



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

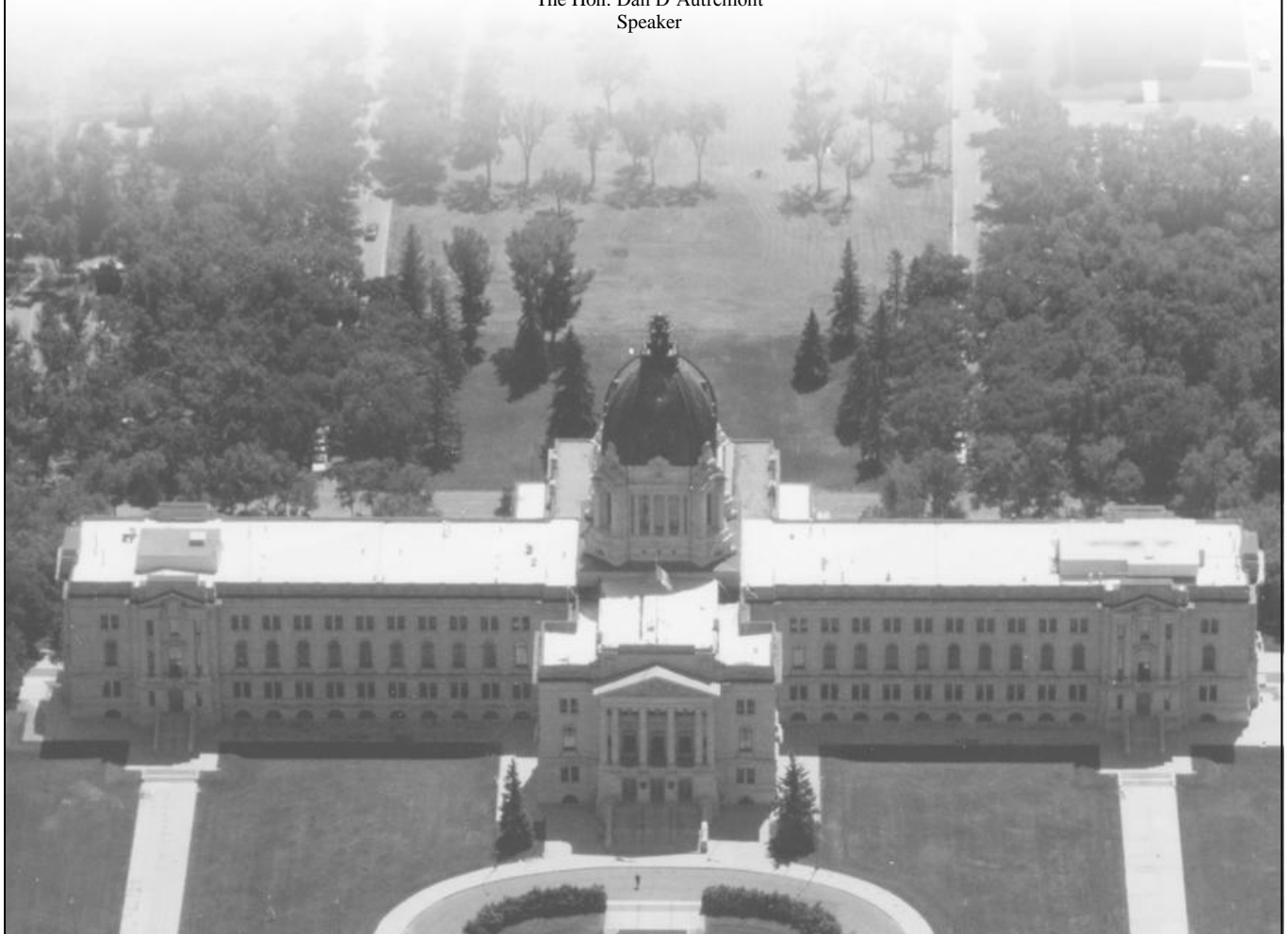
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Hon. 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, 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, Hon. 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, Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Hon. Nancy	SP	Martensville
Hickie, Darryl	SP	Prince Albert Carlton
Hutchinson, Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, 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, Hon. 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, Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Greg	SP	Yorkton
Parent, Roger	SP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Phillips, Kevin	SP	Melfort
Reiter, Hon. Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Laura	SP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Sproule, Cathy	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Steinley, Warren	SP	Regina Walsh Acres
Stewart, Hon. Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Tell, Hon. 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, Hon. Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Wyant, Hon. Gordon	SP	Saskatoon Northwest

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melville-Saltcoats.

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce a constituent of mine, Amanda Hoehn, who is seated in your gallery. Amanda works for Saskatchewan Crop Insurance in Melville, and in the AgStability department. She grew up on a farm in Rama before the family moved to Canora area where she attended high school. Amanda currently resides in Melville with her husband, Derrick, and it's really good to see her in her legislature.

I also, Mr. Speaker, would like to take the opportunity to introduce Theresa Maximuk who I had the opportunity to get to know and work with in the Minister of Agriculture's office, and now is there with Minister Stewart. So, Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming them to their legislature.

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

Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, it's my great pleasure today to introduce 26 grade 7 and 8 students from Grant Road School right here in Regina. Give us a wave everybody.

Accompanying them is Mr. Mark Wilson, who is their teacher. Now Mark is married to Chelsey Vargo who works right here in the legislature, so this is the place that he knows well. Also accompanying the group is Ms. Falene Eckert, who's an educational assistant. I want to thank them very much for coming. And I encourage all members to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — At this time, I would like to introduce to the Assembly Ms. Kathy Burianyak, who we know of as a Clerk of the committees but is now sitting at the Table to gain a little experience in what actually happens in the Chamber here during the day. So I'd like the members to welcome Kathy to the Table.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition on expanding cellphone coverage in the Prairies as follows:

To undertake, as soon as possible, to ensure that SaskTel delivers cell service to the Canoe Lake First Nation, along with the adjoining communities of Cole Bay and Jans Bay; Buffalo River First Nation, also known as Dillon, and the

neighbouring communities of Michel Village and St. George's Hill; English River First Nation, also known as Patuanak and the hamlet of Patuanak; and Birch Narrows First Nation along with the community of Turnor Lake, including all the neighbouring communities in each of these major centres.

Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed the petition today that I'm presenting are primarily from Patuanak, but this petition has signatures from all throughout the land. And I so present.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to present a petition concerning the need for a publicly accessible asbestos registry.

Whereas the Government of Saskatchewan has lists respecting public buildings that contain asbestos; whereas these lists must be accessed individually through freedom of information requests pursuant to *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*; whereas asbestos that is not properly encapsulated poses a public health risk; whereas the availability of information about asbestos allows individuals to make informed decisions regarding their health and safety.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take immediate action to increase protection of workers, patients, students, and the public by passing Bill 604, the asbestos right-to-know Act, which will make a list of public buildings containing asbestos available to the public.

Mr. Speaker, I so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Summer Snack Program

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to congratulate the Saskatoon & District Labour Council on another successful season of their summer snack program. The end of August saw the program wrap up its 24th year of serving lunches to hundreds of Saskatoon kids and families in need.

Kelly Harrington, who is president of the Saskatoon & District Labour Council, described how important this program is within the communities that use it. She says, "The kids are hungry when they come. They eat a lot. They look forward to it and they run out to the cars and help us unload the food."

Mr. Speaker, the summer snack program serves breakfast in Optimist, Pleasant Hill, Meadowgreen Parks, and Westmount School. This year it added a fifth location with the help from a grant from the city of Saskatoon in Confederation Park. While the program's main focus is providing food, it also provides

mentorship from the coordinators who bond with the children. There are sometimes a few tears shed and a few hugs exchanged in the final days of the program.

They've also noticed a difference in the people utilizing the program. More adults are coming. Kelly really noticed a difference in 2008 when she says, "... when the housing market went sky-high and rent was incredibly high. Since that time, we've had a lot of adults actually utilize the program. Prior to that, it had been mainly children."

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join with me in congratulating the Saskatoon & District Labour Council's summer snack program on its 24th successful year serving great food to those who need it. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Yorkton.

Nation Builders and Community Recognition Awards

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress held their 18th annual Nation Builders and Community Recognition Awards luncheon in Yorkton just yesterday.

The UCC [Ukrainian Canadian Congress] Nation Builders Award was established in 1995 to recognize individuals who have provided outstanding service or exceptional community involvement. Mr. Speaker, the Nation Builders Award recognized four individuals who have left a legacy and provided an exemplary role model for the Ukrainian community.

This year's recipients were Adrian Boyko, former president of the UCC-Saskatchewan Provincial Council and vice-president of UCC National; Julian Sadlowski, educator and first Ukrainian elected mayor of North Battleford; Steve Phillipow, cancer survivor and founder of the Canadian Prostate Cancer Network; and finally but certainly not least, Mr. Speaker, the member from Canora-Pelly, the Deputy Premier, our own Ken Krawetz was also a recipient. Ken was recognized for his instrumental leadership in the unanimous passing of Bill 40, *The Ukrainian Famine and Genocide (Holodomor) Memorial Day Act*.

Mr. Speaker, the Community Recognition Award recognized seven individuals who made meritorious contributions in youth achievement, leadership, volunteerism, and cultural preservation and development. The award winners were Doris Makowsky, Gerald Yaholnitsky, Wayne Hydeman, Jean Saranchuk, and my seatmate, the member from Regina Dewdney. Mr. Speaker, our own Gene Makowsky was also recognized for his leadership as a football player, educator, and community ambassador.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating our seatmates and these outstanding other individuals.

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

Co-operating to Build a Better West Conference

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the weekend I

was honoured to attend the Co-operating to Build a Better West conference in Saskatoon where several hundred co-operators from Western Canada learned about the exciting directions co-operatives are heading in Canada's Western provinces. Co-operatives are diverse organizations that speak to their community needs because they are owned and controlled by their members who live in those same communities. They are democratically controlled, and profits go right back into the further development of the community.

Mr. Speaker, I can't express enough how inspired I am as a result of the resourceful and dedicated people I met this weekend. These individuals and groups are committed to protecting and encouraging growth of co-operatives, especially during this time of economic and population change here in Western Canada. In particular I was struck by two speakers at the conference. One of these was John Ralston Saul who has been described as a prophet by *Time Magazine*. Mr. Saul is an award-winning essayist and novelist who challenged the co-operators present to be more aware of the fundamental co-operative nature of our shared Canadian history.

The other person of note was Mary Nirlungayuk from Kugaaruk, Nunavut who described how co-operative businesses in the northern communities have thrived and flourished where other businesses have not dared to venture.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to congratulate this year's winners of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Merit Awards honoured at the banquet on Friday night. And my thanks to the organizers of the Co-operating to Build a Better West conference for creating a forum that brought so many incredible people together to discuss the future of Western Canadian co-operatives. Thank you.

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

Special Olympics Fundraiser

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak about the Special Olympics event in Saskatchewan, the world's largest truck convoy. I had the opportunity to bring greetings at this event in the morning kickoff on September 15th in Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, this event consisted of over 40 semi trucks driving from Saskatoon in an escorted convoy to Regina. This was a great opportunity for Special Olympics Saskatchewan to raise funds and raise awareness.

My daughter Courtney attended the event with me as well. Mr. Speaker, we were both excited to be there because Courtney is a Special Olympian.

I would like to recognize all the volunteers for their outstanding contributions. The truck drivers gave generously to this event, one of them generating over \$10,000 in donations. Because of the fundraisers like this, Mr. Speaker, Special Olympics athletes can compete in national team events on the international stage. This event recognizes athletes from the Summer Olympic 2012 and those competing in the 2013 Special Olympics in Seoul, Korea.

I'd like to personally thank all the organizers, volunteers, and

athletes who took part in the convoy. It was a great success, raising over \$30,000 for Special Olympics Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating the Special Olympics Saskatchewan and all of the athletes for their successful fundraiser. It's not only the funds raised but raised spirits as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Increasing the Availability of Entry-Level Housing

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise in the House to inform all the members of a key ceremony that I was privileged to attend in Moose Jaw this morning. The celebration was about making dreams come true and about what can be achieved when people work together to achieve a common goal.

Plaxton Ridge is a condominium development that will allow 15 Moose Jaw households to have a home to call their own. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the government's Headstart on a Home program has made available \$1.9 million in financial assistance for this development. The aim of this program is to increase the availability of entry-level housing across Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan through the Saskatchewan Immigrant Investor Fund has responded by flowing \$200 million in low interest loans over five years to developers for the municipality-approved projects. It is anticipated that a minimum of 1,000 new entry-level homes will be constructed throughout the province.

Mr. Speaker, I commend Plaxton Developments Inc. and all the other partners involved with this project for stepping forward to help Moose Jaw families to find a safe place to call home.

I ask all members to join me in thanking all of those who were involved in this outstanding project to thank them for their hard work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Saskatchewan Party Convention

Ms. Campeau: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this weekend the Saskatchewan Party held its first convention since the November 2011 election, a historic election that saw the people of Saskatchewan elect 49 Saskatchewan Party MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly].

Mr. Speaker, myself and the MLA from Saskatoon Sutherland had the honour of co-hosting this event. Over 600 people packed TCU Place in Saskatoon to hear Premier Brad Wall's keynote address and to discuss ideas and policies on how our party can continue to move Saskatchewan forward.

Convention delegates were treated to an outstanding lineup of guest speakers including Brian Lee Crowley, who's the managing director of the MacDonald-Laurier Institute, and former chief of defence staff General Rick Hillier. General

Hillier gave a moving speech on inspiration and leadership.

Premier Wall's keynote luncheon address focused on our government's plan for growth, our record, and how our party can continue to build on the Saskatchewan advantage well into the future.

Mr. Speaker, the youth convention had one of its largest turnouts in the history of the party with 77 youth delegates focused on policies and practices that will help support and develop entrepreneurship throughout Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, on Sunday morning, caucus members were treated to the traditional grilling by convention delegates at the government accountability session, and here delegates ask pointed questions on water security, education, and Saskatchewan's natural resources.

Mr. Speaker, the 2012 Saskatchewan Party convention was a resounding success, and I ask all members to join me in thanking all of the delegates who came out to support this weekend. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

NDP Leadership Campaign

Mr. Hickie: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. So far there is a lack of interest in the NDP [New Democratic Party] leadership campaign, but that doesn't mean interesting things are not happening in their leadership race.

First we have that Finance critic, the member from Regina Rosemont, already posting deficits within the first few weeks of his campaign. And then we had three or four NDP candidates, including the members from Saskatoon Massey Place and Regina Rosemont, who appear to agree with federal NDP leader Thomas Mulcair when he called Saskatchewan's economy a "disease." In fact in a recent *StarPhoenix* article, NDP candidate Erin Weir took the NDP to task for evading questions on Mulcair's spurious smear of the Saskatchewan economy. He said, and I quote, "I don't think it's feasible for the Sask NDP caucus to just keep running away . . . every time the Sask Party says 'boo.'"

