



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

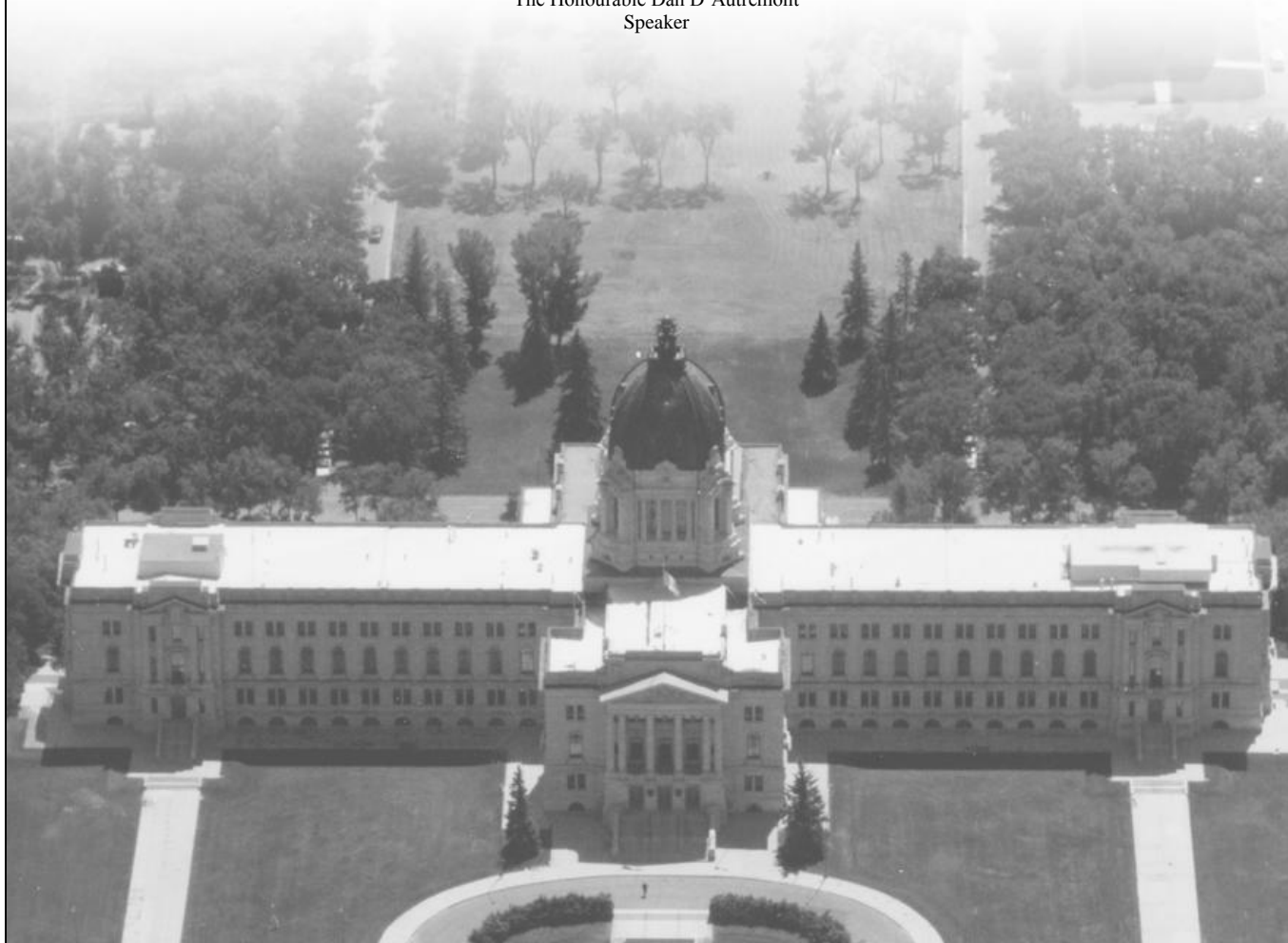
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

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



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

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

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

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Premier . . . Mr. Speaker, I've only been gone one day. I'd ask for leave to make an extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Working Abroad Expo took place in Dublin, Ireland on March 3rd to 4th and then later on that week in Cork on the 7th of March.

We are joined by a large delegation of entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan companies and some government officials who participated in that very, very successful mission, Mr. Speaker. You'll know the government supported that mission, led that mission, but there would have been no credibility to it at all had we not come to offer jobs to people in Ireland. And that can only happen when you have the private sector engaged and businesses alongside, and they just did an excellent job representing Saskatchewan.

Fifteen thousand people attended the expo, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan had the largest pavilion at the expo. There was some competition though from, I think, Australia, New Zealand, and Alberta and BC [British Columbia] had a small presence there, but certainly I think the Saskatchewan delegation was the largest.

There was immediate interest in the opportunities that were on offer from our employers, some of whom were wearing Rider green at the expo, which obviously stood out and had a salutary effect, given the fact that we were in Ireland, Mr. Speaker. One of the companies, K&R Dahl Contracting of White Fox — I believe they're here with us today — made their first offer within 20 minutes of the expo's opening. Another, Sandpiper Truck Services, hired a mechanic who was considering an offer in Perth, Australia.

Here's a great story that was told to me earlier today, Mr. Speaker. The man now to work for Sandpiper Truck Services made his decision after he and his wife consulted with their 10-year-old daughter. They asked her about the choice of Perth versus Saskatchewan, and she said, she asked, are there any snakes in Perth? And I think her dad said, yes there are snakes in Perth. And then she asked, can you snowmobile in Saskatchewan? And the answer to that was yes, and they're

coming to the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

To date there have been more than 280 offers made. Actually we think the number today is 282; that exceeds the target of 275. Employers are still interviewing and screening. Our own immigration officials have been working hard with those who have received the job offers. The first four employees arrived, we understand, yesterday. They're already on the job. They're working for Monad Industrial Constructors at the expansion of Agrium potash mine in Vanscoy, Mr. Speaker. And this will take just a bit of time, but I think it's important to read the names at least of the companies that are with us today. And if I miss any, I apologize through you, Mr. Speaker, to the group that's joined us.

K&R Dahl Contracting is here. Morris Industries is here as well. Young's farm equipment had a display there. So did JayDee AgTech, located all over the province including in my hometown of Swift Current. Redhead Equipment was there and have joined us today, I believe; JNE Welding in Saskatoon; Industrial Machine and Manufacturing in Saskatoon; Sandpiper Truck Services in Lloyd. SaskPower was there looking for engineers, Mr. Speaker; Ardel Steel; Monad Industrial Constructors in Vanscoy; MidWest Truck Centre in Lloyd; Allnorth Consultants in Saskatoon; First Canada ULC, who are in North Battleford, Regina, and Radville. ISM [Information Systems Management Corporation] was there, Mr. Speaker, and we also had the physician recruiting agency of Saskatchewan there on the spot.

I need to thank the Regina Chamber of Commerce and specifically the leadership of the executive director, John Hopkins. I believe he's joined us as well today. John was able to help us ensure that the most important asset of the delegation could come to Ireland, and they are no stranger now to this Assembly, Mr. Speaker: Howard Morrissey and his wife, Sinead Tierney, recently expatriates of Ireland and now contributing mightily to the province of Saskatchewan. And maybe they could give us a wave.

Because, Mr. Speaker, there would be breakout sessions at the expo, on the first day, the Minister of Advanced Education and myself thought we'd tell a packed room all about Saskatchewan. Too late in that session we turned things over to Sinead and Howard, and they were able to answer the questions much better than we were, Mr. Speaker, because they had made this move not too long ago. And so they could speak to all of the quality-of-life questions that came, you know, on health care, on the price of milk, on how long does it take to get a driver's licence, and what's it like to drive on the wrong side of the road.

The next day we, the minister and I, we figured it out that we should just shut up and let them lead that session. And I just want to thank them very much. They're great. They're new residents to the province, but they are fantastic ambassadors for Saskatchewan. And I want to say through you, again, Mr. Speaker, to all the employers, thank you very much for building the Saskatchewan advantage on a daily basis. And thank you for lending credibility to our mission and bringing jobs to the people of Ireland and also to people right across this province on a daily basis. Mr. Speaker, we should welcome them to their

Assembly.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the opposition, and I think on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan, I want to say thank you very much to all of those people who have participated in this latest discussion with Irish people. I think we should all remind ourselves, and we can see from one of our statues over here, that a lot of roots for Saskatchewan come from Ireland over quite a number of centuries. And that's one of the reasons why, when we go to visit Ireland as a delegation, there's lots of connections in families over many, many years. I think that's a real strength for us; it's a real strength for Ireland. And I want to thank all of you who participated in that particular work and specially welcome you here today.

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I have the honour of introducing some very special mothers of children with disabilities that we had an opportunity to have breakfast with this morning. Along with them we have some members of SACL [Saskatchewan Association for Community Living]. Joining us today are Bluesette Campbell, Andrea Lavallee, Adrienne Zakreski, Tracy Patterson, Lynn Shann; and from SACL, we have Kevin McTavish, Judy Hannah, Bonnie Cherewyk, and Tony Bassett.

I'd like to thank the mothers for their information that they shared with us this morning, for their goals, and their dreams for their children. We know the children are our most vulnerable and our most valuable asset. And as we go forward, I assure you that our promise to make sure that Saskatchewan is the best place to live in Canada with a disability, we'll be having your words with us. Thank you very much, and welcome to your Assembly.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister in welcoming everyone from SACL and the mothers who are here today to share a little bit of their story and their experience so all of us in the Assembly have an opportunity to understand just a small little snapshot of what your life is like living with a child with disabilities, both the challenges and all the wonderful things that come from it too.

But I know, having had the privilege back in 2004, I actually was the practicum student who coordinated the first Adopt an MLA breakfast here, so SACL and all the folks involved have a pretty special place in my heart. But keep up your good work and make sure that you keep sharing with us all your own experiences so we know the good work that's happening, but also where the challenges are and where the policy gaps are. Your efforts are well worth it, so thank you so much for being here today. And I'd ask all members to join us in welcoming the mothers and the staff from SACL to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Stewart: — With leave for a slightly extended introduction, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The member has asked for leave for an extended member's statement. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to agree?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. Recognize the member for Thunder Creek.

Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of this honourable Assembly, three very special guests from the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region's executive council: Mr. Cliff Larsen, Montana state senator — and I'll ask them to wave as I introduce them — Mr. Matt Morrison, PNWER's [Pacific NorthWest Economic Region] chief executive officer; Mr. Colin Smith, past president of British Columbia's Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists and PNWER private sector lead. They are accompanied, Mr. Speaker, by Matt Smith and Kareen Holtby of Executive Council, international relations.

PNWER is a public-private partnership comprised of government representatives, businesses, and non-government organizations in the US [United States] states and Canadian provinces and territories of Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, Yukon, Northwest Territories, Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana. Its mission is to promote greater regional collaboration, improve competitiveness, achieve continued economic growth, and reduce trade and regulatory barriers. Saskatchewan has been a member of PNWER since July of 2008, and for the first time will host PNWER's annual summit in Saskatoon this July 15th to 19th.

PNWER is in the city for its biannual capital visit. This morning the committee met with the Lieutenant Governor and representatives of a number of Saskatchewan ministries and agencies in order to discuss how PNWER can best assist them in advancing their interests. Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members of this honourable Assembly to join me in welcoming our guests from PNWER's executive committee.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do want to join in, in welcoming the representatives from PNWER to the legislature. I had the privilege of taking the PNWER leadership course a number of years ago, and I've also attended a number of their meetings and recognized the strong leadership that they have provided for legislators and business, and I think especially college or university presidents in the Pacific Northwest and in Western Canada as a place where good ideas can be discussed and shared and hopefully implemented in many of those places. So special welcome to the PNWER guests. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Estevan.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, I'd like to introduce a constituent of mine that is seated in your gallery. And this constituent just happens to be

my sister, Edna Irwin, and I always look forward to Edna coming up and spending a little bit of time with me. She does it in the fall session as well as the spring session, so it's really great to have her at this time. She's joined by Bonnie Donison. Bonnie works for the Minister of Corrections and Public Safety. So I would ask all members to join me in welcoming Edna and Bonnie to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

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

Ms. Jurgens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, sitting in the west gallery, I would like to introduce a group of present and future leaders; some call them teachers and students. Earlier I had the distinct pleasure of sharing questions and answers with the Prince Albert Rotary model United Nations group, organized through St. Mary High School.

These students are from five Prince Albert schools. There's Carlton Comprehensive High School, there's St. Mary High School with teachers Dennis Ogrodnick, Padraic Watt, Loretta Morhart. There's Rivier Academy with teacher Lee-Anne Trumier, Wesmor Community High School with Dhipak Dookhun, Prince Albert Collegiate Institute with teacher Greg Walker. And also accompanying the group, from the Rotary Club of Prince Albert, is Mr. Morley Harrison who was instrumental in bringing this dynamic group of 34 grade 11 and 12 students here today. Please join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to join with the member opposite and welcome this impressive group of students that are here with us today, the Prince Albert Rotary Club's model United Nations security council team. I did have the privilege of stopping in and having a short visit with these bright leaders in our province. What an impressive bunch. They spoke about some of their future plans in our province in education and some of the work that they've been debating and discussing as part of a security council team.

I want to commend this group of students. But I also want to commend the teachers, and specifically Mr. Morley Harrison, who I understand was instrumental not only this year, but in establishing this program, and certainly good friend Mr. Dennis Ogrodnick. Such a pleasure to see you here today along with the other teachers that I met.

What I am so impressed with is a program like this that really challenges students to be critical thinkers about the world around them. I understand that they were engaged in discussion and debate around Iran's nuclear program and also around expansion of the UN [United Nations] Security Council — challenging issues and challenging discussions, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure. I thank these students for the discussion that they have and for what they'll offer our province now and moving forward, Mr. Speaker. I ask all members to join with me in welcoming them here today.

[13:45]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Hon. Mr. Hickie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pardon me. I have a bad cold so I'll do this as fast as I can. I would join the member from Rosemont and the member from Northcote in welcoming the students and teachers from Prince Albert.

Two of the high schools that are in the gallery this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, are from my riding of P.A. [Prince Albert] Carlton — that's PACI [Prince Albert Collegiate Institute] and Carlton. My two daughters go to Carlton High School, and I see some friends of theirs up in the gallery right now. I want to thank the teachers, Mr. Ogrodnick and Mr. Dookhun. We go back a long way. We have many stories to tell and share, but not today. And, Mr. Morley Harrison, thank you, sir, for your commitment to this group.

Thirty years ago I graduated from St. Mary's High School, and 31 years ago I took part in the model UN in grade 11 and grade 12. I had a great experience at that time. It got me interested in politics. And I didn't know I'd be here in my life, in my future. But who knows? Maybe one day you too will be in this House and representing your constituents. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce somebody in the House to you and through you to the members and colleagues here. Toby Greschner is from my constituency, La Ronge. He's here in the gallery and I just want to acknowledge him and just say welcome to your legislature, Toby. And I know you're moving in to a new position within northern Saskatchewan, and we wish you well. And we know you'll do your best to try to work with First Nations, Métis, and our municipal leaders, also representing all the students trying to make sure there is opportunities for them. And we thank you for that and the work you continue to do on behalf of northern Saskatchewan. Thank you very much. I'd like all members to please join him to his Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to the members of the legislature, I'd like to introduce 34 grade 10's from the Melville Comprehensive School. The 34 students today are accompanied by their teachers, Stuart Wilson and John Svenson. And, Mr. Speaker, I think members will remember that the teachers in Melville have been very faithful in bringing classes to the legislature over the past many and many years, and we certainly appreciate that. So I'd ask all members to join with me in welcoming this group here today.

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a pleasure to join with the member opposite in recognizing Toby Greschner. Toby was with the First Nations and Métis Relations ministry in the Northern Affairs Secretariat and was a source of great counsel. Toby is very passionate about northern Saskatchewan and he has many, many ideas on how to improve the livelihood of northerners.

Certainly his work on the northern action plan, his vision for that plan was very much appreciated. He's made a career decision to move on, Mr. Speaker, but through you I'd like to ask all members to join me in welcoming Toby Greschner and thank him for the work that he has done for the ministry and the province.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker. Nobody's filibustering the introduction of guests, but I'd be remiss if I also didn't welcome, with the delegation of businesses who were in Ireland, the officials from the ministry who did an outstanding job of leading the mission. And so if I can, the assistant deputy minister, Rupen Pandya, is with us; Kirk Westgard is the executive director for immigration; Anna Ditalan is the manager of labour attraction and mission planning; Mr. Speaker, I think I see Richelle, who was going there as well, and a fellow Swift Current resident although I think she moved away some time ago.

And I just want to say to all of them, thank you. They did an outstanding job. I think all the business leaders, business men and women who are here would agree. And we were well served on the trade mission by these fine officials, and I just want to welcome them to their Assembly as well here today. Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to recognize as well some of the individuals that came down from Meadow Lake. It's not often that we have folks from Meadow Lake down here to Regina. It's a long drive.

I want to introduce Bluesette Campbell and Andrea Lavallee. Great to see you. Thank you very much for coming down. And I know that you're very involved with SACL, and thank you for doing that as well. And Karen Holtby as well, who's a good friend of mine from Meadow Lake and currently working for the Government of Saskatchewan. It's good to see you, Karen. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce a legislative delegation from the state of North Dakota visiting us today. Seated behind the bar is Speaker David Drovda. David is the representative from the river south of Williston to the South Dakota border, and so represents a significant chunk of North Dakota. And you might be interested to know that Speakers in North Dakota only get to serve one term.

With us today as well is Representative Bob Skarphol from the Tioga area, which is part of the Bakken oil field development and so they understand all of the issues and pressures that we're facing here in Saskatchewan as well. And last but certainly not least is Representative Patrick Hatlestad from the city of Williston just south of Saskatchewan here. They're here for the next two days to do legislative meetings and to meet members of the Assembly and discuss issues with the various ministries. So I would ask everyone in the Assembly to welcome them to the Saskatchewan legislature.

I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to welcome our delegation from North Dakota. And I want to welcome them in a way that I know that they will understand:

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

So welcome to Saskatchewan, and we'll look forward to visiting with you.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned residents from across Saskatchewan as it relates to the management and accounting of our provincial finances.

And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly call on the Sask Party government to provide Saskatchewan people with the fair, true state of our finances by providing appropriate summary financial accounting and reporting that is in line with the rest of Canada, in compliance with public sector accounting standards and following the independent Provincial Auditor's recommendations; and also to begin to provide responsible, sustainable, and trustworthy financial management as deserved by Saskatchewan people, organizations, municipalities, institutions, taxpayers, and businesses.

