



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

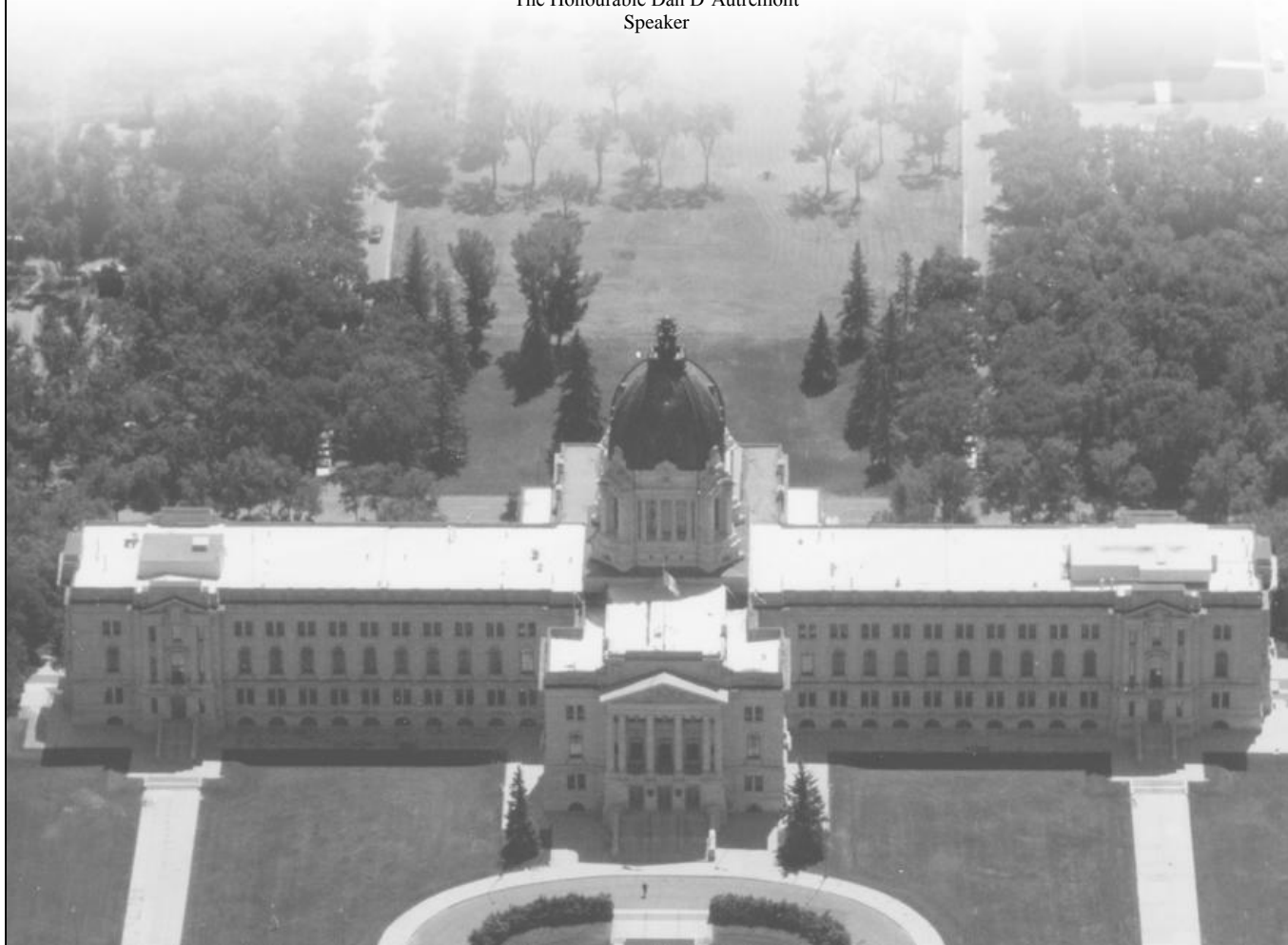
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

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



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

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

[The Assembly resumed at 19:00.]

EVENING SITTING

The Speaker: — The time now being 7 o'clock, the debate shall resume. I recognize the member for Athabasca.

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, and on the proposed amendment moved by Mr. Vermette.]

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. After a very nice supper break, Mr. Speaker — I must add that the break that I had at supper was with my colleague from Cumberland; we had this great meal, Mr. Speaker — I feel energetic, I feel enthused, and I'm ready to enter the debate again for a number of hours, Mr. Speaker.

I want to point out that one of the points that I think that I closed off as we ended before supper break was the whole notion of the question that I asked the Assembly and I asked the people of Saskatchewan on this particular Bill, the whole question of why would we be excluding a number of, I think it's 236,000 young people in Saskatchewan that are under the age of 18 and which this government and this party, the Saskatchewan Party, decided that they would arbitrarily eliminate from the decision-making process around the constituency boundaries or the redrawing of the constituency boundaries, Mr. Speaker. And that's kind of what I want to begin the second phase of my discussion on in terms of the argument against Bill 36, and that is of course the reason why you would eliminate all those young people.

Mr. Speaker, 236,000 young people under the age of 18 in Saskatchewan probably represents about 25 per cent of the provincial population, and you're going to find that obviously that as these young people become more and more up in age that they will soon realize that in 2012 this government didn't include them and didn't involve them in the decision-making process around this particular Bill. And that's what's really discouraging because I'm sure somebody within the NDP [New Democratic Party] ranks will tell them that's exactly what happened.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think there's an opportunity for this government to simply give the Bill up and say, the Bill doesn't really do anything for democracy. It's not what we campaigned on. It wasn't anywhere in any part of our campaign documents nor our platform. So I think it is important that if the opportunity presents itself, maybe what they should do is simply say, all right, you know, the Bill obviously didn't fit the fairness factor. It didn't pass the smell test, so to speak, and maybe we ought to let the Bill go and forever be forgotten.

And, Mr. Speaker, the Bill reminds me of my first goal as a hockey player. It was actually in Buffalo Narrows. And it was a 2-2 game and the Bill . . . Like anything else it was certainly a tough game. And one of my friends shot the puck, and it bounced off the backboards, and I one-timed it in the top corner. And I had to do the shot as such so the puck was actually sideways because if I'd done it flat, the goalie was there, and there wasn't enough room between the goalie's mitt and the top of the net. So I had to do it at such an angle where the puck went in sideways, and Mr. Speaker, there was enough room, there was enough room in there. There was enough room in there that I had to . . . I made the shot, and it was really a good shot.

And I'm getting to the point of the Bill, Mr. Speaker. And what happened was the captain of the other team, the captain of the other team said after that game he was so discouraged. He was so angry about that goal, because there was only enough room for the puck to fit in based on that angle, that he took the puck and he took it to the deepest part of Buffalo Lake and buried it and dug a hole in the ice and threw the puck, never to be seen again. So that puck lies on the bottom of big Buffalo Lake. That's where this Bill should be too, Mr. Speaker. It should be next to that puck as a result of the goal that I made in Buffalo a number of years ago to win that game in overtime. That puck should, will never be seen again, and that's where that Bill should be, tied with an anvil, never to be seen again, Mr. Speaker.

And that's my point is the same thing that puck represents — I think the puck represents the same amount of little space there is to manoeuvre that puck at that time — that's what's going to happen to these commission members, Mr. Speaker, is the Bill really indicates exactly what they can or can't do. And it's much similar to the space that I was given in terms of putting that puck through to score. That's the same principle behind this Bill, Mr. Speaker.

So if anything, if the Saskatchewan Party want us to do them a favour, we will take that Bill, we'll crumple it up and make it as small and as tiny as we can. We'll then take it to the same lake. It's a fairly deep lake because that's where a lot of the commercial fishing activity happens. We'll take it to that same lake, and we'll punch a hole through the ice — there's a bit of ice left — and we'll tie that thing to some other heavy instrument and throw that Bill down that hole, never to be seen again, Mr. Speaker. And that's where that Bill belongs, right next to my puck in the middle of that lake because, Mr. Speaker, it's not worth the paper it's written on in any way, shape, or form.

So I think that in relation to that Bill, the people of Saskatchewan would be very, very pleased if the Bill was pulled. I think a lot of people, a lot of families would be very pleased if the Bill was pulled. And, Mr. Speaker, I think there'll be a lot of people privately and quietly in the backbench will also be very pleased if that Bill was pulled because it's contrary to the reasons I think many of them got involved with politics.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that in relation to this Bill, we have spoken about some of the challenges to the Aboriginal community, the population being, a large number of the

population being young people and thus not being counted. And what you're doing there, as well, Mr. Speaker, is you're discouraging First Nations and Métis people from becoming involved in the electoral process because you're really devaluing a lot of their young people. And that's what this Bill does.

Not only does it devalue people in the Aboriginal community; it devalues people in the non-Aboriginal community, in the immigrant community, in the communities that are trying to make Saskatchewan their home. All of a sudden they find out that in the process of how all things work in Saskatchewan, this particular government has deemed it necessary to exclude their children and grandchildren.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I come from an area, as I mentioned before — I made reference to Patuanak, to Pinehouse, to Ile-a-la-Crosse, to Buffalo and Beauval, La Loche, Green Lake — of how the fact is that in my particular riding this Bill does a great disservice to a lot of the young people that live in these communities. And the reason being is that as you look at how we're going to determine the boundaries, the constituency boundaries, right throughout the North and all throughout the province in general, these young people are not in any way, shape, or form part of this Bill, primarily because there is a political agenda at play here, Mr. Speaker, and people ought to know what exactly is happening.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to point in some of the quotes that Murray Mandryk said, and I want to make sure that the Saskatchewan Party opposition, or Saskatchewan Party government hear what the media has made reference to. And this is on the three more MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly]. "It's the stupidest decision and stupidest justification I've heard from the Brad Wall government so far," Mr. Speaker. That's from Murray Mandryk who a lot of times, Mr. Speaker, does and says things to the opposition that we don't appreciate.

But I need, I need to point out as well, this is what was said, and I quote, "It's the stupidest decision and stupidest justification I've heard from the Brad Wall government so far." So I think that's one of the most important things, Mr. Speaker, that I think the media is trying to explain to the people of Saskatchewan, as we have, is that the justification for three more MLAs, the manner in which they're doing it is not only, Mr. Speaker, the stupidest justification as indicated by the columnist, but it's also quite frankly unfair to the democratic process.

You and I are aware, Mr. Speaker, that people look at this hall as the democratic centre of the province. The Legislative Building in its entirety represents a lot of opportunity for a lot of young people to become involved with politics, and that's kind of what we want to see. We want to see . . . As time goes on, you see more and more of the older politicians, and there's quite a few over there too, that it's maybe their time to go, Mr. Speaker. And what you want to do is have younger, more articulate, and brighter people come in and begin to form the new political era when it comes to operating in Saskatchewan and operating under this dome. So I think it's important that we want to welcome the people of that era to come into this Assembly free and unencumbered in terms of how they think

government should work, of how politics should work.

And, Mr. Speaker, you want them to make those decisions based on good, sound advice when they're younger and certainly good, sound direction when they're . . . given by their parents or grandparents, and certainly informed decisions that they can make on their behalf and many others. And you get that from an early age based on being involved with politics and being involved with your family and so on and so forth.

So I think when you exclude young people from the political process, you are making a serious error. It is absolutely ludicrous to think that somebody at the age of 15 or 16 doesn't have any kind of interest in politics. Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely opposite what the Saskatchewan Party think. There are people, a lot of young people throughout Saskatchewan that have a strong interest in politics, and some of them are as young as eight, nine years old. They pay attention to what happens in the Assembly. Some of them take it in school. Some of them watch it on TV. They see it in the community. They hear it on the radio.

So you look at all the opportunities that they have to be subjected to political speeches and political opportunities and, Mr. Speaker, it's a crying shame that in the design of the constituencies, as important as that decision is, that now they find out that they don't count and they're not making any kind of impact on the constituency boundaries issue. So, Mr. Speaker, it is quite clear that this is an assault on the younger people and the democratic values that they may have when all arguments point that they should be engaged more as opposed to engaged less as being proposed by Bill 36.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it was amazing that when I spoke about Quebec at length this afternoon, and we used the Quebec numbers just to again justify and to illustrate to the public of how the other provinces do it. And again, the numbers that we use are fairly simple. Manitoba's got 22,000 compared to our 17,000, and BC [British Columbia] has got 53,000 people per riding. And Ontario being the largest one, the granddaddy of all, have 125,000 people per riding. And, Mr. Speaker, it is quite clear that we don't need any more MLAs within the province of Saskatchewan. I don't think we've heard that in any of the ridings or any of the campaign trails that we've been on.

But imagine for a moment, Mr. Speaker, imagine for a moment that for once if the Saskatchewan Party would have come clean with the people of Saskatchewan and during the election tell them we want to add more politicians, imagine the laughter at the doorstep, Mr. Speaker. Imagine how many people would be laughing most of those Sask Party guys right out of their doorway when they come there. One of their biggest, one of their flagship Bills is to add more MLAs, and imagine what their response would be, Mr. Speaker, to 99 per cent of them over there had they indicated to the people of Saskatchewan that that was their plan.

And we had an opportunity to watch the debate. We listened to the interviews. We've seen the pamphlets. We've seen the advertisements. And nowhere in the entire arsenal of Sask Party spending, in the election spending, anywhere was there any argument or point raised for more MLAs. They didn't bring that issue up, Mr. Speaker. And now, well four or five months after

the election, and now it becomes a real important issue for them to do.

So obviously if you look around, Mr. Speaker, there were people that were in the loop when this thing was being proposed. There was people in their front bench that had this maybe figured out from the start. So why, again why wasn't the rest of the team advised? Why wasn't the rest of the team advised and to make sure that they were going to be apprised of what's going on, Mr. Speaker. Obviously the rest of the team didn't know what was going on. And, Mr. Speaker, if they did, which I am assuming they must have had some of them involved, why didn't they come forward and tell the people of Saskatchewan our plan is to add more MLAs once we got elected, Mr. Speaker? And not once did we hear that in any of the discussions or the debates or the radio ads that were being put out.

Instead, Mr. Speaker, all the Saskatchewan Party done was attack the NDP, and that's typical of their MO [modus operandi]. That's about all they can do nowadays, Mr. Speaker. And I go back to that point earlier: yes, you've been in power for 16 years but it took us 14 years to clean up the mess left by your previous Conservative cousins, Mr. Speaker.

And that's the bottom line. And no matter what happens, the biggest problem we have with the conservatives across the way claiming credit to the economy or to paying down debt, Mr. Speaker, is that they inherited all that. All the tough work was done before they got there. And the most amazing thing is the people of Saskatchewan knew the boom was coming. Absolutely everybody knew, and everybody knows that the boom will continue. But the point is it doesn't matter who is in power. These things were set up long before the Saskatchewan Party came in, and the process will continue unfolding and will continue building, Mr. Speaker.

So it's absolutely . . . It's actually hilarious on our part when we hear after two or three years — I don't even know if it was two or three years; I think it was about maybe 10, 15 months — where the Saskatchewan Party were going to pay down debt of 40 per cent. Oh, by the way there's this little account in the bank called the bank of Saskatchewan. We're going to use that money to pay down this debt.

[19:15]

So, Mr. Speaker, you can obviously see that all this was set up and they just simply came along and they inherited a great booming economy, a growing population and, of course, money in the bank to pay down debt to appear to be able to, you know, to do something to make the people of Saskatchewan happy.

But, Mr. Speaker, sooner or later the point will come to the Saskatchewan Party that leadership will be required on many fronts. And so far what we've seen from them, what we have seen from them, Mr. Speaker, this is, this is the session that we will see it, Mr. Speaker. After this election in 2011, Mr. Speaker, the next two or three years is going to be the determining factor in terms of how the people of Saskatchewan respond to the Saskatchewan Party government, Mr. Speaker. And this is one Bill. I think there'll be a bunch of other poor choices that that government will make that will begin to spell

the end for the Saskatchewan Party.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to again point out Mandryk's quote just for your information. This is a guy, Mr. Speaker, a columnist that nobody has any influence over. I know at times that the Saskatchewan Party try to sweet talk him and it doesn't work. They have a little relationship with him to try and encourage him to smile and share jokes and all that, but it doesn't work. Because obviously when it comes to Bills that don't pass the smell test or the press test, Mr. Speaker, what will happen, as Murray Mandryk pointed out, and I'll quote what he said: "It's the stupidest decision and the stupidest justification I've heard from the Brad Wall government so far."

Now, Mr. Speaker, that is actually from Murray Mandryk, a columnist that sits up there and watches how things go again, Mr. Speaker, and that is absolutely . . . Some of the points that he's raised, Mr. Speaker, we totally agree. We totally agree that it is a stupid decision and it is just a wacky justification as to how they're going to do this particular process, Mr. Speaker. As we know, there is something much more at play. There's a grander political scheme I think, and people ought to be aware of that. And our job as opposition members, we're going to make sure that people out there know exactly what is going on.

So, Mr. Speaker, I again do another quote. This was on CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] radio of April 12th, 2012 and, Mr. Speaker, that's only a couple weeks ago. And I quote again, Murray Mandryk: "There is no justification for it population-wise or otherwise." Now, Mr. Speaker, that's on CBC, and now what we want people to do is to call CBC, text CBC or text *The StarPhoenix* or email any of the major daily papers. Email the Premier's office and tell him we don't need more MLAs. We can yell from the highest point in Saskatchewan. I'm not sure where the highest point in Saskatchewan . . . Cypress Hills. We want to go to the highest point in Cypress Hills and yell to the whole province, we don't need Bill 36 because, quite frankly, even the media calls it a stupid decision and stupidest justification ever by the Brad Wall government.

So, Mr. Speaker, I don't know how many more ways we can tell the Saskatchewan Party that Bill 36 has got to be the most silliest Bill we've ever seen ever. And as much as you try, as much as you try to justify it, and the more you justify it, Mr. Speaker, people out there are going to catch you and they're going to make sure they challenge you properly.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is something that I think is really important for the people of Saskatchewan to know that the characterization of this Bill and the justification of this Bill — not by the opposition who are politically motivated, but by the media — they have, quite frankly, phrased it as "the stupidest decision and stupidest justification I've heard from the Brad Wall government so far," Mr. Speaker. And that was a quote from Murray Mandryk on CBC radio.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think as we go to some of the other points that I wanted to add to this and I mentioned that the impact on some of the communities in our area . . . And I come from a constituency of Athabasca that's got some great potential. There's a lot of people out there that are working, people that are really building a good, solid life. They have a lot of

concerns about a lot of things, but in general they have a great belief in the future.

