared to 48,000 in Alberta, compared to 51,000 in BC, and 120,000 in Ontario, Mr. Speaker.

[16:00]

So you can see that the people of Saskatchewan, and the NDP, from our perspective, do not need more MLAs. If Alberta doesn't need any more based on those numbers, if BC doesn't need any more based on their numbers, if Manitoba doesn't need any more based on those numbers, and Ontario doesn't need any more based on those numbers, where is the logic that Saskatchewan needs more based on their 17,000 voters per riding? Where is the logic behind that, Mr. Speaker?

And again some of the members are chirping from their seats. And yesterday I said, well let's have a plebiscite. Let's have a public vote. If you agree to having a public vote, then say so. If not, let's have the chirping stop. Mr. Speaker, that's the important point. They can chirp from their seats. They can chirp from their seats, Mr. Speaker, but the moment you mention plebiscites on this particular Bill, it is very, very quiet. It is very, very quiet.

And I challenge, and I challenge the member from Martensville— keeps chirping, chirping from her seat — I challenge you to go to each of your doors that you knocked on and say, guess what? I fulfilled a promise. You wanted more MLAs. I got you more MLAs. And I would see what kind of response that she would have, even given the fact that she's enjoyed good support in that area. I can almost guarantee you most of the people in that riding probably didn't say, excuse me, but can you go to Regina and fight for more MLAs? And in the process of getting more MLAs, could you try and gerrymander the Boundaries Commission and exclude the young people? And then all of a sudden, at the end of day, we achieve our political agenda.

The people of Martensville didn't want that, Mr. Speaker, and the people of Athabasca didn't want that. The people of any provincial constituency didn't ask for that. So why is the Sask Party so defensive when we talk about this particular Bill? Because, Mr. Speaker, we know on this side, as well as they know, that they have a political agenda in play here. And the people of Saskatchewan are gradually hearing that this is something that they had planned. And, Mr. Speaker, that is totally unfair.

And as they chirp more from their seats, as they chirp more from their seats, Mr. Speaker, what's going to happen is that they are actually advocating for that process to unfold. They're actually sitting in their chairs saying, yes, it's a good idea. We support that idea. We think it's a great idea. And yes, if it's meant to get us a better advantage, we're all for that. The word democracy, Mr. Speaker, it's secondary to their agenda. And that's an unfair process.

As I sit in this Assembly, I shake my head some days as to why, why in God's green Earth would this activity be allowed to unfold in Saskatchewan in 2012? In 2012 this kind of activity is happening, Mr. Speaker, and this certainly smacks of political opportunism. And the Saskatchewan Party, every single member will wear this, Mr. Speaker, will wear this Bill as their signature Bill in 2012 in terms of making sure that they're able

to politically interfere with the process.

Mr. Speaker, this is not right. This is not right in any way, shape, or form. And we're asking the members, the backbench, as I mentioned yesterday, the backbench over there to speak up and say, this is not how you do it. This is not how you build a fair Saskatchewan, an inclusive Saskatchewan. You don't gerrymander the process and try and disguise it because of the population growth.

Mr. Speaker, that is not what this is all about. This is not about . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And the member from wherever he's from — Cypress Hills — he's chirping from his seat. He's part of this process. He's part, and he's going to stand up, Mr. Speaker, during the Bill reading. He's going to stand up, and he's going to vote for that. And he knows all the while, he knows all the while, Mr. Speaker . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. Order. Members, I'm having some difficulty hearing the member from Athabasca, even though he's quite close. I know there's a number of conversations happening across the floor. I would suggest that you take those conversations behind the bar. I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And that's what's important here, Mr. Speaker, is at the end of the day on this particular Bill, I'm going to watch which members up there stand up and proudly vote in support of this Bill. And I'm going to watch that, Mr. Speaker, even though they know what the agenda is and what's at play here. I'm going to watch, Mr. Speaker, and I'm going to smile as they each stand up. And they'll vote because they're told how to vote, and that's the bottom line. When you get home . . . The idea is not about representing your constituencies — absolutely not. Once you get to Regina, you're going to be told what to do and how you're going to vote, and that's it.

So the point I'm trying to raise is that out there, out there in Saskatchewanland, people are saying, we don't want more MLAs. And they stand up in this Assembly on this particular Bill and say, yes we do, Mr. Speaker. And they're going to have to explain that to the people of Saskatchewan.

And it's more confusing and it's more conflicting for people out there when they talk about this, saying, okay, well it's not just an issue of having more MLAs. That's the point that we want to raise, Mr. Speaker. The issue is that how they're going to go about doing this, they're going to go about this, costing the province millions of dollars for these three new MLAs, millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker, for these three MLAs. And where that money's coming from, Mr. Speaker, is from programs and cuts to employment and programs that people of Saskatchewan like.

Now if the people out there think this is going to be a simple \$225,000 cost per year, you've got to really start to think. It's going to be a heck of a lot more than that, Mr. Speaker, as you look at transportation, as you look at support services, as you look at a number of other factors. It's more than the salary of an MLA, and it's more than just a salary of a CA [constituency assistant], Mr. Speaker. There are a significant amount of costs attached to each MLA's office.

And the fact of the matter is, the fact of the matter is, if you look at the process in general, it's not only about the cost, it's also about the manner in which they're going to determine the constituency boundaries. That is where the real problem lies, Mr. Speaker, because each of those members, including the member from Cypress Hills, he's going to stand in this Assembly saying to all the families in his riding and other ridings that if you're under the age of 18, our political agenda is more important than your participation in this democracy, so therefore you are not going to be counted when we do the boundaries. You're going to be excluded. You're going to be excluded.

