



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

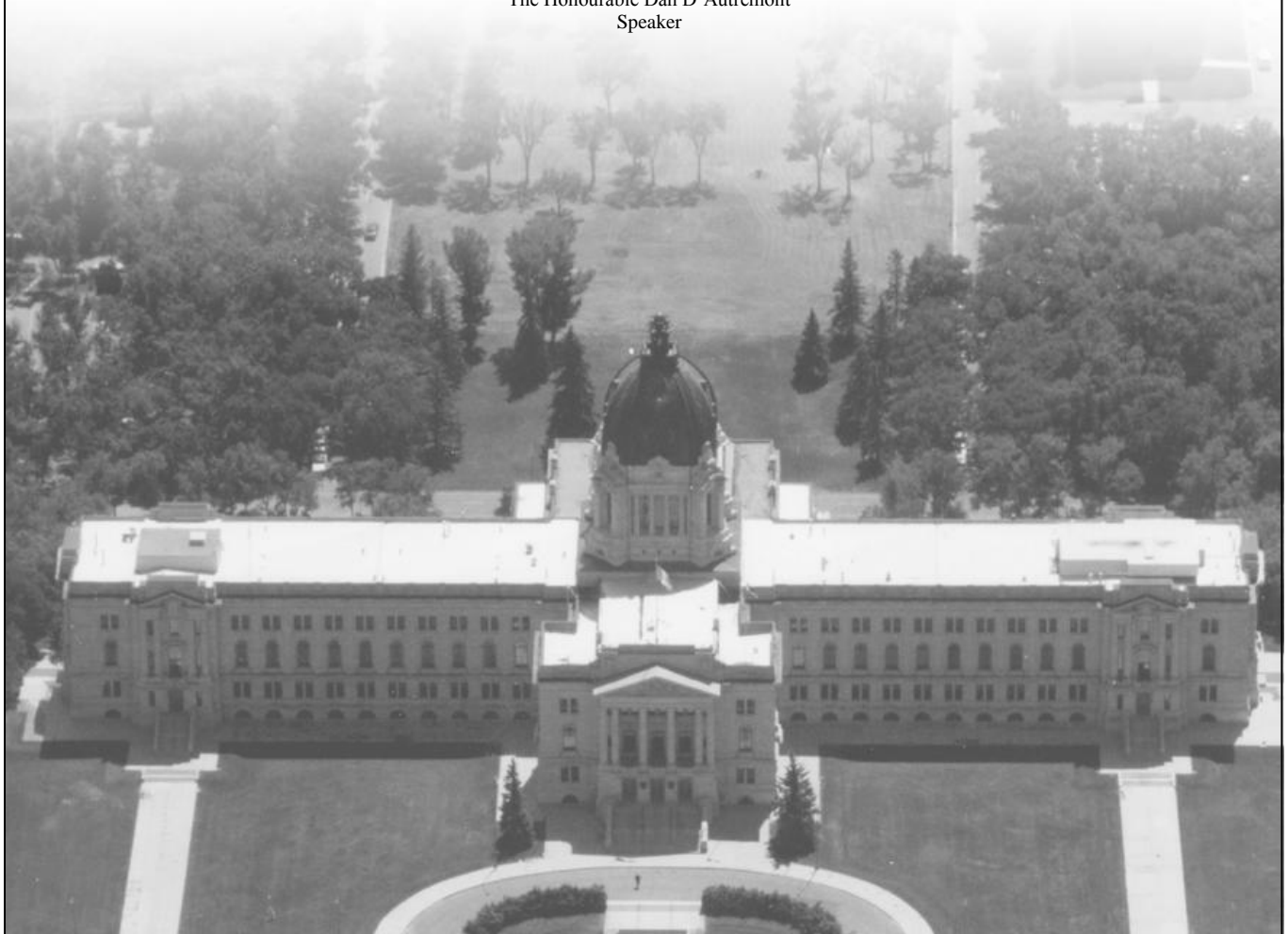
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

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



**MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**

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

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

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Mr. Marchuk:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all the members of the Assembly, I'm delighted to introduce to you 10 grade 12 students from Miller Comprehensive High School in Regina, 10 grade 12 law students and their teacher, Ms. Patrice Krueger. Mr. Speaker, I look forward to visiting with these students after question period, and I would ask all members of the Assembly to join me in welcoming Ms. Krueger and her students to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join in this introduction of this class, Mr. Speaker, because Patrice Krueger, their teacher, is a very good law teacher. She actually worked as a lawyer with me, did her articling with me a number of years ago and decided that her calling should be as a teacher. And she's done an excellent job at that for many, many years. So I want to ask all members to welcome Patrice to the legislature.

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request for leave for an extended introduction.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to rise today to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly our victims services volunteers. In recognition of National Victims of Crime Awareness Week, our government has declared April 22nd to 28th as Victims of Crime Awareness Week here in Saskatchewan. With that in mind, I would like to introduce seven victims services volunteers seated in your gallery. These dedicated volunteers work out of the northeast part of the province, the Regina region, and the Saskatoon victims services programs. They are making their 10- and 15-year anniversaries with the programs.

From the northeast regional victims services we have Linda Walter from Tisdale joining us today. Linda, if you would wave. Joanne Zatylny and Val Orb are here from the Regina region, and from Saskatoon, Vicki Coford who I went to high

school with in grade 9, and it's very apparent the years have been much kinder to her than they have to me. Marla Hartman, Bev Kinshella, and Cecilia Robertson, also from Saskatoon, are all seated in the gallery.

I was honoured to have lunch with these people today, to hear their stories, and share in their fantastic achievement. The experience, knowledge, and dedication they each possess is invaluable. I would also like to mention Cathy Chabot from the Northeast, Joyce Warriner from the Regina region, and Rosalind Regnier of Saskatoon. Although they weren't able to attend today, they are also celebrating their 10- and 15-year anniversaries, and we very much appreciate the work that they've done and continue to do.

We should all be thankful for these dedicated people who are so willing to give their time to help victims of crime navigate the justice system. I would ask that my guests continue their amazing work that they have done over the last 10 and 15 years. They are shining examples of how great the people of the province can be, and that we hope to see them all again five years from now to commemorate their next anniversary. I had indicated to them earlier that this was not a thank you; this was just an ongoing recognition and that they are not, under any circumstances, to stop working.

To show the ministry's appreciation for their continued effort, each of these volunteers is presented with a gift commemorating their years of service. I would like to go one step further and show them here in the Assembly how much we appreciate their commitment and ongoing support of victims of crime. So I'd ask all members to join me in giving a round of applause to these dedicated individuals and all of the nearly 300 victim support workers and 100 board members across the province as we welcome them to their Assembly today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to join in offering thanks and congratulations to these workers with victims in the province of Saskatchewan. It's very gratifying to see a number of people who have been working with the program for many years, and when you see the numbers involved and the community support that's involved, I know that some of them were there early on in the program when I was involved as a minister of Justice. And we had many dreams and hopes about the program, and the kind of dedication that you have shown has brought forward the results that we hoped. And I look forward to many more years of good service from you. So 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 call for . . . presenting a petition calling for greater protection for late-night retail workers by passing Jimmy's law. And we know in the early morning hours of June 20th, 2011, Jimmy Ray Wiebe was shot two times and died from his injuries. He was working at a gas station in Yorkton, alone and

unprotected from intruders.

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

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

And, Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition come from the city of Saskatoon. I do so present.

**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 both 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.

These petitions today are signed by concerned residents of Saskatoon. I so submit.

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

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

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

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully

request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan 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 Opposition Whip.

**Mr. Vermette:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of trappers of Saskatchewan. The current regulations being enforced are creating challenges that are a concern for our traditional trappers. 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 firearm use in consultation with traditional resource users.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

It is signed by many good people of Stanley Mission. I so present.

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Grade 5 and 6 Students Care for the Earth

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to celebrate an important achievement by four of Saskatchewan most talented grade 5 and 6 students.

Our government and SaskPower believe that caring for our Earth is one of our greatest responsibilities. We also believe that every person can make a real difference in preserving the environment. That is why SaskPower Shand greenhouse has sponsored the Energy and our Environment poster contest for 11 years now. The idea behind the contest is to get grade 5 and 6 students to share ideas on how we can all make responsible environmental choices in our daily lives. This contest reminds all of us — kids, teachers, parents, and even members of the Legislative Assembly — how important it is to make good environmental choices each and every day.

Judging by the number of entries this year, the message is getting through loud and clear: 670 posters were submitted from 38 schools. It was refreshing to see so many great ideas on environmental awareness, and I encourage all members of this Assembly to make the special effort to do their part for the environment today and every day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Support for Families and their Pets

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It has long been

said that families come in all shapes and sizes. For many of us, the family pet is an integral part of our home, a source of loyalty and companionship that rivals the best of our friends. Unfortunately for many families already burdened by the rising cost of living, paying for emergency vet care can prove impossible. This forces thousands of reluctant pet owners into painful decisions involving the life of their pet. Over 1,300 healthy and treatable animals were lost last year in Regina alone.

However I'm pleased to rise today to acknowledge the work of a Saskatoon-based organization known as the Konan Koalition. The coalition assists individuals and families under financial constraints, allowing them to make animal-care decisions based on the needs of their animals rather than on the difficulties of their budgets. The organization is the first of its kind in Western Canada, gaining non-profit status in September 2011, and is already active in helping Canadian families.

Dodge is a young dog who was hit by a car in June. His owners, a newlywed couple with a baby on the way, were assisted by a donation from the Konan Koalition so that Dodge could get the surgery he needed. Karma, an SPCA [Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals] rescue dog, recovered following support from the organization and is now back at home playing with his owners and their children. These dogs and more are the new friends of Konan, the namesake being owed to a Saskatoon dog reunited with its family after care at the Western College of Vet Med.

In the short period of time since its inception, the coalition has been recognized as an effective provider of support for animals and their families in need. I ask all members to join me in commending coalition founder Doug Ramage for his work in getting this organization started and to show support for a worthy cause. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Melfort.

#### **Municipal Leaders Prepare for New Potash Mine**

**Mr. Phillips:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this last Friday I had the opportunity to attend the regional planning summit held in Muenster. This summit focused on the challenges and opportunities facing the communities of east central Saskatchewan, resulting from what may become the world's largest potash mine at BHP Jansen Lake site, a site that is in the Melfort constituency, I might add.

This mine will hopefully be constructed over the next three years and will start production with 1,045 employees. Then the mine will ramp up over the following 10 years with 100 miners per year. Part of the presentation focused on the large — huge — potash reserve that the province holds. This potash reserve will supply the world with high-grade fertilizers for hundreds of years.

It should be noted that these municipal leaders are looking at this high-growth area as challenges and not problems, and in many cases have already come up with innovative solutions. I was also invited to a smaller regional meeting held later that evening in Watson. Mr. Speaker, Friday was a great example of municipalities in Saskatchewan coming together to face these

challenges of growth head-on. And I would like all members to join me in congratulating the organizers of these events for their outstanding efforts and their leadership. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[13:45]

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

#### **Saskatoon Educator Named Outstanding Principal**

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate Bob Shmon, the principal of King George Community School in Saskatoon, for being named one of Canada's outstanding principals by The Learning Partnership. Bob is the only recipient from Saskatchewan to receive this award in 2012.

This award recognizes those who communicate a compelling vision, nurture their staff, engage in their communities, and are advocates of a strong public education system. As part of the award, Bob and 39 other principals from across Canada attended a five-day management course at the Joseph L. Rotman School of Management, to learn strategies to help enhance public education at their school and in their community.

Mr. Speaker, Bob has taught in the public school since 1984, and among his teaching assignments were a great six years at Caswell where we worked together as middle years teachers. Bob says the bonus in coming to King George was, and I quote, "an awesome staff, everyone from the teachers to the administration staff, the nutrition staff, and the building operator. You draw on all their strengths."

Learning remains the number one priority in Bob's mind, as shown by his explanation of a great program taking place at King George. I quote, "We are now in the second year of our comprehensive reading initiative, which is meant to reduce some of the learning disparities that occur between community schools and the non-community schools."

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating Bob Shmon for his great work as the principal at King George Community School, earning him the recognition as one of Canada's outstanding principals. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Prince Albert Northcote.

#### **Country Music Awards held in Prince Albert**

**Ms. Jurgens:** — Mr. Speaker, a true sense of community was felt at the Saskatchewan Country Music Awards, which was held in Prince Albert Northcote last Saturday night. These awards showcase the talent of our people, a talent second to none. My colleague from Saskatoon Fairview and I joined in this celebration. It would take far too long to relay to this legislature all the artists that contribute to our province, so I will highlight just three.

Donny Parenteau has chosen to come back to Saskatchewan to live in Prince Albert. My colleague from P.A. [Prince Albert]

Carlton and I could not be more honoured. Donny inspires young minds throughout our province with his motivational speaking.

Samara Yung is a shining example of the youth of this province. Performing professionally since the age of eight, she has showcased her talents at events such as Big Valley Jamboree and the Kinsmen Telemiracle.

Another highly recognized country artist, Blake Emmons, went to Nashville 38 years ago to further his career. A few years ago, he chose to move back to Saskatchewan to live in Love, a small community on the east side of my colleague's constituency of Saskatchewan Rivers. Mr. Speaker, Blake Emmons was instrumental in getting Telemiracle going in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, it is such an honour to highlight our country music artists who, through their words, actions, and deeds, make our Saskatchewan a better community and the best place to live in all of Canada.

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

#### **Yorkton Hosts Gym Sask Provincial Championships**

**Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Saturday I had the honour of bringing greetings on behalf of the Premier and the government to the Shamrock Springers of Yorkton and area for hosting the 2012 Gym Sask Provincial Championships, which represents the national trials for women and men and their provincial Gymnaestrada. Parents, volunteers, and competitors put in great amount of time to ensure that this event was a success.

Gymnastics are a fantastic way to keep our youth active and promote healthy lifestyles. The sport requires physical strength, flexibility, agility, coordination, and balance. All three of our children are involved with the Springers, Mr. Speaker. They learn new skills, improve their physical fitness, and enjoy the many benefits that come from hard work and dedication to a chosen task.

The competitors deserve congratulations for their commitment and hard work. The lessons and life skills they acquire through their participation in gymnastics and other activities will serve them well for their entire lives. The winning participants in this great event move on to the Western regional championships in British Columbia. Our government sees the value in activities and recently expanded the active families benefit to make involvement in sport more affordable for Saskatchewan residents.

I would encourage all members of the Assembly to join me in congratulating our Saskatchewan athletes and continuing to encourage healthy living, dedication, and commitment to sport. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Saskatchewan Rivers.

#### **Child Welfare Transformation Strategy**

**Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise in

the House to talk about the Government of Saskatchewan's next steps in moving forward on our child welfare transformation strategy. Our child welfare transformation strategy is guiding our efforts to change the child welfare system on the themes of working differently, prevention, and renewal.

Reviewing and updating our legislation is a critical step in renewing our system. I am excited that we are moving forward with our partners in this work.

