



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

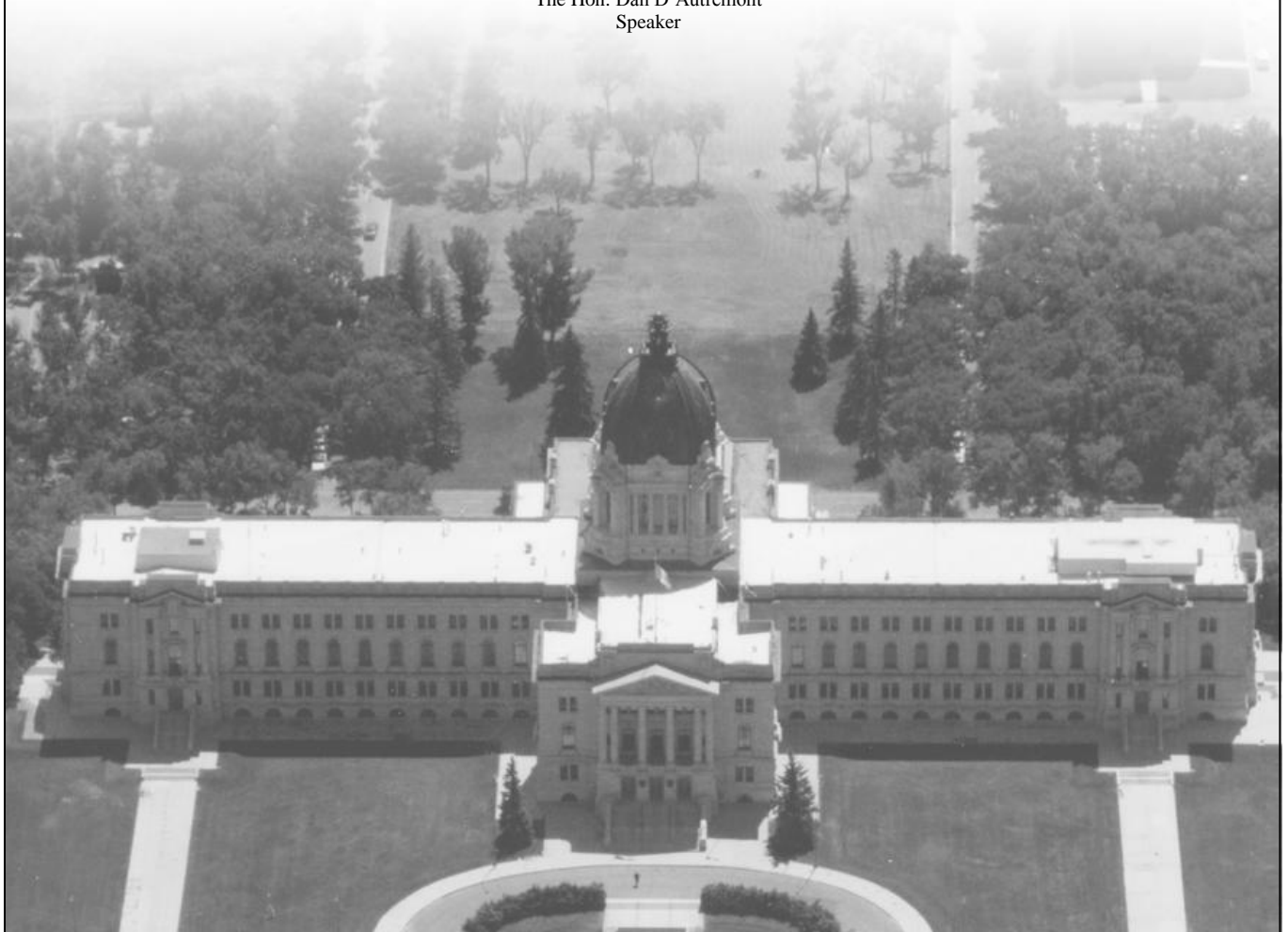
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
authority of  
The 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

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

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Mr. Makowsky:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the west gallery we have nine grade 11 students from Campus Regina Public. They're in the Trek program. And what that is in short, Mr. Speaker, they get to experience some outdoor events and environmental education. And just talking to them earlier, they spent last Thursday outdoors at Echo, so a brave group of students as well. So all members please welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to introduce to you and through you four women who've come to the House to hear and watch the proceedings today. And they're just entering in your gallery as we speak. First I would like to introduce Donna Kerr. Donna, could you just give a little wave? And with her is Pat Colpitts, Darlene Keks, and Diane Robinson. And I would ask all members here to give them a warm welcome to their legislature. Thank you.

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of the House, I'm pleased to introduce three guests that are joining us today in the west gallery, Mr. Speaker. Today we're joined by Roberta Wiest, the director of HealthLine; Dr. Jordan Velestuk, who is the medical adviser for HealthLine; and Jill Belof. Jill is a teacher at St. Catherine School here in Regina.

Earlier today, Mr. Speaker, I was able to join the three of them as we made an announcement that HealthLine will now be easily accessed by dialing 811. There'll be a member's statement shortly, but I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming them today.

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to introduce a petition into the House calling for reconsideration of passing Bill 85, *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*. And we know the proposed Saskatchewan employment Act was introduced in December 2012. It's a sweeping rewrite of our labour laws, including labour standards, occupational health and safety, the health labour relations Act, and *The Trade Union Act*.

But since that time that it was introduced in December, literally hundreds of hours of study and comparison have been carried out in the interest of due diligence. If Bill 85 becomes a new

consolidation of labour laws in the province, working people, particularly young workers, immigrant workers, and other vulnerable workers, will suffer from a hasty watering down of our current labour standards which set the minimum standards for all Saskatchewan workers.

I'd like to read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: cause the Government of Saskatchewan to not pass Bill 85, *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* in this current session before the end of May, and to place it on a much longer legislative track to ensure greater understanding and support for the new labour law.

And, Mr. Speaker, I do so present on behalf of citizens from Moose Jaw and Regina. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too rise today to present a petition on cellphone coverage for northern Saskatchewan. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

To undertake, as soon as possible, to ensure that SaskTel delivers cell service to the Canoe Lake First Nation, along with the adjoining communities of Cole Bay and Jans Bay; Buffalo River First Nation, also known as Dillon, and the neighbouring communities of Michel Village and St. George's Hill; English River First Nation, also known as Patuanak, and the hamlet of Patuanak; and Birch Narrows First Nation, along with the community of Turnor Lake, including all the neighbouring communities in each of these areas.

Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that this petition has been signed all throughout Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, the petition that has been signed here today are primarily from Dillon. And I so present.

### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Congratulations to Saskatoon Writer

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take this chance to congratulate one of my constituents, author Yann Martel. The movie adaptation of his book *Life of Pi*, which premiered in Saskatoon in the fall, was a big winner at the Oscars last month. Award winner Ang Lee won the title of Best Director for the second time, and the movie also won awards for original score, cinematography, and visual effects. The screenplay transformed the complex novel into a stunning three-dimensional cinematic experience.