[13:45]

Mr. Speaker, in that same article Weir called out the other candidates for running up an expensive bill of promises. Weir said, and I quote again, "I have explained very clearly what my programs would cost and how I would pay for them. That's something that I have found to be lacking from the other candidates. Often they've put forward wish lists of things that all New Democrats would like to do."

Mr. Speaker, it is our sincere hope that the rest of the NDP candidates do not run away when Mr. Weir says boo. Thank you.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

The Government's Performance and the Film Industry

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, when people come to this building we, as members of the Assembly, always remind them that it is their Legislative Building. The people of Saskatchewan own this building, and it's an important part of their government.

Mr. Speaker, when business people, working people, community groups, and concerned citizens come to their legislature, they deserve our respect. And these visits should remind us that we work for them, the people of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, government should be transparent and accountable to the people of Saskatchewan in its decision-making processes and humble in its approach to the people of Saskatchewan.

My question is to the Premier: does he share the view that government should be transparent and accountable to the people of Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Yes, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier said in his acceptance speech after last year's election:

We will be a government that keeps its promises, that admits easily our mistakes. We will make them. We will take responsibility for them. We will fix them.

Mr. Speaker, my, how times have changed. The Premier has not led a government that admits its mistakes. This is no more apparent than in the glaring mistake this Sask Party government has made in eliminating the film employment tax credit. The people of Saskatchewan, working people, creative people, and now even business people have felt that the Sask Party has turned its back on them.

To the Premier: why is admitting his mistake on the film industry so hard? Why can he not see the economic and social implications of killing an entire industry?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, part of the reason for the results of the last election is that the people of this province understood that this party, this side of the House, keeps the promises that it makes, Mr. Speaker. You can go down the list. The promises that we've made in health care, kept. In education, kept. The promises we made to invest more in highways, kept. The promises we've made to keep this province moving forward with competitive taxes, kept.

In fact we've exceeded promises, Mr. Speaker, dropping 114,000 low- and middle-income people off of the tax rolls. Mr. Speaker, we also promised we wouldn't use government policies to pick winners and losers, that we would create the right kind of business environment for all of the economy — an economy, by the way, that now is leading the country, Mr. Speaker.

I think the people of the province did vote for a party and a government that kept its promises and keeps Saskatchewan moving forward, and that is exactly what we'll continue to do.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, the sign of a true leader is one that can understand when a mistake is made and then goes back and corrects it. Last week the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce and SaskFilm released a study here at the people's legislature that shows exactly how important the film industry is to the province. This was done after the minister and the Premier were challenged to allow the report to be made public. My question's to the Premier: did he or his cabinet encourage the new restrictions on the CEO [chief executive officer] of the . . .

The Speaker: — That question is out of order as it is questioning decisions of the Speaker. Next question.

Mr. Nilson: — Mr. Speaker, were the actions of the government as they dealt with the president and CEO of the chamber of commerce taken because his report was critical to . . .

The Speaker: — I already stated once, Mr. Leader of the Opposition, that that question is out of order. I recognize the member for Saskatoon Massey Place.

Funding for Health Sciences Building

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's clear that here in Saskatchewan we need more physicians. The number of physician vacancies listed online is 117. The best plan to address this issue, Mr. Speaker, to have a supply of physicians here in Saskatchewan is to train and retain our own homegrown graduates. That is a long-term plan. But in order for that to occur, Mr. Speaker, we need a strong College of Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan. My question to the Health minister: has he met with the Minister of Advanced Education and made clear how important and vital it is to have the College of Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan on sound footing?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, certainly the member is correct in that a fulsome plan on retaining and recruiting physicians for Saskatchewan must first begin with our own medical graduates here at the University of Saskatchewan. Certainly the former minister and myself and colleagues of this government have certainly had discussions about what is contemplated and taking place at the University of Saskatchewan. And further to that, Mr. Speaker, I've met with the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] president as well as the acting dean of the College of Medicine earlier this summer, after my appointment as Health minister. In fact I spoke with the U of S president on the phone on Friday, and we are actually going to be meeting in early December to discuss this further.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last spring the College of Medicine was given a warning that it would be placed on probation without significant changes. Central to those changes, Mr. Speaker, are improvements to do with teaching space. And this underscores the importance of the Health Sciences Building on the campus of the University of Saskatchewan. Yet members will recall last spring, Mr. Speaker, it was this Sask Party government that broke its promise to provide funding for the Health Sciences Building, and instead forced nearly \$100 million of debt onto the campus's books. As a result of that borrowing, Mr. Speaker, the borrowing capacity at the University of Saskatchewan is maxed out. In the near future, the board of governors will have to decide about the A and B wings of the Health Sciences Building, Mr. Speaker.

To the minister: we've already seen a broken promise with this project so far. My question to the minister: what is the plan for funding the rest of the Health Sciences Building?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Advanced Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In 2007 we made a platform commitment to complete the Health Sciences Building, something that had been sadly neglected under the previous administration. We provided \$100 million in 2008, and a further \$50 million in 2011. Mr. Speaker, I can advise that the project came in under budget, providing savings of \$38 million.

Mr. Speaker, it's a sad travesty that the College of Medicine was put under probation by the members opposite. It's a sign that they neglected, did not care about the health of Saskatchewan citizens, did not care about post-secondary education, and were not dealing with anything to deal with the health care in our province. And, Mr. Speaker, it is something that cannot and will not be tolerated under our government.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the minister can say the right words if he wants to, but that's not reality. Reality is they promised to pay upfront for the Health Sciences Building, and they walked away from that promise, forcing nearly \$100 million of debt onto the university's books. The U of S is now in a position where it is not able to take on more debt. Because of the Sask Party's decision to cancel funding and push debt onto the university's books, the U of S now has the highest per-student debt levels in all of Canada.

If the minister is serious about training physicians in Saskatchewan, if he's serious about living up to his election promises, then he should be serious about providing the rest of the funding for the Health Sciences Building. The board of governors will soon decide on what next steps to take with the A and B wings, Mr. Speaker. To the minister: will the Sask Party government provide the needed dollars or will they force the University of Saskatchewan to stall on this project?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Advanced Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite have got a tragic and sad record in this area. Mr. Speaker, the NDP first announced the project on the C and D wings. They announced that in 2003 after and only after they allowed the College of Medicine to go on probation. In the dying days of their government, they had a sod-turning photo opportunity in June of 2007. Mr. Speaker, construction did not start on that building until after the 2007 election. And, Mr. Speaker, this government will see to it that the C and D wings get completed.

And, Mr. Speaker, yes, there is additional debt because of this. Mr. Speaker, that's because of the neglect and the ignoring of it from that side of the House that went on for 16 long years. Mr. Speaker, we will deal with things from this side of the House. Mr. Speaker, we will deal with it either through debt, through additional funding from the . . . [inaudible] . . . but we will develop a plan and we will ensure that everything goes as it's supposed to to ensure the health care of the citizens in our province.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the last warning of probation came under the Sask Party's watch just last spring. Clearly the actions taken by this government, or the lack of actions, Mr. Speaker, have not resulted in the desired outcomes that we need here in the province with respect to the College of Medicine. If this government is serious about training our own physicians, then it needs to step up to the plate and provide the funding for the completion of the remaining wings.

The U of S's last annual report says that it is unable to take on more debt. It says it has the highest levels of debt per student compared to other Canadian institutions in its class. Mr. Speaker, it's necessary that the government provides this funding in a cash grant upfront. My question to the minister: will the funding for the completion of the Health Sciences Building be provided in a cash grant upfront, or are they going to once again force more debt onto the University of Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, we are going to work with our partners at the University of Saskatchewan and at the College of Medicine to ensure that the issues and the problems that that college faced in 2002 are never repeated in this province, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this government on this side of the House has a track record of increasing the number of training seats at the College of Medicine from 60 to 100; the number of residencies from 60 to 120, Mr. Speaker. That is why we have more than 200 more physicians, both specialists and family physicians, working in Saskatchewan today compared to when the members opposite were in government.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the track record of this government is walking away from an election promise to pay upfront for the Health Sciences Building. The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, in order to not be put on probation, we need the

College of Medicine on good footing. Mr. Speaker, we need to have the completion of the Health Sciences Building. That means the completion of the A and B wings. My question to the minister, because he did not answer it in the last reply: will the funding, the remaining of the funding for the Health Sciences Building, will it be provided upfront in a cash grant, or will it be more debt that the university has to try to take on?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, as I've said in my last answer, we are certainly going to work with the College of Medicine and with the U of S as we move forward on this project, Mr. Speaker, and we are going to ensure that we have the full complement of physicians that we need in this province, Mr. Speaker. That's why we're doing things like offering forgiveness of student loans for those physicians that decide to work in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. That's why we are going to continue to put a focus on recruiting our own medical graduates, why we have put in place the physician recruitment agency that has a full-time recruiter that is at the U of S, and why we're going to continue to recruit overseas, Mr. Speaker, because that is all a part of the answer. But of course moving forward with the plan at the college, Mr. Speaker, is a critical part of that.

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

Investment and Ownership in the Potash Industry

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, British Columbia and Alberta newspapers have recently reported that there has been interest expressed from two Chinese state-owned companies, CNOOC [Chinese National Offshore Oil Corporation] and Sinopec, in owning our potash. The reports indicate that the federal Minister of Natural Resources recently met with Chinese officials to discuss purchasing potash companies in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan deserve to know what conversations have started regarding foreign state ownership of the Saskatchewan people's potash. My question is to the Premier: in his recent trip to China, did he also meet with those Chinese state officials about investing in our province's potash industry, and who did he meet with?

[14:00]

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

Hon. Mr. McMillan: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to address the member's question very directly. She's asking if those companies are interested in owning our potash. Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan own the potash in Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as far as the investment that we see coming into Saskatchewan, into potash, into oil and gas, Mr. Speaker, that's part of a growing economy. We have recently put forward the growth plan 2020 that's going to take us to 2020 and beyond, Mr. Speaker, to reach those aggressive targets for employment, for increased population, Mr. Speaker. We

recognize the need for investment, foreign investment, local investment, Mr. Speaker. We think that we've got the resources to move our province forward. And, Mr. Speaker, we look forward to moving our whole province forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, the net benefit tests that takeovers have to meet before being allowed to invest in a province's potash industry has yet to be laid out clearly by the federal government. The federal government certainly isn't prepared to consult with citizens when it's doing the analysis of what constitutes a net benefit, and we don't know whether the provincial government even has a say.

The people of Saskatchewan deserve to know where the Saskatchewan Party government stands on what is a net benefit to the province and whether they are standing up for Saskatchewan when the federal government makes up its mind. To the minister: has the Sask Party government laid out its bottom line net benefit definition when it comes to a potential Chinese state potash takeover, and if yes, will they provide that definition to this Assembly?

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

Hon. Mr. McMillan: — Mr. Speaker, the members on this side of the House are well aware of the investments in our province and when there is a net benefit and when there isn't. And I believe that the record of the members on this side of the House of when we feel there is not a net benefit is unparalleled certainly by the members on that side of the House.

But, Mr. Speaker, the record of defending Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite stood in this House in the last year and voted against pipelines, Mr. Speaker, that would be a net benefit to this province, Mr. Speaker. We have an investment climate, Mr. Speaker, in this province which is second to none. And those members agree with their leader in Ottawa, Mulcair, that it is a disease on our country when we grow. It's a disease on our country when our resource sector is leading, when it's an investment market for the rest of Canada, Mr. Speaker. The people on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, want to see growth. They want to see investment. They want to see Saskatchewan continue to lead in our country.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, the last time a foreign company attempted to take over a potash company, there was much confusion about where the Premier stood about the net benefit to the province. Saskatchewan ministry officials have recently said that since most potash rights are already sold, a Chinese state-owned company would need to purchase an existing private potash business in order to own Saskatchewan potash. If successful, this would have implications for potash companies in years like this one when the market is soft.

To the minister: is the Sask Party government supportive of a takeover of a privately held potash company by a Chinese state-owned business?

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

Hon. Mr. McMillan: — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite are very exercised about foreign investment in our potash industry and, Mr. Speaker, I think it is something that we certainly should be aware of, that we don't want haphazardly, Mr. Speaker. We want to be very clear and deliberate.

But, Mr. Speaker, we today have a potash company, a German potash company, investing in Saskatchewan and, Mr. Speaker, this is the same foreign investment that was made in our province about 40 years ago. It was the last company to build a mine in our province, Mr. Speaker. And those members and their predecessors, Mr. Speaker, changed the law. They changed the rules. They made a nationalized potash Act, Mr. Speaker, and I can tell you, I was at the ground breaking, Mr. Speaker. Their CEO from Germany, Mr. Speaker, had come to Saskatchewan to announce this new potash mine, and he stood and said, we were mad; we were upset for a long, long time; but we're now comfortable in this government to invest again in Saskatchewan, in this province, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Liquor Store Ownership

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again the Saskatchewan Party has rolled out a controversial new idea without care nor consideration for the consequences for the people in the province. When it comes to the potential for new liquor stores in our province, the Sask Party owe people due diligence and respect. The Sask Party promised not to privatize the Crowns and they are going back on their word. They went back on their word already when they said they would admit their mistakes, but they didn't do it, Mr. Speaker.

Once again, why is the Sask Party rolling out the privatization of new liquor stores without doing their homework on the costs and the benefits to the people of this province?

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Unlike when the NDP were government, we have a growing province, and that is indeed exciting. But it also comes with challenges, Mr. Speaker, and those challenges are infrastructure across our province. The priority of this government is going to, has been, and is going to remain hospitals, nursing homes, schools, and highways.

So, Mr. Speaker, as the population grows, there is a need for additional retail stores within our province. We are not going to change the existing SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority] stores. We have a blended, public-private system that's extremely successful. And as we add on to that system, right now it's going to be private stores.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan's liquor sales provide much needed revenues that helps the province, pays for health care and education as the minister spoke about.

A study jointly authorized by CCPA [Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives] and the Parkland Institute has shown that Alberta's privatization has cost that province nearly \$1.5 billion of lost revenues in 10 years, Mr. Speaker, when they privatized their stores. This is not just about a fair process, Mr. Speaker. The Saskatchewan Party is also restricting SLGA stores from improving how they operate to meet the needs of the people.

Mr. Speaker, why is the Sask Party launching private liquor stores without studying what this choice will cost the people of Saskatchewan?

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is a lot of work done, and the SLGA officials monitor the market quite closely. And what we do know is we have 80,000 more people living in our province and the existing SLGA stores are serving those 80,000 people, but there is capacity issues, Mr. Speaker.

But we have examples, Mr. Speaker. We have a public-private system. We have 79 government-owned stores, but we also have 185 private rural franchisees in which to look at to see how they contribute to the government . . . [inaudible] . . . We also have 440 private off-sale outlets, and a private wine store right here in the city of Regina. Mr. Speaker, we have a blended system that's extremely successful, and we believe these stores will support that system.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, a common-sense approach to the need for a new store is to look at the model that has worked under SLGA. The publicly owned stores provide tax revenues that help pay for health and education. We understand that, Mr. Speaker. But the Sask Party is so opposed, they are so opposed to the public stores that they won't even consider them, Mr. Speaker.

