



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

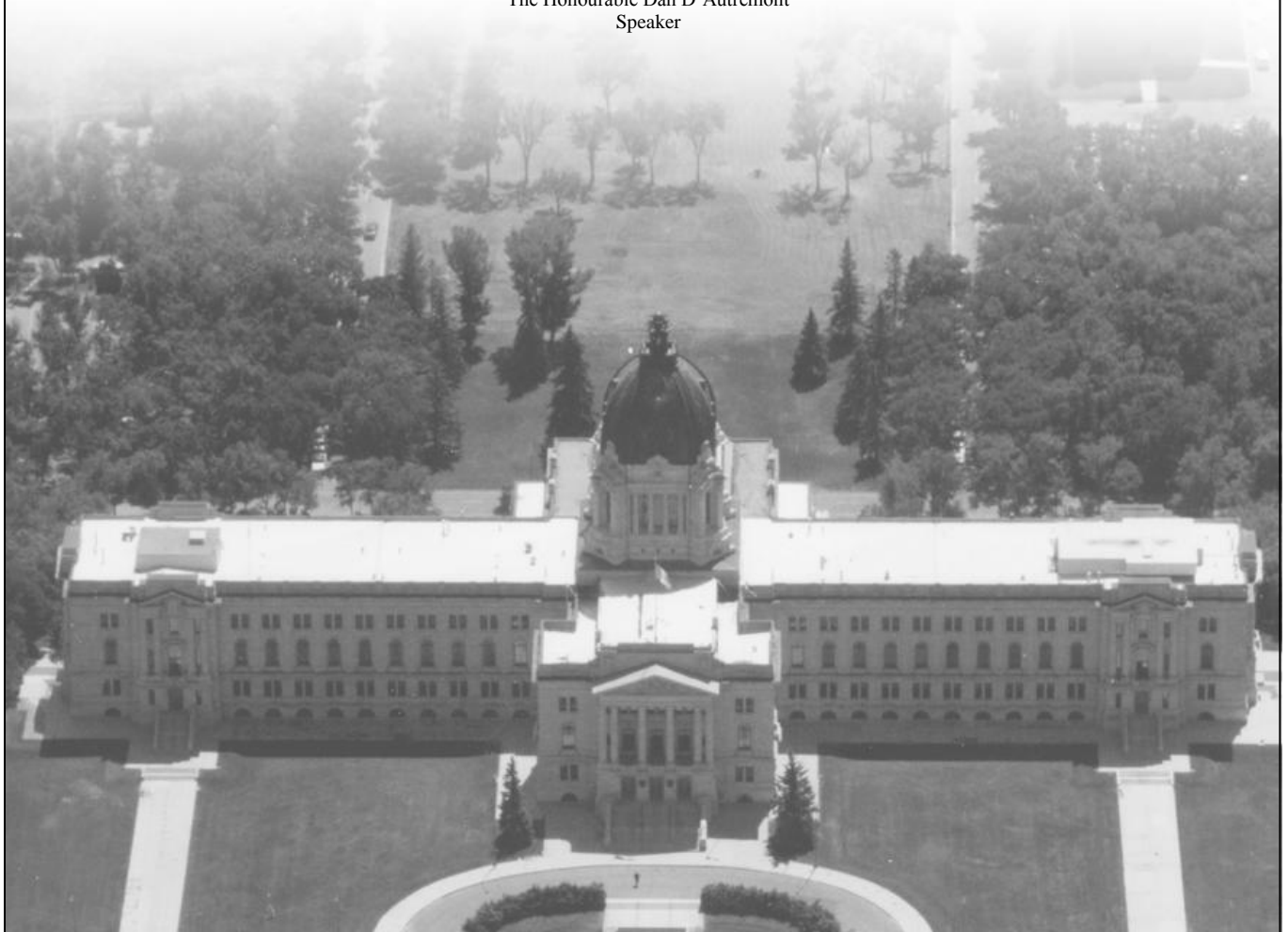
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

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



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

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

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Mr. Marchuk: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask leave for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — The member has asked leave for an extended introduction. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to grant leave?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Mr. Marchuk: — It gives me great pleasure and honour to introduce a most outstanding young man and constituent of Regina Douglas Park seated behind the bar to my right. Accompanying Steven are several members of his support network. First of all his mom, Donald Jones, up in the west gallery, and dad, Dale. Beside Steven is his brother Daniel. Up in the gallery as well are Ken Ripplinger, Roberta Ripplinger, Marina Rist, Cheryl Milne, and Verna Mang.

Mr. Speaker, we all know the good work of the Kinsmen and in particular, Telemiracle. We all know as well, Mr. Speaker, that all the good work of the Kinsmen as a result of Telemiracle could not happen without the contributions of the very generous population and of course the scores of volunteers just like Steven who work tirelessly on behalf of those who are in need.

Mr. Speaker, Steven set a goal to raise \$10,000 for Telemiracle and ended up raising \$2,000 over that goal — \$12,000, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure you'll agree, Mr. Speaker, that raising this kind of money is no small feat. Steven started to raise money in late January with bake sales, steak nights, appeals to family members, and with the great support from the folks and staff at the Wascana Rehabilitation Centre. When asked why he's so passionate about his support for Telemiracle, Steven's reply was simple, and I quote, "I like to help folks, and I know a lot of people who need help. I feel really good about what I've done." And well you should, Steven.

We thank you, and I would ask all members to please join me in congratulating Steven and welcome Steven and his support team to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you, a group seated in the eastern gallery of the legislature. And they are the embodiment, I think, of the motto of Saskatchewan. As they'll note on their tour, it's on the coat of arms. It's *Multis e gentibus vires* "from many peoples, strength." And this group from Open

Door Society's English as a second language class, here with their teacher, Roshnie Thaver, is very much the embodiment of that motto of Saskatchewan and what makes Saskatchewan strong and a great place to live.

They've come to Saskatchewan, to Canada from Afghanistan, Iran, Russia, the Ukraine, Burma, and South Africa, and it's really good to see them here today at their Legislative Assembly. And we're thankful to have them here in the province, and we look forward to their many continued successes here in Saskatchewan. Please join with me in welcoming these individuals to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, I'd like to join the member opposite in welcoming these individuals, this class, to their Legislative Assembly. We know how important our increasingly diverse, dynamic, and cosmopolitan society is. And we're delighted to see that as part of their work, they're seeing civics in action, an opportunity to come to their legislature and see open and free dialogue and debate. We know how important that is. It's a defining feature of Saskatchewan. And here they are, not just witnessing it but also helping to contribute to it. I invite all members to join me in welcoming our guests to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're joined here today in the west gallery by someone who's very important to students and education all across Saskatchewan, none other than Ms. Sandi Urban-Hall, president of the Saskatchewan School Boards Association. It's a pleasure to have Sandi join us here today.

We should also recognize that Sandi has recently been elected the president of the Canadian School Boards Association and will be representing Saskatchewan in education and in a very proud way, I know, and in an important way. I'd like to thank Ms. Urban-Hall for her years of service to education in the province, to Prairie Valley schools, and for the good work that is to come. Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. Please join with me in welcoming Ms. Sandi Urban-Hall.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to welcome Ms. Sandi Urban-Hall, trustee of Prairie Valley School Division and president of the Saskatchewan School Boards Association to her Assembly, as well as congratulate her for her unanimous election for the president of the Canadian School Boards Association. Ms. Urban-Hall was first elected as a trustee in 2003. And she served on the executive of the SSBA [Saskatchewan School Boards Association] since 2006 and is presently serving her third term as the president.

We look forward to having her lead us through what promises to be a year full of challenges and with confidence that her guiding vision of student achievement and opportunity will

serve the association, its board members, and the students of this province well. And soon she'll be serving the students of Canada as well as just Saskatchewan. So welcome to your Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Government Services.

Hon. Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with the member from Douglas Park in welcoming a very special family. But I'd like to point out that Mr. Dale Ripplinger was just awarded the Realtor of the Year at the Regina Real Estate Association's 100th anniversary dinner. Dale has won this prestigious award before, and it's no surprise then that his family members, such as Steven, have become very large contributors to the community because their father has set an absolutely incredible example. You don't get to win Realtor of the Year based on sales. You get to win Realtor of the Year on the work that you do within the community, of giving back, and Dale Ripplinger has given back extensively to the community of Regina. Thank you.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for protection for late-night retail workers by passing Jimmy's law. And we know that in the early morning hours of June 20th, 2011, Jimmy Ray Wiebe was shot two times and killed from his injuries. He was working at a gas station in Yorkton, alone and unprotected from intruders. And we know that armed robberies such as the one that took place in Regina in January this year and the devastating news we had this morning of the Fas Gas convenience store and gas station was held up for the third time, the third time in six weeks during the graveyard shift, show that Jimmy's law is needed to give workers added protection in the workplace. We know other provinces have brought in several safety precautions, and we urge this government to do the same:

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

And, Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition come from Langham and Saskatoon. I do so present. Thank you.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents from across Saskatchewan as it relates to the management and accounting of our provincial finances. And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly call on the Sask Party government to provide Saskatchewan people with the fair, true state of our finances by providing appropriate summary financial accounting and reporting that is in line

with the rest of Canada in compliance with public sector accounting standards and following the independent Provincial Auditor's recommendations; and also to begin to provide responsible, sustainable, and trustworthy financial management as deserved by Saskatchewan people, organizations, municipalities, institutions, taxpayers, and businesses.

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

Mr. Speaker, these petitions today are signed by concerned residents from Weyburn and from Kisbey. I so submit.

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

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cumberland.

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

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

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

And it's signed by many good people of northern Saskatchewan. I so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

30th Anniversary of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, 30 years ago on April 17th, 1982, Queen Elizabeth proclaimed in force the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, a key element of the new constitution which represents Canada's respect and commitment to human rights. I'm pleased, Mr. Speaker, to rise in the House today on the 30th anniversary of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to recognize this very important milestone in Canadian political history.

Let us take this opportunity to reflect upon why people came to Canada in the first place. They came to this country to seek freedom. In many cases people came to this country to flee persecution. However for the most part, the attraction to Canada has been the promise of human rights, civil liberties, and a chance to pursue happiness in a secure environment where lives, property, and security are guaranteed by the state.

Mr. Speaker, we have managed to create a peaceful country where people from every corner of the world of every religion, every political persuasion, every cultural group, and all ethnicities can come together and build a tolerant society where we respect each other. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Mr. Speaker, enshrines Canada's dream of a respectful, fair, and equal society of which we are so proud.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I would ask all my colleagues to join with me today in recognizing the importance of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to our country and to our society. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thirty years ago today, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and Queen Elizabeth II signed the Charter of Rights and Freedoms entrenching this Bill of political and civil rights into the Constitution of Canada.

The Charter is trendsetting and influenced countries such as Israel, South Africa, Hong Kong, and New Zealand in the development of their constitutional documents. It greatly expanded the scope of judicial review, guaranteed rights, and gave judges power to enforce the stated changes. The plan was announced in 1980 to include fundamental freedoms, democratic guarantees, freedom of movement, legal rights, equality, and language rights.

Mr. Speaker, in 1981 the kitchen accord was negotiated by the federal Attorney General and various provincial Justice ministers to ensure that provincial approval would be needed for certain constitutional reforms. The notwithstanding clause, otherwise known as section 33, allows parliament or provincial legislatures to override certain provisions of the Charter, a uniquely Canadian invention.

The Charter is a source of pride for Canadians and polls have shown strong support describing the Charter as a good thing. The Charter is a source of national values and unity and functions as a symbol for all Canadians, representing the core values of freedom.

I encourage all members of this Assembly to applaud the dedication of citizens from all political stripes in the development of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[13:45]

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

Celebrating the Sikh Community in Saskatchewan

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, April 15th, I had the honour of attending a Vaisakhi celebration at a Sikh temple in Saskatoon. Vaisakhi is an important celebration in the Sikh calendar, having both religious and cultural significance. From a faith perspective, it commemorates when Khalsa was established in the year 1699, recognizing that all humans are equal. The Vaisakhi celebration also coincides with the New Year and the beginning of the harvest in Punjab, the birthplace of Sikhism. Needless to say, it is a colourful event and the highlight of the year for the community.

Mr. Speaker, the Sikh community is a very important part of Saskatchewan and especially Saskatoon. Since the introduction of the Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program in 2005, many Sikh families from abroad and other provinces have been choosing to make our province home. And this is very much the case with my constituency of Saskatoon Massey Place. These families are committed to enhancing the cultural and economic vibrancy of our province and are truly living up to our provincial motto "from many peoples, strength."

Mr. Speaker, I want to extend my sincere thanks for the hospitality that was shown to me on Sunday, and I ask all members to join me in recognizing the important contributions made by the Sikh community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Humboldt Broncos Win Canalta Cup

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I gladly rise today, as the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy remains seated, to congratulate the Humboldt Broncos on defeating the Weyburn Red Wings with the series victory of 4 to 2 to win the SJHL [Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League] championship and bring home the Canalta Cup.

Mr. Speaker, this is the fourth SJHL title in just six years for the Humboldt Broncos, a very accomplished team, no doubt. The Broncos will now advance to play in the Anavet Cup, squaring off against the Portage Terriers. I am confident that the Broncos can beat their Manitoba rivals and sign their name to the last ever Anavet Cup. Game 1 kicks off this Friday, April 20th in Humboldt. Furthermore, the Broncos will look for their third national title on home ice when the RBC [Royal Bank of Canada] Cup returns to Saskatchewan for the first time since 2005. I know the community of Humboldt has been very excited to host the RBC cup in May of this year, and I can only imagine how much excitement will grow as we get closer and closer to that first puck drop, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to extend my congratulations to the Humboldt Broncos and their successes so far. I'd also like to congratulate head coach Dean Brockman on leading the Broncos in yet another victory-filled season. I ask all members to join me on cheering on Saskatchewan's best as we watch them to continue to make their way to the top. Go Broncos.

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

Saskatchewan Highways

Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday during question period, the member from Athabasca suggested that professional consulting engineers design highways that are “less safer.” Why the member would seek to undermine the credibility of professional consulting engineers is beyond reason, since the practice of relying more heavily on consultants began in 1997 under the Romanow NDP [New Democratic Party] government and during his brief stint as Minister of Highways in the spring of 2007. That the NDP would suggest work being done by private engineers is unsafe is entirely wrong and frankly, Mr. Speaker, offensive.

As the Minister of Highways indicated earlier, “Every engineer treats safety as a high priority whether they work for the government or in the private sector.” During 16 years of NDP government, highway safety certainly was an issue since the NDP was not fixing this province's highways. In fact the former NDP deputy premier told citizens to fill their own potholes, Mr. Speaker.

Since 2007 the Saskatchewan Party government has made investment in provincial highways a priority. In our first four years, we invested \$2.2 billion in highways. In this year's balanced budget, Mr. Speaker, we have committed \$581.5 million. There is still more work to be done after 16 years, Mr. Speaker, neglect by the former NDP government. And we, along with the Highways ministry staff and our professional consulting engineer partners, are absolutely committed to safety for our highways. Mr. Speaker, the member from Athabasca should apologize to consulting engineers for suggesting their work is unsafe. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Carrot River Valley.

Support for Habitat for Humanity

Mr. Bradshaw: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise in the House to talk about a Habitat for Humanity sod turning that the member from Kelvington-Wadena and I had the privilege of attending in Nipawin on April the 13th. The celebration was about making dreams come true, and about what can be achieved when people work together to achieve a common goal. Our government was pleased to have contributed \$50,000 in Nipawin's first Habitat for Humanity project and to see another Saskatchewan family achieve the dream of owning their own home. In 2012-13 I am also pleased that our government is providing an additional \$1 million to help Habitat construct 20 more homes across the province.

Since March of 2011 our government has invested 344 million in new initiatives including the affordable home ownership

program, the rental construction incentive, the Summit Action Fund, Headstart on a Home, and the corporate income tax rebate. We expect that these investments will result in the development of more than 12,600 new homes for Saskatchewan people, homes that offer security, shelter, well-being, and a sense of belonging.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Habitat for Humanity and its many partners and volunteers for putting home ownership within reach of Saskatchewan families and for building stronger neighbourhoods and communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

“I like to help folks”

Mr. Marchuk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise once more to celebrate the highlights of our outstanding young guest. Mr. Speaker, the accomplishments of this extraordinary young man is an inspiration to all. We have met Steven Ripplinger who has been working hard to raise money for the Telemiracle Foundation and with amazing success. Mr. Speaker, Steven has muscular dystrophy, but that has not slowed him down. And when asked about his passion for Telemiracle, we heard what his response was, and I quote once more: “I like to help folks and I know a lot of people who need help.” Mr. Speaker, a true reflection of Steven's generous spirit and an excellent reflection of Saskatchewan grit.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that Saskatchewan leads the nation per capita in terms of volunteerism. Obviously no finer example than that of Steven Ripplinger. From his table outside the Wascana Rehabilitation Centre cafeteria, Steven spread the spirit of Telemiracle as he turned to Wascana Rehabilitation Centre employees and families to support his cause. Steven has been supporting the Kinsmen Telemiracle Foundation for more than five years and by his own admission, he does not know exactly how much money he's raised. But, Steven, whatever the amount, we are thankful.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all the members, I would like to congratulate and thank Steven and his family on his great contribution to our community, the Kinsmen Foundation, and of course Saskatchewan. Steven, we wish you every success in your future endeavours. Thanks for coming.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Electoral Representation

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier has introduced legislation that will significantly change the electoral process. The Premier's going to remove young people under the age of 18 from the equation when we draw up the new electoral boundaries. Who did the Premier consult before he made this decision? Has he heard from the Children's Advocate?

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I've had a conversation with the Children's Advocate on this matter, and he shares the position taken by the opposition. On this matter, we've agreed to disagree. We think that the appropriate measure for determining electoral boundaries are the people that actually vote in an election.

In the past, and in some constituencies in some other provinces, they use registered voters. They use voters lists. And in some other ones, they use population at large. We think that what we've chosen to do by using people that are of the voting age, we will have the most fair and equitable distribution of electors. And that's the process we've chosen to do.

With regard to our obligation, how we meet the needs of children, we do that by committing resources to them through a variety of different ministries — through Health, Education, and Social Services. And, Mr. Speaker, we've done a better job of it than the members opposite.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Social Services and youth likes to stand in her place and talk about the work she does to protect children and to recognize their rights to fair and equal treatment. On March 26th the Minister of Social Services and youth said, "We are breaking down the silos of government to serve our children better, and we're getting better at it." My question to the Minister of Social Services: what does she think about the Premier's decision to eliminate people under the age of 18 from the electoral boundary calculation?

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, come the next election, I think all MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] would be able to look their electors in the eye and say to them, we have developed a process that will determine the number of seats and the number of voters in each constituency so that it is fair and equitable and distributed appropriately.