And we think that is unfair, and it's patently wrong. It is an affront to democracy. That's our point on this side. That's our point on this side. This is the first time, this is the first time they're doing that, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan's history. Why? Why? Because the Saskatchewan Party wants to manipulate, wants to manipulate the process. But you look at that, Mr. Speaker, and you look at that process and you say, why are they doing this? Why are they doing this? They're doing this, Mr. Speaker, because, Mr. Speaker, they have a political agenda at stake here. That's what they have. That's what they have. They have a political agenda at stake, and that's unfair, Mr. Speaker. That's unfair, Mr. Speaker.

And to add insult to injury, as I mentioned at the outset, Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned at the outset, you look at all the numbers we spoke about. And I'm going to read those numbers out again. These numbers are important. People of Saskatchewan ought to know that. These are the numbers. Saskatchewan has an average of 17,817 voters per riding — people are going to hear the numbers — 17,000 voters. You look at Manitoba, 21,198. Look at Alberta, 43,919. Look at British Columbia, 51,785 voters per riding; and Ontario, 120,110 voters per riding. Ontario has 120,000 voters per riding. The Saskatchewan Party has 17,000 per riding, and they want more MLAs, Mr. Speaker, more MLAs.

So as we talk about that, we say, well explain to us why you want to do this. Explain to us why you want to do this. And of course we get up and we hear about PEI. I think Prince Edward Island's got to be the smallest province in Canada, got to be the smallest province in the country, and yet they make reference to Prince Edward Island, Mr. Speaker. And that's the insulting process attached to this Bill. The people of Saskatchewan can see right through it. And the fact of the matter is that if you begin to insult the intelligence of the Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, you begin to certainly see that that kind of activity does have repercussions and problems.

And it's not just about the right thing to do, and that is vote against this particular Bill. It's to allow the process to unfold, sitting on your hands and doing what you're told to do. Because this is an affront to democracy. It is not fair. It is not right, Mr. Speaker. And that's why this Bill is so poorly thought out, and that's why the people of Saskatchewan need to learn more about this Bill and hear exactly what this Bill is hoping to achieve for the political agenda of the Saskatchewan Party.

So I guess the question that I would ask every one of the members of the Saskatchewan Party, why have you excluded, why have you excluded Meika; why have you excluded Brodey;

why have you excluded Nixon, and why have you excluded Mila — my grandchildren — from your grand plan? Why have you excluded them, Mr. Speaker? Because they just don't count. And they talk about their grandchildren and their children under the age of 18. Well, you can include them. And all you've got to do is vote against that Bill, and that's how you include them. Vote against that Bill; then you include them. If you don't vote against that Bill, then you exclude them. It's as simple as that.

But most of the members there are told, this is how you're going to vote. No questions, no arguments. This is how you're going to vote. And, Mr. Speaker, we're waiting for that opportunity. And I'm going to see the member from . . . wherever he's from. I'm going to see what he does, see if he stands up for those people that he's excluding right now, Mr. Speaker. And we're going to see, we're going to see. He'll stand up and he'll do as he's told. You're going to stand up. You're going to vote for that Bill even though it excludes your children or grandchildren. And that's the important message, Mr. Speaker, is they're allowing that process to unfold. And I'm going to stand here and I'm going to watch them and I'm going to see how they vote — the member from Martensville, the member from Melfort, I think he's from.

Yes, we're going to see as they chirp from their chairs. We're going to see. We're going to see what they're going to do, Mr. Speaker. We're going to see, and that's the important part. That's the important part. And you look at all the other jurisdictions, and guess what? I don't think Ontario is asking for more MLAs. They're not asking for . . . They have 120,000 voters per constituency, Mr. Speaker, 120,000 voters. That's at least six times what we have right now in Saskatchewan. Six times more than what we have right now, and they're not asking for more politicians in Ontario, Mr. Speaker. You know, they're not asking for that. They're not asking for that, and that's the most amazing thing — 120,000 voters per riding in Ontario, 120,000. And I don't hear from any of the . . . I think it's the MPPs [member of provincial parliament] or MLAs?

An Hon. Member: — Yes, MPPs.

Mr. Belanger: — MPPs, which are similar to the MLAs here. Not one of them are calling for more MPPs in Ontario. They're not calling for more MLAs in Alberta. They're not calling for more MLAs in BC. They're not calling for more MLAs in Manitoba. They're not even calling for more MLAs in PEI. They're not even calling for more MLAs in any jurisdiction that I know of in Canada, Mr. Speaker. The only jurisdiction that's asking for more MLAs is Saskatchewan, led by the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker. They're the only ones that are asking for more MLAs, and that's what this Bill does. That's what this Bill does.

And I go back to Ontario again. You know, 120,000 voters per riding, 120,000 voters per riding. And nobody wants more MLAs in Ontario, despite having six times the amount of people that they have to represent in that province than what we have in Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, on the Saskatchewan Party side they're saying, oh, we need more MLAs. That's what this Bill is saying. We need more MLAs. And we're not going . . .

[inaudible interjection] . . . Yes it does. That's what the Bill says here. It says the Bill asks for more MLAs. That's exactly what you said. And the Bill asks for more MLAs and that's exactly . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . If you don't want more MLAs, vote against the Bill. But they won't vote against it, because they're told what to do. That's the bottom line, Mr. Speaker. And I think that the process as I mentioned, six, seven, six times the amount of people, Mr. Speaker, that are being asked . . .

[Interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And that's the whole point, you know. And you've got to be very careful here. Because Ontario is saying they don't want more MPPs, which are similar to MLAs. Ontario's not calling for that, but Saskatchewan Party MLAs are saying we need more; we need three more politicians. And that's not too good, Mr. Speaker, because not only are they doing that, but what they're doing is they're firing highways workers. They're cancelling a lot of the film industry's opportunities in the province, Mr. Speaker. They're firing northern forest fire workers, Mr. Speaker. They're gutting some of the housing programs for people that live in isolated communities. Conservation officers are being fired or their offices being shut down.