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

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

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

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Saskatchewan Hockey Hall of Fame Inductees

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise in the House today to highlight what is proving to be an exceptional year for the Semans Wheat Kings. The 1955 to 1964 hockey team is being inducted into the Saskatchewan hall of fame this summer for what is known to local Semans residents as the decade of champions.

During this decade of champions, Mr. Speaker, the Wheat Kings won five Last Mountain Hockey League championships in addition to five Intermediate C provincial titles.

I'd also like to note, Mr. Speaker, that much of the team's phenomenal success was achieved under the coaching expertise of a man well known to the people of Saskatchewan for his contribution not just in sporting life but in public affairs as well, one Gordon MacMurchy. After having served as a great motivational leader in the hockey arena, the late Gordon MacMurchy shifted to the political arena where he served as NDP [New Democratic Party] MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] and cabinet minister through the 1970s and into the early 1980s.

I'd ask my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, to join with me in thanking Claude Finch, who played on the winning teams in 1955 and 1958, as well as Wayne Marshall, equipment manager of the Wheat Kings during the decade of champions, for taking the initiative to put forth the submission to the Hockey Hall of Fame. This is a wonderful tribute to a fantastic team. Congratulations to the teammates and to the town of Semans for this very special honour. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Estevan.

National Organ and Tissue Donor Awareness Week

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is National Organ and Tissue Donor Awareness Week. Almost 200 people in Saskatchewan are waiting for a transplant. These individuals are waiting for much-needed corneas, kidneys, hearts, livers, and lungs. My nephew, whose mother is here today, has benefited from two life-saving liver transplants, and our family is incredibly grateful for organ and tissue donations.

This is why our government supports greater public awareness about organ and tissue donation, so that fewer patients are forced to put their lives on hold waiting for a transplant. We encourage all Saskatchewan residents to consider organ and tissue donation. Most importantly, we need to let our families know our wishes. By placing organ donation stickers on your health card, Mr. Speaker, there is an easy way to share your wishes with others, and you can visit isanorgandonor.com. This website helps anyone customize their Facebook profile photos with an organ donor badge, or send an email so that friends and families know that they support organ donation. High-profile Saskatchewan people have already done the same. Taking one small step could make a world of difference to someone in the future.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the provincial government, I thank the Saskatchewan transplant program and our community

partners for their good work in encouraging and facilitating organ and tissue donation. Don't take your organs to heaven; heaven knows we need them here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Coffee House Serves Regina Residents

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to recognize a fantastic new business within my constituency that's been serving Regina residents. Kave Haz opened its doors for the first time last summer after extensive renovations. This European-style coffee house not only offers a variety of coffee and teas but great desserts and lunch items as well. The shop is locally owned by Ken Ramage and is conveniently located on Dewdney Avenue across from Luther College. Ken strives to offer the highest quality of products and service to his customers.

Mr. Speaker, I must admit that I've become a regular. The inviting atmosphere inside the café serves as a meeting place, a hub for the community. The fireplace is warm; the décor, modern; the chairs, comfortable; and the conversation always good. The coffee house features fresh pastries, specialty coffees, and over 75 varieties of teas.

This summer Ken will again be offering his homemade gelato. I highly recommend it. Ken and his staff have been doing a great job developing their business. However I have been lobbying Ken to add some perogies and cabbage rolls to the menu, thus far to no avail. I guess I'll leave the menu options up to Ken and his team. They are doing a fine job.

Mr. Speaker, I ask this Assembly to join with me to congratulate Ken and his staff at Kave Haz for their contributions to our community, our economy, and my waistline. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Entrepreneur Creates Innovative Solutions

Ms. Campeau: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to applaud the efforts of a University of Saskatchewan Ph.D. [Doctor of Philosophy] grad and highlight yet another Saskatchewan success story. Monique Haakensen completed a Ph.D. in microbiology, genomics, and bioinformatics at the University of Saskatchewan in 2009. And just over a year later, the 29-year-old opened Contango Strategies in the Innovation Place research park located on the University of Saskatchewan campus.

Contango Strategies Ltd. is currently working on a way for mining companies to become greener by using wetlands. In partnership with native plant solutions, the environmental branch of Ducks Unlimited Canada, Contango is seeing how wetlands can clean up processed water and mining effluents. Their research aim is to use microbes such as fungi, yeast, bacteria, and algae found within the local environment to naturally remove toxins like arsenic and selenium from the dirty water mining operations produce. This alternative way of water

treatment is a cost-effective option for many companies. Instead of building expensive water treatment plants in remote locations, mining companies will be able to build a wetland environment to treat their effluents.

Beyond her research, Monique was also recently named one of Canada's best young entrepreneurs by the Rogers FuEL [Future Entrepreneurial Leaders] Awards, the only entrepreneur in Saskatchewan to receive this prestigious honour. Mr. Speaker, beyond her current accolades, Monique is one of many young Saskatchewan residents creating innovative solutions to problems that exist within this province and around the world, and for this we thank her.

[14:00]

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

World Meningitis Day

Mr. Bradshaw: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today is World Meningitis Day. Meningitis is a serious infection caused by the inflammation of the lining around the brain and spinal cord. The disease has no boundaries based on wealth, colour, creed, or country, and is often mistaken for the flu. Approximately 10 per cent of the individuals who contact the disease will die. Of those who survive, up to one in five suffer permanent disabilities such as hearing loss, neurological damage, and limb amputation. Meningitis spreads through close contact, with the bacteria being transmitted through coughing, sneezing, sharing personal items such as eating utensils, kissing, and close physical contact.

The Meningitis Research Foundation of Canada, MRFC, was established in 1998 to prevent death and disability from meningitis and other infections of the central nervous system. Through education, the MRFC provides support to patients and their families affected by meningitis, increases public awareness of meningitis, and promotes better understanding of the disease among health care professionals.

Mr. Speaker, World Meningitis Day allows us to raise awareness to support the too many Canadians who are affected by meningitis and to work towards sparing the heartache of losing one more loved one to this devastating disease. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Saskatchewan Waste Minimization Awards

Ms. Jurgens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I am pleased to highlight an environmental achievement. On April 19th, the Saskatchewan Waste Reduction Council and SaskPower hosted Saskatchewan's 16th Waste Minimization Awards ceremony here in Regina. These awards recognize waste minimization leadership in the province and promote and encourage all sectors of the province to undertake activities to reduce waste.

During the evening's event, the Ministry of Government Services was awarded the Saskatchewan Waste Minimization

Award in the corporate leadership category for its L.F. McIntosh building in Prince Albert. Overall, the Mac mall as it is nicknamed, reduced its waste by 53 per cent and diverts the equivalent of 35 garbage trucks from the landfill each year through its recycling efforts. They've also adopted a series of energy conservation measures that have reduced their natural gas use by 25 per cent and their electricity use by 15 per cent. All the tenants have embraced a vermicomposting initiative, which uses worms to recycle food waste and diverts 225 pounds of organic materials every week. These extraordinary results remind us that we can all have a positive impact on our environment.

I would also like to congratulate the other Saskatchewan Waste Minimization Award winners. They demonstrate a strong commitment to waste minimization and to helping make our province a better place to live. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Martensville.

Comparing Provincial Budgets

Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the introduction of another deficit provincial budget, this time in Newfoundland and Labrador, Saskatchewan remains the only province in Canada with a balanced budget. Mr. Speaker, Newfoundland, like most other provinces, has been forced to focus their budget on reduced spending and cutting of government services, even hinting at a reduction in spending on provincial infrastructure. Mr. Speaker, that is not the case in Saskatchewan where we have increased municipal revenue sharing by 86 per cent since 2007, and we have committed \$2.2 billion toward our provincial highways.

Ontario is also in the news today, Mr. Speaker. Their deficit budget passed. It now includes even more spending, thanks to a deal with the opposition NDP. This support was bought with a tax-the-rich scheme which many economists say will fall far short of the millions that the NDP and the Liberals hope to raise. Tax increases and deficit budgets are the reality for provinces across the country.

This is not the reality in Saskatchewan where our consecutive balanced budgets have removed over 114,000 low-income earners from the provincial tax rolls. It has implemented the largest single-year tax reduction in Saskatchewan history which will save taxpayers about \$300 million per year. Mr. Speaker, balanced budgets, keeping the economy growing, and keeping our election promises — that is the Saskatchewan advantage.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Lean Process

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government has talked about attempting to be more efficient, but apparently finding ways to spend less money means spending more money.

A committee meeting was told recently that to do lean reviews

of certain government operations, the Sask Party government spent more than \$1.4 million on consultants. To justify this spending, the minister said there's a 6 to 1 return on investments. The film employment tax credit this government is killing just also happens to give this economy a return of \$6 to every 1 spent. To the minister: why is a 6 to 1 return not acceptable for the film industry, but perfectly fine when it comes to the lean process?

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to have this opportunity to speak about lean because it's made a big difference to the people of this province. We have efficiencies right through the entire government. Every ministry has taken the opportunity to involve themselves in at least three lean projects. Six to one savings is a great savings for the people of the province.

In fact when I was in committee meeting the other day, the member who's asking the question said, "I think I've got another idea for you for the number of forms." Mr. Speaker, there's always more work to do when it comes to being efficient and effective, and that's why we have a balanced budget today.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government has already spent two years and \$1.4 million on the lean program. They are now many people in the government who understand how this system works. To the minister: why do we need to spend millions more on consultants going forward when it would be more lean to use the expertise our own staff have developed in the past couple of years?

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, I think the member opposite doesn't understand the lean process because that's exactly what we do within our ministries, is talk to the people on the front line and ask them how they can be more efficient, how they can be more effective. That's why the AgriStability fund has the processing claims down from one year to less than one month. That's why campsite reservations have gone down from one month to one week. And that's why blood services have saved \$3.2 million in savings in a better management of inventory.

Mr. Speaker, I don't understand why the member opposite would have any problem with government being efficient and effective when we're spending taxpayers' money wisely.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Clearly, Mr. Speaker, the minister hasn't heard the last two questions because she hasn't answered either of them.

There also seems to be a real disconnect within this government's lean plans when it comes to staffing. In a report

on lean initiatives in health, the Institute for Healthcare Improvement made it clear that:

The no-layoff policy is critical to the success of implementing lean management. People will more fully commit to engage in improvement work if they are not worried about improving themselves out of a job.

And yet this government is using lean as a way to cut 16 per cent of its workforce. To the minister: how can lean work anywhere in the public service if people are worried they will lean themselves out of a job?

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, again the member opposite should be looking at what we're actually doing where we are using our dollars efficiently and effectively. Saskatchewan people actually understood in the last election that we were going to have the 15 per cent workforce adjustment in our budget and we also knew that the majority of the FTE [full-time equivalent] reductions was going through vacancy management.

Mr. Speaker, we have saved over \$129 million in workforce adjustments and we have people on the lean program, you know, saying, you know, we used to think that the lean process was going to mean that we'd be out of a job. What it really means is we can bring our voice to the workplace and understand how our history and our experience within the workforce is making our workflow better and being more efficient for the people in the province.

That's what we're doing as a government. That's what we're proud of. And that's what the people who are working with us in the public service are asking us to do — let their voice be heard.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister has said how these lean consultants at a cost of \$1.4 million over the past two years have helped the government be more efficient in certain areas. To the minister: if she asked the consultants about MLAs, does she think they would say it is lean to have three more politicians in Saskatchewan at a cost of millions more dollars?

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

Hon. Ms. Draude: — Mr. Speaker, what we asked the people of the province is, are we doing a good job with balanced budgets? The answer was yes. That's why there's 49 of us on this side of the House compared to nine on that side of the House. We also asked the people of the province whether they thought it was a good idea to spend \$72 million on Navigata. What was their answer? No. We asked the people of the province if it was good to spend \$35 million on SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company]. The answer was no. Was it good to spend money on a Calgary company in 2005 and waste \$3.5 million? No.

What we're doing in this province is making sure the people of the province are heard and their money is spent wisely.

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

Dealing With Growth in the School System

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's encouraging that we're currently seeing new Canadians come from all over the world and choosing to build their lives here in Saskatchewan. But in education, this provides both great opportunities but also challenges. Neither are being properly addressed. This was raised repeatedly at the school boards' spring assembly on Friday, and shared by educators across the province. Why isn't the minister supporting new Canadians and the impact on Saskatchewan classrooms properly?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are two . . . We recognize the excitement of having new immigrants to our province. We also know that that does come with challenges and indeed our school divisions have identified those challenges. To address those challenges, Mr. Speaker, that is why this government has increased funding to the school divisions by over 21 per cent, including this budget. Mr. Speaker, the school divisions have the jurisdiction to decide how that money will flow, but that is great support that is in excess of inflation and in excess of increases in enrolment.

The other areas that school divisions are seeing pressure is in their facilities, Mr. Speaker. That is why this government has invested a half a billion dollars in school capital projects, Mr. Speaker. That far surpasses what was being spent by the previous government. Mr. Speaker, this government is supporting both infrastructure and operating.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — The minister is entitled to say that, Mr. Speaker, but the education sector's saying something certainly very different. It is positive that new Canadians are building their lives in Saskatchewan, but there are needs. Certainly adequate supports and resources need to be provided in classrooms by government, and that's simply not happening. School boards, educators, and staff are fully prepared and excited to meet the challenges and opportunities. Instead they're being met with budget constraint and cuts, Mr. Speaker, across this province. This impacts all students. Why is the minister not properly resourcing education, specifically English as a second language education, in this province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's interesting that the member opposite is talking about talking to the school board trustees and yet he wants to see their jurisdiction or their authority taken away from them. Because he full well knows they have total authority within their budgets to decide on their staffing complements, Mr. Speaker. So he knows that the government does not dictate what the staffing

complement looks like within all of the different school divisions. However, obviously he wants their authority taken away from them. So I wonder how these school division trustees feel about that opinion of the NDP. We now have, Mr. Speaker, 38 more EAL, English as an additional language teachers working across our province. Since 2008, Mr. Speaker, that is a 51 per cent increase.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, while we should be proud that we're growing as a province, we need to be addressing the challenges and opportunities that this growth represents in a responsible manner.

As a specific issue, education funding is based on student populations from the end of September of the previous year, Mr. Speaker. The impact is, as the population grows, students are in desks in classrooms without funding, leaving education budgets even tighter. In Saskatoon alone, over 1,000 students were in classrooms without funding last year. This is an important issue and it was raised at the spring assembly of the school boards last week, and it can be fixed, Mr. Speaker. It's about being responsive as a government. Will the minister be responsive to the population growth and commit to working with the education sector to fix this aspect of education funding so that we can meet the needs of students in this province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And we are well aware . . . We're speaking with the school divisions that are seeing this growth of the number of students when September begins. This is the first year of the new funding formula. The reason why we have a new funding formula, Mr. Speaker, is because we took the pressure off of the property tax to fund education in our province, Mr. Speaker. That was something that the NDP allowed to go on year over year until we had tax revolts. Their solution, well they didn't have to worry about growth, Mr. Speaker, because the province wasn't growing when the NDP were government. So it is a unique and new pressure that's on school divisions. We are in conversations how to address that pressure, Mr. Speaker, and we will have those discussions in September when we review how the new funding formula works.

[14:15]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, it's about being a responsive government at a dynamic time, Mr. Speaker, to respond to important needs. Instead we hear nothing more than spin, Mr. Speaker, here today, and we hear a minister rise in this Assembly trying to justify that somehow the money that her government's brought to bear is somehow sufficient and enabling the kinds of progress that we need to make here in education. That's not the case. What we see is budgets that are status quo, budgets that are constraint, and in many cases that provide cuts all across education here in Saskatchewan in this very fiscal year.

But the question was a specific one, and we didn't get an answer; we didn't get a commitment. We don't need to wait for another year. At a time where we're having many students added to our population, which is a great opportunity but also poses some challenges, Mr. Speaker, we need to make sure that we're providing funding for those students to school boards. It's simply not acceptable to leave Saskatoon in the position that they were last year, where they had over 1,000 students in their desks that weren't funded. Will the minister commit today not to wait till September to review this, but to fix this problem with her funding formula, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, what this minister and what this government will commit to today, quite frankly, is funding education by over 5 per cent within this province for operating, not taking into account the additional money that we put into infrastructure again this year. So, Mr. Speaker, that does surpass the increase in enrolment within the classrooms.

Mr. Speaker, it's interesting, you know, when the member opposite talks about spin. Education used to be heavily reliant on property tax. Now it isn't. Maybe he thinks that's just spin, Mr. Speaker, but we have significantly taken the pressure off of property owners. Property taxes used to be increasing by an average of 5 per cent per year, Mr. Speaker. We took a tax burden off of property owners in this province by \$165 million, Mr. Speaker. That's not just spin. We don't have tax revolts around our province any more, Mr. Speaker. That's not just spin. We used to have crumbling schools around our province. We've dedicated over a half a billion dollars. That's not just spin.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Saskatchewan EnerGuide Program

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today we saw the release of the 2011 SaskEnergy annual report. One of the items considered in that report was the Sask EnerGuide for homes program. There wasn't a clear indication as to the future of that program in the report that we were able to discern, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister tell the House what is the future of the Sask EnerGuide program for homes? Thank you.

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, SaskEnergy and the Government of Saskatchewan is continuing on with the EnerGuide program. We did extend the timelines for people to be able to apply to that program, so people are able to submit their applications for it. Once we get closer to the date of when those applications will close, we'll evaluate the program at that time.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Again, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting. The members opposite did extend the guidelines for it last year and to obviously good effect. In 2011 SaskEnergy assisted 6,446 customers through this program and the energy-efficient rebate for new homes. And the company brags about continuing to

lead the nation in participation rates for the Sask EnerGuide for homes program, with 14.6 per cent of the housing stock having an initial retrofit evaluation.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that this program depends upon is reliable timelines. It was extended last year. It was referenced in their platform of course, Mr. Speaker. And I guess, can the minister assure people that this is a valuable program and that reaching 14.6 per cent of homeowners is only just the start of the program?

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, certainly for the people that have accessed this program over the last number of years it has been a valuable program, whether that be upgrading their furnaces or their windows or a variety of other things that are eligible under the program. I believe last year in 2011, approximately \$12 million was paid out in grants as reimbursement for different projects that homeowners undertake. Certainly it has in the past been a good program. And as I said in my first answer, as we get closer to the date of the deadlines that we've given people to get their applications in, not just for their first initial assessment but for the actual work to be done, we'll evaluate the program and whether or not we will continue to go forward with it.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — I guess we have some concern on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, because of course there was a federal program that accompanied this and was again very popular with people across the country and that program came to an end as of March 31st of this year. In the past when their federal cousins have dropped the ball and stood down from the retrofit program federally, Saskatchewan in some cases has stood up and picked up the slack. That's one thing that gives us cause for concern about where this program goes from here.