Mr. Speaker, this government has a strong record of what it is doing for children in our province. And one of the things that we're doing with children is we are creating jobs here so that they are coming back to this province in droves from other jurisdictions. We are pleased and proud of the fact that more people are moving to the province. And as those people move back, if they are above the age of 18, we are ensuring that they have the vote and they will be appropriately accounted.

Mr. Speaker, we will ensure that there are enough schools, that there are enough other facilities, that children in our province, we'll be looking after. But to count them in an electoral map is not an appropriate or fair method of doing things. We will account people that can vote and are of legal voting age, and that is the appropriate and fair, reasonable way of doing things, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, my questions have been to the Premier and to the Minister of Social Services and youth, and

the Minister of Justice has taken the response. Now he said, let's look our electors in the eye in April 2016, if that's when the election is. How are you going to look at those people who turned 18 between 2011 and 2016 and say, well you weren't even included in calculating these boundaries?

So, Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier, and I'd invite the Premier to answer this question, is: will he tell the people of Saskatchewan why he's made this particular decision without consulting the people of Saskatchewan? It's important that he go to the people of Saskatchewan when he makes these kind of changes to our democracy.

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, in the last election, Saskatoon Nutana had 11,843 voters; Massey Place, 11,520. Mr. Speaker, my constituency of Saskatoon Southeast had 16,343. And I want to be able to look at those voters and say that your vote counts just as much as it does in Saskatoon Centre or anywhere else in the province.

Mr. Speaker, with regard to children, we have the largest income tax cut in Saskatchewan history, the largest property tax cut in Saskatchewan, the largest debt reduction in Saskatchewan history, and the largest investment in infrastructure in Saskatchewan history. We are building a new children's hospital in Saskatoon. We are building schools. We are building nursing homes. We are fixing hospitals. We are fixing highways. With that government over there, when they were in office, we had leaky roofs and creaky roads. We are not going down that road any more, Mr. Speaker.

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

Public Servants Seeking Elected Office

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last night in the Human Services Committee, the Minister of Social Services refused to answer questions about why a civil servant in her ministry had been refused permission to run in a civic by-election last fall, despite the individual's supervisor not having concerns about a conflict of interest. My question to the minister: can she please explain to this House why Steven Cormons was not allowed to participate in the democratic process?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member opposite. I want to first of all put on record that we fully support the right of every government employee to run for public office. But we also know that employees, at the same time that they're carrying on their current position, have to examine whether a political office will put them in a conflict. So that's what we were doing. And I think that's what the NDP did because, as far back as 1986, we had a form which is called "Approval for outside employment and activity and/or disclosure of outside activity or interest which may create a perceived conflict of interest." This is the type of form or process that went through. It was revised in 2011. And this

discussion is to ensure that the public interest, that a conflict isn't perceived. But, Mr. Speaker, after the discussion last night we have made an effort to make sure that we are looking at not only Ministry of Social Services, but of the Public Service Commission.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What the minister fails to state in her response is that the individual's supervisor said that there was no conflict. And even if there was a conflict, Mr. Speaker, the individual would be able to recuse himself from a decision if something came up if he was a councillor.

It's interesting, Mr. Speaker, because when we look at the current Sask Party MLAs, we know some served as civil servants. We know that some worked for Crown corporations. We know that some worked in health regions. My question to the minister: why this double standard for employees in her ministry, and what message does this send to civil servants across Saskatchewan?

[14:00]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Social Services.

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After our discussion last night, I had the opportunity to talk not only to the ministry but the Public Service Commission, and I understand the process they went through. But I felt and our ministry felt that maybe it was time that we talked to the Ombudsman, and this morning, or this afternoon, we have done that. And in light of that discussion, we are in the process of asking the Ombudsman to review the conflict of interest policy and advise whether there are changes required. Mr. Speaker, we want to ensure that everybody has the opportunity to hold public office and make sure that there is no conflict of interest.

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

Tuition Fees and University Funding

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday students at the University of Saskatchewan learned that there will be an average tuition increase of 4.7 per cent. Students studying public policy and public administration will see their tuition jump by 13 per cent. Mr. Speaker, for students who are studying finance, the increase will be a whopping 29 per cent. My question to the minister: did he know that his government's actions would result in a tuition increase of up to 29 per cent at the University of Saskatchewan?

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, our track record in supporting our post-secondary students in institutions is rock solid. It's \$3.5 billion over the course of five years, Mr. Speaker. In fact, Mr. Speaker, our track record supporting the University of Saskatchewan is very significant. At the University of Saskatchewan alone, over the course of five

budgets, we've invested more than \$1.5 billion to the University of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we know how significant it is for the institution to have the autonomy to set its own track. We also know how important it is to have the partnership. That's why when we make reference to, for example, Brett Fairbairn, who is the provost at the University of Saskatchewan, he suggests that these incremental increases — in fact, Mr. Speaker, the average is about 4 per cent — these incremental increases are preferable to sudden large spikes. Because as the NDP know, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite know, in 2004 what they saw for the average student was a spike of 18 per cent, Mr. Speaker. And that's part of their track record, Mr. Speaker. Because at the University of Saskatchewan over the years, Mr. Speaker, that they were in power, tuition went up by 99 per cent, Mr. Speaker. That was irresponsible, Mr. Speaker.

What we're doing is making sure small incremental adjustments in tuition, Mr. Speaker, make sure that affordability and accessibility are balanced with having the necessary requirements and necessary resources so that the institution can also focus on excellence. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What the minister conveniently leaves out is that when tuition went up in the 1990s the government was facing massive deficits, something that members opposite on that front bench know a thing or two about, if they were actually willing to talk about it.

The NDP froze tuition, Mr. Speaker, in 2005. Since 2005, provincial revenue has gone up 61 per cent and provincial spending, Mr. Speaker, has gone up 71 per cent. But students are no longer feeling the benefits like they did between '05 and '08. Mr. Speaker, under the Sask Party alone, under their watch, we've seen average tuition has jumped nearly 16 per cent under this Sask Party government.

My question to the minister: with provincial spending going up 71 per cent since 2005, how is it that this minister can justify to students that their education should be less and less affordable?

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, let me just quote the University of Saskatchewan Student Union president, Scott Hitchings, who has called the increases yesterday reasonable, Mr. Speaker.

As far as wanting to talk about the fate of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to talk about the financial state of the province. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has the only balanced budget of any province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we focus not simply on supporting our students, but also making sure that the conditions for growth also continue. Mr. Speaker, that's why we have paid down more than 40 per cent of our debt, more than \$3 billion, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, today there are more than 11,000 jobs open

and available on the saskjobs.ca website, Mr. Speaker. We have the lowest unemployment rate in the country, Mr. Speaker. We're focusing on the success of the students while they're in their studies, but most importantly that they can stay in Saskatchewan and succeed right here in their careers.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, this is the latest in a series of blows that we've seen to students at the U of S [University of Saskatchewan]. Last month, Mr. Speaker, we came to learn that this Sask Party government was transferring almost \$100 million of debt on to the university books. We also learned, Mr. Speaker, that this government was choosing to shortchange the university when it comes to their operating grant. A *StarPhoenix* editorial recently, Mr. Speaker, called this action short-sighted. And for many students it is a cause for concern, Mr. Speaker, because they know that as tuition increases and financial pressures are felt on the campus, tuition will continue to increase in the years to come.

My question to the minister: what does he have to say to the students who wonder, the students who wonder how this Sask Party government can have millions of dollars for more politicians but they insist on making students pay more, making education in the province less affordable, less accessible?

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is factually incorrect when he starts talking about what it's going to cost. It's not going to cost anything extra to have extra MLAs. It's going to ensure better representation.

Mr. Speaker, what we can say, Mr. Speaker, what we can say is we're going to ensure, we're going to ensure, Mr. Speaker, that we continue to make investments like the 3,000 per cent increase in student residence, Mr. Speaker. But we're also going to take the words of Richard Florizone, Mr. Speaker. U of S financial position is the result of a very strong support of the Government of Saskatchewan in recent years, support that has given us an envied position among our peers. Mr. Speaker, at the University of Saskatchewan, students can see the success of these investments.

Whether we're talking about new investments in residence, whether we're talking about making sure that we were able to complete a project started by the members opposite, the Western College of Veterinary Medicine that they simply put tarps on, Mr. Speaker, we continue to make investments — \$1.5 billion, Mr. Speaker — for the students on that college campus, Mr. Speaker. We know how significant that is for today and into the future.

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

Support for the Film Industry

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we know there are members in this House who believe the film

employment tax credit is a good thing. But interestingly enough, especially in light of this government's decision to axe the credit, they're not all on the opposition benches.

I'd like to quote from the June 2001 *Hansard* where the member from Wood River had this to say, "The tax credit, film tax credit has contributed greatly to the overall growth of the province. Not only from a cultural aspect but also in terms of overall economic growth." And he had this to say, "The Film Employment Tax Credit tell us this. You give a tax credit, you create more jobs, you get more young people working, and you get more economic spinoffs."

To the minister: does he agree with the member from Wood River, his colleague around the cabinet table?

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

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We certainly welcome the member's question. We need to begin by reading some of the facts into the record, Mr. Speaker. Most of the film employment tax credit is actually paid out to companies that don't even pay taxes in our province. In fact over 98 per cent of the funding is paid out as a direct grant and less than 2 per cent is paid out as an actual tax credit to companies that pay income tax in our province.

Here are the facts. We know from the last four years that we have facts for — 2006, '07, '08, and '09 — that in that period a total of \$45.3 million was paid out under the program. Of that, \$44.7 million was a direct grant. There was hardly anything for tax reduction at all. In fact the average income tax payable that was reduced is less on average than \$10,000 per year.

Mr. Speaker, our goal is a win-win program that supports the industry by reducing income taxes payable in our province.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's not just the member from Wood River and the Minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing who has spoken in favour of the film tax credit and the benefits to Saskatchewan when we provide incentives for businesses to work in our province. The current Minister of Social Services had this to say in the House in May 2001:

For proof, all we have to do is take a look at what happened to a small sector of the economy that's dealing with a film employment tax credit. We see more jobs, more young people, more economic spinoffs. It just doesn't get any plainer, Mr. Speaker.

Thousands of people from across the province of all political stripes would agree with the Minister of Social Services: it does not get any plainer. While in opposition, members of this current government spoke in favour of this tax credit and were in fact encouraging the government to create other tax incentives for businesses too.

To the minister: how is it that this government said one thing

while they were in opposition and are doing the exact opposite now?

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

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, here's what's actually on the table. The Premier suggested a real tax credit program that reduces the income taxes of Saskatchewan-based film companies. The Premier's also suggested turning over the sound stage facility so that it can be run by the film industry for the film industry. Mr. Speaker, the Premier has also suggested more research into digital production, which we know is the future not only of the film industry, but of all creative industries here in this province. We've heard the Premier's suggestions. We now await a response from the film industry with great interest.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Because after all, Mr. Speaker, we know the Premier knows best. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, not that long ago, there was even more support for the tax credit from members who now sit on the government benches. In April of 2001, the current Minister of Health was in favour of this tax credit. He had this to say:

... but in the long-term, we can see that we would attract more business, not just in the film industry — which this is targeted for which we [do] applaud, we agree with — but there's so many other areas that we could look at this for.

To the minister: when did the applause come to an end? When did this government decide the film industry was no longer worth it?

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

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We'll never have enough time to read contrary opinions, but we'll start and we'll do the best we can. There was a very enlightening interview on CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] radio, Thursday, March 29. The program was *Blue Sky*, with host Garth Materie. He was interviewing Professor Bob Tannenwald from Massachusetts who said, "I think film tax credits are highly cost-ineffective ways of creating economic development." He said, "There are much more cost-effective ways of creating jobs and income for Saskatchewan than film tax credits." He also went on to say, "Film tax credits rob Peter to pay Paul. They don't pay for themselves and the competitive aspect of each province offering film tax credits is irrational and self-destructive."

Mr. Speaker, we've got more to read here too.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cumberland.

Tourism Saskatchewan

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, last Monday Dick DeRyk, the

Chair of the committee that helped create Tourism Saskatchewan, spoke against the government's decision to remove Tourism Saskatchewan as an arm's-length agency.

Mr. DeRyk pointed to CEO [chief executive officer] Linda Haverstock's history as the Liberal leader and said the government decision is politically vindictive and poorly thought out. The minister responded by saying, no other province has a stand-alone tourism agency. My question to the minister: he is removing the film tax credit even though almost every other province has one. How can he stand with a straight face and say the reason for the decision is no other province has a stand-alone tourism agency?

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

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Mr. Speaker, we welcome the question and the opportunity to answer that particular question. We are following the lead of provinces in creating a Crown corporation for tourism because it is a recipe for success. We are not following their lead with respect to the film employment tax credit because it is a recipe for failure.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, the minister likes to reference to the 2009 review as evidence of his consultation and the reason for the decision to remove Tourism Saskatchewan as arm's-length agency. The minister is picking and choosing what he wants out of the report. On page 35 the review clearly states, "One of the key areas of agreement among all parties to this review is Tourism Saskatchewan should remain an arm's length organization from government."

My question to the minister: prior to the budget and the government's decision to remove Tourism Saskatchewan as an arm's-length agency, who did he consult with? Who told him they want government to take complete control of the tourism industry?

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

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, Mr. Speaker, I have to wonder if the members of the opposition have actually read the whole tourism review report. If they did, they would know that it calls for a single point of entry into government for the tourism industry. That's what a Crown corporation is going to do. If they had actually read the whole report, they'd know that it challenges our government to take more of a leadership role with respect to supporting the industry. That's also what the Crown corporation will do.

And, Mr. Speaker, if they'd read the whole report, certainly they would know that every other province has already brought support of its tourism industry back into government. Mr. Speaker, that's what the Crown corporation is all about. I suspect they take time to read the whole report because right now all they've got is, they're standing up there with their hair on fire saying, we're social democrats and we oppose the creation of a Crown corporation. And, Mr. Speaker, that's just not working.

[14:15]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, in light of all the concerns I have heard from members of the tourism industry, and I know the minister has also been receiving letters, emails, telephone calls, my question to the minister: will he pull the Bill and leave the Tourism Saskatchewan as an arm's-length agency?

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

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — It's close enough, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, we too have our testimonials. Here's one from Chris Brewer, president and CEO of the Saskatchewan Snowmobile Association, who writes:

I would like to pass along congratulations for the development of the new Crown corporation that will host Saskatchewan's tourism interests. This is a very positive move forward for Saskatchewan [he says] and it's been a long time coming. Keep up the good work [he advises]. We look forward in working with you and all your people in keeping Saskatchewan the best place to live and play.

And Greg Dionne, the Chair of the northern tourism Saskatchewan region says:

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

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Well, Mr. Speaker, that's fine and dandy, but I know for a fact Tourism Saskatchewan did out a survey. Over 600 people responded, members responded. Almost 70 per cent disagree with this government's decision to turn Tourism Saskatchewan into a Crown corporation. So again, I'll repeat the question. My question to the minister: will he pull the Bill and leave Tourism Saskatchewan as an arm's-length agency?

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

Hon. Mr. Hutchinson: — Mr. Speaker, before the election the NDP supported Crown corporations. Now that the election is over, things are obviously different. Now they're against Crown corporations and they're sounding the alarm, worried that we might actually create one. Mr. Speaker, there's only one reason they would oppose that, and that's because it's a Sask Party initiative.

Mr. Speaker, this is disrespectful of the industry and it's party politics at its lowest. As pointed out in the review, everybody else is going down this path. It's a recipe for success, and we're going there too.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 298 through 349.

The Speaker: — The Government Whip has tabled questions 298 to 349, right? Tabled. I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answer to question 350.

The Speaker: — Question 350 has been ordered. [Inaudible interjection] . . . I already said orders of the day. It's government orders.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 36

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

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again I'm very pleased and honoured to stand today in the Assembly to speak at length about the challenges with this proposed Bill.

And, Mr. Speaker, as we sit and spend the afternoon talking about the challenges on Bill 36, I think the people back home, I would certainly encourage them to do a number of things, as I did in my previous comments, is to start writing letters and sending emails and getting petitions going to do one thing that I think 99 per cent of the people of Saskatchewan want. And that is to have less politicians as being proposed by the Saskatchewan Party government.

Mr. Speaker, the amount of politicians we have in the Assembly is fine. We have 58. And what's happened now with this particular Bill is the Saskatchewan Party wants to increase the number of MLAs in this Assembly by three. And, Mr. Speaker, that's one of the reasons why, as an opposition, we're standing up today. We're standing up to tell the Sask Party government we don't need more MLAs at the cost of millions of dollars, not because you're simply cutting programs that are very essential to Saskatchewan. And what you're doing with those savings is you're hiring more politicians, Mr. Speaker, which I believe is not something that people of Saskatchewan want.

Last week, Mr. Speaker, when we had the conversation on this particular Bill, I asked a very simple, very humble question to the Saskatchewan Party government. And the Saskatchewan Party government, the challenge that they got from the opposition at the time was to have a public debate, Mr. Speaker, and then have a plebiscite, a public vote as to whether the

people of Saskatchewan want more politicians as opposed to the programs that were identified for cuts under the Sask Party government, Mr. Speaker.

And some of those cuts, Mr. Speaker, were very harmful and were very, they were poorly thought out. And Mr. Speaker, they're doing more damage in the long run to Saskatchewan than ever before. And I think that's really important that the people back home, whether they're listening to the Assembly in Regina or Saskatoon or Lloydminster or Buffalo or La Ronge, it's important for them to know that you can indeed be part of the process that changed the Sask Party government's mind about adding more politicians and at the same time cutting programs that are really important to the people overall, Mr. Speaker.

Now I was going to . . . Certainly I want to be able to get some of the quotes from the Children's Advocate because I need to explain, I think, for the sake of people that are out there that are not sure what this Bill is about, I want to be able to explain to them back home what exactly is happening. Mr. Speaker, what I want to point out is this Bill, Bill 36, that's what the Bill number is, and what is being proposed by the Saskatchewan Party.

The title of the Bill is to deal with the constituencies amendments Act, which means they're going to redraw all the constituencies in Saskatchewan, relook at how the constituencies are designed. And they look at a number of different factors. And what they want to do is go from there to see how many more MLAs that they need to add, Mr. Speaker. That's what the Bill is actually about.

And what the Saskatchewan Party want to do, Mr. Speaker, is they want to add three more politicians at a cost of millions of dollars to the people of Saskatchewan over time. And we don't think that's a very good idea. So that's what this Bill does. It requires the redrawing of boundaries and the constituency, and the net result is the Saskatchewan Party want to have three more MLAs, Mr. Speaker, added to this Assembly.