And what they're going to do is the money that they're saving, the millions that they say they're saving, they're going to use that to prop up three more MLAs. That's where the money's going — for three more MLAs. And, Mr. Speaker, I think we've got 58 MLAs in this province. I think that's enough — 58 MLAs. I think that's enough, Mr. Speaker. That's the bottom line. We have enough MLAs in Saskatchewan given our population base.

[16:15]

And you look at what Ontario does, and I go back to Ontario. They've got six times the amount of people in each riding than we have, and I haven't heard one MPP get up — which is an MLA in Ontario — and say, we need more help. We need more MLAs. Not one of them has got up to say that, Mr. Speaker.

And yet in Saskatchewan, in Saskatchewan, we have the Saskatchewan Party MLAs saying, yes we do. Yes we do. And the worst part is, the worst part is, Mr. Speaker, is not only are they saying, yes we do; yes, we need more MLAs. They turn around and they gut programs and they fire people. That's what's the most absurd process that we watch from our end. They turn around and they gut programs and they fire people, Mr. Speaker.

And not only that, they are now excluding all the young people, Mr. Speaker, from the process of determining where these constituencies are. And they're hoping that nobody pays attention to this Bill. That's what they're hoping. And I don't care what anybody says in terms of the process. It ought to be explained very clearly and very plainly to the people of Saskatchewan. And I think, Mr. Speaker, once the people of Saskatchewan get that explanation, they're not going to be a

happy bunch. They're not going to be very happy in Martensville. They're not going to be very happy in Melfort. They're not going to be very happy in any of those areas.

And I dare, I challenge the Saskatchewan Party members, any one of them, today to agree to a plebiscite on this issue, Mr. Speaker. And all you hear is silence. The fact of the matter is they don't want to have that. They don't want to give the people of Saskatchewan that opportunity to publicly vote on this because the answer would be a resounding no.

We don't need more MLAs if my neighbour who is a highways worker got laid off. We don't need more MLAs if my conservation office has been shut down. We don't need more MLAs if one of my fire protection workers has been fired, or we don't need more MLAs if the seniors have got to dig in their pocket more for money for drug costs, Mr. Speaker.

The list goes on as to why this has got to be the most silliest notion that this Bill is being supported by the people of Saskatchewan. It is the Saskatchewan Party political agenda at play here, Mr. Speaker, no matter how you cut it, and that's unfair to the people of Saskatchewan. This is unfair to this great hall of democracy.

And we spoke about the amount of respect, the amount of respect we had to the Armed Forces, Mr. Speaker. That's another issue that's also important that needs to be touched on. It's a fact that today we honoured a lady whose father served in a great war, and whose father served her country well. And, Mr. Speaker, I respect her and I certainly admire her father's contribution to this country. As many other veterans' families will know, it is a bond that brings many of the families together. And we know the sacrifices. You talk about Dieppe; you talk about the World War II and the amount of casualties we had as a country. There were many good men and women that suffered and perished in those wars and many other wars in many other conflicts throughout the world, Mr. Speaker.

You know there's half, less than half of the countries in the world enjoy democracy. Most of the countries are being ruled in many ways that are contrary to democracy and the freedoms that we enjoy. We are very lucky as a country, Mr. Speaker. And we honour those people, which we should. We should honour them at every occasion that we have. Because without them, without the foundation of their sacrifice, we wouldn't enjoy the country that we have today.

Now I talk on many occasions that I had a great opportunity to spend some time with my father before he passed, and he spoke of great love for his country. He was very patriotic. And he had many, many opinions as well. And one of the most amazing things, Mr. Speaker, is that no matter what you said about him, what overrode everything in all his emotions, was the fact that he served his country. And that's important. And he often said, he often said that it's important that you use that properly and that you respect the people that afforded this opportunity, and don't waste it.

Now those are some of the words that we spoke about over the supper hour and during the celebrations we had in our community. Now that is what is at play here, Mr. Speaker. He also said that we don't need to use that process, nor my service,

or any of the other sacrifices made in any political arena. That's why sometimes we have great difficulty in speaking about it. It's not because we don't want to or we're not proud of some of the service and some of his stories and his memories — we are proud of that — but not to play on that too much, but to respect them and to hold them in good regard. But that being said, Mr. Speaker, they afforded us a democracy and they afforded us freedom. And I want to respect that and I want to park that particular process aside, because it's not what I want to do here today, to politicize the process.

But I'll say this, that given that in that vein of thought, in that process of what we think is important for democracy, is that we don't have any kind of political agenda at play. This is really important to the people of Saskatchewan. This is important to many, many people who have been influenced by many great leaders and great warriors of our time. And the whole notion is when you start having that kind of interference and that kind of blatant political agenda is at play, that is an affront to democracy. And that's where I use my language when I say this is not proper. This is not fair. This is not what was intended to be, Mr. Speaker. This is not what was intended to be when people went out there to fight for our freedom, Mr. Speaker.

You should not have the manipulative process as indicated by this Bill. It is simply not right. It is not proper, Mr. Speaker. And you shouldn't be excluding the young people. And I'm talking about all grandchildren, the Sask Party members' grandchildren or children under the age of 18 and my children, all of our children or grandchildren under 18 years of age. They should not be excluded in this process. It is simply fundamentally wrong, because every other jurisdiction includes their families that we make reference to in this Bill. Every single one of them include their kids, grandkids, and children under the age of 18.