I guess the other thing, Mr. Speaker, is that in the 2011 platform it was mentioned alongside the 20 per cent rebate for smart vehicles that of course was, you know, touched on glowingly in the platform and then axed as we discussed here in this House yesterday. So is the minister able to provide some kind of assurance to people other than, we'll see when the time comes?

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, again I will just say that the program has had good response over the last couple of years. Currently the average homeowner that takes part in the program averages in terms of a rebate between I believe 800 and \$1,200, Mr. Speaker. We have extended our timelines for the program beyond what the federal government had indicated. Certainly we had made that public earlier. And, Mr. Speaker, I would just say to the member, when we get closer, as I said in my first two answers, we'll re-evaluate the program at that time.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, we look at this in the context of programs that were brought forward under the going green

slogan by members opposite, and then when it came to the . . . You know, that was the campaigning mode for the government. But when it came to governing, the going green programs were gone. We saw that with the SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] rebates and we're concerned again about this today, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to the EnerGuide for homes which has helped people save money on their power bills, but it's also helped them to fight for mother nature in terms of greenhouse gas emissions and energy conservation.

So again with the release of the annual report, it's a perfect time to give some people the ability to plan and give them some assurance on the future of this program. Again that's alongside a program that was killed by their federal cousins, Mr. Speaker. Why isn't that minister standing up for that valuable federal program, but why isn't the minister providing better assurance to the people of Saskatchewan today when they need it?

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, we have clearly outlined to the people of Saskatchewan when they need to, if they want to take part in this program, when they need to not only do their first consult with the company that they choose that are approved under the program to have a first assessment of their home, but also when the work needs to be done, Mr. Speaker. That's clearly been outlined in the program.

Mr. Speaker, we encourage people to look at the program. I think it's a helpful program for those that want to upgrade their homes and save on their power and their heating costs, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, again we extended the program beyond what the federal government decided to do. That was a decision that this government made. And we'll do so again when we get closer to the deadline for the program.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Possible Second Bridge for Prince Albert

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This government loves to talk about building bridges. The only problem, they're not real bridges, Mr. Speaker, and that's too bad for the people and the businesses of Prince Albert. No one in the Saskatchewan Party is talking about building a real bridge in the city because that is exactly what is needed now. The mayor of Prince Albert, recently he kicked off a build a second bridge campaign because the city and the region desperately need a new bridge over the North Saskatchewan River. But the Saskatchewan Party released the plan for highways and yesterday, very clearly, there's no bridge to help the people and industry of Prince Albert and the North.

Mr. Speaker, why is this government ignoring the common sense wishes of the people of Prince Albert and the North by refusing to build a new bridge for that city and that region?

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

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the city of Prince Albert and that area is growing. The economy is growing just like across the entire province, Mr. Speaker.

We're certainly pleased about that. We recognize the importance of the North and Prince Albert to the future economy of this province. That's why, Mr. Speaker, when there was difficulties with the Diefenbaker bridge this past summer, the province committed to spending 100 per cent of the cost of repairing that bridge, Mr. Speaker. Those repairs are basically complete and we're back to primary weights on that bridge, Mr. Speaker.

As far as to a second bridge, I've had a number of meetings with the mayor on this issue. We've agreed that a study needs to be done, and we're working on it to assess the needs and possible timing and location of a second bridge.

Mr. Speaker, we won't apologize to the members opposite. When we make an announcement, we follow through with it, unlike the members opposite, for instance, Mr. Speaker, on the number of times they announced the Humboldt hospital. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, we're not speaking about the Humboldt hospital. We're talking about a bridge in Prince Albert here. I need the minister to focus, Mr. Speaker. The people of Prince Albert want to know why this government is refusing to build a bridge. This is what they want to hear. Why aren't you building that bridge?

Mr. Speaker, a second bridge is not just needed due to increased traffic. Because the existing Diefenbaker bridge, as the minister has acknowledged today, is in serious need of having a second bridge for that region. After cracks in the Diefenbaker bridge girders were found last summer, it was several months before it could be used again by all vehicles. It is a very dangerous situation. For people and businesses that badly need to cross that river, being forced to take a different route well out of their way is unacceptable. If the Diefenbaker develops another problem, drivers will face major delays because there's no second bridge in place.

With the current bridge's history, does this minister not see that a second bridge is necessary right now?

The Speaker: — I would like to ask the members of the gallery not to participate in the debate on the floor, and that includes applause.

I recognize the Minister of Highways and Infrastructure.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I said in my first answer if the member would have listened, we recognize the importance of the Diefenbaker bridge to Prince Albert and area. That's why we've committed to 100 per cent of the funding to repair that bridge, Mr. Speaker.

You know, it's interesting. The member talks about the Diefenbaker bridge, but I recall during an election campaign a few years ago that for some reason those members opposite, when they were in government, they would commit to doing work on the bridge but they wouldn't commit to paving it. Apparently, Mr. Speaker, those are two different things in the NDP dictionary.

Mr. Speaker, as for a proposed second bridge, here's another thing people might find interesting. Those members opposite, during the recent election campaign, they committed to it by spending federal dollars that didn't even exist. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, to the minister, you are now on your second term, so now it's time to take the training wheels off this government, Mr. Speaker.

Many people are talking about the need for a second Prince Albert bridge, not just the mayor and the city's chamber of commerce, but some of your own members within your caucus have called for a new bridge, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there's no question in our minds that Prince Albert needs a second bridge. There's a history of danger on the Diefenbaker bridge and the economy is moving forward, which we will all support, and a second bridge is very necessary and warranted.

Why does the minister think he knows better about what's best for Prince Albert than the people who were elected to represent the city by asking for that second bridge? Will he listen to his own caucus members, Mr. Speaker?

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

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our position on highways and infrastructure spending over the first term of our government and indeed carrying forward is meant to make them a significant priority. We have an export-based economy. We recognize the importance of highways; bridges obviously are an extension of that.

Mr. Speaker, we've taken a two-pronged approach. First of all what we've looked at is we need to repair a number of roads that have been left to be deteriorating over the years, over 16 years of NDP government.

The second component to this, Mr. Speaker, is that we have new demands on highway infrastructure that never occurred under the members opposite. That's because we have a growing economy. That's why, Mr. Speaker, we're looking at things like, for instance, a passing lane strategy to help combat heavy traffic that never existed under the members opposite. Mr. Speaker, that also includes demands for things like new bridges.

It's very simple why that happened, Mr. Speaker, because this government is planning for growth. When they were in government, they planned for decline.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[14:30]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

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 rise today to move second reading of *The Graduate Retention Program Amendment Act, 2012*.

Mr. Speaker, *The Graduate Retention Program Amendment Act, 2012* is converting the graduate retention program into a non-refundable income tax credit and a separate refundable income tax credit beginning in the 2012 tax year in order to more accurately reflect the manner in which the graduate retention program benefit is currently being utilized.

Four years ago, Mr. Speaker, we introduced the most aggressive youth retention program in the country. That is the graduate retention program, which provides graduates with a refund of up to \$20,000 in tuition fees over seven years. Mr. Speaker, under the current system, the entire graduate retention program benefit is a refundable income tax credit and therefore the full amount is recorded as an expense within the Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Immigration.

This means that the tuition rebate is refundable to the individual irrespective of any taxes payable. At present, graduates receive the graduate retention program, or GRP. They receive this benefit because they're earning sufficient income resulting in Saskatchewan taxes payable. As a result two-thirds of the rebates are being applied against taxes payable and one-third is paid out as a tax refund. Therefore conversion is a non-refundable, and a refundable tax credit is appropriate.

Mr. Speaker, more than 30,000 post-secondary graduates have benefited from the graduate retention program since this initiative was introduced. That translates into approximately \$46 million in graduate retention program rebates, Mr. Speaker, and we know how significant those are to our graduates that are now staying and working here in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, this also translates into thousands of graduates staying in the province, getting jobs, earning income, and helping to ensure that we're sustaining the Saskatchewan advantage.

To be specific, Mr. Speaker, with the amendments to the graduate retention program, graduates with sufficient income and Saskatchewan provincial tax payable will receive the GRP benefit as a reduction in Saskatchewan provincial income tax owing. For those graduates, Mr. Speaker, who may not be earning sufficient income or are claiming other deductions and tax credits, we will provide a new refundable tax credit equal to the unused portion of the non-refundable graduate retention program tax credit. This refundable tax credit will be paid to graduates as an income tax refund.

Mr. Speaker, graduates and post-secondary institutions will see no change in the amount of benefit or in the process for applying to receive the benefit. There will be minor changes to income tax forms which will be communicated in the 2012 income tax package. The Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Immigration will continue to accept GRP applications, determine eligibility, and issue GRP certificates to

eligible graduates. Graduates will continue to use the eligibility certificates to claim GRP benefits on the Saskatchewan income tax return, and program benefits will continue to be applied either to reduce income taxes otherwise payable or to generate an income tax refund payment.

Mr. Speaker, the amendments will also remove the requirement for the individual, for the individual's social insurance number to appear on the graduate retention program papers, certificate. The ministry electronically communicates information about individuals approved under the graduate retention program, which includes social insurance numbers, to the Canada Revenue Agency. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, there is no need to display this personal information on paper certificates. Mr. Speaker, this is an example of how government is committed to ensuring that the personal information of its clients is better protected.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Immigration, through our officials, have consulted with the ministries of Justice and the Attorney General, as well as the ministries of Finance, the Provincial Comptroller's Office and Executive Council on the proposed amendments. Mr. Speaker, Ministry of Finance officials have also consulted with the Canada Revenue Agency to confirm that the amendments can be implemented for the 2012 tax year.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to reiterate that this amendment will more accurately reflect the manner in which the graduate retention program benefit is provided, and I am happy to speak to this amendment today, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of *The Graduate Retention Program Amendment Act, 2012*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again I'm pleased to stand today to do a bit of the reaching out to the public in terms of their, encouraging their participation on looking at this Bill and making sure that the Bill certainly fills the intent of what the government has been certainly speaking about, and trying to retain some of the graduates that complete their grade 12 or complete other post-secondary programs. And of course the objective is to have the students stay in Saskatchewan, and that's obviously something that the opposition would like to certainly support when you see that it would keep more of our children here, then a greater economy and a greater province shall be the net effect.

I think what's important, Mr. Speaker, as you look at the program itself at the outset when this was announced by the Saskatchewan Party, a lot of the folks really took a lot of interest in terms of what the total package was, what the costs were, and the list goes on in terms of some of their, some of the information that they wanted. Now, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that you obviously want to focus on the actual project itself.

In terms of the Act itself, there's a few amendments that the

minister spoke about. And what I would encourage people out there is, amendments are certainly minor in detail in terms of trying to fix some of the issues that they may have ran into when they announced this program because that's typical of the Sask Party, Mr. Speaker. They announce the program, and they try and figure out how they do it later. And that creates a lot of confusion for a lot of people. And that's one of the reasons why we have to take the time to look at the Bill and to understand what the Bill itself is actually saying.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think *The Graduate Retention Program Act* that the minister has spoken about and some of the issues that he has raised, it's going to take a bit of time for us to look through the actual Bill itself to see what the amendments actually entail, and what the impact may be, and certainly which group of people it will have the more dramatic effect on, if there's that cause. And we're going to certainly take the time that we need to assess this Bill.

Now what I would point out, Mr. Speaker, is that from our perspective as a New Democratic caucus, we want to encourage young people to not only go to school, but complete their grade 12 and go on to other post-secondary education and trade skills as well, and to try and get as much of the opportunity attached to education as possible so they're able to maximize their earnings in later years, Mr. Speaker, thus becoming more independent, thus becoming more focused, thus becoming more productive. And that's all part and parcel of the vision that everyone shares for their children and grandchildren, Mr. Speaker.

So in stating that motherhood statement, it's not really something that we would not encourage as an opposition. We obviously want to have our graduates stay in school. We'd like to retain them, and efforts of this sort may or may not achieve that. And while the Saskatchewan Party is touting that this is going to be a great opportunity for people, we need to make sure that this is properly done, it's properly administered, and that it not be left up to the Saskatchewan Party to determine whether it's best for the province, that really the opposition has to have their crack at it to make sure this is right in terms of what it's trying to achieve.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would point out that it's important. When this was mentioned, I think it was \$1,000 per graduate. That was the price tag that was originally announced under the program. And people out there should know, I don't believe, Mr. Speaker, that it's an actual cheque that some of the grade 12 people would get. I think it's actually a tax credit, and that's something that's really important. It's really important that people need to find that out. And some of the questions that we have in terms of *The Income Tax Act* and how that reflects in terms of the credit itself: is it really the full value that the tax credit is getting? How does it impact a person's overall benefit in terms of trying to stay here in Saskatchewan? Is there any impediments to the program that would really hurt the effort overall? These are some of the things we need to understand, Mr. Speaker.

And that's one of the reasons why I want to make sure that we encourage people out there that may be involved with students — whether you're a member of the students' union or whether you're part of a parent-teacher association or whether you're

just a concerned grade 11 or 12 person that wants to look at this particular Act — to see how we can keep more and more of the graduates here in Saskatchewan.

It's a very important Act, Mr. Speaker. And you obviously have to take the time to read it, to go through it, and to farm it out to a number of different groups that may have some positions on it or some concerns. And those that have a lot of interest in this may have a different perspective for the opposition that they might want to share with us. And that's why it's important that we look at these Bills and all the other Bills that are coming forward to make sure that we give it its due diligence and we look at the Bill overall for any kind of weaknesses or misgivings that it might try and present to the people it's supposed to have helped.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the minister went into detail of some of the things that he pointed out, the fact that some of the information may not have to be so public, that we're not going to argue with that, with identity theft out there. It is always the opportunity for people out there to take advantage of some of the information that may be online, and anything to retain and to protect people's personal, private information is very, very key. And that's one of the reasons why we make such a big deal about computers that are being found with their hard drives still intact and a lot of people's information being out there in garbage bins for other, the public to see. That's why it's important that we protect the information.

So sometimes what it is being touted in some of these Bills is actually not what's being, what's being practised by the Saskatchewan Party. And that's why it's important that any effort to keep information, as much of people's personal information out of the public's domain is something that should be exercised on a continual and consistent basis by this government, Mr. Speaker, because there has been breaches. And I'm adding serious breaches, to this particular issue.

So, Mr. Speaker, again and looking under Bill 42, I sometimes look at the overall process. When you look at the opportunity that they have to fix the education system, the opportunity they have to work with properly funding our teachers, and the issue that they have increased debt to the universities, these are some of the issues that this minister and of course this government has certainly brought about in the last several months, Mr. Speaker. And that's not something that they spoke about before the election.

So when they make an announcement and they bring something of this nature forth, and it sounds good and the spin is great, this is the reason why the opposition has to take the time to look at the Bill and to assess it against some of the other actions, as I spoke about earlier, some of the other actions. If it doesn't really complement the other actions, Mr. Speaker, then obviously we want to be able to tell people that that is the case.

And, Mr. Speaker, based on the evidence that we have seen so far that the Saskatchewan Party is not committed to education, and this particular Bill will certainly . . . We want to pay close attention to see if there's some hope for some of the people out there to be able to benefit from some of their nice-sounding media bites, Mr. Speaker. And that's what I think that the people out there are starting to expect from this government,

and that's why they want to take the time to look at the Bill to make sure it's proper and that it is going to fill the intent as the government announced.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of information that we want to check in terms of *The Income Tax Act* in terms of which particular group benefits. Is it a huge benefit for certain people, or is it not a great benefit for others? It's something that we have to pay very close attention to.

And as the Saskatchewan Party likes to speak about all the low-income people that they've taken off the tax roll, I can tell people right now in the province that most of those low-income people, the tax savings that they have overall is probably about 20 bucks a year. But it sounds good for them to say this, Mr. Speaker, but the actual savings are not that significant. In the meantime, many of those same people are faced with skyrocketing rent costs. And so \$20 a year saved on income tax does not make a huge difference in their overall budget.

[14:45]

And that's much similar to this Bill, Mr. Speaker. That's why it's important for us to make sure, if they're touting it and bragging about it and talking about it, that it's the proper thing that they're putting forward in this particular Bill. And so far all the evidence suggests, Mr. Speaker, that it's something that we cannot and will not trust in the Saskatchewan Party. Anything that they spin and then present in the Bill, we want to make sure we take the time to look through it and look through it properly and really, really assess it with the different groups that would be impacted such as students, unions. Some of the teachers may want to participate. Some of the parents, councils might want to look at this, and that's one of the reasons why we want to take our time.

So on that point, Mr. Speaker, I want to quickly close my comments that on Bill 42, we're going to farm out this information to different groups. We're going to read through it very thoroughly. We're going to assess the minister's comments. And again, as I mentioned at the outset, we are going to make sure that what they announced is what the net effect is, that there's not some way that they're going to try and scurry away from this particular promise or water it down so there's not the net effect to really retain and to encourage our young people looking at careers and raising families in the province, which we think is part of a proper plan to look at the sustainable development of Saskatchewan and the ongoing development of our great province.

So, Mr. Speaker, we will take the time on Bill 42. We will research it. We will be coming back with more information, more questions. And at this point, I'd like to adjourn debate on Bill 42.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 42. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and move second reading of Bill No. 43 to amend *The Income Act, 2000*, which will implement the income tax initiatives announced March 21st, 2012.

Mr. Speaker, the budget announced two new initiatives to improve access and affordability for housing in Saskatchewan. First, as promised in our election platform, we have introduced a first-time homebuyers tax credit effective January 1st, 2012. Mr. Speaker, this new non-refundable income tax credit is based on the first \$10,000 of a qualifying home purchase and will provide about \$6.6 million in annual tax saving for new homeowners. The new tax credit corresponds to a similar federal tax credit.

Mr. Speaker, the second housing-related initiative introduced in the budget was an incentive to encourage the development of new multi-unit residential rental projects. This initiative became effective March 21st, 2012. This new incentive will provide a tax rebate equal to a 10 percentage point reduction in the Saskatchewan general corporate income tax rate on rental income earned on new projects. This addresses the disincentive of high income tax rates on investment income earned from the development and rental of multi-unit residential projects.