And quite frankly from my perspective, Mr. Speaker, not only is the manner in how they're redrawing the boundaries is of some concern, but the fact that they've eliminated children from their assessment to the process. They've cut programs and so on and so forth. And nowhere else have we heard throughout Saskatchewan, certainly from the opposition perspective, that people want more politicians. That's not exactly what we heard at all from any corridors, Mr. Speaker.

So that's what is happening with Bill 36, and I want to really begin to point out to the people back home that may not have heard the first address in which we spoke about why we don't need more politicians. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to rattle off some of those numbers that I rattle off time and time again because it's important that people know what is the reason for adding more politicians in Saskatchewan.

The argument that the Sask Party make is, we have greater population so we need more MLAs. The answer is not at all factual, Mr. Speaker, because they're gerrymandering the process, which is a serious, serious problem to do one or two things: (1) is to eliminate the counting of children when they do

these constituency boundaries; and (2) is they're cutting services, Mr. Speaker. They're cutting services, whether it's in Highways or health care or whether it's a film tax credit. They're cutting all these great programs and these great people for the simple reason and the simple excuse of adding more politicians, Mr. Speaker. And that's something that's really important that the people of northern Saskatchewan, of eastern, southern, and central Saskatchewan, and western Saskatchewan ought to know.

I think it's important that if we look at the Bill itself, Mr. Speaker, what typically happens is they will go through a census every four years or six years, I'm not sure of the exact time frame, and that census will determine what the different population numbers are throughout the region. And those census numbers could be skewed. They could be mixed up; they could be wrong at times. A good example of that is the northern town of La Ronge, that's a good example. My colleague was explaining to me that some of the conversations he's had is where they think there was some serious mistakes made in the census for that particular community and that I guess they're doing a recount now. And my colleague, the member from Cumberland, has been very, very instrumental in making sure we're aware of the issue, which is great for us to know.

And that's one of the things that's really important, is many times they do make mistakes in the census. And there's examples of the mistakes made in the census throughout the whole part of our province. So I think it's important that people know that after the census, whether there's mistakes made or not, that we have to go forward with those numbers unless there's a very strong appeal. And in the case of La Ronge, I guess, there is a new count coming in. The appeal has been successful. The member from Cumberland and I want to congratulate the mayor of La Ronge who's done a great job to make sure that this issue was raised with the appropriate people. And that's something that we need to highlight, that sometimes there are errors made in a number of areas when it comes to the census.

So when you look at how this particular government wants to redraw all the constituency boundaries, Mr. Speaker, they're clearly going to manipulate the process. They're going to manipulate the process to try and do a number of things, and you can see evidence of that right in the actual Bill itself, Mr. Speaker. And by manipulation I'm talking about the fact that when you usually do up a boundary, you include everybody — every man, woman, and child, every minority, every elder, every working parent, every elderly person. It doesn't matter where you're at in the world, that you should count.

But what happened was the Saskatchewan Party, in their effort to gerrymander the process, they are now going to exclude all the children under the age of 18, Mr. Speaker. So as they do this new boundary constituency assessment and they work through this Bill, typically every government includes everybody. The Saskatchewan Party is saying, no. If we include everybody, we might run into problems with our electoral plan here, so we need to manipulate it a bit further and we need to exclude young children under the age of 18. Then if we could get them off the way, if we could get these children off the way, then maybe we can again manipulate the process so we can fix up

this electoral boundaries to our liking. And not only will we do that, but in the process we will cut programs. We will cut services. And we'll do so at will. And, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what the problem is with this particular Bill.

Now I want to go back to the point that I made, Mr. Speaker, and this particular Bill. The amendment that we proposed on Bill No. 36, which is *An Act to amend The Constituency Boundaries Act, 1993*, because:

The Bill excludes, in determining the constituency boundaries, the counting of [all] 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, the points are very, very clear. They're very, very straightforward in the amendment. We're saying, how you're doing it is wrong. The people of Saskatchewan didn't ask you to add more politicians. They asked you to do a number of things. And those things were not to go to war with labour. Those things were not to go to war with the teachers. Those things were not to go to war with the film industry, those people that were working for years and years with the government, the highways workers, and so on and so forth. The people of Saskatchewan didn't ask this government to do that in the last election, didn't ask them to add more politicians, Mr. Speaker.

And that's exactly what they're trying to do with this Bill, at the same time excluding all the young people. And that is absolutely, totally unfair, Mr. Speaker, and people have to hear about this far and wide. And that's one of the reasons why I'm very pleased to stand up today to again petition the people of Saskatchewan, to appeal to the people of Saskatchewan to stand up and tell the Saskatchewan Party government that this Bill No. 36 is wrong. We never asked for that. We didn't want more politicians. And if we did have more politicians, we didn't want the process gerrymandered to try and benefit the Saskatchewan Party. And that's exactly what this Bill is going to try and do, Mr. Speaker.

[14:30]

So again I want to again make the reference that I did in some of my earlier statements about how the amendment that we propose would correct the injustice that is being proposed by the Saskatchewan Party government for their own political agenda, Mr. Speaker. And I look at the point and when people ask me, well how is this done in other jurisdictions? How is it done in Alberta? How is it done in Manitoba? How is it done in BC [British Columbia]? How is it done in Ontario? Like all the provinces that skirt our border, how do they do the constituency boundaries?

Well, Mr. Speaker, what we have to ask the question is that for every constituency boundary, how many people are in each of those boundaries, Mr. Speaker? And I think in Saskatchewan, it's roughly about 17,000. I'm not sure of the exact amount, but

this is of course going by memory. But I think it's about 17,000 in every boundary, where the people of Saskatchewan have 17,000 per area.

Now in Alberta I think it's 51,000. In Manitoba I think it's 21,000, if the number is correct. In Ontario it's 120,000 people per area, that that's how they do their count. So I think it's important that people know that out of all the provinces in Western Canada, Saskatchewan has the lowest amount of people per area, per constituency, which is at roughly 17,000.

Our neighbouring province of Manitoba which has a similar population, a very similar population, Mr. Speaker, they have the number of constituencies, people within those defined areas, roughly about 22,000. So we have 17; they have 21. I believe Alberta's got 51. I think BC's got something like 58; and Ontario, of course the granddaddy of them all, they have 120,000 constituents . . .

The Speaker: — I would like to caution the member on repeating himself. He has given those numbers in *Hansard* on page 938, 940, 988, and 989, and twice on 990. I think that the member has repeated those enough, and I would ask him to carry on his debate with new information and new debate rather than repeating himself.

Mr. Belanger: — Now, Mr. Speaker, these debates took over a period of a number of days. And, Mr. Speaker, based on some of the communication advice that I got, if you don't reflect the numbers at least 11, 12, 13, 14 times, people back home don't register those numbers. So I think it's important that we continue with those particular information about what areas and how many people per areas of our neighbouring province because this is a new debate, a new day, and there's obviously new audiences. And I think it's important . . .

The Speaker: — I caution the member not to debate the rulings of the Chair. This is one debate even though it's taken place over a number of days. The member may continue without repetition.

Mr. Belanger: — Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to again point out that one of the arguments that we had made over time here is that the fact that we want to make sure that the whole issue of fairness is something that we think about during the process of this particular debate. And I think we want to continue emphasizing the whole notion of the fairness, and to make sure that people out there know all the facts attached to this particular Bill. And we talked about the numbers of the different jurisdictions that have much, much more than we have in terms of the density of the constituents per area, and we can go into those numbers ad nauseam here because people have to know them. And I think, Mr. Speaker, that that information is certainly getting out there.

Now under this particular amendment that we talked about, Bill No. 36, *An Act to Amend the Constituencies Boundaries Act*, I want to talk about how this may impact a number of communities in my constituency. If you look at the number of communities I have, there's approximately 25 polling stations. Some of the communities have a couple of polling stations.

But in my particular region I've gone to, whether it's Garson

Lake or whether it's Descherm Lake or whether it's to Patuanak, Mr. Speaker, and all those trips that I take, and to all those communities that I visit and all the meetings that I attended — and I'm going to ask my colleagues as well — I don't think anywhere in those meetings that we have attended where people are saying, as our MLA we'd like you to go forward to Regina to argue for more MLAs. I've not heard that in any corridor that I have gone to or any home that I have visited or any public function that I've attended. And I would also suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the Saskatchewan Party members probably never got that as well.

And now the point that I would raise is that they speak about trying to do things in a manner in which the public may not be fully aware of what the issues are. And I don't think that's fair at all because had they ran on adding more MLAs and more politicians in the last election, Mr. Speaker, I think they would have got an earful, Mr. Speaker. No question about that in my mind.

So why are we doing it three months after the last, or five or six months after the last election, Mr. Speaker? It's because they're hoping that people forget. And that is not a fair assessment to make. And again as I've gone to my constituency — Beauval, Green Lake, Ile-a-la-Crosse, Buffalo Narrows — not once did I hear them say we want more MLAs. What we've been hearing them say, the people of northern Saskatchewan say is, we want adequate housing. We want training and employment for our young people. We want to have affordable medicines for the elderly people. Those are the real issues, Mr. Speaker. Those are the real issues that the people of the North are advocating for and asking for when I travel to their homes and to their communities. They're asking for decent, safe highways. They're asking for opportunity in their own lands. They're asking for respect for the fact that they have traditions and customs and they have lifestyles. And they have all these things that they're asking for and to be acknowledged for that.

And, Mr. Speaker, in all these conversations, in all these conversations I have not once heard as their MLA, can you go get more MLAs? Because, Mr. Speaker, that's not what the people of Saskatchewan want. They want programs. They want services, and they want them as quickly as possible, Mr. Speaker. And what they're seeing is the continual disregard and disrespect from the Saskatchewan Party on many fronts, and this is the latest attack on democracy, compliments of the Saskatchewan Party. And again that's an important message.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I, again, travel my area, I meet with many elders and many of the old people, many of the older people that talk to me about a bunch of issues, a bunch of issues that really have provided challenge for them overall in many ways. And, Mr. Speaker, and whether it's affordability, whether it's housing repair, whether it's health care, whether it's help in trying to make sure that they have opportunity for their grandchildren, or whether it's a way that means they can build up their community and build up their hope and build up the future. Mr. Speaker, I have great, great teachings from the elderly people. And they often talk about some of the challenges that they had as young people and now some of the challenges that they have today.

In all those discussions, whether I'm sitting there talking to an

elder in Patuanak, as I mentioned, or Green Lake, Mr. Speaker, it's all about having a decent amount and a healthy amount of acknowledgement of their issues. That's what they're talking about. And when I talk to them about these issues, Mr. Speaker, not once did I ever hear any of them say, let's have more politicians, Mr. Speaker, not once. Their issues are very, very direct. They're very basic, and they're very straightforward.

Now what this government has done, when we talk to the elders about the challenges that they face, is they increased the drug prescription plan. So now some of these elders are paying more for their drugs. And that is actually something that the elders don't appreciate and don't like. And secondly, the other point that they raised is that they're paying more for ambulance care. And that is all, that's all added onto the challenge they have now trying to make ends meet on a monthly basis, Mr. Speaker. When you sit down with an elder, given their fixed income, what's probably really important to a lot of the elders is making sure that they have heat for their home, that they pay their rent, that they have power in their home, that they have food in their home, Mr. Speaker. And sometimes, the last thing that the elders look at, Mr. Speaker, is even the whole notion of getting their regular medicines. There's many times I think a lot of elders cannot afford some of the medicines that they need. And a lot of times they simply don't buy those medicine, and they take great risks with their health and therefore their lives.

And I wanted to make sure that we tell . . . that that message gets to the Saskatchewan Party, that it wasn't about more MLAs as proposed in Bill 36. What they're asking for is fairness. What they're asking for is some help. What they're asking for is to make life as they age a lot better, a lot easier, and to at least in their old age grant them the sense of peace and grant them a bit of serenity in terms of knowing that the future is bright for Saskatchewan and that that new Saskatchewan includes them, Mr. Speaker. And that's something that obviously is not part and parcel of the Sask Party's thinking.

So, Mr. Speaker, when I talk to the elders, it's these issues that they make reference to. These are the points that they're bringing forward to me as their MLA. And not once have I ever heard an elder saying, oh, by the way, on your way to Regina, can you try and get some way to get us more politicians. Not once did anybody ever say that in any of the travels that I've undertaken as an MLA. And, Mr. Speaker, I would ask my colleague members . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . My colleagues in the Assembly are saying, absolutely not, that nobody's ever asked for that. And I can almost guarantee you, Mr. Speaker . . . And I dare any one of the Sask Party MLAs to get up and stand up and say, yes, somebody did ask me to have more MLAs. And, Mr. Speaker, it's very quiet over there because the fact of the matter is nobody wanted this. Absolutely nobody wanted more politicians, and that's what the Sask Party is trying to do with this particular Bill, Mr. Speaker.

Now I will point out that we need to meet with a number of different groups and organizations, and the elders being one of them. I want to highlight what their concerns are. Their concerns are not what's part of Bill 36. Now let's go to the young kids, Mr. Speaker, the young children that this Bill excludes. And like I mentioned at the outset, I've got many, many . . . I'm very lucky in a sense of having some very healthy grandchildren. And I've got some grandnieces and

grandnephews, Mr. Speaker. In our family, the future looks bright based on the fact that these young children are really, really trying hard in school. They're well-disciplined. And of course they hold the future for certainly my family, and I have great confidence in that future because of them.

Now how does this affect them overall? Well when you come to any community in northern Saskatchewan or any community as a result of this Bill, automatically every grandchild, every great-grandchild, every child that's out there under the age of 18 are no longer counted in the Sask Party world. Based on this particular Bill, every grandchild, great-grandchild, and child that's under the age of 18 are no longer counted under this Bill, Mr. Speaker, and that's a shame. That is an absolute shame because people out there have great hope and pride for and to their children.

And now we see with this particular Bill the Sask Party saying, based on our political agenda, based on the fact that we need to get this thing done, we are not going to count the children because that'll skew our plans up overall, and thus we will not be able to achieve the creation of three new positions which require three new constituencies and three more MLAs. That's exactly what is happening here.

So the people out there that are listening, that are paying attention to the Assembly on this fine afternoon, Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is the Saskatchewan Party has said plainly, as a result of this Bill, when we do our assessment on each constituencies, we're not going to count any children or anybody under the age of 18. And that's full stop, period. That's what is being proposed in this Bill.

Contrary to what was done before, Mr. Speaker, when you done a electoral boundaries, what you actually done, every government done, is they counted all the people within that area. They made sure everybody counted, Mr. Speaker. Now what happens obviously if you look at that particular scenario, the Saskatchewan Party don't want to do that. Why? Because it really messes up their plans to gerrymander this constituency boundaries Bill to try and position themselves to be the benefactor of having more MLAs. That's what they're trying to do, Mr. Speaker. And that's why from our perspective as an opposition MLA and certainly as an opposition caucus we're saying absolutely not.

We don't want to see Bill 36 come through. We don't think it's a great idea. Adding more MLAs is not what the people of Saskatchewan want. And, Mr. Speaker, I don't know how much louder and how many more times you've got to say it in this Assembly for the Sask Party to get the message. And I think they are getting the message from a lot of their people because on this side we tell them ad nauseum that people in the province didn't ask you to do this. It wasn't anywhere part of your election platform. It wasn't discussed during the campaigns. It wasn't even spoken about. Five months after the election, six months later, all of a sudden, bang, this Bill comes out of nowhere.

And all of a sudden we're starting to see that there was a ulterior plan, that there was a motive that they had in their plan all this time to really begin to change how the democratic process works in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And I say to them

as a collective, shame on all of you because that's not what this is about. You're supposed to be fair and open and honest with the people of Saskatchewan, and this Bill is contrary to all those practices. They know it. We know it. And the vast majority of people in Saskatchewan are starting to realize, Mr. Speaker, that they've been had as a result of some of the activities attached to this Bill, Bill 36.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out as well, you look at some of these points, look at some of these points, and I talk about the children again. I spoke about the elders. I'm going to speak about the children again at greater lengths, Mr. Speaker, at greater lengths.

[14:45]

You know I listened to the Minister of Justice talk about how could I look my constituents in the eye when we have more in this constituency than that constituency, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, look them in the eye and say, did you guys want more politicians? Same principle applies. And look them in the eye when you say, do you want your children counted in the future of Saskatchewan? Look them in eye and say, oh, we didn't propose this because it was a new thought. Absolutely not, Mr. Speaker.

This has been on the books for a number of years with the Sask Party. It's all been planned by the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker, and this was their most opportune time, following an election where they hope nobody make any deal about this, where there's come and go and it'd be pretty much done. Mr. Speaker, that's not what they anticipated, was to have the opposition grab this particular Bill and talk to the people of Saskatchewan as we are doing so today.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would point out to the many families that are out there, and you're starting to see a disjointed, confusing message from the Saskatchewan Party because you don't know what exactly is meant by the Bill, by this Bill, where it excludes all your children and grandchildren that are under the age of 18. And you begin to ask the questions, well what happens if they turn 18 next year? Well they don't count next year. What happens if we again go and find out that we've actually had some bad information as sometimes Census Canada makes some very, very big errors in how they count people. Well that doesn't matter after the fact, Mr. Speaker.

What they're trying to do is get this Bill through this session so the people in the next two or three years will forget about this Bill, will forget who bought them more politicians and less programs and less workers, Mr. Speaker. But our job as an opposition is to make sure that people never forget. That our job every day and every opportunity is to get up here and tell people, don't forget that this is how you were treated in 2007 or 2012 and the fact that after the election of 2011, that these guys, the Saskatchewan Party brought in this Bill that really it's something, the people of Saskatchewan, that nobody, nobody wanted at all. The people of Saskatchewan did not want this Bill.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think what's important is that the amendment that we propose, and this is really important that people out there listen to the amendment to their Bill that the province put

forward. And the amendment is, this amendment that we propose reads as follows 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

That 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.”

That’s what our motion is on the Table as we speak, Mr. Speaker.

And we’re asking all the people of Saskatchewan to take notice of this Bill, take notice of Bill 36 where the Saskatchewan Party is trying to add three more politicians into the mix. And, Mr. Speaker, that’s not so bad if you were to do it properly, fairly, and to make sure that there was some good reference to other jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker, that I spoke about earlier. And what we’re finding out, Mr. Speaker, is that they didn’t do any of that.

And there is nothing here in this Bill that is about fairness and is about doing the right thing. It is all about a political process and manipulation that is worse, Mr. Speaker. That’s what this is about. This is about manipulation, and as I mentioned in previous points, that this an affront to democracy as a whole. And, Mr. Speaker, people have to know about that. People throughout the province have to know.