Though Yann Martel was born in Spain and lived all over the world, Mr. Speaker, he has made Saskatchewan his home.

Martel has been a proud Saskatoon Nutana resident since 2003 when he was offered a writer-in-residence position at the Saskatoon Public Library. He and his award-winning novelist wife, Alice Kuipers, are raising their children in my neighbourhood.

Martel's novel, *Life of Pi*, has won a number of awards and sold over 7 million copies worldwide since its release in 2001. The book is said to be an inspiration to many throughout the world and during Lee's acceptance speech, he expressed his need to thank Yann Martel for writing this incredible, inspiring book.

In addition to writing the *Life of Pi*, Yann is known for his 2007 challenge to Prime Minister Stephen Harper to read books that "expand stillness." The list of books can be found on the What is Stephen Harper Reading? website.

Yann will be a featured speaker at the weekend's NDP [New Democratic Party] leadership convention, which will add even more excitement to this important event.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you to recognize the beauty of the novel's interpretation on the big screen and to ask you to join me in congratulating Yann Martel for his success.

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

#### Hope's Home Opens in Prince Albert

**Ms. Jurgens:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to recognize the recently opened Hope's Home facility in the city of Prince Albert. This facility includes a brand new 17,000 square foot daycare with room to care for up to 44 medically fragile children with complex medical needs.

Mr. Speaker, Hope's Home provides important care for medically fragile children and their siblings. This greatly assists their parents by giving them the opportunity to work, go to school, or get that break they need from the constant, 24-hour care of a child with complex needs.

Jacqueline Tisher, the founder and executive director of Hope's Home, started the organization in 2004. Ms. Tisher created the organization after she experienced the challenges of balancing a career and caring for a medically fragile child. Hope's Home is named after her late daughter and foster child, Hope Dawn Marie.

Mr. Speaker, with the addition of this new facility in Prince Albert, Hope's Home now provides medical daycare services in three Saskatchewan cities. The other two centres are Regina and Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize this great new facility in Prince Albert and also the great care Hope's Home provides for medically fragile children and their families. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Spending Choices

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It would seem that the concept of a dollar is lost on the Saskatchewan

Party. Yesterday the Saskatchewan Party government flooded the airways with a new advertisement, and in the radio ad the Premier says, "This year we'll need to control government spending again and that means some difficult choices." But those difficult choices apparently don't apply to the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker, who admitted yesterday that they spent \$92,000 of taxpayers' money on those ads, Mr. Speaker.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party spent taxpayers' dollars to warn that they're running out of taxpayers' dollars. There is not a shred of common sense in that, Mr. Speaker. But we're starting to see a pattern here, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the member from Saskatoon Nutana pointed out that while the Premier was calling for austerity, he was having a \$22,000 hardwood floor added to his own office.

In Saskatchewan's resource-rich economy, there should be a sustainable plan for growth and middle-class prosperity. Instead we have the Premier's stubborn insistence that we do as he says and not as he does. People deserve better than a PR [public relations] plan that wastes \$92,000 to warn the middle class about the shortage of money. And I think the Saskatchewan Party should stand to learn the value of a dollar, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

#### Cameco Wins Award

**Mr. Phillips:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in this Assembly to applaud Cameco Corporation on receiving a Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada award which was presented to them last evening in Toronto. The Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada bestows an environmental and social responsibility award each and every year.

Mr. Speaker, this award honours an individual or organization demonstrating an outstanding initiative, leadership, and accomplishment in protecting and preserving the natural environment or in establishing good community relations during the exploration program or in the operation of a mine.

Mr. Speaker, Cameco's model seeks to employ as many northern people as it can and prefers northern-owned businesses in purchasing goods and services for its Saskatchewan operations. Mr. Speaker, I ask that this Assembly recognize Cameco on receiving this prestigious award and their efforts in establishing and maintaining good community relations in its operations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### New Telephone Number for HealthLine

**Mr. Tochor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to announce in the House today that our government is making access to 24/7 health advice easier by changing the provincial HealthLine number to 811. Mr. Speaker, residents can now access HealthLine for professional health advice any time by simply dialling 811 from anywhere in the province.

As you know, HealthLine is a confidential, 24-hour health information and support telephone line. It's free of charge and services are offered in English with translation in over 100 languages. Anyone with a health question or who needs health advice can call HealthLine and speak to a registered nurse or mental health and addictions professional. These professionals can help callers make decisions about their health care options in a safe, caring, and confidential manner.

Mr. Speaker, our government remains committed to providing patient- and family-centred health care in our province, and HealthLine is a key part of our primary health care strategy to improve access to health information and health services. As we mark this important milestone for HealthLine, I ask fellow members in this Assembly to spread the word about the new number and encourage Saskatchewan residents to take advantage of this valuable resource. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Engineering and Geoscience Week

**Mr. Steinley:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, March 3rd to 9th has been proclaimed Engineering and Geoscience Week in Saskatchewan. Engineers and geoscientists are integral to the safe development and maintenance of the infrastructure and technology needed to help keep our export-based economy competitive and improving our quality of life here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, all of us have enjoyed the important work of these professionals, whether it's travelling on the highways, crossing a bridge, or entering a building. Mr. Speaker, the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Saskatchewan or APEGS is the governing body responsible for over 10,000 members in the province, and they have organized various activities to commemorate this week.

APEGS members make significant contributions in a number of important sectors, including agriculture, construction, forestry, manufacturing, mining, transportation, and resources. Engineering and Geoscience Week is an opportunity for us to recognize the significant contributions these professional men and women continue to play in designing the future of our province and for making sure our citizens can get to the vital services they need.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that this Assembly recognize Engineering and Geoscience Week and the dedicated professionals for their innovative and creative contributions to our province. Thank you.

[13:45]

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

### Strong Kids Campaign

**Ms. Ross:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Last month I had the pleasure of attending the annual general meeting for the YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association] and they

highlighted the Strong Kids campaign. Every year the YMCA Strong Kids campaign raises funds to provide financial assistance to children and families for participating in the YMCA programs.

Mr. Speaker, today I would like to acknowledge this great program which ensures the YMCA activities are accessible to everyone in the community. Through participation in these programs, families are able to take advantage of health and fitness programs to live healthy lives. Children and teens can also attend camps to acquire social and leadership skills, after-school literacy training, and vocational training. On average, one in four children coming into the YMCA requires financial assistance to join and stay in programs which benefit themselves immensely.

This great program is sustained through generous donations from residents within the community. Mr. Speaker, I would ask that this Assembly recognize the YMCA Strong Kids campaign and its ability to provide programs in a safe and healthy environment so many of our children, teens, and families can benefit from this. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

### QUESTION PERIOD

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

### Agreement with IPAC-CO2

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan are looking for answers with the Sask Party's IPAC [International Performance Assessment Centre for geologic storage of CO<sub>2</sub>] cover-up. From day to day the story changes with new facts and complications revealed. First the minister clearly told the Crowns committee last June there was a contract in place. She referred to a contract 52 times in two meetings, Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that no contract existed.