A corporation's eligibility for the tax rebate will begin once the corporation is in a taxable position, which could be after several years, and will continue for a period of up to 10 consecutive years. Mr. Speaker, the rebate will be available for projects completed within a specific time frame in order to encourage the rapid development of new housing projects. When combined with other housing incentives initiated by our government, in particular the rental construction incentive introduced last year, it is expected that up to 10,000 new rental units will be created over the life of this program.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to these two housing initiatives, the budget also announced, effective April 1st, 2012, that the research and development tax credit is being altered to provide a refundable tax credit only for the first \$3 million in eligible expenditures incurred by small business corporations. All other eligible expenditures will now be provided a non-refundable tax credit to be deducted against taxes otherwise payable. The tax credit rate remains at 15 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, the budget also announced changes to the tax credit under the graduate retention program, GRP, effective January 1st, 2012. The tuition rebate is being replaced by a non-refundable tax credit deductible against taxes otherwise payable. The non-refundable tax credit is being supplemented by a new refundable tax credit for individuals who do not have sufficient taxes payable to fully use the non-refundable tax credit. This change will permit the GRP to more closely reflect the fact that the majority of tax credits claimed are used to reduce income taxes otherwise payable. However when taken together, these new tax credits ensure that graduates continue to receive their full GRP entitlement.

Mr. Speaker, the remaining income tax amendment is a technical clarification that has been requested by the Canada Revenue Agency to allow the Saskatchewan low-income tax credit to be claimed by both parents for children in a shared custody arrangement. This will match a federal change made last year to the federal goods and services tax credit.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of *An Act to amend The Income Tax Act, 2000*.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Finance has moved second reading of Bill No. 43, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2012*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again I'm pleased to stand up and offer our initial comments on the proposed amendments to *The Income Tax Act, 2000*. No question, Mr. Speaker, Bill 43 certainly speaks about the housing opportunity that a lot of corporations may have in trying to meet some of the growing demands for affordable housing. Certainly this has a focus on the rental issues, and I want to speak a bit about that.

But before we go on any further, some of the amendments on the low-income rolls for some of the parents that may have shared custody of children that might be involved, Mr. Speaker, these are some that, at first blush, that we want to make sure that we understand the Bill clearly and that we're able to assess it properly.

Mr. Speaker, according to the minister, they talk about really the affordability of homes. It's something that has been front and centre to the people of Saskatchewan for a long, long time. When you see people out there paying an incredible amount for rent, an incredible amount, an incredible increase for rent, Mr. Speaker, there's a huge cry of people out there that are beginning to realize that the rental increases in our cities in particular are not affordable and that there has to be something, something has to give, Mr. Speaker.

And we know for a fact that many of the seniors that live in some of the apartments or rent off different corporations, that they are really beginning to have a choice that they make between making sure that they will find the money for the increase in their rents or either looking at food, or even making sure that they have their medicines, Mr. Speaker, or other things that, you know, that they need, or telephone.

So you look at some of the cost. When we as New Democrats speak about affordability of housing, we're not talking about giving huge tax breaks to large corporations, Mr. Speaker. And that's where I think there's a lot of disjointed thinking on the Saskatchewan Party side because people out there have been asking for a specific program to help deal with the rising cost of rent. That was what the big issue is.

So what happens now with this particular Bill is the minister's saying that we're going to give the corporations a tax break if they build housing units. And, Mr. Speaker, in theory you would assume that some of those tax breaks that they're giving to these corporations would translate in lesser cost, rental cost, for some of the people that are going through the huge drain

and the strain of trying to make sure they have a roof over their heads. And many times, Mr. Speaker, those cost savings are not added, or not passed down to the consumer, in this case the renter.

And you start seeing that no matter how many millions of dollars that the minister talks about — I think the figure he used was 6.6 million — at the end of the day is that just a giveaway to the corporations building units? Does it actually translate into real savings for people who are having a tough time making ends meet, in particular trying to make sure that they have enough money for rent? And that's the huge question, Mr. Speaker, is the net impact. When I spoke earlier about the net benefit or net impact of some of the announcements, who gets the cash? Who gets the money? And who gets all the incentive? It's the builders, Mr. Speaker. And that's something that we need to clearly address and to assess properly, Mr. Speaker.

There's all kinds of ways that one could look at how you develop affordable housing, and is this the best way? Once again, Mr. Speaker, we're seeing that the Saskatchewan Party has aligned themselves with their friends and those that are big corporations that can afford to spend millions on building rental units that people then in turn pay huge dollars on a monthly basis to make sure they're covering some of the mortgages of some of these large corporations.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is actually an incredible misplaced priority, from our perspective, when you talk about addressing the homelessness situation, about addressing the affordability issue. And here we have what I think is \$6.6 million that's primarily given to a corporation to build some of these units, and it's a income tax credit. And, Mr. Speaker, they're not going to make the corporation pay any of this money back unless and until they're in a position to do so, and who knows how long that would take, Mr. Speaker. That, coupled with other incentives, as the minister alluded to, along with some federal incentives, and then you begin to wonder, well who needs the housing support the most. It is the renters, Mr. Speaker, not the corporations building these units. It is the renters that live in these units that have to make a choice between their medicines, their foods, or their shelter.

And many times, especially the seniors and the elders, they simply do not have the means to make all the demands for those three categories. So sometimes they won't even buy their own medicine. They'll simply pay for the rent, pay for their power, and pray for some money left over for food. And, Mr. Speaker, that's how many of our senior citizens are living. They're barely able to afford, they're barely able to afford what they have now.

And now with the increased rents, Mr. Speaker, you're pushing a lot of the seniors over the brink, the brink of financial collapse. And this is happening all throughout Saskatchewan on many fronts. Low income families, students, seniors, those that are moving their first time to Saskatchewan go through all these problems, Mr. Speaker. And there's no question in my mind that this is a priority that may be misplaced, and we have to look at it and assess it properly. And there's so many things that we want to talk about on this particular Bill.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there's reference about low-income credit

applying for parents that may have lived . . . or may have had children together but are not married yet or not in any kind of a . . . not as a couple. So that process is certainly, I think, self-explanatory if that's going to support people in general to make sure that there's shared custody of children involved and that they both get those credits and benefits. We don't at the outset see any problem with that. And that's one of the minor points raised in this particular Bill.

But, Mr. Speaker, we want to be able to look at how the Bill impacts low-income people. We want to look at how the Bill impacts the graduate program that was announced earlier, but mostly I think the attention will be on the whole issue of affordability. And I think, Mr. Speaker, the minister and the Saskatchewan Party, once again, the Sask Party missed the mark in terms of their priorities. And it's the same old, same old, Mr. Speaker. We've seen this movie before — once again a right wing government giving their corporate buddies a huge tax break, and under the guise of trying to make housing affordable. This is how they do it.

I think the message should be quite clear, that you give the people directly that are renting the opportunity to really reduce those costs. And 6.6 million alone, Mr. Speaker, could be a significant advantage for many people in these larger centres that have had 30, 50, 70 per cent increases in their rents. Because that's the real story of a lot of people out there, in particular as I mentioned, the elders, Mr. Speaker, have the greatest risk and the greatest challenge of all.

So, Mr. Speaker, as an opposition we want to again encourage different groups out there, whether they're an anti-poverty mission or whether they're there for seniors, whether they're there for the families that are moving to Saskatchewan or for low-income people, we need to get those organizations and groups to really assess whether this Bill meets what is required to talk about or to address the affordability issues.

[15:00]

And, Mr. Speaker, from the first blush of the Bill and the explanation by the minister, it in no way, shape, or form helps out low-income people. In no way, shape, or form helps those that are struggling with high rents, Mr. Speaker, because once again on construction of those units this government is giving the tax breaks and the money to the large corporations that build them and not to the people that rent these units. And that once again, Mr. Speaker, is a huge misplaced opportunity and priority that this government has mixed up and has flubbed once again.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of things that we need to talk about on this particular Bill — I know my colleagues will assess it, and they'll assess it thoroughly — and to point out to the people and organizations that I invited earlier to participate in examining this particular Bill and to always remember that when it came to this particular Bill, on the notion of affordability of homes, just the affordability of having our own house, of being able to live with a roof over our children's head and our seniors' head and able to meet all those needs, what this government has done to this particular Bill has given all the tax benefits and all the incentives to large corporations that can afford to build these houses, these units, which in turn are

rented to you at extremely high cost.

So the obvious question is, what benefit is this to the average person renting these units? Because the incentives for taxes are never ever passed on to the renters, Mr. Speaker. They're the last people to see any benefit. And that's what we've been talking about here in the Assembly is we need a program, we need a program to recognize the renters, the people that can't afford to rent these units. And this government brought this Bill forward to give tax breaks to large corporations. And for crying out loud, what does that do for the average renter? It doesn't do anything, Mr. Speaker. So once again their friends get the cash, and the people that are renting the units get absolutely nothing.

And that's the purpose of trying to assess these Bills properly, to see what exactly who the target audience is, who the benefactors are. And, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you once again, low-income renters, people that are just starting to make their own way into becoming independent people, the Aboriginal community, Mr. Speaker, the elderly — all these low-income groups out there that are trying to find some support from the government, once again the door has been slammed in their face. And large corporations that get all the benefits of rent are now getting all the benefits of the incentives announced in this Bill. And in this day and age, 2012, it's a crying shame.

Something has to change; something has to wake up this particular government because there's many, many seniors and families that are suffering a huge, a huge burden out there, Mr. Speaker, and we've got to start hearing them and responding in a most compassionate, intelligent, and caring way. And so far, Mr. Speaker, this Bill does not fit that description in any way, shape, or form.

So once again, Mr. Speaker, we have other folks that are going to participate on this Bill as the time proceeds. We are quite pleased to be able to stand here and give our initial comments. And again I encourage those that are listening to participate. Look at the Bill online. Give us your comments. We're only a phone call away. And let's fight together, let's fight together to tell the Saskatchewan Party, the Sask Party, that once again their priorities are wrong, and all the great opportunity they had they have flubbed. And they have not certainly provided any extra support or kind support to those people that need it the most, and that's our elderly people, the low-income people, and of course the immigrant community that tries to make Saskatchewan their home.

So again, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to stand on behalf of the opposition and give the initial first few comments and move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 43.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 43. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 37

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hutchinson that **Bill No. 37 — *The Tourism Saskatchewan Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to weigh into a debate, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to Bill No. 37, Mr. Speaker, a Bill that takes over Tourism Saskatchewan from the industry here in Saskatchewan, from the stakeholders here in Saskatchewan. And that's disappointing, Mr. Speaker.

So while I'm pleased to enter the debate, I'm disappointed that we're here discussing these matters. When we think of Tourism Saskatchewan, I think of an organization, an arm's-length organization to government that's been a great success in telling the Saskatchewan story and highlighting the incredible tourism assets we have in this beautiful province, and has played a significant role in supporting that industry, supporting employment in this province, and supported a very positive image of our proud province, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly this Bill is representative of what we've seen on many other fronts, Mr. Speaker, is a government not being straight with Saskatchewan people. This government went before the people of Saskatchewan in an election in the fall, Mr. Speaker, and we didn't see a mention, Mr. Speaker, not a mention of the fact that they wanted to take over and control Enterprise Saskatchewan, to take it away from the entrepreneurs and the industry, Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that it was an incredibly successful organization, Mr. Speaker. We never heard that at all.

But, Mr. Speaker, sadly we never heard as well from a government that hasn't been straight with Saskatchewan people the fact that it wanted to spend millions of dollars on increasing the number of politicians in our province or the fact that it wanted to eliminate the film economy here in Saskatchewan and drive creative young workers outside of this province, Mr. Speaker; to have a harmful impact to our economy by way of employment, by way of the workers, by way of investment, Mr. Speaker, and certainly a major cultural loss to this province, a loss of cultural vibrancy and community vibrancy that was established, Mr. Speaker, by mechanisms such as the film industry and also certainly by way of Tourism Saskatchewan.

So on these fronts, we see a government that hasn't been straight. We see a government that hasn't been straight, Mr. Speaker, when they went before Saskatchewan people with the fact that they wanted to increase the cost of prescription drugs for seniors and children, young families all across this province, Mr. Speaker. That wasn't mentioned in the election in the fall, Mr. Speaker. That wasn't mentioned in the Throne Speech. Certainly the impact is being felt by Saskatchewan families and certainly highlights the circumstance of not being straight with Saskatchewan people.

The list goes on, Mr. Speaker, but the fact is straightforward. The question is one of integrity, Mr. Speaker. We saw a government go before the people in the fall, offer up a pretty

cheery message, pretty sleek brochures, pretty glossy brochures, Mr. Speaker, but not to have any mention of what their actual game plan was, which was to eliminate a film economy, to take away some of the cultural vibrancy we have here in this province, to drive away workers, to increase the cost of living for seniors and young families, Mr. Speaker, to have impacts and constraints in health care, Mr. Speaker, across this province and in classrooms across this province. And quite simply this is why we're hearing from Saskatchewan people all across the province that this isn't what they voted for.

Oh at the same time I would remind you, Mr. Speaker, that astonishingly this government continues to push forward this foolhardy concept of spending millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker, to increase the number of politicians in Saskatchewan, all only to pursue the political best interests, Mr. Speaker, of members opposite. Nothing to do with the best interests of Saskatchewan people.

So certainly that's the same sort of circumstance we see here with Tourism Saskatchewan, an incredibly successful organization, Mr. Speaker, to Saskatchewan, something that's been fundamental in the economy of Saskatchewan, that's driven all sorts of meaningful employment for Saskatchewan people, and that has highlighted and showcased our proud and impressive province in so many ways, Mr. Speaker. This is a sad chapter as it relates to that impressive organization, and we're not willing to let it go without a good push, Mr. Speaker, and we're going to continue to do that. We've got good allies in doing so. Certainly Saskatchewan people are disappointed with this change, a change that they see, Mr. Speaker, has nothing to do with common sense.

You know, it's interesting, Mr. Speaker, that the member from Northeast heckles me, Mr. Speaker, speaking about this while sitting on his chair in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. We don't hear that member say much from his feet. We don't see him stand up and put things on the record very often, Mr. Speaker, but when there are serious matters to be discussed and debated, Mr. Speaker, it seems that he's more interested in heckling from his seat, Mr. Speaker. And that's disappointing because I know, Mr. Speaker, that there's certainly some tourism industry businesses in his own riding, Mr. Speaker, and certainly in this province.

And I find it rather astonishing, Mr. Speaker, that a Regina member would be somehow supporting the elimination of the film economy, the driving away of workers from our province, the driving away of investment, Mr. Speaker. You know, I find that incredibly sad to put that incredible asset that also ties into our tourism story, Mr. Speaker, being our film stage that used to have producers lining up from around the world to utilize that space, Mr. Speaker, and certainly was an impressive asset for all Saskatchewan people and people from abroad and from afar, Mr. Speaker, to come and to tour and to view and to understand that we had this community vitality going on by way of our film industry.

And so I find it pretty sad, Mr. Speaker, that the member opposite would heckle from his seat, Mr. Speaker, on an issue of eliminating and taking control of Tourism Saskatchewan, a wildly successful organization here in Saskatchewan, at the same time as supporting the other things that member has

supported, Mr. Speaker — the big hit and impact to our film economy, Mr. Speaker, the increases he's offering his constituents, Mr. Speaker, by way of the prescription drug increases which for many, Mr. Speaker, will be hundreds of dollars a year for households, seniors, and young families, Mr. Speaker — all of which, Mr. Speaker, wasn't mentioned in any of his literature, Mr. Speaker, or any of the literature of any of those members opposite, Mr. Speaker. And that's where it gets to a matter of integrity, Mr. Speaker, and being straight with Saskatchewan people.

Now Saskatchewan people expect that you're straight with them, Mr. Speaker, as I've highlighted. And that's why they're disappointed from all parts of the province and of all different political persuasions, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . You know, I find it pretty interesting, Mr. Speaker, that the member from Arm River-Watrous is heckling from his seat, Mr. Speaker, instead of being out working hard with the Minister of Education, Mr. Speaker, and working hard in his constituency, to be working to make sure that Nokomis School stays viable, Mr. Speaker. And I'll be quiet for a moment, Mr. Speaker, so that the member from Arm River-Watrous . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — So I wanted to give an opportunity for the member from Arm River-Watrous to actually put a position on the record there, Mr. Speaker, because we don't hear him offer many positions or many voices, Mr. Speaker.

But what I know, Mr. Speaker, is that when I opened up this morning an email from the Nokomis School review committee with a song this morning, Mr. Speaker, that was put together with the school this morning, I'd urge the member to listen to it. It was put together by an incredible band in this province as well, Little Miss Higgins, Mr. Speaker, and I believe they live as well in Nokomis, Mr. Speaker. And it was the voice of grade 1's and of grade 2's and of grade 3's singing a song to talk about the importance of education in Saskatchewan and certainly singing a song to speak about the value and importance of their school, Mr. Speaker.

So I find it pretty interesting and awfully sad, Mr. Speaker, that that member who sits on his chair without offering a message through his microphone, Mr. Speaker . . .

The Speaker: — I would ask the member to direct his comments through the Chair . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . You too.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, and through the Chair, certainly I'm disappointed that we have members opposite that would rather — such as the member from Arm River-Watrous — that would rather heckle from their chair instead of doing something meaningful to keep their school open to a community in recognizing how important that school is, Mr. Speaker.

And it's about common sense on these fronts too, Mr. Speaker. We have an exciting proposal put forward by BHP, Mr. Speaker, in his own riding, Mr. Speaker, and it's Jansen Lake

mine, Mr. Speaker. And this is going to provide all sorts of employment, Mr. Speaker, if it can come to be. But what we need to do, Mr. Speaker, is as this economy grows and as we have things such as operations, such as mines that are being developed, we need to make sure we have the communities in place to support them and that sort of infrastructure, Mr. Speaker. And that's why I urge that member, who I understand maybe around election time talked about that somehow he was a supporter of that school, Mr. Speaker, to stay open. Now of course we see something entirely different, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Why is the Government House Leader on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — What's your point of order?

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Mr. Speaker, I think we're speaking to or on Bill No. 37, *The Tourism Saskatchewan Act*, and I know the member's been talking about schools and all that sort of thing. I haven't heard him address Bill 37 though, Mr. Speaker, and I would ask that he do so.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, I haven't heard the entirety of the member's remarks from Rosemont, but certainly he's making a very passionate and very incisive debate as regards the changes to Tourism Saskatchewan. I think his remarks were entirely on point and certainly within the traditions of this House.