Throughout April and May, the Ministry of Social Services will hold initial discussions with its partners, the FSIN [Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations] and Métis Nation-Saskatchewan and other key stakeholders. The purpose of these early meetings will be to review the child welfare review panel's recommendations in the context of legislative renewal. This will determine the potential scope of the legislative recommendations. Any revisions to legislation will take into account changes in society as well as in child welfare practices that have occurred since the legislation was last amended.

Mr. Speaker, this legislative review addresses one of 12 recommendations provided by the Saskatchewan child welfare review panel to make fundamental change to the child welfare system. This will mean real results for government and our partners in the future. This update is indeed a success we can be proud of. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### **QUESTION PERIOD**

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

#### **Conference Sponsorship**

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Thursday we asked why the government was spending in excess of \$100,000 sponsoring the WCIT [World Congress on Information Technology] 2012 out-of-province conference taking place in Quebec. In fact the government has now revealed that SaskTel International alone spent \$75,000. When I asked the minister last week, he claimed that he wasn't aware of the amount or even the sponsorship, Mr. Speaker. This isn't a couple of thousand dollars. It's 75,000 taxpayer dollars being spent on this out-of-province conference. How could the minister, who's charged with oversight of this major Crown corporation, not know this?

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

**Hon. Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week the member asked questions, four questions I believe it was, with respect to this area. SaskTel International sponsored \$75,000 to provide the company with the opportunity to market their software and consulting services to potential clientele throughout the world. This is nothing unusual. They take part in these types of events on a number of occasions.

Enterprise sponsored \$35,000, SaskPower, \$25,000 for areas of responsibility under their corporations. Again this is nothing unusual. However, I will say this, that the government is reviewing this sponsorship policy, and it will look at better

coordinating between the Crown corporations through CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan] in the future.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, this seems like a very hefty price tag for taxpayers, with questionable value for Saskatchewan people. Some say it looks like nothing more than expensive, extravagant ministerial and executive jet-setting.

Mr. Speaker, how many ministers, Crown CEOs [chief executive officer], executive managers, and staff are going to this conference, and what will the cost be to the people of this province?

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

**Hon. Mr. Boyd:** — Mr. Speaker, again I would say that this is nothing unusual. This was done under the NDP [New Democratic Party]. It is being done under the Sask Party administration. This is a very large IT [information technology] conference — some 3,000 delegates, 80 different countries will be represented there. All of the Crown corporations will have opportunity to sell either software or other areas that they work within. This is something that is a very, very large conference, an IT conference, that of course SaskTel and other Crown corporations in the IT field would find very valuable in terms of selling the products that they develop.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, they're interesting answers. And when we look at the website, there's no sponsorship by other major telecoms. There's no sponsorship by other power companies. There's no sponsorship by other jurisdictions other than the host jurisdiction.

We see SaskTel International spending \$75,000. Late Thursday the government finally revealed that in addition to that spending, SaskPower is of course spending \$25,000 and Enterprise Saskatchewan is spending an additional \$35,000. Last week all three ministers took notice of this question, claiming they had no information on the spending, money being spent by Crown corporations that they're responsible for, Mr. Speaker.

If the ministers responsible didn't know about the pricey sponsorship, who exactly authorized in excess of \$100,000 of taxpayers' money to be spent on this out-of-province conference in Quebec?

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

**Hon. Mr. Boyd:** — Mr. Speaker, of course the member's question last week was a specific amount that the Crown corporations were involved in. We've given you that amount: \$75,000 in the case of SaskTel International; Enterprise Saskatchewan was \$35,000 that had been contributed two years ago; and SaskPower's was \$25,000. You wanted a specific number from each one of the corporations. We have provided

you with that knowledge. Again as I've said, the government is going to take a look at this to better coordinate between the Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that sponsorships of this type are done in an appropriate fashion.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, there's over \$135,000 of taxpayers' dollars going to sponsor this out-of-province conference in Quebec at the same time as rates are going up here in Saskatchewan and a local economic development conference, SEDA [Saskatchewan Economic Development Association], is being cancelled due to a shortage of funding. Mr. Speaker, it doesn't add up. It doesn't make sense. We're talking about well over \$100,000 of which ministers claim they had no understanding. It's obvious that value-for-dollar analysis simply wasn't done.

Mr. Speaker, how is this serving the best interests of Saskatchewan people whom quite simply deserve better?

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

**Hon. Mr. Boyd:** — Mr. Speaker, indeed the people of Saskatchewan are owed an explanation. We have provided that explanation. And they are, they should, and they do expect us to do better in terms of accountability.

If we look at your track record, the NDP's track record over the last number of years, Mr. Speaker, we can go through them if you like. In South America, in Guyana, you lost \$2 million there. In NST [NST Network Services of Chicago] in Chicago, the US [United States] Midwest Fibre Optics company — remember that? — \$16 million lost there. If you want to look in Newfoundland on a cable company down there, \$9.4 million lost there. We can go through the list if you like, but it adds up to an awful lot more money than \$100,000 as sponsorships that the three Crown corporations put forward in this event.

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

### Green Rebate Program

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We know from the budget the Sask Party has cut every green program they could. It seems the environment takes a back seat to more politicians.

Now we know from the latest SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] report that another shoe has dropped. The Sask Party has eliminated the rebate on auto insurance for eco-friendly hybrid and fuel-efficient vehicles. The program was immensely popular, helping thousands of people save a little bit of money on their premiums for driving an environmentally friendly vehicle. To the Minister Responsible for SGI: why is the Sask Party government pulling yet another green incentive?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMillan:** — Mr. Speaker, SGI has recently come forward with their annual report. We've also recently come forward with a rate increase, Mr. Speaker. SGI is accountable to

the driving public. We have to ensure that we have rates that adequately cover the costs of accidents, of injuries, Mr. Speaker. And before we would come forward to raise rates on the driving public, Mr. Speaker, we need to ensure that we have the appropriate spending.

And the green rebate program for high efficiency automobiles, Mr. Speaker, was something that got the ball rolling. The people of Saskatchewan, you see very many high efficiency vehicles in Saskatchewan. And those vehicles, Mr. Speaker . . . We have a very big province. People are driving long distances. I think that for individuals that are looking to see those savings, to be responsible, they're investing in those, Mr. Speaker, themselves.

SGI, Mr. Speaker, will continue to ensure that we have affordable rates for the driving public here.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Sask Party government certainly didn't talk about this in the last election. In fact along with their desire for more politicians, I guess it was something that slipped their mind.

In the Sask Party 2011 platform, it says they'll work with the Crowns to help Saskatchewan go green. But it's clear they meant something entirely different. In 2011 approximately 14,000 people received this rebate. The year before saw 10,750 people receive it. And nowhere in last year's release did they mention it was the last year of the program — nowhere in the release, Mr. Speaker.

To the minister: why is every decent program on the environment torn up under the Sask Party to make room for millions more on spending more on more politicians?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Crown Investments Corporation.

**Hon. Mr. McMillan:** — Mr. Speaker, the success of this program that the member opposite has just pointed out in clear terms, those vehicles are still on the road today, Mr. Speaker. The emission savings that were captured with the incentive put forward by this government over the first four years of the program, those vehicles are still on the road today. And the success of these vehicles, Mr. Speaker, I don't . . . I would expect that the people that are driving them today will, when they purchase their next car, may make the same decision.

And from SGI's point of view, we will continue to ensure that we have cost-effective rates for the driving public, and that we're responsible to ensure that our rates fairly represent, and that there's an appropriate reserve in place should there be accidents, injuries, Mr. Speaker, and SGI will maintain a healthy balance in their stabilization fund. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[14:00]

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last year, the Minister of SGI said, "It's very encouraging to see the number of 'green' vehicle owners receiving a rebate has grown each year." He added, "It is good for our environment and it is good for the economy."

If a program meets the criteria of being affordable, good for the environment, and good for the economy, surely the Sask Party only has an ideological axe to grind. This rebate has helped ten thousands of people, tens of thousands of people make the greener choice to drive an environmentally friendly vehicle. To the minister: why is the Sask Party government axing it to make way for more politicians?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Crown Investments Corporation.

**Hon. Mr. McMillan:** — Mr. Speaker, I would remind the member opposite who makes the assertion that this is an ideological change, I would remind the member opposite that it was in fact this government, in our platform in the 2007-11, that came forward with this green rebate, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, I stand by my comments last year that I am very encouraged that people have recognized the value of this, that people in Saskatchewan are driving greener vehicles, Mr. Speaker, and that those vehicles are still on the road today and that the savings to those drivers from driving a vehicle that is marked fuel efficient, Mr. Speaker, is something that will benefit our environment for this year and for many years to come as those vehicles stay in rotation in Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This policy change puts us completely out of step with other provinces. Manitoba has a \$2,000 rebate for hybrid electric vehicles. BC [British Columbia] exempts the PST [provincial sales tax] on their purchase. Ontario and Quebec give substantial rebates for hybrid purchases. Even in Alberta, even in Alberta the Wildrose Party is in favour of consumer rebates for hybrid vehicles. We're out of step with the direction of the country, Mr. Speaker, especially with a province like ours where our people have to drive long distances to get from place to place, and actually the minister had mentioned that.

Why is the Sask Party government making it harder for the middle class to make responsible, environmentally friendly choices for their families?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister for Crown Investments Corporation.

**Hon. Mr. McMillan:** — Mr. Speaker, as I said in my earlier answer, Saskatchewan has recently gone before the rate review panel, asking for a slight increase to ensure that we have an appropriate reserve in our Auto Fund.

But, Mr. Speaker, I can report to the member opposite that Saskatchewan has some of if not the lowest rates for driving in all of Canada, making it the most affordable place for



middle-class people in Saskatchewan to drive vehicles, Mr. Speaker. She wants to compare it to other provinces though, Mr. Speaker. I think that this is a very apt comparison. Saskatchewan is the only province with a balanced budget, Mr. Speaker. The other provinces have gone forward with large deficits. In Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, we have a balanced budget. We have responsible rates in our auto and driving rates, Mr. Speaker, and we will continue to be responsible to the citizens of Saskatchewan.

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

### Environmental Assessment Reviews

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, the Conservative government is significantly reducing federal environmental oversight of natural resource developments and other projects by consolidating assessments into three departments, eliminating reviews for small projects, and handling more regulatory responsibility to the provinces.

Environmental assessment reviews are the main line of defence that protect our water, soil, and air from contamination. For example the Vale mine and other proposed potash projects will have a significant impact on water in this province and deserve a rigorous review.

To the minister: how will his ministry handle the federal off-loading of this responsibility for assessments?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister for the Environment.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, let me just begin by saying that, that projects like that that the member raised will get a rigorous review, environmental assessment review in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we in fact, the Ministry of Environment had the opportunity to present to the House of Commons committee on the environment in November where we put forward our support of the principle of one project, one assessment which recommends . . . We recommended to the federal government, acknowledgement that the provincial environmental assessment process is equivalent or better than the federal process for projects on provincial land, that we get a blanket exclusion from the federal triggers for a federal assessment, and bilateral agreements for environmental co-operation during this process that might involve other federal agencies, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I will be following up with the federal minister as to the exact details. We're still waiting for the federal Bill to be introduced that will implement these changes, but in principle, Mr. Speaker, we support these changes.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The federal government is also looking at limiting environmental groups from intervening in regulatory hearings for major natural resources projects in an effort to shortcut reviews. This will be included in the new and amended federal legislation the

minister referred to, which will also limit participation in future regulatory hearings to only those people directly affected by projects, according to government officials, although details are still to come.

To the minister: does this government also plan to limit environmental groups' meaningful participation in the environmental assessment process?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, directly to the member's question: Mr. Speaker, no we don't. We're waiting to see what the federal requirements will be in terms of gaining equivalency with the federal government. We have a 30-day public review where we accept submissions from anybody. We also have the ability, I have the ability, Mr. Speaker, to extend that an additional 30 days, which we have done on several occasions.

Mr. Speaker, I'm quite surprised at the line of questioning because ministers of the Environment in Canada have been active in lobbying for the one project-one assessment for a number of years, Mr. Speaker. I read from a document from the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment with respect to a proposed one project-one assessment approach, the CCME [Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment] — that's the Canadian Environment ministers task force of officials from across the provinces — to look at, and I quote, “. . . options to streamline an approach for EA for projects subject to provincial/territorial and federal environmental assessments” that are consistent with the one project, one EA [environmental assessment] process approach.

Mr. Speaker, not only was that signed off on by the Leader of the Opposition when he was in environment, but from the small group of officials that were tasked to look at this, Mr. Speaker. He authorized Saskatchewan Environment officials to be on that task group.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. These questions aren't about the one project-one assessment approach; in fact, that makes sense. This isn't what the questions are about.

The Premier has said, “We want to make sure we have a rigorous environmental assessment process.” But the Sask Party government's record tells an entirely different story, Mr. Speaker. The Sask Party government has slashed funding for industrial development protection by 49 per cent. With projects like the Vale mine and others, the province needs reassurance that rigorous environmental reviews are in place. The Premier says he's in favour of the harmonized approach, but he hasn't backed it up with proper support.

To the minister: where is the rigorous protection of our environment that the Premier has committed to? How can Saskatchewan people have confidence in the environmental assessment process when the government continues to slash funding?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister for the Environment.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, with respect to the member's question and the assertions, that is complete nonsense, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we undertook a reorganization of some of the branches of the Ministry of Environment to deal with this, including building a technical resources branch that takes part in the environment assessment process. In fact, Mr. Speaker, we have added more than twice the number of environmental assessment branch employees, Mr. Speaker, that look at the environmental assessment. So we have doubled, more than doubled the number of people.

And another important step that we took, Mr. Speaker, under the members opposite when environmental assessment was begun under the former government, when staff was assigned, there was no backup staff assigned so that if somebody for whatever reason had to take sick leave or had to, Mr. Speaker . . . or couldn't fulfill those functions, we now on every environmental assessment assign backup staff so that the process continues forward so that we have timely reviews, Mr. Speaker, and proper reviews of all projects.

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

### Electoral Representation

**Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, the Premier introduced Bill 36, which is going to remove young people under the age of 18 from the equation that will be used to draw up the new electoral boundaries. Bill 36 also adds three more politicians to the Legislative Assembly at the cost of millions of dollars.

Mr. Speaker, we've been receiving petitions, electronically and otherwise, and some we've presented here, but a common response is this: "No extra MLAs are needed. Health care is more important and so is education. No one but the Sask Party supports this Bill."

My question to the Premier: will he admit he's made a mistake and pull back Bill 36?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, we've answered this question before. In 1979 the number of constituencies was set at 65 — 63 in the South, three in the North. At that time it was based on the voters list. In 1987 the number of seats was moved to 66 seats with seats set at 29 urban and 35 rural and two in the North, and that time based on the voters list. In 1991 it stayed at 66 seats but reverted to 64 and two, once again based on the voters list. In 1993 the number of seats was reduced to 58 — 56 plus the two.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen a healthy, robust increase in our population and, Mr. Speaker, we feel it is an appropriate, reasonable, and fair thing to do to ensure that the citizens of our province have a good opportunity and good access to their MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly].