Now as I mentioned at the outset, the young children. And again I go to a number of communities. And I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, that during my travels, one of the great values of being an MLA is you get to meet many people. You get to meet many families. You go to many functions, and you try and meet them in different aspects of their life, Mr. Speaker. And as I travelled . . . And one of the examples I want to make about the value of the young people in northern Saskatchewan and why they should be counted in this Bill is because in northern Saskatchewan, there are so many tremendously gifted and solid young people, Mr. Speaker. It’s amazing the amount of young people we have coming out of the North. And the fact that these gifted young people are going to be building the future of our area and our province, it gives me great confidence in their future, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to talk about a group of young kids that I met in Buffalo Narrows. I took a tour of the school one day, and I met a bunch of young kids that were grade 8, grade 9 kids. And we spoke to them about a number of things, Mr. Speaker. And these are the young, bright minds of the future. And as I sat in that room and I listened to these young grade 8 and 9 kids, you know, they spoke about a number of things that were really, really important to them. And the environment was important for them. Training was important for them. The future of

Buffalo Narrows was important for them. And, Mr. Speaker, we sat there for almost two hours with these students, and they had a wide variety of concerns. And the insight that these young kids had at Twin Lakes High School was amazing, Mr. Speaker.

One of the things that they spoke about that I thought was really important is the whole future of politics. You know, they asked me my history, how I got into it, where I was from, what helped me get to, you know, to become a MLA. And I spoke about education to them, the value of education, the value of the teachers at Twin Lakes School, the values of the board that governs the school, the value of constantly pushing themselves, of striving to be really good, whether it’s in sport or academics or whether it’s in community building. I told them it’s all about making sure that the future looks bright for not just yourself and your family but your community and your region.

And we had those good conversations back and forth. And what kept on, crept into my mind, Mr. Speaker, when I talk about this particular Bill, is all those young, bright minds at that meeting and in that forum, all those young kids under the age of 18 were now excluded from this electoral process as a result of Bill 36 that was presented to this Assembly by the Saskatchewan Party government, Mr. Speaker. And to me I think that would be a great shame. And I’m not sure, I’m not sure how I go back to them, Mr. Speaker, and engage that same young group again, knowing that this Bill is going to exclude them in any kind of political process to determine the constituency boundaries. And, Mr. Speaker, that’s important that people out there know that that’s an absolute crying shame when that happens in this day and age.

So I want to point out, when we sat and talked to those young people, what was some of the other issues that they brought forward, Mr. Speaker. And I’m simply, I’m simply advocating on their behalf when they talk about things like the future of their community. They also brought forward the whole issue of the environment, that they were concerned about the quality of lakes. They’re concerned about what is happening in their area. They’re talking about the commercial fishing industry. They’re talking about the construction industry, the mining industry.

And these young, inquisitive minds, you know, these grade 7 and 8, I can tell you right now, Mr. Speaker, that some of the thoughts and some of the questions and the points that they raised during this forum was absolutely beautiful. And the reason why it was beautiful, Mr. Speaker, is because they had a good grasp of what’s going on. These young kids in grade 8 and 9 at the Twin Lakes School in Buffalo Narrows, they had a good grasp of what’s going on.

They understood the fact that there’s this huge activity in the oil and gas in Fort Mac [Fort McMurray], they call it. And they also knew that some of the activity around that area was also having an impact on the environment. And they asked questions about that. How much impact is the Fort McMurray oil sands having in our region? Because it’s only about 70 or 80 miles from here. And certainly they had those discussions. And they wanted to bring a message I think forward, and I think they’re going to continue working on that message is, how do we begin to mitigate those damages to our environment overall as a result of all the tar sands activity in Alberta?

Now the young people there want to see some action on that front, Mr. Speaker, and that's what I mean when I was actually . . . I was astounded by the depth in which they were talking about this issue, and that's important that the people of this Assembly, the people of Saskatchewan know that these young kids, whether they're in your school or whether they're in my school or whether they're in your neighbouring community school or whether they're in preschool, Mr. Speaker, they ought to count when you determine the future of Saskatchewan, given the fact that they're bright, articulate, they're intelligent, and they're committed to our province, Mr. Speaker.

Now what this Bill does, what this Bill does when you start looking at the constituency boundaries and the design of those boundaries, they're not taking into account that grade 8 or that grade 9 class in Twin Lakes School at Buffalo Narrows. They no longer count when you're looking at designing a constituency boundary because the Saskatchewan Party said we're going to not do that any more. We're only going to involve those people of the age of 18 and older. Anybody under the voting age is not included in our Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that is a crying shame. That is a crying shame because it's not right. It is not the right thing to do. Why are we doing it in that fashion, Mr. Speaker? I just don't understand. I have no idea. I cannot grasp why the Saskatchewan Party would exclude all these young, bright, articulate people because they're not the age of 18. Why would they do that, Mr. Speaker? That's the biggest question that I have of this Sask Party government as a result of this Bill. Why are you excluding the young people when you're doing this kind of work? Why? That's the biggest question I think overall, Mr. Speaker. And I think quite frankly that question is going to be answered over time.

Now what I'm going to tell the people of Saskatchewan is that, as you look at those young kids and you talk to them, and there's many great grandparents and great parents and they really educate their children. They talk to them about the future. They position them well. They've got some good, strong support, and they have great love and they have great hope for their children. Everybody has that, Mr. Speaker. Now what happens if some child gets up and says to you, well I'd like to get involved in this process, but I can't because I'm now under the age of 18. Don't I count? Don't I count? And, Mr. Speaker, based on this Bill, they don't count. Based on the Saskatchewan Party's Bill 36 to redraw the constituency boundaries, they don't count.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to ask a number of people and organizations that might be paying attention to this Assembly this afternoon, whether it's a school group or whether it's a bunch of students or whether it is a bunch of professional people or seniors, Mr. Speaker, why don't we start a movement? Why don't we start a process — why don't I count? A process where we would phrase a movement of some sort saying, why don't I count, so we're able to defend our young kids, Mr. Speaker, our grandkids. When we look at the political process and the future of Saskatchewan, I would challenge people out in every part of this province to stand up and begin a movement, why don't I count? Because that's the most important thing, Mr. Speaker.

That's what this Bill does. It takes away the recognition of our young people and of our youth and of our children and of our grandchildren when we determine the political future of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And they have said, the Saskatchewan Party has said to these young people, you don't count on how we do this. We are not including anybody under the age of 18, and that's it, Mr. Speaker. And that's kind of a shame, as I mentioned at the outset. All these young people that we speak to, a lot of young people, it's discouraging to hear when you look them in the face and say, well you don't count because this Bill excludes you.

Now I would challenge every single member of the Sask Party caucus over there is to talk to these young people and explain to them why they don't count in the assessment. Now the minister obviously talked about looking his constituents in the eye and saying, well I got more constituents here; how could I look them in the eye? That was his message. Well our immediate response was, how could he look them in the eye and saying, well the last election I didn't ask for more MLAs and now I am. And how could you look at the young children in every riding in the eye saying, well you don't count. Why you don't count? Because we have an agenda and we're going to fulfill that agenda, and that agenda requires that we don't count you. But we're going to simply make the motion, and we'll talk to you later about how you could count. But that comes later.

And, Mr. Speaker, that is not fair to a lot of young people and young families out there in Saskatchewan. It's an absolute shame, Mr. Speaker, that this Bill is still being proposed by that government, Mr. Speaker.

I would point out, Mr. Speaker, that as again going back to the reference of these young children, and as you watch them begin to get involved with the debate around the room, it was really nice to see that they were having their points and their counterpoints. And they spoke about a lot of things. But paramount to I think the feeling in the room, I really wanted to make them feel that their issues and their points and the points and the concerns they were raising did matter. It did count, Mr. Speaker.

And absolutely, I still absolutely believe that to this day that all the points that they raised, their issues were important to me. Because as they grow older, they'll certainly have more influence on our lives. Because as adults right now, you know, we're going to count on them to be the next health care worker. We're going to be counting on them to be the next politician or be the next teacher, and the list goes on. And these young people are there, and we're trying to build up our future through them. We're trying to make our future strong through them. So why would we exclude them? Why? Why would we exclude them? That's the biggest fundamental question — why?

So I'm going back to my point. I would really encourage classes or people out there that may be listening to begin a campaign of why don't we count, a campaign that you'd have a petition. You'd have presentations in front of the Assembly. You would have videos. You would do the Internet thing. Like there's all kinds of opportunities, very cost-effective ways in which you can begin to mount a campaign on why don't I count.

[15:00]

And that's the important thing, I would say. I would share it with the young people that are out there or to the parents that feel really strongly about this. I would say to them not to be used or manipulated in this process as dictated by Bill 36 by allowing your children to not be counted. I would say to them: stand up; get those young people organized; get them motivated. If they want to get your help, then great. If they want to do that on their own, that's even greater. Get them involved because this is not fair to the democracy of Saskatchewan, but more so it is fundamentally not fair to those young people under the age of 18 whom this Sask Party government is saying doesn't count when we redraw our constituency boundaries, a practice that was done previously where everyone counted and everyone was included, Mr. Speaker. So that's one of the things that I think is important when we talk about our amendment. The fact is that it is the number one point we raise: why are the young people excluded from what we're trying to do today, Mr. Speaker?

Now, Mr. Speaker, I look at some of the other points that a few of my colleagues made in their presentation. And I think it's important, as we heard from members from the city here, from Saskatoon. We've heard people from La Ronge. And we also hear, we know members from the other areas of the province as well, the people in general, they don't want to see more politicians. I think that message is getting through. And I think there's going to be more and more people that are going to bring this issue forward. And as much as the Sask Party members want to deny that it's not an issue, Mr. Speaker, they know it's an issue, and the people of Saskatchewan know it's an issue.

The media is starting to pick up the information that this is not necessarily a smart thing to do at all. In fact I wouldn't mind getting that quote from one of the papers where they characterized the motion to have three more MLAs, and I think the reference was the silliest idea ever, and it may even be stronger language. I think the language that the media used in reference to this Bill, Bill 36, to add three more MLAs, and I'm quoting here, Mr. Speaker, and I do believe my quote is right, but the media referred to this as the stupidest thing that the Saskatchewan Party's done. And those are quotes right from the media, Mr. Speaker, because again I think they realize and the people of Saskatchewan realize that this is not what they ran on. This is not what this is about. This is kind of an odd thing to come out of nowhere.

But, Mr. Speaker, in the opposition, we don't think it's an odd thing that came out of nowhere. We think this is part of a deep plan that the Saskatchewan Party has to manipulate and gerrymander that process to their benefit, pure and simple, Mr. Speaker, and straightforward and cut, as I've presented.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am going to ask the question about . . . And this where the numbers again, I go back to the numbers. It doesn't make any sense that we have those kind of numbers in other jurisdictions and yet we're trying to argue that we need more here. We have the lowest number of constituents now, Mr. Speaker, compared to all our Western Canadian provinces and yet, and yet if you look at the notion that these guys are saying we need more, we can't, we just can't see the logic. We just

can't see the logic at all, Mr. Speaker. And that's why it's important that we tell people out there, we need to have you engaged.

So again this whole notion of why we need more is a big question mark. And how we're going to determine those boundaries, well we're going to exclude the young people. Another question mark. Where does this thing come from? Like who proposes? Another question mark. Why didn't you talk about this before the election? Another question mark. Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan have these question marks all over this Bill. And those questions are fairly, fairly straightforward. Where in God's green earth did any of the Saskatchewan Party candidates during the last election tell people, we are going to add more MLAs? And I can't find any evidence of them saying that anywhere, Mr. Speaker. Not one person.

And that's what's important, Mr. Speaker, is that they don't want to have a, as I challenge each and every one of them, to have a public debate, Mr. Speaker, and to also have a plebiscite, a binding plebiscite on this matter. And you know, as I mentioned in some of the earlier points there was absolute silence from the government benches. Nobody has mentioned a peep once that challenge was out there, Mr. Speaker, because they know deep down that when you exclude children from the process and you try and manipulate the process to your advantage, then you're not going to be too loud and proud about that, Mr. Speaker. So I want to again point out that it is quite amazing that, that you look at some of these points that they're raising and it doesn't make any sense at all.

And one of the points that was actually pretty funny back home, and I know a few people watching the proceedings, when I make reference to the fact that this government made comments about how PEI [Prince Edward Island] does this. Prince Edward Island — it's the smallest, the smallest province in the country. Well, Mr. Speaker, they looked far and wide to find some other province that's done this and how they're doing it. And they didn't talk about Manitoba. They didn't talk about Ontario. They didn't talk about Alberta, didn't talk about the territories. Mr. Speaker, they said, well down in PEI, way down east in PEI, that's how they do it. That's how they do it in PEI. So what Saskatchewan is going to now, now going to copy exactly what PEI does for their election.

And that's how silly this whole motion is, Mr. Speaker, and how silly this whole Bill is. Because quite frankly, you look at this, and they're going down to Prince Edward Island now to get leadership on how to rig elections, Mr. Speaker. And that is an absolute shame. That's an absolute shame. It's almost . . . It's a joke as far as I'm concerned when you do that kind of activity to try and justify cropping up a Bill such as Bill 36, Mr. Speaker.

There is no question in my mind that you look at the amount of people that are being excluded and it's not very fair at all. Because you look at, I think it's a quarter of a million, almost 25 per cent of our provincial population are people under the age of 18 years of age. Those 25 per cent of the people that are excluded under the age of 18, Mr. Speaker, I would ask them now, in a very public way, I would ask them to get organized. And whether you want to name it why don't we count campaign

or some other campaign, get it going. Because you have so much opportunities through a letter writing campaign, through petitions, through social media, through school group or organization, through the local council, the mayors, and certainly through the school divisions. Get involved and ask them why don't we count in this whole process?

Because it's important that the people of Saskatchewan send this government a message. We elected you to do certain things. You're doing things contrary to that. And one of the biggest things and the biggest evidence of how we're doing things contrary to that is Bill No. 36. So I would ask all the schools and any groups and organizations that are out there, is to get a campaign going. Get a campaign going to tell this government that you don't support Bill 36. And furthermore that if they insist on moving forward with Bill 36 that we ought to have a public vote, a plebiscite on this matter, and make it a very open public debate. Let's hear all the arguments. Let's sit down and hear all the arguments as to why this thing is important to the Saskatchewan Party and go from there, Mr. Speaker.

And again we hear a lot of mute silence across the way, Mr. Speaker, because that's something that they don't want to do, is go back to the people to ask them if they want more MLAs. It's the people of Saskatchewan that say, absolutely not. The people of Saskatchewan say, no way, Saskatchewan Party, do we need more MLAs. We reject that idea, and we don't want them. And that's exactly what the people of Saskatchewan would say, Mr. Speaker, if they had the opportunity, if they have the opportunity to a public vote on this Bill, Bill 36.

So come on, accept the challenge to have a public vote on this, and let the people of Saskatchewan decide. And if the people of Saskatchewan decide to have that option, well it's their choice. And we would obviously sit here and we would support that choice, Mr. Speaker. But give them the opportunity to decide if they want this Bill done or not, Mr. Speaker. They simply won't afford that opportunity to the people of Saskatchewan that want to stand up and say, no to more politicians. They want to say, yes, include our young kids, and above all else don't use millions of dollars for politicians at the expense of some very essential programs, Mr. Speaker, such as support for medicines for seniors, such as a film tax credit and such as making sure that the kids have decent services in school and certainly have the protection to be a child in this great province of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I just want to point out that there was . . . If you look at some of the arguments that the Saskatchewan Party have made — and this is what they're telling a lot of people too, and I understand there was a few interviews that were given by a few of the MLAs on the Saskatchewan Party side — and when they're asked about the specific question, some of the backbenchers were asked specifically about this question, Mr. Speaker. We've seen a few of their videos and a few of their interviews. And right on cue, Mr. Speaker, every single one of those, I think three or four backbenchers that were making comments, right on cue they grabbed their song sheet. And they said, oh, we have a balanced budget. That's what they said back in response, you know, to this question.

And people everywhere, you kind of looked at each other and said, that wasn't the question. The question is, why are you

putting this Bill through to add more politicians? Again, you go back to the song sheet: oh we've got a balanced budget. Well, Mr. Speaker, you know that's an absolute . . . For brand-new MLAs to do that, to not have good thoughtful responses to really hard-hitting questions, Mr. Speaker, this shows the exact amount of thought that was put into this Bill by the Saskatchewan Party, which was minimal. Their political agenda was what was the objective. And quite frankly I think overall that communication even with their own backbench was minimal at best, Mr. Speaker. But now they've got to sing from the same song sheet, and let me tell you that tune that they're singing is not something that the people of Saskatchewan want to hear too often for too long.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would point out that in Quebec, in Quebec they have a population of 7.9 million people, almost 8 million people. And they have 125 members in their National Assembly. Of course what's important is that I talked about Alberta's numbers. I talked about Manitoba's numbers, BC's numbers, but I haven't spoken about Quebec's numbers, Mr. Speaker, and I think that's really important. They have 125 members of their Assembly, which they call the National Assembly. They have 63,800 constituents for every constituency represented in the National Assembly. Mr. Speaker, if you do that 63,000, that's three and a half times more constituents that they have in Quebec than what we have in the province now. So if you look at Saskatchewan compared to Quebec, they have three and a half times more people in their constituencies than we have in ours.

So now we're trying to figure out, well if they have that problem in a challenging Quebec, why aren't they asking for more seats, Mr. Speaker, there? And not one single MLA in Quebec or any member of the National Assembly is asking for more MLAs or more of their kind in the National Assembly. They're not asking for more politicians there, Mr. Speaker. So why is Saskatchewan doing that? Three and half times more people per riding in this area than we have, and not one of them in the National Assembly are asking for more politicians, Mr. Speaker. And that's our whole point when you look at Quebec.

Now I go back to the point that if you exclude the young people, that's something that needs to be addressed. And I laid out the challenge here that's quite clear and quite direct. I spoke about the value of our young kids, and I made particular reference to the school in Buffalo Narrows, the Twin Lakes School. And when I sat with those grade 8 and 9 students, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that they want to be actively involved in politics. They want to be able to be counted, and they have great aspirations for the region, for their families, and for their future. So why aren't they included? Why aren't they being counted in this particular Bill? They have absolutely no idea, Mr. Speaker.

Now I'm going to go back. I'm going to be visiting these same kids, and I'm going to tell them exactly what the problem is here. That's because we have not had, we have not had the opportunity to hear what they say that they're not being counted nor they're being assessed when they do the provincial constituency boundaries. And that's something that I think really has to happen, Mr. Speaker. It is clearly what has been taken into account is you've got to figure out a way how you can engage young people, not exclude them.