Recently she told an investigative reporter she had been told prior to those committee meetings that there wasn't a contract. But yesterday the minister's new claim was that she didn't know when she'd learned that there wasn't a contract — a fact that the MNP investigation had clearly found well over a year ago.

Mr. Speaker, the public deserves answers. Was the minister negligent in her responsibility as minister, or did she knowingly provide misleading statements?

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

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — The MNP report calls the agreement a contract. The university calls the agreement a contract.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Those aren't the only misleading statements made by this minister during this cover-up, Mr. Speaker. The minister testified . . .

**The Speaker:** — I would caution the member to choose his words wisely and not to impugn the honour of a member of this House. I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — It gets tricky when the facts are one thing, statements are another thing. But the minister testified to the Crowns committee last year, making claims that value for money wasn't an issue. She claimed that it wasn't about dollars, that it was about process. Those claims in committee have been exposed as incorrect. Now the minister has been charged . . . changed her answer and has shared that she was aware there was waste, that they were paying too much. She also stated that she knew that when she was testifying in committee, when she was saying something entirely different.

The facts being one thing, her statements being another, Mr. Speaker, you can understand why the people of this province are confused. How is this anything but deliberate, misleading statements to the legislature and the people of this . . .

**The Speaker:** — I have cautioned the member in the use of his words and the word deliberate. I would ask that he withdraw that remark.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Withdraw.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — I withdraw the remark.

**The Speaker:** — Did the member say he was withdrawing that remark?

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — That's correct.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — So my question would be, why are the facts one thing and the minister's statements another?

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

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We know that there was an agreement, an arrangement between the University of Regina, Royal Dutch Shell, and the Government of Saskatchewan to do some work on carbon capture and sequestration. We know that under that agreement, the University of Regina was to manage the money and the personnel to start up the company, IPAC-CO2. We know that under that arrangement and the management of the U of R [University of Regina] that some of their employees did not follow the U of R processes. Through those employees, a sole-source contract was entered into. The U of R acknowledged publicly that they were managing the funds at that time and they were managing the personnel.

The gentleman involved, Dr. Wilson, has stated publicly it was his decision, that he made it and the reasons why. We know that it was sole-sourced. We know that there was a conflict of interest while it was under management of the U of R. We also

know that once IPAC incorporated and a board was put into place, actions were taken immediately to find out where everything had gone and what happened.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, getting information on this file has been like pulling teeth. The Sask Party has tried to brush this problem under the rug and deflect responsibility. We see some of that here today, instead of providing answers and accountability that's deserved by Saskatchewan people. And the more the minister talks, the more the disturbing leak of information continues. Yesterday the minister revealed in her scrum that CVI [Climate Ventures Inc.], the for-profit company that the Sask Party funded with taxpayers' dollars the start-up of, also has contracts with Crown corporations. That's new information that wasn't revealed to the Crowns committee or to reporters who have been asking questions for a long time on this file.

To the minister: which Crowns have contracts or had contracts with CVI? How much were they for? Did dollars flow on handshakes or contracts? Were they sole-sourced, and has there been any problems reported?

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

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Actually it was this minister that initiated a search throughout government to see if there was contracts with a company called ClimBIT because it's owned by the same gentleman that has Climate Ventures Inc. So there are three contracts within the Crowns. One is with SaskTel; the contract is for \$22,914. It was let through an RFP [request for proposal] process. There is two contracts with SaskPower. To date, one, \$15,000 plus taxes, has flowed and the other contract, \$13,950, has flowed. Both were sole-sourced because they're under the threshold of \$25,000.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, this is a cover-up, plain and simple. It started with a slow leak of disturbing information. Misleading statements have been repeatedly made, unacceptable conflicts of interest have been revealed by investigation, and management of IPAC is saying the handshake deal led to unboxed, unneeded equipment, and mostly waste, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party continues to ignore every opportunity they've had to provide answers and accountability. Will the minister reverse her course of action and once and for all call on the Provincial Auditor to fully investigate and review this IPAC cover-up?

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

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, the U of R has fully acknowledged that they were managing the funds and the personnel at that time. The person who decided to enter this

contract has fully acknowledged that it was his decision.

But you know, it's interesting that this is more about a political hopeful, quite frankly a leader hopeful, because when in committee he asked me, he asked me which individuals were involved. He asked me for the names. Quite frankly I did not say that publicly in committee, but I told him that in private I would tell him who the names were, who the people at the U of R were. He never bothered to find out. He never bothered to ask me after.

In committee he can talk about . . . And you know why? Because they were choices by the U of R. And all he wants is to send out a perception that there's a cover-up when time and time again, myself as the minister and the previous minister has given him the information. And he has absolutely ignored that. He knows money isn't missing. He knows where the money went. He knows that it was an overpriced contract. He knows it was a sole-source contract. He knows there was a conflict of interest. He knows all of that happened under the management of the U of R.

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

#### Saskatchewan Transportation Company Bus Routes

**Mr. Vermette:** — Mr. Speaker, for many Saskatchewan people, especially seniors, travelling on STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company] is important. They attend their medical appointments in the city. They go shopping. They visit friends and family. What is outrageous is that the Sask Party government is cutting bus routes so they can pay for their priorities like three more politicians.

On routes to Lanigan, Blaine Lake, Eastend, there will be no STC service. One senior from Holdfast wrote to the paper and said she's been left stranded. To the minister: why are these people being told to hitchhike to their medical appointments?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, STC is a public transport company that offers a good service around the province. Mr. Speaker, having said that, the subsidy for STC back 10 years ago was \$1.6 million. As of this year, Mr. Speaker, the subsidy will be \$10 million. Mr. Speaker, that's a huge increase in subsidy.

What we need to do, through the board of directors and through management of STC, is look at routes and cost savings in the corporation. Three routes were looked at, Mr. Speaker, the three that were mentioned. They had an average ridership per trip of two people or less, Mr. Speaker. That's running a bus for a whole route for one or two people per trip, Mr. Speaker. It also did some courier service. But, Mr. Speaker, it was far from making money. They were certainly losing a lot of money. We have moved forward with STC to eliminate those routes, Mr. Speaker, because we don't feel it affects one or two passengers per trip.

As far as the courier service, Mr. Speaker, we know that there

are private courier services in the province that will pick up that business. And we certainly hope that other individuals that want to cover off that service that STC was providing would pick up those routes, Mr. Speaker, and fill in that void.

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

**Mr. Vermette:** — Mr. Speaker, that's interesting. The president of Gravelbourg Chamber of Commerce made it very clear: there are more people using the route than the minister says. So to find out, he emailed STC. They said they would not hand over the numbers due to a commercial sensitivity. Really, Mr. Speaker.