The Speaker: — I would like to remind all members to direct their comments both through the Chair and to the subject matter. I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

[15:15]

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And certainly I'm pleased to be speaking directly to Bill 37, Mr. Speaker, the takeover of Tourism Saskatchewan by this government, Mr. Speaker, an organization that's been wildly successful in this province in serving Saskatchewan people, our economy, our incredible tourism assets.

And what I was highlighting, Mr. Speaker, while I was being heckled by members opposite, Mr. Speaker, was that this comes down to common sense, Mr. Speaker. It comes down to ideology trumping common sense, Mr. Speaker, in a case such as Bill 37 and the takeover of, government takeover of Enterprise Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And as I was being heckled by members opposite, Mr. Speaker, certainly there's other examples of common sense, Mr. Speaker, that we should be speaking to, and whether that be the cuts and elimination of the film economy in Saskatchewan, driving away that important investment, those creative young workers, Mr. Speaker, that's certainly a very fine example of a failure to be making decisions by way of common sense.

Just like, Mr. Speaker, where we have a school, Mr. Speaker, that's up for review and closure in Arm River-Watrous, Mr. Speaker, a school for which . . . needs to serve that growing economy, Mr. Speaker, for which has many tourism assets

within that constituency specifically, Mr. Speaker, and a school that is very important to that community. And I urge members to understand that importance and certainly I urge the constituency MLA to have that understanding. Because it was my understanding that there was support for that school beforehand.

And this isn't just about supporting the economic activity by way of the mine up in that constituency, Mr. Speaker. It's also about the tourism activity within that region, Mr. Speaker. Of course, Nokomis, Mr. Speaker, is just northeast of Last Mountain Lake, a very special migratory game preserve, I believe the first in Canada, Mr. Speaker, which is an impressive, impressive reserve to visit. It's a region that absolutely thrives with hunting and fishing, Mr. Speaker, and certainly that community plays an important role within that. In fact many of the farm operators, many of the producers in that area also have significant interplay into the tourism industry as well up in that region, serving the hunters and the fishers and being a part of it.

And as well, I know for many of those individuals, Mr. Speaker, that school that I spoke of, Mr. Speaker, Nokomis School is important for the viability of certainly that economy but also the expansion of the mind and certainly the expansion of tourism up through that very blessed region — incredible, beautiful area, Mr. Speaker.

So we speak to the matter of the lack of common sense being utilized by this government, the ideological pursuit by that government. Instead of sort of serving the best interests of Saskatchewan people, we see a government that's all too willing to serve its own political best interest, to spend \$3 million, Mr. Speaker, or spend millions of dollars I should say — I'll correct myself — to increase the number of MLAs here in Saskatchewan and to do so, Mr. Speaker, at a time where there's important priorities.

Now many people have speculated; why would this government come out with the mandate they had, Mr. Speaker? And instead of just humbly going to do the work that they were authorized to do so with the mandate that they earned, Mr. Speaker, why would they do all of these things, Mr. Speaker, that certainly aren't in the best interests of Saskatchewan people? And those are good questions, Mr. Speaker, and certainly I share those concerns.

When we look at Tourism Saskatchewan and the takeover of Tourism Saskatchewan, the control of Tourism Saskatchewan, grabbing this from the industry who was directing and driving this successful organization, Mr. Speaker, this is nothing, Mr. Speaker, other than some sort of serving the best interests, I guess, Mr. Speaker, of that party and that government, Mr. Speaker. But it's a sad day.

I know many people have speculated what's the driver of this. Is it political vengeance, Mr. Speaker? You know, just what is it, Mr. Speaker? I guess at the end of the day, it's my great concern, Mr. Speaker, and I know the concern of many across this province, that of course this Tourism Saskatchewan spends dollars to communicate to Saskatchewan people and to our neighbours and to the world about what we have here in Saskatchewan. And they have a significant budget to do that,

and they spend about \$8 million a year in communications, Mr. Speaker.

These decisions were arm's-length from government. They were made in the best interests of tourism here in Saskatchewan and highlighting the incredible, proud province that we have, Mr. Speaker.

I know the speculation and concern is that this is message management to the extreme, where government needs to take over that budget so that they can get their hands on those millions of dollars of communications spending, Mr. Speaker, to somehow build out a communications narrative that supports the political best interests of this government. That's disappointing, Mr. Speaker — not focused on the best interests of our economy, of our tourism sector, of those businesses that have thrived, Mr. Speaker, and having to get their hands all over those dollars, Mr. Speaker, to somehow tell their story.

And I guess, Mr. Speaker, when I look at tourism in this province and I think of the incredible assets we have — over 100,000 lakes, Mr. Speaker, and the beautiful landscapes from the grasslands in south Saskatchewan to the boreal forests to the Canadian Shield, Mr. Speaker, the lakes and rivers, everywhere in between, Mr. Speaker — we have incredible assets, Mr. Speaker. And those are what should be standing on their own two legs as the face of tourism in this province, not some sort of message that's cheerleading of government or there to somehow support the political ambitions of government, Mr. Speaker, but being able to highlight in a proud way, in a strategic way the proud story we have to tell of tourism here in Saskatchewan. Incredibly disappointed that somehow this government thinks that they should have control of those dollars and should somehow put the face of their government on tourism here in Saskatchewan.

When I look here, Mr. Speaker, I think of, you know, what should be the face of tourism in Saskatchewan. I think of things such as the Temple Gardens Mineral Spa in Moose Jaw, Mr. Speaker. I think of the Temple Gardens Mineral Spa. I think of things such as what we have in Moose Mountain Park, the incredible assets, natural assets but also all the businesses that exist there, Mr. Speaker. I think of Prince Albert National Park with golf courses that are absolutely gorgeous, Mr. Speaker, with hotels and bed and breakfasts that are first-rate, Mr. Speaker, and provide just an incredible opportunity, for those that come, from a tourism perspective. I think of places like Sturgeon River Ranch, Mr. Speaker, on the sides of Prince Albert National Park, Mr. Speaker, that is an incredibly special company and the special kind offerings that we offer here in Saskatchewan.

And this is what I would argue, Mr. Speaker, is it should be those sorts of tourism businesses, those sorts of natural assets that should be the face of tourism to this province not the face of government, Mr. Speaker. Not a government grabbing control of this from those entrepreneurs, Mr. Speaker, who have skin in the game, who have made investments, who have built out successful companies, offered employment, Mr. Speaker, but have also showcased our province to the world, Mr. Speaker, and created a real sense of pride within this province as well. So whether it's Cypress Hills and all the great businesses that flourish in and around Cypress Hills, Mr.

Speaker, that great, rich history that goes with that region or whether it's the winery down at Eastend, Mr. Speaker, these are the special assets that should be standing on their own two feet, not the face of government, Mr. Speaker.

We're blessed, Mr. Speaker, with the natural assets that I highlighted: the lakes, the rivers, the fishing, the hunting.

From a natural perspective, the grasslands all across southern Saskatchewan — let's just think of that region, Mr. Speaker. When we think of southern Saskatchewan, why are we wanting government to take control of telling the story of tourism instead of those that are operating in these incredible regions, such as Grasslands National Park, Mr. Speaker, with the natural bison herd that exists, Mr. Speaker, or going further west into the Cypress Hills as I highlighted, Mr. Speaker, or as we move more centrally, Mr. Speaker, and we think of the Big Muddy, and that incredible history that it played in this province, Mr. Speaker? And the fact that this is something that's of great significance to the people of this province that drives local tourism, Mr. Speaker, but also something that can be showcased in such a proud way to the world, Mr. Speaker.

These are assets that many in this province may not even be aware of, Mr. Speaker. And certainly we have business operators, entrepreneurs that have been making investments to showcase some of those aspects. And of course we have a role for government on these fronts with our provincial parks and our park systems across this province. And then we have a role, Mr. Speaker, for making sure that we're protecting all of these special natural environments. That's a whole other discussion, Mr. Speaker, but one that's certainly warranted here at this table.

So I guess what I have to say is it's so disappointing to see a government pushing forward, choosing ideology over common sense, taking control of a communications budget, Mr. Speaker, that's only about serving their best interests, Mr. Speaker. You know, I highlighted some of the south Saskatchewan assets. I spoke about Moose Mountain down into the Southeast as well and just special operations, whether you're through Kenosee Park and looking at the businesses that exist there, the hotel options, Mr. Speaker, in through White Bear and in through Kenosee. The waterslides there, Mr. Speaker, that are such a hit for families in the region and for the entire province, Mr. Speaker, these are special places.

But not only are those businesses special; the region's special. And that's where they work together. And you get up into the hills of the Moose Mountains, Mr. Speaker, well they're not unlike the hills near your home there, Mr. Speaker, in the Last Mountains, which are also incredibly beautiful. But when you're up in the Moose Mountains, this is a majestic land, Mr. Speaker, and we have incredibly special businesses that have built viability and served Saskatchewan people and people from all over the world in showcasing these natural assets.

Just over from Moose Mountain, I think of Forget and a very special, unique restaurant and operation there, bed and breakfast, Mr. Speaker. And I think of the Happy Nun, Mr. Speaker, which is renowned, Mr. Speaker, over the past few years for its exceptional food, Mr. Speaker, and the live acts and musicians that come through it, Mr. Speaker. This is the

face of tourism, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan. Tourism shouldn't be the face of government, Mr. Speaker, not serving the political best interests of government. And that's why we're opposing this in such a significant way, Mr. Speaker.

You know, I think of our own beautiful city here in Regina, Mr. Speaker, and you know, this incredible asset that we have out beside this beautiful building, historical building, being the Saskatchewan legislature. I think of Wascana Park, Mr. Speaker, and the lake that exists and the vitality that brings to our community. You know, Mr. Speaker, it's a beautiful day in Regina here today, and I know that park is alive with activity, many of them tourists, Mr. Speaker, who are here in the province and here in the city, Mr. Speaker, who might be taking a moment from a conference that they're at or might be visiting the city as part of their travels, Mr. Speaker, and staying in one of our fine hotels, Mr. Speaker, but will be taking in certainly that incredible, beautiful asset, being Wascana Lake, Mr. Speaker, and Wascana Park.

I always see this as sort of the jewel and gem of this city, Mr. Speaker. You'll have individuals sitting under a tree reading books in the shade, staying cool. You'll have individuals in the hot sun playing football, probably on the front lawn of this legislature, Mr. Speaker. You'll have individuals rollerblading around the lake and biking, Mr. Speaker. It's a vibrant place and a special place, incredibly special as we move forward and those flowers are planted and those yards are taken care of, Mr. Speaker. And it's something that we should be proud to showcase to the rest of Saskatchewan and to the world, Mr. Speaker. And instead, we see the government choosing to put its face, the face of government, Mr. Speaker, as the face of tourism. It's not the way it should be, Mr. Speaker.

I think of, as I say, the rich history in this city as well that is important to tourism in this province. I think of the very building that we're standing in. I think of RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] depot and the history of it to our city and our province, Mr. Speaker, and to our country, I should say, Mr. Speaker. I think of Government House and what its role was in bringing us together as a province and that history, Mr. Speaker. These are part of our history. They're part of our assets, Mr. Speaker, and those should all be part of the face of tourism in this province. It shouldn't be government taking over the tourism industry to put its face as the face of tourism, Mr. Speaker. And it's quite simply disappointing.

I can go on and on and on, Mr. Speaker, whether I'm highlighting in your own constituency, Last Mountain Lake and starting in the valley and up through the beautiful plains to the northern end of the lake or the great businesses that operate on that lake, including folks like G&S Marina's in at Rowan's Ravine and Strasbourg, Mr. Speaker, that provide incredible sport fishing opportunities for individuals all over the world and all over Canada, Mr. Speaker, showcasing these assets that we know are so special here in this province.

And of course we can continue up through the province in through Saskatoon and the rivers and Wanuskewin and all the tourism opportunities that exist there or in through the North when you get into that incredible boreal forest country, Mr. Speaker, Prince Albert National Park, Mr. Speaker, and Cumberland House, and all of the great history and all of the

incredible future that we see in so many of these communities, much of which connects directly to tourism as well, or tourism is a very important part of it.

You know, yes, I think as I move up further north into the province and you move into that region, Mr. Speaker, where you think of the Canadian Shield, Mr. Speaker, up into northern Saskatchewan where you've got these bespeckled land of rivers and lakes, Mr. Speaker, that is just incredible to fly over, Mr. Speaker, and incredible to be on the ground of or to be paddling up these tributary rivers to the Churchill River, Mr. Speaker, and what a beautiful area, Mr. Speaker. Whether someone enjoys paddling and whitewater, whether they enjoy camping and fishing, Mr. Speaker, the opportunities up there are incredible. The region, the wildlife, Mr. Speaker, it's just a beautiful, beautiful region.

[15:30]

So I think that that's the assets that should be the face of tourism, Mr. Speaker. I was heckled there by the member from Nipawin, who's actually in a very beautiful part of the province, Mr. Speaker; the member for Carrot River Valley, Mr. Speaker, that represents Nipawin, Mr. Speaker. And I think of Tobin Lake, Mr. Speaker, and those entrepreneurs, Mr. Speaker, that have made investments in this province, that have developed out incredible assets, Mr. Speaker, to showcase Tobin Lake, Mr. Speaker, and that region. I think that those individuals are the stories that we should be celebrating. I think that those businesses, those operators, and those lakes, Mr. Speaker, I think that they should be the face of tourism. I think the fact, Mr. Speaker, that, you know, I think it's the world record for walleye, Mr. Speaker, up there on Tobin Lake, Mr. Speaker. I think that should be part of the story and the face of tourism, Mr. Speaker, not the face of government, Mr. Speaker, a government that's taking control of something that was arm's-length, directed by industry, Mr. Speaker, serving our economy, Mr. Speaker, serving to showcase our province.

The golf courses I think in that member's . . . The golf course up in that member's riding, Mr. Speaker, that is one beautiful region, Mr. Speaker. And I'm disappointed that that member would support taking over a mechanism that was so proudly telling the story here in Saskatchewan of the entrepreneurs and of the natural assets that we possess as a province, Mr. Speaker.

You know, I truly love the natural assets we have in this province. I truly enjoy sitting down with the entrepreneurs who have made their livelihood and built out, made investments to highlight these special, natural assets all across this province in our urban landscapes, in our south Saskatchewan grasslands, and certainly in through our North.

And I think that, you know, quite simply it should be these sorts of operators, these sorts of natural assets that should be the face of tourism in Saskatchewan. Not the face of government, Mr. Speaker, a government that's taking control of something that was working so incredibly well and to get control of those communications dollars to tell its own story, Mr. Speaker. And that's disappointing. It's disappointing and, I think, questions can be raised about, you know, whether or not they . . . why they're doing this. But the biggest reason, I believe, Mr. Speaker, is to get their hands over the budget of \$8 million a

year, Mr. Speaker, to have more messaging going out that's controlled by government and less by the people of this province, Mr. Speaker.

You know, I kind of stopped at the boreal forest there, Mr. Speaker. I was talking about, you know, the parkland and up into the boreal forest and up into Nipawin and Prince Albert National Park and Sturgeon Lake ranch and all these great entrepreneurs and then those golf courses — Waskesiu and Elk Ridge — and the incredible lakes that are preserved back up in Prince Albert National Park. But it doesn't stop there, Mr. Speaker, and we're almost, we're not even halfway through the province yet at this time, Mr. Speaker.

When we continue to move northward, Mr. Speaker, we see the Canadian Shield emerge. And of course as I was saying, this bespeckled land of gems, gem-like lakes, Mr. Speaker, and rivers that are alive, as I've said, Mr. Speaker, with wildlife and alive with fish, Mr. Speaker, in an unparalleled way. In a way that we should be so proud to stand up and share ourselves with the rest of the world to say, come and paddle our rivers, come and join our beautiful festivals and our urban landscapes, come and catch the biggest walleye in the world, Mr. Speaker, come and fight some of the toughest northern pike that exist, Mr. Speaker, come and paddle some of the best whitewater along the Churchill River, Mr. Speaker, come and share here in Saskatchewan, come for the cultural festivals that exist here in Regina and all across the province.

I think of Mosaic that's coming up here in June, Mr. Speaker. I think of music festivals, such as the folk festival, Mr. Speaker, that are so special, the children's festival, Mr. Speaker. This should be the face of tourism, Mr. Speaker. The face of tourism shouldn't be the face of government, Mr. Speaker. And that's in many ways why I oppose this takeover of something that was so successful in telling our story and doing so with pride and serving those that have placed the investment into this province, who understand incredibly well the unique assets that we have, and sharing that with one another but also sharing that with the world, Mr. Speaker.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, it comes down to commerce as well. It comes down to economy. It comes down to investment, Mr. Speaker. And it's disappointing for this government to get its hands all over something again, thinking it knows best, thinking it knows better than the entrepreneurs here in Saskatchewan in directing these dollars and guiding these dollars, Mr. Speaker. And this has a direct impact. When we talk about tourism, it's not just about great times fishing on lakes and sitting around that campfire, being at one of those urban festivals or sharing . . . spending time at a hotel in downtown Regina that overlooks Victoria Park, Mr. Speaker. These are all blessed opportunities, Mr. Speaker, but it's also about dollars and cents and about our economy and commerce here in Saskatchewan.

The tourism industry, members should know, plays an enormous role within Saskatchewan. And for them to meddle and to take over control of that industry and to direct the communications, Mr. Speaker, all to serve their own political best interests as opposed to serving the best interests of Saskatchewan people is disappointing. And it's that sort of, I guess, dismissal of our economy, Mr. Speaker, in areas such as

tourism, Mr. Speaker, that we're so disappointed with. We see it in tourism. We see it in the attack on cultural vibrancy and the film economy here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And it's incredibly disappointing because here we are as a province that's worked incredibly hard to achieve and to arrive at where we are here today, with challenges but enormous opportunities that exist, Mr. Speaker. And here we have a time where our natural resource economy is strong, Mr. Speaker, from an oil perspective, from a potash perspective, Mr. Speaker, from all the minerals that we mine, Mr. Speaker. And here we have a government that's choosing to be less instead of being more, Mr. Speaker. And it's a conscious decision, and it's disappointing. I don't know what this government has against investment in this province, Mr. Speaker, against diversifying, diversifying an economy, Mr. Speaker, but it's disappointing.