When I talk about those matters, Mr. Speaker, it's really important that the people out there understand what I mean when I say an affront to democracy. It's not just a fancy little phrase. It really means something to a lot of people out there when we tell them to be fair, open, honest, and above all else, to be inclusive of every person of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I heard a line one time being made by a federal politician and I really like that line and I sometimes use it. But I want to make sure people don't think that I'm going to use it and not give this person credit. It wasn't my line, and it wasn't Saskatchewan that this politician was specifically talking about. But the phrase . . . And I kind of change it a bit, but the phrase that really hit home for me which was really key, was the notion that this is not a good province for any of us unless it's a good province for all of us. And that fundamental belief is something that's really important.

So my Meika should count; my Nixon should count; and my Brodey and my Mila should count. From the day they are born, they should be counted. This Bill does not count them as citizens of Saskatchewan, so this Bill doesn't value them as far as I'm concerned. And no, we're not saying that this is an attack on the children. That's too far-fetched. What we're saying is that you want to do an assessment, a proper assessment to include all the people of Saskatchewan — that includes the youth and the children as well.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, I'd ask for leave to introduce a guest.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Leader of the Opposition has asked for leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to introduce Craig Ashbourne who is here sitting up with Kyall Glennie from our office. Craig Ashbourne was just recently in the last number of days appointed as the new provincial secretary for the New Democratic Party of Saskatchewan. Craig is replacing Dale Schmeichel who is retiring.

And Craig has been working with the New Democratic Party for just over a year as an organizer. He comes to us from the University of Victoria where he's been working on a master's degree in professionalization of the organizing and communications practices of political parties. He brings many skills that are important for us, but it's also clearly a recognition that we have many, many young, capable people in the country who are available to work for political parties.

And so we're very pleased to have Craig here in Saskatchewan working for the New Democratic Party. So I ask all the members here from both sides of the House to welcome somebody who will be a friend to us all. And at certain points we'll obviously be in contest, but let's be in contest with people that we know. So I would ask all members to welcome Mr. Craig Ashbourne to the legislature of Saskatchewan.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 36 — *The Constituency Boundaries Amendment Act, 2011* (continued)

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I want to make sure that I continue that train of thought when I talk about the importance that we look at the whole Bill in its entire nature of what is being planned and how many children that we're going to be excluding. And I talked about my four, and certainly it's something that fits across the way as well.

And I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, to look at some of the numbers that we're looking at right now, in 2006, the last census of Saskatchewan — just to give you an idea when I say there are many Milas out there, there are many Meikas, and there are many Brodey and Nixons and other children of people of Saskatchewan — but in 2006, Mr. Speaker, there was 233,905 people in Saskatchewan under the age of 18. So it's almost 25 per cent of the provincial population that this Sask Party is excluding, 25 per cent of our provincial population in

this particular Bill. And that's the worrisome thing, Mr. Speaker. It is not for any particular reason that they're excluding all these young people other than a political agenda at play, Mr. Speaker.

That's the part that's really, really disturbing. That's the part that really has a lot of people in Saskatchewan shaking their heads because that's not the reason why many of their supporters voted for them, Mr. Speaker. That's not the reason why many of those supporters voted for them. If the many of their supporters that voted for them thought that you're going to have more MLAs and you're going to exclude my family and you're going to exclude my grandchildren and you're going to do this in this odd fashion, then I bet you, Mr. Speaker, there'd be a lot of people changing their minds at the doorstep. And no matter how many times you stage a photo op in some mall, you know, to look like you're friendly for a lot of folks, that's not going to fly any more in the future because people of Saskatchewan will have found out the truth behind this particular Bill of how dastardly this whole process is when you talk about trying to fulfill a political agenda. And that's just pure shameful, Mr. Speaker.

Again those numbers are 233,908 people . . . or 905 people. That's almost 25 per cent of our provincial population that have been arbitrarily cut by the Saskatchewan Party when determining the Constituency Boundaries Commission or the constituency boundary areas, Mr. Speaker.

Now again you would have to ask the question. The plain question, Mr. Speaker, is, why would you exclude the young people? Explain to me why you would exclude the young people when you're doing these provincial constituency boundaries, something that wasn't done before, Mr. Speaker. Why would you do that? Why would you do that, Mr. Speaker? That's a big question we have on this side, a very simple one-word question: why? Why would you do that?

And, Mr. Speaker, from our perspective, we know exactly why they're doing it, Mr. Speaker. It is a larger political agenda at play. And I think the people of Saskatchewan are really starting to pick up on this issue, and a lot of them don't like it, Mr. Speaker. A lot of them don't like it at all. And I think what's important is that, if you look at what the media are saying, the media don't buy it as well. The media are saying, we don't need more politicians. Absolutely not. We don't need them any way, shape, or form.

And you look at all these processes. Mr. Speaker, it is clear to me, it is as clear to me that this is something to do with their politics and nothing to do with fairness, nothing to do with open and accountable and to being transparent to the people of Saskatchewan. And that is a very, very sad day for democracy in general and a very sad day for Saskatchewan when you see that kind of activity occurring on that end, Mr. Speaker.

And I'm going to see how some of their members vote on this Bill. I'm going to see how some of the members vote on this Bill and to see them standing up, to see them stand up, Mr. Speaker, and to prop up, to prop up a Bill that is contrary to fairness, Mr. Speaker. I want to see if they stand up and vote for this Bill. I want to see whether the member from Melfort or the member from Kelvington-Wadena or the member from

Meadow Lake or the member from Martensville, I want to see if they stand up and vote for a Bill that excludes 25 per cent of the provincial population, namely the children and the youth, which are our future for tomorrow. I want to see if they stand up. I want to see if they stand up.