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

**Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, for weeks we've been debating Bill 36, and in fact there was an extensive debate on this Bill

last week. Our office has received numerous letters and telephone calls asking why the Sask Party government is excluding young people under the age of 18 from the electoral boundary calculations and why the Sask Party government is spending millions of dollars on more politicians. A quote from one of the petitions says this: "Lessen the number of politicians and invest in the people, for crying out loud." Mr. Speaker, even the Children's Advocate has weighed in on Bill 36, saying it's probably a violation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

This afternoon we will be putting forward a reasoned amendment to Bill 36. My question to the Premier: will the government support this amendment?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite talks about saving money. Mr. Speaker, we believe in that as well. Mr. Speaker, since our government came into office in 2007, we have reduced the money spent on communications by in excess of \$5 million a year and the amount of money spent by cabinet ministers' travel by three and a half millions dollars a year. Mr. Speaker, that is eight and a half million dollars per year that we are saving since we have formed government, and that is an ongoing saving.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier made a commitment that there would be sufficient savings found in the upcoming budgets that there would be no additional costs to taxpayers. Mr. Speaker, we are going ahead with that. There will be no costs until after the next election after the redistribution takes place. We are doing this in a fair, competent, professional manner, Mr. Speaker. We want to ensure that we have well-balanced, reasonable sized constituencies where people are treated fairly and appropriately.

[14:15]

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

**Mr. Nilson:** — Mr. Speaker, common sense Saskatchewan people have listened to the argument that the member makes here and that the Premier has made other places and say, this doesn't make any sense. Adding three more members to this legislature and having them here for years is going to cost millions of dollars.

Mr. Speaker, page 58 of the 2005 Sask Party policy guide says, "The Saskatchewan Party holds as one of its eight guiding principles the belief in democratic reform to make government more responsive to the people it serves." Mr. Speaker, that same page also says in paragraph DM05-4, and this paragraph specifically states, "A Saskatchewan Party government will implement free votes except on the Budget and Speech from the Throne in the legislature so that MLAs can represent the view of their constituents."

Will the Premier let the other 47 members on that side of the House take a free vote today? Will he let them represent the true views of their constituents?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, if this matter comes to a vote today, and I hope it does come to a vote today, I can assure you that each and every member on this side of the House is going to be voting in favour of this Bill and against the amendments that are put forward. Mr. Speaker, we want to ensure that we have good, adequate, and fair representation. Mr. Speaker, the member from Athabasca has 6,511 constituents; the member from Cumberland, 8,726, the member from Saskatoon Centre, 7,000; and Saskatoon Southeast, 16,343 voters. I want to look those people in the eye at the end of this process and say, your vote counts as much as somebody else's. We are not counting young people because they can't vote. We will apportion election costs on the basis of voters, and that is how we are going to do it. And that is a right, fair, and competent way to do it, and those members ought support it, Mr. Speaker.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### **Bill No. 42 — *The Graduate Retention Program Amendment Act, 2012***

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

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 42, *The Graduate Retention Program Amendment Act* be now introduced and read for a first time.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Advanced Education, Employment and Immigration has moved first reading of Bill No. 42, *The Graduate Retention Program Amendment Act, 2012*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel:** — First reading of this Bill.

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

**Hon. Mr. Norris:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In response to your question, for when shall the Bill be read a second time, I'll just say the next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

##### **Bill No. 43 — *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2012***

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

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 43, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2012* be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Finance has moved first reading of Bill No. 43, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2012*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried. When shall this Bill be read a second time?

**Hon. Mr. Krawetz:** — The next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### SECOND READINGS

##### **Bill No. 36**

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

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to stand up again and continue this debate, but I know in just a few minutes we want to go forward into this discussion. But I just want to review the amendment that we proposed. The reasoned amendment was to have a second look at Bill 36. We think that there was some fundamental flaws in it, that it did not go to, it was not presented to the public during the campaign. It did catch many people off guard and I think many people think that we should have had a chance during the election in 2011 to express an opinion.

The idea around the fact that the population has grown has caught nobody surprised. We all knew that the population was growing here in Saskatchewan. And the time for this . . . And it has been growing since I think 2006, is when we started turning the corner around — maybe even earlier. And so it's by no surprise that we knew that we would have more people. And as the Minister of Justice has said that there is great variation, as you have, between different ridings. But we know we have a Boundaries Commission. And it was announced last Friday the Boundaries Commission was set, and we know who's on it, and we know that work that it's going to do. So we proposed this amendment and it says, and I read:

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

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

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

Saskatchewan.”

So this is about elections today, and it’s about elections into the future. And we believe, we fundamentally believe that when you have a representative democracy like we do, that everyone counts all the time. We do a census, and one of the reasons to do the census is to get that number, is to get that number. And so that’s hugely important. And we just fundamentally believe that it’s inappropriate to be adding three more MLAs. There is no point to that. There is many other choices that we could be making.

And we think that we’ve seen even questions today about the green vehicle rebate or discount that SGI used to get is no longer available, and we think that’s wrong. We think there is a way to encourage people to get to seeing the wisdom of having a hybrid vehicle. In fact in our family, we have two hybrid vehicles. We think it’s the right thing. One is actually too old to qualify any more, so I was actually hoping that it would extend to 2000. And here we lose both ways, by having an older hybrid and a younger one. So I’m particularly disappointed. I know many people across the province today, and I know the minister will be getting many letters on this. I think this is a huge . . . I think this is a significant issue. I won’t put it in the huge basket, but I know I’ll be writing a letter.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think this is a critical piece and I think that we need to take some time, and that’s why we put forward this reasoned amendment. And I hope that the folks over there will have a free vote, and we can see the true measure of what these people’s been getting. And so with that, Mr. Speaker, as I’ve outlined our case before you, we think that we should support this amendment.

**The Speaker:** — On the proposed motion by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General:

That Bill No. 36, *The Constituency Boundaries Amendment Act, 2011* be now read a second time.

And the proposed amendment thereto moved by the member for Cumberland:

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

“this House declines to give second reading to Bill 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

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

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

**The Speaker:** — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — No.

**The Speaker:** — All those in favour say aye.

**An Hon. Member:** — Aye.

**The Speaker:** — Recorded division. Call in the members.

[The division bells rang from 14:24 until 14:52.]

**The Speaker:** — The question before the House is the main motion on Bill No. 36 and the proposed amendment. Will the House take the question as read?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — All those in favour of the amendment please rise.

[Yeas — 9]

Nilson	Forbes	Belanger
Wotherspoon	Brotten	Chartier
Sproule	McCall	Vermette

**The Speaker:** — All those opposed to the amendment please rise.

[Nays — 45]

Morgan	Bjornerud	Norris
Draude	Krawetz	Boyd
Eagles	McMorris	Cheveldayoff
Huyghebaert	Toth	Bradshaw
Reiter	Duncan	Ross
McMillan	Harpauer	Harrison
Wyant	Hickie	Elhard
Hart	Parent	Brkich
Stewart	Ottenbreit	Weekes
Campeau	Heppner	Wilson
Michelson	Kirsch	Merriman
Doke	Cox	Makowsky
Jurgens	Steinley	Doherty
Lawrence	Tochor	Moe
Marchuk	Phillips	Docherty

**Clerk:** — Mr. Speaker, those in favour of the amendment, 9; those opposed, 45.

**The Speaker:** — The amendment is defeated. Is the House ready for the main question? I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Bill 36 was introduced in this legislature without any discussion in the election, with no mention in the Throne Speech, and as far as we can tell after quite a number of weeks, no consultation with the people of the province. Mr. Speaker, that’s fundamentally the wrong way to

amend legislation that relates to the democratic process. Any other jurisdiction in Canada that would look at changing the democratic process for their province or their territory would end up going to the people at various points to make sure that everybody has a chance to give their comments.

Now we know from the responses that we've been receiving on a number of levels that adding three more MLAs and adding the millions of dollars extra that those MLAs will cost over the number of years is not the priority of the people of the province. And more importantly, not including those people under age 18 in your calculations as to how you set up constituency boundaries is sending the wrong message to young people and to families about the worth of their children.

And, Mr. Speaker, we've been getting comments from right across the province about this. And it's very interesting how direct people are. I'm going to make a few quotations from some of the comments that we've been receiving online at our NDP caucus website. From Prince Albert: "Amazing how the Sask Party can cut so many social issues and jobs but turn around and give themselves raises and add more positions — sickening." Mr. Speaker, there's a comment from Regina: "The youth of this province are our future and deserve to be counted." Mr. Speaker, there's a very clear plea from Regina: "No extra MLAs, please."

Mr. Speaker, there's a comment from Saskatoon: "As a mother of three young children, I find it disgraceful that the Saskatchewan Party feels that they don't count. Many of my concerns are about things that affect my children. They count." Mr. Speaker, there's a quote or there's a message from somebody in Regina: "Premier Wall, trying to rig our democracy to suit your political ambitions is not acceptable. Kids count and 58 politicians is more than enough." Another one from Regina: "Three more politicians and five bucks more per medication equal one party I will never be able to vote for again."

Mr. Speaker, there are people all over the province sending in comments. And I know that the members opposite appear to laugh about this. I'm not sure if they were laughing when they were talking to their constituents over the last few weeks. But it's very clear to me, when I have been going out and about in Saskatchewan, that I've had many Sask Party members who come to me and say that they are ashamed of the Premier and what he's done on this particular Bill and on some other things. And it's a question of being ashamed about going forward with something like this in the context of so many people who are losing out in other areas.

[15:00]

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that the members opposite better be very careful about laughing about this particular issue because it's not a laughing matter. It goes right to the fundamental nature of our legislature, of our democracy. And any time that people treat that with disdain or disregard, that's a sign that they're no longer fit to be in this place. They're no longer fit to be members of this legislature.

Mr. Speaker, I think that what has happened over a number of years, but especially in this last six-month period, is that the

Premier and his 48 other members have decided that they have such an overwhelming majority that they can do anything with a complete disregard for the opposition but, more importantly, with a complete disregard for the people of the province.

Common sense Saskatchewan people say, that's enough. We're not going to allow this any more. We're not willing to live in a province where a group of women and men who are elected let it go to their head and let it go to doing things which are not appropriate. Mr. Speaker, Bill 36 is a Bill like that, that's not appropriate. And moreover it spends money in a place where we don't need to spend money, and it doesn't recognize that this money can be used in other places. The responses of the Premier to say that, oh we can figure out how to get other money — that just doesn't wash. People don't understand that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there are some other reasons this Bill has some difficulties, and they relate to our Canadian Constitution and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. And the Children's Advocate has been the person who's been most vocal about this, but others have raised this concern as well to me because they know I'm a lawyer. And, Mr. Speaker, we're not certain what kinds of challenges there may be to this legislation because it relates to, once again, fundamental issues of democracy. And what we're concerned about is that the members opposite have not consulted with the people. The Premier has not put in place appropriate policy consultation to allow this matter to be dealt with. And any time that you come forward with legislation like that, it ends up being subject to review.

Now we know that the labour legislation that this government was so all fired to pass has now received a major setback from a very reasoned judge and that it's costing the province a lot of money in the courts. But more importantly, it's costing money in the economy because of the uncertainty that it creates. Now, Mr. Speaker, this type of legislation as well causes difficulties in that area.

So I think the final or fundamental point I want to make is that this Bill doesn't meet the common sense test, the Saskatchewan ordinary perspective test. Because at a time when government's cutting money, we're adding more politicians. So people are losing their jobs because they say there's not enough money to do certain things, and they're adding more politicians. They're cutting back in the archives, adding more politicians. They're cutting days where our citizens can go to museums and adding more politicians. We're cutting services in a whole number of areas, and we're adding more politicians. We're adding cost to seniors around their health care, around their drug costs, and we're adding more politicians. Students are having to pay substantial increases in tuition. Same time we're adding more politicians at the cost of millions of dollars.

The common sense question is, where are the government's priorities? Who is making these choices? The only answer is the Premier of the province and his executive group. And we today ask the question, would the members opposite follow Saskatchewan Party policy and have a free vote which will allow for the members to speak about this? And, Mr. Speaker, we saw the result. We know their constituents will now be able to see on the record the names of every person who stood up and voted to defeat the amendment. Mr. Speaker, once again

what we're saying is that the common sense perspective does not justify this Bill going forward.

Now we've been taking every step we can to give the government enough time to slow down the process or stop the process and send it back to the people for consultation. For one day we thought maybe they had seen the light and given this a little more time. But clearly that was a one-day reprieve, and here we are again, Mr. Speaker. So I think that there's still a major question around the consultation that hasn't happened with the people of Saskatchewan. And so, Mr. Speaker, I am going to propose a motion as follows. The motion I'm going to make is this:

That the motion be amended by deleting all of the words after the word "That" and substituting the following:

Bill No. 36, *The Constituency Boundaries Amendment Act, 2011* be not now read a second time, but that it be read a second time this day six months hence.

So moved, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Opposition House Leader:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "That" and substituting the following:

Bill No. 36, *The Constituency Boundaries Amendment Act, 2011* be not now read a second time, but it be read a second time this day six months hence.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Saskatoon Massey Place.

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to say it's a pleasure, but it's not a pleasure, Mr. Speaker, because of the nature of the Bill that we are discussing today and the steps that members opposite are trying to take here with respect to our democratic system. But it is important, Mr. Speaker, to enter in on debate on this piece of legislation, and I am happy to speak in support of the hoist motion that was put forward by the Leader of the Opposition when we look at this piece of legislation. The legislation, Mr. Speaker, that the Leader of the Official Opposition was speaking about is Bill No. 36. This Act, Mr. Speaker, is called *The Constituency Boundaries Act, 1993*.

And, Mr. Speaker, when we speak to different types of legislation here in the House, there are of course different types of Bills that we speak to. There are those types of Bills, Mr. Speaker, that are generally housekeeping in nature, and on a routine basis we have that type of legislation come forward from ministers opposite, from ministers who through the departments have looked at existing pieces of legislation and it has been determined that changes are required. And those types of changes, Mr. Speaker, can be for a variety of reasons. Sometimes there has been a change in practice.

Sometimes, Mr. Speaker, existing legislation was not a permanent solution but was a temporary fix, so to speak. I can think of the example last week speaking to some legislation around crop insurance that the Minister of Agriculture has

brought forward to the House. And in that case, it was a situation where the piece of legislation that the minister was bringing forward was a more permanent legislative solution to what had been in place already.

Sometimes, Mr. Speaker, the legislation is brought forward by members opposite is more significant. And I think when we're looking at Bill No. 36, this is most certainly a piece of legislation that is more significant. And I think it is significant, Mr. Speaker, because it misses the mark in so many important areas, and not only missing the mark, Mr. Speaker, but I think it works against the ideals and the principles that we hold near and dear to us as participants in the democratic process. And I think, Mr. Speaker, it weakens the sound reputation that we have here in the province. And I think, Mr. Speaker, it weakens the signals that we send to all Saskatchewan people here in the province.

And I say that, Mr. Speaker, when I think of all Saskatchewan people — that includes those that live in urban centres, those that live in rural areas, those that live in the North, Mr. Speaker, those that live in the South, those individuals, Mr. Speaker, who may be very young, just born, those that would be a bit older, perhaps as a child, a bit older yet as a teenager, into middle age and right up to seniors and golden years, Mr. Speaker. It's important that the pieces of legislation that we put forward do in fact speak to the interests and the concerns of everyone in the province. And I think that is very important to keep in mind.

