



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

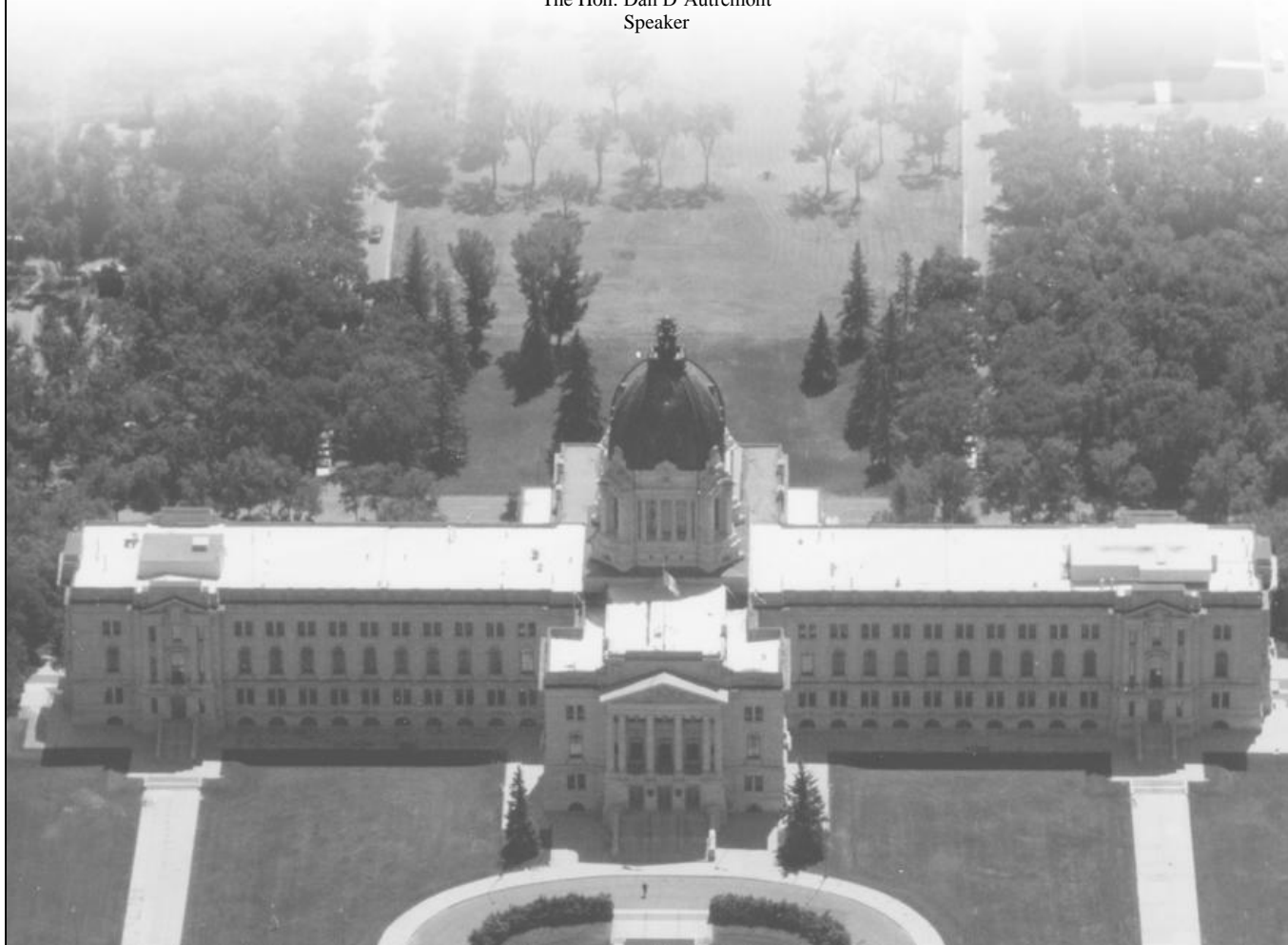
of the

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
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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
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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 Opposition Whip . . . Government Whip, sorry.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all the members of the Assembly, I'm honoured to introduce to you someone I've known for a lot of years, a friend of mine from Yorkton seated in your gallery — just give us a wave there, Aaron — Mr. Aaron Nagy. Mr. Speaker, Aaron was a friend of Jimmy Ray Wiebe who was killed while working at a gas station in Yorkton just last year. Since then Aaron has been very outspoken about the need to do more to protect those working in vulnerable situations. Aaron is joined by his friends today, Jennifer Netzel and Derek Lukey, all of whom I had the pleasure to meet with today along with the Minister of Labour in his office and have lunch.

Along with them, Mr. Speaker, is Mr. Andrew Klukas from the Western Convenience Store Association. Andrew and the Convenience Store Association were very co-operative and provided valuable insight on how to better protect those working in convenience stores late at night.

These individuals are here today to honour the memory of Jimmy Wiebe and recognize the changes we made as a result of their efforts to protect those working alone. I would ask all members to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, very much, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to rise and join with the member from Yorkton in welcoming Aaron Nagy and his friends Jennifer and Derek here as well. Aaron of course is no stranger to this House, as he's been here several times on this very important cause. And it's a good day, and I'm looking forward to hearing more about the announcements that the minister may have.

And I also want to say hello to Andrew Klukas who's just around the corner there. Hello, Andrew. He and I visited this summer as well to talk about the importance of creating safe environments in convenience stores and gas stations when they're open 24 hours. And I sure appreciate his insights.

So I'd ask all members to join with me in welcoming those folks to our legislature. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is an honour and a privilege to introduce two guests seated in your gallery. With us today, Mr. Speaker, are two people from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. Dan Kelly is the president and chief executive officer and Marilyn Braun-Pollon is vice-president, prairie and

agri-business.

Ms. Pollon advocates the views of the federation's agricultural and small-business sectors, and she also serves as the media spokesperson for over 5,000 CFIB [Canadian Federation of Independent Business] members here in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Kelly first served as policy analyst for the CFIB in 1994 and soon after became director of provincial affairs for Manitoba. In 1999 he moved to Calgary to become the federation's western vice-president and later took the role of senior vice-president, legislative affairs, in 2009. In June of 2012, Mr. Kelly was named president and CEO [chief executive officer] of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. He has led many initiatives, including the call for balanced budget laws and workers' compensation reform. In 2010 he also led a successful campaign to establish a code of conduct for the credit and debit card industry in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I would like all members to join me in welcoming Mr. Dan Kelly and Ms. Marilyn Braun-Pollon to the Saskatchewan legislature.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to join the minister opposite and welcome Ms. Marilyn Braun-Pollon and Mr. Dan Kelly to their Assembly. They do provide advocacy and leadership on behalf of Saskatchewan businesses. Certainly I look forward to regular meetings with the CFIB and am able to find often some common areas of interest. And sometimes we don't agree on all matters, but it's certainly an important dialogue that goes on in building out a good policy. So I certainly join with the minister to welcome these Saskatchewan leaders to their Assembly.

While also on my feet I'd like to just quickly mention — I know the member opposite will also introduce these individuals, but while on my feet — Mr. Stuart Wilson and his grade 10s from Melville. And I've gotten to know Mr. Wilson a little bit over the past few years. It's a pleasure to see you here again with your students. And I wish your wife well in her service again to the school board out there in Yorkton, the Catholic school board. It's nice to see you here today. I ask all members to welcome these individuals to their Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member of Regina Walsh Acres.

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And it's an honour for me to rise today and welcome someone to the Legislative Assembly who is important to all of us. It's my CA [constituency assistant], Heather Howell-Shiplack. I know all MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] know how important their constituency assistants are to them and the work they do that make us look good all day. And she's got a tougher job than most, Mr. Speaker, and I want to thank her for being patient with a new MLA. And I'm slowly learning the ropes, but she's a great help and keeps me on time and keeps me on schedule. So I just wanted everyone to welcome Heather to her

Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Bjornerud: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce 30 grade 10 students from Melville Comprehensive High School. The students today are accompanied by their teachers, Stuart Wilson and John Svenson, and chaperone Gloria Lipinski. And I'd ask all members to welcome them to their legislature.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Qu'Appelle Valley.

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to the members of the Legislative Assembly, some guests that are seated in your gallery. These are members from the Saskatchewan Real Estate Association.

For the past two days, we've had the opportunity to meet and discuss issues with the members of the Saskatchewan Real Estate Association. They met with both sides of the House, both caucuses. I think there is probably some very good information that has been shared back and forth.

And we all know that realtors are very progressive. They like to have their thumb on the pulse of the economy. So it's a very worthwhile group for us to be sitting down and meeting with and finding out exactly where our province is headed. I had the opportunity to meet with them this morning and discuss the Premier's growth plan for the province. They were very impressed. So thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too want to join in in welcoming the realtors who are here in question period today. We enjoyed the chance to visit yesterday. But this morning we had a group, I think, of more than 25, maybe 30, who met with us in our caucus room, and we learned many things about issues in Saskatchewan. And what we also learned is that there are many aspects of how we organize ourselves in Saskatchewan that require further work. And so, Mr. Speaker, we will be working with realtors and others to make sure things are better here in the province.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. In some schools across our province, it's bring your child to work day, and this was a choice that we made in our household very recently. So in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to introduce our youngest child, our daughter Faith, who's in grade 9 at the Swift Current Comprehensive High School. She's accompanied today by the itinerary co-ordinator in my office, Shannon Andrews, who we're going to lose soon, at least for a time, because her and her husband are determined to help the government with its growth plan.

And, Mr. Speaker, I just want to introduce Faith to you and through you to all the members. Faith had to choose which parent she might want to be with today. Tami is going to be

busy today in her schedule inspecting properties. She's an assessor and so most of it would be outdoors. And I guess I won by default, but it's great to have her here. She is academically a high performer. She's very talented. So in every important way, she's following after her mom. And I'd ask all members to welcome her to her Legislative Assembly.

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 cell coverage. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Undertake, as soon as possible, to ensure 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 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 areas.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed the petition are from Patuanak, from Canoe Lake, from Turnor Lake. And I so present.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I present a petition regarding 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.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition on behalf of the leadership and community of Wollaston Lake. In 2008, February, the government announced an all-season road would be built. By the end of construction, 2012, that road has not been built.

That the Government of Saskatchewan stop turning their backs on the people from northern Saskatchewan and start investing in public highways in the North.

And the prayer reads as follows:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the government to recognize that the construction on the road to Wollaston Lake, which was started under the previous NDP government, has shown little to no progress and must be completed quickly.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

It is signed by many good people from Wollaston Lake. I so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Day of Remembrance

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, on Sunday we mark the armistice of November 11th, 1918, and today we held a ceremony of remembrance held here at the legislature. I'm honoured to recognize all the men and women who currently serve and have served our proud nation in pursuit of freedom and peace.

Like so many across our province, a history of service to our nation is part of my family's story. My grandfather left Saskatchewan a young farmer to serve our nation with the distinguished Regina Rifles regiment. Today tucked with pride in the pocket of my jacket is my grandfather's soldier's service and pay book. This book was carried with him from his departure to his landing in Normandy and throughout the war. The final entry is dated February 18th, 1945. It's signed by a captain named Orchard and simply states, "wounded, Germany."

My grandfather's service was ended by a bullet in the battle of Moyland Wood. These common stories of sacrifice and service run deep in this province. They cross political divides and communities, and they in part shape us as a nation, a province, as families, and as individuals.

It is with pride and respect that I not only remember my grandfather, but that I remember all that have served and currently serve our proud nation. I ask all members of this Assembly to join with me in extending our thanks. May we remember and may our resolve for peace be strong. In the words of John McCrae, "The torch; be yours to hold it high." Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[13:45]

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

Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

A wreath was laid this morning at the Saskatchewan War Memorial as part of the government's annual Service of Remembrance for the Public Service. Today we gather as a public service and as a province to remember the deeds of those who have given the ultimate sacrifice so we may live in a land that knows peace and prosperity.

Mr. Speaker, I, along with all Canadians, look back in awe at the sacrifices that a generation of Canadians made not only for our country but for the free world. It is so very important to stop and reflect on those men and women who have and continue to give so much.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of the battle of Dieppe, which took place in 1942 during the Second World War in northern France. The battle is considered one of the darkest chapters in Canadian military history. Roughly 5,000 Canadian soldiers participated in the battle, including soldiers from the South Saskatchewan Regiment. More than half of those who participated in the raid were killed, wounded, or taken prisoner by Axis forces. We remember those brave men and women by wearing poppies, attending ceremonies, and visiting memorials. We remember on this day, lest we forget, why we must work for peace every other day of the year. Thank you.

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

Film Industry Workers

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to give you a small sampling of the human cost and the loss to our province because of the Sask Party government's decision to cut the film employment tax credit. Daryl Davis, moved to Toronto, award winning film editor, Gemini nomination for *Moccasin Flats*, editor for *Corner Gas*. Dean Evans, moved to Calgary, Gemini winning film editor. Tamara Harrod, moved to Toronto, hairstylist, nominated for a Gemini for *The Englishman's Boy*. Andrew Gordon, moved to Vancouver, gaffer, SMPA [Saskatchewan Media Production Industry Association] Showcase mentor award. Lesley Rosiak, moved to Vancouver, make-up artist. Terry Silva, moved to Winnipeg, camera assistant. Donavon Fraser, moved to Calgary, camera assistant. Ashley Tuchscherer, moved to Toronto, scenic artist.

Rob King, moving to Toronto, Gemini and Canadian Comedy award-winning director. Carmen Kotyk, moving to Winnipeg, Gemini award-winning casting director. Terry Mialkowsky, moving to Toronto, producer-director, first assistant director, co-creator of *Dust Up* airing on Discovery Channel. Shannon Jardine, moving to Toronto, actress and producer, two-time Showcase award nominee for best actress, co-creator of *Dust Up* airing on Discovery Channel. Nova Herman Alberts, moving to the Yukon, communications and development programmer for SMPA, Gemini nomination. Roger Roscuc, moved to Vancouver, boom operator. Ian McBain, moved to Toronto, editor. Jen Egroff, moved to Calgary, leading digital content creator. Sheree Fondeur, moved to Vancouver, third assistant director.

I see, Mr. Speaker, I'm out of time, but I'm not out of the growing list of people who are leaving our province. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for The Battlefords.

Skin Cancer Screening

Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday at the Legislative Building, a sun awareness and skin cancer screening program was held by the Canadian Dermatologists Association. The goal was to shine a light on the growing number of incidents of skin cancer in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, skin cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in Saskatchewan. In 2009, of the almost 9,000 new cancers diagnosed in Saskatchewan, 3,100 were skin cancers. Mr. Speaker, men have a higher incidence of the three main types of skin cancers: basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma, and melanoma.

Yesterday Dr. Roberta McKay, a Regina dermatologist and regional director of the Canadian Dermatology Association, and Regina dermatologist Dr. Karen Holfeld screened 47 MLAs and staff for skin cancer at the legislative building.

If detected early, the cure rate for skin cancer is around 90 per cent. Dr. Roberta McKay urges everyone to go see their family doctor if you have a mole or freckles that change in shape, colour, or size, and any lesions that do not heal in four weeks. Mr. Speaker, skin cancer is one of the most preventable forms of cancer. Simply by limiting sun exposure, using sunscreen, and wearing a hat, you can significantly reduce your chances of skin cancer.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in thanking Dr. Roberta McKay and Dr. Karen Holfeld for their educational program yesterday. And I encourage everyone to get screened for this preventable form of cancer. Thank you.

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

Quality of Life Day Program

Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise in the House to inform all members that construction will begin soon on a significant expansion of the Regina branch of the Sask Abilities Council. That expansion will enable the Abilities Council to launch the new quality of life day program, which in turn will help improve the lives of people with intellectual disabilities in Regina. Mr. Speaker, the program will provide valuable services for 21 people, including 10 individuals from the community living wait-list.

Our government is pleased to support this initiative with \$350,000 in capital funding and annual funding of just over \$98,000. Our investment in this project is part of our commitment to eliminate the wait-list of 440 Saskatchewan people with intellectual disabilities who require programs and services.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, our government is on pace to reach that goal by the end of March 2013, just a few short months from now, and our supports of projects like the new quality of life program at the Abilities Council will help to ensure that we stay on pace. By doing so, we will also make Saskatchewan a best

place in Canada for people with disabilities.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Saskatoon Sports Hall of Fame Inductees

Mr. Norris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured to rise in the Assembly today to help celebrate the most recent inductees of the Saskatoon Sports Hall of Fame. On Saturday, November 2nd the Saskatoon Sports Hall of Fame held its 27th annual induction ceremony and banquet, where our Minister of Sport was an invited guest. Mr. Speaker, two outstanding Saskatoon athletes, three builders, and two Saskatoon-based teams were inducted.

Curtis Leschyshyn, a former member of the Saskatoon Blades and Stanley Cup champion with the Colorado Avalanche, and Duk Sang Ha, a seven-time Canadian champion in tae kwon do and 1999 world championship competitor were inducted as athletes.

As well, Mark Tennant, a former coach of the University of Saskatchewan women's volleyball team, was inducted into the Hall of Fame as a builder. As coach, he won three consecutive Canadian championships.

Judy Warwick, a track and field coach who's been involved in the sport for more than 30 years, and Mr. Dale Yellowlees, the voice of track and field and a great Greystone resident, were all inducted as builders.