And I see, as I travel to different parts of my constituency, that there's some very good parents. There are parents out there that watch that their child goes to school every day. They make sure that they're dressed properly. They make sure they have proper food and rest and clothing. The list goes on.

And, Mr. Speaker, they also have a great faith in making sure that the land is being taken care of properly. That's one of the things I think that's really, really important. Because you look at some of the challenges, and I go back to my earlier statement about the Twin Lakes School students. When they talk about the potential environmental problems that the Athabasca tar sands around the northern part of Alberta, some of the challenges that they may present to the environment around Buffalo Narrows, La Loche, Ile-a-la-Crosse, and so on and so forth.

Now, Mr. Speaker, those are the issues that many of the young people are actively involved with. They want to know the answers to some of these things. And now we hear that there's less and less monitoring being planned. Now we're hearing that the federal government is getting out of that business and the province is not going to be picking up any of those particular costs as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that people out there know that the young people whom you've excluded from this Bill have aspirations for a greater Saskatchewan. They have beliefs that they can protect the environment, and they want to make sure that if there is activity on the economic front, that there has to be a good balance to ensure that the environment is not destroyed and that the environmental agenda is not compromised, Mr. Speaker. That's the most important message that I got from the young people.

So I think we're going to hear a lot by way of a bunch of emails perhaps, or maybe some petitions and letters from these students, because that's obviously something that we want to encourage. And I think that that message is getting through the social media, whether it's Facebook or texting. And that's the issues that are important. Those are the ones that are really, I think, overall justified to the young people that, yes, their voice is being heard. But, Mr. Speaker, all they hear from this government and this Bill, Mr. Speaker, is that we need more MLAs. Now how is that going to make any sense to the young people of my riding?

Now, Mr. Speaker, we know that there is tons and tons of opportunity in the Fort Mac [Fort McMurray] area when it comes to oil and gas development. There's a lot of people working out there. And we want to see the continued development of the oil sands as a caucus, and certainly as an individual from that area. However, we want to make sure that in that quest to try and get as many jobs and opportunities going as possible, we have to make sure we strike the right balance — the balance between the environment and the economy. We understand that clearly. We understand that there has to be that activity.

The economy's really important to all of us. And, Mr. Speaker,

the economy is the number one issue with the NDP, Mr. Speaker, and always has been, Mr. Speaker. The economy is something that's first and foremost, a lot of the discussions that we've had over time, and certainly over the many caucus and cabinet summits, you know, that we've had. And it's an amazing thing, Mr. Speaker, when you look at some of the points that the young people raise on the environment, and they look at some of the points that we're raising on the economy, that we think that the economy is something that has to be embraced and has to be built.

And the most amazing thing if you look at the history, Mr. Speaker, look at the history of Saskatchewan, every single time that the economy has been on the upswing, every single time that things are getting better and things are getting grander and there's great movement and things are happening and things are starting to move, it has been the NDP that were in power or brought in those changes, Mr. Speaker. And that's the most amazing thing about the right wingers over there, Mr. Speaker. They think they created this economy, Mr. Speaker. Fact of the matter is, as I said at the outset, they simply inherited the economy, inherited the growing population, and of course inherited a bunch of money but . . . And that's the sad reality, the sad part of this whole notion of sitting here in the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, is how they have shouted all over the place, everywhere they go, oh, it was us. It was us. It was us, you know.

And, Mr. Speaker, the more they say it, the sillier they look. But we just smile over there, because the bottom line is as long as we leave Saskatchewan in a greater position than when we got it, Mr. Speaker, that was first and foremost in many of our minds.

So Mr. Speaker, I think that goes to show that, quite frankly, that the obvious reaction of a government that knows they didn't do the economy, they didn't do the booming opportunities in the province, that this is going to continue no matter who's in power. We certainly agree with the sentiment of the people of Saskatchewan. The economy was moving forward before the Sask Party government got there and will continue whether they're in office or not, Mr. Speaker. The world won't stop if the Sask Party's trounced out of office, Mr. Speaker. That work will continue, because it's the right thing to do. And a lot of these companies are making some good investments in our province and we applaud that and we, of course, encourage that.

But on the flip side, it's all about making sure that you have a government that understands some of these challenges, is you've got to have a good economic agenda as well. We embrace that notion and we support that notion.

So what happens if you don't have all the plans in place in a proper point, is that you want to make sure that you have the balance between the economy, as I mentioned, and the environment. And in the event you're not certain if you can provide leadership on one front, Mr. Speaker, the natural reaction of right wingers is to turn around and try and change the electoral process to their advantage, Mr. Speaker. And this is the first natural defensive reaction that we're seeing from a right wing government, Mr. Speaker, because that's exactly how they will react if people know out there that it's not them

doing the great job on the economy. It's not them that has all put a lot of money into the debt, Mr. Speaker. It has always been there. It's always been there, Mr. Speaker.

So now the next step is to try their darnedest to do two things. One is to gerrymander the electoral process, and number two is continue on with their whitewashing of how they balanced the budget and how they're great for the economy and so on and so forth, Mr. Speaker. We all know, and the people of Saskatchewan know the exact truth and the total truth of how all this great opportunity in Saskatchewan came about. It took years and years of rebuilding. It took years and years of heavy lifting, Mr. Speaker. It took years and years of good leadership and, Mr. Speaker, during all that time, there was not one Sask Party government in power, Mr. Speaker. It was the NDP that were in power, Mr. Speaker.

So all that heavy lifting and all that hard work, Mr. Speaker, we think, certainly from our perspectives, that no matter what happens in the future, it is the right thing to do to work to build up Saskatchewan. And so be it if somebody comes along and takes the credit for it. The main thing is the people of Saskatchewan are benefiting, and that's the important point that I would want to raise in relation to this particular debate, the debate on Bill 36.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that's why it's important that we say, look, okay, you've been putting out all these advertisements. You've been putting all this stuff in the mail, through the radio, and doing all this. And you keep doing it over and over again. And your principal action on this whole process is to make sure you continue fooling people and telling people, yes, that is exactly what we've done. We're so great for you guys that we'll keep doing it, but just keep believing us.

And, Mr. Speaker, what happens at the end of the day is that the people of Saskatchewan are beginning to slowly realize that the Saskatchewan Party had absolutely nothing to do with the growing economy, had nothing to do with the population surge, Mr. Speaker. They simply entered politics at the right time, and they're able to certainly be the benefactors of that myth that they're creating, that because of them there is all this great opportunity for Saskatchewan. Those great opportunities for Saskatchewan will continue under any government, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, the NDP want to make sure that we make that perfectly clear that this is a point that we would want to raise from time to time just to remind people exactly the history of the province of Saskatchewan.

As well, I would point out, Mr. Speaker, that after we have had the debate settled, that really the right wingers over there that are talking about the great economy, which one fundamental problem they have is they never created it, but they're claiming it. But anyway, the problem that we have now is, what do we make sure happens to the next step, the next step in our lives as the people of Saskatchewan? We've got to make choices around, choices around how we spend that money, the new-found money, how we make sure we continue building on the economy, how we make it sustainable, Mr. Speaker.

And that's one of the points I would raise is that what you don't do to make Saskatchewan sustainable is you don't try and create more politicians, Mr. Speaker. You need more workers

and you need more thinkers. You need more nurses. You need more doctors. You need more teachers. You need these people to build that growing economy and growing population, Mr. Speaker. If you don't do that, then of course you're going to have more and more problems. And that's exactly what's wrong with the right wing thinkers over there, Mr. Speaker, is they are more tied onto their ideology over than anything else. It's not common sense. It is not practical and it doesn't serve the Saskatchewan people's interests overall.

And this Bill 36, I think, represents what's wrong with the right wingers. It's as much more about manipulation and spin, Mr. Speaker, as opposed to hard work and facts. And that's exactly what we want to separate ourselves from that particular party and of course how the NDP operate.

[19:30]

Now, Mr. Speaker, Mandryk was quite clear again. He spoke about what he thought it was. And I want to re-emphasize, this is a guy that we often find the Saskatchewan Party members — I hate to use that word — but they kind of smile up to him, you know, in a small effort to, in a small effort to try and appease him. They say, hi, how are you? Can we go for coffee later? You know, that's kind of the manipulation process I see happening, and they all do it. They all smile and say, want to go for coffee later? But anyway, and we on this side just burst out laughing because you can't — I hate to use that word — but you can't do that to the media, because the more you do it the sillier you look to us, first of all, and they don't buy it. But then obviously despite all the waving and how are things going up there and how's this and how's that, Mr. Mandryk wrote, "It's the stupidest decision and stupidest justification I've heard from the Brad Wall government so far."

So all the waving and all the goodwill and all the gestures towards him didn't pay off. And it never pays off, but they continue doing that, and I think that's shameful in many ways. You know, they're going to report what they're going to report. We don't wave at them and say, hi, how are things going? Are you enjoying the winter? You know just say what you've got to say and do what you've got to do in the papers and that's it, Mr. Speaker. We don't have no control over that. But anyway that's just how they operate, Mr. Speaker.

And I think one of the things that, clearly from my perspective, from my perspective is that you cannot manipulate the media as the Sask Party's trying to do on every occasion they have. They try and spin their way out of trouble, Mr. Speaker, and that spin, spin, spin's going to catch up sooner or later. And I think this Bill, Bill 36, is going to be the Bill that really brings home to the people of Saskatchewan the point that the Saskatchewan Party doesn't know what they're doing. They do not know what they're doing, so they will naturally revert back to their old instincts and that is to try and fix the elections, to try and gerrymander constituency boundaries to their advantage, Mr. Speaker, and we know that. We can see that from here.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's one of the reasons why we spend so much time trying to argue against this Bill, because this Bill doesn't do anything for the people of Saskatchewan. It's all about the Saskatchewan Party and their agenda of politics, Mr. Speaker.

So I would again point out to the people that are out there listening, Bill 36 is a Bill that doesn't deserve to be passed. It does not deserve any kind of recognition, Mr. Speaker, and it's shameful that that government is going to put this Bill forward to try and get three more politicians, three more MLAs at millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker, when the people of Saskatchewan say they don't want it. They didn't want, they don't want more politicians. They want more services.

And, Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is, no matter how much the opposition or the Saskatchewan Party, the backbenchers included and the cabinet ministers included and the Premier included, no matter how much they try and deny that this Bill is not going to create problems, they didn't run on this Bill last fall. They didn't tell people they were going to do that, and that's the fundamental point that I want to make with my presentation is they never asked the people of Saskatchewan if they could do this, Mr. Speaker. They've done this six months after an election, and that election, Mr. Speaker, I think would be a lot different today had they been fairly straightforward with the people of Saskatchewan in relation to Bill 36.

So, Mr. Speaker, they didn't go to the doorstep. Mr. Speaker, they didn't go to the doorstep and say, hi, how are you. I'm so and so, and I'm running for the Saskatchewan Party. And we're going to bring you guys more MLAs, and we're not going to count your kids so we can achieve the political agenda. And we're going to start cutting services, Mr. Speaker. Imagine how many of those guys would be over there had they been truthful on that front, Mr. Speaker. That is the point we're trying to make today is, why are you putting forward this whole notion of having three more MLAs when clearly last November the people of Saskatchewan didn't tell you to do that? They didn't give you the authorization. They didn't give you the support based on that point. And I think a lot of people within the Sask Party ranks are not very happy with that point.

So the opportunity that the Sask Party members could have is to withdraw the Bill and let that Bill die a quick death. That's the most reasoned way to deal with this particular matter, Mr. Speaker, is let the Bill go. Because we all know — you know — how the Bill is structured to be able to be used in a political scheme in which the Sask Party may benefit, and that is an unfair process for backbenchers to stand up and defend.

And we're going to take a great interest on how many of them stand up and say yes to this Bill when the time comes for voting, Mr. Speaker. We're going to watch. We're going to watch. And if any of them stand up and say yes to this particular Bill, then we know that they are a party to political manipulation, that they are a party to gerrymandering constituency boundaries. Because the bottom line in this particular Bill — the question was never answered by any members of the government — why did you exclude all the young people under the age of 18 from being incorporated within *The Constituency Boundaries Act* to make sure we do this process fair and open and honest?

And secondly is there's no need for MLAs, more MLAs. It's obvious by the numbers that there is no need for more MLAs, so why advocate for that?

So we're going to see how they stand up. We're going to see

how they stack up, these great agents of democracy. We're going to see how they get up and defend what we think is a fundamental right and see how often they stand up and vote for something that they fundamentally know is wrong.

So if they do that, Mr. Speaker, during the voting process, then on this side, all we're going to do is look at each one of them, and then forever and a day, Mr. Speaker, we will remember their names and how they voted. We will remember their names and how they voted, and we will see exactly how well they sleep at nights, Mr. Speaker, after that, because we know what this is about. It's a huge set-up for their political advantage, Mr. Speaker.

And that's the point that I would raise in some of my concluding comments, and again to point out that I would say I want to end my presentation on Murray Mandryk's point once again. And I'd like to re-emphasize, Mr. Speaker, Mandryk on three more MLAs: "It's the stupidest decision and stupidest justification I've heard from the Brad Wall government so far." And that's Murray Mandryk with *The StarPhoenix*. And I'll say it again: "It's the stupidest decision and stupidest justification I've heard from the Brad Wall government so far." That's not the NDP opposition saying that. It is the media saying that. So I think it's really important, Mr. Speaker, that we bring forward some of these points.

And other examples I would use, Mr. Speaker, as in terms of how they're trying to interfere with the political process — and that was a question that my colleague from the Saskatoon area mentioned in the committee last night when they were asking about people running — people that work in the civil service, are they allowed to run for some of these positions? And, Mr. Speaker, that was a question during committee, and it's another example of how Bill 36 is certainly impacting the attitudes of the Sask Party government.

And the Chair of that committee, Mr. Speaker, I believe is the member from Batoche, was very adamant in shutting down that question. I mean clearly in the committee you're allowed to ask questions on policy and practice, and yet the member was steadfastly rejecting any kind of questions on policy. And I don't think that's within his right to do so, Mr. Speaker. As opposition members, we can ask questions on practice and policy. Whether the member likes it or not, we have the right to ask those questions. Is that another attack on democracy? And of course the gentleman kept on and on and on. The bottom line is, if you have a question on policy or practice within committee, I think the government has the right to answer it. And if the committee Chair doesn't think it's right, I don't think that that's right either, Mr. Speaker. The committee Chair is supposed to be neutral. He's supposed to be respectful of the fact that these committees are there to answer questions on practice and policy of different governments or of the different ministries.

So we asked the question, and all of a sudden the question gets called out of order by the Chair. What is that about, Mr. Speaker? That again is an affront to democracy. It's the same principle behind this Bill. It's the same principle behind this Bill. You're allowed to ask questions on any issue that affects the policy of the government. And when you see some of these chairpersons trying to shut down that debate, Mr. Speaker, it

lends to our argument out there to the public that this is another example of how their misguided perception of how things should work, and they rule that question out of order.

I don't think, Mr. Speaker, in the future, I don't think the Chair should be allowed to do that. If you had a question specifically on an issue on a policy or practice, you can ask that question, and the chairman has no right to call that question out of order because that's not within their bailiwick to do so, that they have to and the minister has an obligation to answer the question because a lot of people watch those committee meetings, and they want to know the answers to these questions, Mr. Speaker.

So again I would point out, whether it's Bill 36 or any of the other issues that are being raised, that we have a right to question these Bills. We have a right to question a lot of the issues that are raised by this government, everything from policy to practice. And we think, we think overall that there is a lot of issues that are at stake here, and we're paying a lot of attention to what is being happening to this Bill and in other practices of the Sask Party government.

Now, Mr. Speaker, again Mandryk, the quote, "It's the stupidest decision and the stupidest justification I've heard from the Brad Wall government so far." And, Mr. Speaker, I think the people of Saskatchewan, the people of Saskatchewan I think share the sentiment of Murray Mandryk. I think we share the sentiment of Murray Mandryk. The bottom line, the reason why, the justification part of it is what really gets me, is what really gets a lot of people. The justification of it, it is just plain silly. And, Mr. Speaker, we see right through it.

So on that note, I know it may be disappointing news for a few of the government MLAs, but I'm going to take my seat, and I'm going to ask other members of my caucus to make comments and to join the debate on this particular Bill because this Bill cannot simply die on the order paper and just by way of a vote to be gone. We need to speak more at greater lengths about this Bill. And, Mr. Speaker, I would now ask a member or one of my colleagues to assume the debate on this Bill. Thank you.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to follow the member from Athabasca after what's been an impressive speech on many fronts to address a Bill that really does display misplaced priorities of this government. I commend the member from Athabasca for speaking from his heart actually for many hours here today, Mr. Speaker. And I know what motivates the member from Athabasca as he looks at the circumstances of many of the families all across this province, many of the institutions across this province, and he recognizes how out of line this Bill is with the priorities of Saskatchewan people, Saskatchewan families, Saskatchewan seniors, and how out of line it is to serving those proud institutions here in this province — education, health care — right across the piece, Mr. Speaker.

So I certainly see it as an important debate to enter, so I'm pleased to do so, but I'm disappointed that we're debating a Bill that shouldn't be before us, a Bill and matters that were never

put before Saskatchewan people. It's a matter of being straight with Saskatchewan people and something Saskatchewan people expect. When just a few months back, as Saskatchewan people went to the polls and the Saskatchewan Party put forward their message to voters, not once in that platform was there a mention of excluding youth in elections moving forward, from electoral boundaries. Not a mention was there to spend millions of dollars to increase the number of politicians in Saskatchewan. In fact not a mention of cuts that were pending from this government in health care and in education and increases to costs for Saskatchewan families and seniors all across Saskatchewan. So it's with great disappointment that we enter this debate because quite simply what we see, the actions of this government, the budget of this government, this Bill in itself isn't what Saskatchewan people bargained for. Certainly not what they voted for.