Mr. Speaker, the length of this particular Bill No. 36, the Bill that is addressed in the hoist motion put forward by the Leader of the Opposition, is not that long in actual content. It's a one pager, Bill No. 36, Mr. Speaker, with just a few sections. And this was a piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, that members opposite chose to brought forward. I don't know who exactly was pushing it. That'll be a topic of comments later on this afternoon that I will make. But, Mr. Speaker, we know that the leadership opposite decided this was the right approach to take for whatever reason, and so they brought this forward.

Mr. Speaker, the actual piece of legislation, I'll read it now so that those at home have a sense of the length of it and what it is like.

The short title:

**1** This Act may be cited as *The Constituency Boundaries Amendment Act, 2011*.

So the short title, self-explanatory there, Mr. Speaker. The next component:

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

**Section 2 amended** [Mr. Speaker]

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

So, Mr. Speaker, this component of the legislation as brought forward here is one of the most important parts of this brief

piece of legislation. And that, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that when making the calculations for constituency populations, members opposite are suggesting that those who are under 18 years of age should no longer count. And I will have more to say about that, Mr. Speaker, in the minutes ahead.

The next component, Mr. Speaker:

**Section 3 amended**

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

**Section 12 amended**

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

So this, Mr. Speaker, is the second main component of the legislation, the major change that we see members opposite wanting to bring forward and that is changing the number of individuals in the southern part of the province, Mr. Speaker, from being 56 MLAs to 59. And that, Mr. Speaker, is one of the most significant changes along with the 18 years of age issue.

And this, Mr. Speaker, is as the Leader of the Official Opposition mentioned, is one of the issues that has people scratching their head wondering why on earth members opposite, at a time when they are making decisions about cuts, in a time when they say they're talking about the best interests of Saskatchewan people over the long term, would choose that there should be more politicians in the province, especially, Mr. Speaker, when we look at the number of individuals that MLAs in Saskatchewan represent compared to other provincial jurisdictions.

**Section 13 amended is**

**6 Subsection . . . [3](2) is repealed and the following substituted:**

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

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

where:

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

So this formula here, Mr. Speaker, is basically the means by which the populations in each constituency would be calculated, what the appropriate amount would be for each constituency. And individuals may be wondering the nature of the TP minus NP, that's the total population minus the northern population, Mr. Speaker. And that consideration there is in order to allow for proper representation in the North with respect to some of the traditional rules that have been in place, recognizing the huge area of the North and the issues that are there.

[15:15]

The next section, Mr. Speaker, is the:

**Transitional—Commission to prepare reports based on amendments**

7 Notwithstanding any provision of *The Constituency Boundaries Act, 1993*, if a Constituency Boundaries Commission has been established pursuant to that Act before the coming into force of this Act, the Constituency Boundaries Commission shall prepare its interim and final reports based on the amendments made by this Act.

And no. 8, Mr. Speaker:

**Coming into force**

8 This Act comes into force on assent.

And that of course is when the Lieutenant Governor signs off on the legislation, it having been passed through the different stages that are required here in the House and in the committee.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's important to mention *The Constituency Boundaries Act* and the Constituency Boundaries Commission because, Mr. Speaker, this is the group, it has been the traditional practice over the years . . . it's the traditional process, I should say, that evaluates changes that are in order and necessary for constituency boundaries to better reflect population changes that may have occurred over the previous years. And, Mr. Speaker, this is a process that occurs regularly and is an appropriate process and a good process, and one that has worked.

And I will make more extended comments on this issue, Mr. Speaker, but this is one of the issues I think where members opposite, especially the Justice minister, is trying to do a little bit of a spin that would serve their own interests with respect to defending this poorly thought-out position, in stating that adding more politicians and decreasing the age to 18 is actually about ensuring that there are an equal number of people in constituencies.

Well, Mr. Speaker, there is a very clearly a mechanism already in place to make those kinds of changes that are needed as certain areas, certain communities may grow. Some may shrink. Those are the types of adjustments that regularly occur that ought to occur, Mr. Speaker. And for the minister to say that we need three more politicians in the province in order for that to work doesn't make sense and in my opinion, Mr. Speaker, is an attempt to provide a little bit of interference on the issue as opposed to truly speaking about members' opposite true motives as to why they want this piece of legislation. But I will expand more on that in the minutes ahead.

While the actual piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, is quite brief — a one pager, as I said — it's important. And this is a good lesson, I think, always for opposition members reviewing legislation or government backbenchers reviewing legislation or those in the public who are reviewing legislation: it's often, Mr. Speaker, the short, succinct pieces of legislation, the ones that aren't very long, which at first glance may appear not to be that significant. It's always so important to look closely at them because they can tell a very different story, a more complicated story and in some cases, such as the one with Bill No. 36, a

troubling story, Mr. Speaker, when we look at the actions that members opposite want to do and want to put forward.

The explanatory notes that are provided after the minister's second reading speech — or I guess provided when the legislation was presented to the Assembly, not simply when the speech is provided by the minister explaining why he thinks that this is the right way to go — are a bit longer and, for the most part, Mr. Speaker, provide an explanation similar to what I have provided as I've gone through the different components of Bill No. 36 and the different sections that are there. But for individuals who want to have a more in-depth understanding of the minister's and the government's rationale for making this type of change, they may want to review the explanatory notes for a better explanation.

They may also, Mr. Speaker, want to go to the minister's second reading speech, which would have been delivered in this Assembly, as all second reading speeches are done. And, Mr. Speaker, that too is an important opportunity and a helpful opportunity to see the rationale and the justification that members opposite view in defending a piece of legislation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when looking at second reading speeches, there are different types of second reading speeches based on the type of legislation. Earlier on in my remarks, I talked about different types of legislation, one being more housekeeping in nature and, for the most part, less controversial most of the time.

Those types of speeches, Mr. Speaker, I know that the folks who develop legislation in the ministry — I've never been in cabinet, so I don't exactly know how it works — but I know that legislation and changes can come up through the ministry, Mr. Speaker. And most certainly as changes are brought forward and members opposite decide that this is in fact the path that they want to go, individuals within the ministries, Mr. Speaker, have a role in crafting those speeches. And the second reading speeches is a very important speech for the Assembly and for the official record and for individuals in the House and for those watching at home.

On second reading speeches, for the most part, government ministers follow a script pretty closely, and they don't do too much freewheeling and making it up as they go. There's sometimes the odd sentence or additional example that is worked into the speech, but for the most part, Mr. Speaker, it's a fairly tight script. And it is a tight script, Mr. Speaker, because it is in many ways an official record, and it is a piece of information within this democratic legislative process that people can go to in order to see what is the government's rationale for why they want to do this.

And as I said, in the non-controversial and fairly routine housekeeping types of legislation, I would imagine there would not be a great deal of change that would need to occur in going from the stage where the ministry is preparing second reading remarks and going to the minister's office and being vetted through political staff, Mr. Speaker. I think for housekeeping types of legislation, that would be a fairly straightforward and a fairly smooth process.

Mr. Speaker, I can only imagine the process that took place

with Bill No. 36, because I think that it would in fact be a very different approach than what I just outlined with respect to housekeeping business, with respect to legislation that comes forward on a regular basis which is part of regular reviews that the minister or the ministry may choose to do. Because, Mr. Speaker, the rationale and the explanations that the minister has provided for this piece of legislation, as clearly stated for a number of consecutive question periods that we've had in the Assembly, simply doesn't hold water, in my opinion, and I think, Mr. Speaker, also is not a true reflection of what Saskatchewan people think and a true reflection of what constituents of Sask Party members have been telling them over the past number of weeks since this piece of legislation has come forward.

And I can only imagine, Mr. Speaker, the amount of editing and massaging that was required with respect to how members opposite decided they were going to sell this piece of legislation to the broader public, what sort of defence they would have to put forward, Mr. Speaker, in order to have at least some type of explanation and at least some type of defence and have at least some type of ability to promote this piece of legislation with the broader Saskatchewan public. Because, Mr. Speaker, I don't think anyone in Saskatchewan — there may be one or two, but the vast, vast majority of people, Mr. Speaker — whether they are New Democrats, whether they are Sask Party supporters, whether they are Liberals, whether they are members of the Green Party, whether they are members of the Conservative Party, whether they are members of the Western Independence Party, whether they are members of the Rhinoceros Party, whatever their party, whether they support a party or an individual, an issue, Mr. Speaker, people understand, people know that adding more politicians is simply not the way to go, is simply not a true reflection of what individuals are hearing from their constituents, what they're hearing from their communities and important stakeholder groups in their areas.

And so, as I said, when we think of the work that has been done with respect to the minister's second reading speech, as we think of the work that has been done with respect to the minister providing these answers over the last number of weeks in question period on why they are bringing this piece of legislation forward, I don't think this is one of those housekeeping pieces of legislation, Mr. Speaker. I don't think it was someone within the ministry who thought that it would be a good idea to add a number of politicians, that it would be a good idea to exclude those under 18, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, I actually don't think this idea originated in the backbenches of the Sask Party and in perhaps even in some of the front seats of the Sask Party as well. Because the backbencher members of the Sask Party, Mr. Speaker, some of them who have not been in the Assembly a long time, but I know they care about their communities and they do work hard to listen to their constituents, as is the duty of every elected representative in this Assembly. And, Mr. Speaker, I sure doubt that they've had a steady stream of people at their constituency office door or calling and ringing off the phones, saying that what we should really do is increase the number of politicians in the Assembly at a cost of millions and what we really should be doing is changing and excluding those who are under 18 and then, Mr. Speaker, use a bizarre explanation that this is improving representation and it's really about ensuring that



there are an equal number of people in each constituency.

I simply, Mr. Speaker, don't think this idea came from the backbencher members of the Sask Party. I don't think it came from the ministry, from within the ministry as part of regular legislative changes. And, Mr. Speaker, I don't think it actually even came from probably a good chunk of the sitting cabinet ministers or former cabinet ministers, those who have been opposed to the evils of big government, as they would put it, for many years, Mr. Speaker. To now have them suggesting and proposing that we need to add more politicians to the Assembly is, well, it's not really credible in my opinion, but it's also a little bit humorous to think of the flip-flop and the change of heart that were seen in that case.

Mr. Speaker, let me talk a little bit about the two sections. Actually, no, I'll give a little bit more information as to how this debate and this discussion has gone, Mr. Speaker. Members opposite propose this piece of legislation. And as we have listened to people, as we have had feedback come to us, as we have seen the faces of backbencher Sask Party members who clearly aren't too pleased with this bit of legislation — yes, they can be whipped and they can vote in support, but you know, the face does tell a bigger story and a more detailed story. Because of the feedback and the push back from Saskatchewan people over this wrong-headed approach that the members are choosing to pursue, the official opposition put forward an amendment. And the amendment that we proposed, it said:

... this House declines to give second reading to Bill No. 36, *An Act to amend The Constituency Boundaries Act, 1993*, because:

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

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

So, Mr. Speaker, that was an amendment that we voted on earlier on in this afternoon, and we had a standing vote for this amendment. And members of the opposition, Mr. Speaker, we stood and we supported this amendment because we don't believe 36 is the right path to go. It's not the right path to go for our democracy. It's not the right path to go for having proper representation of young people in this province. And, Mr. Speaker, it's not the right path to go when a government opposite is asking people to pay more for prescription drugs or to deal with cuts in a number of areas to be spending this kind of money on more politicians in the Assembly.

So, Mr. Speaker, we clearly stood against the legislation that the members opposite brought forward in Bill No. 36. And it was our hope, Mr. Speaker, that with the standing vote, members opposite who know this isn't the right thing to do ... And they are on that side, Mr. Speaker. I can guarantee that. They may not ever go on record with respect to a media interview or even in feedback with their constituents. But I'm sure, Mr. Speaker,

in their heart of hearts, as they talk with their closest family members and perhaps their closest advisers and confidants, which we all have in politics I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, that a good number of the backbenchers and perhaps even some of the cabinet ministers said, you know what, friends? This piece of legislation, I know you don't like it. I know that it is the wrong approach and, I'll tell you what, I actually sort of believe that too, but I'm being whipped. I'm being forced into supporting it and that's just the reality.

You know, we saw, Mr. Speaker, a similar approach when we looked at the film tax credit. I know there were members opposite who didn't support that kind of approach with pulling the carpet out from underneath the film and television industry. But again, on the vote, members opposite were happy to go along with it even if they had concerns about that change.

And again, Mr. Speaker, another example about the ability of members opposite to truly speak what they're feeling, to truly speak to what people are telling them, we saw it a few minutes ago when we were looking at this amendment. I was hoping that some of them would have the courage to stand and say, I agree. This isn't the right thing to do. This is about a mistake the government has made. This isn't the right approach. This idea didn't come from within the ministry, within the civil service. This idea didn't come from members of our executives and our local party — the rank and file members. This idea didn't come from myself as a cabinet minister, perhaps even some members opposite thought.

[15:30]

But, Mr. Speaker, they were more than happy to go along with it. And I think that is too bad. I think it's sad and I think it's ... I'm sure it's disappointing for some of the members opposite who perhaps feel a little guilty about not taking a stand on this piece of legislation, because they know that it isn't the right thing to do. And perhaps, Mr. Speaker, it causes a little bit of problems, a few problems at home with respect to individuals that have to justify to their friends and supporters and family members why they're choosing to add more politicians and exclude those who are under 18 from the electoral process.

But, Mr. Speaker, those are challenges and concerns that members opposite will have to reconcile in their own hearts and reconcile to those who may be curious why they chose not to take a stand in this instance.

Let's look, Mr. Speaker, at a few of the different components here. The one section, Mr. Speaker ... Well I should say, so the amendment was rejected by members opposite and it is for this reason, Mr. Speaker, we are giving them one more chance. We are giving them one more opportunity to do the right thing. Through this hoist motion, Mr. Speaker, that has been moved by the Leader of the Official Opposition, we're suggesting we know this piece of legislation is a bad idea. I think a whole lot of the Sask Party caucus members know that this piece of legislation is a bad idea. I think many people, most people in Saskatchewan think and know this piece of legislation to be a bad idea. So we're giving members opposite a chance here to ... We're giving them an exit ramp, so to speak.

While it would appear that they have been determined to pass

this piece of legislation, there's still another opportunity. We can hoist this piece of legislation; we can put it on pause for a period of time before it is reviewed, and that, Mr. Speaker, I think will allow members opposite a bit of time to go home, be in their home constituencies, and drink the water back home for a couple of days. Get away from the legislative bubble. Get away from those in Executive Council and the heavies within caucus or cabinet or within the political structure that is present on the opposite side. Step away from that. Remove themselves for a period of time in order to have a good second thought about this legislation, and determine whether or not it's what they actually want to do, whether it is in fact the appropriate thing.