Will the minister provide the president of the chamber with the information they requested on the passenger numbers?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, the numbers are very clear. On one of the routes, there is an average of one person per trip over the last five years. On two other routes, there's an average of two people per trip over the last five years. Mr. Speaker, those are the numbers that STC has provided publicly, Mr. Speaker. And when you look at the company, we are providing a service that is certainly well-used and appreciated throughout the province.

There is no public transport system that doesn't have a subsidy. We know that public transportation systems in Regina and Saskatoon have huge subsidies and so does STC. Having said that, all those public transport companies, Mr. Speaker, look for efficiencies. These are three routes that is not an easy decision for STC or the government to make. But, Mr. Speaker, to keep the subsidy in control — up at \$10 million — tough decisions have to be made.

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

**Mr. Vermette:** — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, for small businesses in rural Saskatchewan, STC shipping has been useful and affordable. Private sector options are double the cost. The cost increase could kill small businesses, and farmers will have fewer options for parts that they need to fix their machinery. To the Minister: why is the Sask Party failing to deliver for the people of rural Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, as I said, in a growing province there are courier services that will cover off many of those routes, Mr. Speaker. We don't have any trouble with that. But it's interesting that the member would sound so incensed in why this government would back away from rural Saskatchewan. Well it certainly hasn't. Because under the NDP in the 1990s, they shut down 13 routes in rural Saskatchewan — 13 routes. And he sounds so incensed that this government, raising the subsidy of \$10 million, has eliminated three routes.

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

### Rent Increases for Tenants

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday we learned that the Sask Party's plan for affordable housing is completely useless. In a city with the rental vacancy rate hovering around 1 per cent, affordable housing is simply not a priority for this government. Tenants at a building in Regina received notice for a huge increase in their rent. One of the increases is jumping by \$520; that's 77 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, that kind of rent increase is completely unaffordable, especially to a person who is living on a fixed income. To the Minister: why does the Sask Party have no plan for the middle-class and working families who are being hit hard by rent increases that almost double their monthly living costs?

[14:00]

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

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We acknowledge that this is a difficult situation that's going to impact these individuals at the building that was identified in the media yesterday. Some of these are long-term residents, Mr. Speaker, and this is their home. A sudden change of this nature would be very stressful for anyone.

Mr. Speaker, the landlord in that particular case is a member of the Saskatchewan Rental Housing Industry Association. We encourage all tenants to take advantage of their tenant assistance program which they have. In addition, Mr. Speaker, with respect to this particular situation, the director of the Office of Residential Tenancies will be meeting personally with these tenants tomorrow, and he's also been in close contact with the association.

And, Mr. Speaker, on this matter I'm prepared to meet with the affected tenants after question period with my colleague, the Minister of Social Services, to talk about the issue and see what can be done to help these particular individuals.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Mr. Speaker, this Minister's sympathy is cold comfort for these people who are trying to find a place . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And they laugh. Look at them laugh about this. Their rent's going up by 77 per cent and they laugh about it, Mr. Speaker. They have no plan for affordable housing in this province, and they tweaked a rule to allow for six months notice for rent increase. And that notice might as well say eviction because that's what it really is all about. And that's shameful, Mr. Speaker.

Other provinces have a plan to stop this kind of outrageous rent increases. It's about rent controls, and that's the kind of plan we need in a modern Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, the tenants of Robinson Street building are here today. They are petitioning the government to stop these outrageous increases and help them stay in their homes. Some have lived in that building, and as the minister has identified, for over 30 years. Will the minister do the right thing and institute rent controls to stop

gouging renters here in Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've made it perfectly clear we're not going to institute rent controls in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, when we formed government in 2007 landlords were only required to provide a three-month notice for rent increase. In 2008 we recognized that there were pressures on the rental market and the legislation was not adequate. So in response, Mr. Speaker, we increased the notice required for rent increases to six months. We further amended the legislation in 2012 to increase the notice period to 12 months, Mr. Speaker, the highest in Canada, unless the landlord belongs to an approved association.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan rental housing association was chosen specifically for their code of conduct, their code of ethics, and their tenant assistance program. When a tenant contacts the association, they will attempt to bring the two sides together in respect to the rent increases. And if that doesn't work, Mr. Speaker, they'll assist the tenant with finding other accommodations or other programs. And we're confident that that program will be of great assistance to encourage the parties to get together, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, you know, Mr. Speaker, as the minister talks about what's happening across Canada, we know that 80 per cent — 80 per cent — of Canadians live with some form of rent control under all stripes of political parties. And that's true, and that's what should be happening here in Saskatchewan. And they know the tweaking they've done with rent control laws in Saskatchewan just aren't getting the job done, and they don't work, and they leave people out in the cold. And rent control is something that we need now to stop the slow, painful, inescapable eviction notices that in fact these people are facing.

Without rent control, outrageous \$500-a-month increases like this have become the norm in too many of our communities. And that's simply unacceptable and the government should be ashamed it has nothing to offer these tenants to protect them from being gouged.

Why does the minister sit on his hands when he could be putting in rent controls to help tenants afford the basics and stay in their homes?

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Mr. Speaker, I beg to differ with my friend opposite. This rent increase is an exception to the rule. The rent increases that we've been seeing across the province have been more in the 3 to 4 per cent range.

Mr. Speaker, we've already said we're not going to consider rent controls. And even the New Democrats acknowledge that rent controls didn't work. Mr. Speaker, in their 2007 housing report, it's quoted as saying rent controls would be a disincentive for investment, and rent controls create uncertainty



that will lead to a decline in the housing availability.

Mr. Speaker, rent controls are a disincentive to invest in existing housing stock, and they're a disincentive to invest in new housing stock, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Funding for Universities

**Mr. Broten:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Under the Sask Party's watch, the mood at our province's universities has become quite depressing. Because of the Sask Party government's funding decisions, the talk now is of layoffs, job cuts, reduced programs, Mr. Speaker, as well as increased tuition.

But with the Sask Party, Mr. Speaker, it's always somebody else's fault. They will never accept blame. We heard today, Mr. Speaker, from the Minister of CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan] with respect to the IPAC cover-up, actually suggesting it's the NDP's fault that the situation has occurred the way it has, Mr. Speaker.

My question to the minister: why, Mr. Speaker, will he not admit that it is his government that has had a central role in creating the financial mess at our universities here in Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I can advise the member opposite and I can advise the House that this government has never in fact reduced or frozen funding at either university or at SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology]. Mr. Speaker, in fact our government has increased it and has increased it by well over 40 per cent since we've formed government. The same cannot be said for other provinces. British Columbia announced in their budget that they will cut funding to post-secondary institutions by some \$46 million over the next three years. In Quebec, universities are being forced to cut \$124 million by April.

Mr. Speaker, the universities are an important asset in this province. They're responsible for the economic development in this province. We regard them as economic drivers. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, they're responsible for a lot of the research and innovation that takes place in this province.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, let's look at the University of Saskatchewan. It was this government that broke its election promise to properly fund the Health Sciences Building. It was this government, Mr. Speaker, that forced nearly \$100 million of debt onto the university's books and which has caused the financial problems at the University of Saskatchewan. Now, Mr. Speaker, that has tightened the financial picture on campus, and we're seeing layoffs. We're seeing programs eliminated, Mr. Speaker, and we are seeing the belt being tightened at the

University of Saskatchewan.