When we look at the Bill and specific aspects of it that are such a concern, certainly it's that exclusion of youth, exclusion of children here in Saskatchewan, but it's also adding more politicians at the cost of millions of dollars as we move forward for many, many years, Mr. Speaker — this at a time where Saskatchewan people are being asked to do with less and to pay more, Mr. Speaker. It's unacceptable, and it certainly reflects priorities that are inconsistent with those Saskatchewan people that we know all across this province, in all ridings I should say, Mr. Speaker.

So with respect to Bill 36, the Bill that has been put forward, a Bill that has been a surprise and a disappointment to Saskatchewan people, that was sprung upon Saskatchewan people to spend millions of their tax dollars to increase the number of politicians, Mr. Speaker, we've put forward an amendment to that Bill, and that amendment reads as follows:

"this House declines to give second reading to Bill No. 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

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."

[19:45]

Now, Mr. Speaker, I couldn't agree more with the amendment that we put forward on behalf of Saskatchewan people, hearing from Saskatchewan people to champion the true issues that Saskatchewan people care about, Mr. Speaker.

And I'm incredibly disappointed that here we are at 7:46 on Tuesday, April 17th, continuing to debate a Bill that should simply be pulled from this Legislative Chamber, a Bill that should simply be withdrawn, a Bill, Mr. Speaker, that doesn't have the best interests of Saskatchewan people at heart but is all about political games and the best interests and political

fortunes of that party in government opposite, Mr. Speaker. A Bill and changes, Mr. Speaker, that exclude youth, the voice of youth, the importance of youth all across Saskatchewan, exclude them from being counted in the electoral redistribution process and in the count, Mr. Speaker, and a Bill that spends millions of dollars as we move forward to increase the number of politicians in Saskatchewan at a time, Mr. Speaker, where this government is asking Saskatchewan people to pay more and expect less.

This is about elections today, Mr. Speaker, but it's also about elections into the future. And when we look at the youth all across this province and what they mean to our economy and to our social well-being, Mr. Speaker, to the future of this province, we need to make sure that they are front and centre in the policy debates of this Chamber and of elections. To discount that voice, to exclude that voice, Mr. Speaker, is a shameful exercise and something this government's being taken to task for, not just but us, Mr. Speaker, but by Saskatchewan people.

And, Mr. Speaker, in many ways it's those very youth, those children all across Saskatchewan for whom have specific needs in our constituencies that we should be evaluating when we're deriving policy, making decisions around resources by way of the budget. And it's disappointing and shameful, Mr. Speaker, to see a government not only discount that voice, but also by way of their budget to sort of put youth and children and families, Mr. Speaker, the matters that are important to them, to the back of the bus.

And when we look at adding seats, MLAs to this province, Mr. Speaker, at this point in time it's simply the wrong approach. It's out of line with Saskatchewan people, what Saskatchewan people are calling for, what Saskatchewan people expect, and it's certainly out of touch with Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. It's fair to say that quite simply it doesn't add up and it doesn't make sense.

When we look at the actual counts, it's interesting to look at the number of constituents in each of the provinces, the average number of constituents for the respective provinces. Here we are right now as already the most highly represented province in Canada making these changes. So it's not as though this is rectifying some sort of representative injustice, Mr. Speaker. It's quite the opposite. We're already highly represented in Saskatchewan, which is why Saskatchewan people, who are very common sense people, question why this government would be adding more MLAs, more politicians with this in mind at a time where they're asking Saskatchewan people to, as I say, expect less and pay more, Mr. Speaker.

But by way of comparison, in Saskatchewan the number of, I guess comparing to other provinces, in British Columbia they have 2.9 times more the number of constituents than we do in our ridings here, Mr. Speaker. So basically three times more constituents than we have. With that in mind in British Columbia, how does this government justify pushing forward the advancement of millions of dollars of Saskatchewan people's money to increase the number of politicians, Mr. Speaker? So British Columbia has three times more constituents than we have in our ridings.

Now we could look next door. You might say, well maybe it's different with our western neighbour, being Alberta. Well, Mr. Speaker, it's not. Alberta in fact has 2.5 times more constituents in their ridings than we do as MLAs here in Saskatchewan. So British Columbia, 2.9, almost three times more constituents in their ridings than we do right now; in Alberta, 2.5 times more, Mr. Speaker. So our western neighbours, Mr. Speaker, we have much, much, we have much smaller ridings than they have, many fewer constituents in those ridings, and certainly doesn't provide any justification for this government to be pushing forward to increase the number of politicians, further reducing the number of constituents that we represent, Mr. Speaker.

Something that I'd argue that we can . . . The current number of constituents within a riding, certainly it allows us to have significant outreach and touch, and to understand what's important to our constituents, and to represent them well, which in part, Mr. Speaker, is what we're doing here tonight. It's because of that understanding, because of that connection, Mr. Speaker, that we know how out of line the legislation that's been put forward is; we know how out of line the actions of this government are.

When we look at Ontario, Mr. Speaker, if you can imagine, it's almost seven times more the number of constituents in their ridings per MLA than we have here in Saskatchewan. Almost seven times more — 6.7 times what we have here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And this government thinks that we should be adding more MLAs here in Saskatchewan so that we have even fewer constituents in those ridings, Mr. Speaker, only to serve their own political best interest, Mr. Speaker, with no regard for Saskatchewan people and the priorities that are important to Saskatchewan people.

Choosing to spend millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker, to advance their own political best interest at the same time as they're hiking the costs of prescription drugs for seniors, Mr. Speaker, at the same time as they're leaving many classrooms, Mr. Speaker, facing cuts within the classroom for students, Mr. Speaker, facing the prospect of school closures, Mr. Speaker — all sorts of matters that are important and unaddressed and underfunded by this government, Mr. Speaker. It's a question of choices. It's a question of priorities.

I heard something ridiculous from the Premier, Mr. Speaker, on this matter. The Premier somehow tried to suggest that by spending millions more on adding more politicians that this wouldn't cost us any more. Well, Mr. Speaker, it simply displays the Premier's and the Sask Party's math on this front, Mr. Speaker. How does that work, Mr. Speaker? How do you spend more money, but not have it cost Saskatchewan people more?

Now if the Premier and if the Sask Party is somehow suggesting that there are savings to be had somewhere else in their executive offices, Mr. Speaker, in their executive offices, Mr. Speaker — where in fact I know staff took 100 per cent increases in pay where Saskatchewan people have seen less than the rate of inflation, where minimum wage earners are locked in, Mr. Speaker, where in the Premier's office they've seen a doubling of that pay, and all across those executive offices, Mr. Speaker — if the Premier is suggesting that he can find some savings in those offices, his political offices, Mr.

Speaker, I would agree. And I'd encourage him to find those savings and I'd encourage him to make sure that those savings are either had and felt by Saskatchewan people or redistributed to priorities that matter to Saskatchewan people, certainly not to fund this exercise that is nothing more than serving up the political best interests, partisan best interests of this government.

It's interesting, Mr. Speaker. Not only does it display early in a mandate for a government with a large majority, Mr. Speaker, a lack of focus on Saskatchewan people, a lack of compassion for Saskatchewan people. It shows that a government is, this government, the Sask Party government is, it would appear, a tad out of touch with Saskatchewan people, maybe more than a tad, Mr. Speaker. It seems that this government's changed in many ways, Mr. Speaker, when you see what they offered up in the fall election and now what they're doing on so many fronts, Mr. Speaker.

And the fact that this government is spending time in this House to force through the expenditure of millions of dollars through this Bill to increase the number of politicians, to exclude youth, Mr. Speaker, and to have this debate occupy this floor of this Assembly instead of having us being able to turn our attention to the matters that are important to Saskatchewan people and having that government spend its time in prioritizing what matters to Saskatchewan people, is disappointing.

So I go on. It's not just British Columbia that has far larger ridings by way of population. It's not just Alberta, Mr. Speaker. It's not just Ontario. It's also Quebec, Mr. Speaker, that has 3.5 times the number of constituents than we do here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Or we can look at Nova Scotia, which is in a similar circumstance. Well they're not putting forward this sort of legislation, Mr. Speaker.

So if you look across the provincial perspective across Canada, Mr. Speaker, we are incredibly out of line by adding more MLAs, reducing the number of our constituents, Mr. Speaker, and it's incredibly inconsistent with any of the other provinces. To somehow suggest that this is in the best interests of Saskatchewan people is simply not being straight, Mr. Speaker.

When we look at those specific ridings and we look at the actual number of people that we represent, Mr. Speaker, the average per seat, in Saskatchewan we have just over, well closer to 18,000 — 17,810 constituents, Mr. Speaker. In British Columbia, Mr. Speaker, they represent 51,764 constituents, Mr. Speaker. And it just doesn't make sense, Mr. Speaker, that with that sort of comparison that this government thinks that we should represent fewer, Mr. Speaker, that somehow we need more politicians, Mr. Speaker, instead of addressing the needs of Saskatchewan people.

I have no idea, Mr. Speaker, I have no idea how members opposite justify to their constituents that somehow when here in Saskatchewan with . . . I'll use British Columbia. Here we represent close to 18,000 constituents, Mr. Speaker. In Alberta next door, they represent 43,915 constituents, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: — Far more than twice the amount.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — And the member from, I was going to

say Nutana, from Riversdale states that that's far more than twice that, Mr. Speaker, and certainly it is. It's actually two and a half times, Mr. Speaker, what we represent. And then somehow we're supposed to accept from members opposite, Mr. Speaker, that we should be spending millions of taxpayers' hard-earned dollars here in Saskatchewan to increase the number of politicians, Mr. Speaker. Doesn't make sense. It doesn't add up. It's not consistent with the priorities of Saskatchewan people.

When we think of those priorities of Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting because certainly there's opportunities for us to be addressing some of those needs and pressures that are out there. I know in the member from Arm River-Watrous's riding that the school of Nokomis, an important institution to that community, is of great concern and at great risk of closing right now, Mr. Speaker. And this government has taken over education funding in this province, Mr. Speaker. And they're sitting on their hands as it relates to education funding and responding to some of the needs in education, but they're not sitting on their hands when they're voting forward this Bill and speaking in their caucus to spend millions of dollars on increasing the number of politicians, Mr. Speaker. Doesn't make sense. Doesn't add up. It's not fair to the people of Nokomis. It's not fair to the people of Saskatchewan all across this fine province, Mr. Speaker.

So when we look at the actual number of people in these ridings, I thought that Ontario was a striking example. And in Ontario . . . Here in Saskatchewan, remembering that we represent roughly 18,000 constituents in each of our ridings, lowest in Canada, so we have the closest touch, if you will, Mr. Speaker, to our constituents. No problem to fix here if you will, Mr. Speaker. But in Ontario, instead of having 18,000 members in each riding, Mr. Speaker, they have in fact 120,112 constituents.

Now the members on this side, Mr. Speaker, and I saw a few of them gasping on that side, Mr. Speaker, were saying, well are you . . . They were questioning, is that the right number off . . . Is that the right data, Mr. Speaker? It's correct. I'm just going to make sure that I'm reading that into the record correctly. That's 120,112 constituents, Mr. Speaker. That's Ontario, Mr. Speaker. That's 6.7 times larger by way of population than our ridings, Mr. Speaker. How ridiculous does it seem, Mr. Speaker, for the Premier, for this government to suggest that somehow we're under-represented when British Columbia has three times the number of members, when we have Alberta which is two and a half times the number of population in their ridings, Mr. Speaker? It speaks to misplaced priorities.

[20:00]

Mr. Speaker, I'll just highlight again the Bill here that's been put forward. Here in Saskatchewan of course we went through an election in the fall. We also had a Throne Speech. What we never heard in that election and what we never saw in that Throne Speech was any mention of this plan of the Premier and government's to add the politicians, three more politicians to Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And also to exclude the voice of young people, Mr. Speaker. Young people with bright futures in this province and bright individuals for whom we must endeavour to represent, for whom we must endeavour to make

sure their needs and priorities are put forward in the policy discussions in this Chamber, in the legislative discussions of government, and certainly in the budgetary discussions allocating resources to priorities, Mr. Speaker.

So we see a government that didn't suggest they were going to do this in the election. They didn't have it anywhere in their platform. They didn't have it anywhere in their Throne Speech. And then, surprise, surprise, and with great disappointment to Saskatchewan people, they push forward a Bill to spend millions of dollars to increase the number of politicians here in Saskatchewan and also to exclude youth, Mr. Speaker. It's simply wrong. It's the wrong direction to go, Mr. Speaker.

And when we could compare some of those numbers, Mr. Speaker, to what we have here in Saskatchewan, in Saskatchewan on average we represent just under 18,000 constituents in each of our ridings. Now the Premier . . . We're actually the lowest; we have the smallest ridings in all of Canada, Mr. Speaker, thereabouts by way of the data for electoral representation. And the Premier somehow thinks that he should be pushing forward, Mr. Speaker, adding three more politicians that will cost Saskatchewan people millions of dollars at a time where other provinces certainly serve many much larger constituencies. I'll highlight these a little bit here.

In British Columbia, the number of constituents are in fact 51,764, Mr. Speaker, which is 2.9 or 3 times larger than what we represent here in Saskatchewan. It's simply the wrong approach to go, Mr. Speaker. No mention of it in the election. No mention of it in the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker. It does come down to a matter of being straight and forthright with Saskatchewan people, and certainly in this circumstance this is a matter of choices that aren't consistent with what matters to Saskatchewan people.

We saw in fact in the recent budget, Mr. Speaker, significant added expenditure to . . . or cost added to the lives of Saskatchewan people. So at a time where this government is increasing the number of politicians and spending millions of dollars to do so, they're adding costs to Saskatchewan families all across this province, cutting services all across this province, Mr. Speaker, and to fix a problem that doesn't exist as it relates to the best interests of Saskatchewan people, but are serving up the partisan political interests of their own party, Mr. Speaker. That's not how choices should be made. That's not how legislation should be made, and this legislation and these moves are offside with Saskatchewan people.

When we look at some of the other provinces, Mr. Speaker, in fact it's Ontario that has 6.7 times the number of constituents that we represent, Mr. Speaker. So when we represent just under 18,000, those in Ontario in fact represent over 120,000 people, Mr. Speaker, more than 100,000 more constituents than we have, Mr. Speaker. How does that square? How does the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood, who I think is a good person, how does he allow to push this Bill forward at a time where he's got a highway along Earl Grey that needs to be fixed, Mr. Speaker? To spend millions of dollars to increase the number of politicians, Mr. Speaker, it doesn't mesh with the priorities of Saskatchewan people and certainly not in his riding, Mr. Speaker.

When we look at this, the Bill excludes the, in the determination of constituency boundaries, youth as well, Mr. Speaker. And youth, being the bright future to this province, Mr. Speaker, also have needs that need to be represented, voices that need to be heard, and they're individuals that should be engaged, Mr. Speaker. That's how we're going to be stronger as a province. It's how we're going to be able to make improvements, Mr. Speaker. Instead we see a government excluding the voice of youth and taking away the importance of their voice in these matters, discounting their voice as policies are being debated, as legislation gets debated and budgets form, Mr. Speaker. We believe that's simply wrong.

And as the member from Athabasca has highlighted so well, Mr. Speaker, in debate here today, no one's been calling for this. And I look to members opposite. Have they had a single constituent ever come to them to request an increase in the number of politicians? I'm looking to members opposite here. And are you . . . Looking to members opposite, if they're comfortable to go onto the record here with this.

I see the member from Biggar who put his hand up, who has suggested that in his constituency someone came to him, Mr. Speaker, and said that they wanted more politicians, Mr. Speaker. Well I'm not sure, Mr. Speaker, if that wasn't the member from Kindersley that drove over to the member from Biggar's office, Mr. Speaker, and told them that they should support more politicians. That might have been who spoke to the member from Biggar, Mr. Speaker. But I can't imagine a constituent in Saskatchewan, a person in Saskatchewan calling for an increase in the number of politicians.

What I can say, Mr. Speaker, and we as politicians, as legislators, we as MLAs, we meet with Saskatchewan people on an ongoing basis. We do so in community forums. We do so at schools. We do so in the houses of Saskatchewan people. We do so at chamber of commerce meetings. We do so in union halls. We do so on the doorsteps of Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. We do it all across this province. And I can say with all sincerity, Mr. Speaker, I have never had somebody share with me that they think we should increase the number of politicians, short of the members opposite, Mr. Speaker.

And we never heard a sniff of this, Mr. Speaker, in the last election, Mr. Speaker, from a government that put forward a message of something very different in the election. They said it was a time of boom and prosperity. This is what we heard about in the election. We saw the glossy brochures. They came out and had fancy slogans and were pretty slick, Mr. Speaker. But what we've seen in the months following, Mr. Speaker, is a government that's moved forward with actions that certainly aren't in the best interests of Saskatchewan people, but in no way resemble as well what they offered up in the election. A complete disconnect from what was printed in the material of this party, Mr. Speaker, now what they're asking Saskatchewan people to accept.

So it's interesting, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan people at the very base of it are common sense people who expect you to be straight with them, Mr. Speaker. And I think that's why Saskatchewan people are so upset about this Bill, Mr. Speaker, so upset with the expenditure of millions of dollars, their tax dollars, Mr. Speaker, to increase the number of politicians when

we already have the fewest constituents in Canada per riding, Mr. Speaker. Not just by a few, Mr. Speaker, but by, in the case of Ontario, we have more than 100,000 fewer in each of our ridings, and in most cases two or three times fewer than anywhere else in Canada.

But what does this government do after it's won a big mandate and come in after the fall election? You would think that they'd roll their sleeves up, that they'd put their ear to the ground, that they'd listen to Saskatchewan people, and that they'd serve their best interests or at least fulfill the mandate that they earned, Mr. Speaker. Well we don't see any of that, Mr. Speaker. In fact we see something entirely different. It's not what voters bargained for in the past. I'm hearing many people saying that they're seeing some change in this government, something different, something that wasn't offered up in the fall.