So once again they'd rather choose privatization at any cost because that's their agenda when it comes to the Crowns, Mr. Speaker. We see evidence of that. The people of Saskatchewan see evidence of that. And they're going to continue doing that. And our job is to expose that, Mr. Speaker. So once again, will the Saskatchewan Party admit that they have broken their promise and they are now starting on their agenda of privatization at all costs?

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Again, Mr. Speaker, I don't think the member opposite heard earlier but we are not privatizing the existing SLGA stores. We are not breaking a promise. What we are doing is any new stores within our province will be

privately owned, Mr. Speaker, not unlike the 185 private businesses that are already retailing alcohol beverages within our province.

Mr. Speaker, again the NDP are out of touch with the public because it was very interesting . . . There was a poll done on CTV [Canadian Television Network Ltd.]; a web poll was done on this particular issue. And they had over 1,000 votes and, Mr. Speaker, the majority were in favour of additional stores being private stores; 76 per cent of the people said that they were in favour of this initiative. The NDP yet again are out of touch with the people of Saskatchewan.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, we know that SLGA and liquor sales account for millions of dollars of revenue for the province, Mr. Speaker. And from those revenues of course we have education and health care and highways spending.

Mr. Speaker, what's happening now is that there's been no analysis of this announcement whatsoever, and the people of Saskatchewan ought to have some analysis and some information that they can share amongst themselves, Mr. Speaker. And the point is that they are now attacking the government-owned liquor stores by simply saying to them that, all the revenue that you have made for health care and education, we're not taking that into consideration. These new liquor stores we're bringing in, guess what? They're going to be able to market themselves. They're going to have longer hours. But the government-owned stores cannot, Mr. Speaker. They cannot. So once again it's privatization at all costs, Mr. Speaker. They're allowing their ideology to trump common sense.

So once again to the minister: will you at least take the time to analyze this choice that you're making to make sure the people of Saskatchewan's interests are protected?

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Well, Mr. Speaker, we have a growing province for the first time in literally decades. And the analysis is quite simple — new liquor store or a new school? We know what the NDP would do. Quite frankly, in Riversdale they went with a new liquor store and they neglected St. Mary School.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 51 — *The Public Inquiries Act, 2012*/ *Loi de 2012 sur les enquêtes publiques*

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 51, *The Public Inquiries Act, 2012* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General that Bill No. 51, *The Public Inquiries Act, 2012* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure

of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — Order. Do you want me to mention both of the members participating in this?

When shall the bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 52 — *The Public Inquiries Consequential Amendments Act, 2012*

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — I move that Bill No. 52, *The Public Inquiries Consequential Amendments Act, 2012* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General that Bill No. 52, *The Public Inquiries Consequential Amendments Act, 2012* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 53 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal Act, 2012 (No. 2)*

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — I move that Bill No. 53, *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal Act, 2012 (No. 2)* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General that Bill No. 53, *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal Act, 2012 (No. 2)* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — When shall the bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 54 — *The Seizure of Criminal Property Amendment Act, 2012*

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 54, *The Seizure of Criminal Property Amendment Act, 2012* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General that Bill No. 54, *The Seizure of Criminal Property Amendment Act, 2012* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

[14:15]

Bill No. 55 — *The Consumer Protection and Business Practices Act*

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 55, *The Consumer Protection and Business Practices Act* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General that Bill No. 55, *The Consumer Protection and Business Practices Act* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 56 — *The Court of Appeal Amendment Act, 2012/ Loi de 2012 modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur la Cour d'appel*

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 56, *The*

Court of Appeal Amendment Act, 2012 be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General that Bill No. 56, *The Court of Appeal Amendment Act, 2012* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — When shall the bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 57 — *The Condominium Property Amendment Act, 2012*

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 57, *The Condominium Property Amendment Act, 2012* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General that Bill No. 57, *The Condominium Property Amendment Act, 2012* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — When shall the bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 58 — *The Workers' Compensation Act, 2012*

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 58, *The Workers' Compensation Act, 2012* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Advanced Education that Bill No. 58, *The Workers' Compensation Act, 2012* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — First reading of

this bill.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — To bring a motion with respect to the Boundary Commission report, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — We'll do written questions first. I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Speaker, thank you. I wish to table the answers for questions 1 through 50.

The Speaker: — The Government Whip has tabled questions 1 through 50. I now recognize the Deputy Government House Leader.

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

Report of the Constituency Boundaries Commission of Saskatchewan

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the end of my . . . Thank you, and so I'll be moving the following resolution:

That the Constituency Boundaries Commission of Saskatchewan final report, being sessional paper no. 284 of the first session of the twenty-seventh legislature laid before this Assembly by the Speaker, be approved and adopted.

Mr. Speaker, the Constituency Boundaries Commission was established on April 18th, 2012. Appointments to the commission in accordance with the Act are to consist of a Chairperson and two residents of Saskatchewan.

The Lieutenant Governor in Council is required to adopt, to appoint either a judge of the Court of Appeal or a judge of Her Majesty's Court of Queen's Bench for Saskatchewan, nominated by the chief judges of Saskatchewan after consultation with the Chief Justice of Her Majesty's Court of Queen's Bench for Saskatchewan or, Mr. Speaker, a resident of Saskatchewan nominated by the Chief Justice of Saskatchewan.

Once the judge or Saskatchewan resident is appointed in a consultation with the leaders of the opposition and any recognized members of the legislature of Saskatchewan, the Lieutenant Governor in Council then appoints two members to the commission who are residents of Saskatchewan and who are not a Senator, a member of the House of Commons, or a member of the Assembly.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, a commission may appoint one of its members as Deputy Chairperson of the commission who will act as Chairperson if the Chairperson is absent or unable to act or if the office of Chairperson is vacant. The Hon. Mr. Justice Neil Gabrielson is the Chairperson of the commission with Mr. Stuart Pollon and Mr. Harry Van Mulligen also serving as members.

The commission was appointed and has carried out its work under the provisions of *The Constituency Boundaries Act, 1993*. The first meeting of the commission was held on May 1st, 2012, and their deliberations continued until early October.

As described in the commission report, the following factors were taken into account as the commission first began its deliberations: the inclusion of three more constituencies; the change to population of 18 years and older rather than total population; the population increase within urban areas, especially Saskatoon and Regina; and the change of population in some rural constituencies.

As required by the Act, the commission completed an interim report and held a series of public hearings across the province in September of 2012. The public hearings took place across the province, Mr. Speaker, in Prince Albert, The Battlefords, Saskatoon, Regina, Swift Current, Yorkton, and Estevan. These hearings were very well-attended, Mr. Speaker, with 45 oral presentations being given by individuals and corporations. Sixty-one written submissions were also received by the commission from individuals and corporations in the province.

Overall, Mr. Speaker, feedback from those individuals and corporations who submitted recommendations or made presentations to the commission stated that they were very satisfied with the work done by the commission and very supportive of the boundaries.

The commission advised that prior to preparing their final report, they gave careful consideration to the submissions made at the hearings, as well as the written submissions that they received, and that they were to be commended for the tremendous job they did in allowing for public concerns as well as recommendations about constituency names and boundaries themselves to be included in their work.

The commission states in its report that in undertaking its work, the commission has been guided by the requirements of the Act, relevant decisions by the courts, and by common sense.

The commission focused on several factors when determining the new constituencies, Mr. Speaker, including population variations. The commission had the foresight to keep the population of certain constituencies slightly lower than the quotient, which will ensure that each vote cast in the province will remain equal while our population continues to grow. In addition to population variances, communities of interest were also taken into consideration. Roads and geographical features, including rivers and lakes as well as natural barriers between communities, were also factored into consideration when determining the boundaries. In addition to this, both rural and urban municipal boundaries were factored in to help reduce fragmentation of boundaries as much as possible.

Mr. Speaker, the commission did a tremendous job, taking into consideration the many factors that are important to this process, and again I wish to commend them for their work.

With respect to the requirements of the Act, the rules for fixing the boundaries in section 14 provide that:

... in determining the area to be included in a proposed constituency south of the dividing line and in fixing the boundaries of that constituency, a commission shall ensure that the population of each proposed constituency is, as nearly as possible, equal to the constituency population quotient.

The constituency population quotient is the total population less the northern population divided by the 59 ridings, with total population being the voting eligible population that is 18 years of age or older. We are advised in the report that the total population quotient for these purposes was determined to be 13,059.

Having established the central principle, the Act provides that a commission may depart from this requirement:

... where, in its opinion, it is necessary to do so because of:

special geographic considerations, including:

sparsity, density, or relative rates of growth of populations in various regions south of the dividing line;

accessibility to the regions . . . or

the size and shape of the regions . . .

a special community of interests or diversity of interests of persons residing in regions south of the dividing line or;

physical features of regions south of the dividing line.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the Act provides that, in any event:

A commission shall ensure that the population of each constituency south of the dividing line remains within 5%, either more or less, of the constituency population quotient.

In compliance with these rules, and with what I am sure was a liberal dose of common sense previously referred to, the commission has completed its final report. And in doing so, it's achieved the creation of 61 constituencies with boundaries that will ensure that the value of each vote will be as nearly as possible equal whenever that vote is cast in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, for good reason, the two northern constituencies continue to operate under special rules which recognizes the lower population density and vast distances involved in those constituencies. The remaining 59 constituencies will now, however, all have the same number of actual voters plus or minus 5 per cent, in accordance with the recently amended Act.

Mr. Speaker, it's a fundamental principle of our democracy that each vote should be roughly of the same value throughout the province. In Saskatchewan we have one of the lowest permitted size variances of plus or minus 5 per cent between constituencies. However it is our view that in order to ensure votes of equal value in Saskatchewan, it is the number of voters in a constituency that should be used to establish as roughly equal rather than a roughly equal overall population.

The Act was amended to ensure that the commission is using the most recent census data to determine who is of voting age in a constituency rather than using the voters list as is done in some other jurisdictions.

The final report of the commission was produced using the best available data, and I am strongly of the view that it deserves the support of this Assembly. Mr. Speaker, it is the voters who elect the members of the Legislative Assembly, and in our view it is the voters who should therefore be the focus of the constituency boundaries process. The final report reflects that focus.

The other change reflected in this report is the increase in the number of constituencies from 58 to 61. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has had the benefit of considerable growth over the last few years. Since the census upon which our current boundaries were drawn, our population has increased over 5 per cent. And we are proud to say that this dramatic increase is continuing. It has been the view of the government that this process must reflect the increase in population since the boundaries were last drawn. It should also anticipate the population growth that we are confident will occur before the next commission is struck based on the 2021 census.

For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, the Act was amended to recognize the population change in the province of Saskatchewan and the need for increased representation by members of the Legislative Assembly by increasing the number of constituencies from 58 to 61. This 5 per cent increase in the number of seats was achieved by increasing the number of constituencies south of the dividing line, as that term is defined in the Act, from 56 to 59 members.

Mr. Speaker, if the Legislative Assembly passes the resolution adopting the proposed boundaries in this report, *The Constituency Boundaries Act, 1993* requires me, as minister responsible for that Act, to introduce *The Representation Act, 2012* in the same session of the Legislative Assembly to establish the new provincial constituencies as directed by that resolution. Accordingly *The Representation Act, 2012* would be introduced later this session to establish the new constituencies and their boundaries. Those new boundaries will come into force upon the dissolution of the current Legislative Assembly prior to the next provincial general election.

Mr. Speaker, the independent Constituencies Boundary Commission, led by the Hon. Mr. Justice Neil Gabrielson, has served this Assembly and the people of this province exceedingly well with its final report. They have listened carefully to the people of this province and have worked quickly and carefully to execute their duties on our behalf. I thank them again for their service to the people of Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, I hereby move the following resolution:

That the Constituency Boundaries Commission of Saskatchewan final report, being sessional paper 284 of the first session of the twenty-seventh legislature laid before this Assembly by the Speaker, be approved and adopted.

Thank you.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General:

That the Constituency Boundaries Commission of Saskatchewan final report, being sessional paper 284 of the first session of the twenty-seventh legislature laid before this Assembly by the Speaker, be approved and adopted.

I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The official opposition, and I think many people in the province, want to thank Mr. Justice Neil Gabrielson and Mr. Stuart Pollon, Mr. Harry Van Mulligen for their work in preparing this report to the legislature based on the legislation that was introduced in this place last spring. They have followed the legislation carefully and listened to the people of the province and have prepared a report in accordance with that legislation.

But, Mr. Speaker, we have a fundamental problem with the legislation that was introduced, and I know that the member opposite has gone through to try to explain the legislation again. But I think common sense, practical Saskatchewan people are very surprised that the Government of Saskatchewan came forward and added three more politicians at the same time as they've been cutting back on services and cutting back on the numbers of employees in the government. And, Mr. Speaker, this was not something that was mentioned in the election. This was not something that the Sask Party had identified as something that they were going to do if they were re-elected. And, Mr. Speaker, I think many people in the province are questioning the legislation that's the basis for this report.

[14:30]

Mr. Speaker, in most democracies when changes are made to the actual decision-making body for the people of the province, these kinds of decisions are discussed by the population. They're discussed through various forums. We've seen that kind of thing happen in other provinces in Canada when there are suggested changes to be made. Most often there will also be a discussion in an election. And there was a very clear opportunity for the government to raise the issues that they put into their bill, but it's quite clear that these decisions were made in the Premier's office and maybe with a few other people in early December, just after the election was completed last year. And I think fundamentally it doesn't pass the smell test of common sense that those changes were made.

Now let's take a look at what those changes are. The first one is adding three more politicians. Saskatchewan now has one MLA for each 18,240 people. The next closest province is Manitoba

where they have one MLA for 21,940 but when you go to Alberta it's more than 43,000. In British Columbia it's more than 53,000 and in Ontario it's almost 125,000 for each MLA. So we know, we heard a little earlier how our university is going to have the highest debt per capita. I think that was a better number to be working at, is to try to reduce that kind of a debt at our university than to increase the number of MLAs.

And so the other aspect of this legislation is that they have changed the way we count the people of the province and basically said that if you are 18 years of age or under on June 1st, 2011, well then you're not going to be counted in any calculations related to your constituency until probably 11, 12 years from now. So many of the new young voters will not even have been included in the process that sets up the boundaries for our constituency. And that's another fundamental problem with this legislation.

So we have a government that says, we can't do these things for the people. We can't provide these services. We're going to cut back in jobs in these areas, but we will increase the number of MLAs. I think the people of Saskatchewan have understood how fundamentally wrong that process is. We don't need the extra MLAs in the province, Mr. Speaker. We will be, I think, voting against this concept and this idea of how to change the boundaries in the province, because it was not done in an appropriately democratic way. Thank you.

The Speaker: — Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 45 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Saskatchewan Telecommunications) Amendment Act, 2012*

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

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and speak about Bill No. 45, *An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Act and The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Holding Corporation Act*. The amendments deal with a simple housekeeping matter of monetary limits of order in councils and the length of the term of borrowing by SaskTel.