Mr. Speaker, the 1968 University of Saskatchewan men's cross-country team and the 1988 University of Saskatchewan men's volleyball team were both the 2012 team inductees.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all members to join me in congratulating all of the 2012 Saskatoon Sports Hall of Fame inductees.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Walsh Acres.

Rams Defeat Huskies for Place in Canada West Finals

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the House today to recognize the University of Regina Rams, who on Friday, November 2nd defeated the University of Saskatchewan Huskies 31 to 9 to earn a spot in the Hardy Cup. Mr. Speaker, the elements held both offences scoreless for the first quarter, but the Rams managed to get on track and got their offence rolling with a series of long completions. Meanwhile the Rams D [defence] held the dogs to a safety and a defensive touchdown. Rams quarterback Marc Mueller went 21 for 32 for 393 yards passing, for 83 per cent of the Rams' total yards in the game. The Rams' defence put on an impressive performance as well, holding the University of Saskatchewan Huskies to a total of 190 yards.

Mr. Speaker, the Rams will go on now to face the number one ranked team in Canada, the University of Calgary Dinos, in the Canada West finals this weekend in Calgary. The nationally

ranked Rams look to continue with their winning ways and earn the right to compete for the Vanier Cup.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] Huskies on a valiant effort and wish all their players the best of luck in the future, and I ask all members to join me in congratulating the University of Regina Rams with a resounding win. I want U of R [University of Regina] players, coaches, and staff to know that they have a whole province behind them as they march towards a national championship. Go Rams.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Support for the Film Industry and Other Creative Industries

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A year ago today, Saskatchewan families in the film and television industry couldn't imagine they would soon have to leave their province to earn a living. In fact the Sask Party 2011 platform bragged about having increased the funding for the Saskatchewan film employment tax credit. Mr. Speaker, that is the platform that this minister and his government ran on.

How could this government run on a platform of support for the film industry and a tax credit only to take the opposite approach just a few short months later?

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

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I have said before in this House and I've said to my honourable friend, there is no other business in the province of Saskatchewan that enjoys a 45 per cent refundable tax credit on their labour cost, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure every business would love to have that opportunity. So that being said, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance and this government made some difficult decisions this past budget to eliminate this refundable tax credit, Mr. Speaker.

We are now going through a consultation process with our creative industries to come up with a mechanism to support, in a fair manner, Mr. Speaker, across the piece, all of our creative industries in the province of Saskatchewan, a long-term sustainable mechanism to support those industries. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Supporters across Canada are taking to social media today to stand with the Saskatchewan film industry and challenge the Sask Party's poor decision to end this tax credit. People from across Canada are showing their support on Facebook and Twitter. In fact #supportSKfilm, as of noon today, was the top trending topic in Canada on Twitter with more than 2 million people having seen it. Canadians are shocked to see this once thriving

Saskatchewan film industry cut off by the knees, or at the knees by the Sask Party.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier is a fan of social media when it comes to garden gnomes and fishing derbies. What does he have to tweet to all those who support the Saskatchewan film industry?

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

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in my previous answer, we are undertaking a consultation process with our creative industries in this province to come up with a long-term, sustainable mechanism for support in a fair manner, Mr. Speaker. As the president of SMPA, the Saskatchewan media industry production association, wrote to me on October 3rd — these are her words, Mr. Speaker, Holly Baird, the president of SMPA, not mine — in requesting a new support mechanism in the province of Saskatchewan, Ms. Baird went on to say, and I quote, Mr. Speaker:

It should support greater Saskatchewan expenditures to promote industry sustainability. It should be as cost neutral as possible. It needs to meet sector requirements while not participating in what is seen as a bidding war. And it cannot be a tax-related initiative [Mr. Speaker].

We have had a number of consultation meetings with all of the creative industries across the province, Mr. Speaker. We are working towards building a model that we can present to all of the creative industries that will be fair and sustainable. Thank you.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A year ago today the Premier said, "We will be a government that keeps its promises, that admits easily of mistakes. We will make them. We'll take responsibility for them. We will fix them."

These are good words, Mr. Speaker, but they certainly ring hollow because the Premier has had many months and many opportunities to admit his mistake on the film tax credit. So far this has not happened. But it isn't too late. The Premier can stand today and admit that the people of Saskatchewan did not vote to kill the film industry. He'd be a better person for it. Will the Premier do the right thing, admit his colossal mistake and fix the mess he's made, starting today?

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

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Mr. Speaker, a year ago today the people of Saskatchewan spoke loud and clear about the platform they wanted to see implemented in the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, a year ago today, the people of Saskatchewan voted 64 per cent for this party and its platform which included as the base principle, Mr. Speaker, a balanced budget.

Mr. Speaker, we've said to the people of Saskatchewan that we

were going to make difficult budget decisions — difficult budget decisions to invest in people living with disabilities, Mr. Speaker, to invest in seniors, seniors, Mr. Speaker, low-income seniors, our most vulnerable seniors in the province. At the end of this mandate, we will have tripled the seniors' income plan, Mr. Speaker. We also campaigned on removing 115,000 low-income people, Mr. Speaker, off the provincial tax rolls.

Mr. Speaker, I often get the hon. member telling me that Manitoba is the model that we ought to be following. A single mother making \$25,000 a year, Mr. Speaker, in Manitoba, pays almost 400 per cent more provincial income tax than in this province, Mr. Speaker. We think that's better public policy.

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

Status of Budget

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party spent the better part of last year trying to convince Saskatchewan people that the budget was balanced, but as the numbers rolled in and as the facts hit the paper, the Sask Party was forced to admit something else: it was another budget deficit, the third in a row in fact, Mr. Speaker.

But the Sask Party wasted no time to distract from that by focusing on next year, our current year, and claiming it had tabled a balanced budget. They even spent public dollars on expensive billboards trying to make that claim. At the financial first quarter, they continued to make this claim. Mr. Speaker, this budget's supposed balance has been precarious from day one. Does that minister stand by his claim of budgetary balance here today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this government and the Saskatchewan Party are very proud of this budget. Mr. Speaker, it is the only balanced budget in all of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, we understand where the opposition comes from. The opposition, Mr. Speaker, was at a time when this province was under severe decline. Mr. Speaker, we are looking at a province that is moving forward. We have a growth agenda, Mr. Speaker, and with growth there are challenges: no doubt, Mr. Speaker. We want to be able to spend more money on infrastructure. We want to be able to spend more money on utilization, Mr. Speaker, because with 80,000 more people — something that that opposition over there knows nothing about, Mr. Speaker — we have challenges that we are meeting. And, Mr. Speaker, this is a balanced budget.

[14:00]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Clearly, Mr. Speaker, that government doesn't let the facts stand in its way, Mr. Speaker, evidenced in that answer. Mr. Speaker, at budget, government projected \$705 million for its potash revenues, a 56 per cent increase over

the previous year. We felt that number was inflated, overly optimistic. As Finance critic I sounded cautions moments after the budget was tabled:

As an area of caution, it would seem that this government is possibly once again betting too much on a large increase in potash revenues. If this rosy prediction does not pan out, this budget's foundation is damaged.

We're still concerned, Mr. Speaker, and the government hasn't shared any information to refute these concerns. To the minister: be straight with Saskatchewan people. What is the current projection for potash revenues, and is it on track?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when we tabled the quarter 1 estimates, we made some adjustments, Mr. Speaker, in the first quarter. We had adjusted our projections on the non-renewable resource sector. Mr. Speaker, we had built into our budget \$3.1 billion worth of revenue from the non-renewable resource sector, and in the first three months we knew that that estimate for the oil and gas industry was high. And we made those changes, Mr. Speaker, after Q1.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to be delivering to the people of Saskatchewan the mid-year forecast. The mid-year forecast will contain the update for the summary financial statement, Mr. Speaker. It will contain the answers to the very questions that the member asks. So I ask him just to bear with us, Mr. Speaker, as all of the material is compiled. And, Mr. Speaker, very soon, in the month of November, we will indicate to the people of Saskatchewan our mid-year, which will be a report on the growth and revenue fund plus the summary financial statements, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, on budget day, as Finance critic I raised concern over the budget and its impact on people and communities, and if this budget was once again not trustworthy. In the first quarter financial report, this government downgraded, as mentioned, some of its revenues and announced \$55 million of cuts. Yet those cuts have never been detailed or described to the public.

This government owes Saskatchewan people the straight goods on the cuts it has made or the cuts it plans to make. Many people and communities are anxious and quite simply concerned over this. Cuts certainly do impact people. To the minister: where were these cuts made? What were the impacts on Saskatchewan people? And are there further cuts coming at mid-year?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we will do is to provide all of the information that the member is asking for, Mr. Speaker. The province's budget has been noticed by many — the last, in fact the last five budgets, Mr. Speaker. The province of

Saskatchewan has just received a credit rating update, Mr. Speaker. We have a AAA credit rating. Mr. Speaker, the only time in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that the member asks questions when he can't even answer the questions asked by Erin Weir. Erin Weir asked the questions of the leadership candidate over there: say, you know, the proposal that you have before us, in fact for his leadership campaign, Mr. Speaker, is a deficit, Mr. Speaker, a deficit plan. Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member opposite that in mid-year all of his concerns will be addressed.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the government put forward a budget with a flawed foundation from day one. Instead of tracking the markets, making adjustments, and being straight with Saskatchewan people, they embarked on an expensive game of budgetary spin, boastful billboards touting its precarious budget. The problem is while the billboards were saying one thing, the government's balance sheet was telling an entirely different story. One was fiction, the other fact.

Now government's draining again from the rainy day fund. It's adopted a costly privatized approach to infrastructure, and it's starting to liquidate its assets, putting ISC [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan], as an example, up for sale.

Mr. Speaker, instead of spinning the reality and damaging, short-sighted budgetary tricks and sell-offs that don't serve our best interests, when will this government level with Saskatchewan people about the true state of our finances and start managing them properly?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Krawetz: — Mr. Speaker, I think the member opposite knows that in planning a budget we rely on a lot of input, Mr. Speaker, the input from Global Insight, the input from the Conference Board of Canada, the information from the Centre for Spatial Economics, TD [Toronto Dominion] Bank, RBC [Royal Bank of Canada], Bank of Montreal, CIBC [Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce], Scotiabank, Mr. Speaker. And also we rely on the private sector to supply the numbers, Mr. Speaker, that we built into the budget.

No one knows, Mr. Speaker, what is happening in the world and how it will affect the price of a barrel of oil, how it will affect the price of potash, Mr. Speaker. Those are things that we need to pay attention to as the year moves through, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the province of Saskatchewan is still going to lead in many, many categories, Mr. Speaker. We know that that is of keen interest to the people of Saskatchewan. It's of interest to the people that are coming to this province and continuing on our growth agenda.

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

Potential for Small Nuclear Reactors

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. People are noticing that the Premier often makes surprise announcements to the people by musing out loud to the media. It's a very odd habit. He's introducing complex topics without any announcement either in the Sask Party's pre-Throne Speech growth plan, the Throne Speech itself, or even their election platform. It appears to be an agenda of secrecy and surprise.

The latest example is yesterday's musings about bringing nuclear power to the province's North. When he had an opportunity to maybe discuss a plan for long-term care facilities and roads in the North, Mr. Speaker, the Premier instead chose to announce he is looking at nuclear power generation in the North. Why did the Premier suddenly announce plans to develop nuclear power in the North?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, because the press gallery were asking some very good questions. We were having a discussion I think about the recent trade agreement, the recent nuclear co-operation agreement that we've struck with India. We want to acknowledge the fact that our Prime Minister, the federal government, have now two important markets for our uranium, have opened them up through nuclear co-operation agreements. I think it's the first time in the history of a federal government, of a Prime Minister, to take that very specific Saskatchewan issue and put it on the table in terms of the potential for uranium sales in India and in China. And so as we discussed about ways to add value to uranium — I think it was a columnist from the *Leader-Post* was asking about value-added opportunities — we pointed out that, you know, perhaps down the road in northern Canada there's a case for small-reactor technology development in these remote areas. So I simply agreed that this is the kind of value-added we needed to do.

This was part of our innovation agenda. We want to be leading in this regard. That's why we funded the Sylvia Fedoruk Canadian Centre For Nuclear Innovation at the University of Saskatchewan. We've got partners with Hitachi, Mr. Speaker. That's where that comes from. It comes from a good discussion in the province of Saskatchewan, just out there, one that we're happy to have with her as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier's new weather balloon idea on nuclear power generation came in without any warning. He said, "Is there an opportunity in the mid and the long term for small reactors, 20, 30, 40 megawatts? We think there is."

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan already participated in earnest in the Perrins commission in 2009, the Sask Party government's own study. The Perrins report was clear: "The overwhelming response to this public consultation was that nuclear power generation should not be a choice for Saskatchewan." But yesterday, Mr. Speaker, the Premier has already chosen the location and a new reactor and figured out

what size it would be. If he has already a plan developed, Mr. Speaker, why doesn't he release it?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, this is a two-year-old secret. Mr. Speaker, this side of the House announced a couple of years ago, maybe longer, that we would be funding the Canadian Centre for Nuclear Innovation at the University of Saskatchewan. We announced our vision for reclaiming leadership in nuclear medicine. That was part of it, and that is exactly what we've been doing.

But we also said then that we want to lead in terms of R & D [research and development] into potential small-reactor development. We even announced thereafter that we had a partnership with Hitachi. Hitachi is a partner in that centre . . . Well she's shaking her head. She ought to get on the Google and just research it, Mr. Speaker. That's exactly what the government said. We have a partnership with Hitachi. Hitachi's interested in small nuclear technology. This is a two-and-half-year-old secret.

I can get why the hon. members are asking questions. They are uncomfortable even with mining uranium in this province. They're uncomfortable with the fact that half of the workforce in those mines are First Nations. They're uncomfortable with adding any value to it at all. We're not. We want to lead, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, of course the people of Saskatchewan support research involving nuclear medicine. And of course they support research about all forms of energy, including developing renewables and the cost of each type of energy production. But, Mr. Speaker, even small reactors being developed in China have price tags in the neighbourhood of \$1 billion. That's why people have clear concerns about nuclear power generation — because of the high fiscal and environmental costs.

Nuclear power seems to be the only egg in the Premier's basket when it comes to sustaining our growing energy needs. If nuclear power in the North is the Sask Party government's new policy, where is the public consultation? And what will this new policy cost the people of Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, as I've said, there is no surprise here. A couple of years ago the government announced it would be funding, at the University of Saskatchewan, the creation of the Canadian Nuclear Innovation Centre. It's now been named for Dr. Fedoruk.

Mr. Speaker, it wasn't very long ago — five decades ago or so — when this province was a leader in terms of nuclear medicine. This is the province that pioneered cobalt treatment. And since then, after years of that member's party in power, the CCF [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation] in power, after their discomfort with anything having to do with uranium, this

sort of a very uncomfortable relationship even with mining uranium, we have lost our advantage.

We have lost our advantage in this important sector, though we mine 20 per cent of the world's uranium, though 44 per cent of the workforce is Aboriginal in terms of the mining of that uranium, though we're home to one of the world's leading companies, in fact the leading company in the world in uranium. They are uncomfortable. Many that support their party — and we've heard from them — would like to ban uranium mining altogether, Mr. Speaker. They are on the wrong side of the uranium issue, and until they understand that, Mr. Speaker, they're going to be out of step with northern development opportunities, Mr. Speaker.

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

Funding for Health Sciences Building

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, we're not uncomfortable with the topic, and that's why we're asking questions. Our concerns are with the lack of transparency and the lack of detail that has been provided by this government.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this week in question period, we discussed how the Sask Party government has cast a cloud of doubt over the College of Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan by breaking its promise to fund the Health Sciences Building at the University of Saskatchewan and calling into question, raising doubts whether or not the board of governors are able to go ahead on this vitally important project to have it completed. This could raise serious implications for the College of Medicine, affecting accreditation and its national reputation.

My question to the minister: at a time when so many communities need physicians here in Saskatchewan, why will he not ensure that the College of Medicine is on sound footing?

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you for the question, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we're well aware of the issues and challenges that exist at the College of Medicine. These are things that have existed for a large number of years, mostly under the period of time when the members opposite were in government.

Since the time that we've formed government, Mr. Speaker, we have done the Academic Health Sciences Building, and we're supplying major funding for the upgrade of C and D wings. Mr. Speaker, I can also advise the members opposite and advise the House that the University of Saskatchewan is looking at issues regarding A and B wings and what the cost ramifications are of that.

Mr. Speaker, the University of Saskatchewan takes those issues very seriously. I've had a number of meetings with the president of the university, and she is working carefully with the college. We respect their independence, but we will continue to work with them and watch carefully to ensure that things go as they should within that college, Mr. Speaker.

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

Physician Locum Programs

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, of course the university president and administration is taking this seriously. What we need is for the government to also take this seriously and live up to its election commitment to fully fund the Health Sciences Building.

It's not just the long-term supply of physicians where the Sask Party is dropping the ball, as we've seen with their actions with the Health Sciences Building. There's also a huge, immediate need in many communities for physicians throughout the province. Right now we know that there are 118 physician vacancies posted online.

In last year's Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker, there was a promise of 20 new locum doctors to serve communities on a short-time basis and this was not to replace, but to also work alongside the existing locum program provided by the Saskatchewan Medical Association. My question to the minister: how many physicians are currently working in the new locum program?

[14:15]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much. I want to thank the member for his question. Certainly we are well aware what the needs are throughout Saskatchewan when it comes to the physician issue, Mr. Speaker. This government has put in place a 10-year health human resource plan, Mr. Speaker, that speaks not just to physicians but to other health care professionals, Mr. Speaker.