And it's understanding, Mr. Speaker, when at the same time as this government is pushing forward a Bill that recklessly and short-sightedly spends millions of taxpayers' dollars to increase the number of politicians, that they're asking Saskatchewan people to pay more, Mr. Speaker, and expect less. Putting forward a budget that makes cuts to seniors, makes cuts in education, makes cuts in the classroom, makes cuts in health regions all across Saskatchewan as it relates to those critical health services, Mr. Speaker, but at the same very time is spending millions of dollars, by their own choice, Mr. Speaker, to spend millions of dollars to increase the number of politicians, Mr. Speaker. It's awfully disappointing for Saskatchewan people. And I can understand the rightful disappointment, the rightful outrage in some circumstances, Mr. Speaker, from what we're hearing from Saskatchewan people.

Now I hear it in my riding, Mr. Speaker. I've heard it from many. In fact I haven't come across a single person yet, when I've been speaking about this, that somehow thought it's in our best interest to spend millions on adding more politicians, but then cutting in the classroom or cutting in the emergency rooms or cutting the ability to retain the local doctor, Mr. Speaker, or adding costs to seniors, Mr. Speaker, by way of prescription drug increases that have been pushed forward by this government, Mr. Speaker. That's what this government's been doing. None of it was in the election material in the fall, Mr. Speaker. None of it was what the . . . reflecting the mandate that this government had earned, Mr. Speaker.

What they didn't say in the fall campaign, Mr. Speaker, was that they were going to spend millions on politicians, but cut the film economy in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, to cut an economy in an industry, Mr. Speaker, that employs thousands in Saskatchewan, has employed thousands, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan, has provided important investment to our economy, Mr. Speaker. I know that to be true in Canora. I know that to be true in Moose Jaw. I know that to be true all across this province, Mr. Speaker, but to be making a cut, Mr. Speaker, that in fact provided an economic return, a net benefit to the province, if you will, Mr. Speaker, at the same time is spending millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker, if you can imagine, if you can imagine, to increase the number of politicians when we have, Mr. Speaker, the smallest population, ridings by way of population, in Canada.

You know, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people are hard-working people. I think if they looked at the riding examples all across Canada, they would expect their MLAs, their politicians to be the same. I don't think Saskatchewan people look for the easy way out. I don't think they look for the way to work less. I think Saskatchewan people are determined, hard-working people and I think it's a disappointment. And that's what I'm hearing from Saskatchewan people, that somehow the government opposite, Mr. Speaker, is trying to create sort of a cushier environment somehow for politicians, Mr. Speaker. It's inappropriate. It's out of line with the hard work that Saskatchewan people do. It's out of line with the DNA of Saskatchewan people that I know, not just in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, but in urban Saskatchewan and all across this fine province, Mr. Speaker. And I think we can do better than this, Mr. Speaker. And I find it a great disappointment that we're sitting . . . standing on the floor of this Chamber debating this Bill instead of it being withdrawn and pulled, Mr. Speaker, many weeks before. I mean it was a disappointment in general that it was ever introduced, Mr. Speaker.

With that being said, this government's had ample time to do the right thing. We continue to extend and call on this Premier, this government, to do the right thing and to yank this Bill. Bigger government is what this governments driving by way of politicians, Mr. Speaker. I don't know, Mr. Speaker. I never saw that in the member from Thunder Creek's literature in the fall election. What I saw was a glossy brochure, a good looking picture . . . looked good on it, Mr. Speaker, and sort of snappy slogans, Mr. Speaker, about moving forward and boom and all this sort of stuff, Mr. Speaker. But nowhere in there, Mr. Speaker, did I see a mention that somehow what his true intention was, or his government's intention was to drive big government by way of politicians, Mr. Speaker. To increase the number of politicians, Mr. Speaker. Pretty interesting, Mr. Speaker.

Also it didn't mention that he was going to exclude youth in that vote. And I pick on that one member; he's a good guy and I like him, Mr. Speaker, but it's the same can be said for all of the members, all of the members opposite. All of the members opposite, Mr. Speaker. A good bunch in general, Mr. Speaker, but out of line. Out of line with the priorities they're choosing.

And what we're hearing from Saskatchewan people is that this government's changed, changed in their approach. It seems that for many, some are saying they're out of touch with what the priorities are for Saskatchewan families. Others are saying that they seem arrogant with their large, their large majority, Mr. Speaker, feeling they can just do whatever they want. If they want to kill jobs in the film economy, if they want to drive away investment as they are, Mr. Speaker, if they want to hurt creative young entrepreneurs and workers in this province as they're doing, Mr. Speaker, they'll just do it and they won't listen to anyone. And that's too bad, Mr. Speaker.

We see that in this Bill here too, Mr. Speaker. And like I've said, there are priorities in this province that need attention, Mr. Speaker, that require our attention, that require our focus — needs of families, the needs of our economy, the needs of our environment. And here we are spending precious hours here on the floor of this Assembly trying to stop a Bill, Mr. Speaker,

that certainly isn't in the best interests of Saskatchewan people, that redefines our democratic process, Mr. Speaker, and does so with the heavy hand of a majority, Mr. Speaker, that many people that are talking to me are referring to as out of touch and a tad arrogant. Mr. Speaker, it's too bad; Saskatchewan people certainly expect better than that.

[20:15]

As I've said, we have incredibly low populations in our ridings compared to other provinces. Certainly the population growth that's been occurring in Saskatchewan for many years, Mr. Speaker, when we add those numbers up, we still have the smallest ridings, Mr. Speaker, by way of population. So I know the Premier tried to go out and he tried to say, well boy we're growing by way of our population so we need to increase the number of politicians. Well, Mr. Speaker, factoring in those individuals, Mr. Speaker, that have moved to Saskatchewan for many years, Mr. Speaker, and that population growth that we've experienced, we still have the smallest ridings, Mr. Speaker, in general across Canada, and two and three and six times smaller than most other provinces, Mr. Speaker. It's an example of being out of line with Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, I highlight . . . There's a quote that I think is important to put into the record, not because it has fairly direct and arguably harsh language but because I think it reflects what I'm hearing when I'm picking up the phone or talking with many individuals who have broached this subject with me. It reflects very much the sentiment of Saskatchewan people, the pulse of Saskatchewan people all across this province, Mr. Speaker, on this front. And that quote comes from one of our esteemed journalists, Murray Mandryk, and I quote, "It's the stupidest decision, the stupidest justification I've heard from the Brad Wall government so far."

Mr. Speaker, it doesn't have to be this way. There's very intelligent members sitting opposite. There's some members that are compassionate, Mr. Speaker, sitting opposite. How can they let, how can they let a Bill like this be rammed through without fixing something that should have been resolved weeks ago, Mr. Speaker?

But it's not too late. This Bill should be withdrawn. And you know, that's harsh language that's been put forward by Mr. Mandryk in that quote, Mr. Speaker, but it's important language to share because it does certainly reflect the sentiment that I've heard in Weyburn, Mr. Speaker, that I've heard in Yorkton, that I've heard in Moose Jaw, that I've heard all across this province. And it's certainly what I'm hearing, Mr. Speaker, here in Regina. And I'll quote just that quote one more time, Mr. Speaker: "It's the stupidest decision and the stupidest justification I've heard from the Brad Wall government so far."

Mr. Speaker, to spend millions of dollars to increase the number of politicians when we have the smallest ridings in Canada by way of population, it just doesn't make sense, Mr. Speaker. It has nothing to do with, about proper representation of Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. And at the same time in that same Bill, Mr. Speaker, undermining our democratic process, defining and changing our democratic process with a heavy hand of a majority that won't listen to Saskatchewan people or stakeholders, Mr. Speaker, by excluding youth from

the counts that drive the constituencies here in Saskatchewan is shameful.

And it has consequences many years forward because the decisions that are being made here and now have consequences for elections forward, but also for decisions forward. It marginalizes in a significant way the voice of children all across this province, Mr. Speaker, and it undermines and discounts the voice of predominantly young constituencies and young communities, Mr. Speaker. That reflects, Mr. Speaker, an out-of-touch way by this government because those very young communities, Mr. Speaker, with young families and young children with bright futures ahead of them, Mr. Speaker, those are the very constituencies, those are the very communities, and those are the very constituents, Mr. Speaker, by way of the children and youth for whom we should be working to make sure we're serving the best interests that they hold, Mr. Speaker, that we're setting a better future for those children and for those families, Mr. Speaker. Instead we see government excluding that voice, Mr. Speaker, and marginalizing, discounting the voice of young people.

And, Mr. Speaker, of course the reason this government's been doing this is for their own political gain. A government that won a massive majority, Mr. Speaker, in the fall, we accept that, Mr. Speaker. We accept that they won a big majority, Mr. Speaker. But instead of then taking that majority and then serving the mandate and serving Saskatchewan people, what they're doing is to go to redefine election laws in Saskatchewan so that they can try to entrench themselves further in electoral success with Saskatchewan people, electoral tricks that we're seeing put forward here with no respect to the best interests of Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. That's absolutely shameful.

And we call on members to withdraw the piece of legislation that's put forward and save Saskatchewan people, save Saskatchewan people millions of dollars that are otherwise going to be spent by this Premier and this government to increase the number of politicians in Saskatchewan when we don't need to, Mr. Speaker, absolutely don't need to. And we could be reallocating those to priorities of Saskatchewan people.

But at the same time, Mr. Speaker, they're excluding children from the equation, from all across Saskatchewan. Now I've talked about young constituencies. I've talked about seniors. I've talked about rural Saskatchewan. I've talked about urban Saskatchewan. I also want to talk a little bit about First Nations and Métis communities, Mr. Speaker. This Bill can be seen as nothing more than a deliberate attempt to discount the voice and importance of First Nations and Métis communities across Saskatchewan. Reason I say that, Mr. Speaker, is those First Nations and Métis communities are predominantly young communities, Mr. Speaker. Bright futures, lots of hope, lots of optimism if we're serving those best interests and putting forward plans, Mr. Speaker, that serve the best interests of those constituents, Mr. Speaker, of those constituencies and communities.

And instead, this government, this Premier want to play electoral games, Mr. Speaker, to sort of try to shore up the next election somehow, Mr. Speaker, through some sort of tricks, Mr. Speaker, as opposed to serving (a) the mandate that they

earned, Mr. Speaker, and then (b) as being respectful of Saskatchewan people, understanding that they received a large majority, Mr. Speaker, but continuing to work for Saskatchewan people. That's what's changed, Mr. Speaker, and that's what I'm hearing from Saskatchewan people about this government, sadly, Mr. Speaker — that it seems they've changed, certainly aren't delivering what they had offered to deliver, promised to deliver Saskatchewan people in the fall, Mr. Speaker.

And when we look at those First Nations and Métis populations and communities, Mr. Speaker, the incredible opportunities we have to serve this vibrant young . . . these young constituencies and communities, Mr. Speaker, by way of policy and by way of choices here in this legislature, by way of budgetary choices and plans, is significant. And it's no small part of our economic and social well-being as a province moving forward. And it's too bad to see a government that's discounted that voice, Mr. Speaker, instead of rolling up their sleeves and doing the important work for all Saskatchewan people, instead of listening to Saskatchewan people, to choosing to rewrite election laws with no respect to the needs of Saskatchewan people.

I notice as well in one of Murray Mandryk's articles, Mr. Speaker, that the . . . or one of his comments I guess. This was with CBC radio. He says, "There's no justification for it population-wise or otherwise," Mr. Speaker. Now that's a pretty conclusive statement, Mr. Speaker, and we concur, Mr. Speaker. When we look at the population information before us, Mr. Speaker, we have the smallest populations that we serve in all of Canada, not in even a comparable fashion — two and three and six times smaller, Mr. Speaker. And then Murray Mandryk goes on and says, not just from a population perspective, population-wise or otherwise, Mr. Speaker. So there's no other justification to be moving forward with this, Mr. Speaker.

And I guess that's why this government, sadly, didn't bring this forward to Saskatchewan people in the fall election, Mr. Speaker, because they must have known at some level that to play the kind of tricks they were planning to play, they must have known that that doesn't resonate with Saskatchewan people, that it doesn't reflect the needs of Saskatchewan people. So it's something for us to highlight.

When we look at representative democracy and how we can serve our constituents and how we make sure that constituents are engaged and involved in decisions that have a direct impact on their lives, we would look at things such as ridings, and we'd look at things such as the number of constituents. And like I say, we have the smallest ridings in Canada, and we have the ability to serve those constituents very well, which is why we're very pleased to bring forward the voice of many of those constituents here tonight.

The member from Prince Albert Carlton, Mr. Speaker, I quote him from his committee, he said, "We never campaigned on more MLAs. We never talked about that." That's correct, but it's a sad statement, Mr. Speaker. And I know the same is true in Moose Jaw, Mr. Speaker. When members went forward into the election, they never campaigned on this, Mr. Speaker. They never suggested that they were going to spend more money on

more MLAs, Mr. Speaker. They never suggested that they were going to make cuts to education and to health care that would have a direct impact on the services that Saskatchewan people rely and depend on. They never suggested that they were going to increase the cost of prescription drugs for seniors, Mr. Speaker. None of that was talked about. What we saw was a cheery message, one speaking about boom and prosperity and moving forward. And none of these items, Mr. Speaker, were mentioned at that point in time.

We talked about the different ridings that have so many, so many more constituents than . . . other provinces that have so many more constituents than we have, Mr. Speaker, and it's something that we can take a lesson from, Mr. Speaker.

You know, Mr. Speaker, every, every household in Saskatchewan knows that budgets are about choices: the choices of the Premier, the choices of the Finance minister, the choices of cabinet. But they should reflect the choices and priorities of Saskatchewan people, of communities, of improving the lives of Saskatchewan people. The budget that's been put forward, Mr. Speaker, in fact is certainly not reflective of those choices that are important to Saskatchewan people and instead pushes forward expenditure for priorities such as increasing the number of politicians, Mr. Speaker, in a very unfortunate sort of a manner, Mr. Speaker.

We know for a fact, Mr. Speaker, that the push to, the push to increase the number of politicians didn't come from Saskatchewan people. It came from . . . And the question I'm hearing from colleagues is, where did it come from? And I think that that's a good question, and we've been asking that question, Mr. Speaker, and we haven't got answers to that. And Saskatchewan people are deserving of answers. Why push this forward and where did it come from?

What we do know is that it serves the best interests of one party's political fortunes, which is incredibly disappointing to see a government act out of those motivations instead of the best interests of Saskatchewan people. But what we know is that we haven't, we haven't heard from Saskatchewan people that they're calling for more, more politicians. And I'm certain that that's true in ridings all across Regina, all across Saskatoon, and all across rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and we oppose it.

We find it so wrong, Mr. Speaker, that they're going to be taking away youth from the count in these electoral boundaries, discounting that voice. At the same very time as they're excluding the voice of youth, they're in fact making cuts and reductions in education that have a direct impact on children and students all across Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. They're choosing to spend millions of dollars on adding the politicians, Mr. Speaker, but causing impacts to the delivery of education for Saskatchewan students all across the province.

We have many right now, Mr. Speaker, looking all across the province, looking at their own neighbourhoods and looking at their communities post, following this budget, and that are incredibly anxious and nervous, if you will, Mr. Speaker, looking at what those impacts will be in their own community, wondering what that impact will be in their own classroom, Mr. Speaker, for their student or for their grandchild, Mr. Speaker,

for the child next door, or if they're a teacher for the resources that they're provided, Mr. Speaker. They're wondering what it means for school closures, Mr. Speaker.

[20:30]

I know the member from Arm River-Watrous who, you know, who should be, who should be a proponent and should be pushing and should be advocating to find solutions to work with the community of Nokomis, Mr. Speaker, on a school that's important to that community, a school, Mr. Speaker, that in fact serves an area, Mr. Speaker, that includes the Jansen Lake mine project, a potential project that's coming to be by BHP, Mr. Speaker. And what you'll see potentially from that project, Mr. Speaker, and what the community puts forward as their case, is that they're going to see many individuals, young families choosing Nokomis as a place to reside, Mr. Speaker. Because when you're looking across the region there's certainly many different communities where those many hundreds of workers will locate, Mr. Speaker, but certainly Nokomis is a very viable option for many.

The elimination of that school in that community, Mr. Speaker, the member from Arm River-Watrous should know, will have a detrimental effect to that community being able to provide that sort of living to those families that are moving in, Mr. Speaker. And I don't know where, Mr. Speaker, a member like that or any member in this Assembly gets off, Mr. Speaker, with allowing those sorts of impacts — cuts in the classroom, schools to be closed, Mr. Speaker — at the same time as they push forward the expenditure of millions of dollars to increase the number of politicians here in Saskatchewan. It doesn't add up. It's not consistent with the priorities of Saskatchewan people.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I can think of chatting with a constituent just a little while ago following the election after, Mr. Speaker, on Grey Street in Rosemont, Mr. Speaker, with respect to their child, Mr. Speaker, who has a learning disability. And there's been . . . and having concerns when they, Mr. Speaker, when they are looking at the provision of resources for education in this province, about whether or not the proper resources are being allocated to make sure that their child is being supported in an adequate fashion that allows them to move forward with a successful life, Mr. Speaker, something that's a great potential for the student that we're looking at but also, Mr. Speaker, for all those students in the classroom. And this mom puts it incredibly well. She lays out the stress and worry in her own life, Mr. Speaker, and all the extra work they go to to provide the supports for this child, this student, her kid, to be successful in life, Mr. Speaker. And then we see a government that is choosing, making the choice, Mr. Speaker, to spend millions of dollars on increasing the number of politicians, but then making constraints and cuts and impacts in the classroom all across Saskatchewan that certainly impact learning disabled children, impact all students, certainly raise questions around proper supports, Mr. Speaker — big questions.

And I can think, Mr. Speaker, of a middle-aged couple, Mr. Speaker, on Dewdney Avenue in Dieppe. They don't have children any more, Mr. Speaker; their children have grown up. But there's children on either side of them, Mr. Speaker. And

what matters to those constituents of mine, Mr. Speaker, is keeping Dieppe School open, Mr. Speaker, a school that is built in an open format in a similar model as to what some of the new design and construction is going on. That's important to them. It's important to them about the viability of their community, and it's important to them when they look at their neighbours next door and these young families that are building their lives and requiring these services. And they're looking for solutions on that front, Mr. Speaker.