So I hope, Mr. Speaker, as I speak, some of the members opposite may be thinking about the question and the opportunity that is available to them, the chance that they have, Mr. Speaker, to stand up and speak to what their constituents actually believe, stand up and speak to what their heart actually tells them to do and, Mr. Speaker, not proceed with Bill No. 36 at this time. I would like to say forever, Mr. Speaker, because I think that would be a better approach, but at this time at least counts for now. And that gives the members opposite a little bit of breathing time. Go home. Remember what it's like in talking to constituents. I mean, not that we don't do that when the House is in, of course. But I think a bit of time away from the Chamber here might serve members well in remembering why they are here and what they are supposed to do with respect to truly representing the views and the concerns of their areas.

So the one component that we see, Mr. Speaker, is of the legislation as I mentioned in my introductory comments. There's two major changes that are occurring with this piece of legislation. The one is the fact that for the calculations of constituency sizes, those who are 18 will no longer be counted. And I have a few concerns, Mr. Speaker, with this decision and with this approach, and I'm not the only one in the province who have had a concern and some questions about why members opposite are choosing to go down this path.

As is the case very often here in the Assembly, and it is a true honour, Mr. Speaker, we have individuals who come to the Assembly for a variety of reasons. And as I've said before, some of the best visits we have, some of the highlights of any legislative session is when there's a large group of students who come or a small group of students. It doesn't matter if it's a large or small group. But it's always a joy to have students come to the Assembly. And I think it's a very important time for the students coming to the Assembly because I know when I speak to adults who have maybe come to the legislature for a different reason, and I ask, well when was the last time you were here in the Assembly? Sometimes they say, well I've actually never been. This is my first trip. But the most common response is, oh, well I remember coming when I was in a school group. I remember coming when I was in grade 5 or 7 or in high school in social studies, coming and seeing what was going on.

And individuals remember a few things. They often remember some of the theatrics that are involved with question period, and that's part of the parliamentary tradition that we have here in Saskatchewan, that we have throughout the Commonwealth. And they also remember, Mr. Speaker, that when they come to the Assembly they were welcomed, they were respected, and

they were valued. I hope at least that is the feeling that they have when they come to the Assembly, when they think back to their time in the Assembly.

And, Mr. Speaker, the importance that we place on those under 18 coming to the Assembly is something that members opposite and members on this side understand because we always talk about how happy we are to have them here, how important it is that they are here. And we always encourage them to, or we very often encourage them, especially through the question-and-answer times that come after whatever proceedings may be going on in the Assembly, we always encourage them to become involved, to get active, to know what's going on — at a bare minimum, please vote. More than that, if you choose to get involved with an issue or with a party, make sure you do that as well. And we do that, Mr. Speaker, because we know that those who are under 18 matter. We know that those under 18 are important. We know that they have important issues, we know that they have important needs and concerns, and we know that they have very important ideas.

And as all members know, in our constituency offices as individuals come forward, very, very often the issues that we deal with at the constituency level have something to do with children. Very often, Mr. Speaker, it's issues about schooling. I can think of many examples where I've had parents come to me and say there's a problem in the classroom and they want some ideas about how it could maybe be solved, who they should talk to. Or they have concerns about resources allocated to their school. And a lot of this, Mr. Speaker, can be the role of school divisions in providing.

But individuals know that a great deal of the funding for education, well now pretty much exclusively, comes from the provincial government. And they see their MLAs and they see their provincial politicians as someone they can go to to present their concerns, to present their case, and to hopefully get some help or at least some advice and, if all else fails, a listening ear to help empathize with the situation that they may be in if there's no direct action that can be taken.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I think it's that reality of the importance that we place on students, it's that reality of the importance that we place on the role that they have, the ideas that they have, the concerns that they have, that we have included youth and children in the calculations for constituency sizes. I could think, Mr. Speaker, that in some areas the issues of youth are the most pressing and most important issues that may be present.

In my constituency, for example, in door knocking or spending time and going to events in the Hampton Village area, people's concerns for their children, and children concerned about their school, is perhaps the . . . Not perhaps; it is the most common thing brought up by individuals. And that again, Mr. Speaker, shows that it is important that the needs, that the interests of youth, those under 18, are considered when we are making the boundary calculations and in so doing allowing the issues of the youth to be as important to anyone else's issues. The issues of youth to be considered with the same weight, with the same level of seriousness as they deserve, as those who are above 18, I think that's a very important point.

It's interesting. Last week while members of the opposition

have been talking about this for a little while, some other individuals have weighed into the debate. One example, Mr. Speaker, is the Children's Advocate. And, Mr. Speaker, for those that are listening at home there, I'll just give a little bit of background about the role of independent officers of the legislature. Here in the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, we of course have government members. We have opposition members. But we have another group of individuals who are servants of the legislature, individuals who are independent, not swayed by what a government or an opposition member wants. But, Mr. Speaker, these are individuals who are selected and given the authority to have responsibility for a particular area in order to provide that independent, arm's-length, objective advice and sometimes criticism about what is going on.

And so the independent officers of the legislature — off the top of my head, Mr. Speaker — we have the Ombudsman, that's one; we have the auditor, that's another; we have the Conflict of Interest Commissioner; we have the Privacy Commissioner; and we also, Mr. Speaker, have the Children's Advocate. I think that's all of them, Mr. Speaker. Someone that's speaking after me can correct me if I'm wrong on those but, Mr. Speaker . . . or if I said any of them twice.

But last week we have the Children's Advocate who raised some really significant concerns about the changes put forward in Bill No. 36, specifically the issue of excluding youth from the electoral count, and going so far as to call it wrong. There is a news story, Mr. Speaker, from *The Star Phoenix*, and the quote here says, and I'll read it. It's the second page of an online article. "It's my opinion that this proposed amendment is contrary to the interests of children and youth," said the Children's Advocate Tuesday about Bill 36, *The Constituency Boundaries Act*, the piece of legislation that we've been discussing in the past few days, Mr. Speaker.

And then there's another quote that the advocate provides. It's, "I've got access to legal advice that I believe compelled me to try and suggest to the government of Saskatchewan that we do not support this particular amendment." And there's an additional quote, Mr. Speaker, that goes on. It says that "Considering that over 40 per cent of First Nations citizens in Saskatchewan are under the age of 18, you're really excluding the almost half of the First Nations population from equal political representation." So, Mr. Speaker, some significant concerns and went on to say that the change might in fact violate the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

And so you would think that when you have an independent officer of the legislature, someone who doesn't needlessly enter debate on important issues but, as they are charged through the role and the duty that they take on as being an independent officer of the legislature, really only speak up when there's been a direct request from members on either side . . . And I can think of the example of the Ombudsman. And we saw last week how the Minister of Social Services referred a matter to the Ombudsman about civil servants being allowed to participate in the democratic process and be allowed to run for municipal election. So that's one example of how issues can come up to, on to the radar so to speak, of an independent officer.

Another way, Mr. Speaker, is when one of the independent officers feels like there is something important, feels like there

is something that violates the values and the principles that they were charged to promote and uphold, and feel a need to speak out, Mr. Speaker. And I think it is important to listen to the advice and the warning that is provided by the Children's Advocate on this issue, Mr. Speaker, because it's a very legitimate and a very real concern. And while, Mr. Speaker, in an earlier part of my speech I talked about how I don't think there are a whole lot of people in Saskatchewan who are interested in this piece of legislation, that see this piece of legislation as a good idea — that's from general public, people that pay attention to politics at a base level or perhaps live and breathe it — I don't think those people think that the addition of more politicians and excluding those under 18 is a good idea. But, Mr. Speaker, we also see an independent officer of the legislature voicing his concern about how this proposed legislation is wrong and how this proposed legislation has many fairly significant and dangerous pitfalls from a democratic perspective in my opinion.

[15:45]

Now I would hope, I would have hoped, Mr. Speaker, that the minister would have recognized that this is a problem, would have hoped that the minister would have recognized that this was not a smart thing to do, would have heeded the advice of the independent officer. But, Mr. Speaker, the minister's response as reported in this online article from *The StarPhoenix* said, "We don't agree with that."

So, Mr. Speaker, and I think in the House as I recall from remarks that the minister said, I think he said, we agree to disagree. I don't have that right off the top of my head . . . Or I mean that's off the top of my head. I don't have the *Hansard* in front of me, but I think that's what he said on that date. And it's, while it's troubling for this particular issue, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the exclusion of those under 18 and the addition of three more politicians to the Assembly, it's also a troubling and a concerning approach to officers of the Legislative Assembly that we've seen members opposite exhibit on more than one occasion.

The other example I can think . . . Oh, the Chief Electoral Officer. That's the other individual I didn't list when I was listing the independent officers of the legislature. But the example I want to give involves the Chief Electoral Officer, Mr. Speaker, because we had a situation here not too long ago where two sides, opposition and government, had agreed on a candidate for the Chief Electoral Officer. And then once that decision was made known to the Sask Party caucus, members opposite vetoed it and politically inserted themselves into a process that shouldn't have been politicized. That's one example, Mr. Speaker.

And there have been other issues with respect to statements that the Privacy Commissioner has made where members opposite simply say they don't care. I'm paraphrasing, but that's the outcome of their comments based on the way that they have treated warnings and statements that have come from the independent officers of the legislature.

So, Mr. Speaker, in a piece of legislation that has such a great relevance and has such a huge effect on people in this province, it's troubling, Mr. Speaker, that members opposite would take

this approach, would ignore good, sound advice from independent individuals, independent officers, and would simply plow ahead with an agenda simply because there's a few people on the inner, of the inner circle who think that it's a good idea politically. Because that's what this is about. Members of cabinet know this, members in the middle benches know this, and most certainly members on the backbenches know this. They just don't, haven't felt convicted enough to speak up against it, is all I can assume.

On the issue of the advocate's comments concerning the exclusion of those under 18, there was an additional quote, "Leaving children, youth out of the population . . ." Sorry. This is from a CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] article, I should say, posted April 17th. And a quote from the independent officer says:

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

And, Mr. Speaker, I think of the provincial motto, "from many peoples, strength," something that we talk about because it talks about our history of diversity, our history of being a strong place because of our diversity, and welcoming and taking into consideration everyone in the province. But it would seem to me, Mr. Speaker, based on the warning provided by the independent officer of the legislature, that in this instance we're not living up to that provincial motto. We're not living up to that motto, "from many peoples, strength," Mr. Speaker, because we're leaving out many people in the calculation based on the legislation that members opposite are bringing forward.

Our member from Moose Jaw North is talking about something. I heard something about SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company] or something. It's interesting, Mr. Speaker, a very interesting defence. You know, everything I've ever heard from members opposite in talking about SPUDCO has been pretty negative and pretty concerned about it. So for them to now say that this is their SPUDCO and that this is an issue that they aren't proud of, well I agree. It's not that great of an issue, and I think it is troubling. And if the members opposite believe that adding the number of politicians to the Assembly and eliminating those under 18 is their SPUDCO, if they think that, if that is their view, if they have concerns about it, well then perhaps the member from . . . Well I won't single out a member. Perhaps all the members in the backbench who have similar concerns, or those in the front bench, should speak up and pull this piece of legislation or support the hoist motion that is before the Assembly at this time, Mr. Speaker, and agree to park this piece of legislation for a period of time. Because most certainly it doesn't . . . We could do so much better. It doesn't live up to what we should be doing here, Mr. Speaker.

So the one concern that I've talked about for a while is the issue of excluding those who are under 18 years of age. And, Mr. Speaker, I don't think it's the right approach. I don't think it is consistent with the warm welcome and the high level of importance we place on school groups when they come here. Because we recognize that young people matter, that young

people are important, and that young people should in fact count.

Mr. Speaker, I think excluding those that are under 18 has a number of problems from a Charter perspective as identified by the independent officer of the legislature, the Children's Advocate. And, Mr. Speaker, I don't think it's what Saskatchewan people want. I don't think it's what the vast majority of people in this province think is a wise approach. I think, Mr. Speaker, this is coming from an inner circle of an inner circle for political, partisan reasons. I do not think that it is in the best interests of our democratic system. I think members opposite, a good number of them, know this.

And I wish, Mr. Speaker, that members opposite would have the courage to speak out against this piece of legislation either by supporting the hoist motion or by talking to those on the front benches, talking to the Premier, talking to the Deputy Premier, and saying that this is a bad idea. That is their duty as elected officials, in my opinion.

Now the next component, Mr. Speaker — I've talked about the under-18 issue for some time — and the next component is the addition of more politicians to the Assembly, increasing it by three. And, Mr. Speaker, now if members opposite haven't been hearing about the need to exclude those under 18 from the electoral process, they most certainly, Mr. Speaker, have not been hearing about the need for more politicians in the Assembly. And members opposite know this.

Members opposite, in the election that occurred last fall, knocked on many doors as did members of all political parties. Members opposite spoke to many, many people about what their priorities are, what their concerns are. And, Mr. Speaker, I highly doubt there was ever a single individual who said, what we need are more politicians. Please, please, if you are elected, I want you to take this message forward to the Legislative Assembly. I want you to advocate. I want you to work. I want you to clear all government business, all government legislation and please, please put forward legislation to increase the number of politicians in the Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I don't think members opposite have ever had that conversation with an individual constituent as they have door knocked. I don't think they've had that conversation as they've gone to community events. Mr. Speaker, I know for certain it's a conversation I have never had with a constituent in talking with them about what matters to them, you know, talking with them about how their communities could be stronger, how their communities could be better. It is simply not credible, Mr. Speaker. It is simply not believable that members opposite could say in any way that this is something their constituents want. I just doubt it, Mr. Speaker. And I'm talking about constituents who are not aligned with a political party, people that randomly come to a doorstep or people that come to a door when you're going to their house.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people don't want this piece of legislation, and members opposite know it. Saskatchewan people do not want . . . Member from Moose Jaw North is a strong advocate of adding politicians to the Assembly. He's talking from his seat. He's saying that he strongly believes that there should be three more politicians added to the Assembly.

That's a puzzling position, Mr. Speaker. That is a bizarre position, Mr. Speaker, especially in light of many of the decisions that members opposite have made.

We know, Mr. Speaker, adding more politicians, increasing the size of this legislature is going to cost the people of Saskatchewan millions of dollars. It will cost people money. Now members opposite, again in their bizarre spinning of this misguided piece of legislation, has said, well actually it's not going to cost more money; it won't cost more money at all.

Well, Mr. Speaker, this is the silliest argument that I've heard. MLAs, the vast majority, Mr. Speaker, I think everyone here collects a paycheque. That costs money, Mr. Speaker. I run a constituency office as does every other MLA. We have to pay rent, Mr. Speaker. It costs money to run our constituency offices. In our constituency offices, Mr. Speaker, we have the ability to hire people to be there and to help constituents as they come in when we are not able to be there. Those individuals don't work for free, Mr. Speaker. Those individuals receive a paycheque. That in fact costs money, Mr. Speaker, for all of our constituency offices. There are utilities to pay. My office has running water. My office has electricity. My office has heating, has energy as well, Mr. Speaker. This all costs money, Mr. Speaker.

And so, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And now a member from Carrot River is talking about driving miles. And an interesting line of questioning, especially given the fact that the SGI minister today was talking about some of the rationale that he used in explaining why a certain program was cut. Mr. Speaker, it costs money for mileage, and the member from Carrot River is correct. And so for individuals either in rural areas or urban members who travel to different parts of the province, it costs money for travel claims, Mr. Speaker. This too is an expense.