We are, as the member knows and has referenced in his question, we are working on a new rural locum program, Mr. Speaker. What we want to do is work with regions so that those regions have at their disposal, not just locums through the SMA [Saskatchewan Medical Association] program that is already in existence, but also a dedicated regional locum program so that regions themselves have at their disposal locums to move throughout the regions to address service disruptions when those occur.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the context is fine and helpful, but the question was: how many physicians are working in the new locum program right now? We know the Sask Party has a long way to go to have the full complement of 20 physicians that it has promised to be working in the program.

There's currently an existing locum program provided by the Saskatchewan Medical Association, which provides relief coverage to rural communities across Saskatchewan. The SMA has run this program effectively, directly assisting physician practices in rural Saskatchewan, but it hasn't always been easy for the SMA to recruit enough physicians into the program. As the minister struggles to find enough physicians for his new

program, this will inevitably create competition as the SMA is also seeking to attract physicians into the existing rural relief program.

My question to the minister: is this new program banned from poaching physicians from the existing relief program provided by the Saskatchewan Medical Association?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, certainly, certainly we want to see this new locum, rural locum program, complement the work that's already being done by the SMA with their locum program. However, Mr. Speaker, we do know that through the SMA program, that is really seen as a short-term solution to some of the issues that is being faced, particularly in rural or remote areas.

Mr. Speaker, the rural locum program that was announced by this government, what we are looking to do is to provide assistance to regional health authorities to have essentially their own regional locum program, so that on a, what I would say would be a longer time frame, a locum could be utilized in particularly rural and remote areas while perhaps that region is waiting for a physician going through the SIPPA [Saskatchewan international physician practice assessment] program or other recruitment.

So, Mr. Speaker, while this isn't intended to certainly replace or duplicate the SMA rural locum program. It's really to enhance the services that regions have at their disposal.

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

Mr. Broten: — Again, Mr. Speaker, no answer to the question: how many physicians are practising currently in the new program? Many communities struggle to find physicians and have them practising in their towns. And we've seen this routinely cause bidding wars as RMs [rural municipality], towns, NGOs [non-governmental organization] work together, Mr. Speaker, in order to attract physicians to their community.

Many people are concerned that the new locum program may make it more difficult to recruit local doctors to specific communities, especially when the province may have deeper pockets than what a non-profit operating in the community may have. My question to the minister: on behalf of the many communities that are working hard to attract physicians to their towns, how will he ensure that the new locum program does not take physicians away from the communities that are doing the hard work right now for long-term supply of physicians?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, we certainly know that we need to be and have been working with regional health authorities and communities as it relates to recruiting and retaining physicians across this province, Mr. Speaker. This idea that communities are involved in the recruitment process certainly isn't a new fact, a new idea, Mr. Speaker. In fact this summer I attended a centennial celebration in my constituency, Mr. Speaker. And as a part of that celebration they read out a

bit of the history of the RM, and about 90 years ago the RM put money in to recruit physicians. So we know that this is something that hasn't happened just in the last five years.

Mr. Speaker, we announced that we wanted to move forward with a new program, with a 20 rural locum pool, Mr. Speaker. We think that we could have approximately 11 by the end of this year, Mr. Speaker. It is a four-year commitment, though. But, Mr. Speaker, it's a part of our plan to recruit physicians through a new program for international and through more training seats here at home.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

Safety for Late-Night Workers

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise in the Assembly to introduce a workplace safety measure that will improve the safety and security of workers in late-night retail establishments. Our government is committed to promoting workers because they are the province's most important resource. They set us apart from other jurisdictions across the country and around the world. We are taking further steps to protect the health and safety of Saskatchewan workers.

In June of 2011 while working at a gas station in Yorkton, Jimmy Ray Wiebe was murdered. The tragic murder of Jimmy Wiebe brought the discussion of workplace violence to the forefront. Employers have an obligation to protect employees from violence in the workplace. To ensure that we are doing everything to protect vulnerable workers, officials from the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety canvassed safety legislation in other provinces and met with stakeholders. They provided input on ways to improve violence protection for workers and late-night retail workers in particular.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to share with you that we are implementing regulations requiring employers to provide additional protections for late-night retail workers providing services between the hours of 11 p.m. and 6 a.m. These measures include safe cash handling procedures, use of video cameras, and the provision of appropriate visibility and signage for all late-night retail premises. Most importantly the regulation will require a check-in system and personal emergency transmitter be provided to all workers working alone in late-night retail. As well employers will also be required to conduct a workplace hazard assessment. The additional protections are effective and enforceable. They are best practices modelled after other jurisdictions. We will work diligently to educate workplaces and continue enforcement efforts to achieve compliance and ensure safety for late-night retail workers.

With this announcement we honour Jimmy Wiebe, and we thank Aaron Nagy who worked faithfully and tirelessly to advocate for additional protection for late-night retail workers. I also want to thank Andrew Klukas, who is here in the visitor's gallery today, and the Western Convenience Stores Association for their co-operation and input. Mr. Speaker, I also want to recognize the member opposite who has also made this a

significant cause for him and also has a family member that has been involved in a workplace incident.

Our government values and respects the contribution of Saskatchewan's working population, and we want to ensure that Jimmy Wiebe did not die in vain. Because of him, many people in Saskatchewan will have even greater protection than before. We will continue to enforce, monitor, and update best practices. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the minister for sharing a copy of the statement with me in advance and for the many conversations we've had over the past year leading up to today's statement.

I do want to congratulate the government for their work in passing these regulations. The NDP [New Democratic Party] is pleased that a year of advocacy for Jimmy's law has led to an increase in safety regulations for late-night retail workers. And although they fall short of the measures we were proposing in our private member's bill named Jimmy's law, I believe it's a positive step forward and will be a welcome improvement for workers and their families.

Following the introduction of my private member's bill, I conducted a late-night tour of workplaces around the province and visited with workers on the night shift in eight different cities. What I heard is that they felt vulnerable and anxious. Everyone working a night shift is keenly aware of those tragic cases where an employee has become a victim. I want to as well acknowledge the pain faced by the families and friends of these victims. Survivors continue to live on with the memory of what has happened, and the healing is difficult.

One of these victims was Jimmy Wiebe, the namesake for our private member's bill. Jimmy deserved better protection. All workers deserve better protection, therefore steps to increase security and workplace safety are needed and welcome. And as I said, the new regulations are a good first step, but enforcement of the new regulations will be critical. According to a hazard alert released by the ministry's own occupational health and safety division in May, non-compliance with the existing lower safety requirements was only 80 per cent. Making sure that business owners and workers are aware of and following the rules is an important part, ongoing part of governing.

I too want to thank several people who helped contribute to the success of our campaign to bring safer working conditions to late-night workers. And they include in our own caucus staff, in helping produce the petition, the bill, our researcher Rod Scansen; the SFL [Saskatchewan Federation of Labour], Lori Jobb, Heath Smith and Larry Hubich, amongst others; Darren Kaytor, a survivor of two late night robberies this past spring in Saskatoon who came out with us on our tour and was very eloquent; and of course Aaron Nagy who really was the driving force behind this all. And I too want to acknowledge the Wiebe family for their support.

Mr. Speaker, as I conclude, I want to acknowledge the human face of workplace safety and in particular the clerks who work in vulnerable at-risk situations such as late-night retail. It is so

personal because almost all of us know someone who works a late shift. These people are often young, perhaps their first job. Sometimes they are retirees just trying to make ends meet or students working in order to afford a higher education. These are people with dreams, and they are people with families and friends who have connections to our community. They are people who deserve to be safe in their workplace.

Mr. Speaker, I've read into the record over the course of the past year names of clerks and others across Canada who've died violently in their workplace, not to mention the untold number of near misses of dangerous occurrences. Now on a personal note, I want to, I'd like to thank the minister for his thoughtful words, as our own family has experienced first-hand last month the harsh reality of a late-night robbery. Fortunately our daughter wasn't harmed, and for that we are thankful.

I am confident, Mr. Speaker, that today our actions are an important first step in making our province a safer place to work. That is our job as legislators, and I am encouraged by the progress on our journey. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 59 — *The Animal Identification Amendment Act, 2012*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 59, *The Animal Identification Amendment Act, 2012* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Agriculture that Bill No. 59, *The Animal Identification Amendment Act, 2012* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the question?

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. Stewart: — Next sitting of the House.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 60 — *The Animal Products Amendment Act, 2012*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 60, *The Animal Products Amendment Act, 2012* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Agriculture that Bill No. 60, *The Animal Products 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. Stewart: — Next sitting of the House.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 62 — *The Parks Amendment Act, 2012 (No. 2)*

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

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 62, *The Parks Amendment Act, 2012 (No. 2)* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport that Bill No. 62, *The Parks Amendment 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 this bill be read a second time?

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 64 — *The Regional Parks Consequential Amendments Act, 2012/Loi de 2012 portant modifications corrélatives à la loi intitulée The Regional Parks Act, 2012*

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

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 64, *The Regional Parks Consequential Amendments Act, 2012* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport that Bill No. 64, *The Regional Parks 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. Doherty: — Next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

[14:30]

Bill No. 65 — *The Securities Amendment Act, 2012 (No. 2)*

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 65, *The Securities Amendment Act, 2012 (No. 2)* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Justice and Attorney General has moved first reading of Bill No. 65, *The Securities 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: — The next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 61 — *The Railway Amendment Act, 2012*

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

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my privilege to rise and speak about Bill No. 61, an Act to amend the railway amendment Act. *The Railway Amendment Act* outlines the railway abandonment process, which requires railway owners to offer to sell their railway lines to interested parties before being allowed to permanently abandon their railway. The abandonment process requires that a railway owner first advertise their intentions to either sell or abandon the line and invite any expressions of interest from buyers. Currently the Highway Traffic Board has insufficient authority to remedy a situation where either the seller or the potential buyer is negotiating in bad faith.

In the government purchase phase, a municipal government is required to either decline or accept the offer to purchase the net

salvage value within 60 days of receiving the offer, and they can only request a net salvage value after they have accepted the offer. As a result, they are forced to make a critical decision without knowing what the exact purchase price will be.

It was therefore proposed that *The Railway Act* be amended to adopt the following provisions. To address bad faith negotiation allegations against the seller during the sale phase, we are proposing to give the Highway Traffic Board new powers to evaluate the dispute and, if necessary, issue an order to the parties to enter an agreement that the board believes is fair and reasonable. Alternatively if the board believes the potential buyer is negotiating in bad faith, the board has the authority to relieve the seller of their obligation to continue negotiating with the interested party.

In order to give municipal governments more comfort in their decision to accept the offer to purchase, we are proposing an amendment that will allow municipal governments the opportunity to request a net salvage value cost estimate before accepting the offer. Ultimately the need for these changes stems from insuring that abandon process provides an interested buyer with every opportunity to reach a fair agreement with the railway seller.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 61, *An Act to amend The Railway Act, 2012*.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Highways and Transportation has moved second reading of Bill No. 61, *The Railway Amendment Act, 2012*. Is the Assembly . . . I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise once again on behalf of the opposition to give our initial comments on Bill 61, which is really an Act to amend the railway system throughout the province of Saskatchewan. As I understand, the minister with some of his speaking points raised the notion that some of these railway companies throughout our province decide to sell their line either through a salvage process or even selling it to somebody who might even want to retain the rights to run the rail system in that particular area. It gives us a lot of . . . there's a lot of different information that we need to find out, and we need to seek to see whether this is a good option or not.

Obviously from the opposition perspective, we want to be able to utilize the rail system throughout Saskatchewan as best we can because we know that the stress and strain on the highway system throughout northern Saskatchewan and southern and south Saskatchewan and all throughout our provinces, that really that there is a lot of strain on the highway system.

And you can see evidence of that, whether it's a truck hauling ore out of the North or whether it's a farmer hauling grain from their field, that a lot of the stress has been placed from the railway system back onto the highway system, Mr. Speaker, through our grid roads and our main highways that we see the stress. And we see the strain of all the traffic and, of course, hauling all the products on the highways. So obviously it doesn't make sense that the province and the people of Saskatchewan look at the option that was available many, many years ago at a greater rate, and that's to use the rail system that

we have in the province of Saskatchewan.

So this is a very interesting bill, Mr. Speaker, because obviously at the outset the people of Saskatchewan would say, yes I think a rail transportation system would be advantageous. How would we run these systems? How would we pay for the purchase of these rights to, you know, to run freight on rail, and so on and so forth? Because we know that there are a number of major rail companies, whether it's VIA or some of the other rail operators in the country, that used to have running rights in the province and have since abandoned Saskatchewan and, quite frankly, abandoned rural Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of questions about why they done that, and the hurt and the harm that they caused not only the agricultural sector, but the economy in general, Mr. Speaker.

So this bill, I think at the outset that there's a lot of points that I want to raise on this bill, primarily because I think people haven't had the time to really discuss the issue of folks that I see on my trips back home now and then the fact that they're tearing up rail lines. And to me, I think that that's a huge, colossal waste of money because the rail lines are there. It could be a valuable tool to haul a number of freight cars loaded with farm products and loaded with forestry products and so on and so forth. Why can't they simply keep that line running? Because I'm sure it could be used.

And it's kind of a disappointment to me, Mr. Speaker, when we see the fact that these rail lines are being torn up. And obviously this bill speaks about the opportunity for both the buyer and the seller and the province to inject themselves in the process. And, Mr. Speaker, I think that it's only fair that we do that to see what is going on. Because obviously you would assume that after six years the Saskatchewan Party government would have figured this out, but it's taken them six years, and how many more tracks and how many kilometres of track have we lost in the meantime?

So that's one of the things I think is really important. Is this too little too late to help alleviate the stress on our highway system? I believe it is, Mr. Speaker. Now how many more kilometres is this Act going to impact, Mr. Speaker? I don't know that information. The minister didn't allude to it, didn't speak about it. So we need to find that out.

As well we also need to find out the basic information, like how many different tracks are being owned and operated by producer-friendly co-operatives? Is there any tracks owned by municipal co-operatives? Is there any private track operatives in the province that have an interest in any of these tracks that are deemed to be expendable by the major players and therefore for sale? A lot of this information, as an opposition, we need to have.

Now I don't know what the larger railway companies would have to say about this particular Act and, you know, the companies that abandoned Saskatchewan. And my only point is that I don't want to . . . I really don't care what they have to say about the whole notion of what their decision is on the railway system in Saskatchewan, because they did abandon the producer. They did abandon our province and, Mr. Speaker, it's something that I don't think we should encourage in terms of having consultation with them.

But we ought to be able to put some measures in there that will protect the Saskatchewan people's interest on a continual basis, and I do hope that this bill is able to salvage some of the tracks that are out there that could be used or could be purchased, or there could be some good discussion on how different groups can purchase the track and keep the track running for their own purposes.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would point out that when you look at the notion of bad faith . . . Now obviously bad faith has got a lot of legal connotations to it. Perhaps these companies — and I pray that it's not case — but some of these larger companies would want to keep running rights away from some of these co-operatives. Because obviously they have a business interest and the large corporations want to be able to keep control of how many railway systems are operational, how much are being hauled by the transportation system of rail.

So all these questions that the major companies would have an interest in, we have to know exactly what their end game is in, Mr. Speaker. I doubt very much if the ministry and this particular minister has that information, but it'd be very valuable if we did have the information as to what their future plans are when it comes to Saskatchewan.

At the outset, Mr. Speaker, I spoke about the value to our economy if we're able to transfer as much of the produce transferred throughout our province, if you were able to have a good system of rail and then highway. There's no question about it, that if we had a complementary role and that we're able to envision this, Mr. Speaker, that it'd be a really important, important, vital piece to rural Saskatchewan to have that transportation system call a rail line.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I know in Meadow Lake that there's been lot of discussions with the RM, with the town of Meadow Lake, on having a rail system that would be able to serve that region from Meadow Lake to North Battleford. Now I don't know how far along that this particular government has had and the success that they have had in trying to forward that particular argument, that particular case. I know that I did attend a meeting with the RM and that there was a few people from the town of Meadow Lake as well, or the city now, and they did talk about the fact that they needed support on purchasing some of these lines and that they needed ongoing support.

So when we talk about bad faith, Mr. Speaker, I'm not just simply referencing the parties that may want to buy the rights to the rail system in a specified area or the party that wants to sell those rights, Mr. Speaker. I'm also talking about the government in terms of their faith in helping this system along.

Now in the case of Meadow Lake, if they're not going to help the RM and the city of Meadow Lake to have this rail system put in place so they're able to transfer a lot of goods produced in that particular area to North Battleford, Mr. Speaker, then there's a bit of bad faith on the province as well. Because you can't just simply say that we want to look at how they're selling these lines. You've got to also come up with a solution on how you fund and finance these lines to help the people really keep that rail line system going. And I know that there's a lot of discussions, Mr. Speaker. We're privy to some of them, but this is one example of how a town or a city has been trying to reach

out to this government to help address two things. One is to keep their economy moving, and a big part of that economic building is to ensure that you have a way to transfer and transport your goods and services that you produce in that area. And the second point that the people would make is that we ought to have a complementary system between a rail-line system and a highway system. Because if you don't have both, then the stress of transporting all those goods and services produced out of Meadow Lake area is all transferred to one part of that system, which is called the highway system.