[16:30]

And, Mr. Speaker, they aren't going to stand up because they're told what to do when they get here, and their constituents' issues are second, second in the priority list when it comes to this particular Sask Party government, Mr. Speaker. And this is something that is clearly designed to manipulate the process, and absolutely everybody and their dog knows that's the plan, Mr. Speaker. Even my dog back home knows that's the plan. Him and I have some good discussions on politics, Mr. Speaker, and he knows what's at stake here. He's a pretty sharp dog. So I think I'll point out that he knows, he knows, Mr. Speaker, what's going on. And as I mentioned to you, everybody and their . . . and all the families in Saskatchewan knows what's happening.

So the matter is very, very clear to us from our perspective. We have to pull this Bill. We have to pull this Bill. And we appeal to the Sask Party backbench to at least stand up and say, this Bill is wrong. Why are we doing it this way? Why are we doing it this way? And I'll tell you one thing, Mr. Speaker. They'll be told to be quiet, stand up when you're told, and sit down when you're done voting. That's exactly what will happen.

So we're asking the backbench to have a backbone over there and speak to their front bench and say, come on, you guys, this is not right. This is not fair. This is not how you do it. This is not how you do it. You can fundamentally disagree on things. I'm not arguing that you should do this every day. But on the process that really gerrymanders a political plan for the Sask Party, you should have the decency to stand up and say, this is wrong. You should stand up and say, this is wrong. Because this is not the reason why we're here. And, Mr. Speaker, they won't do it. They won't do it.

And that's why it's important on this side of the House. We look at that, and we watch how they conduct themselves. We watch very clearly, carefully what they do, what they say, what they do, Mr. Speaker, and we watch. We watch. And they're standing there and they're saying, okay, we're just going to blindly follow. Whatever we're told to do, we'll do. It's important to have faith, but not blind faith. You've got to be able to ask questions in how this affects things overall, Mr. Speaker.

And the backbench over there is not saying a peep. They're all hoping, well maybe if I'm quiet and I do this and I sacrifice my integrity under the altar of being in government and I might be in cabinet, so I'd better be quiet and I'd better do as I'm told. And, Mr. Speaker, all you've got to do is wait another 30 sleeps and you'll find out whether you're in cabinet or not, Mr. Speaker. But in the meantime, if you're not in cabinet, if you're not in cabinet, then what you should do is get up and speak your mind. Because obviously there's only one reason you're there, and that is to fill the backbench, stand up when you're told to stand up, and vote for Bills that are contrary to what you fundamentally believe in, and that's the issue of fairness. And

this Bill is contrary to that. It is contrary in many, many ways and, Mr. Speaker, in many, many aspects as well.

So I point out to the young children out there, a quarter of a million of our future of our young kids and our youth are being excluded from this Bill. And the reason they're being excluded, let me reiterate. The reason why they're being excluded is because there is a plan to gerrymander the boundaries and the provincial constituencies to hopefully benefit the Saskatchewan Party government by adding three more MLAs. That's the only reason they're doing that.

And what do they make comparisons to, Mr. Speaker? As the Government of Saskatchewan, what do they make comparisons to? PEI is doing it. That's how Prince Edward Island does it out on the East Coast. That's their answer. And people out there are sitting there just absolutely astounded. How could they make that comparison here? And yet when we talk about the economy, oh, we're new West. When it comes to the constituency boundaries, oh, we're PEI now.

Why don't you show some leadership and some gumption by saying this is wrong? Let's go back and let's not have the three more MLAs. Let's rehire the workers we fired. Let's refinance the programs that are important for the people of Saskatchewan. Let's do things right. Let's do things right. That's what they should say, Mr. Speaker. They should get up, and they should speak. And they should certainly articulate to the people of Saskatchewan why they think this is wrong.

And, Mr. Speaker, because they all are hoping to have a chance to get in cabinet . . . I can tell you guys there's probably going to be about maybe five or six changes. That's it. My money's on Bjornrud . . . I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker. My money's on the member from Melville that he won't be back in cabinet, Mr. Speaker. And I'm pretty sure of that. But all the rest of the guys are all hoping for positioning, Mr. Speaker. They're all hoping for positioning, and that's why they won't speak out against this Bill. They won't speak out against this Bill, Mr. Speaker, because it's all about positioning.

And that's unfair to the people of Saskatchewan. Why it's unfair is you don't position yourself based on how much you sacrifice on the altar of democracy. That's not what that's about. You can still keep your inner qualities and your strong beliefs. And yes, you can lose arguments, and majority always wins. We understand that.

But there are some things you may not fundamentally believe. And some of those things, I think, are really tugging at your beliefs is this Bill, because the Bill excludes young people. The Bill asks for more MLAs. And the worst part of this Bill, the worst part of this Bill is simply the fact that it's all part of the gerrymandering process attached to the political agenda of the Saskatchewan Party government, Mr. Speaker. That's why this Bill should be defeated. That's why this Bill should be tossed in the shredder or garbage can, never to be seen again. Never to be seen again, Mr. Speaker. And that Sask Party . . . The Sask Party members opposite will have the opportunity to actually take this Bill and kill it, Mr. Speaker. They can kill this Bill and say, we're going to do something right. Let's do it right. Let's not try and, under the guise of what's correct, put something forward when we know clearly it is the wrong thing to do.

Now I want to talk a bit about the commission members itself, Mr. Speaker, because as an opposition party, we don't want to challenge any of the qualities nor the integrity nor the merit of some of the commission members that the Sask Party might choose to sit on this particular process. They might want to have these commission members announced, and there may be some very good commission members. I hope that they're as neutral as can be. So I don't think that the NDP opposition is going to question the merits of any of the commission members. We're not going to argue about those points because I think, at the very least, these people will come forward with some very good ideas and very good concepts, but above all else they come there with some very good merit.