My question to the Minister of Advanced Education: will he admit that his decision, his government's decision to force nearly \$100 million of debt onto the university's books, Mr. Speaker, is the cause of the problems that the University of Saskatchewan is now experiencing?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, we are pleased with what is taking place at the University of Saskatchewan with regard to the Academic Health Sciences Building. This government has provided in excess of \$200 million for that process. The university has borrowed an additional \$70 million of their money for an investment on the D and E wings of over a quarter of a billion dollars to date.

Mr. Speaker, we will work with the university with regard to the completion of the changes necessary to A and B wings. And, Mr. Speaker, we have never said no to a request from the university with regard to the Academic Health Sciences Building. We have continued to work with them so that they can ensure that construction goes ahead. I toured the facility last week and, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that they are making good progress. D wing is in the process of being occupied, and E wing is well on under construction.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite have a sad record of what they have done with regard to post-secondary education. We'll take no advice from them on how post-secondary education ought to be funded in this province.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, the Sask. Party's election promise was not to force \$80 million of debt onto the university for the Health Sciences Building. Their promise was to complete the project, Mr. Speaker.

The minister says he is committed to funding the health sciences project, but he won't put that in writing with the University of Saskatchewan. He won't do that, Mr. Speaker, because he does not want that liability showing up on the province's books. He wants it to show up on the university's books, Mr. Speaker, in order to make the provincial budget look better than it actually is.

Will the Minister of Advanced Education admit, will he admit that the nearly \$100 million of debt was forced onto the University of Saskatchewan's books in order to make the provincial books look better than they actually are?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is looking for some admissions. There ought to be some admissions coming from the members on that side of the bench: 1993-94, minus 2.5 per cent reduction; '94-95, minus 4 per cent reduction; '95-96, zero per cent; '96-97, zero per cent; '97-98,

minus point one — that's a lot of years in a row with no growth, no expansion, nothing whatever to cover the costs that were there.

Mr. Speaker, in the late . . . just before forming government, they could have built the Academic Health Sciences Building for approximately \$120 million. They didn't do that. While we waited for them to do something over there, the costs of that project more than doubled. Mr. Speaker, that government, when they were in government, ought to apologize for how they handled things. It is an embarrassment to the province. And, Mr. Speaker, this is a government that is fixing, changing, and repairing the things that they left behind.

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

**Mr. Broten:** — Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party simply won't admit when it's made a mistake and when it's broken an election promise. They won't admit that it was a mistake to cancel the film employment tax credit. The Minister of CIC won't admit that there were mistakes made about the cover-up of IPAC. And now this minister won't admit what the true motive was to push nearly \$100 million of debt onto the universities' books, Mr. Speaker.

Let's look at the University of Regina. Here we also see huge cuts taking place, Mr. Speaker. There's talk of sessional lecturers being reduced in great numbers. Sessional lecturers provide a huge amount of the undergraduate education, but under this Sask Party government, sessional lecturers are being eliminated at a great number.

My question to the Advanced Education minister: what does he have to say to the sessional lecturers at the U of R who have been contributing faithfully to the University of Regina community but now will be receiving their pink slips in the mailbox?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, the people at U of R or anybody else ought to look back and look at what took place during their government: 1993-94 at the U of R, minus 1.3; '94-95, minus 4 per cent; '97-98, minus point six per cent. And you know what else they did, Mr. Speaker? They had the nerve to say to the universities, both universities, we are going to charge you \$15,000 to have a lawyer from Regina, Harold MacKay, go out and help you learn to live on less money so you can do it. That's the legacy that those people left behind.

Mr. Speaker, we are working with the universities. We value the contribution that they make to the people of this province. And, Mr. Speaker, we are going to ensure that the Academic Health Sciences Building gets finished. We are working with the university. We have never said no. We have never turned down a request on that. We are continuing to work on that, unlike the members opposite who have a shabby, shabby record.

**The Speaker:** — Why is the Minister of Crown Investments on her feet?

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, with leave, to introduce an order for a special committee.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister for Crown Investments has asked for leave to present an order for special committees. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

## MOTIONS

### Special Committee on Traffic Safety

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, I move:

That a special committee on traffic safety be appointed in accordance with rule no. 150(1) of the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan* to conduct an inquiry on matters related to improving traffic safety and reducing fatalities by examining the dominant factors that cause traffic collisions in the province: impaired driving, distracted driving, excessive speed, intersection safety, and wildlife collisions; as well as education and public awareness issues related to traffic safety; and

That the said committee shall hold public hearings to receive presentations from interested individuals and groups, and report its recommendations to the Assembly by August 30th, 2013; and further

That members Hickie, Wilson, Cox, Parent, Steinley, Chartier, and Vermette be appointed to the said committee.

[14:15]

**The Speaker:** — Order. It has been moved by the Minister of Crown Investments:

That a special committee on traffic safety be appointed in accordance with rule 150(1) of the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan* to conduct an inquiry on matters related to improving traffic safety and reducing fatalities by examining the dominant factors that cause traffic collisions in the province: impaired driving, distracted driving, excessive speed, intersection safety, and wildlife collisions; as well as education and public awareness issues related to traffic safety; and

That the said committee shall hold public hearings to receive representations from interested individuals and groups, and report its recommendations to the Assembly by August 30, 2013; and further

That members Hickie, Wilson, Cox, Parent, Steinley, Chartier, and Vermette be appointed to the said committee.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? All in favour, say aye.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Aye.

**The Speaker:** — All opposed, say nay.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Nay.

**The Speaker:** — The ayes have it. Carried.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### SECOND READINGS

##### Bill No. 85

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 85** — *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* be now read a second time.]

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure I'm thrilled to rise to speak to this bill today. It's a massive bill that's been introduced right at the end of the last portion of the session in December, and really only a scant three or four legislative days ago. And yet we're still reeling from the impact of this bill and the depth of it, the breadth of it, and the impact it's going to have on working people in Saskatchewan. So this is an important bill, a very important bill — likely the most important bill of this Legislative Assembly or this session. And we're very concerned about the impact of the bill on the various people that it will impact, and quite frankly it's the working people of Saskatchewan that appear to be under attack here, Mr. Speaker.

When the minister introduced the bill back in December, December 5th, he did a number of things when he introduced the bill. And I guess, you know, he thanked the people that he had consulted with, a list of various organizations. He also indicated some of the main provisions that he felt are important in the bill. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the minister didn't indicate why these changes were needed, and I think that's something that working people are very concerned about, is where is the motive for these kind of sweeping changes to the labour laws of Saskatchewan.