So I know they've been working very hard, the RM and the city and many producers and many business people. They are working hard to try and get this rail-line system going. But my real question, Mr. Speaker, when a minister makes reference to bad faith, is there some bad faith on the part of the government by not adequately supporting them financially to put that line in place? Because the end result is there is less strain on our highway system as a result of a line, a rail-line that ran from Meadow Lake to North Battleford, Mr. Speaker.

And the obvious answer is yes. I think there's a great business case made for that line and I think people were very, very surprised that when all the opportunity came for the province to do something about it, they simply walked away from all the discussion. And Meadow Lake was once again left to look at themselves as the only people that are advocating for this in supporting this notion. And I think that in many, many ways there was a lot of bad faith expressed and shown by the Sask Party government towards the Meadow Lake folks that were trying to retain the right to run a rail-line system from Meadow Lake to North Battleford, which would've been good for their economic activity and good for the entire region, Mr. Speaker.

So we look at some of the notions and the comments and the initial look at this bill. There are many, many ways. There are many, many ways that we would like to ensure the people of Saskatchewan have a good transportation system complemented by a great rail-line system that is owned and operated by co-operatives throughout the province. Nothing wrong with that concept at all, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely nothing wrong with that concept.

So you know, when you hear bills of this sort coming forward, Bill 61, we really want to pay a lot of attention to it. We want to pay a lot of attention to it because what again I point out is that, if it is an effort to stop the multinational rail-line corporation from really hurting Saskatchewan's growth, simply for the reason they don't want to see any competition in our province, then we don't want to focus the blame on the people that are trying to build these rail-line co-operatives. They're the ones that are trying to make a difference, Mr. Speaker, and we have to capitalize on that.

[14:45]

So we need to tell the multinational rail-line companies that, if you're going to start tearing up tracks and you're going to start selling these running rights without any consultation with the people of the impacted area, then something ought to be done about that to stop that. We absolutely, totally agree, Mr. Speaker. And we'll continue having and holding that strong belief.

On the flip side, if the community co-operatives, as evidenced in Meadow Lake, put together a compelling plan and a business plan to have the rail-line system developed in consort with them as partners and then we don't do anything to help support them in that regard, Mr. Speaker, isn't that considered bad faith as a government? And the answer is, absolutely. It is considered bad faith. Because not only are you hurting that economy, you're hurting all these different economies along that route that could have benefited from a really, really superior transportation system that has a road component to it, a highway component to it, but also has a rail-line transportation system as part of that overall transportation strategy.

So, Mr. Speaker, there is a lot of questions that we have on this particular bill. I look at the comments the minister made in reference to net salvage value assessment option. Obviously it's pretty self-explanatory that, in a sense, that if they want to sell a line, they look at the net salvage value of the line if there's no economic value. How do you figure out those values, Mr. Speaker, if you're not giving the communities the opportunity to purchase those lines when they're intact and the running rights that many of these large corporations may own? How could you actually go down the path to say, well before anything happens, let's look at the net salvage value of that line? Well, Mr. Speaker, it's almost as if they're giving up before they even get into the fight.

And I say, shame to the Saskatchewan Party that you should capitalize on the energy and on the enthusiasm of the people of the Meadow Lake area that had been asking you for years to support their system of rail-line development, to support their system and their request to develop a rail-line co-operative so that they're able to transfer goods and services efficiently, effectively, and not put all the strain on the main highway that runs to Meadow Lake and of course to North Battleford and south.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of bad faith that I see that the Saskatchewan Party has shown on this particular file. It's very obvious as you see the strategy of the Sask Party. They now tend to say, okay, the multinational, large federal transportation companies, the rail line companies, the big, bad corporate rail-line companies, we want to make sure they don't show bad faith to the producer-owned co-operatives.

And, Mr. Speaker, they're just right next door to the large corporations that have shown bad faith to many people that had some initiative and faith that they can run their own rail line. And what I mean by that, Mr. Speaker, is that they in no way, shape, or form did try and support some of the local initiatives that I'm aware of in the northwest part of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, I think that it is a prevalent problem all throughout the province and that many, many people in many, many communities are watching this particular bill with a lot of interest.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I see that as you look at some of the challenges of transportation in our province, you'll get some of the work being done around the Saskatoon area. You can see the impact of how — the potentially positive impact — of how the city of Meadow Lake and some of the RM of Meadow Lake and some of the supporting RMs in that area, when they say there's a great economic case for the province to help us with

this rail-line project, they make a compelling argument, Mr. Speaker.

So as you begin to see how you connect the dots by having a solid rail-line system put in from Meadow Lake to North Battleford, and then you go on to Saskatoon from there and then you start seeing Saskatoon and the number of transportation improvements being made to the city. And that's about the ease in the moving of goods and services, Mr. Speaker. And then you go on to Vancouver, to the Vancouver port where you can again transfer your products and services worldwide, Mr. Speaker, it makes a really good, compelling argument of how everything is connected. So, Mr. Speaker, it is the principle of good, solid, cost-efficient transportation of goods, Mr. Speaker, that many people argue about when they bring forward the argument of rail-line support.

Now, Mr. Speaker, in Big River, Meadow Lake, those are some of the communities that I notice in my travels that you see rail lines in those areas being torn up. And it's a crying shame, Mr. Speaker, because those rail lines . . . I don't know what the salvage value is of a kilometre of rail line, but imagine what that kilometre of rail line can actually save you on not only transportation costs but the wear and tear on our provincial highway system, Mr. Speaker.

So there's a lot of complementary arguments, and I think if there's any bad faith to be mentioned with this particular bill, the bad faith is that the people of the city of Meadow Lake really reached out to this government to help them with this particular project, and they simply turned their back on them and they failed them miserably. So there is a lot of bad faith when we talk about some of the transportation opportunities with rail line as being shown on a continual basis by the Sask Party government.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have many more comments on Bill 61. I know that as we go down this path that there is a number of colleagues of mine that are paying very close attention to everything this particular minister does in transportation. We pray that he doesn't mess things up, and we pray that he takes the opportunity to really learn how to do things right and learn from the examples of the people of Meadow Lake. So that, I think, that's one of the lessons and one of the points that we'd like to make earlier on.

And the other point I would like to do, Mr. Speaker, on Bill 61, on Bill 61 is to ask for some of those folks, the people that are advocating a greater use of the rail-line system in Saskatchewan, to stop them from tearing up these rail lines, to have them come to the Assembly to come join the opposition in pressing this government to stop acting in bad faith when it comes to protecting rail lines, and of course to try as best as possible to financially support them in purchasing those running rights from some of the larger corporations so they can use them for their own co-operatives, for their own communities, and for their own economies.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of issues that we want to raise in this particular bill. I just see that this bill has a lot of shortcomings. It doesn't answer a lot of questions. And the amount of kilometres that are being impacted, which organizations have had success? The best practices of some of

the organizations that are successful, how much money did they have to put in? How are the discussions with our national railway companies, how are those going? How's the relationship of this government with a lot of the larger players in this industry? These are some of the questions that we have to ask, Mr. Speaker.

But you know one thing for sure as a result of this bill, that they appear they want to be able to take on these larger companies. But, Mr. Speaker, they're not giving the people the resources nor the time nor the support to really make a difference when it comes to shortline rail service in some of these areas. And that's a crying shame, Mr. Speaker. And that's one of the things that I point out when the minister makes reference to bad faith. There's a lot of bad faith, Mr. Speaker, and it's shown every single day to those people that show that initiative, by the Saskatchewan Party government. And I say, shame on them, Mr. Speaker.

So it's important that we continue to point out that people have the opportunity to come to the Assembly, express their views on whether this bill is proper. The opposition are going to take the next two or three months to look at this particular bill, go forward and ask people, is there anything that we can do to strengthen your hand, to support your cause? Let the opposition know, and we will take on the Saskatchewan Party to make sure they don't simply say, oh, it's those big national rail-line companies that are doing all this damage. In the meantime, they're sitting there crossing their fingers that they aren't asked for any money. And if they're not asked for any money, they point out the bogeyman to all these people. Then all of the sudden the attention is not focused on them.

So I think it's important that the people of Saskatchewan know that there's a lot of bad faith expressed to the people that want to take rail-line transportation opportunities to the maximum. And that bad faith many, many times is being shown by the Saskatchewan Party government.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have a lot more issues we want to raise on this bill. We can go on for quite some time, Mr. Speaker. I'm prepared to go on for quite some time if need be because the impact and the effect, what the people are hauling, the products, the discussions, the years, the money, all these issues, there's so many things that we can speak about, Mr. Speaker. I can go on for hours here, Mr. Speaker. I could go on for hours.

But I want to make sure, I want to make sure of one thing: that the Saskatchewan Party fundamentally believe that it's all about private enterprise, Mr. Speaker. And it's amazing, they talk about private enterprise, that there's . . . We believe they have a strong role to play of course. But it's amazing, the moment they stop hearing private enterprise is when organizations that want to take over running rights for rail lines and actually build up these rail lines, when they come ask these guys for money, they say, sorry, we believe in private enterprise, so you guys are a co-operative. I don't think you guys should get into . . . We don't believe, as Sask Party, you guys should get into owning a rail line.

So they sometimes are confusing, Mr. Speaker. They're very confusing to their own supporters. And we all know, within the NDP ranks, they're always confused, Mr. Speaker. And I think

quite frankly that's something that needs to be said from time to time just to remind their members that there are a lot of people watching what they do on rail-line companies through bills like this, Bill 61.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's going to be other members of my trusted caucus that are going to have a lot of comments on this bill. I'm going to have an opportunity to express more of these concerns as the Assembly proceeds. We have several months before the spring sitting in which we can bring back more compelling arguments. And I challenge all the organizations out there that have a desire to look at rail line as one of the options to transport goods and services out of your community, out of your region, that you take a very good look at what this bill does, a very good look at what this bill does.

And while at the outset it appears that we're all holding the multinational federal companies to task, that we also make sure that the Saskatchewan Party is also held to task and make sure that they put the proper resources, they put the proper supports, and above all else, they put their money where their mouth is when it comes to supporting and developing regional rail lines that many RMs and cities and towns and villages want.

And, Mr. Speaker, talk is cheap, so they've got to start producing. Otherwise the people of Saskatchewan, the rural people in particular out around the Meadow Lake area, Big River area are going to simply say, well these guys are busy blaming everybody. They're not taking no responsibility whatsoever to address this problem, to help us build the system. And they're the ones that we need to focus on. I think it's a very important message that I give today.

And today I was kind of smiling, Mr. Speaker, when we asked the Minister of Finance about their balanced budget. And we all smile over here when they mention that phrase. Well he got up and he blamed the banks. Oh those pesky banks, you know. They shouldn't be creating a deficit for the Saskatchewan Party government. You know, that's exactly what the minister said. We counted on the banks to make these predictions so it's not us. It must be the banks that created this deficit. We're still saying we have a balanced budget. Yes right, you have a balanced budget. We all know you don't.

So it's the same, it's the same principle with this bill, Mr. Speaker. Same principle with this bill, Mr. Speaker, is that they're blaming the national rail-line transportation companies. We better go after those guys. We better go after those guys because they're hurting our producer-owned co-operatives. Well, Mr. Speaker, you in the meantime as a government, Sask Party government are not doing nothing to help the rail line, regional rail lines develop, Mr. Speaker. So again there's a lot of bad faith referenced in this particular bill, Mr. Speaker.

The minister alluded to bad faith. I suggest the bad faith's right over there, Mr. Speaker, because they have not put their money where their mouth is to help regional rail lines develop, and they haven't put the proper supports. They haven't put the proper emphasis, and they haven't put the proper respect by making sure that many of these regional rail lines have their support. If you want to help the local economy, if you want to help some of their own support base, so why don't they do it, Mr. Speaker? Because they're so busy blaming others. They

want to deflect the attention, Mr. Speaker. They want to deflect the attention.

And now today, the latest, the latest deflection, it wasn't them that created the deficit; it was the banks. The Minister of Finance said it was the banks, the banks that give us this deficit. Well those banks . . . If I see one of them, I'm going to give them a talking to, Mr. Speaker, because they're the ones to blame according to the Sask Party, you know. And we're sitting here laughing our heads off in opposition. And, Mr. Speaker, you can't keep blaming other organizations for your incompetence. You simply have to stand up and face the music.

So Bill 61, Mr. Speaker, once again Bill 61, they're looking and focusing on the big CNR [Canadian National Railways] and VIA Rail saying, these guys are doing bad things to us so we've got to straighten them out. But in the meantime, they're not spending one red cent to help solve the problem that many of the producers and many of the communities and the cities and rural parts of our province have been asking for, and that's to help fund a regional rail-line system to protect running rights for the local economies, to make sure that we don't have these companies tear up land that would be so valuable. All in all, it makes good economic sense. Plus you've got the huge added benefit of saving our transportation system a lot of wear and tear because you haul all kinds of goods and all kinds of products on our road system.

[15:00]

And if you transfer some of that over to the rail-line system, it makes sense. It makes sense. So for our perspective, it's common sense, and that's what the people of these co-operatives are saying. It's common sense. It's economic sense. It's good sense. Why don't you do it? So what happens now? We get a bill like this and the minister says, well they're going to give those big bad multinational corporations that are involved with rail-line transportation, we're going to give them heck. We're going to accuse them of bad faith. We're going to really watch how they . . . what salvage value they get out of their lines or they're going to tear them up.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think we need a big mirror to put in front of that entire cabinet and Premier and caucus and say, we are the solution to the problem on rail lines. And here, have a look at this mirror. And that's the point, Mr. Speaker, is that they've got to stop assessing blame, pointing fingers, and putting everything over there, Mr. Speaker, saying it's all these other guys' fault. Mr. Speaker, it's not even close. The Saskatchewan Party failed to deliver. They continue failing to deliver, and they're turning their back on the people of Saskatchewan. And they have betrayed the trust when you talk about issues of regional rail line, Mr. Speaker.

And I think the people of Saskatchewan, people of Meadow Lake, people of Big River have had enough of this shell game, Mr. Speaker. The real problem is the Saskatchewan Party's lack of commitment to support rail lines identified in Bill 61. And, Mr. Speaker, the opposition is going to stand up, and we're going to hold them to account.

We have a lot more to say, Mr. Speaker. Like I said, we can go on for a long time here. I'm more than prepared to do that. The

effects downstream, whether it's in North Battleford, whether it's in Saskatoon, the effects downstream of stifling this opportunity is going to be . . . There's a huge potential, but there's also a huge problem if it's not addressed right.

So the best thing, Mr. Speaker, that I just love being in opposition, the thing that I love being in opposition is that I don't have to market, I don't have to market the so-called growth plan. Every one of them talk about a growth plan, Mr. Speaker. I don't have to use those words. Because it's a fictional growth plan. We can get up here and we can speak about what the issues are. We don't have to have a piece of paper handed to us and say, any time anybody gives you criticism say, the growth plan. That's a fictional plan, and shame on them for saying "the growth plan" when they know there's huge deficits in their plan, Mr. Speaker, that there's no commitment to their plan. There's no financial resources to the plan. It's just a buzzword they like to use and market as much as they can.

And once again evidence of that is very apparent through the lack of commitment financially through Bill 61 to show the regional rail lines and the co-operatives on how these regional rail lines, under their ownership . . . They could have put money in that and say, here's some cash to help you out. We support that, Mr. Speaker. But guess what? It's a two-page bill with no reference of cash. The only thing they do here is point to the big multinational rail-line companies saying, it's all their fault; but we'll fight them for you. In the meantime, no money.

So, Mr. Speaker, on Bill 61, we have a lot more we want to say about this, and we will say more. And we will come back. And we will encourage people to participate in this. So at this time, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to adjourn debate on Bill 61.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 61, the railroad amendment Act, 2012. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 63 — *The Regional Parks Act, 2012*

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

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to speak about *The Regional Parks Act, 2012*. Regional parks are valuable contributors to Saskatchewan's network of parks, offering a wide range of outdoor recreational services and facilities, which fulfill a need for local tourism and recreation opportunities. This new legislation is being proposed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of regional parks governance and to provide additional clarity to the regional park authorities that rely on this legislation and the subsequent regulations to guide their operations.

The Regional Parks Act, 2012 replaces *The Regional Parks Act, 1979* in order to address an array of administrative and operational changes that have impacted the regional parks program over the past 30 years. Mr. Speaker, this new Act

improves upon the existing legislation in five critical areas and will send a signal to our municipal and non-profit partners that we are listening to and addressing their needs.

The first area of improvement under the proposed legislation, Mr. Speaker, is to provide a much clearer description of the minister's powers with regard to the regional parks program. The existing legislation describes powers of the department versus the minister and does not specifically describe the types of powers required to carry out the minister's responsibilities.

The second critical area of improvement, Mr. Speaker, I would like to introduce in the proposed legislation establishes the authority to delegate certain minister's powers to the Saskatchewan Regional Parks Association via a formal administration agreement approved by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. The Saskatchewan Regional Parks Association plays a pivotal role in the administration of the regional parks program across the entire province, serving not only as the voice for regional parks in the province but also providing important services like accreditation, marketing, and provision of advice to regional parks boards as well as adjudication of provincial capital grant funding.

Saskatchewan Regional Parks Association's role in administering the regional parks has grown significantly since the 1990s when capital and maintenance grants were provided directly to the regional parks. Today we have the benefit of working together with the association, allowing them to apply peer-developed and -reviewed criteria in order to distribute funding in a manner that maximizes the overall benefits.