But the problem we're going to have, Mr. Speaker, is the parameters in which they have to do their work. That's where the problem lies, Mr. Speaker. And the Bill is very clear. It explains here, look, we're going to make sure, we're going to make sure that you have these parameters to work with. The Bill is quite clear. So why would you have those people that have that great integrity and great history be part of this commission when clearly the agenda has been drawn out for them, and they have very little room to work with?

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to use the analogy I used before. It's not to make light of this issue, but it's the same process I always use when we talk about, whether it's the Crowns or whether it's different groups that this group works with. It's much with the Boundaries Commission as the movie, *The Jerk*. You know the movie. I talked about this before. And again, *The Jerk*, starring Steve Martin. And Steve Martin is this, he's this guy works at this circus. And he's out there and he's actually in this concession, not concession booth, but this prize booth. And of course people come there, and you put a ring on this bottle to get these . . . you win a prize. So the people say, what kind of prize? And what Steve Martin does in his movie role, he says, well if you get a ring on that bottle, you win everything this side of the stuffed animals, everything above the dolls, everything on this side of the money prize, and everything below the ornaments. Well, Mr. Speaker, in that little box were some erasers and pencils, you know, and that's what the people won as prizes.

Well what's going to happen, Mr. Speaker? It's going to be the same process that the Sask Party has with these commission members. They're going to say, here's all the rules. This is what you can't do, and you can't do this either, and you can't include these people, and you can't do this either. So what happens is you've got a very confined box in which you are able to operate with. And they're going there with their integrity and the desire to do things well. If they are indeed neutral, they're going to go there with good intentions, and all of a sudden they find themselves in a box. Well, we're not allowed to do anything here because (a) we cannot include the young people, (b) we've only got a defined time to do this. The Act spells out what the parameters are, so what the heck are we doing here?

And, Mr. Speaker, that's why I think what's going to happen, we suspect that there's going to be more interference in this whole process because I don't know if they're going to allow certain people that can make a significant value to this thing to be able to sit on this commission. I think you're going to see more political interference on the appointment of that

commission, Mr. Speaker. I suspect that's what's going to happen, Mr. Speaker. We are waiting to hear who's going to be on the commission, Mr. Speaker. And we're also going to see, we're also going to see who they have put on there, Mr. Speaker. And if any of these members have Sask Party ties in any way, shape, or form, Mr. Speaker, then again it goes to beg the question, what is this all about? What is this all about?

And, Mr. Speaker, we suspect that's what's going to happen with this particular Bill. And that's the whole point, Mr. Speaker. We're going to find out exactly who these commission members are. And, Mr. Speaker, I fear for the worst. That's my particular position. I fear for the worst. Because there's no way, there's no way you're going to do a number of things, Mr. Speaker; there's no way you're going to do a number of things and not do the final step, not do the final step.

You're going to have a Bill that's going to exclude young people, so that really confuses a lot of different groups and organizations out there. And then you're going to have a defined time in which this Bill has to be discussed. And absolutely every one of the Sask Party MLAs, you're going to vote for this whether you like it or not. That's a done deal, right? That process has been taken care of. Now we're going to make sure we have the Bill that defines what they're able to do or what they're able to say or what they're able to decide. So that part's done. And the final step, I think, is to make sure they have commission members that they can politically influence in some way, shape, or form.

So we're waiting for that final *coup de grâce* on that particular Bill, and we're going to pay very close attention, Mr. Speaker, to how these members are selected. And if there's any affiliation at all with the Sask Party, it will lend argument to our point that this is all about gerrymandering the next election and make sure that this is going to be a . . . [inaudible] . . . process.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think overall that we're going to watch very carefully how this is handled. We're going to watch very carefully. And we ask the media, we ask the media that buys ink by the barrels to make sure they pay attention to this. Because I guess again, as we've pointed out, there are significant problems with this Bill. We're going to ask the media to pay attention to this and expose the plan, to show that this is exactly about gerrymandering and the manipulation of the electoral process, Mr. Speaker. That is something I think is really important, that the people of Saskatchewan really have to watch.

And the second point is, why are they excluding all the young people? That's the second point. And the third point is, why do they bring in these more MLAs that cost millions of dollars more, millions of dollars more, at the expense of programs and people working for this government? It doesn't make any sense, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't make any sense.

But from this Assembly's perspective, the nine of us are going to watch how the 49 of them vote. And we're going to see how, whether they stand up for democracy or whether they stand up for fairness or whether they stand up for the principled thing to do on this particular Bill, Mr. Speaker. This is all about values. This Bill will represent their values for years to come. This Bill will test their values, Mr. Speaker, as to where they stand as

men and women of the Saskatchewan Party caucus, as to whether they believe this Bill is fundamentally wrong. They'll either skip the vote or they'll sit down, and they will make sure that they do the right thing.

And that's one of the things, one of the points I would raise, Mr. Speaker, is I implore the members of the Saskatchewan Party to stand up and speak up and say, you know, this is not fair. This is not right to exclude kids. And yes, okay, if the endgame is to have more MLAs, then that's fair. We shouldn't interfere with it, you can say. But there's a lot of interference with it, and you've got to make sure that interference is taken away completely, Mr. Speaker.

And the other thing you've got to ask is whether the constituents that supported you really wanted more MLAs. They're not going to phone and say, we didn't want more MLAs. You've got to ask them: did you guys want more MLAs? And the resounding answer would be no. And the sad reality is not one Saskatchewan Party member across the way consulted with any one of their constituents. They didn't, they didn't consult with any one of their constituents. And that's the unfairness, Mr. Speaker. That's the unfairness. And not one person was asked about this.