We understand, I think, there's over 12 bills that are being affected. It's a massive overhaul. And you know, it's a kind of governance style that we see being used by the federal government these days as well where you pack as much as you possibly can into one bill; you limit the amount of examination that's available by the public, by the legislators. And when you see 12 bills being amended here when in fact they should all be treated separately so that there's adequate time to debate these bills, adequate time to analyze the impact.

And I think you well know, Mr. Speaker, the difference one word can make in any piece of legislation could be significant. And we see that in the court challenges that we see in various pieces of legislation, for example the recent Whatcott decision when words were being examined to determine whether they

were in fact hatred. These are complex matters, and often it's one word that makes a difference. And I will take some time in my words today to indicate some of those words that are particularly troubling and have significant impact.

The other thing that we didn't see in this legislation is something that's outstanding business for this government, and that's to fix the mess they made with the essential services Act. We know they've been mandated by the courts to do something about it and they simply have not taken the proper time and the attention that that correction deserves and is required. And it's very disappointing that this minister chose to ignore the order of the court to fix that legislation and to defer it in lieu of introducing an ominous or omnibus or ominous piece of legislation that threatens working people across the province without any consultation with them and without any sort of regard for the impact on them and their families and their lives and their daily lives, and certainly without any motivation that's apparent.

And even if you've looked at the original document that was tabled in May last year, it's full of legalese; it's full of technical jargon. It doesn't speak to any of the ordinary working public. It's really something that you can tell is designed for lawyers to read, and certainly the minister is a lawyer. It's a very legalistic document. And it's a difficult thing for ordinary working people to get their heads around. And I would challenge many of the members here to see how many have actually read through that document from cover to cover and could tell us what's in there.

Now some will, some will. But I would again acknowledge the people with their hands up are people who have a legal background. So I think that just proves my point, Mr. Speaker, that this a document that's intended, a very technical document that was intended for people with certain skills and expertise, and it wasn't one that was meant to be a valid and a credible consultative document with the working people of Saskatchewan. So that's where the problem started.

First of all, they ignore the essential services requirements that were laid out by the court, and then they decided to smooch together — and I don't know how you would spell that word to the Hansard people — but mash together 12 pieces of legislation that . . . Well maybe smooch works, Mr. Speaker. But at any rate they managed to, maybe if I think of my Mixmaster, they mangled 12 pieces of legislation that should all be treated separately, that had valid reasons and history — 100 years of history for why they came into being — and they're now presented to us in this bill, *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*.

So just a little bit about what is in the bill. Normally what I like to do when I'm rising in the legislature to speak to bills is take a look at the provisions of the changes that are being proposed. Of course I can't even possibly begin to do that today because of the sheer volume of changes and the length of the document. I don't think it would . . . Well it would just take too long, Mr. Speaker. And I'm wanting to make sure that we can move along the debates as we go along.

Certainly I will comment on a number of the key provisions that we're concerned about, but first of all just a bit of an

overview about the type of changes that are being contemplated by *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*.

First of all, we're looking at, it's a consolidation of 12 different Acts: *The Assignment of Wages Act*, *The Building Trades Protection Act*, *The Construction Industry Labour Relations Act*, *The Employment Agencies Act*, *The Fire Departments Platoon Act*, *The Health Labour Relations Reorganization Act*, *The Labour Management Dispute (Temporary Provisions) Act*, *The Labour Standards Act*, *The Occupational Health and Safety Act*, *The Radiation Health and Safety Act*, *The Trade Union Act* — which is the grandfather of all labour legislation, first in North America — and *The Wages Recovery Act*.

As you can see even by their names, Mr. Speaker, this is a wide range of bills that are being amalgamated and put together in one Act. And I think the unique identity of each of these pieces of legislation is being lost just by the very fact that they will no longer exist separately. Yes, there are always opportunities for efficiencies in legislation and there may be some overlap in some of these bills. That to me should have been the focus of this review. But I think this minister has gone way, way beyond that kind of review.

So the new bill is organized in 10 parts. The first part deals with preliminary matters which are typical you would find in this type of legislation. The second one deals with employment standards. So this is now the sweeping level of standards that are being applied to all workers.

First of all, in the scope itself, it does maintain an exemption for agricultural workers in the Act and it's going to move all the other exemptions to the regulations. So here we have right at the very beginning of this bill a suggestion that exemptions will be dealt with in the regulations. And that's something that's been identified as of great concern to many people who've reviewed the bill, is that much of the substance of the bill isn't there. And that's a huge concern.

What we're seeing is that this bill defers a lot of the substantive decisions, a lot of the substantive policy, to the regulation portion of the legislative suite. And you know, Mr. Speaker, what happens when you put everything in regulations is that it escapes scrutiny. It can be passed by the executive arm of government and we do not see any review by the legislature nor by any of the affected people because it's simply not required. The Executive Council can pass regulations without having any public review, and that's not acceptable.

This is the kind of thing where you're dealing with people's lives, their work lives, and the impact on them and their families. And they're not going to have an opportunity to review any of this because it's going to be found in the regulations. Plus, when questions are asked of the minister in terms of what's going to happen, he basically says, well we won't know until we see the regulations.

So it's a way for the minister to avoid the in-depth answers that are required so that people understand what's in this bill. And it's not just one instance. It comes up over and over and over again in this piece of legislation. That has people very worried, Mr. Speaker, and I'll get into some of their specific concerns later.

In the employment standards portion of the bill, which is part II, you can see there's a change to things like overtime which allows modified work arrangements to exist. This is something that has been highlighted as a concern for many people, many workers, and there are a fairly long list of changes there — two types of work arrangements; permits are needed for longer work periods without a day of rest. And they're incorporating firefighter hours of work provisions into this part which is one of the things that has to be done if this omnibus bill is to succeed for all the different types of work situations that it's purporting to apply to.

Also in the employment standards portion, there's some things that are interesting and I think will be welcome to workers, and the government has certainly touted this one, the fact that you can get a leave for organ donation, which is a significant change, and leave to attend citizenship ceremonies for one day.

So those are the types of things, I think that, you know, generally the public would not have a huge issue with also lowering qualifying period for maternity and parental and adoption leave. We are told there's no changes to annual holidays or public holiday provisions and that notice provisions have not changed as well.

We are seeing a change to the minimum wage in that it's indexed to the CPI [consumer price index]. That's something that the minister has explained. And the payment of wages, the electronic payment of wages, that's something I think that's just getting with the times, and it certainly happens in other jurisdictions. So we'll be interested to see how that works — things like pre-paid cards. So it's a novel way of dealing with that.

We're seeing all kinds of other changes in terms of employment standards. Equal pay, discriminatory actions fines, time banks, and *The Wages Recovery Act* are all dealt with in there. In the summary that was provided in terms of part III and part V, which is occupational health and safety and radiation health and safety, there's a number of requirements that are changed in there. Prime contractors, in terms of requiring designation of prime contractors on multiple employer work sites. So we'll see how that works out in those areas where there are multiple employer work sites.