But they're not just looking to the school that's just a few blocks over, Mr. Speaker, in Dieppe, there over on Dewdney. What they're looking at, Mr. Speaker, is the pounding of traffic, of heavy-haul traffic, Mr. Speaker, on their street, Mr. Speaker. And what they're wondering, Mr. Speaker, is when is there going to be some sort of a plan to mitigate that, Mr. Speaker. And this is in many ways related to something that certainly we've supported and something I support by way of the Global Transportation Hub, something that's bringing economic development, Mr. Speaker, and certainly bringing young families into the constituency and into the community of Dieppe specifically, and that will require that school, Mr. Speaker.

Further to that, what they're expecting is that . . . And they support the Global Transportation Hub. What they don't support is the dangerous, heavy-haul traffic that's been routed down their street, Mr. Speaker. If you can imagine, the dishes in their cupboards vibrate and shake, Mr. Speaker. And then what they're looking at, Mr. Speaker, and then when we're speaking about this, is a government that's pushing forward . . .

The Speaker: — I would remind the member that the Bill we're discussing is *The Constituency Boundaries Act* and the subsequent amendment — not highways and not education.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And so where I tie in here is that the priorities of Saskatchewan people in a growing province are not being served, Mr. Speaker. What is being served, Mr. Speaker, and being served up, if you will, Mr. Speaker, is the expenditure of millions of dollars to add the number of politicians, Mr. Speaker, at the same time they exclude the voice of children. So my constituent on Dewdney Avenue, Mr. Speaker, who sees their infrastructure being pounded in front and safety concerns galore, Mr. Speaker, both for themselves but for their neighbours, Mr. Speaker, what they're wondering is, why instead is there not a plan to mitigate that traffic? Now that doesn't cost a whole lot of money, Mr. Speaker, and if it does require some, a few resources, I know where we can get some, Mr. Speaker, when I'm looking at instead of spending millions of dollars on three more politicians, Mr. Speaker.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, it highlights the other point of this, is that this government wants to exclude the voice of children, the neighbours on either side of their house that have children that go to Dieppe School, Mr. Speaker, that's being closed as we speak, Mr. Speaker, here this year, pushed forward. What they'd like to see is that being addressed. Instead they see a government that's spending millions of dollars to increase the number of politicians. So that's where I relate directly to the amendment that we put forward and the amendment that would make changes of course to a foolhardy

and short-sighted Bill, Mr. Speaker, but not only that, a Bill that reflects an out-of-touch nature of the government, Mr. Speaker.

And this is the interesting change that's gone on in Saskatchewan since the fall, Mr. Speaker, is more and more and more what I hear when people phone me with concern about actions of government is that they're saying, you know, I've never phoned my MLA before; I've never phoned an MLA before; or, I'm phoning you from, in often cases, one of their ridings too, Mr. Speaker, because they're feeling that they're not being heard, Mr. Speaker, on this front. So we're taking that call from people that haven't been engaged in the process before, Mr. Speaker, who are saying, something's changed here, Mr. Speaker. It's not what they bargained for.

And this is where it gets to the very DNA of Saskatchewan people. We expect commonsense solutions. We expect a government that's going to be straight with voters, straight with Saskatchewan people. And we haven't got that, Mr. Speaker. We see that when we look at this piece of legislation that was a surprise for Saskatchewan people, certainly a disappointment we're hearing from Saskatchewan people.

We see that there when we know in the fall election, Mr. Speaker, when this government won a big majority — and we accept that, Mr. Speaker — when they won that big majority, not a mention, Mr. Speaker, was there of increasing the number of politicians. Not a mention, Mr. Speaker. And we know, we know, we know, Mr. Speaker, why — well we suspect we know — why we never heard about that, Mr. Speaker, is that this government was willing to be less than forthright with Saskatchewan people. That's disappointing.

Another reason, Mr. Speaker, is that they knew that this would not be something that Saskatchewan people would accept well, something they wouldn't accept or support. And certainly they haven't. All across the province we've had individuals weigh in and say, this is wrong, Mr. Speaker. We didn't see it in the election. We didn't see it in the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, and it's not fair to Saskatchewan people. Instead we see a government that's spending millions to increase the number of politicians, to exclude youth and young communities from being a focus and a priority here in Saskatchewan, from being counted, Mr. Speaker, from being placed front and centre in the policy debate as they should, and the budgetary decisions as they should, Mr. Speaker, and pushing forward an agenda that's out of line with what Saskatchewan people desire and certainly the best interests of Saskatchewan people.

So it's for all these reasons, Mr. Speaker, that we oppose this piece of legislation. It's for all these reasons, Mr. Speaker, that we are so disappointed and surprised that we're still speaking to this Bill, trying to stop it on behalf of Saskatchewan people who are incredibly disappointed with this piece of legislation, all across this province. And we're going to continue to work to do that, Mr. Speaker.

And as I've said, Mr. Speaker, a government that campaigned on some cheery message with slick brochures about moving forward and about boom and all this positive stuff, Mr. Speaker, and then when they move forward, Mr. Speaker, with their big majority, Mr. Speaker, delivering something that's certainly not consistent with their mandate, Mr. Speaker, and leaving

Saskatchewan people questioning, is it arrogance? Is it not understanding Saskatchewan communities? But certainly leaving Saskatchewan people with concern and for good reason — a government making structural change to our democratic process without an ounce of consultation with Saskatchewan people and without their best interests in mind.

Mr. Speaker, for all of those reasons, I certainly won't be . . . I support the amendment we put forward, and we continue to urge this government to pull this piece of legislation. And I know one of my colleagues would like to continue this discussion.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And once again it's my pleasure to weigh into the debate on the amendment. As you know, the amendment that we proposed was that:

“this House declines to give second reading to Bill No. 36, *An Act to amend The Constituency Boundaries Act, 1993* [for two reasons] because

The Bill excludes, in determining 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

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, Mr. Speaker, to start off tonight, I'm just wondering if it wouldn't be a good idea to maybe go through Bill . . . the original legislation that the Bill is trying to amend just so we understand the context that we're talking about at this point. And that Bill is . . . sorry, that law and the piece of legislation is Chapter C-27.1, which is entitled *An Act to Provide for the Division of Saskatchewan into Constituencies for the Election of Members of the Legislative Assembly*.

So right off the hop, Mr. Speaker, we have a Bill that's in place. It's a perfectly adequate Bill. It certainly hasn't been a point of concern. Leading up into the census for this year, we knew that there would be changes coming because that's the way the system is set up and that's the way it's been done. And there really hasn't been any concerns raised, as far as we know, about anything that was within that Bill.

So what does the Bill look like? Well it's a fairly short Bill. And we're right in the middle of it now, as you know, because we are getting ready to appoint the new commission to do the work. So what is it they're going to be doing? Well if you look at the Bill, it says the first thing that has to happen after the census occurs is that there has to be the establishment of a commission. So we're in the business of doing that right now. And it's done by Lieutenant Governor in Council, and they shall do it for every census or just following the census every 10th year.

As you know, Stats Canada creates a census every 10 years. That gives us the population data that we need to truly reflect the constituency boundaries and figure out where the boundaries should be so that it's fair and that it's important that the population counts are as close as possible. Given geographic differences and various sort of particular needs of certain areas, make sure that the population count is as close as possible.

So that's the goal is to make sure that the people of Saskatchewan and their elected representative have the similar number of people in each riding to make a fair representation in this Chamber. And that's what this Bill sets out to do and does it quite fine, if I may add.

So the way the commission is going to be set up, we're going to have a chairperson and two residents of Saskatchewan. And the chairperson, there is three possible choices for chairperson that the Lieutenant Governor can make, Lieutenant Governor in Council. First would be a judge of the Court of Appeal who would be nominated by the Chief Justice, or a judge of Her Majesty's Court of Queen's Bench for Saskatchewan, also nominated by the Chief Justice of Saskatchewan after consultation with the Chief Justice of the Queen's Bench. And finally the third choice is a resident of Saskatchewan nominated by the Chief Justice of Saskatchewan.

But as you can see, the thread running throughout this choice for Chair is that the person nominated is chosen by the Chief Justice of Saskatchewan, so that's the first person. And the Lieutenant Governor in Council has no options there. That's something, it's a "shall" provision, so there is no choice. Once the Chief Justice has made the nomination, then it's expected that the Lieutenant Governor in Council will appoint that person as chairperson.

At that point . . . And yes, the Chief Justice is to be requested to do that by the Clerk of the Executive Council. And then finally, Lieutenant Governor in Council is required to consult with the leaders of the opposition and any recognized members of the Legislative Assembly, and then they shall appoint two other members, people who are residents of Saskatchewan and they're not ineligible pursuant to section 8.

[20:45]

So the next clause in the Act talks about how they can appoint one of the members as Deputy Chair. So that's one of the abilities of the commission. And then section 7 of the Act talks about a vacancy. So if for whatever reason one of the people become ineligible to act or if they resign or if something else happens, then the Lieutenant Governor can fill that vacancy. So that's section 7 of the existing Act, the 1993 constituency boundaries Act.

So then we turn to section 8. It tells us who is ineligible to be appointed. First of all, most of them, in fact they're all elected members except for the Senate. So a member of the Senate, a member of the House of Commons, or a member of the Assembly, this Legislative Assembly, so none of us can be appointed to the Boundaries Commission, which makes a lot of sense, Mr. Speaker. And as I say, this Bill seems to work pretty fine just the way it's written.

There is allowances that are going to be fixed so they get paid. It's a big job. We understand it's a number of several days and in fact several weeks commitment by these members of the commission, and they have a lot of work that they have to do to make sure that the boundaries are fair and representative.

So the way that the rules follow is in section 11. Within 30 days of the appointment to the commission, so as soon as they're appointed, then the Clerk, the Executive Council shall give the chairperson a copy of that part of the census with respect to which the commission has established showing the total population. So the Clerk of the Executive Council has to furnish the commission with the status, or the stats that they need to understand the current population of our province. And then they have to, once they get that, they have to prepare an interim report and a final report containing their recommendations respecting constituency boundaries.

There is some special needs that have been identified in this Bill regarding the geography of the North. So when they are fixing the boundaries, they have to . . . The two northern constituencies are already fixed and established, and it divides them into two constituencies. And then the rest of the province, at this point in time, they're required to divide them into 56 constituencies, which makes up the 58 that we currently have, Mr. Speaker. And so then, that's the way it's set up right now.

And the next step is that in their final report they have to make recommendations which shall include boundary descriptions for each proposed constituency and the proposed name of each proposed constituency.

So I think, you know, given that we're into some incredible population changes in the province — there's depopulation in some areas and increasing population in other areas — we know this is an exciting time for electoral boundaries, Mr. Speaker, and for the electoral office that we have currently in the province. And this is going to be an exciting year to see how these new boundaries are going to look, maybe some new changes, maybe some of us will be referred to differently. We just don't know, but that could happen. So it could be quite interesting.

The current quotient that we're talking about now is a quotient that . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Maybe we could have a Ness Creek constituency. That would be a great name for a constituency. I think it would be fantastic. The member opposite is suggesting a new name for a constituency.

The constituency population quotient is calculated. There's a formula set up, and the quotient equals total population of the province minus the northern population. So we'll get the northern populations excluded, and then we will divide it into 56. So we've got the two northern constituents . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . New name, new name, Mr. Speaker. The members opposite are getting confused with what I'm trying to say. There may be new names. Certainly no new . . .

An Hon. Member: — Speak a little more slowly.

Ms. Sproule: — Maybe I need to slow down a little bit. That's correct. So that's the way it's set up. The formula is quite well established. It's been used. It's been successful and it's

working, Mr. Speaker.

There's certain rules in the Act that delineate how the boundaries are to be fixed, so outside of the northern dividing line of course. A commission shall ensure . . . Now this is the direction to the commission that's very important. They have to ". . . ensure that the population of each proposed constituency is, as nearly as possible, equal to the constituency population quotient."

No small task, Mr. Speaker. That's going to be a very difficult job, and I'm sure it is every time that the commission is struck. This is the most important feature of this. It's not how many constituencies that there are, but it's that there is an equal and fair distribution of the population. And I will be getting into the proposed Bill soon in terms of how that isn't as quite as fair as the existing Bill.

There is some room for manoeuvring for the commission, and that's found in section 14(2), where they can depart from that requirement to make it as equal as possible. But here's the conditions:

special geographic considerations, including:

sparsity, density or relative rates of growth of population in various regions south of the dividing line.

So already this Bill makes provision for population and growth, population growth. It's there. It's been there for 20 years or 19 years and, Mr. Speaker, it seems to be working just fine.

It also talks about accessibility to the regions mentioned in that clause. So they can take in geographic considerations in relation to the regions. And also they can take into consideration the size and shape of the regions described in that first clause, which are the relative rates of growth, density, or sparsity of the population.

There's a couple more features that they can look at, and one is a special community of interests. And, Mr. Speaker, we're hearing a lot about that now federally. In fact there's an article in Wikipedia that talks about some of the issues that we're looking at right now federally, and the current federal electoral district boundaries in Saskatchewan have been labelled as gerrymandered. The province's two major cities, Regina and Saskatoon, are both tracked into four districts each when the populations of the cities' proper would justify about three and two and a half all-urban districts respectively. So that's just one point that was mentioned on the Wikipedia page.

So they have to look at a special community of interests, and I know that we will be seeing more about that in the federal, the work that's already commenced federally. And certainly there are people that are writing to that commission right now about that very issue.

And then finally there's an opportunity for the committee to take into account physical features of regions south of the dividing line.

So there's a few things that the commission is directed to look at, and certainly growth in population is one of them and

sparsity of population is one of them. And we're hearing about both of those issues in the current debate, and I would suggest that the existing Bill adequately deals with it. So that's something that I think the House should take into account.

There's a few other clauses in the Bill that are more administrative in nature. They're allowed to make their own rules, and they can conduct and hold hearings at times and places that they consider appropriate. So I would expect within the next few months there will be a number of hearings, and we'll see our commission making calls for presentations from various interested groups and hopefully from the public as well. They are required to provide notice for residents for the time and place of the hearings. They have to advertise it in papers, and there's conditions on what they have to include in the advertisement. So there's a fair set of rules around that, Mr. Speaker.

And there's rules for how people can make presentations at these hearings. And I suspect that our commission is going to hear from a lot of people in the next few months. They just have to provide notice and give their name and address and a concise summary of what they intend to present on and also what their political, financial, or other interests are. So they have to disclose those interests, and then they're allowed to make a presentation to the commission once the hearings are started. At that point, the commission will prepare an interim report, and that's found in clause 19 of the Bill. And if they want, they can get an extension of time if necessary, if the Lieutenant Governor in Council agrees to extend it.

And then finally, after they've completed the interim report, they have to file that with the Clerk of the Executive Council. They have to publish it in the *Gazette* and one or more papers having general circulation in Saskatchewan, stating that the report has been filed. And then they have to announce the further public hearings once the interim report is filed. So once they've done their work on an interim basis, the public will have another kick at the cat and be able to make further presentations.

The final report is then prepared, and it has to be, right now the time frame is six months after the date the commission is established. So once we establish our commission, within six months they have to complete their work. It's going to be a tough job. And then we'll have the new electoral boundaries, Mr. Speaker.

There's a number of other administrative rules where they are supposed to file the document and how it's to be filed.

So at this point, that's the Bill from 1993. I think it's a good Bill. It seems to have been working quite fine, and that's I think one of the main reasons why we're suggesting that the amendment be considered seriously by members opposite. There's no need for any changes to this Bill. It's working just fine.

I'm going to get now into some other documentation that we've gathered in relation to the proposed Bill. As you know, Mr. Speaker, the Bill has two main clauses, and one is to add three more seats, three more constituencies to the province, and the second one is the way the population is going to be calculated.

It will exclude children under the age of 18. We take great exception to both of those proposals, and certainly the amendment that we're proposing is exactly that. We are suggesting that this House decline to even give second reading to this Bill and because of the two main offensive clauses: the one in counting young people out who deserve to be counted; and secondly, that increases the number of members of the legislature by three, which we have no idea where that came from and don't see it as necessary, based on all the information that we have gathered in our research in the last little while.

So the first piece that I would like to share with you, Mr. Speaker, is an article from some friends of the Sask Party actually, the Canadian Taxpayers Federation. And there's an editorial that we've obtained from them, and it says Saskatchewan doesn't need more politicians. The questions they asked . . . They say the following: "During the recent provincial election do you remember Premier Brad Wall saying anything about a dreadful shortage of provincial politicians?"

They go on to say, "Do you remember him saying anything during televised leader debates, radio interviews [television] or in newspaper stories about his plan to add three more seats to the provincial legislature?" And they go on to say, "We don't." This is a further quote: "In fact we checked his party's provincial platform and there was no mention about adding more politicians." And so the question they ask is, "Then why is his government sliding in legislation during the busy Christmas season that would add three seats to the Saskatchewan Legislature?" They say, "Good question."

I say, good question. We're not sure why it's being done. And there is some information from the government that suggests why it's being done, but it just doesn't add up, Mr. Speaker. In fact they go on to say on the next part of their article:

In the Saskatchewan government's news release, they cite the province's growing population as justification for adding more seats to the legislature. The release notes that over the next four years, Saskatchewan's population will increase by 100,000.

That's all fine and dandy, but that doesn't mean the legislature necessarily needs more seats. Even if you don't increase the number of MLAs, a population of 1,158,000 works out to one politician for every 19,966 people. That's still the highest ratio of politicians to citizens in all provinces in Canada with a population of a million or more people.

So they're questioning that, Mr. Speaker. That's the Canadian Taxpayers Federation. And as you well know, they are looking out for useful and practical spending of tax dollars, and this simply doesn't seem to be something that we could call a useful and practical way of spending tax dollars. No one's asked for it. No one wants it.

Other information that we've gathered is in terms of the population from other provinces, and certainly the Canadian Taxpayers Federation twigged on to this. Even with the growth in population that we're experiencing, there simply is no comparison or need with our neighbours both to the west and to the east of needing an increase. And in fact we're already one

of the lowest ratios, and we have lots of room in our ratios to get caught up to our neighbours.

So if we look at our census from this year, or sorry, 2011, the population per seat right now on average is 17,810. If we look at BC to our west, we have the population per seat of 51,764. Mr. Speaker, this is 2.9 times the number of constituents per riding in BC. So they seem to be fairly sophisticated, and they have wide . . . a vast province as well. It's a large province. There's lots of rural area, lots of urban population. So why is it that their ratio is so much higher and they seem to be managing just fine?