Over the past five years, the Canada bond market has expanded to include bonds issued for 30 years or more. This financing option, which has not been available to the province or SaskTel for a very long time, is made possible now due to our recent credit upgrades. The provincial Department of Finance has started borrowing at these longer terms, and should we fail to

amend this restriction, it could potentially impact SaskTel's ability to participate directly in the provincial borrowing program. If the provincial Department of Finance determines the borrowing for a term longer than 30 years is desirable for the province and SaskTel cannot participate, then the interest costs that SaskTel will be paying will be higher.

From 2011 to the end of September 2012, SaskTel has spent approximately \$300 million on its network here in Saskatchewan, and SaskTel needs to continue to invest to provide services residents and businesses are demanding. This includes the 670 million that will be spent on completing the six-year fibre to the premises program, and approximately 60 million for the deployment of the new LTE — which stands for long-term evolution — wireless network scheduled to be introduced early 2013.

This housekeeping matter is to align SaskTel's dollar limit for the order in council with CIC's [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan] model that was recommended by the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations. Currently SaskTel requires an order in council for all lands purchased in excess of \$100,000. This can delay the purchase of land for cell towers. This of course impacts SaskTel's ability to provide exceptional service to its customers in the highly competitive cellular market, as many cellular sites are now exceeding the \$100,000 mark, especially in our larger cities. This amendment is therefore in support of SaskTel's continued investment in cellular and other communication services in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I move the second reading of Bill No. 45, *An Act to amend the Saskatchewan Telecommunications Act and The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Holding Corporation Act*.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the Minister of Highways and Infrastructure that Bill No. 45, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Saskatchewan Telecommunications) Amendment Act, 2012* be now read a second time. I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased on behalf of the official opposition to stand up and offer our initial comments about Bill No. 45 and the importance of SaskTel in terms of allowing the Crown corporation, whom we're very proud of, to be able to borrow excess money if needed to really strengthen them as a Crown and that the provisions, as the minister has indicated, are minor in nature in that some of the smaller rules and regulations surrounding borrowing money for SaskTel purposes, as he described, are something that the corporation has to do.

And we certainly want to at the outset indicate that SaskTel is a Crown corporation that we're quite proud of. And the minister alluded to some of the points about world-class and describing SaskTel and the fact that they want to spend \$670 million on improving their cell service and their cell coverage. And, Mr. Speaker, there's no question from our perspective as an opposition that we look and always make sure that we find the ways and means in which we could brag about the Crowns and talk about the Crowns, and SaskTel being one of the more successful ones that we want to make sure that we take every opportunity to make sure that we highlight their achievements and their success as a Crown.

There's no question, Mr. Speaker, that we look to SaskTel for leadership on many fronts. As I stand up here every day in the Assembly, I present petitions on behalf of a number of northern First Nations in the area that I represent as other areas throughout the province also reach out to SaskTel to try and get them to provide those services. And we look at how we could strengthen that to providing the petitions every day from the Canoe Lake First Nation, from Dillon, from Patuanak, and of course from Turnor Lake and all the neighbouring communities, as I mentioned at the outset, that I announced, that I named during my petition presentation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I understand and I think we understand that as we move forward that SaskTel's, obviously their borrowing capacity, their borrowing limits, their borrowing requirements have to certainly, if I give for lack of a better word, jive with what CIC's doing and certainly coordinate and collaborate with what the Ministry of Finance is doing. We understand that and we appreciate that.

And it's important to note that the people out there in Saskatchewanland, they want to make sure that SaskTel remains competitive, that SaskTel remains strong. And we've seen evidence of some of the bungling by the minister in terms of SaskTel's future, of how they have not supported nor defended SaskTel to the extent that they have, that they profess, Mr. Speaker. They have to do more. That's the bottom line. They have to do more. And I'll give you the most recent example as we speak in the Assembly about the Huawei deal that the Premier's signed. What's all that about?

We talk about the challenge that they had with the wireless Internet service for the Internet. That was bungled as well. And then as time goes on, you know, we find them bringing forward bills of this sort, saying we need to borrow more money for the Crowns. And we need to be able to make sure we coordinate, collaborate those borrowing responsibilities, those borrowing needs to what CIC does and certainly what the Ministry of Finance does as well.

And at the outset people would say, well there's nothing wrong with that in terms of being able to position SaskTel to borrow for a longer term. But there's got to be a lot more oversight to how much the Crown corporation is borrowing, where they're borrowing it from. And people of Saskatchewan have a right to know. And that's one of the reasons why, when they bring bills of this nature forward, as I mentioned on a lot of the other bills, is that you have to make sure you take the time to really read it through. And always remember that it's the Sask Party government that's hell-bent on privatization that's proposing some of these things of this nature, that we take the extra time and make the extra effort to connect with people that are in the know of what challenges the Crown corporation faces to ensure it's longer term health and future.

So at the outset you look at the issue of borrowing more money and positioning SaskTel to do that. There's all kinds of questions that we have. Like in terms of the long-term debt, how will this affect the bottom line? What are your plans for withdrawing from SaskTel any of the retained earnings of the corporation? Because obviously the last go around the government basically cleaned them out their savings.

And this is one of the things that really worries a lot of people, is how can you on one hand, like this bill, propose to coordinate their borrowing process yet at the same time they clean out their savings? They don't defend them when it comes to . . . don't defend the Crown corporations and their customers, like SaskTel's customers, when it comes to protecting frequencies on their cell or their Internet service in rural Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of questions we have on the miscellaneous statutes that the minister spoke about. There are things that we are very, very quick to pick up as an opposition. When this government talks about longer term debt for any Crown corporation, a longer time frame in which they can borrow money, the bigger and greater amounts that they can borrow, it's always a worrisome trend. And that's what this minister's alluding to in his bill saying that we want to look at a longer term process under Bill 45 and to coordinate that with CIC's process as well as the Ministry of Finance.

So it begs the question. They want to borrow more money for a longer term. How much more and how much longer? These are some of the questions that we have at the outset in relation to Bill 45. And it's always the worry on our part, as I mentioned, when we talk about the Sask Party looking after the Crowns. It's really, really worrisome for a lot of people in Saskatchewan. And we want to make sure, we want to make sure that people out there are aware of what they're proposing in any bill.

And Bill 45 is a classic example of how at the outset the minister's nonchalant in his presentation, saying it's all about coordination. It's all about borrowing limits and borrowing terms. We're trying to make sure everything's fine so we can strengthen the Crown. The vast majority of people in Saskatchewan are rolling their eyes when they talk about that sort of thing. And we on this side of the Assembly pay very, very close attention to what obviously the minister is trying to do. What's the objective with the premise that we know that he doesn't support and protect the Crowns in any way, shape, or form.

[14:45]

So, Mr. Speaker, we obviously want to encourage and solicit people's help and advice on this front. Like all the other bills we're speaking about today, we're going to ask them to certainly help us to research or to give us information. As I've said on many other bills, that the purpose of the bills here is to explain what the bills are about, to get the opposition perspective on the bills. And then of course these bills come back in the spring sitting. It gives us an adequate amount of time to research them, to find out different groups, what impact that they think this might have on the Crown, and all the while, Mr. Speaker, being very, very wary of what the Sask Party has and what their plans are for the Crown corporations.

So at the outset, from what the minister spoke of very quickly, he mentioned the fact that Bill 45 is primarily about the terms of limit in terms of the money they want to borrow, plus the time frame, and that they're collaborating and coordinating that with CIC, of which SaskTel is part of the process there, as well as the Ministry of Finance.

But as I said at the outset, Mr. Speaker, we watch very carefully any time the Sask Party has an opportunity to hide long-term debt in our Crowns. What does that mean for our overall debt? Their PPP [public-private partnership] partnerships that they speak about, you know, that's another example of how they're hiding debt. And we've seen evidence of that in the '90s where it took us 16 years to repair some of the incredible financial burden that the people of Saskatchewan suffered from on the Conservatives of the day, their cousins, when they put this province close to \$16 billion in debt.

So I think, Mr. Speaker, when you look PPP partnerships, they look at longer term debts for our Crown. It begins to worry people throughout Saskatchewanland that what's the objective here? Are you going to saddle SaskTel with more debt over a longer term? Because if you're going to saddle all these Crown corporations with all that debt, in the process you're taking all the equity out of it to balance off your books for today, Mr. Speaker, you're leaving generations, generations down the road with more and more debt. And, Mr. Speaker, we've seen the same MO [modus operandi] of the 1990s Conservatives as we're seeing with the 2011-2012 Saskatchewan Party government, Mr. Speaker.

So through the PPP partnerships and certainly through longer term debt as described in this particular bill, Mr. Speaker, we don't see . . . we see nothing but trouble. Any time the Saskatchewan Party starts talking about protecting our Crowns, the people on this side of the Assembly start to laugh. They start to roll their eyes because we know, you know, coming from the them it's actually pretty, pretty darn funny, Mr. Speaker. And that's what I think is absolutely key to this bill and any other bill that they propose.

Really, Mr. Speaker, if they really supported the Crowns, you know, would they clean them out of their savings, Mr. Speaker? Like you look at SaskTel, they cleaned SaskTel of all the retained earnings. They cleaned them right out, and then they privatized services like the 411 information services. Now when you call up an operator, like where's this operator based out of? You look at all these issues and then you begin to wonder, well if these guys aren't supportive of the Crowns, then why aren't people exposing them to that fact?

And that's why some of these bills that they bring forward, we'll have to make every effort. And every plan that we have is to make sure that people know exactly what the Sask Party's doing with our Crowns. And here's another example of nothing but longer debt, longer term to pay down a debt, and bigger debt for the Crowns, and that's what this bill is basically speaking about, Mr. Speaker. And the people of Saskatchewan ought to know that, and that's the purpose of us really trying to expose the challenges with Bill 45.

So on that front, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that my colleagues will have a lot more to say about this bill. We'll have committee opportunities to challenge the minister on this bill. And we've got other things that we want to bring forward as time will permit us to do so, and we certainly will take that opportunity. So a big welcome to the people out there that may have some of the concerns with this bill. And as minor as the minister may make the bill and the amendments to the bill, he may want to make it appear to be minor, there are some major implications

and complications for the Crowns.

So my only point is that I would ask the minister to make sure that he has advised people in the area, and advised folks throughout his constituency, and advised the people in general under his ministerial duties some of the challenges that this bill may provide to SaskTel. So on that note, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 45.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 45, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Saskatchewan Telecommunications) Amendment Act, 2012*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 46 — *The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2012*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 46, *The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2012*. Mr. Speaker, the municipal employees' pension plan, also known as MEP, is a defined benefit pension plan administered by the Municipal Employees' Pension Commission. The plan provides retirement benefits to the employees of school divisions, urban and rural municipalities, regional colleges, regional public libraries, and other local authorities within the province of Saskatchewan. MEP's membership consists of over 16,000 members and 4,000 pensioners. As we know, many countries are dealing with issues around pensions, and the two key concerns are the solvency of the plans and their fairness.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, Canada's pension plans have been ranked as some of the top sustainable pension plans in developing countries. This certainly reinforces the need to continually review our pension plans to ensure they are operating as efficiently and as effectively as possible. Reviewing the governing legislation of our pension funds provides the opportunity to make changes that are vital for the sustainability of the plan and, most importantly, to ensure the security of the plan for its members.

It is desirable, Mr. Speaker, to amend *The Municipal Employees Pension Act* to implement the outcomes from a review of the Municipal Employees' Pension Commission pursuant to subsection 7(13) of the Act, and to align certain provisions of the Act with *The Pension Benefits Act, 1992*.

The proposed amendments, Mr. Speaker, are, it will allow the commission to extend the terms of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson at times when leadership continuity is vital and their original terms are nearing an end. It will, for clarity purposes, modify the Act to note that a simple majority of commission members is required for all decisions made by the commission. It will align the Act with provincial pension legislation, provide for a lifetime pension benefit to be paid to an eligible surviving spouse where the member dies prior to

retirement, and it will eliminate ambiguity. The Act will be modified to clearly state that a spousal waiver to a pension benefit is revocable.

A review of the composition of the commission every five years, as required under the Act, helps to ensure that those governing the pension plan have the appropriate structure and authority to provide high quality leadership to the plan. At my direction, this review was last undertaken in late 2010, extending into 2011. Plan stakeholders and the commission were provided with an opportunity to provide their feedback. The feedback received has been valuable in making improvements to the governance of the plan. Consultation was necessary to ensure the plan for plan holders is as sound and up to date as possible. Stakeholders can be assured that if a tragedy happens, their loved ones will be protected. These amendments will also ensure that the future of the plan is sustainable for years to come.

Aligning *The Municipal Employees' Pension Act* to comply with *The Pension Benefits Act, 1992* ensures that members of the pension plan are entitled to the same minimum benefits afforded to all members of pension plans registered in the province of Saskatchewan. Again, Mr. Speaker, our government is making appropriate changes to ensure the plan meets the needs of participants and to ensure the plan is sound and sustainable.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of *The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2012*. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 46, *The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act* be now read a second time. I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise this afternoon to speak to the Act to amend *The Municipal Employees' Pension Act*, and it's Bill No. 46. As the Minister of Finance has pointed out, the legislative changes that are made for pension legislation need to be about two things: solvency, making sure that the plans are financially viable; and also fairness to all of the members of the plan. And, Mr. Speaker, we will be looking at this legislation in light of comments that we will eventually receive from the people who are affected by the legislation. But before we get those comments, I think it's important to put a number of questions on the record today so that we will have some specific issues to look at.

Now when we look at the legislation, it appears that there are a couple of things that are going on. One is that there's some changes made in how the plans themselves actually would operate. And when we look at section 3 of Bill No. 46, which is headed section 7 amended, we note that they've added a subsection (9.1) into section 7. And effectively what it says is that the commission has the power to extend the term of the chairperson and the vice-chairperson to make sure that there's continuity of leadership in the plan.

Now presumably this has arisen because a problem was identified or something happened over the last number of years where this became an issue. And that wasn't necessarily laid out

in what we've heard so far, so we will end up having to find out if that's what happened. But one of the concerns always when you step into plans and have the commission make some changes in there is, why and in what circumstances would that happen? And so practically we're going to have to take a look and find out if the problem that is ostensibly being corrected is corrected by this particular provision or if this provision may actually create some other problems that haven't yet been identified. But practically this goes right to the heart of the Chair and Vice-Chair roles within the running of the municipal employees' pension plan that's incorporated under this Act.

So when we go to the next section, section 4 of Bill 46, and it's basically saying that there's going to be a new section 7.01 in the existing legislation. And this is a kind of a curious one, and I think again it's drafted in a way that indicates there's been some particular problem and that this will solve that problem. And so we will be seeking out the information as to what were the facts, what were the circumstances that led to the drafting of this particular section.

[15:00]

Because the section talks about how decisions are made and clearly what the explanation given is that this now makes it 100 per cent clear that a simple majority is all that's required to make a decision on a board for one of these pensions incorporated under this legislation. But curiously or maybe not so curiously, I'm not so sure because we don't know all of the facts that led to the drafting of this of this particular provision.