A number of penalties are being increased, which is appropriate when you're doing a consolidation and review of this sort. Reimbursement for WCB [Workers' Compensation Board] expenditures, from the WCB on expenditures on industrial safety programs. And certainly we were talking about in the context of even motorcycle safety that when people can take programs, it's important for them to be able to reflect that in the fees that they pay.

So we see where, if there's industrial safety programs, there can be a reimbursement and that seems to be appropriate, Mr. Speaker. And again, without going into detail on all the legislative changes, I'm merely highlighting some of the changes that this bill is attempting to deal with.

Part IV is the appeals process, and there seems to be an attempt at streamlining here in a single avenue for appeals. So that's something that we will be watching very closely. Part VI is

probably one of the more interesting parts. It's the labour relations section of the new bill. And there's a number of requirements, onerous requirements here that are being imposed on trade unions and workers' unions to make things more complicated for them, for sure, but certainly changes that weren't looked for or asked for.

[14:30]

The decertification provisions, there's new grounds in there that I'm going to speak to later. And then voluntarily recognizes unions, we'll see how that portion works out. At least secret ballots are continued in terms of union votes, and then there's some other portions on negotiation of agreements and first collective agreements, also on last offer votes, union security and deduction of union dues, and technological change.

Other areas that are represented in this part is the duty of fair representation, fines of union members. And one of the big changes here is the removal of the legislative authority of the union's right to fine its members for crossing a picket line. That's a big change for unions and I think something that is of grave concern to them as it takes away some of their power to maintain their rights in striking.

There's other ones that haven't been changed. A number of areas — fire departments, health sector, Labour Relations Board, all of these are facing some changes as well. Part VII, essential services, is just a place marker right now and the ministry has indicated that they're waiting guidance from the Court of Appeal. So once this is heard from the Court of Appeal, that's apparently when they're going to be prepared to make some changes based on the court's decision.

So those are just some of the highlights that were provided to various parties at the technical briefing last December. And so that was a portion, or I guess a summary of some of the areas that are being affected. As you can see, Mr. Speaker, this is something I could speak to at great length, just on the actual changes themselves, to let the public know and the people that are following this bill sort of work through each of those changes. But simply it's too vast of a scope to even attempt to try and get through all that. So again a reminder, and I think this was something that we were hoping to find in the Act but there's nothing in it on the new essential services legislation. And we still are waiting for that despite the fact that the court decision was some time ago.

So on May 2nd when the minister introduced the consultation — quote, I'll put that in quotes — “consultation” document, the immediate concern was that he only provided 90 days for people to review this. We're heading into summer and we know that this is a highly technical document with a significant number of changes to 12 different pieces of legislation. And he provided the public and the working people of this province 90 days to look at the changes for something nobody asked for, or at least the minister wasn't telling us who asked for this. Although I think if you read his consultation paper, it's obvious he consulted with a certain group of people because he kept saying, what we've “heard.” But he wouldn't indicate in the paper who he heard it from. So that's left as a bit of a mystery, although I think any sort of aware person could guess that this is not coming from the working people, but rather from the

employer side.

At any rate, our party and our caucus recognized that this consultation process was simply not going to work. And this fall our critic, the member from Saskatoon Centre, initiated a labour consultation tour. And in that tour our caucus visited a number of cities and towns in Saskatchewan and actually invited people to come out and talk about some of the concerns they had with the bill. And the most important thing I think was the fact that we actually gave people a voice and a sense that they were being consulted, which they were not feeling the love from the ministry in terms of their short time frame and the massive amount of changes that they were proposing.

So there were a number of recommendations that came out of our review, and the categories that the review focused on were seven points. First of all, the importance of public consultation. That's something that was overlooked by the government when they rammed through in 90 days a consultation process on a massive bill with sweeping changes that affects a lot of people. And again, one word change can have a significant effect, and we're talking about a bill that is almost 100 pages long, Mr. Speaker. So that's in itself is something that I think the working people of this province took as a direct insult from the ministry when they felt that they weren't able to even be consulted on this change.

The other thing that our consultations worked on was ensuring a balanced working environment. And this is something again that, as far as the public was aware and the workers in this province and I think many employers, Mr. Speaker, there is a balanced working environment. There wasn't a cry for changes to this labour legislation. So what's motivating this government to make those kinds of changes? Is it something that they're interested in because they want to look out for workers? That's not the message we're getting, Mr. Speaker. It's not the message we're getting at all.

The third point that our report focused on was the dangers of losing strong workplace legislation. As our critic has pointed out time and time again, these bills are the result of a hundred years of labour laws that came through our province's history. They reflect the values of our public and of the citizens of Saskatchewan, the working public, but also employers and employees alike.

There was a machine that was working, and if it isn't broke, why would you fix it? That's the question that kept coming up time and time again. What we were looking for, and what you would look for in any kind of labour reform, is the fourth point — positive changes that will work for working people. Working people are the backbone of our economy. And we know that, Mr. Speaker. And if you don't have a place where they're valued and safe and feeling that their work is important and that they're recognized for that, then we are going to have issues that start to arise. And this bill does absolutely nothing to look out for positive changes that will work for working people.

The fifth point that was highlighted in our tour was to take care of the most vulnerable workers. And something I've always thought, Mr. Speaker, about people who are represented by labour unions is that the ones that need them the most, the people that need labour unions the most, are those that don't

have a union. And that's why unions come about, Mr. Speaker, is because there are injustices. There are workers that are being taken advantage of and they are incredibly vulnerable.

They're usually young workers. And I can think of an example of my son who was working in a restaurant, in the kitchen in a restaurant, and when he wasn't able to stay on after a three-hour shift, he was fired. And that was, he was expected to work for three hours, couldn't stay on past that, and his employer fired him. Those kinds of things are unfair, and you can just see where the power imbalance exists, that where employers like that can take advantage of vulnerable workers.

And that's not what the role of government is, Mr. Speaker. The role of government is to take care of those people that are vulnerable because they don't have a voice, and they don't have the power that they need to be protected.

The other point that we were looking for is to strengthen the unions and collective bargaining rights. Those are important values in our province, in the history of our province, and is something that I think Saskatchewanians can be proud of. And that was something that we felt if these bills needed to be changed — which we didn't think they did, but in the event that they were — that something that should happen is that they should improve unions and the collective bargaining rights.

And finally the last piece which is always important, and I think there's no disagreement with this, is that it should strengthen the economy through workplace safety and training. So workplace safety and training, just like motorcycle training, all those things are things that increase people's safety and reduces injury and the impact of injury on the workplace.

So there's a number of things that were identified and I would urge members opposite to have a look at the concerns that came out of the tour. There's certainly information on our website that's available. And it's something I think that we demonstrated, that if you actually sit down and take the time to listen to what people have to say and give them a chance to voice their concerns, there actually can be value in that.