My ministry has worked closely with the Saskatchewan Regional Parks Association to draft this proposed legislation in order that it can continue its pivotal role with the appropriate supporting legislation in place. Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Regional Parks Association has been asking for legislative and regulatory changes for over 10 years now and will be pleased to see a new Act and subsequent regulations move forward.

The third area being addressed in the proposed legislation is formal recognition of community and non-profit organizations in the establishment and operation of regional park authorities, where previously only municipalities had this formal recognition. The ongoing role of municipalities in the establishment and operation of regional parks is also reinforced, as the connection between regional parks and municipal government is critical. Mr. Speaker, this new provision recognizes the reality of changing demographics in rural Saskatchewan and the critical role that community organizations have come to play in supporting municipal partners in the management and operation of regional park authorities.

A fourth component of the proposed legislation is overall improved clarity throughout the legislation, including the removal of many out-of-date and redundant references. The existing Act, which was originally written in 1960, is quite detailed and many of the existing sections in the Act have been moved to regulations, policy, or simply deleted altogether.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, this new proposed legislation clarifies the processes required for regional park boundary adjustments and

adds rigour and public accountability with regard to park dissolution and also with regard to financial and annual operating. Regarding park dissolutions, the proposed legislation allows me, as minister, to set certain conditions such as the completion of a public consultation process. Any set conditions would need to be met prior to my creating an order to dissolve a regional park. The proposed legislation clearly enables me to do this. Public accountability is also strengthened, Mr. Speaker, through clear requirements for regional park authorities to report back to their membership annually and to table reports with the Legislative Assembly if requested by the minister.

My ministry has worked extensively with the Saskatchewan Regional Parks Association in the development of this proposed legislation. Internally we have worked with provincial ministries including Justice and Attorney General, Government Relations, Municipal Affairs, Environment, Highways and Infrastructure, and externally with municipal organizations including Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association and the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities.

To conclude, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of Bill 63, *The Regional Parks Act, 2012*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The minister has moved second reading of Bill No. 63, the regional parks amendment Act, 2012. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again I'm very pleased to stand up on this particular bill and speak about some of the challenges, the immediate challenges that we see on Bill 63, where the minister has indicated that he has the authority, along with the municipal government, to dedesignate or to not designate certain regional parks, at his whim and certainly at his mercy, Mr. Speaker.

And one of the things I think we want to spend a little bit of time on, Mr. Speaker, is to highlight the incredible value of the regional park system that we enjoy in the province. There are many, many places that I've been in the province and, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we don't do enough is we don't do enough to highlight and we don't do enough to make sure that the regional park system is being bragged about and being used and being showcased, Mr. Speaker.

I think a lot of times the regional park system, they have a great amount of commitment. I remember attending a number of the regional parks when I was a minister and I was treated very well and the people that showed me their parks, they were very, very proud, very proud of the effort that they undertook as a volunteer board and certainly as a region and as a community or an RM. And as they began to develop these parks and support these parks and they of course formed the regional association and the provincial association, and I attended a number of their conventions, Mr. Speaker. And absolutely these are quality people. They're very committed and dedicated to their communities. They volunteer a lot of their free time and they make beautiful parks out of nothing, Mr. Speaker.

I've seen parks where they've had, you know, just very basic campsites, and once the volunteer board got involved and once

the communities got involved, they developed some very, very special sites, Mr. Speaker. And I was actually struck and I was actually amazed and I was actually inspired at the value of the Regional Parks Association because, as I mentioned at the outset, they didn't get a lot of support. They didn't get a lot of recognition. And as a minister I tried my very darndest to make sure that they got recognized. I used some of their regional parks and at one time we even increased their funding, Mr. Speaker. It was a significant amount of increase as well. We could've done more and should've done more, but I think the people at that time understood that the Tories broke the bank when they left office in the early '90s.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think one of the things that's really important is that that didn't deter them. And I think they appreciated the challenges we face as a province, and they buckled down and they went to work.

Now today now, the regional park systems is a beautiful system. I'm sure my colleague, who also served as the minister responsible for the regional parks, can attest to the incredible value and can certainly talk about the commitment that these groups have had to the regional park system. You go to a number of gas stations; you see the reminders on some of the billboards. You hear them being interviewed on the news. You see their advertisements in some of the weekly papers. It's actually an amazing thing to see how they have marketed the regional parks.

And, Mr. Speaker, as an opposition, we're very, very proud of the work that the regional parks executives and the board of directors and their volunteers do. And we hope that that kind of effort continues for many, many years. Because that's what makes Saskatchewan great, Mr. Speaker, is people of that sort, volunteers of that nature, and certainly people that are dedicated to making sure that Saskatchewan showcases its natural beauty.

Now, Mr. Speaker, absolutely, there's no question that the regional parks people do build our communities. They help our economies. They make people feel welcome because, as you know, when you have a regional park and you have a number of services at the park, whether it's a swimming pool or whether it's a serviced campsite or golfing, these are some of the things that they put in place. And it's amazing, Mr. Speaker, that they not just look at the summer program, as my colleague pointed out. There's cross-country skiing. There's snowmobile trails. The list kind of goes on as to what could be happening in Saskatchewan.

So I wanted to point out that the regional park system is a great system. It's something that people should experience and that Saskatchewan and particularly the official opposition, the NDP caucus, want to thank them publicly for their great help and for their great supports, Mr. Speaker.

I also want to point out that we also want to be careful that we don't do anything to hurt that process. We want to foster the development of our regional parks for many, many years to come. Now any time that the Sask Party starts meddling into some of these exciting organizations, then we become a bit concerned. Because we know that 99.99 per cent of the time, they want to blame somebody else for their actions. So they don't stand on their own two feet, Mr. Speaker. And when they

get involved with regional parks, it begins to make me wonder and worry what their agenda is, Mr. Speaker.

Now one of the examples I would use is LeRoy. As you may have heard, Mr. Speaker, LeRoy is a great community. They've got a regional park there as well. I understand that there's a golf course. I understand there's some campsites. There's a pool as well. And most recently LeRoy, being one of the Regional Parks Association members, they wanted to sell the park, the Sask Party did. And of course the bad thing about it is that, at the end of the day, the people of LeRoy, I think, agreed with the sale. After they had a meeting, they agreed. But what they didn't agree with is that the consultation happened after the sale was announced.

[15:15]

Now LeRoy people are very, very smart people. They want to be able to support and foster development. They know that there's a great opportunity in the mining sector next door to their community. They know that they want to be part of the economy. They want to see things stimulated in the area. Like they know what's going on, Mr. Speaker. And at the end of the day, the LeRoy people said, okay we've had a public meeting. We think what is being proposed . . . Well they weren't 100 per cent in favour of how it was handled, Mr. Speaker. I think the people of LeRoy decided that it made a bit of sense to do what the private company wanted to do, to build a work camp near or in their regional park and that was to of course complement the growth of the potash industry.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what was disturbing, I think, was the manner in which the Sask Party dealt with the people of LeRoy on the regional parks issue. They didn't consult them. They didn't sit down with them. They didn't draft up a plan together. And they simply announced this. Then the public meeting happened after the fact. And once the community had their meeting, and once everything was understood, the people of LeRoy decided that it was in their best interest to try and figure out how they could support this process, support the continued expansion of potash, of the potash mine there, and to support the workers that will be working at these mines. And that's a credit to the people of LeRoy, Mr. Speaker.

But what the people of LeRoy also asked, Mr. Speaker, was they asked that there be concessions given to protect the integrity and to protect the services that were at the regional park. They also asked that as well. And in good faith, Mr. Speaker, the people of LeRoy decided that yes, it wasn't great that they didn't let us know what was happening at the outset — and they came to a public meeting, the Sask Party came to a public meeting after the fact — we understand what's going on a bit better and we want to support and accommodate the growth of the mining sector. So that's exactly what they did.

They ended up supporting this process. And certainly from our perspective as opposition, we support the people of LeRoy in their plans. We support the fact that they made this decision all the while knowing that that's good for the economy and that's basically how the people of LeRoy would certainly show their support. And the problem they had is that they weren't told of this till after the fact.

And the second problem, I think and we think they're going to have, is that they asked for some concessions. And, Mr. Speaker, based on what the Sask Party has done time and time again is they've failed to deliver on a lot of concessions. And we see that from this particular government on a constant basis. And that's what we would warn LeRoy people about, is if there's concessions that you're asking for, be very, very careful, Mr. Speaker, because the Saskatchewan Party is short on fulfilling the concessions they make to accommodate the sale of some land to their private corporate buddies. And the last thing that they're going to worry about is the concession to the LeRoy people, in their bid to satisfy their large corporate friends.

So to the people of LeRoy, we support and respect what you're trying to do to support the economy. We understand that there's a few people upset at how it was handled. We understand that particular aspect. But we also warn you that if the Sask Party's giving you concessions, you better have four or five lawyers go through that agreement because if there's ways they can get out of that agreement, Mr. Speaker, they'll do it in a heartbeat. There's no question about it in our mind. And that really, I think, is a threat to the integrity to our regional park system.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think LeRoy people are going to demand that. They're going to want that, and they're going to make sure they get that, Mr. Speaker. And we can't blame them. So, Mr. Speaker, I would certainly point out that the regional park system in general, that they have to really . . . I think they're going to pay very close attention to what happens to the LeRoy Regional Park. And the reason why they're going to watch that is they don't want to see this government selling off pieces of regional parks without people's knowledge. That was the most awkward thing to do. And again today, the LeRoy people supported that because they're great people there. They know what's good for the economy so they'll continue doing that.

But the problem is, is that the Saskatchewan Party's done it after the fact. You know, it's almost as if they took them for granted. And that's kind of . . . If they're going to treat them like that at the early stages of this project, imagine what they'll do later down the road when they try and guarantee concessions. Mr. Speaker, I don't think, I don't think in any way, shape, or form that they're serious about getting those concessions in place.

There's a lot more that I want to say about this Act. There's not a whole lot of different initiatives in this particular Act, and the minister alluded to them trying to work with the Regional Parks Association. And the only question I have is, what kind of intent do they have, the Saskatchewan Party government have, when it comes to working with the Regional Parks Association? Is it about more money? Now that's not identified in this bill. Is it about a respect for a thorough process before they sell a regional park? Well it's not in this bill, Mr. Speaker. Is it recognition? Is it opportunity to showcase what the regional parks are all about? Well it's not in this bill, Mr. Speaker. What's in this bill is the sale option that the minister spoke about when they dealt with LeRoy Regional Park, the fact that they sold it, then they consulted the people. And that's what this bill is trying to correct, Mr. Speaker.

So based on their action and their activities, we in the

opposition do not have a lot of faith and confidence in this minister or any other minister on that side of the House because quite frankly they have betrayed a lot of people on many fronts. And yet they turn around and blame others, or they do the consultation after the fact.

So on that point, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that my colleagues will have a lot more to say about this, and we're going to be researching this. We're going to advise the people of the Regional Parks Association, and we'd like their input. And we will certainly raise the issue, and we will defend the integrity of the Regional Parks Association. And we'll learn a lot of valuable lessons from the people of LeRoy to make sure there's follow-up and follow through and commitment, that it isn't just words that the Sask Party use and then turn around and disappoint all these people.

So, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 63. And, Mr. Speaker, I so move. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 63, *The Regional Parks Act, 2012*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — That's carried.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 45

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. McMorris that **Bill No. 45** — *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Saskatchewan Telecommunications) Amendment Act, 2012* be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I appreciate the applause from the member from Yorkton to take my feet here today. I do appreciate that. The new Opposition Whip, I believe, Mr. Speaker, here today. And certainly we do welcome the expansion of those benches.

It's always difficult to follow the eloquent member from Athabasca in speaking, who's always succinct and to the point and whose words in many ways are difficult, as I say, to follow. But it is my pleasure to weigh in on Bill No. 45, *An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Act and The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Holding Corporation Act*.

Now when I'm looking at this bill, and I'm looking as a practical nature . . . I've read through the minister's comments as it relates to the changes that are being made and what the impact or the purpose of the changes are on Saskatchewan, on our SaskTel, Saskatchewan Telecommunications Corporation. What I recognize from the minister is that he's put forward that these are generally housekeeping changes. That's his message.

And they speak to two different pieces, Mr. Speaker. They speak to borrowing limits and provisions, changes that will allow SaskTel to in fact borrow at 30-year terms, which is consistent with the Ministry of Finance, and allows them to access some of the financial tools that the bond market has put onto the marketplace here in Canada, and potentially allow some better borrowing rates in doing so.

There's also another practical change that's highlighted here, that being a change for no order in council that's required for oversight of expenditures over \$100,000. I understand that's being removed as it's deemed impractical to be responsive to address and make the changes required for some of the purchase and acquisition of land for the satellite towers required for cell phone coverage in the province.

So those are the minister's contentions of this bill. I always believe that it is important for us, with any bill that's put forward, to make sure that we're not just reading the minister's statement but also making sure that we're doing a thoughtful consultation with Saskatchewan people and stakeholders as it relates to any bill, making sure that we understand what the goals of a bill are, what the purpose are, the intended consequences, if you will, Mr. Speaker. But it's also important for us to make sure that we're bringing the kind of scrutiny and oversight to this Assembly to make sure that we arrive at making sure that there's not any unintended consequences as a result of the changes put forward by government.

Now this has been an important role for the official opposition over the past few years and particularly the last year because what we have seen with the current government is an approach to drive legislation that has often not reflected the evidence put before them, often not reflected a consultative process in building that legislation. And that's why we fulfill a very important role in not just speaking to these bills here in the Assembly but also engaging Saskatchewan stakeholders and Saskatchewan people in that analysis and making sure we're providing the proper sort of scrutiny and oversight that Saskatchewan people deserve. Because we have learned, Mr. Speaker, that we can't assume that that's been done by this government. In fact it's been a government that has often pushed aside consultation and often pushed aside common sense, Mr. Speaker, in the pursuit of an agenda that's in their own best interests or an agenda that's in line with their ideological interest but not in the best interests of Saskatchewan people. So that's sort of the purpose of why it's important that we fulfill this role to the people of the province, and certainly we invite that consultation process moving forward.

When I look at the two practical changes that the minister speaks of or housekeeping changes that the minister speaks of here, one of them speaks to specifically borrowing and the ability to utilize 30-year bond tools or products that are on the Canadian marketplace, and as I've said, to do so, to be able to come in line with the Ministry of Finance and the bond market that they're accessing, and certainly do talk about some consequences of not doing so, of not having the preferred borrowing rates that we should.

Now these are reasonable, very reasonable considerations, Mr. Speaker. And if it was just that, Mr. Speaker, I would have no trouble just simply supporting these changes as housekeeping

changes. But what's problematic here, Mr. Speaker, is that when we're talking about borrowing limits and monetary limits, what we're recognizing is in fact we have a government that has relied very heavily on the Crown sector to cash flow the operations of government. And this has had an adverse consequence certainly on Saskatchewan customers, regions, and communities across this province, but also it has an impact on the public, on the taxpayer if you will, Mr. Speaker. This is a discussion we've had often in this Assembly. But this goes directly to the heart of the unsustainability of the financial management put forward by the government opposite, by the Sask Party government, a government that has relied on the Crown sector to produce the revenues to try to balance off budgets that were put forward in an unsustainable fashion by this government.

And I would highlight again: so these would be practical changes and simple enough to support if this were about borrowing dollars and borrowing requirements that we're investing back into the network that SaskTel supports across this province, about making sure that we were meeting the needs of communities, whether that's cellphone users or Internet users, in all parts of this province. But in fact that hasn't been where a lot of the Crown sector borrowing has occurred. It hasn't been about borrowing to then be able to reinvest in Saskatchewan people and communities and in those networks. That's something that we would urge. That's something we would support, Mr. Speaker. But what a lot of the borrowing from the Crown sector represents, and we see a major increase again this year, Mr. Speaker, is simply producing the dollars to transfer across to cover off for unsustainable finances by the government opposite, Mr. Speaker.

[15:30]

And I go back just a couple of years on this, Mr. Speaker. And I look at the year of 2009, which stands out to me, and I know it stands out to many that watch the finances of this province closely. But we had this unprecedented circumstance where government reached into the Crown sector and actually took \$755 million in one year, Mr. Speaker, from the Crown sector, an unprecedented and damaging dividend rate from the Crown sector, far surpassing any sort of an appropriate dividend coming from the Crown sector. And let me be frank, Mr. Speaker, there is an appropriate dividend from the Crown sector to be paid to the people of the province. But what this government has done and the way they've acted has denied any sort of economic balance and has denied the best interests of Saskatchewan people being present with the sort of exorbitant dividend stripping and raids done at the whim of government, Mr. Speaker.

You know, I do believe we have to build out a structure that protects our Crown corporations from those sorts of reckless and damaging actions that we've seen of government and make sure that our Crowns are on a solid economic footing into the future. Because in many ways it was these Crowns that addressed the challenges and opportunities of yesterday in our history, and they were the innovations of Saskatchewan people coming together in a co-operative, common sense way to address those challenges. But just the same, Mr. Speaker, these are the same very institutions that should be able to give us

some purpose to our future, some control of our future in making sure that we have some certainty of achieving a brighter future for many people and communities across Saskatchewan.