Now, Mr. Speaker, on the Aboriginal communities per se, both the Métis communities and especially the First Nations communities where this has the greatest impact, I would suggest that the population of young people in the Aboriginal community is greater, much greater than that of the non-Aboriginal community. And I would hazard a guess, Mr. Speaker, anywhere from 65, up to 65 per cent of some of these reserves, First Nations lands and the Métis communities, the huge amount of these communities, whether it's inner city or whether it's on a reserve itself consist of young people, very young people. And, Mr. Speaker, this has a more profound effect and impact on them than any other group, I would suggest. Not trying to diminish the other groups, but because of the population and the density of young people, of how they're being excluded, Mr. Speaker. And that's exactly what I think the Saskatchewan Party want to do. They want to exclude that density of young people that are in the First Nations land so that they don't count in the future when they do these constituencies. That's the objective, Mr. Speaker.

[15:15]

Now, Mr. Speaker, if you look at some of the First Nations that dot our province, and again, there's been a lot of MLAs that have visited a lot of the First Nations communities and the Métis communities in time, and I would ask anyone of the Sask Party MLAs, did they have those conversations? I would challenge any one of them today to stand up and say, yes, during the election somebody said to me, we want more MLAs. And, Mr. Speaker, there's not a peep from across the way because not one of them were told that they wanted more MLAs. And that's what they refuse to acknowledge, and that's what they refuse to address as a result of this particular Bill, Mr. Speaker.

Now I would go back to the whole point, and obviously when you look at the population stats from all the other different areas, it's something that people out there in Saskatchewan are beginning to know. They're beginning to know the numbers of Alberta. They're beginning to know the numbers of Manitoba. And now they know the numbers in Quebec. They know the numbers in BC, and of course in Ontario. And so they're saying, well if that's the case, why is the Saskatchewan Party advocating for more MLAs? Well that's the big question we have. Why is the Saskatchewan Party advocating and promoting more MLAs in the province in a time when they talk about austerity in their budget, Mr. Speaker, in a time when they cut programs that are essential to the future of Saskatchewan, at a time to go to war with working people? Why all of a sudden are they trying to add more politicians instead? It just doesn't make any sense in any way, shape, or form, Mr. Speaker. And that is something that people have to, have to certainly address.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I spoke about it very earlier, when you look at some of the young people that are being excluded. I'm assuming that the commission that will be established as a result of this Bill will begin their work, in probably the next three to six months we'll have some idea what's going on in terms of what they're proposing. And what will happen now again when they do that work, the Bill is fairly clear that anybody under 18 will not be included in the assessment of these constituencies. So therefore, you know, there's some parameters that this new commission has to work under, and we

are certainly going to argue and look very carefully as to how they deal with the commission members.

But I want to point out that you can find some really good commission members, but if they have the process spelled out to them, they have the parameters of what they're allowed to do and, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that sometimes the confined space in which this commission can move in is going to be so problematic overall that what'll simply happen is that at the end of the day the Sask Party will get their wish as to how they want to gerrymander the constituency boundaries and therefore try and benefit from that process. And they will have that set up through the Bill and it will be no fault of the commission. It'll be no fault of the commission, Mr. Speaker. That's exactly what was going on, Mr. Speaker.

And it's kind of a silly thing to do when you look at that overall because it doesn't make any sense at all, doesn't make any sense at all unless you buy the argument from the opposition that it's all about a political agenda. It's all about a set-up; it's all about manoeuvring their political agenda to benefit them, Mr. Speaker. And that's the shameful part is they try and deny it. And as much as they start denying it, Mr. Speaker, it's no question in our mind, no question in my mind in particular that this is obviously a ploy on their part to get political and to certainly set themselves up in the future.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to go to the Children's Advocate, if I can. The whole process of . . . As a result of this Bill, there is almost a quarter of our population that are going to be excluded from this government's Bill to determine the constituency boundaries — 235,000 I believe. And, Mr. Speaker, that's an absolute shame.

Now the Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children, I want to quote that today for the people that are listening and watching and the kids that are out there — the grade 8 and 9 kids that I spoke to at Twin Lakes, the grandchildren that are out there, and my grandchildren. I spoke about them last week. Now the Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children says Bill 36, this Bill is a challenge to the rights of children, something the organization of the Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children has worked hard to protect. So the Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children don't agree with this Bill at all, that they're saying that this is challenging the rights of children. And, Mr. Speaker, I don't know how much more blunt and straightforward that that organization could become, but they've said it and they've said it quite clearly.

The Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children is a network of Canadian organizations and individuals who promote the rights of children. Its purpose is to exchange information, provide public education materials about the rights of children, about the rights of our children and our grandchildren. On November 1st, 2011 the Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children realized a report titled *Right in Principle, Right in Practice*. Now, Mr. Speaker, "*Right in Principle, Right in Practice* assesses how well Canada [as a country] achieves the goal of creating a society where every child can realize their full potential."

And I want to be able to read that again. They commissioned a study and the report that's called *Right in Principle, Right in*

Practice. That's what it's called. And what this report does, "*Right in Principle, Right in Practice*, [it] assesses how well Canada achieves the goal of creating a society where every child can realize their full potential." And, Mr. Speaker, those are really good statements, solid, strong statements when we talk that the right of every child to realize their full potential. One of the key points or subcategories of the report is, every child counts.

Well not with Bill 36, Mr. Speaker. Not with this Bill and the Saskatchewan Party government's decision to exclude children under the age of 18 in the electoral boundary count, Mr. Speaker. And there's no question in our minds when we argue here in the Assembly as politicians that we have our job to do, and that is to contest what we think is an unfair practice of the Saskatchewan Party and to try and hold them to account.

Now these other groups and organizations that watch the Assembly and see what's going on, like the Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children, they feel that this Bill 36 is a challenge to the rights of children. And, Mr. Speaker, it is amazing that these organizations get involved with that kind of activity to the extent they have been, and I commend them for that. I commend them for monitoring and for watching what happens in this Assembly and all the other Assemblies when the rights of the children are being compromised in some way, shape, or form for some nefarious objective. And, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that objective is more political in nature, and, Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children are not happy that this has been done.

Now folks out there need to know that the Coalition for the Rights of Children is a network of Canadian organizations and individuals who promote the rights of children. Now, Mr. Speaker, if every child is going to reach their full potential, they also have to be involved in their community. That we have been talking about. And part of being involved in their community is being involved in the electoral process, and it's knowing that they count. Now the Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children understand that, that the children have rights. They need to be recognized. They need to be respected. They need to be nurtured. They need to be allowed to grow. They need that freedom, Mr. Speaker. They need to be able to spread their wings. There's no question about that. That's what this is all about.

And the Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children, well they obviously are not a political organization as well. Their primary focus is to look at, how can I make that particular area of this world better for children? And it's a shame that the Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children has to pay attention to Saskatchewan in this day and age. It's an absolute shame. And what drew them to Saskatchewan to make an assessment on whether this is a good deal or not was Bill 36, Bill 36, an Act in which this Sask Party government has excluded every child under the age of 18 when they do the electoral boundaries. And, Mr. Speaker, that was not spoken about during the election.

Now what would have been really nice, Mr. Speaker, is that during the election, if any of the Sask Party MLAs were to go to the doorstep and say, hi, I'm thinking of adding a few more MLAs, but in order for us to do this, we have to exclude all the

children in the house and exclude your grandchildren. And we're doing this because PEI is doing it. You know, this is how PEI is doing it. You know, imagine how many doors would be slammed in their faces, Mr. Speaker, if that's what they approached the people with. And the amazing thing is, Mr. Speaker, that's what this Bill does. That's what this Bill does.

So it would be nice if we could have the opportunity to tell the people of Saskatchewan that's exactly what the Bill is doing. So I want to reiterate, and I wonder how many people would say what a great idea it is to add more MLAs. And had the Sask Party done that, Mr. Speaker, during the election, then I think there would have been a whole different story today, Mr. Speaker. No question about that, that they hid this from the people of Saskatchewan. They had this thing thought out long ago, Mr. Speaker. They had this thing out long ago.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children, as I mentioned, is a network of Canadian organizations and individuals who promote the rights of children. And the purpose that they have is to exchange information, provide public education materials about those rights, and that there is no question that being involved in the electoral process is something that the kids would like to do. I think they have a genuine need, and they have a general understanding of how politics works. Some of them get really into it at a really young age. And it's a shame now that we tell them that as a result of this Bill, you no longer count.

So, Mr. Speaker, again, to exclude young people under the age of 18 . . . The point that the rights of the children organization would like to raise is that if every child, every child is allowed to reach their full potential, they ought to know that they count in the electoral process as well. And the question I have for the Saskatchewan Party: do the members on the other side of the House agree that if a child is going to develop fully, they also need to understand politics and in particular the political process? I think they need to, Mr. Speaker. I think everybody on this side of the Assembly thinks they need to as well. So I think it's really important that that question be posed to the Saskatchewan Party.

And I go back to my whole argument about the young people that are out there or the groups and organizations, I think you need to start up a process. Start a movement where you say, do I count? Or do we count? Or why don't we count? Anything of that sort to send a message to the Saskatchewan Party.

So the whole point again, you look at the Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children. The message is: what kind of encouragement, what message, what incentive is being given to people under the age of 18 to learn about politics and the political process if they're being told that they don't count in the electoral boundary calculation? If Bill 36 is passed, and they are told through legislation that they don't count, why would they get involved? What incentive do they have to learn about the province's political history?

And, Mr. Speaker, every young person, you shut them out or you shun them or you scold them or you isolate them, they will withdraw. And if they know that they're not valued, that they're not counted, that they're not going to be part and parcel of how this thing is all figured out, Mr. Speaker, they will withdraw.

It's a natural reaction of young people that if they're under that pressure, they'll withdraw or they'll fight, and they'll become more of a problem later on if you don't deal with it.

And that's what we can't understand, why in this day and age in 2012, in 2012, in the Saskatchewan Party world, the young people don't exist. Why, Mr. Speaker? That's a question I've asked time and time again as a result of this Bill. Why? Why don't they count?

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think what's important is that we would ask people, as I mentioned at the outset, we would ask the young people to get engaged. You can actually change this whether you're in Buffalo Narrows, whether you're in Cumberland House, whether you're in the inner cities, or whether you're in Melfort. You can count. You can count if you'd begin the process to get the Saskatchewan Party government to understand that you should be included in the political process, included in the count to determine where the political boundaries are, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that Saskatchewan is very proud of and I think overall every single person is proud of, that we all know that on both sides of the House that Saskatchewan has an interesting and lively political history. We've got some great debates, and we've got some great leaders and great people throughout time that have done a great amount of service to the people of Saskatchewan and the country.

[15:30]

One of the greatest things that I think is important is that one that has brought medicare to the province and certainly brought medicare to the country and produced Canada's greatest politician, and that is Tommy Douglas. There's no question, Mr. Speaker, that Mr. Douglas's history and his legacy and his service to the people of Saskatchewan is all known throughout this great province and all known throughout the country.

Now, Mr. Speaker, somewhere along the line, Mr. Douglas had to be encouraged as a young person to become active in politics. I'm not certain how old he was when he entered politics, but I can tell you that he probably was subjected to a lot of discussion, that he was probably included, and he was probably certainly pushed to the limit in terms of understanding how politics works by many people around him. So I would say that he reached his full potential as a young person and a young man. And he realized that politics was his calling and he got engaged. He got involved.

And that's exactly what I think would happen here in this instance, that when the Sask Party's excluding young people, that you don't know how many other Tommy Douglases there are out there amongst the young people that don't like what's happening in this world and can actually make a great change and be of great benefit to the province, to the country. And that's our point, Mr. Speaker, about understanding history, about engaging in politics as young people or at a young age and making sure that we send the right message to the younger generation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, again what Bill 36 says to young people under the age of 18, what Bill 36 says to young people under

the age of 18 is, don't worry about politics. You don't count anyway. That's what the Bill is saying, Mr. Speaker, because we're not going to count you when we do our assessment on the constituency boundaries. And that's really important that message gets through. And that's one of the things that the young people are angry about, and that's why we keep telling them to make sure, make sure that you get up in the morning and that you somehow communicate with the Saskatchewan Party, the MLAs, by way of Internet or social media and to make sure that they get the message that you should count and you're against Bill 36.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out, just to make sure I clarify that in this whole notion of trying to get coalitions and people together, it's important to know that the Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children work hard to protect those rights. And as I mentioned, the Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children is a network of Canadian organizations and individuals who promote the rights of children. So what they want to do, Mr. Speaker, is that they don't speak out against this particular Bill, they just speak about affirming the children's rights.

That's what they're trying to do here, that they're saying to all of us, this great organization saying to all of us that children matter. And my only word, Mr. Speaker, is I don't want them to come to Saskatchewan as a result of Bills like this that say, well they're not practising what we think is fair for the future of our children. And that's the important message and the important worry I would have as a result of trying to make sure that there's groups out there that are going to fight for the children and the youth. And this is one group that I want to make reference to, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the right in principle and the right in practice, the report, I have it in my hand here. And I want to be able to read a bit about the Canadian coalition that tries to promote the rights of children and what they're about because it's important that we heed the words of this coalition when we talk about the rights of children, that we listen to what they have to say. That's really important, Mr. Speaker. So I want to read out really quickly that:

The Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children is a network of Canadian organizations and individuals who promote respect for the rights of children. Its purpose is to: exchange information; provide public education materials about the Convention on the Rights of . . . [children]; monitor implementation of the Convention in Canada; and engage in dialogue with government officials on child rights issues.

Now that's what's important, Mr. Speaker. And that's why I would ask the Saskatchewan Party to heed the warning that the Canadian coalition is going to defend the rights of the children. That's important. What we don't want is this Canadian coalition to focus on Saskatchewan as a result of this Bill, Mr. Speaker because they're talking about, youth matter. They talk about, youth matter, children matter. We have to respect their rights. That's their motherhood statement. That's their mantra. And these organizations are good. They're valuable. They're very effective. They communicate well, and they're powerful, Mr. Speaker.

Now do we want as a province to have them come to Saskatchewan saying, well we've got a problem with a Bill over there that is contrary to what our message is? My suggestion today is that we don't want the Canadian coalition paying attention to us in that negative way. So the warning is don't let them get involved through this Bill because this Bill does something that I don't think that they will be supportive of, which is excluding the rights of the young people.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would go out to again point out that it's important that we understand who the Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children are because they have a lot of history. They don't just pop up and say all of a sudden out of the blue we're going to start making these statements. These are organizations that defend the rights of children, Mr. Speaker. And we feel as an opposition that this Bill is contrary to what these groups are working towards, and contrary to working for the rights of children. We feel that their work has a lot of opportunity here in Saskatchewan if the Saskatchewan Party continues moving forward on their Bill that excludes all these young kids. Now, Mr. Speaker, some of the accomplishments of this Coalition for the Rights of Children, and I want to read out some of their accomplishments:

Canada ratified the CRC [Convention on the Rights of the Child] on December, 1991 in the presence of the coalition and youth delegates from each of the provinces and territories.

Children from all parts of Canada have participated in consultation on matters that affect them, with the support of coalition members. Canadian children have participated in the World Summit for Children, the Earth Summit, and the UN Special Session for Children, and other national and international events.

The Coalition provided policy recommendations for Canada's participation in the UN Special Session for Children, and for Canada's Action Plan, entitled, "A Canada Fit for Children."

The Coalition provided a vehicle for Canadian civil society organizations to participate in the regular five-year reviews of Canada's implementation of the CRC before the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Canada now has representation on the UN Committee for the Rights of the Child; this was one of the goals of the coalition, [Mr. Speaker].

And finally, Mr. Speaker, the Child Rights Award:

The award recognizes individuals or groups who demonstrated exemplary efforts to respect the rights of children as described in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Recipients will receive a certificate, be honoured in an appropriate way, and be publicly recognized through the CCRC [Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children] website and newsletter.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is really important that people know that this Canadian Coalition for the Rights of the Child has had a lot of accomplishments. It's a very effective organization, and that's the kind of organization I think we need in Saskatchewan to start popping up, popping up and start working against this particular Bill.

Now we would hope we get many of these organizations involved in this Bill, and that's certainly something we would openly ask them to get involved. But in Saskatchewan alone there's great opportunity. There's great opportunity for many of the groups out there that advocate for children's rights to get involved with this Bill and begin telling the government, the Saskatchewan Party government, that the Bill is wrong in many ways and excluding the rights of a child or children or youth is not something that we should be encouraging here in the province of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to again point out to the people of Saskatchewan in general that it is obviously a plan here, that if you look at the structure of the Bill itself . . . And I made this point on three or four occasions but I need to make it again, primarily because people should know that when you design the Bill you put in parameters and you put in the conduct and you put in the process of what the Bill is hoping to achieve. Now what the Saskatchewan Party will argue, and I think we're going to start hearing that more and more, is this is an independent process. We're going to hire a judge; we're going to hire a . . . maybe get somebody in the opposition to appoint somebody; maybe we'll appoint somebody; and we'll leave it to them to decide.

Well, Mr. Speaker, you've got to be very careful is that's not what's going to happen. That's not what's going to happen. Yes, maybe we'll appoint one of ours and maybe they'll appoint one of theirs and maybe there'll be a judge in the middle and people will think that's it. What you've got to understand is this Bill is fairly descriptive as to what rules that this committee has to work under, what rules that this committee has to work under.

That's why the number three MLAs are in the Bill, because it's been determined by the Saskatchewan Party already that the Bill is going to include three more MLAs. And so this group will get together and their basic rules are yes, you can appear to be coordinated in how you're going to do this work; however, the parameters within the Bill are fairly prescriptive and they're fairly tight. So you've got to follow these rules. And here's a list of the rules, so go out and give the public the perception that we're not interfering with it: that's what the Sask Party's going to say. But, Mr. Speaker, the Bill itself it's quite clear that they have their agenda and something that they will certainly work towards trying to achieve.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would read some of the other notes on the children's rights but I don't think that's necessary at this time primarily because, primarily because you don't want to compromise the potential partners that are out there. And if I look at the whole notion of the Canadian Coalition for the rights of Children, they have not been actively involved with this particular file. We used our reference to them primarily because we think that there's a connector between what the Sask Party's trying to do and versus what their work entails, Mr. Speaker. And that work of course is protecting the right of a child which we think we're doing as a result of our amendment to Bill 36.