You know, the people of this province, Mr. Speaker, worked way too hard, Mr. Speaker, to pull ourselves out of circumstances of debt, to ride out certain circumstances of volatility in resource activity at times, Mr. Speaker. They've worked too hard, Mr. Speaker, to at this point in time where we have one sector and sectors of our economy doing quite well by way of our resource economy, Mr. Speaker, to take a conscious decision to be less than more, Mr. Speaker, to make decisions, Mr. Speaker, that drives away film investment in this province, dollars and cents that are being spent in communities all across Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, to be taking control over our tourism budget, Mr. Speaker, a tourism budget that was handled best by Tourism Saskatchewan, by those that have invested all across this province, Mr. Speaker, that have skin in the game, Mr. Speaker. And it's awfully, awfully, awfully disappointing. And as I've said, you know, in the land of living skies, Mr. Speaker, in that bespeckled land of lakes and rivers up in the member from Cumberland's riding, Mr. Speaker, those are the assets that should be standing on their own.

When I think of the Athabasca sand dunes, Mr. Speaker, up in the member from Athabasca's riding, those incredible sand dunes, Mr. Speaker, those should be part of the story of tourism, Mr. Speaker, the face of tourism to the world, one that's incredibly proud, Mr. Speaker, one that I think we share in an unrivalled fashion, Mr. Speaker, with the rest of the world. A jurisdiction that starts in south Saskatchewan with the beauty of those grasslands, Mr. Speaker, and ends in the Far North at the Athabasca sand dunes and up into the Canadian Shield and the connection to almost tundra-like circumstances, Mr. Speaker. It's a beautiful province.

I think it's places like Pawistik Lodge, Mr. Speaker, that should be the face of . . . on the Sturgeon Weir River, Mr. Speaker, a historic river, a beautiful river that teams with fish, Mr. Speaker, that should be the face tourism. Mr. Speaker, I think that it's companies and regions that they operate in, such as the Churchill River Canoe Outfitters, Mr. Speaker, up in Missinipe that should be the face of tourism in this province, not the government, Mr. Speaker. Companies such as Churchill River Canoe Outfitters have showcased that river and that region, Mr. Speaker, to so many, not only in this province but also outside this province and to the world, Mr. Speaker.

And those are incredible, special entrepreneurs in this province, Mr. Speaker, that understand the important interplay between

sustainable environment and a sustainable business, Mr. Speaker, and that certainly should be the face of tourism in this province. I think we are speaking of Missinipe there, Mr. Speaker. I think of Thompson's Camps, Mr. Speaker, offering unparalleled fishing and opportunities for individuals to explore our beautiful northern landscape by boat, Mr. Speaker, or in the campsite or in the cabins, Mr. Speaker — beautiful, beautiful spot.

I think of beautiful spots as, you know, up in that region where you can paddle your way down the river to make your way to the oldest church in Saskatchewan there at Stanley Mission, Mr. Speaker, standing proudly on the shores of the Churchill River, Mr. Speaker. And I think of them paddling just a little bit further, Mr. Speaker, to the base of Nistowiak Falls, Mr. Speaker.

And so you have these incredible, beautiful, natural assets, Mr. Speaker, and then this interplay of investment and entrepreneurs who have made investments of their time and money to help showcase those natural assets but also to build out commerce and employment in the region, Mr. Speaker.

I think of Jim's Camp at the base of Nistowiak Falls, one of the most beautiful places in all of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and the other camps, Mr. Speaker, that exist right on that exact region and that same part of the river, Mr. Speaker. This should be the face of tourism here in Saskatchewan. Instead we see a government that's more interested with political intervention and control of communications, Mr. Speaker.

The member from Walsh Acres heckles from his feet, Mr. Speaker. He tries to be loud, Mr. Speaker. He's probably frustrated that his caucus doesn't allow him to speak on the microphone very often, Mr. Speaker, to stand up for Saskatchewan people or to stand up for his constituents. But what I know, whether it's the member from Walsh Acres who shouts loudly across this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, I urge members like him to have more of a voice at the caucus table, Mr. Speaker, to stand up against the forces within that caucus, Mr. Speaker, that are making these decisions that are so poor, Mr. Speaker, decisions that are driving investment from his constituency, Mr. Speaker, decisions that are driving workers from his constituency, Mr. Speaker.

I know right now that in constituencies, constituencies like my own, Mr. Speaker, and certainly like Walsh Acres, some of those individuals, Mr. Speaker, that were working in that film industry, Mr. Speaker, are now having the very difficult circumstance and prospect of figuring out what their livelihood will be, Mr. Speaker. For many, it's about moving.

The member's heckling from his feet, Mr. Speaker. He's saying, is there any examples of it? What I would urge the member to do is to see the thousands and thousands and thousands of signatures that have come in on petitions, to read the hundreds and hundreds of letters that have come in, Mr. Speaker, highlighting the stories, Mr. Speaker, of the workers in this province who have built their life in this province. And we urge that member to serve their best interest, Mr. Speaker, and to share that voice, Mr. Speaker.

And you know, when we're talking about the film industry

here, Mr. Speaker, it has a direct connection to tourism in this province, Mr. Speaker. You know, in many ways for many people, I know they'll have had their attention focused to the province through the story of Dog River, Mr. Speaker, through *Corner Gas*. They'll have had their attention through Indian Head and *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, Mr. Speaker. And certainly of course there's some hard results that also exist there by way of commerce and investment in through Rouleau and through Indian Head and through Regina and Saskatoon and Moose Jaw, Mr. Speaker, investment that this government is driving away. And this is why we question and we challenge this government, Mr. Speaker.

What do they have against investment, Mr. Speaker? What do they have about diversifying our economy, Mr. Speaker? Why can't we choose to be more than less, Mr. Speaker? And I would highlight . . . You know, members opposite laugh and they, you know, they wonder well is that a . . . They're wondering maybe is that a stretch to talk about. Are they, you know, against some of that diversification? Well there's nothing else to call it, Mr. Speaker. At a time, Mr. Speaker, where this province was hitting its stride, working its way out of some challenged circumstances, we were proud to build out aspects. When I say we, Saskatchewan people were proud to build out aspects. When I say we, Saskatchewan people are proud to build out aspects of our tourism industry, Mr. Speaker, proud to build out aspects such as our film industry here in Saskatchewan that brought a proud spotlight to our province, a community vitality to our province, Mr. Speaker, that speaks to quality of life.

And, Mr. Speaker, now we're at a time where we have a really quite strong resource sector here in this province. This is a wonderful thing, Mr. Speaker. But why can't we utilize this time, Mr. Speaker, for us to continue to strive to be more, Mr. Speaker, for us to continue to look at ways we can diversify our economy or add to it, for ways to add vitality to our communities, Mr. Speaker, to add culture to our communities. And instead we see sort of this stripped-down approach, Mr. Speaker, that this government employs — taking over things like Tourism Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and certainly eliminating the film economy, Mr. Speaker, and the thousands of people who work in that economy, in that industry, Mr. Speaker.

And I think it's careless. I think it's reckless. I think it's disrespectful for any member of this Assembly to dismiss the hurt and challenge that is being caused to so many in this province that are looking at being displaced from their own province, that are looking . . . How are they going to earn the dollars they need to provide for their family and where are they going to do so? And sadly many of those individuals are having to choose outside Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

[15:45]

And this is where, when we look at aspects such as tourism in Saskatchewan, we look at aspects such as the film industry, and as a direct connect, we see disappointing approach from this government, Mr. Speaker. As I say, in our blessed province, our land of living skies with some of the most beautiful natural assets in the world, Mr. Speaker, it's so disappointing that this government thinks that it should be their face, the face of

government as the face of tourism, Mr. Speaker, by way of TV ads and communications, Mr. Speaker, instead of those natural assets and those entrepreneurs that have skin in the game, that have done the hard work, that have made the investments, and that understand what a special province that we live in.

We see a government that's moving forward in a sense that's of ideological pursuit, Mr. Speaker, as opposed to common sense. We see that here in this Bill certainly. We see a government that's all about serving themselves. It's all about them, Mr. Speaker, not about Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, and that's disappointing.

We see that certainly with the taking over and the takeover of the tourism industry, Mr. Speaker — very disappointing. And we see that, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about things such as adding three more politicians, to spend millions of dollars on more politicians while at the same very time, Mr. Speaker, they have direct impacts into lives of Saskatchewan people and are compromising both our community vitality, our economy, driving away investment and taking away communications of our beautiful natural assets, our tourism assets and those businesses, Mr. Speaker, from those that understand them best, Mr. Speaker, just so they can have their stamp and their control — sort of message management to the extreme, Mr. Speaker, of those tourism communications dollars.

We need a government that's not all about themselves, Mr. Speaker, and about their own political best interest. We need a government focused on the best interests of Saskatchewan people. And, Mr. Speaker, that includes the film industry. Mr. Speaker, that includes the tourism industry. Mr. Speaker, that includes being able to highlight the incredible assets that we have here in this province and constituencies, in all of our constituencies, Mr. Speaker, each and every one of you. And I urge members to think about this right now. I urge members to think of their own constituencies and to think about the incredible, natural assets and tourism assets that they have within their riding.

You know, I'm getting heckled by the member from Moose Jaw, Mr. Speaker, on this. And what I find is interesting is that member from Moose Jaw is more interested in having his face as the face of tourism, instead of having the Moose Jaw Temple Gardens Mineral Spa; instead of having Buffalo Pound Lake right beside Moose Jaw, Mr. Speaker, as the face; instead of the Tunnels or the beautiful revitalization of those streets, Mr. Speaker, that that member should be more aware of. That member should be focusing his attention, Mr. Speaker, on letting those assets — the revitalization of Main Street Moose Jaw, Temple Gardens Mineral Spa, Mr. Speaker, Buffalo Pound Lake — those should be the face of tourism, not the member from Moose Jaw North's face, Mr. Speaker. And that's disappointing.

I don't know why the member from Moose Jaw North thinks that it should be him and his face and the face of government, Mr. Speaker, instead of those incredible, natural assets, Mr. Speaker, instead of highlighting the beautiful assets that we have as a province, whether it's aspects, as we've said, such as the Temple Gardens Mineral Spa or our historic Globe Theatre, Mr. Speaker, in downtown Regina and all the connect that occurs to restaurateurs and to activity in this province.

Disappointed with what's going on.

And I hear members heckling opposite, Mr. Speaker. Members heckling opposite; maybe we struck a chord. What I urge those members to do is to have their voice at caucus. What I want them to do is they should be thinking about all of those incredible, natural assets in each of their ridings, and the special businesses that operate, those entrepreneurs, the small business operators that have made investments in their ridings, Mr. Speaker, that operate in their ridings, that highlight our special story. And I urge them, all those backbenchers that shout across the floor, Mr. Speaker, I urge those members to bring that voice and that sort of energy to their caucus table to make sure we're not advancing and pushing forward a Bill like this that should simply be pulled, Mr. Speaker, that should simply be pulled, and allowing the tourism industry to operate in the fashion by way of partnership with government but in a fashion which is arm's length from government, Mr. Speaker.

Because quite simply, we think all the natural assets I spoke of, Mr. Speaker, the Churchill River down through the businesses that operate through Grasslands to Moose Mountain Park, we think that our natural assets, the businesses that operate there, Mr. Speaker, the incredible special places in a place that can only be described as the most beautiful place — being our province — and the diversity we offer to tourists to come to this province, for travellers to come to this province, and for Saskatchewan people to explore and play and invest in their own province, Mr. Speaker, and so it's for all these reasons that we oppose this piece of legislation.

Tourism Saskatchewan was something that was very successful, that was operating well, serving Saskatchewan people, serving the businesses, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan, highlighting our proud story, showcasing our land of living skies, our exceptional lakes and rivers and highlighting the special businesses, Mr. Speaker, that have made the choice, made the commitment to do the work and to invest and roll up their sleeves in this province. We think it's those people, we think it's those natural assets, we think it's those gems across this province that should be the face of tourism, Mr. Speaker, not the faces of members opposite.

And you know, I find it absolutely astounding that members opposite heckle across the floor on a piece of legislation that they in this Assembly . . . They should be hiding under their desk, Mr. Speaker. And after they're done hiding under their desk, Mr. Speaker, they should be taking their voices back to the caucus table because this is a piece of legislation that I believe from a common sense perspective, Mr. Speaker, members opposite realize this legislation, this change isn't in the best interests of Saskatchewan people. It isn't in the best interest of our tourism sector. It isn't in the best interest of our province, our economy.

Why this government thinks they need to use the heavy hand of government with a very large majority that they've earned, Mr. Speaker . . . And I give them that and I respect that. But the problem is that majority that they earned and the mandate that they earned isn't what they're delivering, Mr. Speaker. And instead of taking the mandate that they earned and doing what Saskatchewan people do best — is rolling up their sleeves, working humbly and proudly towards those goals, Mr. Speaker

— we see a government doing something entirely different, whether it's spending millions of dollars to increase the number of politicians, whether it's cutting the film economy in Saskatchewan, driving away investment and workers, Mr. Speaker, the cultural loss that exists in our cities or certainly as it relates to Bill 37, the takeover of Tourism Saskatchewan here in Saskatchewan. For a government that is all about themselves, Mr. Speaker, about serving their own political best interests, about controlling those \$8 million, Mr. Speaker, that have proudly been used in years previous to showcase the incredible assets we each have in each of our ridings and all across this province, Mr. Speaker.

And I think, you know, as I look to the member from Estevan, there's beautiful aspects of her constituency, and tourism entrepreneurs who have made investment, and hunters and fishers and all that natural landscape, just the same up through so many of our ridings or all of our ridings, Mr. Speaker. And those are the people we should be standing with.

Why would the member, you know, any members opposite choose to stand with making their government the face of tourism to take control of that budget with the heavy hand of government, Mr. Speaker, not being straight with Saskatchewan people in the last election about doing this? Doing this with no analysis, Mr. Speaker, that somehow, you know, somehow trying to suggest this is in their best interests instead of standing with the entrepreneurs in their constituencies who have made the tourism investments that help us tell our story as a province, that help us showcase ourselves to the world.

And it's about those natural assets I talked about, Mr. Speaker — the grasslands, the fish, the wildlife, the lakes, the rivers — but it's also about those very special, unique businesses that have made those investments, rolled up their sleeves, done the hard work and are a very important part of the economy here in Saskatchewan and the vibrancy, Mr. Speaker, to our province.

So for all those reasons, Mr. Speaker, the fact that this just simply doesn't make sense, we oppose this piece of legislation. We oppose the takeover, heavy-handed takeover that we've seen of these communications dollars of Tourism Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. It's not warranted. It's not in the best interests of Saskatchewan people, and we're going to continue to push to make sure that those voices are heard.

And I find it astonishing, Mr. Speaker, that as we discuss this piece of legislation, that any members in this Assembly somehow think . . . If they're in it to serve their constituents, if they're in it to serve their province, if they're in it to serve our economy, Mr. Speaker, if they're in it to serve the people of this province, then I don't know how a member stands up and supports the takeover of these dollars, these communications dollars, the takeover of Tourism Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, without . . . Unless that's not what they're in it for, and it's all about their own political best interests, Mr. Speaker. And that's disappointing.

So I would urge the government to reconsider its position. I urge members opposite who are now listening — which I appreciate instead of heckling, Mr. Speaker, for something that I know is very important to their constituents — I urge those members, Mr. Speaker, to have that voice at caucus. Let's bring

forward some reasonable solutions on this front. Let's continue to build this proud province. Let's continue to showcase the entrepreneurs who are playing the support role in our tourism in this province, and let's choose to be more instead of being less, Mr. Speaker. Our government is consciously choosing to make decisions that limit and reduce some of the vibrancy and economy here in this province — film industry and taking control of tourism here in this province.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to speak against this legislation. I look forward to, and hopeful that government may be able to come to a different mind on this front. I'm not incredibly optimistic towards that. We've seen them ram forward with the heavy hand of a large majority, Mr. Speaker, some changes already that certainly aren't in the best interests of Saskatchewan people. And I think this is why we're starting to hear from Saskatchewan people that these guys have changed, Mr. Speaker, that these guys have changed. And that's what we're hearing from Saskatchewan people. When they went before them just in the fall with their glossy brochures and positive message, now they're doing all of these things, Mr. Speaker, that weren't mentioned and certainly aren't in their best interests. That's where I think those questions are coming from.

And then the other thing that we're hearing in many of the letters, many of the phone calls, and just general conversations is that there seems to be a bit of an out-of-touch nature of this big majority with Saskatchewan people and the businesses and entrepreneurs, Mr. Speaker, that build this beautiful province, Mr. Speaker. We're hearing a little bit about maybe there's a sense of being out of touch. We hear a bit that it seems that this is all about them, Mr. Speaker, and their own political interests instead of taking the energy of that majority, working towards their mandate, and focusing their energies and efforts towards the best interests of Saskatchewan people, utilizing this economy that we have, Mr. Speaker, to make improvements, meaningful improvements in the lives and communities all across Saskatchewan. That's the opportunity we're presented, Mr. Speaker. And I think it's an exciting proposition. I think it's a tremendous opportunity, and I've been so disappointed to see a government losing its path.

So we urge them to reconsider pushing forward this Bill that takes over Tourism Saskatchewan, takes over the budget of Tourism Saskatchewan, takes control of the communications budget of Tourism Saskatchewan. And we say, let those natural assets stand on their own two feet and speak proudly to our province, speak proudly to the world.

And as I've said, whether that's in urban Saskatchewan or a spot such as Wanuskewin or whether it's up in Meadow Lake park, Mr. Speaker, whether it's down in southern Saskatchewan, this is something we should be making sure we're enabling that to be the face of our tourism industry in this province, not this government or these MLAs putting their face and their stamp on our tourism budget, Mr. Speaker, just to run more ads, Mr. Speaker, that somehow are controlled by government, Mr. Speaker.

So we stand opposed to this legislation. We stand with Saskatchewan people on this front in all communities across Saskatchewan, and we'll continue to push against this piece of

legislation that certainly doesn't serve the best interests of Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to enter this debate, although I'm disappointed this legislation's on the table. We call on the government to withdraw it. At this point in time, I adjourn debate.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Regina Rosemont has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 37, *The Tourism Saskatchewan Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

[16:00]

Bill No. 38

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hutchinson that **Bill No. 38 — *The Active Families Benefit Amendment Act, 2012*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to wade into the debate and discussion today about Bill No. 38, *An Act to amend The Active Families Benefit Act*.