The record of this government as it relates to the Crown sector is a disappointing one, Mr. Speaker. The facts speak for themselves, Mr. Speaker. Whether it's the over \$2 billion in just over five years that this government has drained from the Crown sector . . . It's reflected in the borrowing of the Crown sector, Mr. Speaker, as well, but has drained from the Crown sector. It's also reflected in the inability of this government to meet the needs of Saskatchewan people and communities, whether it's cellphone coverage, whether it's rural Internet usage, Mr. Speaker — and I think that that's one that's top of mind for many here, Mr. Speaker. Because, as I say, the borrowing that this government often supports in the Crown sectors is not to support that investment that we're speaking about. It's about transferring those dollars across for unsustainable finances of the current government. And this is where I take exception to the plan and the record of the Saskatchewan Party government.

Even this year I know when I look at some of the challenges we face as a province, and as we had this once proud international telecommunications company for which we were all rightfully proud of and was a leader not just in Canada but a leader from a global perspective, it has now in many ways been limited by the actions of this government. And I look at a very sad state of that is the impact that right now and the uncertainty for over 8,000 rural customers all across Saskatchewan as they're facing being forced upon them an inferior product, a private product, and a more costly product. And when I say product, a different company as well, a private company where this government and the federal government have been complicit in I guess taking away market share and responsibility from SaskTel, where once SaskTel had a proud record in serving those customers in communities.

I would urge that those rural customers are important customers. I would argue that those rural communities are important communities to our future and that they should be supported by SaskTel with exceptional service, exceptional product, and affordable rates. And the changes that are being brought forward by this government and the federal government have certainly not served that interest.

I also recognize that there is this consistent sort of hollowing out of our Crown sector and contracting out in our Crown sector. And certainly SaskTel is like many of our other Crowns in its approach under this government, Mr. Speaker, where we're seeing significant contracting out that we know, Mr. Speaker, could be done more effectively and more efficiently by the Crown corporations themselves and serve the best interests of all of Saskatchewan people and all Saskatchewan communities.

So the Crown record, to be frank, Mr. Speaker, of this government is a disappointing one. It's one that I'm more than willing to take this government to task on and simply lay the facts on the table: the unprecedented Crown sector dividend raids that we've seen; the contracting out in an ideological way without any evidence, without any common sense to support those choices, Mr. Speaker; the tying of the hands of those

Crown corporations, of governments into the future; and then those impacts subsequent to the people and communities who should expect something better from the Crown corporations for which they own and for which they've built, Mr. Speaker.

So when we're talking about borrowing in monetary limits and what's described as simply housekeeping changes by the minister, we have to recognize the broader context. If that was simply the case, if this was simply borrowing tools, being able to access 30-year bond products, Mr. Speaker, that would allow this government to invest and meet the needs of Saskatchewan people through investments in our network and in our people, then that's something we could support, and it would be a very practical matter and one of a housekeeping nature. But it's the fact that this gets to this much bigger issue of the unsustainability of this government's finances but, as importantly, to highlight the unprecedented way that this government has raided dollars from our Crown sector at a consequence to Saskatchewan people and communities and had a direct negative impact back onto those Crowns for which we depend on, Mr. Speaker.

So I'm always proud to get up on this side of the floor and to weigh in on the importance of our Crown sector, to speak to the importance of being able leave it on an independent, solid economic footing, something that's been prohibited by this government by way of, as I say, the cash grabs or the dividend raids that are going on or even some of the constraints and collaring that has occurred on that Crown sector, where they no longer can operate in an independent fashion as any other large business or organization where they're able to go out and, in an economically sound way, divest risk and bring back the benefit to Saskatchewan people, where they've been collared on that front, and then of course the ideological contracting out, Mr. Speaker, the contracting out that's denied, really, the common sense and the best interests of many throughout this province.

So those are a couple pieces that I would highlight. When I speak to the importance of addressing this matter — and we're talking about Crown sector borrowing — again this is something that we would support if it was about investing back into the network to meet the needs of Saskatchewan people.

You know, I find it interesting that the member from P.A. [Prince Albert] Carlton sort of heckles from his seat at the backbenches, furthest backbenches of that large caucus opposite, but we haven't heard that member stand up and say much, Mr. Speaker, in this Assembly. I wonder if he has a voice in caucus. I'm not sure. We know he doesn't have a voice in cabinet.

But we do know that there's important needs in his community, Mr. Speaker, to be served by the very Crown corporations that we're speaking about, Mr. Speaker, and about some of the other important investments, such as having infrastructure renewed to make sure that the economy and people of a community are protected. And in many ways I find it interesting that the member from P.A. Carlton shouts across in sort of a silly, foolish way from his seat, Mr. Speaker, but doesn't then stand up to talk about making sure that the Crown corporations are serving his region, making sure that he's speaking to the infrastructure needs of that region, Mr. Speaker, and making sure he's speaking to the economic opportunities within that

region.

So anyways, he shouts from his seat, Mr. Speaker. This is the longest speech I've heard him give all session long so far, Mr. Speaker, in fact. And I think I've heard him say more here than I've heard him say about the best interests of Prince Albert residents, Mr. Speaker.

So I'm glad to see that member animated. What I hope he does is takes that energy. I hope takes that energy. I hope he takes that passion. I hope he shares it with his caucus members. I hope he asks and begs one of those cabinet ministers to listen to him and then I hope he shares some of the needs that are important for P.A., such as some of that infrastructure and that bridge, Mr. Speaker, making sure that our Crowns are serving that region, or to make sure that economic development is occurring. And in many ways the member should know that there's an awful lot of important needs for that region.

And going directly back to the bill here, Mr. Speaker. When I'm speaking about what's being changed here it's, as I say, a provision for order in councils to not be required for land purchase of \$100,000 for land by SaskTel. It sounds like a reasonable proposal so that they can acquire the land they need to operate in a competitive environment, to be able to make sure those cellphone towers can be constructed and serve Saskatchewan people, to make sure cellphone use is strong all across Saskatchewan, including in Prince Albert where they deserve strong cellphone coverage as well, Mr. Speaker, just like my constituents.

And also when we look at the changes around the borrowing tools available to the Crown sector, it as well could be a very practical, it could be a very housekeeping sort of a change, Mr. Speaker. But the fact is it speaks to a much greater challenge of this government. It's the unsustainability of their finances. It's the continued drain and raid that we've seen on the Crown sector, the hollowing out of the Crown sector, not just . . . you know, certainly spoken to by the well over \$2 billion that have been drained from the Crown sector and the rainy day fund, from the Crown sector. And it's reflected in higher borrowing, Mr. Speaker.

I'll highlight the budget document of this year, the 2012-13 budget summary, page 60 where it highlights the public debt of this province. And I notice that in 2009, reflected here by government documents, debt is \$7.7 billion. And I see in 2013 that it will have grown to \$9.3 billion. That's a \$1.6 billion increase, Mr. Speaker, over just, you know, four, four years, Mr. Speaker. Four years under this government and a \$1.6 billion increase in borrowing of debt, A 25 per cent increase, Mr. Speaker, and a lot of that is reflected directly in our Crown corporations.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to speak to this here today. As I say, if this was simply about enabling our Crown corporations to have the fiscal tools they require to borrow and to invest back into the needs of Saskatchewan people and back into those networks, this would be something easy for us to simply pass and support, Mr. Speaker. But it does highlight something greater — the structural imbalance of finances of government opposite, the unsustainability of their finances, and their treatment of the Crown sector, Mr. Speaker, a hollowing out, a

weakening of their financial position, a constraining and collaring them from being able to operate in an independent economic fashion, Mr. Speaker, an ideological contracting out that we've seen in this sector directed and driven by this government, Mr. Speaker. And I would say as it relates to our Crown sector, the facts are the facts, Mr. Speaker, and Saskatchewan people deserve better on this front.

And I'm pleased to enter into discussion here today. I know there'll be others that will want to speak to this bill, but I know I do look forward to asking further questions at the committee structure as well and fully understanding where the borrowing requirements are and making sure then that those borrowing requirements match the best interests of Saskatchewan people. And the best interests of Saskatchewan people aren't for our Crown sector to go and borrow billions of dollars only to be transferred across to a government that can't control its finances in a sustainable fashion, Mr. Speaker.

So we'll be providing that sort of oversight, that kind of scrutiny in making sure that we represent all people, all communities across this province in doing so. It's my pleasure to enter debate here today, Mr. Speaker, and at this point in time I will adjourn debate on, as it relates to Bill No. 45, the miscellaneous statutes amendment Act, 2012. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tochor): — The member from Regina Rosemont has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 45, the miscellaneous status Act. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tochor): — Carried.

Bill No. 46

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Krawetz that **Bill No. 46 — *The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2012*** be now read a second time.]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tochor): — I recognize Saskatoon Nutana.

[15:45]

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's with great pleasure I rise to speak to this today. I'm happy to be here at this fall session having exactly one year ago today being elected for the first time to this Assembly, and I have quite a different perspective today than I did a year ago. So I'm looking forward to this fall session and, with enthusiasm, looking forward to entering into the debates on the bills that are being presented by this government.

This particular bill, Bill No. 46 is *An Act to amend The Municipal Employees' Pension Act*. Now if I understand correctly, the municipal employees' pension plan, or MEPP, is administered by a commission. And it's a 10-member commission that is administering the plan, and this commission is responsible for all the plan's administration, communication, and investment activities. And in fact it's stated the mission of

the commission is to oversee and direct the administration of the plan and to manage the assets in the best interests of the members. And I'm certain, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that that is exactly what the commission is doing. And they're doing good work.

What we see here in this bill, based on the comments of the minister was . . . It's difficult to speak with all the chattering going on, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I'll do my best. The minister that introduced it indicated there's a couple of changes. It seems to be housekeeping changes. He didn't give us a lot of detail in his speech, but he did indicate that one of the proposed amendments will be to allow the commission to extend the terms of the chairperson and the vice-chairperson at times when leadership continuity is vital and their original terms are nearing an end. So I believe that is the change to subsection (9) that's being proposed. And it's being amended to add a new section, subsection (9.1), which allows the commission to reappoint the chairperson for an additional year or they can reappoint the vice-chairperson for an additional year.

I'm not sure why that's felt to be necessary. In most cases, if a term is decided by legislation, that should be the term. And you don't often see a clause like this where the government would choose to extend somebody's term. Why not just make the term for one year longer then, if that's the intent? So I'm not sure why the good folks who are proposing these amendments from within the public service have made that change. It's not clear to me, but it seems a bit unusual. However, you know, obviously once it's passed into law their term will likely be extended for another year if indeed the intent of the minister is to ensure that leadership continuity is available to the commission when the original terms are coming to an end.

It also has a clarification in it, and the clause is, the proposed clause 7 is now being, there's an additional section being added to describe how a majority decision is made and the restriction on liability of the commission members.

This one's interesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It indicates clearly that the decision of the commission is by majority — so it's a democratic decision — and that only a simple majority is required for decisions made. Then it goes on to indicate that if a member of the commission is either not there at the meeting or if they don't vote for a decision or if they request that their dissent be entered into the minutes of the meeting, if they request that their dissent be entered into the minutes of the meeting, that somehow they are now exempt from liability. They're no longer liable with respect to the decisions of the entire commission.

That's not something I've seen a lot, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it would be concerning to me as a member of the commission if there is a contentious decision and the majority vote is by a difference of one. So there's 10 people on the board. If the vote is say six to four, the four people who didn't vote in favour are now exempt from liability of the decision of the commission, despite the fact that it's the majority that is making the decision. And that's how democracy works.

So I'm not sure what would drive a change like that and we'll be looking for more information, as we have time to look at this bill, to understand why it's important to exempt people from

liability because usually it's the responsibility of the commission of the whole or the board as a whole when decisions are made. Simply by not being present that day seems to be a pretty generous exemption from liability, and people may choose not to show up for meetings if there's something contentious and they don't want to be involved in the discussion. So it doesn't seem to promote sort of a free and thorough discussion of issues that the commission is dealing with.

We know that the trustees of this, the commission members are trustees. I wanted to take a little look, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about the makeup of this particular commission because as you know, yesterday my colleague from Saskatoon Riversdale was questioning the Minister for the Status of Women to find out what progress has been made on representation of women in boards and commissions that are appointed by this government. And I have to report, sadly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that of the 10 members of this commission, only two are women. So that's nowhere near the representation of women in the Municipal Employees' Pension Plan, in the government as a whole, and certainly in our province, and the citizenship of our province.

So sadly, once again we see an example where there isn't equal representation of women on a commission like this. And we really do want to see progress in this area and would hope that the minister and the member that's been appointed to look into this take very serious steps to correct what is an imbalance in the representation of women in a commission like this.

Certainly, you know, in many cases for municipal employees the spousal benefits are something that's very important, and benefits for children of the employees, and if women's voices aren't being heard at this level it may result in injustices. So we are looking to this government to ensure that there is equal representation and the voices of women are heard at tables, boards, agencies, commissions — all the appointments that happen. Even as the minister yesterday pointed out, we're very proud to note that our university presidents are women, but sadly that wasn't an appointment by this government. Yes and of course we're also very pleased to see that Moose Jaw elected a female mayor. That's wonderful news. But again, it wasn't appointment by this government. This government has to do better work in that area, and we look forward to the efforts that will be made in that area.

There are a couple other changes that are being proposed in this amending Act, and in particular there's a new subsection being added after subsection 20.1(2). And it goes on to say that if a member's spouse has provided a waiver under the previous subsection, that they can revoke that waiver. What we understand is that this clause is just keeping this particular legislation in sync with *The Pension Benefits Act* of 1992. As you might know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this pension, the municipal employees' pension plan, is administered by the public employment pension plan folks as well. So that's the pension plan that all of us as members are members of, and we certainly applaud the work of the folks there as they administer these plans.

So this amendment is, as indicated in the explanatory notes, simply trying to keep this pension plan in line with the public employees pension plan and its subsequent legislation, *The*

Pension Benefits Act, 1992.

There's one more amendment that's being proposed in this particular amending legislation. And in this one they're suggesting to repeal subsection 21(3). And what this section is dealing with is that immediate monthly survivorship pension payable to the member's spouse. What's interesting in this particular portion of the explanatory notes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that if you read it, it says that:

The amendment provides an immediate monthly survivorship pension payable to a member's spouse in the amount deemed to be paid assuming the meme or former member had elected to commence a pension . . .

Now I had to look into what a meme is. It may be a typographical error, because according to the Wikipedia, a meme is an idea that behaves like a virus, that moves through a population taking hold in each person it infects. And so I think pretty clearly that's a typo in this particular explanation. But I know it's a popular word in the Internet culture, and I hear my children talking about memes. But I don't think in this case the explanatory note is meaning to refer to a meme. Indeed I think it's intended to refer to a member or a former member.

So again the amendment that's being proposed in subsection 21(3), the replacement of the existing provision is to allow for it to be in sync, again, with *The Pension Benefits Act*. So the original clause is fairly short, and the new clause allows for some adjustments upon the death of the employee, and it will allow the beneficiaries some further flexibility.

Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, these changes appear to be in order, generally. I think we have some of our good folks over in the public service that are doing good work. And you've heard me speak before about the importance of the work of our public service. It's disappointing to see this government choose an arbitrary number like 15 per cent and just reduce the number of public servants that are doing good work for the people of Saskatchewan.

This kind of work is important. It may seem trivial or administrative, but it's keeping our legislative agenda and our legislative suite in order, ensuring that laws are consistent with other laws, that pension plans, the public employees' pension plan, is consistent with the municipal employees' pension plan. That kind of work is difficult. It's time consuming, and when you're losing 15 per cent of your workforce, it's demoralizing, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And as a former public servant, I need to speak out against this as much as I can, because plans like the municipal employees' pension plan and the public employees' pension plan and the administration of those are carried out by public servants.

And as our leader spoke when he was mentioning, providing his comments to the Assembly in relation to this Act and the role of pension plans, we know how important pension plans are in Canada and in fact how good they are. And that's certainly something that the minister's mentioned as well. Canada pension plans have been ranked as some of the top sustainable pension plans in developing countries, and part of that is because of the good people that do the work in managing those plans.

It's also part of that is because of the good people in the department of Justice and in the various ministries who are doing the good work of the government and of the people. And it's always unfortunate, I think, when we see efforts to arbitrarily pick numbers and just say, we're going to slash the public service by 15 per cent, and then taking programs like lean to squeeze into a square hole the round peg of numbers of public employees. That simply isn't the way the workforce is. That isn't the way the work evolves. It isn't the way services to the public evolve, and important services to the public that are being lost or, through attrition, phased out. And the public, as a result, suffers, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So we will be looking very carefully at this bill. I think many of my colleagues are going to want to speak to this and others as well, and these kinds of changes. We're going to be talking to people in the community, talking to people in the pension plans, trying to find out why it is that a simple majority is being chosen and why some of the members of the commission are exempt from liability with respect to decisions if they aren't in favour of it or if they're not present.

As I said earlier, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's not something you commonly see in the makeup and directors of commissions. And it may provide some instability in terms of the decision making that this commission is undertaking, particularly when there are difficult decisions to be made. And certainly, I think, by accepting to be a member of the commission that that person is accepting to be responsible for the decisions of the commission as the majority decides them. So we're going to want to find out why it is that this government is . . . and the public servants that have drafted these changes and recommended them to the minister, why this is seen as a necessity. So that's something we'll be looking for, for sure.