It then goes on in subsection (2) of 7.01 to say that if you happen to be on this commission . . . Say there's five members and the vote is three to two. Well if you're on this commission and you didn't agree with the decision — so you're one of the two, the minority — you could have your dissent registered. And then I think effectively what this does is eliminates any of your liability for that particular decision.

It is an interesting question of governance and how decisions are made when you state in subsection (1) that the simple majority is all that's required, but if it is a simple majority, then the people who lost the vote can take steps to make sure that they're not liable for that decision.

And I think everybody's curious as to why that particular provision is there. Presumably there are a few incidents that have arisen in these plans where an issue has come up about the ultimate liability of the members as it relates to this. But I think it's interesting to see a clause like this. I don't think we have similar clauses in any other legislation, but that's something we'll also be looking at to see whether there is a precedent for this type of a clause.

Now the next section 5 of Bill 46 amends by adding after 20.1 a new subsection (3). And effectively what it says is, "At any time before the date of death of a member, the member's spouse may revoke a waiver provided pursuant to subsection (2) by providing a written notice of the revocation in a form acceptable to the commission." Now clearly once again this is a response to a particular situation that has arisen, and I think it would be important to understand the facts around that particular decision and as the power of this particular revocation.

Now if it's a matter which it appears may be related to separation of parties or some other matrimonial dispute, there may be some other issues around whether this revocation can be granted in a situation where a person has entered into another type of contract that says you won't do this. So it raises some questions in the legislation itself as to some very specific points, and I think that once again we will be asking for information about the particular situation that has arisen that has generated this particular amendment. Because it may be that giving this power is detrimental to other parties, including the children of a member or other people who may be dependent on the member who has died. So I think we're owed a bigger explanation on that particular provision that's here.

Then we go to the next point, and this is section 6 of Bill 46. And this amends section 21, and effectively subsection 21(3) is repealed, and then they add subsections 21(3), (4), and (5). And these particular provisions are said to be, you know, related to the payment of the monthly survivorship pension amount, and I think practically what they're trying to do is make sure that the provisions in these municipal employees' pensions plans will be similar to *The Pension Benefits Act*. And one of the reasons that I guess all legislation around pensions attempts to become similar or the same is that it's easier to administer for everybody because the rules are the same. But once again this must have arisen because of a particular problem or a particular situation that wasn't able to be resolved through the discretion in the plan. And so they've attempted to write in the legislation all of the various possibilities that might be covered by, you know, by a situation around the monthly allowances. And so it is again a situation where we'll ask about, well what are the circumstances that led to this particular change in the legislation?

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we look at pension legislation in general, we know that this ends up being effectively deferred compensation. And sometimes people forget the fact that what happens for an employee is that they have elected or they have contracted, if it's a unionized job which many of the municipal jobs are, to receive a certain amount of their pay each biweekly or each week or per month, and then they take another portion and have agreed that that will go into a pension plan. But effectively it is their compensation for the work that they have done for that particular two-week period or for that particular month.

And so when this money then goes and is managed by a board, which is incorporated under this legislation, it's being held in trust for the employee. And one of the challenges that we've had in a few of the municipal employee pension plans in Saskatchewan is that that money held in trust hasn't been sufficient to cover all of the liabilities as identified by actuaries whose job it is to assess the amount of money that's in a plan versus the responsibility that the plan has for its members. And we know that this was an issue in the recent elections in municipalities where there are some municipalities that have some particular challenges.

And so when we look at this legislation, we're also going to have to make sure that there isn't anything here which diminishes that responsibility of the trustees to provide for the employees or, on the other side, diminishes the responsibility of the members in making sure that it's fair for the employees,

which in this case, they're often the taxpayers in municipalities.

Now we know . . . And it's quite interesting actually to compare what has happened in Saskatchewan, what has happened in Canada. And I agree with the Minister of Finance that most of our pension plans are in relatively good shape. But we also know that when we look at other jurisdictions and California comes to mind, one of the biggest issues in the state of California is that many municipalities who have plans that are probably under legislation pretty similar to this Saskatchewan provincial legislation — only there it would be the state of California legislation — there's many of the plans in California that have huge liabilities for their retired people to the point where they aren't able to even to hire people to do the regular jobs in the local municipalities. And they've gotten to a point where a number of the communities are really, really stuck. And it relates to some of their taxation referenda and also some of the decisions they've made around the revenues in municipalities.

But those kinds of issues also can arise when we look at pension plans that are incorporated under *The Municipal Employees' Pension Act* because the plans are funded by the workers out of their salary as they receive it or out of their pay as they receive it, but it's also funded by the municipal taxpayers. And there are sometimes challenges to deal with related to infrastructure or to many of the other day-to-day services that are provided in the municipality, which means some choices are made that diminish the assets available for the employees under their municipal employees' pension plan.

And what we will do is ask questions around this particular legislation to see whether it is some of the plans . . . it is some of the municipalities in Saskatchewan where there is litigation about the plan that has generated some of these suggested changes or if it's very specific personal situations that can be corrected by this legislation. And this, I think, kind of raises one of the points that I've often cited when I've been responding to bills provided by the present government which is, they could save all of us a lot of work if they actually were more specific in why certain changes were being proposed in the legislation. Because a simple story about each of these sections I've just been going through probably would've saved all of us from my speculating as to what the situation is.

And I know that that expanded version or perspective as each bill is presented is also very valuable on the record if later there's a challenge to the particular Act that has passed or out of the bill that's passed. Because I know, as a lawyer, we would often go to *Hansard* to see what was said about a particular piece of legislation when it was introduced. We would look at the discussions that take place in the legislature. We'd look at what questions were asked in committee, because all of those could add an interpretation to one or two words or in the legislation that would make a very important difference for somebody 10 years from now or 15 years from now or even a couple years from now.

So what we look at when we look at all the legislation introduced by the government is, what's the story or what are the facts behind why a particular change was made? What's the rationale? What's sometimes the ideology? Because sometimes there's ideological changes made to the legislation. But more

importantly, on some of these types of legislation, it really is that particular story or factual situation that explains why a particular change has been made in the legislation.

So when we're looking at the legislation as we move forward, we will be asking those very specific questions but will also be asking some of the bigger questions around some of the litigation and discussion that's been happening related to municipal employees' pension plans throughout the province.

Now I know that a number of my colleagues are going to have questions about this particular legislation and that they will want to speak to some of the very specific points. I know that when you look at legislation like the employees' pension Act, then practically what we're concerned about is both the individuals but also the taxpayers who fund the jobs, and in fact then fund the trust monies that will pay for the pensions over the long term. So, Mr. Speaker, with those comments I'll now adjourn debate. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Leader of the Opposition has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 46, *The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2012*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — That's carried.

[15:15]

Bill No. 47 — *The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Amendment Act, 2012*

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of Bill 47, *An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Act, 2005 and to make consequential amendments to other Acts*.

Mr. Speaker, you know that Saskatchewan's economy is strong. Our population is at a record level and is growing. People are moving back to our province and building their careers and lives here. We need water to support this growing population, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We need water to ensure a high quality of life. We need water to ensure a healthy environment, and we need water for continuing economic growth.

On October 16th, the Premier spoke about *The Saskatchewan Plan for Growth*, and indeed he spoke about the importance of water. *The Saskatchewan Plan for Growth* identifies the 25-year Saskatchewan water security plan and the creation of the Water Security Agency. It's an important step to ensure that Saskatchewan manages its water supply to support growth while protecting and enhancing water quality in its lakes and rivers, and responding effectively to floods and droughts.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish to mention briefly the concept of the Water Security Agency. This concept has been developed among the world's water experts for the last 10 years. Water

security refers to ensuring sustainable water supplies to support our society's needs. Those include water for drinking but also for irrigation, for industry and energy production, for fisheries, and other water services. Mr. Speaker, if I may quote two Canadians well-known for their excellent work on water, Mr. Thomas Axworthy and Mr. Bob Sandford, and I quote, "Water security is the foundation for food and energy security and for overall long-term social and economic development."

The term water security captures exactly what we wish to achieve in our province to support a high quality of life and continued growth. The Act, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is very simple. It continues the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority as the Water Security Agency and updates other pieces of legislation to ensure consistency in referring to the Water Security Agency. It also changes the name of the Act to *The Water Security Agency Act*.

This is however a very important piece of legislation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in advancing our work to ensure that water supports economic growth. It supports our quality of life, and it supports our environmental well-being. I am confident, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that everyone in this Chamber agrees on the overwhelming importance of protecting and managing our very valuable water supply.

Mr. Speaker, creating the Water Security Agency is a major step to ensure management of our water and to implement the Saskatchewan plan for growth. As the board of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, SARM, advised us during our consultations on the 25-year water security plan, and I quote, "Water is central to expansion of economic development in our province."

The Water Security Agency is mandated to ensure protection of water quality, maintenance of aquatic habitats, and sustainable water supplies. The Water Security Agency brings together for the first time all of government's core water management responsibilities and technical expertise to ensure a comprehensive and integrated approach to water management. This has been accomplished by bringing together staff and programs from the Ministry of Environment, from the Ministry of Agriculture, from the Ministry of Health, along with all of the responsibilities and staff from the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority.

Mr. Speaker, the Water Security Agency will provide a stronger focus on water issues. This new agency will simplify the water-related regulatory processes and establish a one-window approach for many water functions.

The Water Security Agency will have regulatory authority over water supply including water allocations, water quality, municipal drinking water, and waste water systems, and similar large private systems, work such as dams and channels, drainage, protection of aquatic habitat as well.

The Water Security Agency will provide the strong leadership needed to ensure the implementation of the 25-year Saskatchewan water security plan. The creation of the Water Security Agency strengthens drinking water protection by bringing responsibility for source-to-tap protection of drinking water into one agency as recommended, Mr. Deputy Speaker —

this is a very important point — as recommended by Justice Laing back in 2002.

The Water Security Agency, like the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority, will be headquartered in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, Canada. Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, the Water Security Agency will lead implementation of the 25-year Saskatchewan water security plan. The 25-year water security plan which we developed following extensive — and I want to make this point, Mr. Deputy Speaker — extensive consultations is a major step towards addressing the challenges of growth. This plan will ensure a sustainable water supply to support our growth, to support a healthy environment, and to support our high quality of life in our province.

The plan, Mr. Deputy Speaker, sets out seven principles which will guide our actions. A long-term perspective, Mr. Speaker. On this side of the House, we don't shy away from setting goals and having a long-term perspective.

Mr. Speaker, number two, water for future generations. We want to, we welcome people into our province in record numbers, Mr. Speaker. And those future generations will indeed be larger and larger if this economic growth continues.

Number three, Mr. Deputy Speaker, an integrated approach to management, Mr. Speaker, an integration that's important within a coordinated and well-run government.

Partnerships and participation, Mr. Speaker, that's an area of importance as well. Shared responsibility, the value of water and, Mr. Speaker, continuous improvement.

The plan provides guidance to all of government on work related to water. That work will be directed to achieving these seven goals: sustainable supplies, safe drinking water, protection of water resources, safe dams, flood and drought damage reduction, adequate data information and knowledge, and effective governance and engagement, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I had the pleasure of releasing the 25-year Saskatchewan water security plan to a crowd of interested people on the banks of the South Saskatchewan River on October 15th. Now that was only three weeks ago, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but the weather was quite different than what we see out there today. The sun was shining. It was indeed a beautiful day. I said that the only thing that could make it more perfect is if we saw my opposition critic come to the announcement, and lo and behold, a few minutes later the opposition critic showed up. So it was indeed, it was indeed a perfect day, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to speak to many people after the announcement. All of them, Mr. Speaker, all of them were very positive about the 25-year water security plan and the creation of the Water Security Agency. Many of them had participated in the consultations as we developed the plan. Mr. Speaker, all agree that water is one of our most important resources and requires strength in management and attention. Creation of the Water Security Agency is how we are creating that stronger focus within the Government of Saskatchewan.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I wish to repeat the words of former Prime Minister Jean Chrétien who, when speaking about water

very recently said, “This necessitates the promotion of an ethic of water usage and a realization that water is simply too valuable not to manage appropriately.”

Mr. Speaker, with that I move second reading of the Bill No. 47, *An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Act, 2005 and to make consequential amendments to other Acts*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of the Environment has moved second reading of Bill No. 47, *The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Amendment Act, 2012* be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just want to point out that I’m very pleased to be able to stand here and talk about this particular bill, Bill 47. And at the outset, we were sitting there chatting with a few of our colleagues. I just want to say to the minister that we’re taking a very, very high and certainly an extreme look at what this Act does in terms of bringing forward and collaborating and organizing all the different departments out there that he spoke about, and having them come under one particular roof to look at the importance of water quality, the importance of water supply, and the importance of water to not just agriculture, but to business and to people in general.

And, Mr. Speaker, I did attend the minister’s statement and comment and certainly listened to his presentation on the riverbanks of the beautiful city of Saskatoon. And the one thing I’ll give the minister, certainly we all do give this particular individual an A triple plus because when we do that, we give him that because he’s very, very, he’s very gracious, and he’s very welcoming to opposition MLAs that attend his functions, various functions. And we certainly do give him credit for recognizing the opposition MLAs. And that’s something that we would encourage him to do. And I thank him for that, as he did at this function.

But, Mr. Speaker, it’s a big fat F on the future when he talks about watershed protection because there’s so many different places that he could have went. And he should have spoke about it on the riverbanks, and he certainly didn’t, Mr. Speaker.

What we see this, what we see this as, primarily this particular Act, is we all appreciate the importance of water. Everybody in this Assembly and everybody in the opposition, everybody in this world appreciates the value of water. No party and no person is immune to the fear that we won’t have enough safe water. And the quality of water is always a constant, constant concern to many people across political parties and across countries and throughout the entire world, Mr. Speaker.

But what happens when we attended the beautiful ceremony — and we had a gracious host, no question about that — but I really, really wanted to see if there was any kind of earth-shattering, just earth-jarring announcements that, you know, that the minister would make. And, Mr. Speaker, I sat there and I listened to his presentation, and there was nothing of significance to note in terms of what the minister has planned under this particular bill.

Now let me explain what do I mean by that, Mr. Speaker. They amalgamated three different departments, as the minister has indicated. And the first insight and the first thing that I thought was, I wonder if they’re using this to cut programs, cut staff, and cut services, Mr. Speaker. That was the instinct reaction that I had.

Now today I’m going to obviously put forward a question about the impacts of job losses as a result of amalgamating all three of these different departments, Mr. Speaker, and that’s what the important lesson that I’ve learned when it comes to the Sask Party. They have a lean program. They have a lean program that you want to get rid of as many government employees as possible. Now is this, is this another exercise in doing so? Is this another exercise in reducing the amount of jobs from the Moose Jaw area? And, Mr. Speaker, is this another attack on the working men and women under the guise of protection of water? Now that’s what the important thing, Mr. Speaker, is that we have to make sure that this is not the net effect.