Now, Mr. Speaker, for those that may not have heard the numbers, I want to do numbers one more time, Mr. Speaker, and I won't do those numbers again. But the numbers that we have, Mr. Speaker, for the other provinces and I want to use

these again, if you look at Saskatchewan, we have roughly 18,000 people per riding. Manitoba has roughly 22,000 people per riding. Alberta has 43,000 people per riding. British Columbia has 53,000 people per riding. Quebec has 63,000 people per riding. And Ontario has 125,000 people per riding, Mr. Speaker. And that's the comparison that I want to do. How does Saskatchewan stack up to Manitoba? Well they have 3,000 more people per riding. How do we stack up to Alberta? Well they have tons more per riding, BC even more and Quebec even more. And of course Ontario, 100 . . . almost six, almost seven times more people per riding than what is being proposed here in Saskatchewan. Those numbers I think, Mr. Speaker, need to be told by the people, and the people of Saskatchewan need to be heard time and time again if they don't agree with this particular Bill.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to go back to our amendment just briefly so people know what we're arguing about. I'm just going to update the folks that are listening or may have joined us. Bill 36 is a Bill that the Saskatchewan Party want to put forward. They want to add three more politicians to this Assembly. But in order for them to do that, they've got to do an assessment of all the areas. And they realized that they wouldn't have much luck on going through this assessment if they'd done it the normal practice, which is to include everybody, so they put another rule in to exclude the children. And, Mr. Speaker, that's a crying shame. So we stand up today and say, well we don't support that. We don't think it's a great idea. And so therefore our motion that we made as an NDP caucus is, the motion reads as follows 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 constituency boundaries, the counting of the young people of Saskatchewan who deserve to be counted to determine [the] representation within this Legislative Assembly; and further,

That the Bill increases the number of MLAs by three which is an unnecessary increase of politicians to represent the people of Saskatchewan.”

Now that is our amendment, Mr. Speaker.

And I go back to the motion or the discussion I had on the commission itself. The commission itself, I'm assuming, will consist of three people. And the people of the province have to really be careful here because I'm assuming, and I could be corrected by . . . And nothing surprises me when it comes to the Saskatchewan Party. But I'm assuming that the NDP will be able to appoint one member. All right. And then the Saskatchewan Party will be able to appoint another member. And the third person will be a judge, I believe. So under the argument and the assumption that they're going to have three people on this commission, Mr. Speaker, we could have three: one from the NDP, one from the Sask Party, and of course the judge.

And people will say, well that seems fair. That's what the people would say. Well, Mr. Speaker, what the problem is is

this commission, even though we get to appoint somebody, and they have fairly tight rules they have to work with — and the rules are referred to in our amendment and in the Bill — the rule talks about adding more MLAs, three more. So this committee has to do that, whether they like it or not. And number two is this committee has to exclude the children in their assessment for the constituency boundaries. The Bill is very prescriptive in terms of what they are to do.

So as much as we would want to respect the commission members and wish them well in their work because it's important that we don't target the commission members, it's important for people to know that the commission members have some very, very strict rules in which they operate and they can't deviate from the rules. At the end of the day, if this Bill passes, it's about adding three more MLAs, and it's about excluding the children. That's exactly what the Bill does, Mr. Speaker. And I think in the long run, people of Saskatchewan are going to know that.

[15:45]

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure of the timeline and the time frame in which we're able to bring forward some of the Bill itself in terms of making it law. But I can tell you right now that there is a lot of organizations out there that still are not aware of the Bill itself. And by way of the discussion here in the Chamber, we're going to try and bring out as much of the information on the Bill as possible, and that's one of the reasons why we're standing up today and speaking to this particular Bill.

Now I would point out that in the Aboriginal communities . . . I mentioned this very briefly, and as you know we've got a number of Indian bands. I think the number is 74. And a lot of the First Nations land and the First Nations area and the First Nations communities, Mr. Speaker, I said at the outset that the Aboriginal, the young kids, the young children, there's a huge percentage. I think it's something as high as 60 per cent of the population. The general population of some of our Aboriginal communities are all under the age of 24. There's a huge percentage of young people that are under the age of 18. So how does it impact them? How does it affect them overall? I would say to you, Mr. Speaker, that it is obviously a huge, a huge challenge.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Requesting leave to introduce guests.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Regina Rosemont is requesting leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce some very special guests here today in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. Specifically I have my

mother-in-law who's joined us here today, Barb Willows. I've introduced Barb before to the Assembly.

But the reason Barb's here today is we have a visitor here today, and that's Ms. Anne Glennie. And Anne Glennie is a constituent in the fine constituency of Cannington. Anne in fact is the sister of my grandmother-in-law, so my wife's grandma, and an important part of the family. And I've known Anne for many years. She grew up in Windthorst. For many years she was active on the farm, a strong cattle operation, mixed farm and as well a teacher down in the Southeast. It's a pleasure to have her today. She's active in political life, in the social affairs of her community, and she's an astute individual who cares deeply about her province.

So I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming Ms. Anne Glennie. But I would also be remiss not to mention Mr. Kyall Glennie, her grandson who also joins her today. And Kyall has been very active in student politics and public affairs and have served with distinction in this building, working in years previous, and currently he's serving and working with the official opposition. So it's a pleasure to have these three individuals here today and I ask all members to join with me in giving the warmest of welcomes.

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

SECOND READINGS

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

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm also very pleased to recognize Ms. Anne Glennie and of course her grandson Kyall and of course all the other guests. I think what's important is that more than likely, Mr. Speaker, when Anne had Kyall visiting her from time to time she may have explained politics to him on a few occasions. And young Kyall being the astute politician he is today, Mr. Speaker, it's the whole point that we're talking about, an engagement of young people, of our young people in our lives in the political process. That's what I think is important that we want to recognize, and certainly I think some of the work that's being done by Ms. Glennie and certainly her grandson today is a testament to my argument today in the Assembly that we have to engage our young people as quickly and as young as we can in the political process because that'll serve Saskatchewan better in the future. That's the key thing. It'll serve the province of Saskatchewan a lot better in the future if we engage our young people.

And right now, as I mentioned in the Bill, Bill 36, is we're excluding 236,000 young people under the age of 18, Mr. Speaker, 236,000 which is 25 per cent of our population. And anybody knows in this world if you exclude 25 per cent of your opportunity for the future, then you're not a very good manager of that future. And that's what we're arguing here today when it comes to the Saskatchewan Party, that we don't think that they're managing the future very well by actions of this sort and Bills of this nature, Mr. Speaker, not in any way, shape, or form. And that's what the important thing to note. And when I see elderly people that come into our lives and into our

Assembly and they're accompanying a young person, we know that they had some influence, that they had some way of shaping these young people's minds and encouraging those thoughts and nurturing those beliefs and certainly opening up the future to them.

And what would've happened now, Mr. Speaker, if we had elders that told young people, well I'm not going to talk to you about this stuff because you don't count. Imagine a lot of disappointed young people throughout this province that would probably just end up giving up opportunities and going elsewhere, Mr. Speaker. Thank goodness we didn't have that particular attitude when we had our elders in place teaching young people about the value of participating, the value of being part and parcel of the political process, the value of knowing that you matter and that you count. Those values were handed down from many of the elderly people in the province. And obviously, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan party never got the memo because the memo . . . They're obviously undertaking now is that under this Bill 36, under Bill 36 all those young people who have great opportunity and a great future and have great potential — that's the thing you want to point out, the great potential that they have to make Saskatchewan a better place, a better place, Mr. Speaker — they are not being counted in this Bill and this electoral process by that government, Mr. Speaker.

And that is the solid point and why this amendment is so crucial to this opposition and of why I think when we see elders like Ms. Glennie come into the Assembly here, it reaffirms to us, it reaffirms to us that there is value in teaching our young people about Saskatchewan, that there is value in teaching them to become independent, to become proud, to become their own person, and to also become involved in the community — whether it's politics, the arts, or culture — that they should become involved in all parts of the community, Mr. Speaker.

And that's kind of one of the things I think is really important, is to nurture that opportunity as many of the elders did during our times as young people. And, Mr. Speaker, I think that we should applaud that, we should embrace that, and we should build on that. And when we see Bills like this Bill 36 coming along and not doing a darn thing to help foster that attitude and develop those young people by simply saying to them, you're not included in our count; you don't count any more, Mr. Speaker, this is absolutely a shame. And, Mr. Speaker, it is just not fair and it's not proper for a government to undertake such a measure. Now, Mr. Speaker, that is a point I think that we need to raise and raise it on a consistent basis.

Now going back to the Aboriginal communities as I spoke to about earlier, Mr. Speaker, we know that in the Aboriginal community that there's some difficult times. The Aboriginal community, like many other cultures and other peoples, we have our challenges as well. You know, whether it's poor roads or challenging health care or housing, we know that those continual problems need to be addressed. And there's certainly a lot of good quality people and leaders that are trying to make that difference.

But in the communities, the Aboriginal community, both the Métis communities and the First Nations communities I mentioned earlier, the huge concentration of young people,

there's a lot of young people under the age of 18 and there are a tremendous amount.

I can remember going into the community of Pinehouse for a visit. And as you travel in the community . . . And I was there for a wedding, and we were part of the wedding party. And you had to obviously hop in a vehicle and drive through the community. And as we were driving through the community of Pinehouse in this wedding parade, you can see the kids come out of the houses — just tons of young kids, just an amazing, amazing amount of young kids coming forward.

Then you go to the schools and you see all these young kids. You know, they're learning; they're growing. They've got great teachers as well and they've got great leadership in the community. Everything's moving in the right direction. And you can't help but get a feeling of energy and optimism and a great sense of pride when you see all these young people being nurtured and being developed and being promoted and supported like that. It's an amazing thing to see.

And I just simply said, you know, to the person I was riding with, I said, where did all these kids come from? You know, they're just all over the place. And, Mr. Speaker, that's the amazing fact within the Aboriginal community, as you might know, that you go to some of these communities, there's tons of children and young people in these communities. And how does this Bill affect them? How does it impact them as well, Mr. Speaker?

Well it's a more profound statement when you go to a community that has 20, 30 per cent of the young people under the age of 18, when you go to another community that may have 50 or 60 per cent under the age of 18. It has a greater negative effect on them by saying to them, we're going to determine whether this is part of seat A or seat B. But there's 10 of you in this room and there's 60 in this room that are considered too young. We're only going to count those 10. That's exactly what this Bill does, Mr. Speaker. And you look at that profound impact it has on the Aboriginal communities. It is not fair. Again it just smacks of . . . It's just an attack on the democratic rights of those young children, and I don't think it's fair at all.

And the question that you ask, why are they doing that? Why are they silly enough to do that, Mr. Speaker? And we ascertain on this side the reason why they're doing that is simply because they want to make sure that they manipulate the seats to make the change that they feel is necessary to get three more MLAs, and then they can certainly gerrymander those constituency boundaries as they wish. And that, Mr. Speaker, is not only unfair to this great hall of democracy, but it's unfair to the veterans and especially unfair to the children that we've excluded for a politically motivated plan, Mr. Speaker.

Now I think if you look at some of the economic opportunities that was referenced by the chamber of commerce, and I think the number that they raised was \$90 billion of economic opportunity if we engage our Aboriginal population right. And, Mr. Speaker, it's not 90 million. I think it's Professor Howe at the U of R. He spoke at the GDI [Gabriel Dumont Institute] conference or something, or spoke to some document, and the document clearly stated that if we engage the Métis and the

First Nations and the Aboriginal people in general in a really good, growing economy, it could make a net difference of \$90 billion, Mr. Speaker — \$90 billion for the future of the province of Saskatchewan if we do it right.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's an amazing opportunity. But what happens now, we turn around and we say that is an admirable goal. It's an objective I think we should all strive to go for, is to get full employment and to create great opportunity for the Aboriginal people. So we need not exclude them any more in the economy; we need not exclude them for the opportunities in the resource sector; that we don't play them off in a political battle, Mr. Speaker. We do things right by them. That's one of the messages that I think that's really key for a lot of people that are out there.

Now we know that those mistakes are going to cost us some serious money if we don't engage the Aboriginal community. We know that, Mr. Speaker, and I'm coming back to my point on this Bill. So if it means excluding some of the population that we have been, up to \$90 billion, it's going to cost us for the future of our economy. What happens now with this Bill if we exclude 25 per cent of our population and that 25 per cent is where all our vested interest for the future is, Mr. Speaker? And that is of course the building on the hope and the future for a better Saskatchewan and a greater Saskatchewan.

And I go back to my point earlier. Why are they being excluded? And you know why, Mr. Speaker? Because if they're included, all of a sudden there's going to be a whole different makeup of how the constituencies are redrawn. That's why. That's why they were excluded. For no other reason. That if we included the total general population in the redesign of these boundaries, then Sask Party would not have had the benefit of being able to gerrymander those boundaries to their benefit. So what do they do, Mr. Speaker? They bring a Bill forward. They bring a Bill forward that sets out the rules and say, we're going to have three MLAs and you're going to exclude the young people when we redo the constituencies. And we know and everybody in Saskatchewan know that was what the intention is and that's what the objective is. And we can see right through it, Mr. Speaker.

So I tell the people of Saskatchewan, pay very close attention to this matter and don't play that political game at all because this is not what this is about. We ought to be ashamed that we're going to try and do things of that sort for political benefit. We should include everybody and make sure everybody counts for the future development of this province. So I'll go back to my earlier statement about the whole notion of the Aboriginal community and the \$90 billion opportunity they have for the economy. This professor that done the study, you know, from the U of S, and that professor was fairly straightforward and he had some very hard-hitting facts and took some very good, took a great amount of time to come to his conclusion. The study wasn't done overnight. And he looked at the opportunities, he looked at the challenges, and he looked at how they can get this thing done properly. How do you get the Aboriginal community engaged to the extent they should be engaged?

[16:00]

And, Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day the one number that

stuck out, the one number that stuck out to almost everybody in the province was the \$90 billion opportunity. That's the number that stuck to everybody's mind. In this phrase, in this day and age they talk about, money talks and the other stuff walks. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that we note to the people of Saskatchewan that that \$90 billion opportunity is something that we need to, we need to keep in the back of our minds.

Now the other, the position I would take when it comes to the Aboriginal community is that if you look at that \$90 billion opportunity and you translate that — and I would suggest maybe the population, the Aboriginal population's about 15 per cent now and moving up — now if we take that same kind of principle of 15 per cent of the provincial population, we engage them in the economy to the extent we should, it's a \$90 billion opportunity. Now what happens, now this Bill is taking 25 per cent of the population which is all the young people under the age of 18. They're taking them out of the equation now. So what is that going to cost us, not just for the economy later on down the road, but more so for the political process itself, Mr. Speaker, for the political process itself?

That's the point I would raise is that, how do we determine those costs? I wonder if the professor can actually do that, that kind of cost-benefit analysis of how this Bill excludes them from the . . . I wonder if that possibly could be an option for him to, you know, to look at and try and do. That would be a very, very interesting work and it would be something that would be of huge interest to a lot of people, Mr. Speaker.

Now I want to, if you look at . . . I said at the outset, the Aboriginal community are a bit more impacted by this, and a bit more profoundly. We're trying to, we're trying to see, okay now, if 25 per cent of a general population is impacted, what does that mean for political development, political opportunity, political thoughts, and so on and so forth? We can figure . . . I think we can have a pretty good way of trying to figure that out. But on the flip side, on the Aboriginal population, when you exclude 40 or 50 per cent of their population — because they're all so very young there — what other negative effects will that have on their community? Because this has a profound effect.

And that's my point, Mr. Speaker, is that it is much more acute in some areas when you exclude the young people in some of the things you're doing than in other areas. And I make reference to the Aboriginal population in these communities. It's much, much greater than the non-Aboriginal population. So the effect and the profound effect would be greater on the Aboriginal front, I believe, than elsewhere.

So as we move forward, as grandparents and as great-grandparents in some cases, you want to be able to look at your children in the eye or grandchild in the eye and saying, the future belongs to you. And I often do that, Mr. Speaker. I tell my young daughter, my young granddaughter — her name is Meika — whatever you want to do, Meika, the world is yours, I tell her. And of course Brodey comes running around the corner because he wants to be involved too. And I tell Brodey the same thing.

And, Mr. Speaker, like I said at the outset of my presentation, I have a great confidence in my future because my grandchildren

are there and they're bright, they're articulate, they're healthy; and I thank God for that. And I am hopeful that they continue being bright and helpful and productive in their future. And if I look them right in the face and say, look, I really believe that the future is going to be great, because they're young kids, and I tell them that every day that I'm with them. All of a sudden, they're seven; they're eight; they're nine; they're ten; and they're on their way. And they may not need their papa as much, but I'll tell you one thing, from the early stages of their lives I've always told them that the future's theirs, and keep pushing. I've always made sure I took the time to tell the grandkids that because they basically listen to me and think I'm a great guy because I give them money, you know, and I think that's really important. But you teach them as you go along.

Now under this Act, all that work would be for naught. All that work that I may do with my two grandchildren, the oldest ones, will be for naught because as they begin to do the constituency boundaries, I guess in our house, my daughter and my wife and I would count. Meika and Brodey and Mila and Nixon wouldn't count. And, Mr. Speaker, I think that's a crying shame because these kids have great potential. They have great opportunity, and I want to engage them as I have, not just in the advice and how to live life, but on the political process as well. I think they need to be engaged.

And the question that I think is paramount, a question that is paramount in this Bill is that I tell that to my young kids or to my young grandkids that they count. And all of a sudden the Bill says, no you don't count because we're not going to include them in the assessment. We then turn around and say, well why are they not including the young people? That is the fundamental question to this Bill. Why aren't these young people included in the assessment for all the constituencies? Why aren't they included? That's the number one question I have on this Bill. Why have they been excluded?

And I'll tell the people of Saskatchewan the reason why. It's primarily because it does not fit the political agenda of the Saskatchewan Party to manipulate this process under this Bill for their political advantage, so therefore they've done the obvious thing, and they excluded a lot of the young kids because they knew it had a greater impact in certain ridings than other ridings. And, Mr. Speaker, that is the bottom line. That is the bottom line as to why they've done that.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think one of the things that we often talk about, and I really think that's an important point to raise as well, the Saskatchewan Party members were accusing me of being supportive of more MLAs, Mr. Speaker. And what they've done, as they've done today with the Ministry of Highways is they cut and paste a lot of our closing comments in the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, and they misinterpret, they misrepresent what we say in the Assembly to their advantage, Mr. Speaker. And you can see it. And you can see it. You can see it time and time again that where they have taken something that I may have said and used it in a different context. And they're very careful how they put the wording out there, Mr. Speaker. And I've seen evidence of it. And I've seen evidence of that today from the Ministry of Highways, the Minister of Highways accusing me of saying that the engineers are not, are not qualified, Mr. Speaker.

I looked in *Hansard*, Mr. Speaker, and I didn't see no evidence of that. I didn't see no evidence of that, and then all of a sudden these guys are saying, well that's what you said. And, Mr. Speaker, I sit here and I, you know, we sit back and just smile at them because we know exactly their political agenda and the games that they play, Mr. Speaker. So that's the same thing they've done with me on this constituency boundaries, Mr. Speaker.

I said, given the fact that if we had the increased services, we had increase in the amount of workers, we had increase in all these other aspects of life, then and only then can we look at possibly doing this, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, what they've done is they turn it around, and again they manipulated that process to make it look like I was supportive of that Bill. And, Mr. Speaker, there's no way in any way, shape or form that I'm going to support this Bill at all, Mr. Speaker. Because the people of Saskatchewan don't want this Bill, and the problem is the Saskatchewan Party members know it very well. They know it very well that he is . . . that the people of Saskatchewan don't want this Bill.