So I don't understand, Mr. Speaker, how any of the members opposite can stand with a straight face and say that this is not going to cost more money. It most certainly will because there will be salaries to pay for the elected person. There will be salaries to pay for the constituency assistant. There will be rent to pay, Mr. Speaker, for the constituency office. Mr. Speaker, there will be bills to pay in that constituency office. And, Mr. Speaker, as the elected representative travels throughout the province, either coming to Regina or going to other communities for critic duties, for issues of importance, for listening to Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, that costs money.

And so, Mr. Speaker, for members opposite to say that it will not cost more for more MLAs is simply not believable. Members opposite know it. But it is, Mr. Speaker, consistent with the pattern that we've seen of members opposite trying to rationalize, trying to do their very best to provide some justification for this wrong-headed move in the same way that the Justice minister says that this piece of legislation is about ensuring there are an equal number of people in constituencies.

Mr. Speaker, that is done through the boundary review on a regular basis. That will occur on a regular basis as it always has. Mr. Speaker, those types of adjustments can be made. Those types of adjustments are already ensured through existing

legislation. To use that explanation, to use that explanation as a justification for an increase in the number of politicians in the Assembly, for reducing those who are under 18 years of age is a ridiculous argument in my opinion. It's one that members opposite, especially those in the backbenches, know doesn't hold water. And, Mr. Speaker, I would hope that there would be a better explanation provided to the people of Saskatchewan.

Maybe over the weekend, Mr. Speaker, some of the backbenchers had the opportunity to speak to the Justice minister and say, Mr. Minister, I know I'm a backbencher and I know my opinion is mostly and most often ignored from the inner circle, but this idea is silly. Moreover the explanation, the rationale that you're using to promote and defend it is silly, and I would encourage a different approach. And while that, while that backbencher is at it, Mr. Speaker, they should tell the minister that this piece of legislation should be pulled because it most certainly does not serve the best interests of Saskatchewan people.

So, Mr. Speaker, without doubt this argument that members opposite are making that more politicians will not cost the people of Saskatchewan anything, we know that is a silly argument and simply is not credible. Now if that was it, I mean, it's not unlike members, it's not unlike humans to say things that aren't credible at times. Sometimes we, that's part of the human condition that we're going to make mistakes and say things maybe, Mr. Speaker, that could be said differently.

But, Mr. Speaker, to plow ahead with a plan that will cost Saskatchewan people more money, to plow ahead with a plan that clearly is not wanted by the vast, vast majority of Saskatchewan people, is, I think, probably not even wanted by a good number of the backbenchers and maybe even the odd cabinet minister, to plow ahead with a plan of adding more politicians then, at the very same time, to bring forward a budget a few weeks ago asking Saskatchewan people to pay more — that, Mr. Speaker, is one of the things that I find most outrageous about members opposite approach to this piece of legislation, one of the things.

I've identified how I think excluding under-18s is a bad idea, how more politicians will cost money and that's not a good idea. But then, Mr. Speaker, within the same period of time, to say they're willing to spend millions more on politicians here in the Assembly but then ask Saskatchewan people to pay more or to receive less in certain programs and services, Mr. Speaker, that is not the right approach. Members opposite know it.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, it is a good example of how government has missed its mark on this piece of legislation, how it maybe started as a clever idea by one or two people in the inner circle of the inner circle. But seriously, Mr. Speaker, members opposite should get out of the group think. Members opposite should have the courage to act by their convictions. Members opposite should listen to their constituents, perhaps even listen to some of their own party members who say that this piece of legislation is a bad idea. I'm not the only person that has said that, Mr. Speaker. There have been columnists and editorials that have called this a stupid decision, and I won't read all those right now, Mr. Speaker. But this is not something that Saskatchewan people are running to with open arms. This is not giving them a good feeling. They know that this is not the

right approach.

[16:00]

So, Mr. Speaker, on the one hand we have members opposite willing to spend millions more on more politicians for those salaries, for the rent, for those travel claims, all those things that will cost money, Mr. Speaker. Then at the same time, Mr. Speaker, we see them shortchanging the western development museums here in Saskatchewan and causing the WDM [Western Development Museum] to close its doors on Monday. How does that make sense, Mr. Speaker? It simply doesn't.

I have some good friends who are very active on the WDM. These people love what they do. They love volunteering, and they pour thousands of hours into what they do. They care about our history. They care about telling our Saskatchewan story and, Mr. Speaker, often it's to Saskatchewan people, to school groups. It's the people that like history. But in many situations, Mr. Speaker, the work that they do on Mondays is to visitors, is to guests to this province, is to newcomers to this province to help tell the Saskatchewan story.

So to have the members opposite shortchange the WDM in such a way that they need to shut their doors on Monday mornings but they're more than happy, they'll line up one after another and support a government piece of legislation to spend millions more on politicians, that just doesn't make sense to Saskatchewan people. It most certainly doesn't make sense to the people who are so concerned and outraged over members opposite underfunding of the WDM.

Apparently this was reported in the news, Mr. Speaker. I didn't see the news story myself, but, Mr. Speaker, in response to the shortchanging that is incurred by members opposite to the WDM, I was told that the staff at the WDM actually agreed to take two weeks without pay, Mr. Speaker, in order that there wouldn't have to be layoffs for other staff members. That's the level of dedication that people at the WDM have to what they do. That's how much they care about our history. That's how much they care about their fellow Saskatchewan citizens.

If only members opposite had a similar type of care when it comes to this piece of legislation, Bill 36, they would recognize that it is wrong. They would recognize that it is not a smart approach. They would recognize that, as columnists have said, it's a stupid idea, Mr. Speaker. They would recognize that this is not what Saskatchewan people want.

And again, Mr. Speaker, we have given members opposite many opportunities to speak up. And I won't paint every member on the opposite benches with the same brush. I think there are members over there who know this is a bad idea. In the same way, there are members over there who know in their heart of hearts that the film tax credit is a good thing, that it supported industry. It helped many of their constituents. It helped many of their Regina businesses. I know there's members over there that believe that.

In the same way, Mr. Speaker, when we look at this piece of legislation, there are members over there who know this is not the right thing to do. There are members over there who know it is not fair. It is not right. It is not proper to underfund the

WDM, to force employees there to give up a paycheque, Mr. Speaker, in order to prevent layoffs from other people. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, they'll roll out millions for more politicians in the Assembly. They'll gladly write cheques, Mr. Speaker, to cover constituency office expenses. They'll gladly write cheques, Mr. Speaker, for travel reimbursements, but they won't, Mr. Speaker, fund the WDM properly. That's the contradiction. That is the horrible situation that we find ourselves here with Bill No. 36.

Members opposite know it. Members opposite, Mr. Speaker, know that this is not the right thing. And the more they protest . . . Mr. Speaker, you always know when you strike a nerve with members opposite and they don't like what you're saying because they start chattering from their seats, Mr. Speaker. They start trying to put up a defence. And really the explanation, Mr. Speaker, that the member from P.A. Carlton is giving right now, Mr. Speaker, is just as wrong-headed as the Justice minister's justification saying that this is about ensuring equal numbers are across the constituencies.

Members opposite know this, Mr. Speaker. Backbenchers know this, Mr. Speaker. They need to stand up. They need to speak to those in the inner circle. They need to speak to cabinet ministers who have a say in this, Mr. Speaker. They need to say that this is wrong. And the member from Arm River-Watrous knows it, and he ought to talk to those people on the front bench, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there are other areas where it's not consistent with this approach of asking people to pay more or get less and at the same time spending millions more on more politicians. Mr. Speaker, we see with the seniors' drug plan. Seniors are being asked to pay more per month for each prescription that they receive through the drug plan, Mr. Speaker. We know many seniors on fixed incomes. We know many seniors, when faced with health challenges, they may be on multiple prescriptions.

When we think of a couple, Mr. Speaker, which is often the case, two individuals living together on a very fixed income doing their best to live within their means, we know, Mr. Speaker, that if they're on a few prescriptions each that the monthly addition here can be quite significant for these people. And when they are on a fixed income, this is a substantial amount. It would be like an additional utility payment for many of them, Mr. Speaker. And we know that often people, unwisely but out of desperation and out of doing the best in managing their prescriptions, we know that sometimes people make decisions with rationing or making choices around prescriptions which would be against doctors' best wishes or doctors' intentions. We know these types of decisions are made.

So, Mr. Speaker, on the one hand, we have members opposite saying seniors need to pay more for their prescriptions. With the other hand, they're more than happy to roll out millions for more politicians in the Assembly. To me this doesn't make sense. I know to many seniors in the province this doesn't make sense.

The other example, Mr. Speaker, here we have . . . It hasn't been talked about quite as much as of late, but I know it is discussed in estimates in the various ministries. We have the members opposite's four-by-four plan. And that's a euphemism

for eliminating 4 per cent of the civil service over 4 years, I think is the way that it goes. Members opposite, more than happy to reduce and eliminate and get rid of civil servants who do a good job of working for Saskatchewan people, providing public services that Saskatchewan people rely upon and that need so dearly and that value and appreciate, recognizing the important work that public servants do. They're going ahead with this plan to shrink the civil service.

So you would think, Mr. Speaker, that sort of approach, they would take some of their own medicine. But we see the exact opposite, Mr. Speaker. We see members opposite suggesting we needed to expand the size of the legislature. We need to increase the number of politicians in the province.

Again, Mr. Speaker, not something I've heard from many constituents. And when we think of some of the civil servants affected by members opposite's plan to cut the civil service, I think if we spoke with some of those civil servants, they too would find it a bit puzzling that members opposite are happy to eliminate their jobs but they in fact want to increase the number of politicians to the Assembly. Doesn't make sense to me, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, I've talked a bit about a number of components. I've provided an overview of Bill No. 36, how this eliminates those who are under 18 from the calculation for boundary populations. I've talked about how that is the wrong approach. We in Saskatchewan, based on what people truly feel, because people . . . We do know the importance and the value of youth. And it's evidenced, Mr. Speaker, by the welcome that we give to school groups when they come to this Assembly. People in Saskatchewan know that those under 18 should count.

The Children's Advocate, an independent officer of the legislature, has raised major flags about this change. And the minister's response, the government response is, well we don't care. That's not a quote, Mr. Speaker, but that's the intention of the response that members opposite have provided. Mr. Speaker, members opposite on those backbenches, some in the middle, and maybe even a few cabinet ministers know it's not the right approach. I know they have concerns with it. They need to speak up and have their concerns heard.

Mr. Speaker, the second component I've talked about is how, in my view, I don't think there is anyone other than a few members within the Sask Party cabinet who think it's a good idea to add to the number of politicians here in Saskatchewan. And the irony, Mr. Speaker, is now having some Sask Party MLAs who for years in oppositions crusaded against the evils of big government and are now standing and proudly proclaiming their support for more politicians in the province, Mr. Speaker. I find that rather strange. And when you see such turnarounds with such retreats from long-held beliefs and views and clearly articulated visions, Mr. Speaker, I think it tells me that there's a deeper and a bigger story going on here. I think it tells me, Mr. Speaker, that this was a political idea that a few people in the inner circle, the inner circle cooked up, that pushed forward through getting buy-in from some of the cabinet ministers that matter. And, Mr. Speaker, I think that's how we ended up today with Bill No. 36 before the House. I think members opposite who are backbenchers or maybe those who served in cabinet once upon a time know this to be the case.

And I encourage those members . . . We are now discussing a hoist motion before the Assembly. They've just, Mr. Speaker, voted against an NDP amendment. And I understand their reluctance to support an NDP amendment and what that could mean politically and all those types of things, how that might be hard for them to do that, Mr. Speaker. So be it. Okay. We can let that one go. We've clearly stated that we're opposed to Bill 36. We suggested in the amendment that it should be pulled. It should not go forward. If members opposite don't want to go that far, right today, that's okay.

We're giving them another opportunity now, Mr. Speaker. We have a hoist motion before the House. What this will do is hoist it off, push it off for 60 days, and I think, Mr. Speaker . . . six months, pardon me, not 60 days, six months. Enough time for members opposite to go back to their communities, to hear from people, to get a bit of perspective outside of the dome here, also I think, Mr. Speaker, to be away from the sway of their Whip and of whoever within cabinet is the chief architect and proponent of this. Some time, Mr. Speaker, for them to do a bit of introspection. Some time, Mr. Speaker, for them to listen to their gut. Some time for them, Mr. Speaker, to listen to their significant others. Some time, Mr. Speaker, for them to listen to their constituents. Some time, Mr. Speaker, for them to go to the WDM in their local area and ask how they feel about it. Some time, Mr. Speaker, for them to go to the seniors who are paying more for their prescription drugs and see if they approve and are supportive of adding more politicians at a cost of millions. Some time for them, Mr. Speaker, to go to the students who'll be paying more tuition in this province, a chance for them to go to them and see if it's okay that they're pleading poverty right now when it comes to providing affordable and accessible education for post-secondary students.

Mr. Speaker, it gives them six months to realize that, you know what? When the Children's Advocate raises concerns, instead of getting caught in a trap of spending a lot of money, time, and resources on a legal avenue and a court case, let's just do the right thing right now and take a pause. Let's hoist this piece of legislation for six months and come to our senses. And I think, Mr. Speaker, it's my hope that a few of those backbenchers would have the courage to do that, would have the courage.

They can go back to their lounge right now. They can keep a few in the Assembly. They can go back to the lounge and hold a meeting right now and discuss this possibility. I encourage them to do that. I think there's probably a member from our side of the House who will be talking to this hoist motion. They have the chance to discuss this. They have the chance, Mr. Speaker, to even call up some WDM volunteers right now and ask them if they're okay with spending millions more on politicians. Meanwhile they're shutting and turning off the lights in the WDM on Mondays.

Mr. Speaker, they have the time to do that. They could do that right now. They could go to their members lounge. I know there's phones in there. We all have BlackBerrys, something that costs money as well. Some people have iPhones. We have the technology, Mr. Speaker, we have the ability to listen to our constituents. I think there's a member from our side who will speak to this hoist motion right now, Mr. Speaker. Members opposite, they can stand up, go back, listen to some people, have a discussion with their caucus, talk to the person they need

to talk to within cabinet, and let them know that this is a bad idea, an idea that Saskatchewan people do not want. I encourage them to do that, Mr. Speaker, and with that, Mr. Speaker, I would conclude my remarks.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my pleasure to wade into the debate today on the motion before us, which is calling on the government to basically pull Bill No. 36 or press pause, put it on hold for the next six months. I'd like to read the motion for you:

That Bill No. 36, *The Constituency Boundaries Amendment Act, 2011*, be not now read a second time, but that it be read a second time this day six months hence.

So what this motion is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is an opportunity to stop and slow down and go back to our constituents, and have the Sask Party government go back to its constituents, and find out what really matters to the citizens of Saskatchewan.