And in the last election, I wouldn't mind to have heard their Premier get up and say, oh our plan is, in growing Saskatchewan, we want to grow the number of MLAs. Well, Mr. Speaker, he didn't say that. And not one member of their cabinet nor their team said that once anywhere. Had they said it once: we want three more MLAs, and guess what, people of Saskatchewan? We're going to exclude your family members. Your children and your grandchildren are not going to count in this process. They didn't say that, Mr. Speaker.

And furthermore we're going to make sure we draft the Bill up where we're able to determine the outcome of this Bill. And yet we're going to try and have what we think is going to be an independent commission to determine how this thing is going to work, which is a process that we'll go through, but probably at the end of the day won't change what our desired plan of action is. That's exactly what's going on here, Mr. Speaker. And everybody in Saskatchewan knows that, clear as day. They know that, and that's the whole point.

[16:45]

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would point out again, what people want to know out there, what the numbers are, what the numbers are of young people that we're actually excluding. And the numbers are, Mr. Speaker, 233,905 people that this Bill excludes, that are under the age of 19, and that's according to a 2006 census. So I think the rationale of excluding young people, to that amount of young people, is absolutely ridiculous, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to again . . . I have a lot more I want to say on this particular Bill, but I want to say the numbers again, the numbers again of the provinces that have the MLA system in place — of course we all have them but the ones that have the greater numbers, again — Saskatchewan has 17,000 voters; Manitoba's got 21,000 voters per riding; and Alberta's got 43,000; BC's got 51,000 voters per riding; and Ontario has 120,000 voters for

every constituency or riding they have in that province. And yet not one of them, not one of them are asking for more MLAs. The lowest amount of voters per constituency is in the province of Saskatchewan, and the Saskatchewan Party's saying, guess what? We need more MLAs.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan . . . We know in opposition, but the people of Saskatchewan clearly know this is all about political gamesmanship. This is all about manipulation. And when they talked about fixed election dates, I didn't mean rigged election dates. I didn't think it was, you know, to that extent. But today now, they talk about fixed elections. It has a whole different meaning to the people of Saskatchewan and especially to the opposition, Mr. Speaker.

And that's why this Bill is so poorly thought out and the people of the government think that this Bill, on Bill C-36, is going to zip under the radar and the people of Saskatchewan don't know about it. We will see, Mr. Speaker. We will see. We have a long ways to go on this Bill and it's not something that the people of Saskatchewan want. I don't know how many more different ways I can say this. Perhaps in Cree I can explain very quickly.

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

And very quickly the word in Cree is, if you wanted more MLAs, the Sask Party should've said that during the election. And not one person that ran for the Sask Party ever told people, guess what, if we get in we're going to have more MLAs. Imagine, imagine the response you would've got, Mr. Speaker. I don't think you would've even staged a positive meet-and-greet at the mall. Even that wouldn't have worked after that. So I think it's important to point out that this really flies in the face of democracy and talks about the value of the Sask Party government, Mr. Speaker.

Now I know in northern Saskatchewan there was a lot of promises made in the last election. And I don't remember, I don't remember any of the opposition candidates, the opposition candidates saying to people . . . I don't know if it happened in Cumberland, but I didn't hear it in Athabasca. I didn't hear it in Athabasca saying, guess what, you guys? If you elect the Sask Party MLA, we'll have more MLAs. You know, I don't think I heard that, Mr. Speaker. The member from Cumberland says he never heard that either. So, well mind you, there was nothing ever said, Mr. Speaker, but I don't think that was a specific comment nor was it was a specific promise that was made by the Sask Party candidates in our area.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I think a few of the Sask Party supporters, not only in Cumberland but in Athabasca, are mad at this government because they've done away with the enterprise regions, you know. And that was a kind of a confusing thing, and that's one of the casualties of the last budget, Mr. Speaker. And this, we're taking the money from the enterprise regions, the money they're spending there, they're taking that money and they're going to be hiring more MLAs now.

So the plan that they have for growing the economy in northern Saskatchewan is, oh the enterprise regions — where we start coordinating the economy and training people in working and doing all these things — well they're going to pull the pin on that one and we're going to give you more MLAs, you know,

and there's going to be about three of them.

So the people of Saskatchewan are saying, well how does that work? How does that work? Well it works because they do it in PEI. So we say, okay, it happened in PEI, that's how you do it. And oh, by the way, all the Aboriginal youth in your community, we're not going to count them either. Yes, they don't count anymore. And oh, by the way, we're all going to vote for this. They were told how to vote.

You see, Mr. Speaker, how wrong-headed this Bill is. It is absolutely something that people of Saskatchewan should take notice of. The federal boundaries commission is the same principle, Mr. Speaker. It's the same principle. There's a lot of manipulation then when those boundaries were determined.

And I go back to northern Saskatchewan. I think the member from Cumberland and I can agree that the northern part of Saskatchewan should be one federal riding. But somewhere along the lines, they kind of manipulated the riding to include a forestry fringe in some of the larger centres like Meadow Lake, Big River. And we respect the people of those communities, but, Mr. Speaker, there's a totally different language, totally different economy, totally different customs. And we should have our own federal riding. But somewhere along the line there was that manipulation. And I think there's a few other places involved — Saskatoon, Humboldt — another good example. And people can see throughout the province that the manipulation occurred. And, Mr. Speaker, that's unfortunate, and it really flies in the face of democracy.