[15:30]

But unfortunately the NDP don’t buy that at all. We know that some of the amalgamating efforts, amalgamation efforts by the Sask Party, all that means is job loss for most of the people that served this province for many, many years, people that have been involved with the Watershed Authority for many, many years, people based in Moose Jaw, Mr. Speaker, and other parts of the province. Now I’m pleased to hear that Moose Jaw is again going to be the headquarters for the Watershed Authority, and that’s really important.

We see that with the Valley View Centre’s a good example of how they’ve shut down that centre with no plan in place to provide services. You hear very, very . . . no noise from the Moose Jaw MLAs. It’s been very quiet on that front.

On the Watershed Authority, if they’ve any job losses, you don’t hear a peep from those backbenchers, Mr. Speaker. So we’ve got to do the job as opposition to make sure that we defend and protect Moose Jaw on not only job losses but to work with the people of Moose Jaw to make sure that there is no further damage or harm done to the city of Moose Jaw.

And that’s why we looked at the Watershed Authority and what’s being proposed in this bill to make sure that it’s not just about their eloquent words on water, the importance of water, because we all agree the importance of water is there. We’re just saying, don’t use your political plans under the guise of protecting water to lay off people and forget about the people of Moose Jaw, Mr. Speaker. And that’s what I’m afraid might be happening under the amalgamation that the minister explained under this particular bill, Bill 47.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what’s important is that there is something that we always have to look at. Under these bills, amalgamation, as the minister spoke about in terms of the water quality, the engineering, and so on and so forth . . . We have called for a comprehensive and dynamic study of how water is needed for the people of Saskatchewan, not just in agriculture and the economy, Mr. Speaker, but to ensure safe water quality for years to come.

Now this minister talks about 25 years and they talk about amalgamation of some of these units and some of these different departments. And we right away instinctively say, oh job losses for a lot of people. But when you look at the actual content of the bill, what is the plan? What is the structure? What is the goals? What are your magnificent plans that you have for water, Mr. Speaker?

And we look, Mr. Speaker, at the document, the presentation, the minister's comments today, and basically we see nothing, absolutely nothing that would be of significance to the people of Saskatchewan. Nothing to address climate change which has a direct effect and an impact on our water supply, Mr. Speaker. Nothing about protecting the water quality that we enjoy now. We see a lot of problems with people flooding in certain areas of the province — nothing to address that, Mr. Speaker.

We have nothing to talk about the infrastructure problem that many of the cities have, like Prince Albert as an example. Moose Jaw has them as well. You hear silence again from those members. So, Mr. Speaker, we sat there, and we really, really wanted to hear some significant, solid, forward-thinking, aggressive, and dynamic announcements on water quality, Mr. Speaker. And not a word. Nothing on water supply. Nothing on the three provinces coming forward with a new resolution. Nothing on making sure that we're able to keep some of the resources over a longer term so we're able to have the steady supply of water for a variety of needs. Nothing on that front, Mr. Speaker, absolutely nothing.

Now we have been calling for a dynamic water strategy on this side of the Assembly. We had been asking for that, Mr. Speaker. We have three provinces that make a deal here. We have Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan. We all share water and the supply of water. And we all are concerned about how we make sure that the water supply is steady to our province. And how do we effect that? How do we make . . . How do we build on that partnership, Mr. Speaker? And not a word from the minister on that particular partnership. Nothing on the changing global challenges that we have when it comes to our climate, Mr. Speaker. Nothing on that, Mr. Speaker, at all.

And we talk about things like the effects of, I'll give you a good example, of the oil sands in Alberta. You know, what effect does the pollution of the Fort Mac [Fort McMurray] oil sands have on northwestern Saskatchewan? That includes Meadow Lake. That includes Saskatoon eventually. That all the pollution from that activity in northern Alberta is having an effect on our northern lakes, rivers, and streams, Mr. Speaker, that's having an effect. Seventy per cent of that pollution is coming to northwestern Saskatchewan. And did the minister talk about that at the press conference, Mr. Speaker, under this bill? Absolutely not. Absolutely not.

And so the point I'm trying to make today, that if you want to talk about the importance of water, the importance of water to the people of Saskatchewan, at least make the water plan dynamic. At least make the water plan exciting. At least make the water plan visionary, and at least make the water plan global to Saskatchewan. Don't just talk about one-offs and putting one department under another department.

And, Mr. Speaker, it simply doesn't fly with the people of

Saskatchewan where you're saying, we have a new plan in water management, and everybody gets up and listens and says, what is it? We're going to amalgamate three different departments together. And these three departments, we're going to maybe save about eight jobs, but we're going to keep it in Moose Jaw. And, Mr. Speaker, my point being that the people of Saskatchewan expected better on our water quality and protection of our water.

Now had the minister even alluded to the challenge that the Fort McMurray oil sands activity has on northwestern lakes and streams and rivers and the forest, I would have been pleased with that, Mr. Speaker. I would have been pleased with that because they would have addressed that. Some people say there's a billion dollar, a \$4 billion cleanup fund sitting in northern Alberta waiting for the Saskatchewan government to force the Alberta government to start doing cleanups on or start looking at the problem that they are creating when they're polluting our northwestern lands and lakes. The minister knows that. The minister knows that. And no reference to that, Mr. Speaker.

No reference to a new dam site, a dam system where northern Saskatchewan, southern Saskatchewan . . . that we're able to have built a series of dams to make sure that we're able to retain water for future generations. Nothing was mentioned of that, Mr. Speaker.

A process where we're going to be . . . Again we're going to address the greenhouse gas challenge that Saskatchewan poses not just to our own environment but to the rest of the world, that we have to address that as well. Nothing on that front, Mr. Speaker. And you look at all these issues, the big ticket items that should've been addressed in this water strategy that the minister spoke about were completely ignored, were completely ignored.

So my only point is that, why didn't they take the opportunity, that opportunity on that riverbank, to talk about the hard-hitting issues that are impacting the quality of our water in northern Saskatchewan and the province as a whole? Why doesn't he talk about a comprehensive agreement with our three Prairie provinces to make sure that we have a good understanding of how much water we're able to share and when we're able to share it? Why didn't we talk about a structure, a dam structure, a reservoir structure we're able to keep some of the water for years to come? Why couldn't we talk about a way in which we could address flooding in one area and address drought in the other area to complement those two problems? None of those major, main ticket items were spoken about, Mr. Speaker.

Instead, Mr. Speaker, he spoke about amalgamating three different departments. And that's the point that I think is really important on some of these bills is that people in Saskatchewan ought to know that, when it comes to bills of this sort, that you got to really understand the intent of the bill, what the impact of the bill is, and really what's the plan of the Sask Party in the background to make sure that the intent that they're speaking about — you know, these nice little words they use — is being followed.

Now, Mr. Speaker, on Bill 47 they never even mention the fact that . . . If the minister would have stood up on the banks of the

river that day and say, from this day forward, no fresh water from Saskatchewan will ever be sold out of our border, Mr. Speaker; that we're not going to have some company come here and start piping water out of our communities; we're not going to sell water, start . . . Piping water to the States is ending. He didn't say any of that, Mr. Speaker, when I sat there, and the people were expecting some really dynamic announcements on never, ever piping fresh water to the States. He could have said that easy, Mr. Speaker.

He could have spoke about the three provinces, the water agreement. He could have spoke about how they're able to do a reservoir system, of how we can change our consumption of water, how we're going to balance all of the needs of the fresh water demands for our province, whether it's agriculture or industry or communities. He could have spoke about an infrastructure program to really provide safe and potable water to the people of Saskatchewan. He could have spoke about Prince Albert's challenges in terms of the infrastructure when he talks about the water supply. All these issues, Mr. Speaker, as I stood there and listened to the presentation, not one was mentioned, not once.

So my point is, if you're going to have an announcement on the beautiful banks of the South Saskatchewan River in the beautiful city of Saskatoon, you know, you've got a bunch of people with you, that was the opportunity, Mr. Speaker. That was the prime opportunity. And I went to that function, Mr. Speaker, to see if some of those issues were going to be spoken about, to see if the minister would get up, and he would get up and he would say, I'm glad to be here today to announce this. In the intent of this bill, we're here to put *The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Act* . . . We're now going to create a Water Security Agency.

Now what happens if you started a Water Security Agency? If I were him, I'd say it's a five-fold process. One, we're going to make sure that the Fort McMurray tar sands, oil sands, stop polluting northwestern Saskatchewan lakes and rivers because that's a good supply of fresh water and fresh lakes. We're going to stop, Mr. Speaker, stop the fighting between the three provinces and come up with a really good deal to ensure the continued supply, the continued supply of fresh water from the mountains so that all of us can enjoy the continued and safe supply of our water.

Mr. Speaker, he could have spoken about the need to change how people are using our water to make sure they use the water wisely. And he could have spoke about a wide myriad of all this great opportunity that he had as a minister. Instead, Mr. Speaker, he was resigned and constrained I believe by his right-wing friends to simply say, we're going to amalgamate. We're going to amalgamate three departments, and we're going to rename it the watershed or Water Security Agency, Mr. Speaker.

So while he was a very gracious host, Mr. Speaker — I'll give him that, a very gracious host, always has been the nicest and I suspect he always will be — but in terms of visionary, hard-hitting, a solid action plan on water, Mr. Speaker, I gave him a big, fat F, Mr. Speaker. The member from Kindersley used to use that phrase: a big, fat F. But that's what I'm giving this particular minister in terms of vision for a water protection

agency, Mr. Speaker, because none of the hard issues were ever, ever discussed, nor were any of the issues that needed to be addressed even mentioned in some of the discussion.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm asking the Minister of the Environment today, the same minister today, that under his water protection Act, is he compelled today to do a baseline study on the effects of the Fort Mac oil sands activity on the northwestern lakes, Mr. Speaker, to protect the water that he's described here? Is he prepared to do a baseline study? Because every day and every month that you don't do that baseline study to determine the effects — the net effects on the lakes and the rivers and the streams — then more and more pollution will accumulate. And by the time you get to figure out what the pollution is, it'll be too late to force Alberta to remediate the environmental destruction that is occurring on our lakes and rivers and streams because this minister failed to act.

He has an excellent opportunity, Mr. Speaker, today. An excellent opportunity through this particular bill to address that. So one after another after another opportunity to address the big, major issues under this particular Act, Mr. Speaker, there was nothing. There was nothing whatsoever.

So, Mr. Speaker, that's the point that I think is really important. We look at the Saskatchewan Party. I don't hear a peep from them when they talk about the job loss in Moose Jaw because that's what their net effect is, Mr. Speaker. I don't hear a peep from them that says, no we'll never have a pipeline of water going to the States. We won't be piping water out of our province, Mr. Speaker.

I don't hear a peep from them to protect the integrity of our ecosystem, the water in the lakes and the streams from the Fort McMurray oil sands activity where 70 per cent of their pollution comes in our lakes and rivers. Not a peep from them, despite them having money in an environmental front. Not a peep from them, Mr. Speaker.

Nothing to talk about the incredible drought that happens in certain areas of our province versus the flooding that happens in other areas. Nothing on that, Mr. Speaker. Nothing on the science that has proven time and time again that global warming is occurring. We need to address that. We need to change our habits. Nothing of that sort ever came forward in some of the activity and some of the points that the minister raised in relation to this Act, Mr. Speaker.

[15:45]

So today I'm telling . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And there's the former minister from Martensville. She was pretty quiet on these files. She didn't move any of those files forward whatsoever, Mr. Speaker. Not one inch did she move those files, Mr. Speaker. You know, so we listen to her rant from her seat. And, Mr. Speaker, she was . . . This minister's a bit better than her. There's no question in my mind that he's a bit more gracious and that he understand the issues. But she wouldn't do anything, anything to move the environmental file.

And again as far as we're concerned for her grading, if there ever was a grading, she'd get an F minus minus if that's possible, Mr. Speaker, on championing the environmental rights

when she was the minister of the Environment, Mr. Speaker, because she never once stood up for the things that she was in charge of and that she was supposed to defend. She never once stood up and done the job that it took to make sure that she fulfilled her obligations as minister of the Environment. She skirted the issues. She ignored the environment. And, Mr. Speaker, we were quite pleased when she got transferred from that particular file because we were hoping that the next person would at least listen to the people and begin to address these issues instead of meeting with this stone cold silence when people come forward with some of these pressing and concerning issues.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot more we want to say on Bill 47. A lot more. I know my colleagues will have some issues they want to raise as well. Everywhere you go, whether it's the forestry sector, whether it's the loggers or the fishermen, water is a really important resource. The minister had an excellent opportunity to address the big global issues. And, Mr. Speaker, this Bill 47, all he highlighted was the fact that they're amalgamating three departments, and in those amalgamations there will be job loss. And the members from Moose Jaw are quiet once again. You don't hear a peep from them. Don't even mention the Valley View; they'll break out in a really cold sweat.

So, Mr. Speaker, that's the kind of leadership that this minister is providing on this particular file and the kind of non-action of some of the members behind him that simply need to speak up a bit more, need to speak up. And instead of hearing quotes from the former prime minister, perhaps we need action on this file. And I think, Mr. Speaker, actions will speak a lot better than quotes, Mr. Speaker, which is really important and a message that I want to share with the minister.

So to the people that are out there concerned about water, and they look at this particular Act . . . And I go back to the title of the Act, Water Security Agency. Water Security Agency, Mr. Speaker. Those three words are really, really important to the people of Saskatchewan. And when they say, well that sounds really interesting, this Water Security Agency. What does that mean? Are we going to finally address some of these big-ticket items? Well, no. No. What they're saying with this Water Security Agency, they're going to amalgamate three departments, but we're not sure of the job losses. We're not sure of the effect. That's the language we're hearing from the minister.

So, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I want to make sure the people of Saskatchewan know that on the NDP side of the Assembly, we take water security very, very seriously. We want to make sure that there's no export of raw water or fresh water out of our province, that even through NAFTA [North American Free Trade Agreement], the free trade agreement, that water is not considered a good, Mr. Speaker, that it's considered a resource that Saskatchewan and Canada need to protect.

And there are a lot of people in their camp, Mr. Speaker, that would rather have water considered a good under NAFTA so they can export water to the States, Mr. Speaker, thereby putting all our ecosystems at risk. And yet when we talk about these issues, Mr. Speaker, very quiet from the other side, very quiet. I think they're taking their silence lessons from the

members from Moose Jaw, you know, because they do it so well.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think what's really important, what's really important is that you have to make sure people know water security is the main, main problem, is the main issue in the minds of people of Saskatchewan. And we have to do much more, much more than simply amalgamate three departments if we're serious about protecting our water and if we're serious about making sure that we're putting a line in the sand, whether it's Alberta tar sands that are destroying our lands or whether it's people from NAFTA that want to take all our fresh water to the States. Mr. Speaker, we've got to say no. Saskatchewan is not into that.

And again I go back to my earlier point: not one mention of those main big-ticket issues at this announcement. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure people there expected a lot more. They expected a lot more and they got the, well, we're amalgamating three departments. So we're sitting there saying, well is there more to this? Well we're going to have it in Moose Jaw, he said. We're going to keep the office there. I said, okay, that's not bad. And then all of a sudden the media pulled him off to the side, and we had a lot more questions.