But that's part and parcel of what we do in this Assembly. That's part and parcel of what we do in the Assembly. And it would be really nice, Mr. Speaker, it would be really nice if the Saskatchewan Party in the last election, as I said at the outset, would go up, knock on somebody's door and say, you know what, look them in the eye and saying, we want to do a new Bill. And this Bill is going to increase the number of MLAs, and we're going to increase the number of MLAs in the province. And we're not going to, oh, that little child and grandchild running around in your house, we're not going to include them in this assessment. And we're going to start cutting costs because you've got to save money for more politicians. Why didn't they do that, Mr. Speaker, during the election?

You know why, Mr. Speaker? They'd be challenged away from that house so fast. And what gives them the right to do that today, Mr. Speaker? What gives them the right to do that today, six months after that, after they went to that doorstep, Mr. Speaker, six months after the election and now trying to propose this Bill? What gives them the right to do that, Mr. Speaker? They never asked the people of Saskatchewan. They never asked them if they could do this. They never asked them if they could do that, Mr. Speaker.

So the point that I would point out today is, I would ask them, the member from wherever he's from, I would ask him, do you agree, do you agree to do a plebiscite? Do you agree to do a plebiscite, Moose Jaw North? Does the member from Moose Jaw North agree to do a plebiscite on this Bill, Mr. Speaker? I want to hear him say, yes or no. I want to hear him say, yes or no. And all of a sudden, he's very quiet. He's very quiet, very quiet.

You know, and that's the problem with the Saskatchewan Party, they need a backbench with a backbone, Mr. Speaker. Instead of reading from their prepared notes when they're asked about the situation, about the only thing they say, it's a growing economy and balanced budget. They better not deviate from those words, Mr. Speaker, or they'd be scolded. And that's the problem we have in the democracy today, Mr. Speaker, is

they're simply told what to do, and they will do as they're told, Mr. Speaker. And that's the value of having a backbencher over there that does not contribute nor makes a big difference overall to the people that they represent and the province of Saskatchewan as a whole.

So if I'm going to ask them, ask any one of them, do you want to say yes or no to a plebiscite on this matter? Yes or no? Do you want to have a plebiscite, a public vote on this Bill? Yes or no? A simple answer would be sufficient, Mr. Speaker, and obviously not one of them has risen to the challenge, Mr. Speaker. Not one of them has risen to the challenge of having a plebiscite on this Bill, Mr. Speaker, because they'll be told by the public of Saskatchewan, no way José, do we want this Bill. We don't want to exclude our children. We don't want to exclude our grandchildren. We don't want to exclude our great-grandchildren, and we certainly don't want more politicians. That's what they'll be told.

But they refuse to do that, Mr. Speaker. And they're hoping, and they're hoping that doing this in the first term that they're back after an election that they've done very well at that people will forget, Mr. Speaker. They think that people will forget but, Mr. Speaker, people have a long, long memory on many things, Mr. Speaker. And a lot of them will not forget of how their children and grandchildren were excluded, of how they were given more MLAs and less programs and services, Mr. Speaker, and how this was all done for one simple reason, and that they're trying to position the Saskatchewan Party to be the benefactors of this particular move, Mr. Speaker. That's what that's about.

So I think today as I sit here and I keep challenging them to a public vote on this and, Mr. Speaker, they're all very quiet. It's so quiet over there you could hear a pin drop, Mr. Speaker. And the point I would raise, the point I would raise is why don't they speak up for the people? And the people, the people that have children and grandchildren, why don't they speak up for those people and say, include our kids, include the future of our province in this whole Bill? Because the bottom line is why are they excluded is because there is a political agenda at work.

That's the bottom line and that's what they don't want to admit. But the people of Saskatchewan won't be bound by that. The people of Saskatchewan won't be told, here's your song sheet, backbench. You will say as you're told and you will not deviate from the script. People of Saskatchewan will get up and say, no, we don't want more politicians. That's what the people of Saskatchewan would say. We want more people to work in the front-line health care. We want more people to work on clearing the roads. We want people to make sure that they're there for services, Mr. Speaker, for teachers, and the list goes on. That's what the people of Saskatchewan would say we spend more money on, not more politicians, Mr. Speaker.

And the big question is why are they putting this Bill in? Why? And it's a very simple question. And, Mr. Speaker, we don't have any answers from the government and, Mr. Speaker, and especially from the backbench. Now again, I would point out to some of them that are chirping from their chairs every now and then, in particular the member from Moose Jaw North, that if he agrees to do a plebiscite, get up and say, I agree to do a plebiscite. I'll certainly want to hear if he's agreeing to do that,

Mr. Speaker. And obviously he's . . . I think he's gone.

[16:15]

So obviously the challenge, Mr. Speaker, obviously the challenge has not been met. You know, so as we scurry back to our basement offices, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that it's important to note, it's important to note that they will not agree, that they will not agree to a plebiscite. They will not agree to a plebiscite, Mr. Speaker. And that's the fundamental problem, adding more MLAs, is they know that they're standing on very shaky ground.

Now obviously as an opposition, we don't in any way, shape, or form, support this Bill. That's why we have this amendment. But, Mr. Speaker, the neutral party that sits up in the balcony there called the press, they're the ones that will decide. They're the ones that will decide, based on their skills of writing and interpreting what's going on, they will decide whether this is a good Bill or not. I think from their vantage point, from their vantage point as media, and I think the reference that they made to this Bill, I don't remember the exact phrase, but I think the reference was made to the stupidest thing that the Saskatchewan Party ever done. And I'm quoting, Mr. Speaker. And I think that's important for them to know. That's how the media perceived this Bill. This is how the public perceives this Bill. This is how the opposition perceives this Bill. This is how many groups out there that may be involved with this later on will perceive this Bill. The only people that don't seem to get it, that don't like this Bill, are the Saskatchewan Party members over there.

And I kind of forgive, I kind of forgive the backbenchers because they're new at this. This is their first term here. But somewhere within their own little mindset, take those song sheets you're told to sing from, park them aside, and think for one minute what you're doing with this Bill. You're excluding 25 per cent of the population of Saskatchewan which are all young people. You think about that, think about that. And that hasn't been done before. And think about the cuts to the programs and services. You think about the cuts to the programs and services, the film employment tax credit, and some of the front workers. Think about those people that have got fired. And, Mr. Speaker, and then think about the amount of . . . asking the people of Saskatchewan to have more politicians. Think about those points.

And that's my whole point, Mr. Speaker, is that they're not thinking for themselves. They are part and parcel of a marching order. And that's exactly what they'll do on this Bill, even though they know it is a wrong Bill to be put forward, Mr. Speaker. And that's the shame of this whole Bill, Mr. Speaker. It is not done in a fair, it is not done in a thorough, and it's not done in any kind of an open fashion where people of Saskatchewan have a fair view on that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, public debate in any place, in any place in Saskatchewan, in any hall, any member of this opposition will gladly debate any member of that opposition or cabinet on any venue on this Bill, Mr. Speaker, on any Bill — on this Bill, Mr. Speaker, in particular. But we're prepared to go there and have a debate in any venue, in any community hall in any community in the province of Saskatchewan on this Bill, and what we argue

versus what they argue. And then at the end of the day, let the people that attend that meeting or let the people in that community decide by way of a plebiscite whether they want this Bill or not. And, Mr. Speaker, I think the answer that they'll get resoundingly is, no way, we don't want this Bill. We don't want more politicians. We want more programs and services for our elderly people, for our working people, Mr. Speaker, and of course for our young children.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that in my coffee I take cream and sugar, one and one. And I think a lot of the waitresses in the province of Saskatchewan begin to know. And that's what's important that in my coffee, Mr. Speaker, when I say one and one, it's a helping of fairness, and certainly it's a helping of support, when you talk about the mixture. And that's what this Bill should have. It should have support. It should have fairness attached to it. And, Mr. Speaker, it has neither one of them. It has neither one of those, fairness or support from the public in any way, shape, or form.

And I don't know how many more times you got to tell these guys, the Saskatchewan Party guys, that quite frankly from our perspective, from our point of view, this Bill has no support anywhere. It doesn't have any support from any quarter, from any person, from any organization. And I wouldn't mind seeing any kind of letters they've got from any group saying, do you support the notion — any kind of letter — do you support the notion of having more politicians in the province? And if they did have any kind of those letters, I wouldn't mind, I wouldn't mind getting a copy.

But what I wouldn't mind getting, Mr. Speaker, I know they have it. I know that they probably got letters of concern, whether it's email or text or a comment somewhere. I wonder if they would share with the opposition some of the comments they may have gotten from the different organizations once they travel home. Even one. If they had one, that would be great, Mr. Speaker. I know they have a lot more.

Now again I'm going back to my comments. I've seen a few of them guys, I've seen a few of those guys on the . . . I've heard a few of them on the radio. I've seen a few of them on a few television interviews, particularly the backbench. And they're asked the question, why are you trying to add more MLAs? And they say, oh, we have a balanced budget. So the reporter asks them again, why are you excluding 35 per cent of the people when you're redrawing the constituencies, Mr. MLA? He says, we have a booming economy. And the other thing is, why didn't you tell the people that you were going to do this before the last election? We need to put criminals in jail.

You know, Mr. Speaker, that's their typical responses, you know, to any kind of questions. Now I wonder what would happen to the backbench — not the backbench, the entire cabinet — if we took away the words "balanced budget," which is not true, or we took away "booming economy" or "putting criminals in jail." Mr. Speaker, there'd be a lot of quiet folks over there. They wouldn't know what to say.

And that was the most amazing, the most amazing point. I saw one, I'm not going to mention which of the MLAs. They were being interviewed by the local TV station. And the question was posed to them on Bill 36, why are you asking for more MLAs?

And the guy said, we have a balanced budget. And of course the entire population and the city just kind of shook their heads. You guys just don't get it. If you're going to be part of a team, the team has to be part of you. That's the most important thing. And this Bill is contrary to fairness. It's contrary to democracy. And all it's done is . . . It hasn't done anything but simply fulfill the political objectives of people that have manipulated not only the front bench at times but the entire backbench as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think you need to park your notes, your singing notes and your song sheet that you're given and told, don't deviate from this stuff. And if you behave, maybe a couple of months from now you'll be in cabinet. Mr. Speaker, that's not the way it should work. That's not the way it should work. If there are some serious problems with the Bill and you fundamentally disagree with it, your response to a query on that Bill as to why you want more MLAs shouldn't be, we have a balanced budget. Because that's not only an insult to your intelligence and your capacity as an MLA; that's insulting the people that sent you here.

You have a free mind and free will. You should be able to get up and you should be able to speak what you have to speak within caucus. And granted if people within a caucus vote in a certain fashion, obviously as a team you have to accept that decision made by the majority within your caucus. But if there's some fundamental flaws as to how you arrived at that decision as a collective then, Mr. Speaker, if you sit there and simply sing from the song sheet given to you, then you're doing a great disservice to not only yourself but to the people that sent you to this great hall of democracy, but the people that came before you and especially the people that come after you. And those are the young people that you've now excluded as a result of this Bill.

That's the important thing I would say to the backbench over there, Mr. Speaker, that this Bill is wrong. You know it's wrong. And you know the premise of this Bill is not as pure and simple as you're told, that there are some other ulterior motives that are contrary to democracy and contrary to the future of this province. And it really limits the amount of . . . It really limits, in my opinion, the amount of honour that we believe we serve when we come here in the first place.

And that's my point, Mr. Speaker. So some of them may chirp, like the member from Moose Jaw North chirped now and then. You know, my challenge to him is, okay, you want to have a challenge. Let's have a debate on this. Let's have a public vote on this. And, Mr. Speaker, I will never get that from them, never, Mr. Speaker, simply because they refuse to go back to the people of Saskatchewan on this issue because they know they'd be told by the people of Saskatchewan, no way. No way do we want more politicians, when we started seeing highways workers being cut, when you started seeing programs like the film tax employment credit being cut, when you started seeing the services in health care being diminished.

That's not what the people of Saskatchewan want, Mr. Speaker. They didn't elect the Saskatchewan Party government to add more politicians. And had they known that last fall, there'd be a lot of people in the backbench, especially the backbench, that would pay that price, Mr. Speaker. And that's the challenge of being in a backbench. You're supposed to be part of a team, but

guess what? The first mistake that's made by you or the first mistake that's made out there by government, you're usually the first one thrown under the bus, Mr. Speaker.

So next time somebody asks you in the Assembly or asks you in public or asks you in a media interview, why are you trying to add more MLAs, don't say, we have a balanced budget because that's not an answer. You simply say that this is the reason why we're going to do this: we have a growing population or we got this or we got that. And then you're asked the next question about, why are you excluding the general population? Why are you cutting health? Why are you cutting jobs, and so on and so forth? You better have the backup answer because your first answer needs to qualify your backup answer. You can't just simply say . . . You've got to know what you're talking about.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that's one of the problems that we have right now is there isn't a backbencher over there with a backbone to stand up and tell these guys, we don't like this Bill. We don't like this Bill because we never campaigned on it. It wasn't part of our platform, and then after the fact we're trying to do this. And after the fact we're trying to do this. That's not what this is about. That's not the reason you come here. And not only are we doing this after the fact, but we're trying to manipulate it to benefit us politically, which is contrary to the reason why you got here in the first place, to be fair, to represent and to build a better Saskatchewan. That is the point on this Bill, Mr. Speaker. There's got to be some rhyme or reason as to how you justify a Bill that nobody wants to the public out there. You're wondering, why am I doing this? Why are we doing this? That's what the Saskatchewan Party members should ask themselves. Why are we doing this? Because the opposition think it's got to be one of the silliest ideas in the world. We know it very well. But when the media characterized this Bill as the stupidest Bill that they've seen from the Saskatchewan Party, isn't that enough that a neutral party such as the media explains to you that this is a pretty stupid Bill? That's their position.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't know how else to explain to the backbench, but you better go back and have some discussions because people don't want more MLAs. They want more services. People don't want to exclude our young people. They want to include the young people, Mr. Speaker. And above all else, people don't want to be manipulated for a political agenda. That's the number one issue that's out there, Mr. Speaker, and that's the point that we raised as an opposition, is that we need more highways workers and if you want to hire more MLAs, you better make sure they know how to drive a plow. Because, Mr. Speaker, that's what people of Saskatchewan expect in this day and age. They want good service, they want a fair and reasonable cost for some of the things that they have, and above all else they want to be respected for some of the decisions they made in the past. And if they're not, they will quickly change their mind on a lot of things.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that's one of the most important things that I want to raise today, is the fact that if this is not taken back to the people as we thought would be proper to do . . . Let's take it back, and if the people of Saskatchewan give the Saskatchewan Party a ringing endorsement of this Bill, then the opposition will forever hold their tongue on this Bill, Mr. Speaker. We will not say another word on this Bill if the people

of Saskatchewan give that party the opportunity to proceed with this Bill. And if they don't get that Bill: my challenge today, if they don't get that support, is you pull this Bill and let it die a good death because that's what it deserves. A good death, because it didn't work out, it shouldn't have worked out, and, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan caught on to it and figured it out that this Bill was contrary to what was being proposed and the people of Saskatchewan have seen right through it.

So I think it's important that the people of Saskatchewan hear that message, and I'm telling people wherever I go, you want more politicians? And you know, a lot of them say to me, absolutely not. Absolutely not. Absolutely not.

Now we hear, where's that member from? Regina what? Dewdney?

An Hon. Member: — Northeast.

Mr. Belanger: — Northeast, Regina Northeast. And the big thing is if you look at the Northeast, you know, he was in Calgary for a number of years. He was in Calgary for a number of years, Mr. Speaker. He doesn't know the parameters of this Bill, what the Bill impacts. He doesn't know yet, but he will. He was in Calgary and he was just visiting. When things were tough in Saskatchewan he headed for the hills, he headed for Calgary foothills. You know, that's where he's going to head. And then they brought him back and they got him into their Crown corporations. And then after he's done here, he'll be heading probably back to Calgary, Mr. Speaker. So he's just visiting. He's just visiting; we know that.

And the bottom line is that when you see a two-handed approach of a North Battleford employee that couldn't run, and yet he was working in the Crowns and he was allowed to run, there's a double standard going on there. But that's fine. We're not going to argue about that. But the bottom line, the bottom line is that there's always these concepts going on over there and this Bill further, in our opinion it further cements in our thinking that there is something that the people of Saskatchewan are going to be looking at this thing very closely. They're going to not forget that this was done to them six months after a general election, and they're going to remember that these guys cut programs and services, and they've done it in a most underhanded way. And now they're turning around and giving us more politicians, Mr. Speaker. That's their response. That's their response.

[16:30]

Now from my perspective as a member of the opposition, we are going to all vote against this Bill and vote for the amendment. We're going to vote for our amendment because the amendment that we have in front talks about including young people and talks about not allowing the gerrymandering of the constituency boundaries to the extent that they want to do, Mr. Speaker. That's what we're going to stand up for.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to watch very carefully how the backbench responds. The member from Arm River, you know he sits there and he's going to say he's going to be advocating for more MLAs, you know. And that's one of the most amazing

things, Mr. Speaker. I'm just still trying to figure that out.

You know, here's the guys over there that want to have more MLAs. And I need to explain something to the backbench over there, Mr. Speaker. If you have more MLAs — and let's say for the sake of supporting what I'm always claiming, that there's a political plan out there to have some of those MLAs go to the Saskatchewan Party — some of the backbench MLAs should actually oppose this Bill because if you get more MLAs, either they'll come here or they'll go there, it'll limit your chances of being in cabinet. So some of you guys, some of you guys, some of you guys should stand up and say, well I don't want more competition for cabinet. So on the vote day, on the vote day of this Bill, on the vote day of this Bill, on the vote day of this Bill say, no, we want to be in cabinet. We simply don't want to be able to have more competition. And that's my point. At least for your own self-interest, if you are prepared to sing from a song sheet and ask a very thoughtful question and simply say balanced budget, then another thing you should do to preserve your opportunities is not have more competition for you. So eliminate the competition. Don't invite more in because that really creates a lot of problems for you.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think the important point I'm trying to raise here is that, who wants three more MLAs? Tell me who wants three more MLAs. There's 49 over there that want three more MLAs. And out of the 49 there's probably 30 that are confused to what it actually means because, Mr. Speaker, the reason why I'm saying they're confused is because they don't have any thought process on defending this particular Bill when asked by the media. You know, when you're asked by the media a question on why you want something to happen to a certain Bill, don't say we have a balanced budget because that doesn't make any sense to the people that are listening. You need to explain the aspects of the Bill, why did you support more MLAs?