[21:00]

Let's look at Alberta now for a moment, can we? We have 3.6 million people in Alberta in the most recent census, and their population per seat is 43,915. So in that case, in Alberta we have 2.5 times the number of constituents of Saskatchewan per MLA. Alberta, this is someone that this government often looks to for inspiration and modelling. And so if that's the case there, where is the impetus for the additional seats here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker?

We just haven't been able to find out where the government is coming up with this, other than a vague reference to growing population — certainly that population can be captured within these ratios — and concerns about maybe distances that some members have to drive. And that's a reality, I think, in this kind of scenario, but it certainly doesn't seem to justify the import of the Bill. I just don't understand how that is necessary.

Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, population there, 1.2 million in the last census, so a slightly larger population than in our province, but not a whole lot. It's very close. And how many people in each seat do they have? 21,193 — so that's close, about 1.2 — much higher. And, you know, Mr. Speaker, I did some really rudimentary math about this with the calculator. I'm thinking if we take out the children, as this Bill purports to do, we may be down to around 750,000 people. And so it's actually decreasing the number of people to 12,000, and that doesn't seem to really be necessary or valuable for any reason at all. So the exclusion of the children certainly doesn't make any sense. And right now, you know, we're looking at 17,810 per seat. It's about . . . [inaudible].

So now if you look at Ontario, Mr. Speaker, 12 million people in the province of Ontario, and what do they have for population per seat? 120,000 people, and their ratio is 6.7 people to every one person in Saskatchewan.

An Hon. Member: — What was that? Six point . . .

Ms. Sproule: — 6.7 is the ratio. My colleague asked me to repeat that, and I'm happy to do that because it's very large. It's in fact the largest in Canada. And Ontario is not a backwards province or seems to have a fairly sophisticated approach to politics. So it's not clear to me, Mr. Speaker, why, again there's no evident reason why this government would see this as being necessary.

And then finally, if we look at Quebec with almost 8 million people in the last census — so easily the second largest

population in Canada — and they have per seat, on average . . . They have 125 seats in their Assembly, and on average they have 63,000 people per seat on average. And that's 3.5 times the number of constituents of Saskatchewan per MLA. They seem to be managing. They seem to be doing all right. And you know, if we want to look at our federal counterparts of course the population is much, much larger, and also the sizes of the ridings. And again they do seem to be managing.

So those are some of the initial points I wanted to make. I now want to talk a little bit about the children because that's something that concerns me greatly, Mr. Speaker. I have a 16-year-old son at home who will be voting in the next election. His name is Sam. He's a good student. He's interested in a variety of sports and he's starting to become politically aware and certainly having a mother as an MLA has forced him into it sooner than maybe other teenagers his age. But him and his friends are interested in what's going on and certainly my own personal involvement in politics has sparked some of that. And he seems to be curious about the whole process. He was here when we signed the rolls and is just starting to understand what it means and what my job is and what it is I'm trying to do.

And you know, he won't be counted. If this Bill gets passed, he won't be counted even though he'll be voting in the next election. And there's something that's fundamentally wrong with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I think a lot of children, if they're going to realize that they're not being counted for the purposes of the representative that's going to represent them here in this House, they're going to feel discounted because that's exactly what they are being, how they're being treated.

And I'm afraid with the level of engagement, citizenship engagement, it's difficult to get people to vote already and if young people are turned off by the whole process because they know they're not being counted, they're certainly not going to want to find out more about the process or get engaged or join a party, any party, or become involved in being proper citizens of the province. They need to be drawn into it in certain ways and this is certainly not one way of doing it. And there hasn't been a lot of explanation by this government as to why the exclusion of children is seen as something that is positive.

Certainly I think the one thing that we have heard is that there's concern of some of the distances that some MLAs have to travel and that's certainly a concern and a real additional burden for them certainly. But adding . . . We're not sure yet where these ridings are going to be added and, you know, I think in terms of the global aggregate of acreage, rural acreage, in adding those two extra ridings I'm not sure about the significant changes it will make. They'll still be big, even if we add three more. And we're not sure whether they're going in the cities where most of the growth is actually occurring. And in fact, if we go with population growth, I would think the urban ridings would get larger but that the rural ridings would get much larger because the population growth in the rural areas is actually decreasing. So I'm not sure that population growth is going to be justification enough to make those ridings smaller.

So it seems that just counting out the children will make the difference because there are more kids in urban areas and in the North. And we've talked a lot about that, Mr. Deputy Speaker,

about the fact that where there are more children is certainly where there are younger families and younger people and where there are more Aboriginal people. In fact some of the numbers we've seen suggest that there's maybe up to 50 per cent of Aboriginal communities will be counted out because of the calculation of the population because they're under 18. And that's a message, I think, that to send to First Nations and Métis communities that is really . . . We're going to lose a lot of their enthusiasm for being citizens of Saskatchewan and for their children being contributing members to our society and again engaging them in the political process, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's something that we have great concern about and apparently the Children's Advocate is now weighing in on this situation as well and has said that, and this is a quote, the Children's Advocate has said, "To eliminate those under 18 of the eligibility runs contrary to everyone's right to equal representation. Every citizen has the right to effective representation."

So we're talking about citizens here, and my son is a citizen and my nephew is a citizen. And we heard our colleague from Athabasca talk about his grandkids. They're citizens, and to tell them that they're not or to suggest that they're not, to me is insulting but it's probably contrary to their right. And I'm afraid that this Bill may even end up with some legal challenges because of that.

Every citizen has the right to effective representation and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that includes my colleague's brand new baby, Clara, who was just born a couple of weeks ago. Clara is a citizen of our country. She has the rights of citizenship and that includes the right to vote, which she will have when she's 18, but it also includes, in our democracy, because it's a representative democracy, she's entitled to equal representation. To you, to my colleagues, to the members opposite, that child, brand new baby Clara, is entitled to the rights of representation just like everybody else. And to exclude her from the population count sends that message that she is not equally represented because she wasn't even counted.

So this is something I think that . . . Well I know my son and his friends, they do follow this with some interest, and they're questioning politics. I think some of them are already disenchanted, and if the member opposite talks to them I'm not sure how much more enchanted they would be, but anyways he's certainly welcome to it if he's interested in it.

And actually one of my constituents is talking to me from across the way as well, Mr. Speaker. And his daughter will not be counted either because she's not 18, and she will be excluded from her rights of equal representation. And she will be my constituent, and I will look forward to representing her, but unfortunately she's not being counted, and that's the sad part of this Bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that these children are not being counted. And the minister opposite's daughter is not being counted, and she will not be equally represented in this calculation that's being proposed under this Bill.

It's age discrimination and, you know, it's really sad, it's really sad right now because today is — and we know this — today is the 30th anniversary of the Charter, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, introduced in Canada in 1982. It was a very proud moment for our country when the Charter was

introduced. And as a young law student in the '90s — well I wasn't all that young — but when I was studying law in the '90s, the Charter was the single most important feature of our studies in law school. And it talked about the kind of rights that the Children's Advocate is talking about. Something to be proud of is the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. And we have legislation that may be questioned, and I'm not sure whether there will be challenges, but there is some noise that there might be. And again, I go back to the quote of the Children's Advocate: "This runs contrary to everyone's right to equal representation."

And I think it's disappointing for my son. It's disappointing for all of our children that are under 18 and grandchildren and for the people of Saskatchewan and the children of Saskatchewan.

My colleague here talked about, there are other ways to engage people and bring them into the process — proper schools, adequate tuition, sufficient support for tuition at least or at least tuition fees that are affordable. Those are ways this government could show support for children and support for young people in this country and engage them in the political process and protect our democracy. Because if our young people don't protect this democracy, we're going to lose it.

And we can see little cracks in it already with the antics that the federal government is undertaking with proroguing and not following the rules, just basically ignoring judges' comments on illegal actions in relation to the *Canadian Wheat Board Act*. I mean, these are serious cracks in the seams of our democracy, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And if kids and children under 18 aren't included and not given the right to equal representation, this is a sad and dark time for democracy in Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And this is something that I think we all need to be concerned about.

And you know what? We are hearing from people. Many of us talked about what happened during the election. And of course this wasn't on the platform for the government when they were telling us about this Bill so . . . Or sorry, it wasn't on their platform when we were out campaigning. But I just want to read to you an email that I got yesterday in my office actually, Mr. Speaker. This is someone I've never met, and she says to me, this is a quote:

Dear Cathy Sproule,

I am a member of your riding and am very concerned about the proposed Bill 36 - The act to amend constituency boundaries. The proposed criteria change of no longer counting people under 18 in determining constituency boundaries is unconstitutional and needs to be arrested. The aboriginal population has a very high population under the age of 18. This kind of amendment not only discriminates for age but also for race. This amendment would greatly affect aboriginal representation at a provincial level. Discrimination for age and race is a constitutional issue. I hope that the NDP will continue to fight these proposed changes.

Sincerely,

Tanis Walmsley

That's a letter from one of my constituents, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I've never met this woman.

We're getting letters in the "Letters to the Editor" as well that question the wisdom of this Bill and the necessity of it, and I can share some of that with you at this point as well. The first one is from Philip Sparks in the *Leader-Post* on April 3rd. And what this fellow has said is, and I quote. This is another quote of the letter:

It's pretty easy to see where the Saskatchewan Party stands in regards to seniors as opposed to creating three more MLAs for the province. Getting three more seats in the legislature seems to be much more important than helping seniors, some of whom are struggling with high prescription drug prices. Now they will just have to dig deeper.

Many seniors require more prescriptions as they get older and many are already experiencing financial hardship. Does our government care? It would certainly seem not, as long as they can brag about the prosperity they have brought to the province, crow about the "Saskatchewan advantage" and what a rich province we all live in.

I am 71 and have health issues that require me to take several prescriptions every day. Now it will cost me about \$45 more each month. But I am one of the lucky ones as I have two part-time jobs and I can handle it. How many seniors are in that position?

Does the government seem concerned? Nope. Three more MLAs . . . now that's important. There is an election in the future and I hope the seniors in this province show the Sask. Party the exit door.

And that was from Philip Sparks from Weyburn. So that's one letter that we've seen in the paper.

[21:15]

And the other one is from Joyce Neufeld dated March 31st, and it's the *Leader-Post* as well. So, quote:

I am one of the seniors affected by the increase in prescription fees for seniors. Premier Brad Wall and company can brag on the one hand about adding three extra MLAs, when access to MLAs is easy enough, yet he is hitting the most vulnerable — seniors — many of whom are living below the poverty line already.

Wall might think that \$5 is just a pittance, but ask any senior living on just above \$1,000 a month who may be on four medications — that is \$20 a month. I think the government is a real disgrace to the very people who built this province.

The Premier should scrap the intended increase in MLAs (which is just a gerrymander for the Sask. Party to gain more seats) and return to the \$15 prescription fee which was in effect previously. I certainly did not see any increase in income tax rates for the wealthy in the budget. What gives?

And that's from Joyce Neufeld from Waldeck.

So we're seeing letters to the editor. We're seeing comments from the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, and certainly a number of editorials have really commented on this as well. For example we have Troy Fleece, who reported in the *Regina Leader-Post*, and he quoted some of the comments that he got from both the Premier and our leader, leader John Nilson. But he also went on to say that, and this is a quote as well:

University of Regina assistant political science professor Jim Farney said the most appropriate method of counting people to decide boundaries has been the subject of academic debate. Narrowing it to people over 18 is less restrictive than counting only people who are registered voters, he said. But he added that by excluding people under 18 in Saskatchewan from the count you could be "shifting seats away from areas with more Aboriginals because they have such a young population."

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is . . . I think we should maybe talk a little bit just about gerrymandering and what it is and where it come from. Again this is an article in Wikipedia about gerrymandering, and what it says is this. The description of gerrymandering in this article starts out by saying . . . I'll just find it here. It's a practice . . . This is a quote from Wikipedia on gerrymandering:

Gerrymandering is a practice that attempts to establish a political advantage for a particular party or group by manipulating geographic boundaries to create partisan or incumbent-protected districts. The resulting district is known as a gerrymander; however, that word can also refer to the process.

So gerrymandering, and they go on to say, "may be used to achieve desired electoral results for a particular party, or may be used to help or hinder a particular demographic, such as political, racial, linguistic, religious or class group." And I think the quote from Mr. Farney from the University of Regina was referring to the Aboriginal demographic as this would be potentially a form of racial gerrymandering, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And just a little bit about the etymology of the word. And I've spoken about this previously but I actually did a report on this in social studies in grade 9 and I still remember colouring the salamander shape of the actual district that was gerrymandered and where the term came from. So it says here the word gerrymander was used for the first time in the *Boston Gazette* on March 26, 1812. So that's 200 years ago and a couple weeks when it was first mentioned. So it's a 200-year-old word and the word was created in reaction to redrawing of the Massachusetts state senate election districts under the then governor, Elbridge Gerry. And so that's where the gerry part came from, his last name.

In 1812 Governor Gerry signed a Bill that redistricted Massachusetts to benefit his Democratic-Republican Party. And when mapped, one of the contorted districts in the Boston area was said to resemble the shape of a salamander. And there's an image here that shows that on the *Wikipedia* page. So then the cartoonists got a hold of it and they started drawing flames and

wings and that's how the term gerrymandering came about. The exact author of the term gerrymander may never be definitively established but it was believed that Federalist newspaper editors Nathan Hale and Benjamin and John Russell were the instigators.

So the political cartoon was certainly the image that sealed the fate of this word, I think, and that's where it came from. But anyways this started in Massachusetts in 1812 and it's certainly been used, and there's a number of examples of it on the *Wikipedia* page where it has been used. And in fact the situation I referred to earlier in Canada where in Saskatoon and Regina, the way the boundaries were created in the last go-round with the commission, the federal commission, it's been suggested that that was a gerrymander of sorts. And that type of gerrymander is called the cracking.

So it's a strategy . . . Cracking, when gerrymandering is occurring, involves spreading out voters of a particular type among many districts in order to deny them a sufficiently large voting block in any particular district. And certainly we know from the federal commission and what the reports that are coming out now, it's only in Saskatchewan where communities of interests, like we have in Saskatoon and Regina, have been cracked by spreading, cutting them up and then spreading them out into a more rural part of the province which in effect takes away the community of interests where voting was very high — for example, the New Democratic Party in the last federal election. So that's one type of gerrymandering, and it's called cracking.

The other type of gerrymandering is called packing. And in packing, the goal there is to concentrate as many voters of one type into a single electoral district to reduce their influence in other districts. In some cases this can be done to get representation for a community of common interests, rather than to dilute that interest over several districts to a point of ineffectiveness. So it's almost the opposite of the cracking technique that's been used.

It says here also that gerrymandering can be effective because of the wasted-vote effect, by packing opposition voters into districts they will already win. So you're not gaining anything there. You're increasing excess votes for winners. And by cracking the remainder among districts where they've moved into the minority, the number of wasted votes among the opposition can be maximized. And similarly with supporters holding narrow margins in the unpacked districts, the number of wasted votes among supporters is minimized. So it's a fairly sophisticated process, and there's a number of ways to accomplish this. And the article goes on quite at length about different ways that it has been done and different types of gerrymandering that have occurred in the past and have been documented.

And I think the article I just read is suggesting that what's going on here could be seen by the citizenship and by the people of Saskatchewan, certainly by historians when they look back on it, as an attempt to gain advantage for the current government. And certainly the sad part about it is that the people that are being used to create that advantage are the youth who are being excluded right from the count itself.

In fact, I was thinking about what our colleague from Athabasca was mentioning earlier about going out on the ice and digging a hole in the ice and taking this Bill and putting into the lake along with the puck that he was talking about. But you know, there are lakes that are closer. We may not need even to go that far north, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because there are certainly a number of lakes in the southern part of the province where we could easily do that. And with the ice being lifted, maybe it's not even necessary to go . . . You know, we could go out in a boat. We don't have to be cutting holes in the ice anywhere. We can just put a rock around it, fold it up in a nice little package as my colleague described, and Buffalo Pound, in fact Wascana Creek — it's right here — and that might be the best place for this Bill. But we could be part of the dragon boat races, or we could have an event.

We could create a wonderful cultural event around this, if we decide. And we're hoping that the government will decide to do the right thing, and go to the people and think about it. I guess that's another point I wanted to talk about a little bit, was the fact that where did this come from . . . Last Mountain Lake, maybe, right by Arlington Beach. That might be a good place to do it, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But I guess what we've been asking ourselves as well is throughout the election campaign, we door knocked on thousands of doors; members opposite door knocked on thousands of doors. I know I certainly never, ever heard a concern from any particular constituent that there weren't enough politicians and that there was a burning desire on the part of the people of Saskatchewan to increase the number of members in this Assembly. I just didn't hear it.

And then, you know, we got to the Throne Speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we heard the agenda for this government. We understood what their agenda was going to be for this legislative session. And I don't remember reading anything in there about more politicians. And I think the reason why I don't remember that is it's not there. It's not part of the Throne Speech of this government. And yet on the very last day of a short session in December, just before Christmas, on our desks appears Bill 36, and it's *An Act to amend The Constituency Boundaries Act* of Saskatchewan, 1993.

The whole process itself suggests to me that this was something that this government was not interested engaging people on, was not interested in talking to the electors throughout the election, and simply was not interested in raising as an issue or a goal or an agenda in the Throne Speech. So what really happened? And you know, it would have been great to have been a fly on the wall in the cabinet chamber when this decision was made because there's nothing in the facts, there's nothing in the rhetoric that suggests to me why this came about, why it was necessary, unless we look at some of the examples in gerrymandering that we find in history. And indeed this may be one of those articles in *Wikipedia* eventually if this does come about.

It's not too late, and we are certainly using the amendment that we've proposed to give this government an opportunity to think about it again and again. What the amendment says is that this House declines to give second reading to Bill No. 36. So this is an opportunity for all the members opposite to decline. They

can just vote in favour of our amendment.