So, Mr. Speaker, today I'm challenging the Minister of the Environment, who is proposing this bill, to tell him to get an action file going on the impacts of the Fort McMurray oil sand activity on northwestern Saskatchewan's lakes, rivers, and streams. Because 70 per cent of that activity, the pollution that is associated with that activity is falling on northern Saskatchewan lakes, rivers, and streams. And they've got money to mediate some of those impacts, Mr. Speaker.

I want to see if this minister's willing to stand up and call his Alberta counterpart and tell him to stop polluting our land. And if you're going to pollute our land, we're going to make sure you give money to it so we can fix up and fix up these problems that you're creating. Mr. Speaker, I think it's time that minister stands up, and then we can have some . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . The former minister's talking again. But you know, she wouldn't say a word because she's conservative, Mr. Speaker. And they're conservative over there, and Ottawa probably told her, don't be fighting your conservative friends. You know, so she was quite quiet on that front.

So this new minister, I'm hoping, I'm hoping that he has the courage. I wish him the courage to stand up and say, we now want to see an action plan on the impacts of Fort McMurray tar sands on northern Saskatchewan lakes, rivers, and streams because 70 per cent of the pollution of that activity is falling on northern Saskatchewan lakes. And, Mr. Speaker, that would be a good first step, in terms of this bill, when I ask him to give us some global answers, to give us some global decisions, to give us some global leadership on some of the water stewardship efforts that he should be undertaking as a minister, Mr. Speaker.

And the final note I would point out, Mr. Speaker, I had a really good friend and this guy used to work for Saskatchewan Environment. His name was Henry La Plante. And Henry, God rest his soul, he worked in the fire tower for years. And Henry would tell me he would get up in the morning. He'd go to work and he'd climb up the tower, the fire tower where he stayed a

long time. And every morning he would clean out the windows in the fire tower. And he'd tell me this. He said, every time I do this with my finger, it'd be black, slimy stuff on the windows. What is that, he asked me one day. And I said, I don't have no idea what that is. He said, that's pollution coming from Fort Mac. And he said, and nobody's talking about those things.

Now Henry, rest his soul, was going to be arguing about those things. And he talked about these issues time and time again, Mr. Speaker. This province owes Henry La Plante a lot of thanks because he brought this issue forward. He, I think as a result of some of his workplace issues, that he became ill. He became ill. And there's a lot of problems with Fort McMurray's pollution coming our way. Seventy per cent of all the activity attached to the oil sands is being dumped on northwestern Saskatchewan as we speak. And this minister talks about amalgamation as his answer to a water stewardship model, Mr. Speaker.

So I'm asking the minister to please take the initiative. And don't tell me you're going to monitor three or four lakes over a period of 10 years because that's just insulting, Mr. Speaker. I'm asking this minister today, if you're serious about your role and you're serious about your Watershed Authority Act that you're proposing today, then the first step you ought to do is to make sure that if Alberta's polluting Saskatchewan's lakes, rivers, and streams in northwestern Saskatchewan, then they ought to stop. And if they don't stop, they ought to pay to fix up the damage and the mess that they've created on our northern lakes, rivers, and streams. I'm asking the minister today if he would do that, Mr. Speaker. He has to do it, because it's impacting what I think is his primary obligation as a minister, impacting the quality of water in our lakes, rivers, and streams that he's described in this bill as being really important to the people of Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, before I take my seat I want to challenge the minister to that point today. I want to thank Henry La Plante for his years of service and his years of fighting for the people of Saskatchewan and his years of working for Saskatchewan Environment. And really I think, quite frankly, the amount of time that he reached out to young people to tell them, these are some of the issues you have to watch out . . . You have to be able to live off the land. You've got to be able to respect your neighbour. You've got to be able to have fun in life. He'd done all these wonderful things, Henry did. And he's the one that really told me when I was a lot younger that there's a lot of negative impact, there is, as a result of some of the oil sands activity on our lands. And we need to start speaking up about that. We need to start speaking up, and we need to start speaking out, is what he said, Mr. Speaker.

Now what I'll point out again is that I would ask the minister, I would ask the minister to please take it upon himself under the new title that he's created under this Act, to start monitoring what Alberta is doing to our northern rivers, lakes, and streams, Mr. Speaker. What are they doing? And we need to find out. And, Mr. Speaker, nobody's paying attention to that file. I heard the Premier make a small reference about monitoring five lakes. Mr. Speaker, it's a lot bigger than that.

And when that effect starts happening, when that effect starts to happen, Mr. Speaker, when it starts impacting Meadow Lake, it

starts impacting P.A. [Prince Albert], it starts impacting Saskatoon, then this plume of pollution is going to start having a negative effect on many people's health, not just northwestern Saskatchewan. So it's a problem in northwestern Saskatchewan with the ability and the threat to grow even wider in impacting more and more people, more and more lakes and rivers, Mr. Speaker. And that's one of the reasons why I was severely disappointed, seriously disappointed when I attended a function and all I heard was the primary cornerstone of the speech was amalgamating three different departments to save on jobs.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have a lot more to say about this particular bill, and I think we're going to take the time to ask people out there to begin, to begin to pay attention to what this government is doing or not doing, of how they like to speak about water security and water stewardship when they in fact are providing zero leadership on that front. Zero leadership on that particular front, Mr. Speaker. So I would ask them, if you're going to make all these announcements on a beautiful bank in a beautiful city, at least have the courtesy to bring some global solution to the challenges we have when it comes to water security and water stewardship. Not just talking about amalgamation of three different departments, Mr. Speaker.

So the points I'm making I've made on a number of occasions. I'll continue making those points, and I would ask all my member colleagues to take the time to look through the bill and see if there's anything earth-shattering in this bill that really blows their minds. And, Mr. Speaker, from what we've heard and seen of this particular government, of past ministers, and certainly the past ministers and the current minister, is that I give him a big fat F, as the member from Kindersley used to say, a big fat F on dealing with the global issues that threaten and challenge Saskatchewan's water supply and security, Mr. Speaker. So on that note I will move that we adjourn debate on Bill 47.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 47, *The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Amendment Act, 2012*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — That's carried.

Bill No. 48 — *The Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases Amendment Act, 2012*

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to, after my brief remarks I would like to move second reading of the amendment to *The Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases Act*, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But before I begin talking about Bill 48, I can't help but respond to my learned friend opposite there. He has put forward a challenge and, ladies and gentlemen, when you receive a challenge on the floor of the legislature from the opposition, you want to take that challenge. You want to meet that

challenge and you want to go for it. Mr. Speaker, I would like nothing more than to accept that challenge, but I can't. I can't announce tomorrow that we're going to be doing something, Mr. Speaker, that was already announced two years ago by the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy, Mr. Speaker. I can't reannounce, I can't with good conscience reannounce something that was the work that was begun by the member from Martensville, the work that was announced by the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy, Mr. Speaker. I know members opposite reannounce hospitals and things like that, but we can't, we can't do that, Mr. Speaker.

[16:00]

Well, Mr. Speaker, with that interesting take from the member opposite on the bill, I just, I would like to go on and on, but he has given us an opportunity to have things that we can talk about later on, Mr. Speaker.

Now to the next bill, the bill in front of us today, *The Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases Act*. The Act was passed in May of 2010. The amendment to the Act is required to allow the province to negotiate a Canada-Saskatchewan equivalency agreement on the federal coal-fired electricity regulations which were gazetted in the federal House of Commons in September 2012, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The purpose of the equivalency agreement is to avoid regulatory duplication by enabling the federal and provincial government to work together to achieve priority environmental goals and by removing unnecessary regulatory burdens on businesses in terms of time, costs, and resources.

The federal and provincial regulations do not need to be identical but they need to serve the same purpose with the same outcomes. The legislative amendment advances Saskatchewan's growth plan by balancing environmental and economic factors and allowing greenhouse gas emission reductions in the electricity sector to be managed under provincial legislation rather than federal legislation, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The amendment mirrors the key requirement of the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act, 1999* which gives any citizen the right to request the Minister of Environment to undertake an investigation of an alleged offence under *The Management and Reduction of Greenhouses Gases Act* and to be kept informed of the progress of the investigation.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, these provisions for a citizen's inquiry do not currently exist in *The Management and Reduction of Greenhouses Gases Act*. The amendment will comply with the requirements to negotiate an equivalency agreement and make provincial legislation and regulations legally enforceable.

The other key requirement for an equivalency agreement is that provincial regulations for coal-fired electricity must achieve equal or better environmental outcomes, Mr. Deputy Speaker — equal or better. It's an important term and I hope everyone in the House is listening very closely. The environmental outcomes of the federal coal-fired electricity regulatory framework will indeed undertake, will achieve equal or better

environmental outcomes.

Under provincial regulations, greenhouse gas emissions in Saskatchewan will be reduced by 20 per cent by 2020 from 2006 levels, which is more stringent than the emission reductions required under the federal coal-fired electricity regulations. With this legislation, regulated emitters will have to report and reduce their emissions to meet provincial targets. This will eventually impact other sectors — oil and gas, potash, nitrogen fertilizers — where federal standards are being established and equivalency agreements will be pursued.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we know, Saskatchewan is leading the way when it comes to carbon capture and storage, CCS technologies. Having an equivalency agreement in place is vital to provide regulatory flexibility and certainly so that SaskPower can meet the federal GHG [greenhouse gas] performance standard, enabling the corporation to undertake the important carbon capture and storage development.

The government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is constructing the Boundary Dam capture and sequestration project, the largest infrastructure project in SaskPower's history, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This project will produce 100 megawatts of clean baseload electricity, reduce greenhouse emissions by capturing and sequestering 1 million tonnes of carbon dioxide per year and help increase oil production through EOR, enhanced oil recovery.

Extensive consultation has been undertaken and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I mean extensive consultation, I mean extensive. Some 1,200 submissions from across the province from interested groups, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have all contributed, and that is something that we are certainly very happy indeed that they have. And, Mr. Speaker, stakeholders at various stages of the legislation development have given us their thoughts and they made this a better piece of legislation.

During this time, we heard that industry strongly prefers provincial regulation over federal regulation. We are a government that is close to the people. We are close to the industry that is helping our province grow. As we say on this side, they are leading the way, and the government is moving out of the way to ensure that they do that.

We have continued to work closely with the federal government as evidenced in the past, in June, when Minister Peter Kent, excellent federal minister, a federal Conservative minister, in my opinion who's doing an excellent job . . . I have to say that because I quoted a couple of Liberals in the last time. Now I've got to make sure that I give credit where credit is due, and Mr. Peter Kent is indeed an excellent, excellent minister. I confirmed our intention to develop an equivalency agreement on coal-fired electricity emissions.

Mr. Speaker, the proposed amendment demonstrates our government's commitment to sustain economic growth, address the challenges that come with that growth and, Mr. Speaker, all towards one goal of building a better quality of life for Saskatchewan people in an environmentally sustainable way.

Mr. Speaker, I now move second reading of the amendment to *The Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases Act*.

Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — The Minister of the Environment has moved second reading of Bill No. 48, *The Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases Amendment Act, 2012*. Is it the pleasure . . . I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am also very pleased to stand up today to offer our initial comments about the proposed Act, Bill No. 48, *The Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases Amendment Act, 2012*.

And, Mr. Speaker, there's a great amount of interest of people in the province, and of course throughout the world, on trying to figure out exactly the challenge we all have with greenhouse gas and certainly the emissions and how we're trying to address that to reduce all the greenhouse gas that is generated all throughout not just Saskatchewan, of course, but throughout the world.

Now, Mr. Speaker, a lot of people in the province of Saskatchewan know that a lot of our power is generated through hydro. It's generated through natural gas. It's generated through coal-fired plants as well. And I think the people of Saskatchewan appreciate the fact that there has to be some effort and has to be some notice of the fact that in the coal-fired plants that we have to do something to mitigate the enormous challenge that we pose to our environment and certainly the rest of the Western Canada environment as well. So they look at leadership from any government, you know, to do so. And we hear some of the efforts around clean coal technology, the fact that there is some major effort being undertaken to reduce the amount of greenhouse gas that we're emitting. And that's certainly a positive step forward — nobody's arguing about that — and we applaud it on all fronts, Mr. Speaker.

I think at the flip side, we encourage people to look at cogeneration. We encourage people to look at conservation. These are some of the efforts that people could undertake in the wide variety of opportunity to address greenhouse gas emissions and to also reduce the problem.

So, Mr. Speaker, I look at this bill. There is a lot of different issues that are at play here. And we're trying to find out through a process of public consultation exactly what the targets are for the greenhouse gas emissions that the government is speaking about. And there is a lot of interest as to how they're coordinating their efforts with that of the federal government because everybody knows that you look at the federal government right now, one of their cornerstones is certainly not environmental protection, Mr. Speaker. And we look at greenhouse gas, and I know that there's a lot of people within the federal circles that know that the Conservatives in Ottawa don't make an extra effort to have the environmental protection badge worn on their chest, Mr. Speaker, because they don't provide any leadership and they don't provide any direction, nor do they provide the necessary supports to the provinces that may want to undertake that kind of effort.

So obviously the minister is certainly pleased with his federal counterpart. And I want to ask the minister later on, as we have opportunities for questions or for committee work, exactly how his admiration for a federal environmental minister is going to

translate into real programs to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions here in the province of Saskatchewan. What exact programs, what exact money is Peter Kent going to give our minister to do some of this work? And I can almost guarantee you, Mr. Speaker, again you'll have a big, fat zero dollars attached to any kind of commitment from the federal government to deal with greenhouse gas emissions, Mr. Speaker.

We had an excellent opportunity several years ago to talk about how we can integrate renewable energies into providing some of the power needs of the people of Saskatchewan to actually reduce some of the, you know, the greenhouse gas emissions. And that's my point under this particular bill is that you need to have actions attached to these bills. You need to have federal coordination. You need to have all these different activities, and quite frankly, an array of programs that would really help you achieve some of the objectives that you identified in your bill.

But alas, Mr. Speaker, there's nothing of that sort in this particular bill. And people, certainly on our side of the Assembly, are quite discouraged that once again the minister has missed the opportunity, as the previous ministers have missed the opportunity, to really bring forward some solid, hard-hitting action items to deal with the greenhouse gas emission problems that not just Saskatchewan but the world faces when we talk about the challenge to our environment and climate change, Mr. Speaker.

I think the minister has alluded to and may have agreed that climate change is a problem. And many times as people talk about the climate change, one of the words I hate to hear is when people use the phrase that we're adapting to climate change. And to me when they use the word adapting, does that mean that we are consigned or resigned to admit that we're not going to be able to change some of the things that man has caused to our natural environment, that we can't undo the damage that we've done? It's got to that point, and people are saying that we cannot undo the damage so we have to adapt to the climate change. It's almost admitting defeat, Mr. Speaker, because it's something that a lot of people in the environmental community don't want to do, but when they hear that kind of terminology they certainly become discouraged.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out again to the minister that I will take a great amount of interest in how he proposes to do the objectives that he's outlined in his bill. I want to be able to tell people that are out there that may be listening that we would encourage you to participate, either through email or certainly by telephone or by faxes, to send stuff to us. And we can certainly ask them to come to the Assembly and pay a lot of interest, pay a lot of interest to exactly what this minister's doing and what kind of coordination and corresponding support dollars that he's getting from his federal counterpart to really address the greenhouse gas emissions that the people of Saskatchewan grapple with and that we certainly have to address as time moves on.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, we had a chance to tour the province under the green energies commission. And we spoke about just a ton of examples of how people can really provide solutions to meeting some of our growing energy demands and how we could address greenhouse gas emissions.