What this Bill does, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is basically, well I should . . . I'll talk a little bit about what the active families benefit is, and then I'll chat a little bit about what this Bill does. So the active families benefit, it's an annual, fully refundable tax benefit that was introduced . . . The Bill was introduced in 2008, and it came into force in 2009 when the goal was to help families with the cost of their children's participation in cultural, recreational, and sports activities. So basically what happens, effective January 1st, 2009, a parent or legal guardian of a child from 6 to 14 years of age who's registered in cultural, recreational, and sports activities is eligible for this fully refundable tax benefit up to \$150. And what this Bill is proposing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is in the Act itself right now, the age requirement is that children be between 6 and 14 is in the Act, but that is going to be removed and section 2 clause 2 is being repealed and the following is being substituted. That:

“(d) ‘**eligible child**’ means a child who:

(i) meets the prescribed age criterion as of the last day of a taxation year; or

(ii) in the case of a child who dies during the taxation year, would have met the prescribed age criterion as of the last day of the taxation year”.

So basically the age is being taken out of the Bill, and section 6 is amended in such that it'll now be in regulations and the government is . . . We've heard in a news release that the government is planning on moving the age to 18. So children

from the age of 6 to under 18 actually will now be eligible, their families will be eligible to apply for the active families benefit. But the age is no longer prescribed in the legislation. They've said it will be in the regulations, but we've not seen the regulations yet.

So the active families benefit . . . As a mom of two kids I can speak to the importance of . . . We all want to make sure that our kids have the best opportunities to be involved in sports and cultural activities. I think we want our kids to be loved and we want our kids to be nurtured, and one of the ways we nurture them is to make sure that they have access to as many opportunities as possible.

I know as a mom that sometimes that finding that balance between making sure that our kids aren't in too many activities sometimes and over organizing them . . . But this Bill and this active families benefit, a fully refundable tax credit, is great up to \$150. But there is one flaw with the system. The reality is you have to pay for the activities upfront and then you wait for your tax credit. And that is a bit of a problem, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because not everybody has money upfront to pay and register for activities. I know my daughter's dance school wouldn't be willing to wait for payment until a tax credit comes back. So in principle, this active families benefit is one step or a great option to support families, but the reality is a benefit isn't always the best way to do things, or a tax benefit.

Speaking of my own childhood, I'm the youngest of seven kids. My mom was at home with us and we were involved in everything. You know, at the time you don't realize what your parents might be giving up so you can participate. As I said, there's seven of us in our family and we all played badminton. The Riverside Badminton & Tennis Club was just about a kilometre or two kilometres from our house and it was an inexpensive way for my parents to get us involved in sports. They could buy a family membership and it was fairly cost-effective, so all of us played badminton. I have four brothers and two of them were very serious about hockey. I have a brother who was a gymnast and very involved in gymnastics. We danced . . .

An Hon. Member: — Did you beat your brothers at badminton?

Ms. Chartier: — The member opposite is asking if I was able to beat my brother David in badminton, and the jury's still out on that. There was a time where I could but he's I think a little fitter than I am these days, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But we danced, my sisters and I . . . actually and my brother Dave danced, although he probably wouldn't be very happy about me putting that on the record. I have the pictures to prove it actually, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We all took piano lessons, all seven of us, from kindergarten to grade 8. My parents made sure that we had as many opportunities as possible but it wasn't . . . My family didn't have a lot of money. My mom was at home with us and my dad was a police officer, not a huge income. But again, like I said, you don't realize as a child what your parents are giving up so you can have all kinds of wonderful opportunities. I know as a badminton player I got to travel all across Canada. I know my brothers with hockey and my brother with gymnastics all had

really wonderful opportunities that sports afforded them. I have to say on the cultural side, I did play the piano for eight years but that wasn't my forte, much to my piano teacher, Ms. Smith's chagrin, I'm sure. But sports were really big in our house, Mr. Speaker.

But my point again, we were a family with not a huge income and my parents did without so we would have the opportunity to participate in activities. And again, as a child you don't see what your parents are doing without. But I do remember around income tax time actually, in the spring, my mom, if we needed new clothes or we needed . . . Spring was always a little bit tight and I can remember my mom — and this was before the day of the active families benefit — but just, my parents made sacrifices and shelled out the money out front so their kids could have all kinds of opportunities. But I remember in the spring and my mom saying, well Danielle — or Dan, she calls me Dan — well, we couldn't, we can't do that until our income tax comes back.

The reality is, income tax benefits, it's not that they're not helpful, but there are so many families who don't have any leverage or any room to pay for things upfront. Again my parents didn't have a lot of money and they prioritized sports and cultural activities for all of us, but I don't know at what cost to them. My parents, I'm sure, made great sacrifices for us but I clearly remember that income tax time or the spring, growing up and being a little tight for money at that time, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The one thing about the active families benefit. If you take a look at the budget, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you will see actually, interestingly enough, on page 134 of the 2012-2013 budget, you have the active families benefit which will be going from 9 million last year to 12 million this year. But right above it is the . . . So that's a \$3,000 difference because we'll be including those under 18. But just right above that is the film employment tax credit which last year was going from 8,200,000 to 5,200,000. So we see a \$3 million increase for the active families benefit and a \$3 million decrease on the film employment tax credit.

So although I would applaud the government increasing the age limit for the active families benefit, I'd like to ask at what cost to other areas in Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport. And it's clear that we've seen the government's decision to axe the film employment tax credit as one of those decisions. And obviously governing is about making difficult decisions, but the decision . . . You can see where the active families money is coming from, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I would challenge the government: perhaps they could have found the money by not putting forward legislation adding three more politicians, or perhaps they could have looked to cuts in their own Executive Council — to make cuts in the Premier's office basically, Executive Council — to find that \$3 million to support active families benefit.

Instead though, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government has decided to pull the rug out from underneath an industry that creates jobs, creates many, many jobs in Saskatchewan, not just in the film industry, but with respect to economic spinoff, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There's one store in Regina, one production, one production, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and a production

wardrobe . . . On the set of one production, a wardrobe person came in and spent \$8,000 for one production in a local Regina clothing store, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

There's lumber yards. There's caterers. There's restaurants. There's no shortage of businesses here in Saskatchewan that benefited from the film employment tax credit, because 70 per cent of investment in the film industry comes from outside of our border, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This is new money, not here in Saskatchewan already. This is money that was new money here in our province that out-of-province investors were spending here in our province. So the loss of the film employment tax credit is about now, unfortunately, it will be about the loss of jobs. It'll be about the loss of economic spinoff. It will be about the loss of the ability to take that pride in place.

There's something pretty fabulous about seeing your neighbours or seeing someone you know or seeing your neighbourhood or the school that you attended or a house where a production is shot, on TV or on the big screen. It creates that amazing pride of place and that will . . . The reality is, with the loss of the film employment tax credit, we will have a loss of that, the loss of the ability to share our stories around the world, Mr. Deputy Speaker. *Corner Gas*, *Corner Gas* was shared in more than 100 or shown more than 100 . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — Please state your point of order.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Mr. Speaker, I believe we are on Bill 38, *The Active Families Benefit Amendment Act, 2012*, and the member is clearly not speaking to that Bill, and I would ask that she do so.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Clearly the member is making a link between the budgetary connection between the film employment tax credit and the active child family benefits. There's a clear connection between it and she is speaking directly to the impact of that on the budget. And she has the budget estimates and that's what she's referring to.

The Deputy Speaker: — It's been a long-standing practice that members speak to the motion before the House. However, there is some latitude, but I will be listening carefully to make sure that that member's comments are tied in. And I would encourage all members to tie in their comments to the Bill before the House. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Riversdale.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to Bill 38, I was pointing out that the active families benefit has seen an increase of \$3 million. And for this year, the film employment tax credit will see a cut of 3 million, and then going forward, it will no longer be existing, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So there is a direct tie here between the active families benefit and the film employment tax credit. These are about

choices that the government makes. And my point has been this government has made . . . This shouldn't have been a choice between adding the active families benefit and cutting the film employment tax credit.

I'm suggesting that perhaps the government should have looked a little bit closer to home for savings, perhaps in the Premier's own office in Executive Council where, despite the fact that the civil service is being cut 15 per cent over the next four years, Executive Council isn't seeing a single cut, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So with respect to Bill 38, the active families benefit, I think I've spoken a little bit about the reality that a tax credit is nice and a fully refundable tax credit, which this benefit is — which I commend the government for doing that — a fully refundable tax benefit is a very positive thing. And the fact that it covers not just sports activities, but culture and recreational activities, is very positive.

But there are pitfalls with tax benefits. I spoke about my own family, Mr. Deputy Speaker, who because my parents on a tight income made many sacrifices, we were always waiting for that income tax time to be able to make other financial choices because kids in activities, the reality is the dance school, the hockey school, all those kinds of places, Mr. Deputy Speaker, can't wait for a tax credit to come back to receive their payment. So again the active families benefit is a good thing.

But there is a really great program here in Saskatchewan that does some wonderful things and that would be KidSport. And KidSport is a children's . . . So KidSport actually does a little bit to fill in some of the gaps, but a charity can't be relied on.

I'm a social democrat. I believe that government has the responsibility and the ability. It's our job to make people's lives better, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And although the third sector or the not-for-profit sector does amazing, wonderful work, I don't think government should be off-loading everything onto them. And KidSport is a really great organization. But the reality is, supporting families and individuals to become the best possible people shouldn't be left up to charity alone, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But just a little bit about KidSport. KidSport is a kids', a children's charity dedicated to assisting children of families facing financial obstacles to participate in community sport programs. The KidSport goal is to provide these children with the opportunity to learn the fundamentals of teamwork, dedication, and responsibility through participation in sport. And again, having grown up in a family where that was really emphasized, I think some of the skills that I have learned — and I look at some of my siblings as well — that ability to participate, be part of a group, be part of a team. You're not just getting physical activity but you're learning how to work with others, how to win and how to lose, Mr. Deputy Speaker — both gracefully, which I think is very, very important.

[16:15]

So KidSport is a really great organization. It does fill some of the gaps. The mission of KidSport Saskatchewan is that no kid should be left on the sidelines and all should be given the

opportunity to experience the positive benefits of organized sport. KidSport provides support to children in order to remove financial barriers that prevent them from playing organized sports.

So interestingly enough, according to the report card on physical activity for children and youth, only 51 per cent of Saskatchewan kids aged 5 to 14 years of age are regularly involved in a meaningful sport activity. The reality of social and economic obstacles are major barriers that prevent these young people from participating in sport and receiving its significant benefits.

I just had an opportunity to chat with a family today actually who . . . Both parents are employed. They work really darn hard, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and happen to receive the Saskatchewan employment supplement. Their kids actually participate in or have had the support of KidSport to play sports. But I think one of the things that is most frustrating for this family, they receive the employment supplement at only a small amount. They have always been right on the cusp of the cut-off line. And the husband actually just got a small boost in his annual contract, and so now they're \$25, Mr. Deputy Speaker, \$25 over the limit for the Saskatchewan employment supplement. So it wasn't actually the employment supplement benefit that mattered most to them. It was being eligible for the family health benefits. The husband is a diabetic. The kids have, need glasses, dental work, all those kinds of things. So when we talk about choices of government and what a government could be doing differently, the rates for the Saskatchewan employment supplement and the cut-off point hasn't changed since 2008, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that is a bit of a problem as well.

So the other thing that this mother's asking about, her children get KidSport money or KidSport support, but she also has mentioned the Regina . . . There's a program here in Regina through the city to help kids participate in local activities. And this woman's children, this family's children were able to take swimming lessons. But the one thing she pointed out about the Regina program is that every year there is, perhaps not every year, but they do increase the amount that you're able to make.

Because the reality is in the last four years, actually since 2005, we've seen population increase. We've seen, we have seen income increase. But programs haven't been indexed to meet that, Mr. Speaker, and so this individual — who she and her husband work really, really hard and don't have much themselves, who make those sacrifices that I was talking about earlier — still don't have the opportunity because something like the Saskatchewan employment supplement hasn't been increased and which I think is a huge shame.

Obviously children being involved in sports and cultural activities and recreational activities is great and really important, I think, for the again not just about physical activity but about the growth of us as individuals. I think the opportunity to play piano or take art lessons or take language classes, all those things enhance . . . Those little brains are little sponges, and there's all kinds of evidence that shows that early opportunity to participate in these kinds of things make us a little bit smarter, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So finding any mechanism to be able to allow families who have financial constraints to be able to participate in activities, their kids be able to participate in activities, again it's great. Again I would argue that there are some challenges with the tax credits. It's a good program, but we have to look at not just other mechanisms to ensure, we have to make sure that families have money in their pocket, whether it's indexing minimum wage, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which is another issue that the government . . . Actually when they were elected in 2007, there was a plan in place. The Minister of Labour at the time, I think back in 2005 or 2006, had put an incremental step for the government to raise the minimum wage and at the end of that last wage increase was the commitment to index. So yes, this government has increased minimum wage but the one thing they've failed to do is index it.

So thinking about ways to better support families so they have the opportunity to not have to rely on charity to be able to have their kids participate in activities, I think is a very important thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But with that I know that in committee my colleagues will have many questions to ask. Again we're supportive of the active families benefits but would like to just draw attention to the reality that that's only one piece of the puzzle, and there should be many other things put in place to ensure that families have the opportunity to live the best possible life.

So with that I'd like to conclude my remarks. And again I know my colleagues will have questions to ask in committee. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport that Bill No. 38, *The Active Families Benefit Amendment Act, 2012* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . To which committee shall this Bill be referred to? I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I designate that Bill No. 38, *The Active Families Benefit Amendment Act, 2012* be referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Bill stands referred to the Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Bill No. 39

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 39** — *The Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority of Saskatchewan Act* be now read a second time.]

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Leader.

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise to speak to Bill No. 39, *An Act respecting the Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority of Saskatchewan and making consequential amendments to other Acts*.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Bill has been introduced by the Minister of Justice and it's a broad, sweeping Bill to create a new organization within the bounds of the Government of Saskatchewan. And it has quite a number of activities that are pulled together in a Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority. My reading of the legislation is that it does provide an efficient way to deal with a whole number of disparate matters that relate to the regulation of financial businesses, financial affairs, as well as consumer affairs, and I'm not necessarily opposed to that concept.

But I think all of us need to be very careful when this type of legislation is created because it moves the authority and the responsibility perhaps one step a little further away from the Minister of Justice, who is also the Minister of Consumer Affairs. And so when we look at this legislation and see all of the different Bills or Acts that are its responsibility, which include the consumer protection legislation, and I think it's worth just reminding ourselves which ones those are: *The Auctioneers Act, The Cemeteries Act, The Charitable Fund-raising Businesses Act, The Collection Agents Act, The Consumer and Commercial Affairs Act, The Consumer Protection Act, The Cost of Credit Disclosure Act, The Credit Reporting Act, The Direct Sellers Act, The Film and Video Classification Act, The Funeral and Cremation Services Act, The Motor Dealers Act, The Sale of Goods Act, and The Ticket Sales Act*, you look at those pieces of legislation and then the catch-all that says any other Act which is deemed to be of a consumer nature, they encapsulate that whole role of the protection of the consumer.

And what our question should be as this legislation goes forward is, will the minister still take responsibility for all of these types of protections for consumers? Now I'm hoping that the answer to that question is yes and that he's doing it or she's doing it through this type of legislation, but that becomes one of the fundamental questions.

And then when you look at the financial services legislation, which are sort of the other side of this legislation, and you look at the Acts that are covered under that side and you look at *The Co-operatives Act, The Credit Union Act* — the credit union Acts, I guess I could say — *The Mortgage Brokerages and Mortgage Administrators Act, The New Generation Co-operatives Act, The Payday Loans Act, The Pension Benefits Act, The Real Estate Act, The Saskatchewan Insurance Act, The Securities Act, The Trust and Loan Corporations Act*, plus any other Acts which may be designated to be under this particular organization.

And so what we see is that all of these pieces of legislation which have been developed over the decades to protect individuals as it relates to both consumer issues, purchasing of services, and also then financial services, your banking and credit union types of transactions, they're all being brought under this particular authority. And we can ask the question, why is that happening? Well one of the things clearly that is happening is that within the Ministry of Justice there is some

consolidation of the workload. There's that aspect.

But another aspect is that some of these types of legislation actually generate fees and generate revenue. And by setting up an agency or an authority like this legislation does, they can, the Ministry of Justice can take all of this, the financial resources, and run them through this authority outside of the regular budget of the Ministry of Justice. And unfortunately sometimes when monies are dealt with slightly out of the regular system of the books of the government, we don't always have full access to the information about them. And so we will be watching carefully as this legislation is put forward to see exactly how this is organized and how this is done.

It does also, I think, play into some of the questions about where are these people employed that will be working here. And I noticed that in the minister's speech when he started or when he presented this legislation, he talked about the numbers of employees that would be transferred to this particular authority. Now that's not necessarily a bad thing but also there are specific issues that need to be dealt with to make sure that employees are treated fairly but also that the resources are appropriately shared to make sure that the work is done.

So, Mr. Speaker, this legislation, on the face of it, is relatively straightforward, but it has all of these other questions related to it. And I know that as we continue to watch the legislative process and then, more importantly, the regulatory process as this authority is put into place, that we will be watching very carefully along with, I'm sure, the Provincial Auditor and many other businesses in the community who will be paying substantial fees to this particular authority. I have no further comments on this Bill.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 39, *The Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority of Saskatchewan Act* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Deputy Speaker: — Which committee shall this Bill be referred to? I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I designate that Bill No. 39, *The Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority of Saskatchewan Act* be referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

The Deputy Speaker: — This Bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

[16:30]

Bill No. 40

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed

motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 40** — *The Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority of Saskatchewan Consequential Amendment Act, 2012/Loi de 2012 portant modification corrélative à la loi intitulée The Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority of Saskatchewan Act* be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm pleased to rise to speak to Bill No. 40, *An Act to make a consequential amendment resulting from the enactment of The Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority of Saskatchewan Act* which is Bill No. 39, which we were just discussing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a bilingual Bill that deals with a specific reference to the new Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority of Saskatchewan in *The Co-operatives Act*, and it effectively deals with this bilingual question, and I have no further comments. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 40, *The Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority of Saskatchewan Consequential Amendment Act, 2012* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — That's carried.

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

The Deputy Speaker: — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I designate that Bill No. 40, *The Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority of Saskatchewan Consequential Amendment Act, 2012* be referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

The Deputy Speaker: — This Bill stands referred to the Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Bill No. 41

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hickie that **Bill No. 41** — *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Municipal Affairs — Municipal Taxation) Amendment Act, 2012* be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with pleasure I rise today to speak to Bill No. 41, *An Act to amend certain Statutes with respect to certain municipal taxation matters affecting school divisions*. This is a fairly straightforward Act, I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, although I will want to go through it in a little bit of detail here this afternoon just to make

sure for the record that there is an explanation that the people can have a look at it as well, and perhaps provide some comments that will help clarify exactly what the intent of the Bill is.