And here's why we think it should not receive second reading: because it 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 Assembly, and further, as suggested by the Children's Advocate, have a right to be represented democratically in this great country of ours and in this great province of ours. And then the Bill also increases the number of members of the Legislative Assembly by three, which is an unnecessary increase of politicians to represent the people of Saskatchewan.

We've talked a lot about the costs of this particular Bill, and you know, no matter how you slice the math, we are expensive to have, to be — our offices, our salaries, our constituency assistants, our caucus supporters. This is not a cheap place. And so, you know, in terms of being responsible and proper management — and the Canadian Taxpayers Federation has pointed that out — is that unnecessary expenses seem to be out of context in this day and age, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and certainly isn't needed. The work I think can be done adequately.

We've looked at the averages from other populations and other provinces, and we see that they're just . . . I keep coming to it: I can't understand why this is necessary. It's an unnecessary expense. It's excluding children from their own representation in this Chamber. It's adding and arranging political boundaries to advantage the government. And it just seems to be an unnecessary expense and creating bigger government which doesn't seem to fit well with what we're hearing from this government in other Bills. Although they are adding two more Crowns, so I'm not sure, but then they are cutting the public service. So we have a cut of 16 per cent of the public service in the next few years, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That seems to be contrary to this Bill which seems to be adding more politicians. And certainly maybe the split personality that we're seeing may manifest itself more as we go into the rest of this session. But we'll see what happens.

Anyways what I wanted to talk about right now is another article by . . . It's an editorial by Murray Mandryk from April 7th, 2012. And the headline of this article was that the NDP are right to oppose more MLAs. So he made some comments as well, I think, that are pretty relevant and worth reading into the record, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And particularly he said in the middle of the article:

. . . physically larger rural ridings isn't much of a justification. Besides the benefits of cyber communication that eliminates the need to travel by ox cart to meet with your local MLA, the job of an MLA is now a full-time one and the legislature's four-day-a-week schedule and fewer sitting days reduces the need to spend time in Regina.

And then he goes on to say:

(While Saskatchewan Party MLAs dutifully argue that we already made allowances for northern seats, what they neglect to mention is those northern [riding] MLAs already manage to represent their constituents in ridings several times larger than the biggest rural constituencies.)

[21:30]

And I've said this before, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but indeed if they were concerned about the size and the travel requirements, we would probably have maybe four or six northern ridings, if that's truly the justification for this Bill is to enable people to travel the length of their constituency, which is an ordeal, and I'm not going to . . . I won't deny that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's an important and difficult part of some of the rural MLAs' work. And getting around and getting to events, we were talking earlier tonight, it's not easy. And I understand that travel is a huge time consumer. So time is precious for MLAs, and unfortunately, you know, a lot of time ends up being spent on the road. One of the members opposite indicated using five vehicles in her political career just by travelling to her constituents. And that's a serious commitment and a huge burden for the rural MLAs.

But think about the northern MLAs. If this is the true justification for this Bill, then we need to increase more rural northern ridings as well so all the good folks from the North can have easy access to their MLAs. Thank goodness, and I've talked about this before as well, that we have other ways to communicate with people these days that make it somewhat easier. And I'm sure most of the rural MLAs use Internet and email and other types of cyber communication to at least get in touch with people and, you know, and reduce the need to actually see them physically in person. And there's always the telephone and the cellular telephones too. There are ways to connect with constituents that don't require physical presence.

And Murray's article, one of the things he says in the conclusion, is that "It's fair for the Sask. Party to argue inequities between the number of voters in seats like Saskatoon Southeast versus Saskatoon Centre."

Yes, populations have changed, and I know my colleague from Saskatoon Centre has some interesting numbers about the last time the commission was struck, and he'll be sharing them with you as well.

But he goes on to say:

But normal redistribution — required every 10 years, by law — takes care of that, anyway.

Despite Wall's insistence that nothing is afoot here, the only plausible explanation for the Sask. Party wanting to do this is that it has already drawn a map that shows the political benefit to it of additional seats in east Saskatoon, southeast Regina and rural Saskatchewan.

So the NDP should be opposing adding three more MLAs for the same reason the rest of us should be opposing it — it's something that only seems to benefit the Sask. Party.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think I've covered most of the ground I wanted to cover tonight in this opportunity to speak to this amendment. I'm really encouraging and hoping that the members opposite consider the amendment and consider this idea that maybe it's not time for this right at this point, and that we go forward with our commission in the manner intended by the original Act in 1993 and let them do their work. They know

how to do the population redistribution. The Bill is very clear about how that shouldn't take place. They will be consulting and having hearings with people.

Let's not exclude my son, member opposite's daughter, from the count in my riding particularly so that I can effectively represent the same number of people, including children, that are being represented by all the other ridings and especially those with less children. And even more so for those First Nation populations where 50 per cent of their population won't even be counted because their children represent 50 per cent of their population.

So I'm very pleased to have been able to speak to this amendment. I think it's an important amendment. I'm glad we brought it forward, and I honestly and seriously encourage everyone — backbenchers, cabinet members — to think just one more time about this. You have time, and maybe this isn't the right time for this.

So thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for bearing with me. And I'm going to close my comments for now.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to . . . or mixed emotions to rise tonight because clearly we wish we wouldn't have to be doing this. There's more pressing business, but clearly this is probably the most important Bill before the House in this session.

It's ironic, as I had said a few weeks ago, that it's a one-pager, but we're forced to introduce the amendment. And the amendment that we're discussing tonight and that I support is:

"this House declines to give second reading to Bill No. 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

. . . [this] 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 that's what we're talking about tonight. It's a very important issue, very important issue. And I have to say that it's been really worthwhile listening to my colleagues that have come before me — the member from Nutana, Rosemont, and Athabasca. And I hope that we all get a chance to contribute a bit to this discussion because I think people in Saskatchewan have concerns.

Unfortunately in many ways this government has done a lot to try to introduce this Bill in a sleeper-type of way so people don't get engaged. And that's what they probably would like to see — an electorate, a province that is not engaged. And we see

that in terms of voter turnout, that people say, it really doesn't matter. People, politicians, what we do, what we try to do is say what we're going to do and then do what we said that we were going to do. That's a pretty simple creed to live by when it comes to elections, and hopefully we have the courage of conviction to live simply by that.

When we ask for people to support us, we say what we're going to do, and then we do that. And we don't change things up. And this is simply a really important example of going to some of the basic foundations of how our democratic system is made here in Saskatchewan. And through the evolution of Saskatchewan over the past 100 and now five, six years, we've come to a place where we think we've got it pretty well right.

We've seen some rough bumps, such as when we went to the Supreme Court of Canada in the late '80s and the early '90s about trying to get the right system in place. And we see a Premier who's trying to rationalize excluding young people because of what happened 30 years ago. But we know the world has changed a lot in the last, actually, 30-plus years.

In fact one thing we're celebrating today, one thing we're celebrating today is the Charter — Canada's constitution that we mark today — a very important milestone, something that happened in between 1979 and now. And I think even in fact that Premier Blakeney at the time did both the 1979 and the '82 constitution. We grow. We evolve to do the right thing.

So I am very happy to be here tonight discussing the amendment before us. And I have to say that we even have late news here from CBC from 8:28 tonight, CBC. In fact I'll read the newscast in case maybe you didn't hear this. And I see the member from Greystone is interested, and I'll read the whole thing. And I quote from CBC, new out:

A plan to count only citizens of voting age in determining the configuration of new electoral boundaries could be a violation of children's rights, Bob Pringle, Saskatchewan Children's Advocate, says.

It goes on to say:

The province has launched a process to redraw the electoral map.

In addition to boosting the number of politicians to 61 from 58, the province wants the size of each constituency determined based on the population that is over 18.

But according to Pringle, that could violate the Charter of Rights.

"Section 3 of the charter is intended to ensure effective representation of the whole population, not just those over the age of 18 years," Pringle said Tuesday.

Pringle added the exclusion of minors may also run afoul of the Charter's equality provisions.

He said not counting people under 18 would affect communities with a large youth component.

"Leaving children, youth, out of the population count to calculate the boundaries will have a significant effect on the political representation of aboriginal people and new immigrants due to their much younger demographics," Pringle said.

And it goes on to say:

Saskatchewan's Justice Minister, Don Morgan, said Tuesday he is aware of Pringle's view and he disagrees.

He said it is fair to count only people of voting age.

Now I have to say, this information is new information. We've just become aware of it over the course of the day and of course this news tonight. And I think this is, this is shocking that we can have a government who has gone on record to say that they're fighting for the children of Saskatchewan — particularly those who are in vulnerable situations, but all children — and yet they do this, yet they do this.

And I remember just a few weeks ago, I think it was the kids from Balfour were here. The kids were here from Balfour, and the local MLA took at length to introduce them and made a big point of saying, welcome to your legislature. But really, as I said then, I think we are all going to be hypocrites if we continue down that road and we say, you don't really count. And I think the member from Athabasca said it really well today, and I think when he talked about maybe we need to have a campaign, he was suggesting young people might rally round, why don't I count? Why don't I count? And I think that's a really good question.

And I think here we have the Children's Advocate stepping up to the plate and saying, it's much more than that. This goes against the Charter of Rights. And Charter of Rights are not just for people over the age of 18. They're for everyone.

And as my colleague from Nutana has said, talked about my colleague from Massey Place, and I don't know if he was in the House. We were talking about the new child, Clara, and how Clara matters. Clara counts. Today she counts. But if we pass this Bill, she doesn't count. And that's an unfortunate thing. That's a very unfortunate thing.

And so I think it's incumbent on us to pass this amendment, pass this amendment and defeat the Bill and send it back and take another look at this. Because as I said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have to have the courage of our conviction to say what we're going to do when we knock on doors. And it's as simple as that. And I think the government in many ways has lost its moral compass on this Bill because they did not have the courage of conviction to say, this is what our plan was.

It was not a surprise, it was not a surprise to anyone that we were going to have a census and that in fact it would be in the 10th year of what the Act, the legislation requires; that what would come next would be a commission to correct any of the imbalances that exist. And I know, and I know that — and I'll talk about it later — that often my riding comes up as an example of the imbalance. We know that. And I know, for example, Southeast has had a huge population boom.

But I think people need to recognize that in my riding, in Centre, has its own unique challenges. It's a population that has a lot of rentals. We have a very mixed demographic in that riding, both of workers coming into the province that might displace people who would be voting in Saskatoon or in Saskatchewan, new immigrants. It's quite an interesting mixture. And of course many, if you go down 22nd Street, you will see apartment blocks that are actually, have been over the last year or two actually closed because they're being redone. And so there's a whole lot of things happening in Saskatoon Centre.

[21:45]

But as was stated earlier, I do want to say, and it wasn't actually in the last report in terms of the constituencies, but I want to point out to some who might find this interesting that at one point, in 1993, Saskatoon Southeast was the smallest of the 11 ridings in Saskatchewan, and the largest was my riding of Saskatoon Idylwyld. And how things can change as our demographics change and our cities change. But here I do find it interesting. In '93 Southeast was smaller than Saskatoon Idylwyld. In fact Idylwyld was the largest and Southeast was the smallest in Saskatoon.

But those things are worked out. Those things are worked out. That's why we have these commissions every 10 years because we know populations shift, areas of the city grow. Other areas of the cities may be having challenges that are causing the numbers not to be there as they once were.

But I do want to say, Mr. Speaker, this is a very important amendment before us, and one that I think we need to consider. And I would ask the members opposite to individually think about this because I think, as we get new information, we're seeing that maybe this wasn't as well thought out as it could have been.

You know, I think that we all knew the census was coming in 2011. And we all . . . I think if this government in its last mandate of the four years had, as I said, the courage of conviction to actually believe in this kind of thing, what they should have done, what they should have done — and they could have done this — is two years ago had hearings, public hearings on the issue of, do we need more MLAs?

The population in Saskatchewan was growing. We've known that for several years. We've known it for several years because we have interim reports on population growth, whether it's through Sask Health or is the StatsCan. Of course you have the official ones every five years, but it was to no one's surprise that we saw the population of Saskatchewan where it was. Now it might have been to some of the members opposite over there who said, oh we had no idea Saskatchewan was growing. All of a sudden we find out in 2011 that Saskatchewan's much bigger than it was in 2001. I don't think that's quite true. I don't think that's quite true. I think we all knew what was happening.

And if these folks had, as I said, the courage of conviction, they could have gone to the people and said, you know what? I think we need to have some input here. What do you think? What do you think? Do you want to have three more MLAs, three more MLAs, or do you want to have services? Do you want to have

services like keeping the senior drug plan and for young people the drug plan more affordable? Can we do that? What do you think we should do? What do you think we should do? Should we invest more in our schools? Should we invest more in keeping our tuition fees more reasonable? What would you prefer?

Now we saw earlier today in question period that we had a minister in his answer try to defend — try — and of course I think he saw the folly of his answer when he tried to spin the fact that these three new MLAs would not cost anything. That's unbelievable, simply unbelievable. You know, when you have a budget that's grown so much under this government, so much under this government, how can you possibly say it's not going to cost anything? They're just going to absorb the cost. That's foolish to say because once you've got an MLA and three MLAs in place, they do cost something. Now the estimated amount that we're hearing is somewhere around 225, 250,000. That's three-quarters of a million a year. Over the course of four years — you can do the math — that's over 3 million. And of course it's just not four years. We're talking into the future. We're talking into the future. So it is millions of dollars. And I think the government needs to own up to this idea that it does actually cost more money. It does cost more money.

And they've made some choices. They've made choices here, and that's what being a government is all about. It's about making choices. It's about setting your priorities, letting the public know what your priorities are, and then planning. And clearly they haven't planned very well here at all, not at all. Because well as we say, the two reasons that we have issues: one, excluding those folks under the age of 18, the young people of Saskatchewan who for now for a generation have come to expect that they will be part of the formula because they count, and now they don't count. So this is going to be a shift, a shift of how we think about young people in Saskatchewan. And as the Children's Advocate says, this is an issue. This is one you just can't say, hey we've passed the Bill and it's all over with; we do the formula and it's done, and then we go back to saying, welcome to your legislature. That's not on any more. That's not on any more because it's a new Saskatchewan. It's a different Saskatchewan. And it's one that they knew about and they didn't campaign on. And I think as we see this problem with young people becoming more and more disengaged with the political system, with what makes Saskatchewan a wonderful place, and we see that, we see that, we see that in terms of the voter turnout. And we know if there's one demographic who doesn't come out to vote, it's the young people. It's the young people.

So what kind of message is it that we send to young people now? Is it really that we're really saying, Mr. Speaker, you don't come out to vote so why should we count you in the formula? Is that really what we're saying? You don't come out to vote, so why should we count you? I think that's just not who we are here in Saskatchewan. I think we count everyone. We work for everyone, and we work for everyone all the time. We work for everyone all the time. And I think that's an important principle of what Saskatchewan is all about. And we know across Canada, this is what most provinces do.

And so I think that we're taking a major step back. It's not something that we're going to be proud of, and I think that we

have some real, real concerns with it on our side of the House. So we feel it is our duty to oppose this. And I know many people have talked about some of the editorials that have been read into the record that it is our duty to oppose this, because I think people need to be aware of what Bill 36 is all about. And this is why we're proposing this amendment, this reasoned amendment that we decline second reading to Bill No. 36, because it in fact:

“... 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

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.”

And you know, Mr. Speaker, other provinces have gone through this. And I know I've talked about the example of British Columbia that just recently had hearings, had a process by which they went to their people — and that's the right way to do it — went to their people and said, what do you think we should do? Our population is growing. In BC we know the population's growing. The population in other provinces are growing. The population of Canada is growing. And so we have that ability to consult with people. That's what we do. BC did, and what did they find out? People said, we prefer to invest in services for the people of British Columbia. And I think I would bet that in Saskatchewan, if the people across the way here, the Sask Party MLAs had campaigned or held hearings prior to the election, that's what they would have heard. And we wouldn't be here tonight doing this debate on this amendment.

So I think this is a huge step back. And I also just want to also bring into the mix too that, as some of the columnists and others have pointed out to me, that not only when you exclude people who are 17 and younger, you're excluding future voters, those who are 10 and 14 who would be voting. And so those are an important group there in any by-elections. But see this is where it gets complicated, because if you start saying, well we'll take the 10 ... anybody over 10, I think it's just wise to stick to the Charter and say, everyone counts. It's the right thing to do. And not only is it the right thing to do, it's the most straightforward thing to do. It's what we've been doing now for many years.

And why all of a sudden do we say, you know what? We're going to change the system. And I think for many, they shake their heads and say, where did this come from? Where did this come from? And that's a fair question I think that the people of Saskatchewan have to ask. And people wonder, so where did this come from? We've not had any correspondence or letters saying, you know what? We need more politicians in this province. We've had lots of letters and emails and correspondence about what people think we need, but I have to be straight with you, Mr. Speaker. We've not had anybody say, you know, what we really need is three more politicians. They've just not said that.

So, Mr. Speaker, you know, and we have had this debate and I

know that there's been members across the way who've hollered at this when we raised the idea of representative democracy. And for some reason they feel that that's not the principle that Saskatchewan should embrace, that they should not embrace representative democracy, that they will just in reality work for their voters, you know. You know, it's funny, Mr. Speaker. I'm a teacher by trade and, you know, when we get standardized tests, there's always this tendency, and I think people have heard about the idea of teaching to the test — right? — teaching to the test because everything's measured around the test. So now what we're going to do is we're going to have the voters ... Everything's going to be about the voters. But yes, we'd say we work for everybody. But really what matters are the voters. And I think we really have ... we're on dangerous ground when we start moving away from the principle of representative democracy, that everyone counts, that the Charter really means everyone. It's not just those over the age of 18.

So when we get into that area, it reminds me of when we start teaching to the test because we want to have great test scores. Well we want to have good students. We want to have a good society where everyone counts. Everyone counts — our grandchildren, our future children, our seniors, our new Canadians, people who are in our province for whatever reason but are not quite yet Canadian citizens. They all count because they are all part of Saskatchewan. And I think that's really, really important because it's our job. It's our job, and simply it's our job to represent everyone. And I think that there is absolutely no excuse, there's no good excuse for changing that.