Now what I think is important as well is that we have more discussion on this matter. And something that I think is really important, that people begin to research what the Bill really implies. We have to begin to research what the Bill really implies.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think I want to also point out to my learned friend here that we have to get people motivated. I think there's no question from my mind that people out there begin to understand what exactly is going on. That if they come out to the Assembly, that we make sure that their voices are heard. Because the thing about it, if people really try to get active, they really try to get active and they start paying attention to this, I think overall that if you look at the strength of the people — it doesn't matter where they come from — if you look at the strength of the people, they have to be able to come here and flex that strength to show them that they mean business when it comes to this Bill and that the Saskatchewan Party government shouldn't be able to manipulate, manipulate the process to their advantage, because that's not fair. And not anybody in the conservative corners or the reform corners from where they come from, and nobody in those corridors that really want to see manipulation to the extent that it is happening.

So I think what the point that we would raise, Mr. Speaker, I want to just quickly go through some of the stats as I mentioned again. If you look at the editorials, we talk about a person like Murray Mandryk. And Mandryk certainly speaks about fairness, and he's supposed to be neutral and he certainly is. Sometimes I get upset with him. I mean, one time he gave me a C minus as a minister. But I like him today. I notice how they all smile and wave at him until his next article, and then all of a

sudden he's not getting smiled or waved at.

But what happened, Mr. Speaker, is him as well, he's got to be neutral. And he pointed out that there's nobody in Saskatchewan that ever called for more MLAs. And I think that's going to be a very, very difficult sell for the people of Saskatchewan, and certainly the Saskatchewan Party is going to be very, very upset when they find out that the people of Saskatchewan didn't want more MLAs.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important, these numbers once again. I think this is my 11th time. Saskatchewan has 17,000 voters per riding, Manitoba's got 21,000. Alberta's got 43,000. British Columbia's got 51,000, and Ontario has 120,000 voters, Mr. Speaker, per riding, per riding. And Saskatchewan's got 17,000. And not one of the jurisdictions throughout the country of Canada are asking for more MLAs, or in the case of Ontario, more MPPs. Not one.

In fact, the province that they made reference to or made comparisons to, Mr. Speaker, was PEI. And last I checked on the news wire, PEI is not asking for more MLAs, Mr. Speaker. The smallest province in the country is not asking for more MLAs. And it's just shameful that the Sask Party is contrary to all the other jurisdictions by asking for more MLAs, and yet they have one of the lowest or the lowest voter per riding in the country, Mr. Speaker.

Now I would point out that if you look at the costs of having three more MLAs, Mr. Speaker, it is something that I think that people need to pay close attention to. They shake their heads when we in opposition say millions of dollars. Well don't forget, over this next four terms, you're looking at between 2 and \$3 million of the costs that are going to be happening over this term. And shouldn't that 2 or \$3 million be used elsewhere? Maybe they could have helped fund the enterprise region. Perhaps they could have put the money back into the seniors' prescription plan. Oh, maybe they could have kept the conservation offices open up in Pelican Narrows and Sandy Bay. Or maybe they could have kept the firefighters on.

There's so many different ways you can spend that 2 or \$3 million. And the Saskatchewan Party government is going to simply say, no, the people of Saskatchewan, we're not going to listen to you. We're going to add more MLAs. We're going to make sure that we fire all these people so we can have more politicians in the province. And, Mr. Speaker, that is not growing the future of Saskatchewan in a sustainable way. That is just pure politics in the worst form, Mr. Speaker. It's pure politics in the worst form, and that's a shame, Mr. Speaker.

And that's why this particular Bill, that's why this particular Bill is so problematic for the Sask Party, because it really denotes value. It denotes their beliefs as human beings. And if we stand here today and we watch how they vote when this Bill comes out, when it comes up for the vote, Mr. Speaker, we are going to find out where their value system is right at that moment. We're going to see if they're going to stand up for the constituents and how they're going to determine whether there's more points as they should try and represent the people properly, whether there's more premise on that, or whether there's more points to be made with the cabinet in terms of trying to be a member of cabinet. We're going to see where

their priorities are and how they're going to respond to this challenge to not vote for that Bill and to let the Bill die a good death. Because that's what it should die — a good, sudden death, because that's exactly what this is all about.

And, Mr. Speaker, I know nine MLAs on this side of the Assembly know that it flies in the face of democracy. And all nine of us will pick up that Bill. We'll wrap it up neatly in a nice little package. We'll tie a big rock to it, and we'll go throw it in the deepest part of the Churchill River system, never to be seen again. And that's exactly where that Bill should be, Mr. Speaker. That should be right amongst the loon droppings, never to be seen again, Mr. Speaker. That's the most important message.

So again I would point out to the people of Saskatchewan, we've got tons more to say about this particular Bill, because this is only one family and one perspective from one MLA. We've got tons of other people that are going to join in the debate. Because, Mr. Speaker, we are going to make sure people know that this Bill is contrary to the good, solid foundation that was built by the veterans and the many people of this country, Mr. Speaker. And that foundation believes in one principle, and that principle is having a solid democracy. And this Bill is totally contrary to democracy, Mr. Speaker.

So again I want to point out those numbers. Saskatchewan has an average of 17,000 voters per riding; 21,000 in Manitoba. Alberta has 43,000. British Columbia has 51,000 voters per riding, and Ontario has 120,000 voters per riding, Mr. Speaker. It is absolutely amazing the staggering amount of voters, especially in Ontario, and not one MPP or not one MLA is asking, we need more MLAs. But in Saskatchewan under the Saskatchewan Party, that's all they seem to talk about, Mr. Speaker, and that is shameful. That is not the reason they were sent here, to ask for more politicians, when they're cutting programs and they're killing jobs for people that have worked for this government for years and years and years, Mr. Speaker. So I think it's important . . .

The Speaker: — The time now being after the hour of adjournment, this House stands adjourned to 10 a.m. tomorrow morning.

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.]

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