The first clause that we have in the new Bill, other than the short title in section 1, is section 2, and what it does, it amends *The Cities Act*. So this is a fairly lengthy Bill, *The Cities Act*. What they're doing here is just repealing one subsection. They're repealing subsection 242(1.1). And what it's doing here is substituting a new section. And the explanation that we've been provided indicates that the provision will discontinue the application of tax incentives on education property taxes levied by cities on behalf of the school division.

So this is something that is really transferring responsibility to cities and the incentive is no longer being there, will make it more difficult for them to be able to collect taxes in an early and reasonable fashion. So it seems to be a burden created now for cities, and that's really unfortunate, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It says that the cities will no longer have the authority to apply an incentive such as a discount to a current year's education property tax, all or part of education property tax arrears and penalties, applied by the municipality's education property tax arrears.

So the new subsection just basically says:

"A city shall apply the same incentives that it has provided for by resolution or bylaw pursuant to subsection (1) to any taxes that the city levies on behalf of any other taxing authority except for taxes the city levies on behalf of a school division.

So that's the way the first clause is reading under *The Cities Act*, and then they go on to add a new subsection in the same relative area of *The Cities Act*. Now we're talking about section 262(4), and they're adding a subsection there. The explanation we've been given is that it ensures that all properties exempted are assessed and added to the assessment roll for the length of the exemption. So what the goal here is to ensure that this provides for full transparency of tax exemptions. And the section reads, the new section reads:

"If a council exempts property from taxation pursuant to subsection (3) or (4), the assessment for that property must appear on the assessment roll in each year of the exemption".

Now this seems to be a fairly reasonable proposal, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because when people get exemptions it's important for the public to be aware of that. We don't want anyone getting special treatment for their taxes unless there's a public, accountable process in place that ensures that that public or that that individual who's getting the benefit of the law is made public and that other people are aware that they can also apply for those exemptions as well. So that seems to be a reasonable proposal as far as the second amendment to *The Cities Act*.

And then we see further on in the Bill that now we're looking at *The Municipalities Act*, and there's a couple of amendments there. In *The Municipalities Act*, the section that's being amended is the one that's entitled manner of payment. And

what the proposed provisions in this new Bill are going to do will discontinue the application of tax incentives on education . . . sorry, on education property taxes levied by municipalities on behalf of a school division.

So again these tax incentives, I think, were ones that helped cities and municipalities collect these taxes in a timely fashion. People are encouraged to pay early when there's incentives that are available to them, and unfortunately when those are taken away, I think it will be a burden for the collection of education property taxes in a timely and perhaps proactive fashion. So as the monies are collected later, it means less access to those funds for the operation of the municipalities and the cities, and it's not sure why this is necessary. The minister, I think, is feeling that he's been very generous to municipalities and cities, and therefore they now need to look after these matters on their own.

I am not sure if that is equalled out in the equation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because it does seem to add burdens to city administration and municipal administration. And again if it's the public servants that are being given the burden of looking after these things, it just doesn't seem that that's something that the taxpayers would want to support. And indeed I like paying my property taxes on my rural property as early as possible because we do get that 2 or 3 per cent incentive. And it's encouraging. It's much like the go green programs that have been in place and are now being discontinued where people just need incentives, and good things happen. And this is, I think, something that government can do successfully and create social change and create new habits for people if there are proper incentives in place.

So the removal of a tax incentive on education property taxes seems to be a bit of a disincentive now because it's gone altogether. And I think the burden of administration and collection that the municipalities bear at this point in time will be greater. And I'm not sure that that's a positive move on the part of this government.

The next provision that's amended now is also in *The Municipalities Act*, and that's an addition to subsection 295(2). And what that is, is they're repealing a subsection, 295(2). It used to say, if council can "enter into an agreement with the owner or occupant of any property for the purpose of exempting that property from taxation . . ." And in this case, the new provision reads . . . 272(4). Sorry, I have to go to the next one, 295(2). I'm sorry. It says subsection (3) is added, and it says:

"(3) If a council exempts property from taxation pursuant to subsection (1) or (2), the assessment for that property must appear on the assessment roll in each year of the exemption".

So again I think this is a clause that's designed to ensure transparency of tax exemptions in the same manner that the change is being made to *The Cities Act*. So in this case, it's *The Municipalities Act*, and it requires the municipal authorities to add the exempted properties to the assessment roll.

I'm not sure in what circumstances a council would want to do an exemption of property from taxation. And certainly we'd

question that because, you know, everybody pays taxes. And so for certain individuals or ratepayers to get an exemption would have to be an extraordinary move on the part of a municipality or city or a northern municipality because it's an expectation, I think, of any property owner that you have to pay your fair share of taxes. And certainly exempting any one taxpayer or ratepayer from taxation, as proposed by section 295 of this Act, *The Municipalities Act*, seems to be giving an advantage to an individual taxpayer, to the disadvantage of the other ones who make their commitments in taxation, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So again it seems to be a positive move, this particular amendment. And ensuring that there is full transparency is always a good thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The third and final portion of this Act that is being amended is now *The Northern Municipalities Act*. And again it's similar changes that we've seen to *The Cities Act* and to *The Municipalities Act*. And it says here that they're amending section 293(4) of *The Northern Municipalities Act* by repealing it. And the explanation for this is that "The proposed provision discontinues the application of tax incentives on education property taxes levied by northern municipalities on behalf of a school division."

So again it's the same idea that we saw in the first two parts of the Bill, that there's no more tax incentives for payment, at least not that the minister will support and backfill, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Northern municipalities have no authority to apply any discounts to current year property taxes, all or part of the property tax arrears, or penalties applied by the municipality to education property tax arrears.

So the new section reads as follows:

"A municipality shall apply the same incentives that it has provided for by bylaw pursuant to subsection (1), (2) or (3) to any taxes that the municipality levies on behalf of any other taxing authority except for taxes the municipality levies on behalf of a school division".

And then they have added again the same change that we've seen in the first two parts of the Bill. There's the notion of transparency. So subsection 315(2) of *The Northern Municipalities Act* is now followed by subsection (3), a new subsection which indicates that if any exemptions are happening to the property from taxation, that it has to appear on the assessment roll in each year of that exemption.

So again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it seems that these very basic changes to these three particular pieces of legislation are twofold. One is that there's full transparency now required for any exemptions that municipalities, northern municipalities, or cities apply to properties. So that seems to be a positive move. Unfortunately, it's countered by the discontinuation of the application of tax incentives on education property taxes. So there's no ability now for municipalities to apply those incentives. And it will, I think, make life more difficult for municipal authorities and administrators and people who are responsible, the public service that are responsible for the management and monitoring and collection of those taxes.

As I said, incentives are motivators. We're human. We like

incentives. We like sales. We like deals. And that's how we operate, and that's seen time and time again. Just open the newspaper and you see that there's all kinds of incentives for shoppers out there. This is the same thing for taxpayers. And taking away those incentives, I think, are obviously a disincentive to taxpayers to be prompt in paying their taxes which will then delay the amount of funds available to the municipal authorities and to the school divisions and may indeed increase the number of collections that are required in tax enforcement.

So again, it's unfortunate that the government chose to do this in this Bill. But I think as far as comments at this point in time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there will be some other questions once this gets to committee. But at this point, I think that would conclude my remarks on this particular Bill.

I'm just going to double check one more thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker. At this point, I am going to adjourn debate.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Nutana has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 41, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Municipal Affairs — Municipal Taxation) Amendment Act, 2012*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — That's carried.

[16:45]

Bill No. 9

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hutchinson that **Bill No. 9 — *The Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation Amendment Act, 2011*** be now read a second time.]

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to rise today to participate in the debate on Bill No. 9. This primarily focuses with the Community Initiatives Fund's provisions within *The Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation Act*.

The CIF [Community Initiatives Fund] as it's commonly known, Mr. Speaker, has been around since the gaming deals got set up and since Casino Regina and then Casino Moose Jaw came on stream. And again, Mr. Speaker, the intent of the Community Initiatives Fund was to ensure that a good portion of proceeds from the casinos, Regina and Moose Jaw, went back to the community. And certainly over the years, Mr. Speaker, I've had the opportunity to see different of these grants at work and for different causes in through the inner city of Regina. And certainly it's, in my experience, dollars that are put towards some pretty good causes.

So in terms of the work of the committee or the Community Initiatives Fund, certainly the current program streams on offer deal with (1) community grants for human development, (2) youth leadership and Aboriginal inclusion including the urban

Aboriginal community grant program, (3) physical activity, which is a stream that went to the Saskatchewan in motion campaign — and certainly, Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure if you're still keeping track of how far you're walking every day, but certainly there is a good challenge that was put out under that program and good work that has been done to try and invigorate the body politic here in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker — (4) is a stream devoted to problem gaming and mitigation payments, and (5) is the community vitality program including small capital investments and milestone community celebrations.

Again, Mr. Speaker, the provisions in this particular amendment to the Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation, they focus primarily with the provisions around the Community Initiatives Fund and certainly the question of tightening up governance and ensuring that you've got better provisions, a better refining of the governance regime for a particular sort of fund such as this. And again, Mr. Speaker, this is a multi-million dollar fund that has had significant dollars flow through it over the years. And again you can never rest content in terms of the work that need be done around ensuring the best possible governance and in terms of refining the relationships as exist in the legislation.

So when the government brings this forward under the aegis of including the terms of appointment for the board of trustees, including the establishment of quorum, including the designation of Chair and Vice-Chair, the remuneration and reimbursement of expenses, the ability to engage in technical expertise, the ability to provide appropriate pension and benefits for employees, well, Mr. Speaker, that's certainly important work and work that should be given its due under this legislation.

There are other issues that arise in the legislation as touched upon by the government in introducing this legislation. One is the establishment of full authority to manage and operate the fund. That is there in the legislation, but what was required was more explicit direction in terms of the ability to hire necessary employees for the management of the fund. And certainly, Mr. Speaker, having some familiarity with the individuals that have been tasked with the management of this fund and their outstanding record in past of community involvement and contribution to the community at large, obviously we would like to see their standing in terms of employment be clarified. Because if I might say, Mr. Speaker, they've got, in certain positions with this fund, some very capable people, some very good people that have made a contribution over years to the broader community. So that is something that we're glad to see.

The second point is the clarification of liability protection under the Act. Again, Mr. Speaker, in terms of trustees and any future employees requiring liability protection from legal actions for good-faith decisions, carrying out the management of the fund, that is as it would seem to be in terms of a decent proposal.

The third is the clarification of the stewardship and oversight responsibility in terms of the Community Initiatives Fund. Reporting the relationship is again established by a memorandum of understanding that is not legally binding, but this is something that should clarify that.

Fourth and finally, Mr. Speaker, the amendment concerning the updating and modernization of the granting provision, again that is as it would seem to be needed in the legislation.

So we will watch this development with interest, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the way this goes. We'll have more questions on this in committee. But certainly any time when it comes to the stewardship of this government of public dollars, or dollars that arise from public enterprise, we're very interested to see how those are watched over and managed. We'll be very interested to see how the board evolves over time, Mr. Speaker, in terms of who is appointed to that. And we'll also be very interested to see the impact of the current negotiations that are being undertaken in the gaming framework agreement and what effect those might have.

But that being said, Mr. Speaker, we have further questions that would lend themselves to the committee process and the scrutiny that that opportunity provides. And as such I will conclude my remarks and for helping to allow this to go to committee. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the Minister of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport that Bill No. 9, *The Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation Amendment Act, 2011* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Deputy Speaker: — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I designate that Bill No. 9, *The Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation Amendment Act, 2011* be referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

The Deputy Speaker: — This Bill stands referred to the Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Bill No. 34

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Bjornerud that **Bill No. 34** — *The Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation Act, 2011* be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to rise to speak to *An Act respecting Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation*, Bill No. 34. This is a Bill that introduces quite a few new features to *The Crop Insurance Act* and we will certainly want to look very closely at all of those new features.

There's in particular, I think, the main change that we see in this Bill is the additional, or the introduction of agricultural product insurance, which is a new feature in the Bill. Typically it was only applying to crops, but appears that now there's a whole new area of extended benefits being afforded to agricultural products. Now the only problem with the Act, Mr. Speaker, is that we don't know what those products will be because this is another instance where the government has decided not to list those products in the Bill itself and in the legislation proper, but that it would be prescribed through regulation. So again we don't exactly know what the whole intent of the Bill is going to be because we don't know what those agricultural products will be. But what we do know is that they will be able to apply for insurance for those products in the event of the types of occurrences in weather or whatever that causes crops to be eligible for insurance.

The other thing indicated by the minister in his comments in the introduction of this Bill is that the Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation, which is I believe currently responsible for AgriStability, a farming program that's shared with the federal government, is they're going to continue to administer it. And the intention of this Bill is to bring in some provisions that make sure that AgriStability is, I think in the words of the minister, bringing it up to date and make it into a forward-looking Act. So I believe the goal of the government in this case is somewhat clear, but we will have a lot of questions about how those products are going to be insured and the other changes that are in place.

The minister indicated that authority for the crop insurance to deliver the AgriStability program was originally on a temporary basis. But it appears that, in his view, it was okay for interim, but the preferable long-term solution is a specific legislative authority for the Crop Insurance Corporation to administer AgriStability.

So if you look at part II of the Bill, you will see there are a number of provisions in there that deal with the implementation and authority for the SCIC [Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation], the Crop Insurance Corporation, to manage the agricultural income stabilization program. Now it's a very complicated program, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's one that as a newcomer to this world as the critic for Agriculture that it's a complex program that I'm starting to understand, but I'm going to want to be able to ask specific questions to the minister and I'm anticipating that those questions would be better asked in committee at this point in time.

The whole sections, I think, basically sections 3 and 4 of the Bill, bring in the authority for the Crop Insurance Corporation to be the manager of this and it authorizes the Lieutenant Governor in Council to enter into agreements with the Government of Canada respecting the income stabilization program. And it also defines who the producers are in respect of the agricultural income stabilization program.

So I think at this point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to reserve those types of specific questions for the minister in committee because it's easier to get information from the minister as to the intent. And therefore I think we're ready to proceed and I would conclude my remarks on Bill 34.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the Minister of Agriculture that Bill No. 34, *The Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation Act* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Deputy Speaker: — To which committee shall this Bill be referred? I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I designate that Bill No. 34, *The Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation Act* be referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

The Deputy Speaker: — This Bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy. I recognize the Government House Leader.

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

The Deputy Speaker: — The Government House Leader has moved that this House adjourns. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:58.]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Wall	1227, 1230
Nilson	1228, 1230
Draude	1228
Chartier	1228
Stewart	1228
Eagles	1228
Jurgens	1229
Wotherspoon	1229
Hickie	1229
Vermette	1229
Bjornerud	1229
Cheveldayoff	1229
Harrison	1230
The Speaker	1230

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Wotherspoon	1230
Vermette	1230

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Saskatchewan Hockey Hall of Fame Inductees

McCall	1231
--------------	------

National Organ and Tissue Donor Awareness Week

Eagles	1231
--------------	------

Coffee House Serves Regina Residents

Wotherspoon	1231
-------------------	------

Entrepreneur Creates Innovative Solutions

Campeau	1231
---------------	------

World Meningitis Day

Bradshaw	1232
----------------	------

Saskatchewan Waste Minimization Awards

Jurgens	1232
---------------	------

Comparing Provincial Budgets

Heppner	1232
---------------	------

QUESTION PERIOD

Lean Process

Chartier	1232
Draude	1233

Dealing With Growth in the School System

Wotherspoon	1234
Harpauer	1234

Saskatchewan EnerGuide Program

McCall	1235
Duncan	1235

Possible Second Bridge for Prince Albert

Belanger	1236
Reiter	1236

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

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

Norris	1237
Belanger	1238

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

Krawetz	1240
Belanger	1240

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 37 — *The Tourism Saskatchewan Act*

Wotherspoon	1242
Harrison (point of order)	1244
McCall (point of order)	1244

Bill No. 38 — <i>The Active Families Benefit Amendment Act, 2012</i>	
Chartier	1251
Harrison (point of order)	1252
Sproule (point of order)	1252
Harrison (referral to committee)	1254
Bill No. 39 — <i>The Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority of Saskatchewan Act</i>	
Nilson	1254
Harrison (referral to committee)	1255
Bill No. 40 — <i>The Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority of Saskatchewan Consequential Amendment Act, 2012</i>	
<i>Loi de 2012 portant modification corrélative à la loi intitulée The Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority of Saskatchewan Act</i>	
Nilson	1255
Harrison (referral to committee)	1255
Bill No. 41 — <i>The Miscellaneous Statutes (Municipal Affairs — Municipal Taxation) Amendment Act, 2012</i>	
Sproule	1255
Bill No. 9 — <i>The Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation Amendment Act, 2011</i>	
McCall	1257
Harrison (referral to committee)	1258
Bill No. 34 — <i>The Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation Act, 2011</i>	
Sproule	1258
Harrison (referral to committee)	1259

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. Brad Wall
Premier of Saskatchewan
President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Bob Bjornerud
Minister of Agriculture
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Crop Insurance Corporation

Hon. Bill Boyd
Minister of Energy and Resources
Minister Responsible for SaskTel
Minister Responsible for The Global
Transportation Hub Authority

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff
Minister of First Nations and Métis Relations
Minister Responsible for Northern Affairs
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Gaming Corporation

Hon. June Draude
Minister of Social Services
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women
Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission

Hon. Dustin Duncan
Minister of Environment
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Corporation
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated

Hon. Donna Harpauer
Minister of Education

Hon. Jeremy Harrison
Minister of Enterprise
Minister Responsible for Trade

Hon. Darryl Hickie
Minister of Municipal Affairs

Hon. Bill Hutchinson
Minister of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport
Minister Responsible for the Provincial
Capital Commission

Hon. D.F. (Yogi) Huyghebaert
Minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing

Hon. Ken Krawetz
Deputy Premier
Minister of Finance

Hon. Tim McMillan
Minister Responsible for Crown
Investments Corporation
Minister Responsible for Information
Technology Office
Minister Responsible for Information
Services Corporation
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Government Insurance
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Liquor and Gaming Authority

Hon. Don McMorris
Minister of Health

Hon. Don Morgan
Minister of Justice and Attorney General
Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety
Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan
Workers' Compensation Board

Hon. Rob Norris
Minister of Advanced Education,
Employment and Immigration
Minister Responsible for Innovation
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Power Corporation
Minister Responsible for Uranium
Development Partnership

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

Hon. Laura Ross
Minister of Government Services