And if you're going to be asked that question in the media, you'd better have an answer. And as opposed to going back to your song sheets, or song sheet, we have a balanced budget. We know the budget isn't even balanced, Mr. Speaker. It's not even balanced, but that's not the point. The point is you've got to get thinking in your own way as to how you're going to defend something that you fundamentally believe in and they can't defend it because (a) they may not understand it or (b) what's worse is that they simply are doing what they're told.

And, Mr. Speaker, that is unfair. That's unfair to this hall of democracy. It's unfair to them, as I mentioned earlier, and it's unfair to the people that they represent. And, Mr. Speaker, that is a shame and that's why we keep talking about this Bill being an affront to democracy where you're looking at trying to do everything possible to manipulate the process, to try and position yourself as a party, to be benefactors of that process which calls for more politicians, and thus it creates this feeling out there that people are being used in a most negative way.

Yet at the same time you're firing real front-line workers, front-line workers that have served this province for years, Mr. Speaker. And that's why it's important that I tell the people of Saskatchewan, this Bill is a Bill I'd want to debate till the very end, right till the very end. And we may lose that vote in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. Chances are we will. But I want

everybody in Saskatchewan, every single person in Saskatchewan that may be watching that vote day on this Bill, to see which members across the way are standing up and are saying yes to this Bill, because they're also saying yes to excluding your child and your grandchild. They're saying yes to making sure they have more politicians and less programs. And they're also saying yes, Mr. Speaker, they're saying yes to the manipulation of this democracy in general.

And that's a shame, Mr. Speaker, because if they weren't going to manipulate it, Mr. Speaker, there's general discussion, why exclude the children under the age of 18? Why exclude them? That's the other question I have. Why exclude the children under 18? For what reason did they do that? For what reason? That's the question I have.

So next time there's an interview on the radio or TV and somebody says, what reason did you have to exclude the children under 18 in this electoral boundaries Act? And I wouldn't mind hearing some of the answers over there, Mr. Speaker. You know I'd pay a ringside seat to hear what they had to say about that particular question.

So the question I have open to the entire Sask Party government, including the Premier and his cabinet ministers, what reason do you have for excluding all the children under 18 from the boundaries or *The Constituency Boundaries Act* that's being proposed under Bill 36? What reason? Why are you doing that? That's a fundamental question.

The second question is, why are you adding more politicians instead of front-line workers, Mr. Speaker, to fight fires or to teach our children or to provide health care? What reason are you trying to . . . Why are you adding more politicians? And above all else, where is your argument for more politicians? Where is the argument?

It can't be on numbers because we've shown you today that Saskatchewan's got 18,000 voters per riding. Manitoba's got 22,000. Alberta's got 41,000. BC's got 53,000. Quebec's got 64,000. Ontario's got 125,000. Mr. Speaker, it's amazing. It's amazing the numbers of voters per riding in all these other provinces. But Saskatchewan is saying, oh no, no, we need more. And I'm trying to figure out why and where. And the further question that I ask is, why did you exclude the children?

So, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of different things that we need to ask on this Bill, a lot of different things. We are far from done in terms of the questions and the positions and the actions that you want to take on this Bill. We asked earlier this day to make sure that the kids and the parents out there and the grandparents to start a letter-writing campaign. Write to the daily newspapers. Try and get onto the radio and phone-in shows. Write them a letter. Write to the Premier or to any member of the Sask Party MLA, or bring petitions here to the Assembly. We will fight. We will fight for you if you give us that information, Mr. Speaker. And we understand that there are petitions coming in.

But, Mr. Speaker, rest assured that people of Saskatchewan are going to watch this Bill. They're going to watch it very carefully, and they're going to see what's going on here. And I'll tell you, I bet you one thing, that they quickly realize that

not only is there manipulation going on from that particular government, Mr. Speaker, on this Bill, but they have cold-heartedly excluded all the kids and the young kids under the age of 18 from being included in this count. And I say shame on them. Shame on them because that's not exactly what the people of Saskatchewan asked for last fall.

Well, the big thing I would point out again as I mentioned at the outset, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan, this was hidden from them. This agenda was hidden from them. And had they known this, Mr. Speaker, that there were going to be more politicians added because of the Saskatchewan Party, rest assured, Mr. Speaker, that there would be a lot of people angry about that. There'd be a lot more people angry today as a result of them being not told what's going on as opposed to making sure that they're upfront and honest with them at the beginning. And, Mr. Speaker, that is what the critical argument that I would make is: that they weren't told.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to again point out that the whole vote on this Bill will be coming forward to the Assembly here today. And I'm going to ask and watch very carefully how the members vote across the way. And I made the Aboriginal people's argument. I made the representation argument. I made the distance issue certainly in some of the points that we raised, of the First Nations and the fact that in northern Saskatchewan we have a seven, eight-hour drive every week to be here. And despite the fact that we probably have the furthest driving distance — my colleague and I from Cumberland — we've never asked for more MLAs, Mr. Speaker. We've never asked for more MLAs.

Now we know that there's been calls from different groups that may ask for some politicians to be seen in some of their communities because there are times when we know that a lot of the Sask Party MLAs, once they're elected, people rarely see them, Mr. Speaker. That is what's important. It's not the point that they would raise, that we want more politicians. The big point, I think people in general would say, we want to see more of our politicians, not more politicians.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that's one of the points that I would raise in some of my closing comments. I think that we're going to make sure that we start the campaign as an opposition, and I think we have petitions that are coming in. I believe that there are some letters that may be forthcoming. We want to make sure that we hit the media with some of these things. And we would ask the media to continue being engaged in this file, to continue looking at the whole ridiculous nature of this Bill and to dig a bit deeper. Like where did this come from?

And that's what the important message is, is when the media sits up in their media balcony, and they look what's going on in this Assembly, you know, some days I imagine it's very amusing to them. But the fundamental point that they made is, in trying to be balanced and trying to be straight with the people of Saskatchewan, the media characterizes this Bill as one of the stupidest Bills that they've seen the Saskatchewan Party present. Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't know how the media arrived at such a strong word, but that's how they characterized this Bill.

And I was watching, Mr. Speaker, with a bit of amusement

when yesterday, when there was reference to some of the media comment, half of the Sask Party caucus started chirping up at the media saying, oh, did you say that about us? You know like obviously there's a bit of a, you know, don't-be-mean-to-us kind of appeal there, Mr. Speaker. And you shouldn't try and manipulate or play the media in that fashion because it makes you look silly on this side. We were sitting there and laughing at that. The media aren't going to be manipulated in any way by you guys smiling at them. They're going to determine what they're going to write, and they going to write it as best they can. A lot of times we don't agree with what they write about us, but we don't smile at them and chirp at them and try and connect with them over the rail here. We just leave them alone. Let them do their job. And that's what I would suggest that the Sask Party does as well.

But when the media get up and they characterize this Act as one of the stupidest Acts they've seen coming forward, Mr. Speaker, enough said. I think they are doing their darndest to be fair and impartial and make sure that they do it in a balanced way in how they present what they see as Bills that the governments are doing, whether they see it as good or bad. And, Mr. Speaker, this was not considered bad. It was considered a very stupid Bill.

So one of the things I would point out is what the media is saying. You know, these are words that we can justify through showing the press clipping here. I think it's important that people out there know that the NDP aren't doing it just to be dirty or to be slanderous. I think what they're trying to do is say, look, we don't agree with this Bill. We have other groups and organizations that don't agree with this Bill. And now the media is sitting up there looking at this thing. Well this is not a very good Bill either. And they described it very directly in a very negative fashion.

So, Mr. Speaker, again I would point out the fundamental question people of Saskatchewan are asking. Number one is, why are we advocating for more politicians? If you want to have more politicians, let's have a plebiscite. Let's have a public vote. And let's have a binding, a binding public vote, Mr. Speaker. And the questions we're asking in opposition: why in this Bill, why in this Bill are you taking out all the children or the people, youth under the age of 18 in determining where these constituencies are? That's the question we're asking. Why are you doing that? We need to have those questions answered. It is a serious question we ask of all Sask Party MLAs. Why are you excluding those children under the age of 18 when you do the design of the constituency boundaries? Why are you doing that? That's the question we have. And where in the platform, where in the platform did you advocate for three MLAs? We need to know that, Mr. Speaker.

So that's the key point that we'd raise in some of our closing comments here today is the fact is, why are you doing this? And that's the fundamental question the people of Saskatchewan ask. And today when I asked for a public vote on this — we asked about five or six or seven or eight times — and not one of them have gotten up to speak up and say, yes, let's have it. It's an open challenge. It's a point that we raised. And, Mr. Speaker, there's no way we're getting a peep out of any Sask Party MLA because, Mr. Speaker, they know they didn't get the mandate from the people to do this. And they know they have a

tough time defending it, and they can't defend it, and much less if they want to go to a public debate and a public vote.

[16:45]

Now, Mr. Speaker, what I think is really important is that if you look at the whole notion of some of my constituency I mentioned at the outset — large, young, Aboriginal population — some of them aren't of voting age yet but they really, really are active in politics. Many of them are very young. And it would be nice to know, and certainly within the NDP we have an option to join the party under the age of 12 to 18. And I'm sure the Saskatchewan Party have the same youth membership opportunities for people under the age of 18 to be part of the Sask Party. But, Mr. Speaker, I wonder what the age information on that application for the Sask Party cards. So that information is out there, Mr. Speaker. We'll certainly find out. So it's okay for them to be a member of the Sask Party, but they won't be included to be voting if they're under the age of 18. And that's the sad point.

Now, Mr. Speaker:

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

So, Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to quickly say I just explained in Cree that I told them that same argument I made, that what's happening here . . . I'm not happy that they're trying to bring more MLAs when we should have more health care workers, more teachers, that they didn't tell the people of Saskatchewan that they were doing this, and that this Bill No. 36 is contrary to anything that the Sask Party has said or done.

And the most important thing is that in the North, as was spoken to about when they had a number of visitors, is that in northern Saskatchewan they want mental health counsellors. They want drug addiction workers. And they want people to help strengthen the family. They want better roads. They want decent housing. They want fairness when it comes to all the resources being pulled out of the North. They want to be able to have a future for their kids for training and working. They want jobs. They want to be recognized for what they are and who they are because they have a great amount of good people in northern Saskatchewan.

The problem is that the Saskatchewan Party just treats them with a lot of disrespect, and they don't acknowledge some of the challenges we have. And this Bill again goes back, the same old thing, that when you want to do some things on the political front, we're going to exclude people. And now every person that's under the age of 18 will know how many of the Aboriginal people feel at times. When the Saskatchewan Party is in power, we get ignored and we get treated in the most negative fashion, Mr. Speaker. And that's why it's important that people out there get the message, is that as you look at this Bill, if you're under 18, you don't count. A lot of Aboriginal people can relate to that. So there's a lot of times we certainly are able to share some of their frustration and some of the challenges we feel together, as once again we see evidence that the Sask Party is ignoring a large group of people.

So in closing, Mr. Speaker, I think what's important is that in northern Saskatchewan it's addiction services, it's youth

drop-in centres, it's health care facilities, it's housing, it's training opportunities, it's highways, it's support for our young people, it's support to strengthen the families, it's support to recognize that the elders have a difficult time in making ends meet between costs for food, for heat, costs for helping out with the grandkids, between their medicines. Like the elders have a difficult time, Mr. Speaker.

And these are the issues that the Saskatchewan Party should be working to address instead of increasing the health care costs, the drug costs for the elders. They should have been dealing with road issues instead of trying to bring more politicians in here. They should have been trying to deal with some of the mental health addiction problems in the North instead of trying to put together a process that costs the government millions of dollars more for more politicians. That's not what we want as an opposition, and it's not what the people of Saskatchewan asked for at all, Mr. Speaker.

So again, Mr. Speaker, this Bill smacks of political interference. It's an affront to democracy. It's a great discredit, great discredit to the new MLAs on that side of the House, Mr. Speaker, because that's not what they joined politics for. I know that and the people in the province know that. But they have to wear that just as much as the front bench, Mr. Speaker, because obviously there is going to be the question marks out there in the future as to why they put this Bill in place.

The bottom line, the bottom line, Mr. Speaker, is that the three MLAs that the Saskatchewan Party want to add, Mr. Speaker, are primarily there at the expense of the Saskatchewan Party. And, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan did not want that, and they still don't want it, Mr. Speaker, and that's the most important lesson.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would add on this front, if I am going to stand here today and I ask the opposition for a debate on this matter, I am prepared to respect the wishes of the people of Saskatchewan through a plebiscite. If the people of Saskatchewan say they like this Bill, they want this Bill, then I'll simply say this: that I would respect the position of the people of Saskatchewan through that plebiscite. If they say yes, we want more MLAs, I will respect that. But if they said no, we don't want more MLAs, would the government support that notion?

And, Mr. Speaker, that's a question that I think I should answer because none of them are saying a word right now, and the answer is quite frankly that the Saskatchewan Party doesn't want to have a public debate on this. They don't want to have a plebiscite on this because the people of Saskatchewan would tell them, no. No way. We'd never asked for that. We don't want it, and we still don't want it whether it is a year from now or three years from now or four years from now.

But, Mr. Speaker, I'll tell the people of Saskatchewan that the train may have left the station, Mr. Speaker, the train may have left the station. But quite frankly there is time that the people of Saskatchewan have by way of giving us emails, letters to the editors, interviews on the radio and TV, and certainly signing petitions and coming to the Assembly, telling people we don't need more politicians. When you start seeing 112, 112 people from the highways labs that were being cut in the last couple of

years, Mr. Speaker, those are the people that the people of Saskatchewan want back, Mr. Speaker. They don't want more politicians. They don't want more politicians, Mr. Speaker. They want those highways workers back, Mr. Speaker.

So I think the important message is that you have to get it, you have to get it in any way, shape, or form. People don't want this Bill. They don't want these three MLAs. They want front-line workers in health care, in highways, in addiction services, and the list goes on, Mr. Speaker. So I think it's important that people out there get the message that they can make a difference here, that there is a way that we could make this government change that silly notion that they can turn around and put more MLAs, at the same time cutting programs and people. That's not how you should operate as a government.

And secondly, the most resounding thing, the most resounding thing is that, did you mention this in your platform at the last election? And we looked and looked. We even had a couple of accountants look, you know, through the fine print. And we had some of my colleagues put on bifocals and they couldn't find anywhere in the Saskatchewan Party platform last year saying, we are going to increase the number of MLAs by three. Nothing in there whatsoever.

And although this deal was cooked up about a year ago, maybe two years ago, Mr. Speaker, the plan quite frankly is to look at some of the opportunities that the Saskatchewan Party want to pounce on. One of them is waiting for the census so they can advocate for this kind of Bill and manipulate the process so they can get their wishes to have three more MLAs. And this whole notion of trying to be fair and open and accountable to the people of Saskatchewan, well that's out the window because they made one fundamental mistake, one fundamental mistake which showed their hand, Mr. Speaker. And that mistake is that they arbitrarily chose to exclude every young person under the age of 18.

And the reason why they've done that, Mr. Speaker, was for the pure, manipulative plan that they have for their political agenda. Full stop, period, Mr. Speaker. I think that's quite clear. The people of Saskatchewan can see through that. They can see through that a mile away. And the more that the opposition, or the government, tries to manipulate or tries to hide the information or trying to discredit the opposition or trying to deny that they're doing this, the more the people of Saskatchewan will hold them to account.

So in the future, if you're asked, if you're asked by some interviewer or some media person, why are you doing this, don't say, we have a balanced budget. Tell them the real reason why because I think everybody knows now the real reason why behind this Bill. The real reason behind . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well that's a little bit better than your last answer. But, Mr. Speaker, I think what's important is that you talk to the people and you be very factual and upfront with him or with them in terms of why you're putting this Bill in place. It's pure and simple as that. And that's the unfortunate reality, Mr. Speaker, is that we know what the plan is. And the unfortunate reality is 30 per cent of those guys back there are just part of this train that left the station. And our job is to make sure the people in the constituencies know what's going on.

And that's a fundamental question that we want to add to again is, why are you excluding all the children and youth under the age of 18? That's a question I would ask any member of that government. Why are you excluding people under the age of 18 in this constituency boundaries Bill? That is the fundamental question. And you know what, Mr. Speaker, there's not one answer from that part, not one answer.

So I want to explain to them, the reason why you're doing that is so you're able to gerrymander the constituency boundaries to try and fit your political agenda, thereby watering down certain areas that have more children than others, Mr. Speaker. And that's an attack on the family structure, an attack on the young people. That's why you're doing it. So might as well call a spade, a spade in this Assembly because everybody and their dog and their horse and their cow knows that this is what's happening, Mr. Speaker. And certainly from the opposition perspective, we know that as well, and we're not going to hide that. We're going to tell the people of Saskatchewan that our role is to expose those kind of challenge and those kind of points and those kind of attacks, and we'll continue doing so.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have a lot more things I want to say on this Bill. We haven't gotten into the jurisdictional debate on the political process when it comes to making sure the First Nations and the Métis people get active in politics. We think that there's a lot of opportunity to correct a lot of wrongs. And one of the things you want to do is make sure that not just the non-Aboriginal people are engaged in the politics as soon as they can, but the First Nations and the Métis people have that opportunity as well. And there's many, many more younger people in some of the reserves and some of the northern Métis communities. The population of young people is high, so this Bill has a more profound effect on them and that's the challenge that we have to address.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned at the outset when I stood to my feet today, that I have a lot to say about this Bill. I think this Bill is a really, really bad Bill. It doesn't do any justice to this hall. It doesn't do any justice to democracy. It doesn't do any justice to the freedom that was afforded to us by our veterans. And, Mr. Speaker, it's a shame to stand here today to see this kind of activity happening in 2012. And I would ask the people out there in Saskatchewanland that if you have an opportunity to help us fight back on this Bill, this Bill would be something that we should all . . . It's a hill that we should all gather up together and fight until we get this Bill killed and get this Bill out of the way so we can continue building this democracy, and of course the economy. So, Mr. Speaker, I would point out that we have more to say and we shall say more. I've got other information that I want to share with the Assembly when the time permits.

The Speaker: — The time being now after the hour of 5 o'clock, this House stands recessed to 7 p.m.

[The Assembly recessed from 17:00 until 19:00.]

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Minister of Energy and Resources
Minister Responsible for SaskTel
Minister Responsible for The Global
Transportation Hub Authority

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Minister Responsible for Northern Affairs
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Gaming Corporation

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Minister Responsible for the Status of Women
Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission

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Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Corporation
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Investments Corporation
Minister Responsible for Information
Technology Office
Minister Responsible for Information
Services Corporation
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Government Insurance
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Liquor and Gaming Authority

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Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety
Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan
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Employment and Immigration
Minister Responsible for Innovation
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Power Corporation
Minister Responsible for Uranium
Development Partnership

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

Hon. Laura Ross
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