And I think this is when we start to wonder what is, what is the rationale behind this and is there some ulterior motives? And I think that this is why I keep going back to this, about the courage of our convictions and being able to, when we're on the doorsteps, say what we really mean, say what we really mean. And sometimes that will be a difficult conversation. But if there are plans to say, you know what? We think, we think that we need to have more politicians. I think this is where this government has failed. Because they've simply not demonstrated that courage, not demonstrated that courage of their conviction, but in fact they're taking the easy way to get to more power. And I think this is wrong, absolutely wrong.

And, Mr. Speaker, in the time that we've been, you know, leading up to the budget and we've talked about austerity and is it prosperity or austerity, you know, when we've got, we've just got mixed messages here. We've got mixed messages that we don't have a lot of money and we've got to be, we've got to be careful on everything. And I really appreciated this afternoon when the member from Athabasca was pointing out that on this topic we need to have an intelligent conversation. We need to have the intelligent discussion about what's really important in our democracy here because we're really setting something, not only for 10 years, but for many years. If we go to 61 MLAs, that's not just for 10 years really. That's for decades. That's really for decades. We sure hope it is. If we increase the number of seats, it's something for long term.

So we have to have the rational conversation. But the member from Athabasca here was showing how difficult it is to have a rational, intelligent conversation with the folks over there because they seem to have only a couple of answers out of their

songbook. And everything is about either the balanced budget or putting more criminals in jail, and you can't have a conversation about anything else. They simply are incapable of discussing anything else.

[22:00]

And that's what it's all about, no matter what it is. And I don't know how they, you know, I mean how they will defend this or they just go into their robo-answer about this because they don't seem to have to be able to give any answers about, where did this idea come from? Where did this idea come from? They just go blank or they go to the balanced budget answer or putting more criminals in jail. And none of them make sense. You think, what channel am I tuning in to here? But that's on the robo-calls, you know.

And so I have to say that, Mr. Speaker, I have some real concerns about this because really this seems to be not well thought out, and we're really seeing some questions that need to have some answers. And when we have . . . And I will read this again because I was shocked earlier this evening when I heard what the Children's Advocate had to say. And this was on the 8:30 news tonight, the 8:30 news in case members opposite didn't hear it. And some say they heard and didn't faze because it didn't register. They didn't know how to deal with it. They just didn't know how to deal with it because, you know, here you have an officer of this legislature having this opinion.

I think we have to listen to it. I think we have to listen to it. And it's not a joke when the Children's Advocate, who has been talking about some of the major challenges young people face in this province . . . And we see this government on one hand saying, we're all there for children; we're all there for young people. And in fact we have, before the House, we have a Bill creating a separate officer of the legislature because the Children's Advocate was actually under the auspices of the Ombudsman. And now we have before us a Bill because we think that much of the Children's Advocate, that he needs to be recognized, the officer needs to have his own independent status . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . There you go. There you go.

So what he said, this is what he said, and I quote from CBC tonight: "A plan to count only citizens of voting age in determining the configuration of new electoral boundaries could be a violation of children's rights, Bob Pringle . . . Children's Advocate, says." He says, and I will continue to say, I'll continue to quote the article:

But according to Pringle, that could violate the Charter of Rights.

"Section 3 of the charter is intended to ensure effective representation of the whole population, not just those over the age of 18 years," Pringle said Tuesday.

He goes on to say:

Pringle added the exclusion of minors may also run afoul of the Charter's equality provisions.

He said not counting people under 18 would affect

communities with a large youth component.

And this is a quote directly from him:

"Leaving children, youth, out of the population count to calculate the boundaries will have a significant effect on the political representation of aboriginal people and new immigrants due to their much younger demographics," Pringle said.

So I think we've got an issue here. We've got an issue that's real and one that we just can't brush aside. And that's why I think this amendment is really something that we need to take a look at and I urge the members opposite to take a look at. Because, as I said, this is not just for the next ten years, but when you're doing this kind of work, it's for decades into the future. That's the way we should be doing anything when we're changing the electoral, the number of MLAs. And we know there's a process for correcting imbalances, and that's why we have a commission. The process has set up a commission every ten years and everybody knows that. Everybody knows that. It's not a surprise. But it is a surprise and it's a shock when you see after the election this kind of fundamental change.

And you know, and it's not that, you know, Mr. Speaker, our ridings are so, so large. Here we have the population per seat, and what we would have right now, and our population per seat is 17,810. And BC is 51,764. So that's almost three times larger, three times larger, and they seem to be able to work with that. And in fact they said that's about right. That's about right. They had hearings and said, is that, do we need more MLAs in BC? They said no, we're okay. We're okay.

And then we get into Alberta. They're about 44,000. Manitoba, which has a population density just a little bit bigger than ours — theirs is 2.2 people per square kilometres; ours is 1.8 — they have 21,000, 21,000 people per seat. And of course, you know, I've heard our side, members on our side quote the Ontario number which is just mind-boggling, but they seem to make it work. They seem to make it work. They have 120,000 people per seat. That's over six times more, over six times more. I think that's phenomenal. That's phenomenal, you know.

And as I, and you know, as we were doing it, I was listening to the member from Nutana. And we were working out the math about if we were to do the same formula that these folks are advocating, that the government's advocating, that we would be at just over 12,000 people, 12,000 people that we'd be representing. I mean that's, that's incredible. We'd be then one-tenth the size of Ontario. But we're not counting kids. We're not counting kids. Kids don't count. Kids don't count. So that's the rule, and then we'd be one-tenth the size of the ridings of Ontario.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that we have a process for correcting imbalances right now. Every 10 years we correct the imbalances. Everybody knows that. Everybody knows that. And we know that the population's grown. That's not a surprise. We've been watching that, and we've been happy to see the population growing for several years now. No surprise there. So everybody knew that there would be some corrections coming up. That's not a surprise.

But what the surprise was, what the surprise was that three MLAs and not counting youth. And as I said earlier, it's about the courage of conviction. And maybe that's not a surprise, because we knew this government. There were several things. This seems to be a habit of this government. They don't consult and all of a sudden you see things they never said anything about.

And we can go back and talk about several examples of that, several examples of that. We saw the essential services legislation that happens to be in the courts right now, struck down. And are we looking at a piece of legislation that may face the same fate . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes. The question is, what are the court . . . Are they just going to absorb that cost too? That's a no-cost item, no-cost item for the government, court costs.

But, Mr. Speaker, we've seen this happen. We've seen this before where they've just not had the courage of conviction to say what they're going to do and then do it. They don't say it, they don't tell anybody they're going to do it, and then we see this kind of legislation just before Christmas. And you know, this just isn't the way this kind of change should happen. And we are deeply concerned that they did not campaign on it, and it's not the priorities the people in Saskatchewan are talking about.

People in Saskatchewan are talking about infrastructure. They're talking about how are their roads, how are their streets. They're talking about policing. You know, Mr. Speaker, today I had, you know, I saw about the devastating news that we had about, in my own riding, that a gas station on 20th Street for the third time in six weeks was held up after midnight. And we need action on those kind of things. And here we are debating whether we need three more politicians. I think on 20th Street we need three more police. We need better occupational health and safety regulations. We need more inspectors.

What we're having, what we're seeing, what we're seeing is a cutback in government services of 16 per cent of occupational health, of government services, government services, but a 5 per cent increase in politicians, 5 per cent increase in politicians. It just doesn't add up. And these are the choices of this government. These are the choices of this government.

And so I have some real concerns, and I have to echo many of the issues that have been raised by members before me. But I have to say that when we see real issues facing people in our ridings, this was not brought up. This was not brought up. This was not brought up. You know, as I said earlier about the holdup on 20th Street last night, I'm sure, I'm sure Darren would say, what I really need is three more politicians to solve this problem. They're not saying that. They're not saying that. They're saying, I need more help to make sure I'm safer in my workplace. That's what they're saying. I need more help to make sure I'm safer in my workplace. I don't need three more politicians. So I think these folks need to focus on what's really, really important.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that we have some challenges here. And I think this government needs to get its priorities straight, and I don't know how they set this as a priority, that they needed three more politicians and they needed to send out the

message that kids don't count. Where that came from I don't know, and I'd sure like to hear from the other side. When we have questions in question period, they do everything to avoid answering, answering those questions.

But you know, it was interesting. I did have a chance to ask the Minister of Municipal Affairs during estimates about, you know, in the last couple of years we've seen some interesting approaches to how we do elections. And of course, what I'm talking about is the idea around photo ID [identification]. And where did that come from? And again we didn't have a real clear answer when we raised those questions a couple of years ago as in they . . .

An Hon. Member: — We shut them down on that one, David.

Mr. Forbes: — What's that?

An Hon. Member: — We shut them down on attestations.

Mr. Forbes: — That's right. That's right.

And so we had a chance to talk about this in estimates the other night. Were they going to share their approach that cities needed to have more councillors? Were they going to be that generous and say, listen, we're adding more MLAs; do you guys want to have more city councillors? More politicians for everybody. And that's because it seems to be the style of the day. Everybody wants more politicians. I don't think so. I don't think so. And this is, you know, and this is because we were concerned about the ID, which is a big issue in my riding, as there are a significant number of people that don't have photo ID.

But anyway so I asked them. I said, so are you going to do the same thing? Are you going to share this with everybody and just say to the cities, listen, we all think you need two or three more politicians?

An Hon. Member: — What did Mandryk say about this?

Mr. Forbes: — I'm not sure. I'm not sure he actually addressed this one. We'll have to make sure we ask the columnists, what do they think about more city councillors? But I think . . . But this is the point I wanted to make, Mr. Speaker. And this is where the Minister of Municipal Affairs said, you know, and I quote — and this is on page 22, April 2nd, 2012 — and I quote, "We never campaigned on more MLAs. We never talked about that." There you go. He admitted to it. He admitted to it. These folks all go, the other folks all go silent on it. But then he goes and he goes on to say, "I would have to say that I have never been asked by anybody about additional councillors in a city yet." So he's probably not going to do it because that would be the rational thing.

[22:15]

If not asked to do it, why would you do it? So I'm thinking, why are these folks doing this if nobody's asked them to do it? And this is a question we keep asking. So who's asked you? Has SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] asked you to do this? Has SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] asked you to do it? Who's asked them to

do it? Was there an emergency resolution: we need three more MLAs in Saskatchewan? We don't . . . Our numbers aren't quite low, high, I don't know what. Jack them up. Jack them up. More politicians in Saskatchewan.

You know, you know, I don't think that's what they're saying. I don't think that's what they're saying. People are saying we need more services; we need support. I know when it comes to environment, there's issues. I heard issues around recycling. We hear issues about child care. We hear issues about highways, P.A. [Prince Albert]. We hear issues around the second bridge . . . [inaudible] . . . Nokomis School closing. Now one of the members . . . Earl Grey highway. All of those things.

And I'm sure we could get letters, and they'd probably be happy to table those letters. But they've not tabled the letters. But I did hear one. You know, there was a letter that was read into the record earlier, by Philip Sparks. And I just want to read it because I think this is where some of the members opposite may not quite understand it. And the title was, "Putting politics first." And this was April 3rd, 2012, by Philip Sparks, and he's from Weyburn. And I quote:

It is pretty easy to see where the Saskatchewan Party stands in regards to seniors as opposed to creating three more MLAs for the province. Getting three more seats in the legislature seems to be much more important than helping seniors, some of whom are struggling with high prescription drug prices. Now they will just have to dig deeper.

Many seniors require more prescriptions as they get older and many are already experiencing financial hardship. Does our government care? It would certainly seem not, as long as they can brag about the prosperity they have brought to the province, crow about the "Saskatchewan advantage" and what a rich province we all live in.

I am 71 and have health issues that require me to take several prescriptions every day. Now it will cost me about \$45 more each month. But I am one of the lucky ones as I have two part-time jobs [He's 71 years old. He's got two part-time jobs.] and I can handle it. How many other seniors are in that position?

Does the government seem concerned? Nope. Three more MLAs though, now that's important. There is an election in the future and I hope the seniors in this province show the Sask. Party the exit door.

Now what I find interesting about this letter is the Sask Party government probably thinks he's endorsing their position because he said, "Three more MLAs though, now that's important." So maybe they're taking that as a ringing endorsement. No, I think that's called irony. That's called tongue in cheek. So just for you folks over there opposite, this is not an endorsement. That's not an endorsement. He's being a little witty. So because I want to make sure . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Sarcasm. Sarcasm, there you go. All right, there you go. So I just want to point that out that if this is a letter that they were going to table for support, the one letter that they thought really mattered — all right? — so, Mr.

Speaker, I have some real concerns here because I think the member opposite have some real issues here about understanding where the people of the province stand.

An Hon. Member: — It's come to this, David. They're crossing the floor.

Mr. Forbes: — They're crossing the floor. I have to watch my back here. I get a little nervous when I see somebody walking around with a jug of water, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, I do want to say that there's lots of things that I wanted to talk about. I wanted to talk about some of the columns that have been read into the record, but I do think that we have lots more to say about this, Mr. Speaker.

But you know, I wanted to also point out this: that, you know, the last time we had the commission was in 2002. And there were a couple of members from the other side who made presentations to that commission in 2002. The member for Canora-Pelly made a petition, and the member for Kelvington-Wadena presented to the commission in 2002. And not once in their presentation did they argue to exclude children under the age of 18.

So somehow since then . . . And they have both been in the House for many years, and they've been successful politicians. They have represented their people and clearly have been returned with significant majorities. So clearly they have been doing their work in their ridings. But they do have concerns, like we all should have concerns, when it comes to the commission, that we want to make to sure the commission hears. How can we make the system work a little bit better about drawing the boundaries and making sure that we have good representation?

But not once in their presentation did they argue that they needed more MLAs to help represent their constituents. What they did talk about was the changes to the block of constituencies and the boundaries to better reflect what they thought were the areas within the constituencies. But they did not propose that there should be more constituencies in our province. They said, you know, they wanted the constituencies more square so this could allow constituents more easy access to their MLA and their MLA office and also makes it easier for the MLA to locate an office that's in a location central to all their constituents.

And so I think this goes back to the gerrymander comment where you can have badly drawn constituencies that look like salamanders but we try to do is in squares so that the people have easy access. And that can be done. That can be done. We can make it work here. But I don't think that . . . And here you have this group here who's saying they weren't looking to cut out people who were younger than 18 and they weren't looking to increase the number of MLAs. They just had, they had a plan about how they could make it work. So why now have they changed their tune?

So I have to say it looked like they had a more reasonable approach in 2002 than they do in 2012. So I don't know what the change was in the last 10 years, why all of a sudden they had different issues. Because here you have two successful

Sask Party politicians who seem to be appreciated by their constituents because I know they get returned by healthy margins. Now I do have to say in that . . . But I have not heard from those two that one of the things that the people were saying in their ridings was, hey could we break this up more and interject one more rural or three more rural ridings. They weren't saying that. They seemed to think that the numbers were about right and there are ways to make it work.

So, Mr. Speaker, I keep going back to this, that we have a system that works. It's got a built-in process to correct the imbalances. We count young people now because we value young people. And I think that the problem that we see coming up into the future is the signal that we don't count young people.

And as I said, as this story grows and as the momentum grows and questions seem to increase about the nature of this Bill, and as I reflect on what the folks on CBC were saying tonight, the fact that Bob Pringle, our Children's Advocate, is saying that there could be real problems here that the . . . especially when it comes to the Charter of Rights. And I just want to quote this again because I think this is new news. And I think the folks at home when they hear this tomorrow on CBC, and because this is a late-breaking evening news . . . And when Pringle says that section 3 of the Charter is intended to ensure effective representation of the whole population not just those over the age of 18 years — that's what he's saying — I think that we have some work to do here.

And so I think that's why this amendment is so important and that we think that we need to support this amendment. When you have folks like the Children's Advocate stepping up and saying, you know, if we really value our young people, our children, our youth, that it's important that we support this amendment. And I want to make sure I get it, the amendment, into the record one more time before the evening is out because I know there are people who tune in after the news and want to hear what we're talking about. And what our amendment is that we're proposing on this side that:

“this House declines to give second reading to Bill No. 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,

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 we're going to count on the support for the members opposite because we think as they reflect on our speeches today that, hopefully, that it's connected with some of them. We talked about the courage of conviction, the courage of conviction to say what you mean, to say what you're going to do, and do the right thing. Do the right thing. So when this amendment comes to vote, make sure that you think about the

Charter. Think about what the Children's Advocate is saying. Think about our children and support this amendment.

Now the government could do a much quicker thing and withdraw the Bill tomorrow as we've been talking about on this side. We're not quite sure of where to depose, dispose of this Bill, you know, whether it's in the lake out front here or another lake. We're talking about Last Mountain Lake. But I think we need to get rid of this Bill. Bill No. 36 needs to go so we can get rid of this and get onto the pressing issues that really matter to the people of Saskatchewan.

There are issues out there tonight that people are concerned about as we talked about, this letter from the fellow from Weyburn talking about prescription drug costs. That's an issue. That's a real issue. I've raised the issue of occupational health and safety. Tonight there are people going to work after midnight who are thinking about how safe are they at work.

And so I think we need to be focusing, we need to be turning to the issues of the day that are pressing and real, that matter to the people that we represent and all the people we represent whether they're younger than 18 or older than 18. It's child care, quality child care. All of those issues. They are important to each and everyone of us. This kind of distraction . . . We should just do the right thing, do the right thing as soon as possible — withdraw the Bill. And if they're not going to withdraw the Bill, then do the right thing and support the amendment.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I know that there'll be many, many of us who want to speak. And I'm not quite finished saying the things I want to say, so I'm looking forward to more time to talk about this. But I think that it's about our job, and our job is to do the right thing. And sometimes we have to admit that we haven't thought through all the things we've done. And I think this Bill No. 36 is a prime example of not thinking it all the way through, you know.

We have a system. We have a system to correct the imbalances, but nobody, nobody during the campaign said we needed more politicians. And so I think this is absolutely wrong-headed, and the amendment is the right thing to do. So, Mr. Speaker, I think that . . .

The Speaker: — Now being after the hour of adjournment of 10:30 p.m., this House stands adjourned to 1:30 Wednesday afternoon.

[The Assembly adjourned at 22:30.]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EVENING SITTING
ADJOURNED DEBATES
SECOND READINGS

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

Belanger	1089
Wotherspoon	1095
Sproule	1103
Forbes	1111

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