So Bill No. 36 — I should provide some context here — what Bill No. 36, an amendment to the constituency boundaries amendment Act, what this Act does in essence, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is it excludes in determining the constituency boundaries the counting of young people of Saskatchewan who deserve to be counted to determine the representation within the Legislative Assembly. So it's removing those under 18 from the count when it comes to creating the new constituency boundaries that will be happening in the near future, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The other thing that this Bill does is it will be adding three more politicians, or three more MLAs, to this Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

Earlier this afternoon, the government had an opportunity to vote on an initial amendment that we had brought forward last week asking the government to pull the Bill, basically that this Bill not receive second reading. And this afternoon, just looking at the clock here, just a couple of hours ago, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we had a vote here in this House, with the nine members of the opposition voting in favour of our amendment ensuring that this Bill shouldn't get second reading. And the government voted against our amendment.

So here we stand now. This is another opportunity or another option for the government to slow down and say, hey we will go out and talk to the citizens of Saskatchewan who we haven't discussed this with; this was not in our election platform. And this was not something that the government raised in the Throne Speech. So this is an opportunity to go back to our constituents and find out what they really think about this idea around adding three more politicians, especially at a time when this government is cutting services, Mr. Speaker.

[16:15]

The one thing that I often speak of when I get up in this House is consultation. And this is an opportunity. The opposition is trying to provide the government an opportunity to go back to its citizens, to its constituents, get out from the dome of this place. I always likened being in the legislature to a bit of a

bubble. Sometimes we think everybody knows what's going . . . We in here always have a sense of what's going on. But what really matters is when we get out and get back to our constituencies and talk to real people where issues are really pressing in their lives.

I remember speaking to the former lieutenant governor who at one point said that . . . The former lieutenant governor talked about when he was the Clerk here, and he'd be in the Legislative Assembly and things would seem so intense and so just over the top in here, and he would get out for a walk at lunch or on break between 5 and 7 and come back. But he'd, on his break he would realize you would think when you were in here it was the end of the world, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and he said he would get out there and then you would connect with real people and find out that things were very different outside of this legislature than they were in here, Mr. Speaker. So this is an opportunity for the government caucus to get out from this place here and go and speak to constituents and talk to them about what really matters.

I know that we've had the opportunity, and I've heard from many people about the different parts of Bill No. 36 which is proposing adding three more MLAs and excluding those under 18 from the count. I've had the opportunity to hear what people have to say, and I haven't spoken to a single individual who has said that adding more MLAs is a really good idea and is a top priority. Nor have I heard anybody tell me . . . I've heard quite the contrary. I've had people tell me that excluding those under 18 from the constituency boundary count is anti-democratic and a really bad idea. So we have to listen to what people are telling us about this. We need to represent everyone in the province. That's what people are telling me specifically about the under-18 piece, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So I want to tell you a little bit about my own family and who I represent, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think that I wear my momness on my sleeve here, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I have two daughters. I have a 14-year-old, Hennessey, and a 4-year-old, Ophelia. Hennessey is very interested . . . Well Hennessey, for the record, if this Bill, if Bill No. 36 goes through unamended, she will not count, Mr. Deputy Speaker. She will be able to vote in the next election. She will be 18 at the time of the next provincial election, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but she will not have mattered. She will not have counted in the redrawing of constituency boundaries, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So Hennessey, I want to tell you a little bit about Hennessey. She's a pretty neat young woman who's interested in what's going on around the world. She just had an opportunity to participate in a heritage fair where she was talking about — her and her friend Emily — their topic for the heritage fair was about women in Canada throughout the last 100 years. So I have to say, she's a child who clearly makes me very proud, talking about issues that are very near and dear to her mom's own heart.

And then I've got Ophelia, and Ophelia is four. And I would say that she has a bit of a flare for the dramatic. She attends the francophone school in Saskatoon called canadienne-française at the prématernelle program, and I think perhaps that someday she might pursue the arts. But we'll have to see. You never want to try to prejudice or predetermine things about your kids.



But those are my two kids, and neither of them will be counted, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the redrawing of the constituency boundaries that's set to happen right away. And it's a shame, particularly for both of them, but around Hennessey who will be able to vote but her . . . She will not have been counted in the redrawing of the boundaries.

The one thing that the Premier said back in, I believe, it was December, he said, "Elections are about people who are the age of majority, 18 years and older, who can cast the vote." With that comment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would respectfully disagree. I believe and I think democracy would tell this tale that elections are about citizens, not about voters. It shouldn't be about who votes. It's about who lives in our geographic boundaries who we represent.

And I want to talk a little bit . . . I'm thinking about my daughter and her presentation at the heritage fair, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I'd like to take the Premier with his quote that elections are about voters back to not so very long ago — last month. Last month, actually I think about the third week in March, was the anniversary, the 96th anniversary here in Saskatchewan of the Royal Assent of the Bill giving women the right to vote on equal terms to men. This is less than 100 years ago, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So if elections are about those who cast the vote, is the Premier saying that elections less than 100 years ago weren't about my grandmother and my great-grandmother and all other women? Were they just about male citizens, Mr. Deputy Speaker? I would argue that elections are about citizens and the needs and desires and aspirations of citizens, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Or we could go back and talk about First Nations people, who were not allowed to vote in Canada until 1960, which is an absolute, I think, a bit of a black mark on our record here in Saskatchewan and Canada. But again I would argue that, were no issues with respect to First Nations people relevant? Were elections really simply about citizens, or were elections simply about voters and not about those citizens? And I would argue that, no, elections are about citizens and citizenship, Mr. Speaker.

Here in Saskatchewan and Canada, we've had issues around declining engagement in the political process or declining engagement in elections. I think we always point to elections because elections are sort of the marker of who is engaged. There's all kinds of other ways of being engaged in the electoral process, but elections are very much . . . But engagement, we use elections very much as a marker of how people are feeling about their political system. So I would ask the Premier and I'd ask the government members, what message are we sending to young people? You don't count, so why would you care? Why would you bother engaging with the political process?

So there's some interesting literature, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I've had an opportunity to read, that often people who feel marginalized or put down by policy or who don't see themselves reflected positively in government policy don't feel any need to engage. They are the ones who on the doorstep, they say, it doesn't matter what you say; politics doesn't matter to me.

But you know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker? The reality is we

should be sending the message to all citizens here in Saskatchewan, including those under 18, that their engagement and their involvement really does matter. And if we want them to engage, we should be telling them that they matter in the count of the constituency boundaries, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I believe this sends an incredibly negative message to young people, and many of them who in the next election will be able to vote and will have been told, though, that they don't count.

There are some interesting statistics. And I actually don't have this one around me, but if you haven't, there's something . . . I'm a broad brush strokes individual, Mr. Speaker, and sometimes details, precise details, escape me. But I believe if you haven't cast a vote, they say by the age of about 22, your chances of ever casting a vote again radically diminish just because you've decided in your own experiences that politics doesn't matter. And I think that that's an absolute shame.

And again, I think telling those under 18 that they shouldn't count in the redistribution of electoral boundaries is doing our young people a disservice. But not just our young people because these will be the people who will be moving into — they'll be casting votes — they will be moving into roles of leadership as they go through their education and post-secondary education. And I think the opportunity for people to know that they matter sends a really positive message, and I think this government is sending the exact opposite message.

So I've talked a little bit about . . . So actually, you know what? I just want to talk about a few of the issues that matter to young people who can't currently cast a ballot, but issues are important to them. Education, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the stuff that we talk about here in this legislature pertains to what they will be learning: curriculum, provincial government-set curriculum, provincial government-set school schedules. I know there was some concern in the younger set, in the grade 8, grade 9 students who were very worried about the possibility of changes to the school schedule starting after the September long weekend and then losing the February break. That was a very big concern for young people, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Child care, where we send our children for care when we're not able to be there prior to them starting school, but also while they're in school, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There's after-school care. Many parents work long days, and child care is an issue and a concern to young people.

Post-secondary education. I know even with my daughter in grade 8, university is on our radar. She's thinking about where she'd like to go and what she'd like to study. And so, as you go through those high school years, it becomes more and more out in your forefront, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And so post-secondary education and student loans and tuition costs, these are all things on the minds of young people who deserve to count, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The environment is a huge one for young people. What is the legacy that we're . . . And I think this is probably one of the biggest ones that I know talking to many of the young people that I have a chance to, the environment is front and centre for these young people. And they worry about what we are, the older generations are, the kind of legacy we're leaving for them.

So representing young people, those under 18 in the legislature really does matter, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So who do I represent? I represent a whole host of people, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in Saskatoon Riversdale. I think who I am, we all bring a little piece of that into the legislature. As I said, I'm a parent of young kids or youngish kids, so that's a big part of my own network right now, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So I'm here and I represent other parents who have many similar concerns or different concerns as well. I'm here to speak to the needs of parents. I'm here to speak to the needs of seniors, parents, people like my parents, who care about their grandchildren and the issues that affect them.

Some of the issues and concerns in Saskatoon Riversdale, Mr. Deputy Speaker, again, child care. The reality is that often, if we want to be employed or if we want to go to school, that finding a place that we feel that we can afford, that we feel that is good-quality care, where our kids are loved and nurtured, I think that that's one of the biggest things that we all look for in child care, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the love and nurturing of a facility, Mr. Deputy Speaker, or the people who work there.

Again, education. In my constituency, English as an additional language is a very big issue. There's many newcomers here in Saskatchewan, and I have a good strong population actually of refugees who live in Saskatoon Riversdale. And I have schools where there's more than 23 languages spoken and more than 40 countries represented. It's quite, quite an amazing thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but the reality is you need to be able to put in place those supports to ensure that these hopefully soon-to-be citizens have the tools they need to have the best and fulfill their potential here as Canadian citizens, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I think some of the concerns — balancing work and family, being able to find that time to be able to engage in work and still be the best possible parent or best possible caregiver of your mother or father — the reality is child care's a big issue here in Saskatchewan, but so is elder care. We have an aging demographic, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we need public policy. We don't need three more politicians, we need public policy that ensures that we can provide the care for our loved ones that they need, again whether they're children or they're elders, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I believe these are the priorities of our families. These are the priorities of families here, not just in Saskatoon Riversdale, but in Saskatchewan. And families come in all shapes and sizes, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I know housing, housing continues to be a big pressing issue. Home ownership is one thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it was always something here in Saskatchewan that I think that we took for granted or trusted that this was something that we could . . . We'd always have the opportunity to buy a home. You put some money down and you have a chance to have, build some equity and pride of ownership and attachment to a community, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But housing and housing prices, not only have housing prices shot up, but with rent shooting skyward it's been very difficult for young people, or anybody for that matter, to put together enough money for a down payment to be able to buy a house.

[16:30]

So I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that these are the priorities of Saskatchewan people. And this is what I hear in my own constituency and from elsewhere as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think the concerns of average, everyday folks just trying to get by and make a living are about housing, about child care, about health care. It's about education. They want to feel like government is listening to them, and adding three more politicians is not anything that any of them have said. Nobody has asked for three more politicians. It certainly is not the folks in Saskatoon Riversdale's priority.

I've had a chance to look at what other members of other provincial legislatures do or how they make do and how they represent their citizens, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And you know, their jobs are actually very similar if not, I'd say, identical to ours. Their job is to talk to their constituents, find out the needs and concerns of their constituents. Like us, they balance their work and their care responsibilities. There are undoubtedly, in legislatures across Canada, people who have responsibilities for young children. And they happen to serve as MLAs or MPPs [Member of Provincial Parliament], and they also have responsibilities for elder care, whether it's a mother or a mother-in-law or a grandpa. The reality is these MLAs and MPPs are doing the same thing that we are — they're balancing their family life and time away from home the best that they can.

They actually happen to go to capital cities, just like us, and represent the issues of their constituents, just like we do. But whether it's health care or social services or better highways or education or better child care, you know what? These MLAs are talking about the very same issues because these tend to be the priorities of citizens in general, Mr. Speaker. So the reality is they somehow manage to do this with a greater number of constituents to represent than we have, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I don't know how they do it. Perhaps they are supermen and superwomen. But they manage to represent far greater numbers of constituents than we do, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and balance this responsibility.

I'd like to tell you a little bit about what goes on in some of the other provinces with respect to numbers of citizens to MLAs, in terms of ratio.

So in BC, if we head west and we head to BC for example, there are about 4.4 million people there, and they have 85 seats in their Assembly. BC is almost twice the size geographically, about 922,000 square kilometres. They have mountains to drive over and an ocean to cross to get to their Assembly, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And somehow they manage to represent 51,000 citizens in every seat — 51,000 citizens, Mr. Deputy Speaker — compared to about 18,000 that we represent here in Saskatchewan. That's 2.9 times the number of constituents for every MLA in BC than we have here in Saskatchewan — 2.9 times the amount. My colleague from Saskatoon Nutana was saying she doesn't know how they do it. And well apparently they must be pretty special folks, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

In Alberta they have 3.6 million people, and right now they have 83 seats. So their province isn't much bigger than Saskatchewan. I think we all know the geography of Alberta quite well, our neighbour just to the west. It's about 640,000 square kilometres. So they have far more people than us in that

space. They have, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about 44,000 citizens in each constituency — 44,000 citizens, Mr. Deputy Speaker — which is about 2.5 times that what we have in Saskatchewan.

So just to our neighbour to the east, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In Manitoba they have 1.2 million people. And the interesting thing is for a province about the same size, about 552,000 square kilometres, and more people, and more people, they actually have one fewer MLA. They have one less MLA in Manitoba, despite the fact that they have slightly more people and same population size. So how do they manage to do it in Manitoba with one less MLA, Mr. Deputy Speaker? They do have a slightly higher population density than we do, but they have far more people per seat. And you know what, they represent about 21,000 citizens per constituency — 21,000 citizens per constituency, Mr. Speaker. That's 1.2 times the number of constituents that we have here in Saskatchewan.

So Ontario, it's quite an interesting story in Ontario, Mr. Speaker. They have about 12.8 million people in the province, and it happens to be the largest province in our country. And they have 107 seats, which follow the federal seats of the province. So in Ontario they're called MPPs, which is the Member of the Provincial Parliament, but they do again much the same work as we do here in Saskatchewan. I'd argue very much the same work.

So the province there is about 908 000 square kilometres, so they have a far more dense province, at least in most areas. That's at 14 people per square kilometre. So the population per seat is much more, however. They have 120,000 citizens per constituency, Mr. Speaker, 120,000 citizens per constituency. We're at around 18,000 per constituency, Mr. Speaker. That's 6.7 times the people we represent here in Saskatchewan. So 120,000, Mr. Speaker. I don't know how Ontario MPPs do it, but apparently they must be quite amazing, Mr. Speaker.

In Quebec they have 7.9 million people. They have 125 seats in their Assembly. And just if anybody's wondering, they call their Assembly the National Assembly, or Assemblée nationale in French as they refer to it in Quebec, and their politics tend to be quite different in that province. But again the basic tasks of a member of their Assembly is very much like what we do here in Saskatchewan in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. For their 125 seats, they have 63,000 citizens in each seat, 63,000 citizens. That is about 3.5 times the number of constituents than we represent in Saskatchewan.

So in the Maritimes the story is a little bit different, so we . . . due to the small geographic size of the province and the tight, remote areas that they have.