So I think at this point, Mr. Speaker, that will be probably the extent of the comments I want to make on this particular bill. I'm looking forward to having an opportunity to speak on the other bills. We see a number of again fairly technical administrative-type changes in the legislation that's been introduced to date. We're certainly looking forward to seeing more of this government's plan and vision for the future in their legislative agenda. The administrative bills, like I say, are necessary, and it's the good work of the public servants bringing these things forward to the Assembly. And certainly it's our job as members to ensure that these are properly debated and vetted through the public and ensure that the legislative process is ticking along.

But we certainly will want to look at the other bills to find out what the future of Saskatchewan holds when it comes to legislation. We know that there's other bills being alluded to, particularly privatization of a Crown corporation and changes to the labour law. So those are other bills that I think will require a lot of intense scrutiny and discussions with members of the public, and certainly I look forward to the debate on those as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So I think at that point I'm going to conclude my comments on Bill 46, *The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2012*. And at this point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to adjourn debate on the bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tochor): — The member from Saskatoon Nutana has moved adjournment on Bill No. 46, *The Municipal Employees' Pension Act, 2012*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tochor): — Carried.

[16:00]

Bill No. 47

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff that **Bill No. 47 — *The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Amendment Act, 2012*** be now read a second time.]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tochor): — I recognize Saskatoon Massey Place.

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to stand in the Assembly and speak on behalf of the good people of Saskatoon Massey Place.

Mr. Speaker, this afternoon in second reading, or in adjourned debates, we were touching on a number of pieces of legislation on a variety of topics as the speakers before me have remarked on them — the Saskatchewan Telecommunications amendment Act, *The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act*, and now, Mr. Speaker, *The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Amendment Act, 2012* which was moved by the minister responsible.

All the topics, Mr. Speaker, are important. And most certainly when we talk about water and look at water, what it means to our province, I would suggest that this piece of legislation is very important and something that all Saskatchewan people care about, that Saskatchewan people have a real interest in, and that Saskatchewan people want to have the proper decisions made when it comes to managing the supply of our water, and when it comes to ensuring that the regulations and the proper controls and checks are in place in order to ensure the steps that we take as a province are the right ones, the steps that we take from a perspective of industry, from the perspective of development, from the perspective of government and provincial activity or at the municipal level, Mr. Speaker, and as it relates also to the federal government.

When we think of water, it's something that we too often take for granted during our daily routines. We just assume that when we turn on the tap that the faucet will flow and there'll be water there. We assume that when we head to the lake that the lake levels will be good and that we'll have a good summer vacation with our families. And we assume that when we are engaged in economic activity, whether it be agriculture or whether it be mining, for example, we assume and trust that the water will be there. But too often when we make those sorts of assumptions, Mr. Speaker, and we don't take the right steps from a legislative perspective and then from a perspective of regulation and enforcement, when we don't take those proper steps, we can call into question the long-term viability and sustainability of the decisions that we make as they relate to water.

Water is something very important to all Saskatchewan people, and this actually goes back to the origins of our province. Of course the First Nations that were here before European settlers came, organized much of their lives around water, especially in the North but in the South as well, Mr. Speaker. When we think of patterns of activity throughout the year and how the activities that First Nations people pursued as it related to living and surviving in a climate that is harsh, of course considerations about water were very important. And it's, Mr. Speaker, in the North and why European settlers moved west, Mr. Speaker, it was along the water routes.

And we can think to some of the oldest communities that we have here in the province along the water systems. In the North, Cumberland House for example, where settlement and activity and fur trading have occurred for many, many years, for centuries, Mr. Speaker. And we think of historic spots, for example the church at Stanley Mission. We think how important that building is for the history of the people in the area, but how important it is also in telling Saskatchewan's story, the story of First Nations people living here, voyageurs coming across the country to Saskatchewan, and the settlement and the development that has occurred since then. A history, Mr. Speaker, with high points and low points, but it's a history that we have in common, a history that we share. And it goes back to the issue of water, believe it or not.

We also think, Mr. Speaker, of how important water is in a historical context when we think of the settlement of the Prairies by pioneers, creating farms, settling homesteads, breaking the prairie soil, and how water was so important to those settlers. And there's a huge generational difference now, Mr. Speaker, between those who grew up on the farm and grew up with a real, true appreciation for the scarcity of water and how precious water is when you are completely self-sustaining, in one spot, compared to now, Mr. Speaker, where I think sadly, too often, we take the provision of water and the security of our water for granted.

And I can think of one example, Mr. Speaker, that I remember my wife's family passing on to me. And they had a family friend from the area at the farm who had spent her whole life on the farm, and had actually a fairly difficult life and a number of challenges that she faced. But she grew up with a real pioneer mentality, that water matters and that you need to treat water with respect, use it sparingly, and not abuse it in the way that is wasteful. And, Mr. Speaker, there were stories how, even though once she had moved into Swift Current and was living in a very urban setting, she still maintained that approach. So whenever there was any sort of water, it was always used as many times as possible. It was never needlessly poured down the drain or needlessly used in a way that did not respect the resource.

And that example, actually it's one person, a widow who was living in Swift Current. But it symbolizes the kind of respect and the kind of approach we should take to the issue of water here in the province. And we haven't always done a good job of maintaining or respecting our resources and I think we can do a much better job of that.

We also think, Mr. Speaker, how important water is to us culturally. I talk a bit about the historical context in terms of

First Nations people who lived in Saskatchewan and the settlement and the travelling here by Europeans. But we also know right now, culturally, that water is very important to us. And it's often water that provides the sense of place that we speak to when we talk about why we love this province so much.

For example, I use the example of my home city in Saskatoon. The presence of the South Saskatchewan River there really is culturally something very important to the entire city. It's something that everyone in the city relates to. We have bridges crossing the river. We talk about the east and the west side of the river. The role and the presence of the South Saskatchewan River through Saskatoon has had a very huge influence on the development of the city and how we view ourselves as residents of Saskatoon, and if we look now at the development that is occurring with River Landing and all along the Meewasin and really the trail-blazing work that was done in setting up the Meewasin Valley Authority and ensuring that there is a integrated and a holistic and a smart approach to managing the Meewasin River Valley that passes through Saskatoon and stretches on on both sides of the city.

So that's a current and a modern-day example, Mr. Speaker, of how, when we're talking about water, we have to get it right and we have to make sure that we're taking the appropriate steps to preserve and respect that historical tradition we have on the Prairies through the First Nations people, through pioneers. But it also has huge relevance right now. So whether we're living in Saskatoon or in another community in this fine province, we have to ensure when we're taking steps to do with water that we're making the right decisions and we're making decisions that are sustainable and in the best interests of everyone.

When I say everyone, Mr. Speaker, it means in the best interests of individuals in every corner of the province. But it also means everyone in terms of generations. And we need to be thinking not what is right just for the current generation and generations that are living here on the Prairies, but we have to have a forward view in looking at what is the best decision for our children, our great-grandchildren, and so on. And that's the constant reminder that rivers provide us.

Rivers existed hundreds, thousands of years before us — were present in a location. And it's easy to forget that when we're crossing Circle Drive bridge and not really paying attention to what's going on. But it's an important awareness to ensure that the actions that we take now are in fact respectful of how we're part of something bigger and something more significant than the current years that we might have the pleasure of occupying and breathing air and drinking the water on the planet.

Mr. Speaker, we also know water is hugely important to our economy and we know that, as I said, through the historical experience of fur trading, as one example, of farming, of many different types of activity. But we know that there is a need now for the availability and the access in the provision of water in today's economy. So there's a number of avenues where water is important in today's economy.

We can think of irrigation, Mr. Speaker, as one example of how we need to manage our water resource in a way that supports

agriculture, that has the provision of irrigation for the locations where it is deemed appropriate. I think of Outlook, Mr. Speaker, as one example where irrigation has been very important for that area of the province. But, Mr. Speaker, we know that it's also larger than simply irrigation and we know that for many of the activities involved with the development of our resources for mining, water also is hugely important for the operations that are occurring. And that is the challenge, Mr. Speaker, how we ensure that we take the proper steps with respect to our resource but also encourage the responsible and the sustainable development of our resources.

We know water is also hugely important for our economy when it comes to tourism and when it comes to recreational pursuits. I know it's the case for me, Mr. Speaker, and I am sure it's the case for many other members in the House. But when I'm speaking with people from outside of Saskatchewan, having the chance to talk about home, there are many great things about the province — the people, the sky, our cities, our towns, all of those things — but of course I always emphasize our lakes and the many summer pursuits and winter pursuits we have around the bodies of water in Saskatchewan.

And we know this is a huge benefit to the local economy in terms of the tourism from Saskatchewan people who are living in the province but also from out-of-province activity as well. So when we think of industries like fishing, for example, and people coming to Saskatchewan to engage in sport fishing, we need to have good, clean, and adequate supply of water for those activities to occur. We think of going to the cabin in developing areas where there are resorts and there are all sorts of recreational activities around water. We have to ensure that our lakes are being properly managed, Mr. Speaker, in terms of their cleanliness and appropriate water levels when it comes to usage and as that may relate to industrial usage.

So it's important to have that sort of perspective in mind when we're making decisions and when we're talking about the future of water supply control and safety here in the province. We need to understand that we are in fact just stewards of the resource for a short period of time. We have to understand that the water resources that are in the province were here long before us and, God willing, they will be here long after us as well if we make the right decisions.

And we have to also, Mr. Speaker, appreciate the need for water in the activities that occur in the province. So those are activities of a recreational nature but they're also activities of an economic nature. And so whether we're talking about agriculture, whether we're talking about mining, whether we're talking about tourism, it is so very important to ensure that we are making responsible decisions — decisions that are good for the long term and that are in fact in the best interest of not only our own generation but the generations to come after us.

We know water is important, Mr. Speaker, because we also know that it's something we hear about a lot in the Assembly and we have members of the community and of the province engage us as MLAs to talk about water issues, whether it is long-term protection of the South Saskatchewan River Basin or whether it is the good work of groups such as Ducks Unlimited, Mr. Speaker, who are working to protect and preserve our wetlands as a resource. You know, Ducks Unlimited has a great

view of how we need to make the right steps in order to one, protect the resource to make sure that it is there, to protect the environment and the animals living in that resource, but then also to support the things that we like to do as Saskatchewan people, like hunting for example, and having access to waterways and being out in Saskatchewan enjoying everything that our good province has to offer.

[16:15]

So it's very important in looking at Bill 47. While the actual piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, is quite brief, it's always important to look at the piece of legislation and see what is important.

The member from P.A. Carlton is very animated, Mr. Speaker, and the member from P.A. Carlton has a river in his community, a river in need of a bridge across his community, Mr. Speaker. And I would think that the member opposite would like to spend a bit of time talking about the need for a bridge across the waterway in his city, Mr. Speaker.

Now in looking at this piece of legislation, Bill No. 47, *The Saskatchewan Watershed Authority Act, 2005*, an Act to make consequential amendments to other Acts, there are a number of components here. At face value, when you look at the legislation just in a quick manner, it would appear that it is simply about a name change. And the name change is changing, within the legislation, the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority to the Water Security Agency . . . Mr. Speaker, the member from Prince Albert Carlton is very anxious to get into this debate on water. I wish he was in cabinet, Mr. Speaker, to talk about the value and the importance of water, but sadly that's not the case for himself or for the good people of Prince Albert.

In looking at this legislation, it is more significant than simply the changing of a name. And I appreciate the minister's second reading speech for providing some more detail and some more explanation for what is being asked of in Bill No. 47. And I compliment the officials working within the ministry who put together a fine second reading speech for the minister, and it provided more clarity and explanation with respect to what Bill No. 47 is doing. I don't want to question the member from Silver Springs that he . . . I know that he may craft some of his speeches, but I don't know if he crafted every single word of that speech. So I did want to give credit where credit is due. And I think some members from the ministry did provide a bit of input on that piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, the minister responsible can give a very fine speech in the House, Mr. Speaker, and I've been happy to hear him deliver speeches on different occasions. But on Bill No. 47, it does provide more meaning than simply the name change. And what we're seeing here, Mr. Speaker, with the piece of legislation, is not simply the renaming of the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority, but it is the changing of the organization in some fairly significant way, in ways that may not be apparent upon first reading of the legislation.

There is the name change, the Water Security Agency. And the name, Mr. Speaker, that's up to individuals' personal opinion whether they think that is a good name or not. And so that's not really . . . Water Security Agency. It's a fine name in the words

itself, Mr. Speaker. But what is happening here with the piece of legislation, as described by the minister, is a one-window approach. So individuals or businesses or groups that have concerns about water and have concerns about the management of water have a one-window approach for having their matters dealt with in a way that is what I would assume the minister believes is a more efficient way of handling the case.

It's not simply renaming, Mr. Speaker, because it is also a realignment in the way that what was the authority will work, and not just the authority but also the other government ministries that have relevance to the work of the water authority. So it is, Mr. Speaker, more than simply a name change. And to remind all members of the Assembly what the minister said, if they haven't committed his remarks to memory, in talking about how this changes the approach of the agency, quoting from *Hansard* on November 5th on page 1760, the minister stated:

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.

So it is, Mr. Speaker, taking individuals from different ministries, combining them along with the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority in order to fulfill what the minister would, I assume, describe as a new mandate or a new direction for the authority under the new name of the Water Security Agency.

So it is, Mr. Speaker, important to ask ourselves questions about . . . When changes like that occur, when there is a realignment of roles and when there is a combination of individuals from different ministries who have been operating in a different way, it's important to give some serious thought as to how this could affect the outcome and the situation and affect the good work that we need done when it comes to the protection and the promotion of the precious resource of water.

So there's a number of individuals, Mr. Speaker, who I assume would be involved with this change. As the minister said, it does involve individuals from a number of ministries such as the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture, from the Ministry of Health, and then the individuals from the Watershed Authority.

And in the minister's approach to a one-window approach as it was described in his speech, it's also important to ask ourselves if this approach is the best approach for the protection of our resource here in the province. And it's good and appropriate, Mr. Speaker, for government to be more responsive to the needs of its citizens and to make changes to the way that government operates in order to meet the needs of its citizens in a more effective manner, in a more timely manner, and a more efficient manner. That has been the orientation, Mr. Speaker, of a professional civil service for many years, and that should be the orientation for the professional civil service in the years to come — to always provide the best service possible to Saskatchewan people in carrying out the direction and the wishes that are provided by this legislature and through the executive branch.

It's important though, Mr. Speaker, when there is a changing of rules, when we have a one-window approach, it's also important to ensure that the dual purposes that are included in that approach are both being served to the full extent that they need to be served, the full extent that they need to be responsive to the needs of Saskatchewan people. So when we're combining the one aspect of usage and promotion of economic activity, whether that be through agriculture, whether that be through industry, whether that be through tourism, that's important work, and that needs to be done. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, the enforcement and the determination of standards and controls and inspections needs to be strong. And those standards and those regulations, Mr. Speaker, can't be watered down and can't be weakened because of the one-window approach.

So that's the challenge, Mr. Speaker, as I see it. The challenge is to be a strong regulatory agency at the same time as allowing Saskatchewan people to be good stewards and utilize the resource of water that we need for our business and our recreational pursuits.

It's not clear to me, Mr. Speaker, in the minister's second reading speech how, through the one-window approach, how that is going to be accomplished. And it's also not clear to me, Mr. Speaker, if individuals in the broader community who have a real . . . We all have a stake when it comes to the conservation and protection of our water, but whether those that are highly, highly engaged on this issue and doing their utmost to promote this issue — water protection and conservation — whether those individuals are satisfied with this approach. And I think for that reason, Mr. Speaker, when we have a reorientation of civil servants and a new mandate for the office, it's important to ensure that we're getting both of those things right and that one of the mandates of the office is not subservient to the other; that one is not at the expense of the other. And I would like to have more explanation, Mr. Speaker, through the minister's second reading speech, as to how that will occur, how that protection will occur to the level that it needs to be there at the same time as the promotional pursuits of the new agency will be conducted. It's important to get both of those things right and that one is not performed at the expense of the other, whichever order that may be in, Mr. Speaker.

So in simply looking at the words, the notion of a one-window approach, most people would admit that in ways that we can make government more efficient and more effective and have easier access for people to receive services, that is a positive thing. But the top concern I think that Saskatchewan people have when it comes to water is to ensure that the resource is there for the long run and that the resource is there for the generations that come after us because, as I said, it is so vitally important to what occurs in our economy, so vitally important in respecting our history as a province, and it's so vitally important to what happens in the future.

So I know, Mr. Speaker, in many of the comments that the minister made with respect to this piece of legislation, he talked about the different principles that will be guiding the legislation. And many of those principles in and of themselves sound fine, Mr. Speaker, and I'm sure they do provide a good orientation for how the new agency will be operating. But the real question as I see it within this piece of legislation, Mr.

Speaker, is how to balance those two aspects which at times can be competing. And there may be a tension there at times. So when they're under the same one-window roof, the question is how well both of the mandates can be served.

Perhaps the minister has a very thorough and adequate response in answer to that question that I raise, but I would be looking for more information on that. And I think, having just received this bill not too long ago, there's most certainly a lot of discussion that we need to have with other individuals in the community who care so much about water. And we need to ensure that they think this is a step in the right direction, not a step in the wrong direction.

We have seen, Mr. Speaker, on a number of aspects, where the steps that the government have taken haven't been in the best interests of Saskatchewan. I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that this would be one of them. I don't doubt the personal intentions of the minister in bringing forward this legislation, but sometimes there can be unintended consequences for a new approach. And I am looking forward to receiving more input and feedback from Saskatchewan people on this piece of legislation. And I know my colleagues who sit in the official opposition will be keen to enter in on this debate.