There was all kinds of great information, Mr. Speaker.

And I just want to point out that it was a very, very worthwhile trip that I undertook when I went on a number of these public forums. And you sat there and you listened to what people had to say, everything from net metering to better and more insulation in homes to natural gas opportunities to wind power to solar power through cogeneration. Like there's all kinds of these concepts, all these things were being spoken about, Mr. Speaker. And I took notes and I listened intently to some of the presentations. And man, we've got some gifted people out there that have some tremendous ideas. And they certainly have a lot of intelligence, and basically they know what they're talking about.

So my argument is, are they engaged with this whole greenhouse gas point that the minister is trying to raise under Bill 48? Are they going to be involved with the reduction of greenhouse gas? And if so again the point goes, where are the resources to ensure that we exhaust all the avenues to reduce the greenhouse emissions through targeted dollars and programs to each of these areas that provided information to us during the tour and during those hearings? And, Mr. Speaker, I once again am disappointed that they don't see any linkage to dollars or programs under this particular bill. And that's kind of where you really want to be able to see whether this minister's serious about the goals that he's identified. And again he quoted, or gave credit to his colleague in Ottawa.

[16:15]

So the question that I have is that if he's serious about this particular target, Mr. Speaker, if he's serious about addressing the climate change challenges, if he's serious about the water quality, if he's serious about the greenhouse gas emissions problem that he's identified in this bill then, Mr. Speaker, we need to see action. We need to see programs because, quite frankly, we're tired of words. We're tired of rhetoric, and we're tired of spin. We need to see action, Mr. Speaker, because the impacts of not addressing these issues is very, very dramatic.

It really goes against the whole notion of what we call smart growth as a NDP caucus. Because you've got to protect the environment. You've got to protect the working people, and you've got to certainly embrace industry and investment into building our economy. We understand that, Mr. Speaker. And one of the critical points and the vital points of that particular smart growth strategy is to make sure you take care of the environment and to make sure that people are engaged in that duty because we all need to do our part. And so far we haven't seen no evidence nor commitment to the environmental file by this minister or the government in general.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have a lot more to say on this particular bill. We want to look at it a bit more. As I said at the outset, we invite the public to participate because this is the first go-round on the bills. We have a couple of months to research it, and we will certainly be back with a lot more information, a lot more questions, and a lot more positions to take on Bill 48. And at this time, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of Bill No. 48, *The Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases*

Amendment Act, 2012. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 49 — *The Forestry Professions Amendment Act, 2012*

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. After some brief remarks, I will be moving the second reading of *The Forestry Professions Amendment Act, 2012*. The amendments before this House will establish a legislated right to practice for professional foresters and forest technologists in Saskatchewan, elevating the forestry profession to the same level as other provinces do in Canada with similar legislation.

The amended legislation will also build on several important commitments of this government: our commitment to economic growth by ensuring a reconfigured forest sector can rely on its forestry professionals, our commitment to provide a competitive business environment for the forestry sector, and our commitment to the sustainable management and long-term health of Saskatchewan's provincial forests. Through these amendments, we will build the public's confidence that our natural heritage of forests is being well managed by professionals whose competence is recognized by their peers across the country.

Right now, Mr. Speaker, *The Forestry Professions Act* is right to title. This means that only registered members of the Association of Saskatchewan Forestry Professionals can call themselves registered professional foresters and registered professional forest technologists. This right-to-title protection is important, but there are remaining concerns for the protection of both public safety and for the environment. In the present legislation, there is nothing to stop anyone from engaging in the professional practice of forestry, whatever they may choose to call themselves.

It is important to make sure that this practice is undertaken by competent professionals because many of the tasks regularly given to forestry professionals can involve significant safety and environmental risks, whether they are designing a resource road, building a water course crossing, or handling hazardous materials such as herbicides and pesticides. Some tasks carry financial and legal risks as well. Saskatchewan forest companies depend on forestry professionals to make sure that their operations are in compliance with all applicable laws, that they meet critical standards for certification, and that important commitments to share information with First Nations and Métis communities are met as well, Mr. Speaker.

As is noted in *The Saskatchewan Plan for Growth: Vision 2020 and Beyond*, forestry was the hardest hit industry in Saskatchewan during the worldwide economic downturn. Greater certainty about the forestry professionals who manage this in its financial, safety, and environmental risks is essential to the recovery of the forest industry in our province. The shift to right to practice as proposed in the amended

legislation will allow the Association of Saskatchewan Forestry Professionals to ensure that all those working as professional foresters and technologists in Saskatchewan are qualified and competent in their areas of practice. It will also enable the association's members to be recognized as qualified persons in the Saskatchewan environmental code expected to come into effect this fall. The code will be a cornerstone of our ministry's continuing shift to a results-based regulatory framework that will provide client-centred service and foster innovation while enhancing the protection we offer our environment.

The amended legislation supports this approach with the ministry's role becoming much less about dictating exactly how things are done and much more about monitoring, auditing, and enforcing performance. Since we became government, we have been working diligently to make changes to the way we regulate this industry. We have listened to our clients. We have consulted with stakeholders and have incorporated their suggestions in the work that has been done, Mr. Speaker.

The amended legislation and the right to practice protection it includes is fully supported by the Association of Saskatchewan Forestry Professionals and its membership, which come from industry, consulting academia, and government. Mr. Speaker, the proposed amendments will allow forestry to join a host of other Saskatchewan professions where right to practice is already established in law, including agrologists, engineers, geoscientists, and land surveyors. These practice rights are also already protected for forestry professionals in the other New West Partnership provinces as well as other provinces in Canada.

The amendments would bring the profession in Saskatchewan up to that same level while ensuring that trade and labour mobility agreements are respected, which is vital to our province's thriving economy. Mr. Speaker, the proposed amendments are a concrete demonstration of our government's confidence in the Saskatchewan Forestry Professionals and their association. They are also an acknowledgement of the profession's key role in the growth of Saskatchewan's reconfigured forestry sector and in the sustainable management of the forest on which this sector depends.

Mr. Speaker, with this I now move second reading of *The Forestry Professions Amendment Act, 2012*. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — The Minister for the Environment has moved second reading of Bill No. 49, *The Forestry Professions 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. I'm pleased once again to stand up and offer our initial comments on Bill No. 49, *The Forestry Professions Amendment Act, 2012*. And, Mr. Speaker, I think it's really important, there's a couple points that I do want to make. Obviously if we have more and more certified and certainly highly qualified people involved with forest management, that's something that the NDP would certainly applaud and would certainly want to support, Mr. Speaker.

I think what's really important is that we have to follow the

process as to where the minister arrived at. And when he spoke about how are you going to certainly authenticate the work of the forestry professions, he mentioned at the outset that there was a number of people that he consulted. And I would ask the minister to forward to me if he can, his consulting academia, as he described these people that helped him work on the qualifications of these foresters and these planners. So if he could give me a list of those folks that he dealt with on that front, it certainly would give me, give me a lot more information than I have in front of me.

I think it's important that people in Saskatchewan really appreciate the fact that when people do go to school, they spend a lot of time in school, they spend a lot of money getting their certifications and qualifications down pat, that they are recognized by their peers, they're recognized by the public, and they're recognized by government as people that know what they're doing in each of these professions. And I think forestry in general needs as many people certified and qualified as possible because a lot of people have differing opinions on how our forest is managed.

And if you have a consistent kind of process in terms of, in terms of qualification, being recognized by your peers as I mentioned, then we can certainly to a certain extent have a bit of confidence when this particular government talks about qualification and certification of people like forestry professions.

Now, Mr. Speaker, at the outset, the minister alluded to forestry being hard hit by the global downturn in the economy, that forestry companies all throughout the world suffered as a result of the economic turmoil, that the whole earth suffered, I guess, during that time. So it's nice for the Sask Party to finally recognize that it was the global economy, the downturn in the forestry sector that created forestry problems in Saskatchewan. So two years ago or a couple years before the last election, everything was the NDP's fault. Now today they're saying, well, it was a global economy problem and forestry really suffered. So, Mr. Speaker, it's nice to hear the truth finally come out from one of the ministers as to how the forestry was impacted. And certainly it was not, as they described, an NDP doing, Mr. Speaker.

So I would point out that we have a lot of information out there and people that give you advice. And one of the other questions I have for the minister is I appreciate the fact that you have to have some standards, some training, and some certification by your peers to be able to call yourself a forester. And if this Act is intended to strengthen that description and strengthen that effort, then of course the NDP will certainly look at this bill and see if there's any opportunity for us to move it along as quickly as we can.

But the point I would raise is that I'd also want to ask the minister: where would you describe the role of, say, a local trapper would play or an elder that had a lot of good information, a lot more practical information than a certified forester? Because as we know, a lot of the elders, the trappers, and the fishermen, the people that live off the land, they know a lot about animal behaviour. They know a lot about forestry planning. They know a lot more than some of the people that do get certified. Is there a role, an opportunity for the trappers'

association or the fishing industry that could give some good advice on forestry fronts? You know, like, there's all kinds of people out there that have tons of advice. And it would be a great opportunity for this minister to say, look, not only are we recognizing foresters and planners, but we're also engaging the trappers and the fishermen and the people that live off the land and giving them the opportunity to participate in how we develop our forests.

And we need to rationalize that as well because, Mr. Speaker, if we get them involved, then what can we argue from our perspective, at the end of the day, that if forestry's being cut right, that are explained by the professionals as the minister alluded to in his bill, and that you have the supporting advice and support from impacted groups like communities and trappers and commercial fishermen and First Nations and Métis leaders and people of the North, and they're endorsing it as well, this makes the package all the more comprehensive and makes the package all the more, all the more saleable.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think we would want to make sure that we have those avenues available to the minister and to determine our forestry perspective in terms of making sure it's comprehensive. And if this bill is just simply arming one of the planners of that industry, basically being the forestry planner, and qualifying and certifying them, then at the outset it doesn't seem to be something that we could not support, but we need to take the time to reach out to other groups to qualify what they may have to say when it comes to forestry practice in general.

[16:30]

So on that point, Mr. Speaker, we have a lot more to say about this as I mentioned at the outset. We solicit some of the advice and comments outside of the Assembly, and certainly as opposition, we'll do our job and we'll go through the bill. We will research with groups. And we will certainly counterpropose ideas that may strengthen this bill because it obviously needs to be strengthened, and by that I mean reaching out to the traditional resource users such as fishermen and trappers to make this process more comprehensive.

So on that note, Mr. Speaker, I would want to point out that we have more issues and more comments on this at a later date, but at this stage, I want to adjourn debate on Bill No. 49, *The Forestry Professions Amendment Act, 2012*.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the member that Bill No. 49, *The Forestry Professions Amendment Act, 2012* be adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

**Bill No. 50 — *The Medical Profession
Amendment Act, 2012***

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of *The Medical Profession*

Amendment Act, 2012.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Health is committed to working with self-regulating health professionals to ensure patient safety. We have been working with health sector stakeholders to update *The Medical Profession Act* which has been in force since 1981. These amendments were requested by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan to support safe patient care and update its bylaw-making authority.

The Ministry of Health supports the physician and registered nurse engagement in the full scope of practice of medicine and nursing respectively. This will also permit the college to respond more quickly to the anticipated national changes in categories of licensure of health professionals.

Mr. Speaker, these amendments will also help keep patients' personal health information more secure. The college will now have a greater ability to maintain current address and contact information for physicians. The college will be able to better communicate with physicians and keep information up to date when physicians join or leave a practice. This, Mr. Speaker, will support proper and secure storage, disposal, and transfer of patient files and improve disaster planning processes.

Mr. Speaker, we consulted extensively with professional health provider organizations about the changes. And I'd like to thank the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association, the Saskatchewan Medical Association, the Saskatchewan Association of Licensed Practical Nurses, the Saskatchewan College of Pharmacists, the Registered Psychiatric Nurses Association of Saskatchewan, and all of our regional health authorities. These organizations provided valuable insight, and we appreciate their interest and their contributions to this process.

I believe these amendments are a positive step forward for our health system. They support our efforts to provide the safest possible health care environments for patients and health providers. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of *The Medical Profession Amendment Act, 2012*.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 50, *The Medical Profession Act, 2012* be read a second time. 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. I'm very pleased to stand up today to offer initial comments on Bill No. 50. I think it's important that as we sit here and we speak about some of the challenges with the health file over time that it's always important that we collaborate and coordinate with those people that are the front line when we deal with people that are either sick or injured. And certainly whether you're a doctor, a nurse, or an LPN [licensed practical nurse], that this team of health professionals are people that we should consult with first and foremost. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to see that the minister did allude to the fact that there was consultation to a number of organizations, and certainly I think that's a good first step.

Now, Mr. Speaker, obviously if you're looking at patients'

information being kept confidential, again this government . . . When you find health records being found in dumpsters in some of the downtown cities, that doesn't really, that doesn't really bode well for the government that talks about confidentiality. And if this effort is meant to improve on that so that there is no more health records found in dumpsters, then of course the opposition NDP would support that, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of having to be able to respond well to emergency measures and some planning, obviously if there is instances where there is information available to doctors on a priority basis, an unencumbered basis that would help deal with some of the issues of the emergent nature, then obviously that will make the emergency planning system a lot better.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that we look at this particular file. It's a huge file. It's a huge proposal in the sense of the impact of the people that it involves. Obviously we don't want to go through the process as quickly as we can because it's something that we should not do as an opposition. So it's important that we tell the associations and groups that the minister met with that we may contact them and get their perspective in terms of what this bill means for them, whether they support it, and whether it complements what the minister is alluding to when he talks about trying to make sure, as an example, that the emergency measures planning Act is followed as efficiently as possible.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have a lot more to say about this particular bill. I know my colleagues and the critic for Health will have a lot more issues to add to this as we go along. And of course the typical invite to people that are out there listening to what the minister had to say and certainly what our initial comments were, we would invite you to participate in the debate and forward to us in any way, shape, or form, whether it's fax or email or a visit here to the Assembly that you can participate in this particular debate.

So, Mr. Speaker, a lot more to say on this as we move forward, and we will take a lot of time to research this bill and make sure that we respond accordingly. So on that note, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 50, *The Medical Profession Act*, 2012. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of Bill No. 50, *The Medical Profession Act*, 2012. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I move the House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — The Deputy Government House Leader has moved that the House do now adjourn.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. This House stands adjourned to 1:30 p.m., Tuesday.

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:38.]

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Premier

President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Bill Boyd

Minister of the Economy
Minister Responsible for The Global
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Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Power Corporation

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff

Minister of Environment
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