But one of the reasons I wanted to point out these numbers and draw attention both to the members opposite, to the governing members, just in case they haven't been listening carefully over the last few months of this debate, I wanted them to have a good picture of what we represent and what other provinces are representing. But I challenge the government to really demonstrate what is needed about these new politicians. I believe that citizens here in Saskatchewan are quite well represented. And I know personally and I have no doubt that colleagues on both sides of the House work very, very hard to represent their constituents. I know that I do.

But the fact of the matter is, the fact of the matter is we have a very, well an extremely — I won't just say very — it's an extremely low constituent-to-MLA ratio. This government actually is funny with ratios. They don't seem to like the 6-to-1 ratio on return on investment for the film industry but . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh, my colleagues are telling me I'm giving them too much credit. But you know what? I believe that credit is, you give credit where credit is due. And the reality is we, I think we all try very hard to represent our constituents. But again, Bill No. 36, Bill No. 36 was not part of their election platform. Nowhere do they mention this in their election platform, and we've looked. We've looked high and low through that election platform, have seen no, no indication in their election platform, not even in the fine print. Not even in the fine print, Mr. Speaker. Not even with a magnifying glass have we been able to find anywhere in that platform or election document this government's plan to introduce three more MLAs. And they didn't introduce it during the election platform, so that's a shame.

But they also actually had another opportunity to talk about it at the end of November here — I guess it would have been the beginning of December, Mr. Speaker — in the Throne Speech. The government had an opportunity in the Throne Speech to talk about this. They didn't mention a single word about introducing a Bill that would involve adding three more politicians at the cost of millions of dollars, millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker. And the reality, it is millions of dollars.

The irony is, some of the spin that comes from that other side, from the government side of the bench, is about the saying that adding more politicians isn't going to cost money, is actually one of the silliest things I quite possibly have ever heard. That how is it that, that . . . The Minister of Justice actually, when the Premier's been asked questions and has refused to, has been asked questions . . . When the Premier's been asked questions about this, he has deferred to the Minister of Justice. And the Minister of Justice, actually I like the Minister of Justice. We were at an event together on Friday night. But I would quibble. I would completely, well more than quibble. I would outright disagree that how is it that adding three more MLAs does not cost more money, Mr. Speaker?

And my colleague who spoke before me, the member from Massey Place, had talked a little bit about this. And the reality is yes, none of us in this Assembly, we all draw a paycheque, Mr. Speaker. The reality is all MLAs are paid a salary. We all have constituency offices where we have to pay rent, where we pay for utility bills, where we have the ability to hire staff to support our constituents, the people in our areas that we represent, when we're not able to be there. Those are all costs — the costs of driving back and forth.

The reality is, Mr. Speaker, it's one of the absolutely the silliest things that I've heard in my two and a half years here that you could argue that adding three more politicians does not cost any more money. I have no idea how they expect people to believe that. Perhaps if you say something long enough, you begin to start to believe that. And I think that that's the collective sense on those benches, both in the backbenches and the front benches. If you just say it long enough, you start to believe it, and you cross your fingers and hope that everybody else is. But I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that people don't believe that and

don't accept that. They know that adding more MLAs is (a) not needed and (b) will in fact cost more money, Mr. Speaker.

And one of the other things that the Minister of Justice has commented about is — and trying to deflect attention, actually trying to deflect attention from the amendments in this Bill — he talks about the fact that his constituency of Saskatoon Southeast has grown, and it has. I would give him that. He has far more, far more citizens living in his constituency. But you know what, Mr. Speaker? There are provisions in the Act already that already speak to this. It's called boundary redistribution, and it happens every 10 years based on the census. So these are things that happen as due course. You don't need an extra piece of legislation or you don't need to add three more MLAs or discount those under 18 from the electoral process to make sure that seats are evenly redistributed, Mr. Speaker. You do not need to do that. That's completely unnecessary.

You know what? I want to go back to the reality that this Bill No. 36, the amendments were not part of this election platform. And you know who actually said that, Mr. Speaker? The member from Prince Albert Carlton. He said it in committee on April 2nd in the Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice Committee, and I quote, "We never campaigned on more MLAs. We never talked about that." He did not. Nobody has said . . . Nobody, Mr. Speaker.

Again it's interesting. Whenever you strike a chord with folks in here, Mr. Speaker, it gets noisy. And I'm sure that you know you've hit a chord, you know you've hit a chord because they are feeling so guilty. They know. They're hearing, they are hearing, Mr. Speaker, from their citizens. Mr. Speaker, they are hearing from their citizens: why didn't you talk about this in your election platform? They are hearing this. So it's always so interesting to me, when you're on your feet making a speech, you know when it gets noisy over there that you have hit a chord, Mr. Speaker, or a nerve, as my colleague would like to say. Perhaps you hit a bit of nerve, and perhaps also I think the guilt starts to emanate from that side, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mr. Speaker. I'm sorry I keep referring to you as Deputy Speaker, but I know you've just changed chairs here a little while ago here. So my apologies about that.

[16:45]

You know, I would commend actually, I would commend the member from Prince Albert Carlton because I think that that's one of the most straightforward things I've heard from this government since I've been in this House. So you know what? Again I'm a big believer in giving credit where credit is due, and that's probably one of the most straightforward things that I've had an opportunity to hear while sitting in this Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker. So I am glad that the member's willing to admit that fact.

And I would like to call on the other members on the government side of benches to admit that as well because I know they are getting phone calls and emails and visits to their constituency offices and letters — and letters, Mr. Speaker. Again, like I said, you always know you've hit a chord. And I know that they're in their brain calculating how many letters did I . . . Oh my goodness, I did receive a whole stack of letters

on that, Mr. Speaker. So you always know you hit a chord when they start speaking so loudly, Mr. Speaker.

So again I know people are asking why they didn't put this in their campaign literature. And again this is why we have this motion in front of us. Again earlier . . . So this motion today is asking the government on Bill No. 36 to press pause, take a breath, go back and talk to their constituents, do real and meaningful consultation. And they will hear, they will hear from their constituents that adding three more MLAs is not one of the priorities that . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I've now lost my train of thought. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for that . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . being heckled by the Speaker.

The reality is, Mr. Speaker, that people of Saskatchewan, their priority is not three more MLAs. The reality is they're, we're hearing the priority . . . The priorities of the people of Saskatchewan are education, health care, child care, good quality elder care, making sure that people have what they need to lead the best possible life. And adding three more politicians does not add to the quality of life for citizens of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And the other, again we focus . . . We tend to focus a lot on the three more MLAs piece. But the other thing that I'm hearing a great deal about, actually perhaps even more than three more MLAs, is the not counting those under 18 in the boundary, in the boundary, in the boundary redistribution, Mr. Speaker.

So I would like the members on the opposite benches, on the government benches to stand and tell me which doors they knocked on, who, which citizens said to them, you know what, I really, really would like you to add more politicians. That's what I need to make my life better — three more politicians, Mr. Speaker. I would like, I would like, I would like the members opposite to stand in their place and say with a straight face that people were asking them for more politicians. Because I know that wasn't the case. It's quite the opposite.

The people of Saskatoon Riversdale, I do know the people of Saskatoon Riversdale do not want more politicians. They want me to address their concerns here or me to raise the issue. But they want the government to address the issues that are important to them. They want me to raise the issues here.

I can tell you a little about one of my constituents. She would like adequate and affordable housing. She lives in Embassy Gardens which has seen rent increases over the last couple of years, actually every six months for the last few years. One constituent who lives in it, so her rent is more than \$700 in Sask Housing's affordable housing, Mr. Speaker. In Sask Housing's affordable housing, her rent is more than \$700 and her monthly income is \$1,000, Mr. Speaker. Her rent is \$700 and her monthly income is \$1,000. This is a woman who's worked all her life but now has a disability and is not able to work, so she is living off \$1,000 a month and her rent she's paying is more than \$700 in Sask Housing's affordable housing which is in Embassy Gardens here in Saskatoon Riversdale, Mr. Speaker.

I can tell you that she would much rather have affordable housing than three more politicians, Mr. Speaker. This is a real issue and concern for her. Again as I said, she's a senior. So drug costs, the fact of the matter that you're paying five more

dollars per prescription adds up for many, many individuals. So I know that people want services and they want to be able to have a healthy, appropriate, affordable roof over their heads so they can fulfill and live their best possible lives, Mr. Speaker.

Again, I talked a little about this constituent who lives in Embassy Gardens who in Sask Housing saw rent increases every six months, as everybody did in Sask Housing for six months in the affordable program, Mr. Speaker. This is where rent is, the policy is that it's supposed to be 10 per cent below market rate. Well I think first of all the reality is this is a government program and the minister has the opportunity to affect the policies of Sask Housing. And I would argue that being 10 per cent below market rate is not affordable. The reality is the market has been quite difficult, Mr. Speaker. And I think it's incumbent on the government to address in their own housing program some of the policies that are not working very well.

I know, I actually just had a visit from a constituent a short while ago, well actually shortly before the budget, Mr. Speaker. And you know what? He and his wife are struggling with drug costs. I actually chatted with him before the budget — probably end of February, early March. And you know what? They were struggling with drug costs at that point in time. So two seniors who were struggling with drug costs before, before this change, Mr. Speaker, and now they're really feeling the pinch. If you've got seven medications or any permutations and computations of medication, Mr. Speaker, whether it's 20 bucks a month or \$100 a month, \$20 a month when you're on a fixed income really has a huge impact, Mr. Speaker. So I know again, just reiterating, I know people in Saskatoon Riversdale want affordable housing, and they want medications that they can afford.

And something else that they'd like, Mr. Speaker, is more child care spaces. This isn't in Saskatoon Riversdale, but child care is one of my critic portfolios and I know at the francophone child care right now, Felix Le Chat, there are currently 63 spaces, but the wait-list for those 63 spaces is at 172, Mr. Speaker, 172. What's happening there, Mr. Speaker, is many people from abroad are coming to our province to call it home, which is fabulous, and many of them are from French-speaking nations.

So imagine, put yourself in the shoes of someone coming from a French-speaking nation. Mr. Speaker, you come to Saskatoon and you've been told that the supports will be there that you need to integrate and feel a part of Saskatoon and Saskatchewan, and your children perhaps don't speak any English yet. They might speak many other languages including French, but they might not speak English. So the one challenge we have here in Saskatchewan isn't just recruiting people to Saskatchewan, but it's retaining them here, making sure that they feel comfortable and confident and can contribute to our province. And one of the things that people need to contribute, Mr. Speaker, is affordable quality child care.

And the reality is if you've got francophone children who don't speak a word of English . . . as I said, they probably speak multiple other languages. Yes, they are going to learn English. Children are amazing little sponges. But when you come to a new country, a new culture, one of the connections with the community and into the community is often the school or the

child care centre. And not having the opportunity for children to be able to integrate into their community and for families to be able to work or get an education, I think is very . . . well it's incredibly disappointing and disheartening. And again this is a priority of the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker — not having three more politicians.

I'm thinking about a family from Burundi actually who was on the list for the Felix Le Chat child care. And they came to Saskatchewan, had been here for a few months. They had been on that waiting list where there are 63 spaces and there are 172 on the waiting list. And they were on this waiting list, Mr. Speaker, and do you know what happened? Well they couldn't wait any longer. They didn't have care for their kids. How can you work or go to school if you don't have care for your kids that meets your family's need? So you know where they've gone, Mr. Speaker? To Quebec. So we've lost a family from Burundi to Quebec because we don't, apparently this government does not have the priorities of the people in mind when it comes to paying for services like child care or education or health care. But this government has instead as one of its priorities adding millions of dollars — and it is millions of dollars — for three more politicians.

I actually just two weeks ago, over the Easter break, had an opportunity to attend two senior teas and hear from them what's important to them. Again, what kinds of things did they talk to me about? Affordable medications. Access to the health care they need. Decent, affordable housing for them and their families. And they're not . . . You know the interesting thing about seniors is that they're not just concerned about their own little piece of the world. They're concerned about their kids and their grandkids, what's going on for them. And they see their grandkids paying increased tuition. They see their kids struggling to find child care for their grandkids. So they see their grandkids now not being able to buy a house or struggling with rent and having huge stress.

So these seniors would like things — obviously affordable medication, good housing, the health care that they need — but they're also very concerned about the younger generations. And they were concerned about having those under 18 not included in the count, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They were very concerned about that. Not one of these seniors, not a single one of these seniors said to me, you know what, Danielle? You go back to that Legislative Assembly and you, on behalf of Saskatoon, the people of Saskatoon Riversdale, you tell that government that we want three more MLAs. Not a single one of them said that, Mr. Speaker. That was no surprise there to the members on this side of the House because we believe this is a wrong-headed approach, adding three more MLAs, especially with a government who is committed to cut the public service — the people who provide the front-line care, Mr. Speaker, the front-line services to the citizens of Saskatchewan.

This government is willing to cut the public service but add three more politicians. And I haven't been in this Assembly very long, but I know there are some members opposite who have been in cabinet and are no longer there, and there may be others who are actually hugely opposed to bigger government. So it's interesting to me. Interesting to me, Mr. Speaker. Interesting to me, Mr. Speaker, that adding three more politicians is in fact bigger government. Adding three more

politicians — in case the members opposite didn't realize it — adding three more politicians is bigger government.

I also had the member, I also had the Minister of Social Services, who is responsible for the Public Service Commission . . . I read in her *Hansard* last year she had mentioned that the Premier was committed to smaller government. And you know what? She said that to me last week in estimates, in committee. She said, we have a Premier who is committed to smaller government. Well it's only smaller government when it's the people who are providing direct services, apparently, Mr. Speaker.

So at a time where we're telling the public service that they have to . . . that we're cutting the public service by 4 per cent over four years in a row, so almost to the tune of 16 per cent, we're cutting the public service and adding three more politicians. That does not fit, does not make any sense at all. And the fact that this government is spending money to cut the civil service, actually about 1.5 million on their lean investment, Mr. Speaker, in the first two years, 1.5 million to cut the civil service, Mr. Speaker, that is really lean, Mr. Speaker.

One point five, actually that's a 6 to 1 return on investment, just in case you were wondering. And that's what the minister had said. Ironically, that's the 6 to 1 return on investment of the film employment tax credit, which this government thought was not a good idea. They didn't think the 6 to 1 return on investment was satisfactory for the film employment tax credit. But you know what? They think that 6 to 1 to implement their lean initiative is satisfactory, Mr. Speaker.

But again I just want to emphasize, in those estimates . . . I'd read back in preparing for estimates. The Public Service Commission is a new critic duty for me so I was trying to do all the preparation necessary. And just reading back through *Hansard*, that there were many times where the minister had mentioned the Premier being committed to smaller government, and actually that was said again last week. This Premier is committed to smaller government. Well that actually flies completely in the face of adding three more MLAs, Mr. Speaker. That is exactly the opposite of smaller government.

So we have much, much, much, much to say. And I've heard a few members opposite say, oh Danielle, you've only got eight minutes to speak. You know what, Mr. Speaker? I have a lot to say about this Bill. This is a really . . . This is a pressing issue and a pressing concern. This government needs to press pause on this piece of legislation, which we're providing them the opportunity to do through this, through this motion.

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

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

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