And, Mr. Speaker, judged by the noise in the Assembly right now, I think there is a number of government members who might like to comment on this. I would hope that if they do not have the opportunity to speak here in the Assembly that they would make their voices heard around the caucus table, and for those that are in cabinet would be vocal around the cabinet table as well.

Mr. Speaker, this is an important topic. Water is so very important to our past, our present, and our future. It has been an honour to have the opportunity to make a few remarks about the role of water and how we need to make the right decisions, having that long-term perspective, that generational perspective that what we do now, the actions that we take now, do in fact have to be in the best interests of all generations that will be coming after us, Mr. Speaker, the people that will be sitting in this Assembly many years from now when we are long and gone.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I've appreciated the opportunity to make a few remarks on this piece of legislation and I would like to move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 47. Thank you.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 48

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff that **Bill No. 48** — *The Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases Amendment Act, 2012* be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to speak to Bill No. 48, *An Act to amend The Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases Act*. This bill is amending a bill that was introduced first in 2010. And the purpose of this bill, Mr. Speaker, is to allow the government to enter into an equivalency agreement with the federal government around coal-fired electricity regulations.

So what was missing in this Act originally or what needs to be added to this Act now, Mr. Speaker? What needs to be added to this Act, Mr. Speaker, is in order to enter into the equivalency agreement, the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* requires a citizen's investigation power to exist in provincial legislation as a legal requirement. And that right now is missing, Mr. Speaker, so basically all these amendments deal with adding that legal requirement for a citizen's investigation power, and all of the housekeeping that comes along with that, Mr. Speaker.

[16:30]

So some of the details in terms of being able to, in terms of that ability to have that investigation power, section 62.1(1), what this now includes, Mr. Speaker, is:

Any resident of Saskatchewan who is at least 18 years old and who is of the opinion that a contravention against this Act, the regulations or the code has been committed may apply to the minister for an investigation of the alleged contravention.

So what it also does, Mr. Speaker, as I said, it lays out the housekeeping around this necessary investigation to be able to have these equivalency agreements. So what is the responsibility here? So:

A person applying for an investigation pursuant to this section shall ensure that the application is accompanied by a solemn or statutory declaration that:

- (a) states the name and address of the applicant;
- (b) states the nature of the alleged contravention and the name of each person alleged to be involved in the commission of the contravention; and
- (c) contains a concise statement of the evidence supporting the allegations of the applicant.

Obviously those are all three very necessary things to be able to engage in an investigation, Mr. Speaker.

It also lays out, Mr. Speaker, what happens in the investigation process. It allows for the opportunity that the applicant who's applied for an investigation is updated of the receipt of his or her application in a timely manner and that the minister begin the investigation, that the investigation process is began.

So any time we deal with government, Mr. Speaker, it's always very good to know that if you've sent a letter or an email or

filed a complaint, that someone on the other end is listening. There's nothing worse than not knowing if your letter has been received or if anybody cares or if there's been any action taken whatsoever, Mr. Speaker. So this is a good, the fact that the government needs to ensure that the applicant who has a complaint is updated of the receipt of the application and knowing about the process is very good.

What else? The provision 62.2(2) has also been added. And it deems that the applicant obtains a response from the minister with regards to the progress of the investigation within a reasonable time frame and any action that the minister has taken or attempts to take.

So it's not just about responding or getting that email at some point in time, or that letter in some time, but ensuring that it's done in a timely manner. Again, any time that we deal with government, it's nice to know that someone on the other end is listening and that someone is dealing with your issue or concern promptly. I know when people come into our constituency offices, it's important that people know that they're being heard, as we know that from our lived experience here as MLAs and possibly if we've ever had dealings on our own with government. So making sure that people are informed in a timely fashion, that's very important as well.

There's also a new provision that helps meet the equivalent, the requirements for the equivalency agreement, Mr. Speaker, provision no. 62.2(3). And "This amendment ensures that the response from the minister will be contained in a report which will include a timeframe to complete the investigation or to implement an action." And then the explanatory notes for the bill points out that "This is necessary to ensure that the minister is accountable to the applicant and that the investigation is again being addressed in a timely manner."

So on the occasion that an investigation is discontinued, section 62.2(4) outlines . . . I'd like to read that actually, 62.2(4). So a minister or the ministry would not have to provide a report. So "A report pursuant to subsection (2) is not required if the investigation is discontinued before the end of the 90-day period mentioned in that subsection." So on the case that an investigation doesn't go forward, that there's not a need to report the outcome of the investigation because it's discontinued. So that is what that point does, Mr. Speaker.

Subsection 62.2(5), the minister is given the opportunity here to "discontinue an investigation if . . . [he or she] is of the opinion that the alleged contravention does not require further investigation." So that allows the opportunity . . . Obviously not every issue that comes before a government, if there isn't sufficient evidence then an investigation shouldn't go forward. And that outlines that, Mr. Speaker. So it provides the minister with the ability to discontinue an investigation.

And there's also a final provision here, 62.2(6), and it lays out the process, or this amendment is necessary . . . The notes on the bill outline that "This amendment is necessary because it lays out the process for what occurs when an investigation is discontinued." So:

If an investigation is discontinued, the minister shall:

(a) prepare a written report describing the information obtained during the investigation and stating the reasons for its discontinuation; and

(b) send a copy of the report to the applicant and to any person whose conduct was investigated.

So this, Mr. Speaker, allows, as I said . . . The minister outlined a few days ago that this bill is to help us meet equivalency agreements with the federal government on coal-fired electricity regs, and the piece that was missing was the investigation piece. But I'd just like to refer to his comments of November 5th, 2012 in *Hansard*, page 1766. I'd like to just quote the minister, Mr. Speaker:

Extensive consultation has been undertaken and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I mean extensive consultation, I mean extensive.

Mr. Speaker, when this government talks about consultation, I'd be curious about their definition of extensive consultation. So I'm glad, Mr. Speaker, that he's outlined, I'm glad, Mr. Speaker, that he's outlined what extensive consultation . . . I'm glad he says that extensive consultation has been done. But we have some serious questions on this side of the House as to how this government defines extensive consultation. Would they say the 90-day period for which they were reviewing 15 pieces of labour legislation — 100 years of labour legislation? Would they say 90 days, which also happened to fall over the summer, is that extensive consultation, Mr. Speaker? That triggers for me some very, very serious concerns when this government starts talking about consultation. I think they have some very different ideas about what consultation is, compared to the rest of the province, Mr. Speaker.

So while I hear the minister responsible saying that they were good on consultation on this one, well perhaps some of his ministers, his fellow colleagues should take some advice then from the Environment minister if he is stating that they're good on consultation for this one, Mr. Speaker.

What else have they failed to consult on? Three more MLAs, Mr. Speaker. Last year in the Throne Speech there was nothing, nothing in the election platform of 2011, Mr. Speaker. A year ago, a year ago today, Mr. Speaker, this government was re-elected. Mr. Speaker, this government did not outline once, did not outline once the need, in either the election platform or the Throne Speech, the three more MLAs, Mr. Speaker. There was no consultation on this.

And from what we heard loud and clear from many people, people I know throughout Saskatoon Riversdale, I didn't hear one person, not a single person told me that they felt we needed to add three more politicians. They would rather prioritize other more pressing issues — housing, health care, the film tax credit. I met with folks who firmly believed that this government could be spending money on far more important things than adding three more politicians, Mr. Speaker.

But again let's talk about their lack of consultation, some policy making that happens on that side of the House, Mr. Speaker. In this last budget, Mr. Speaker, this government cut a program that was key to the creative industries, not just the film industry,

Mr. Speaker. But that program, the film employment tax credit, you talk to anybody across any of the creative sectors, Mr. Speaker, and you know what they would say to me, Mr. Speaker? They would say . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . The member from Martensville is asking me if I've got thoughts on the bill. And in fact I do, Mr. Speaker.

This minister has talked about consultation. This minister has talked about extensive consultation, and this government has failed abysmally when it comes to consultation, Mr. Speaker. So they cut a key program to an entire sector, Mr. Speaker, that had ripple effects and ramifications for so many people. They cut a program when I don't think they had any idea what was involved. So they cut a program. They cut a program and then decided, after it was clear that this was not a popular decision, then they decided they were going to do some consultations across all creative industries, Mr. Speaker. So when this government talks about consultation and extensive consultations, we question whether or not they fully understand what consultation, really meaningful consultation looks like.

And I know the Minister Responsible for Culture has gotten up and talked about the creative industries consultations, which people have participated in. And you ask anybody from any of the creative sectors how they feel about those consultations, and they're participating in them because they know they have to try and have their voices heard. But I've spoken to people across those creative industries who have said they have some serious concerns. And they feel like it's a done deal, that there's already a plan written, Mr. Speaker. So when this government talks about consultation, we have some very serious concerns.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to, with respect to Bill No. 48, *An Act to amend The Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases Act*, I would like to move to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of debate for 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 Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff that **Bill No. 49** — *The Forestry Professions Amendment Act, 2012* be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today and speak to Bill No. 49, *An Act to amend The Forestry Professions Act*.

And I think this is a very serious Act, but I just do want to say a couple of things before I start. It reminded me of a cartoon I saw, and I think it was in *The Globe and Mail*, about the fall is the time when we see lots of professional foresters out trying to sell wet wood under the guise of saying, this wood is much

better because it burns much slower.

But I was struck, I was struck by the minister's speech. I was struck by the minister's speech. He was leading us to believe that he crafts every one of his, every one of his speeches that he has ever put into words. Well, every word, he thinks about every word. And I was struck by this when he says and I quote, in his speech of November 5th, just a few, couple of days ago, and I quote, "Mr. Speaker, the proposed amendments are a concrete demonstration of our government's confidence in the Saskatchewan Forestry Professionals and their association."

These folks are foresters. They deal in wood, not concrete. So I would think, I'm not sure the minister really knows what he's talking about here. And I think he should think about better ways of describing his relationships with these professionals other than concrete or pavement or whatever. I think, really I think we really need to think more carefully about every word and especially a minister who takes a lot of pride, a lot of pride on every word he says — a concrete relationship.

Now I would think, I would think when we talk about our desks here, we consider them a solid wood desk, a solid relationship, or maybe if we're talking about a beam, you think about a clear beam, one without knots. And so, Mr. Speaker, I would think that, that the minister when he's talking about as important things as relationships with professionals, that he really should think of words that are more appropriate. But to describe them as concrete certainly reminds of the Joni Mitchell, the Joni Mitchell song when you cut down all the trees and you pave the parking lot with concrete. That's what he's talking about. That's how he views the world of forestry. It's good to cut them all down. Cut them all down and pave it with concrete.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that we have some questions about this bill. We'll certainly have questions for the minister when we get into estimates or into committee to talk about these bills. So I really, I do have a lot of questions about this. And I think that we'll have to talk extensively about this because clearly, and the minister did allude to it, that the people have a lot of questions about what's happening in our forests these days, particularly since the downturn in the world markets. And the minister alluded to that.

You know, our forestry sector was doing so well, doing so well. And of course so many reasons, particularly dealing with global markets, have seen pressures in our forestry sector. But still this government has made some commitments, and they seem to be unable to carry through those commitments to restart that sector.

[16:45]

And so we'll have a lot of questions about that because forestry here, particularly in the northern part of the province, but, you know, in the parkland, but also when we talk about Moose Mountain and Cypress Hills, there is some really interesting areas around forestry that the public is very interested in. And so when we talk about *The Forestry Professions Amendment Act* we want to make sure we're having the very best people doing the kind of work, the kind of work that our public expects.

And particularly now, when we see, when we see as well the minister, who is talking about the environmental code. And, you know, it is interesting because he talks a lot about consultation in that one. We compare what happened with the environmental code, say, to the labour, this new labour code that they're talking about where there's a 90 day mail-in ballot. This environmental code, we see, will come into effect sometime this fall.

And so if you're outsourcing some of the work to folks who have the qualifications that . . . We have a fair number of questions about what their work will be doing. As he said:

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.

And I think that's really critical, and I know people in Saskatchewan will have a lot of questions about that. We have a lot of expectations. People in Saskatchewan have high expectations when it comes to forestry. And so this is important, and this is not some small matter that we're talking about here.

And so we will be interested to know who were the people that the ministry consulted on, and what is the impact and how this will all play out. And he talks about, particularly the New West Partnership provinces, how does that all relate. And how does this strengthen our communities where the forestry sector provided jobs and provided, as we talked today even, just the recreation parks. And parks, the ability to enjoy our natural environments and protection of biodiversity, and this will be an important part of that. And so when you have this type of thing, this is really critical.

And so there's a real public interest when we have organizations like this that will self-regulate and have certain abilities and powers that we're leaving up to the professional organizations. In many ways it's the right thing to do, but we have to make sure we protect the public interest, particularly when we know that there's so much potential here in Saskatchewan when it comes to forestry, on so many different levels.

Clearly of course when we talk about the economic contributions that forestry can provide to our communities, particularly the ones who are in the rural areas who are looking for opportunities to diversify, this is hugely, hugely important. But it's also hugely important in terms of environmental protection. And it's hugely important when we talk about protecting our water sources, the watershed, that type of thing.

So this is one that we'll have to make sure that we follow up with and we talk to the people in the different sectors to say, so what do you think about this? I think it's interesting that the minister talked about some of the reasons that he raised around public safety. We would have liked to have more information about that because we get . . . You know, it seems apparent right off the bat when we . . . the connection between forestry professionals and the environment. And of course there is a clear connection, too, with public safety, particularly when

you're talking about fire management, road construction, that type of thing.

But some of the language in the bill, particularly when we talk about the new section 23.01(2)(d) when it talks about limiting liability around loss of life, harm, or damage to safety and health or welfare of people, we'd be curious to know what that is all about. As well the issue around members of Canadian Forces performing his or her duties in the Forces, that's one that we need a little bit more clarity about why that has to be enunciated in the legislation.

You know, Mr. Speaker, we often talk about unintended consequences, so when there's certain things that are alluded to, it's only reasonable that we actually ask for more details about why that particular issue is part of the question. Of course the minister did give some examples about what kind of things these folks do, whether he talks about significant safety environmental risks where they're designing a resource road, developing or building a water course crossing, or handling hazardous material such as herbicides and pesticides. And some of these carry financial and legal risks as well. So we will ask for more specific information on this.

And of course, he did talk a little bit about the First Nations and Métis communities, making sure obligations are met to them. And I'm sure hoping that they have spent time working with the First Nations and Métis communities to make sure that there is capacity for understanding what this means. They may be looking for what typically in the past worked, and I'm not sure because I need to ask these questions. Maybe work was done by a conservation officer but will now be done by these folks as a private company. And we're not sure if that's the scenario that we're reading here, but if that's the case . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . What's that?

An Hon. Member: — It could be a concrete company.

Mr. Forbes: — It could be a concrete company, yes.

So we've got questions about this because if this is outsourcing work that would normally be done by the public sector, and people know and understand the folks that are working through this, that all of a sudden you see somebody from a private company, the confidence may not be there. And they wonder, how do we have recourse? How do we make complaints about whether they're coming onto your land and doing things that maybe they have the right-of-way to do. Maybe they have the clear passage to do that, but people don't really understand why they do as a private company. I don't know. I'm just drawing out scenarios because what we do on our side is make sure we think this completely all the way through, think about the different scenarios that may happen that may cause some concerns. And we want to make sure that we understand this completely.

And then as well, Mr. Speaker, I'd be curious to know whether *The Forestry Professions Act* and the amendment Act allows some sort of advocacy aspect to their organization. Are they a professional group that will come to the legislature to meet with us as the real estate folks did today, meet with certain government officials? Can we hold them accountable? What are the processes for holding them accountable? So these are

questions that we have.

As I said before, clearly it's one that's very, very important. And of course, you know, when we . . . I think about this a lot as the Labour critic, the role of safety, particularly within forestry. You know, we think about tree planting, all of that kind of thing, what this all means for that. We have a lot of questions about how does that play out into that and, of course, what are the specific requirements that will allow people into the practice.

It seems pretty thorough on some sections. It talks about their stamp. They get a stamp so that when they can give the seal of approval to a plan, that it's recognized and has a stamp of approval, I guess, is what we're looking for. And when they're not doing the work that they should be doing, whether they've been suspended or for whatever reasons they cannot use that seal, they have to return it. So that's relatively straightforward.

But we need to go through this so that we completely, completely understand this. And I think that as well, in terms of the public interest, again I go back to what is the public's obligation to be using these folks? And that's very important. When we think of . . . We take a lot of pride in our natural forests, as I said, in the North or in the South around Moose Mountain or Cypress Hills, but also our urban forests. Urban forests are critically important, and we've seen weather now where I know our own trees in Saskatoon took quite a beating last weekend through the wind storms. So how this plays out . . . And what are the cost implications for ordinary citizens and the obligations to do that?

So again, Mr. Speaker, I think that we do have some concerns about this, but it seems relatively straightforward. I would think that on our side of the House, we would describe our relationship with many of these folks as a clear relationship, one that is a solid relationship, not so much a concrete relationship. I think we should ask the minister to rethink his standing with the folks.

With that though, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to now move adjournment of reading Bill No. 49, *The Forestry Professions Amendment Act, 2012*. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 49, *The Forestry Professions Amendment 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: — I move that the House do now adjourn, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The House Leader has moved that the House do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to now adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — This House stands adjourned to 10 a.m. Thursday.

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:57.]

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