We consulted with more than 700 people face to face and our Labour critic released his findings. They're all available in the document. The report that was prepared and what our critic said is that we heard some common themes. The first is that workplaces in Saskatchewan have fairly balanced relationships. The balance is there. There was nothing to remove the balance. So again we're not sure why the minister felt necessary to introduce these sweeping changes because what we heard is that there was already a balance there. And that is a contributing factor to our economy and I don't think we can underestimate that, Mr. Speaker. Having a strong economy requires having a strong and a competent workforce and a workforce that feels that its rights are being protected. Throwing that off balance with this reckless overhaul will have chilling effects on people and on our economy.

There's concerns that were raised from working parents and the changes to the employment standards will hurt the work-family balance. And that's something again that government should be concerned about, is the rights of families and that the balance is there for them in relation to work and their family balance.

Overtime regulation changes, we don't even know what they're going to look like but we know that working families are concerned about that. Overtime is a real challenge for people who are trying to raise kids and deal with all the demands of the family needs.

There are other comments that our Labour critic made. He indicated that workers and employers believe that details matter. And some of the ideas in the government's discussion paper, it was identified that they're just fearmongering, like asking if public holidays or vacation days should be rolled back when in fact those changes weren't there. So there were a lot of comments in the consultation document that never got reflected in the legislation. So again, why? Why were those questions asked if this government had no intention of making those changes? Were they just hoping to raise the level of fear to the point that when they didn't make those changes, people would feel somewhat relaxed, and yet realizing that the other changes will have a significant impact on the work-life balance and also on the workplace itself?

Okay, so that was kind of the report that our Labour critic submitted. And we've continued to ask this government to basically slow down the process because that's one of the biggest problems we have right now is that the urgency and the speed with which this government is moving is simply not giving people who are concerned enough time to identify what the issues are and have a good look at what the true impact of the legislation's going to be.

We're hearing a number of things that we need to be wary about, so I'm just going to highlight from some of the reports that we were able to get about the things that people are concerned about in *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*.

First of all, it's indicated that this is a bailout in terms of hours of rest between shifts. Now what happens is that the new Act details minimum periods of rest between shifts for workers with no collective agreement. So there's no definition of emergency circumstances. It does set out that the required periods of rest do not apply in emergency circumstances. So we don't know what emergency circumstances are, but we do know that periods of rest don't apply. So that raises concern in the workers' view, and is it just a way to force them to work for longer hours and is it only for the benefit of the employers? Who's the benefit for for this provision? I think the conclusion is that it would be for the benefit of employers.

The next concern that we see is the basic rules regarding hours of work. *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* sets out the basic rules for working people with no union regarding hours of work, and what it appears is that fewer workers will enjoy consecutive days off and many workers will not know if the protection exists until the government determines certain workplaces to be covered. Again we don't have the detail we need to be able to do a proper analysis. It's like signing a contract without reading the fine print, Mr. Speaker. So who is this going to benefit? I think any rational person would come to the conclusion that this is going to benefit employers. It's not going to benefit working people.

The next one — and I have a lot of these to bring up, Mr. Speaker, because this is a very important Act that's changing a

lot of people's lives — the next one crossing the line. Labour law changes are taking us backwards. The effect of *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* is to take control out of the hands of working people and place the employers in a position to determine the rules they want to apply to the workers. There's also power for employers to interfere with processes such as collective bargaining, strike votes in the internal workings of unions. And I'll get into that in more detail later.

These are fundamental changes that take us back decades. So the question again, why is this piece of legislation so unfair and so skewed against workers? There's no input for workers now in decision making. *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* is changing the definition of employee and the result appears to be, and again we don't know for sure, but that front-line workers will no longer have any input into policy development or budget discussions. And this is completely contrary to the lean principles that are being consistently referred to by this government as the appropriate way to work and have work being done in government workplaces. Why, why then, under *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*, are the voices of workers being silenced?

Then the next question that we have to ask: what is overtime? *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* does not clearly set out that overtime must be paid to workers where daily hours of work exceed either eight or ten hours in the case of a modified work arrangement. There's nothing there. So the question is: do workers have to work for longer hours for less pay? Is that happening, or not? And again the clarity is not there, and the questions are not being answered.

There's other issues that arise — divide and conquer. What's happening here with *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* is we see them creating a divide in the workplace between those who provide direct supervision — and we'll look very closely at that definition in a little while here — but those who provide direct supervision and then other workers in the crew. What exactly is direct supervision? We're going to create two separate bargaining units. And the kind of problems that that is going to create is something that's very, very concerning to a lot of workers. It's going to take rungs out of the advancement ladder, it could limit access to overtime, and lend to other lost benefits including seniority and salary steps.

[14:45]

There's other things in this document. *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* does nothing to address many problems identified with *The Public Service Essential Services Act*. And I mentioned that earlier, Mr. Speaker. We have been waiting and waiting for this government to get its act together on essential services. And that's what this bill should have focused on, and we see that there's nothing there at all. So when is it coming? How much longer is it going to take?

But I think the biggest issue for, in this case, the SEIU-West [Service Employees International Union] is that there are going to be significant delays in bargaining. And this is, I think, one of the most important things. Because as you know, Mr. Speaker, delays in bargaining are not only difficult for the workers. It's difficult for the public; it's difficult for the employer. And anything that creates delays in bargaining is

going to have a direct impact on the economy and on the working people and the lives of working people. So *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* does nothing to improve the collective bargaining experience.

Currently the collective bargaining continues to be plagued with roadblocks and delays, and we see nothing in this Act to improve this. And in fact what it allows is for the employer to force the vote on the last offer, and then the minister can force a membership vote on the same last offer. This is not fair, Mr. Speaker. And again it's obviously something that speaks in favour of the employer and it creates an imbalance that simply is not going to work.

One of the things I want to address now is some of the specific issues that have been identified by, in this case, SGEU [Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union]. And I think these are really important for the people to understand. So I'm going to go through these in some detail.

As I said earlier, the problem with the bill itself in general is that it's combining 12 pieces of labour legislation, and the stakeholders who have to go through this with a fine-tooth comb simply will not have enough time to do a thorough review. If this bill's going to be pushed through at the end of this spring session, there just isn't enough time for people to do a proper analysis when you look at the volume.

And you know, it's worth noting that when *The Trade Union Act* and *The Labour Standards Act* were last reviewed, it was a two-year process, Mr. Speaker. So what is the hurry? What is the motivation? Those are questions that we would like to get answers for, but we certainly haven't been able to do so. The SGEU is urging the government just to slow down, take a breath and allow more in-depth analysis. The minister shut down recommendations. He gave them until March 1st.

Last week was the last day for comments and, you know, we know that this government wants to push through this bill and see it go through at the end of this legislative session. So the recommendation again, and I think on behalf of these working people, our position as the opposition is to just step back a little bit, take some time, allow a proper and thorough analysis, do proper consultation, and ensure that these changes actually do make sense. And we don't know who motivated these changes or why this government felt the need to introduce such a massive change, but we are concerned, especially when we see their track record in labour legislation to date, Mr. Speaker.

So the question is, does this government support extending the time frame for review? Will this minister take a serious look at these time frames and just step back a little bit and give stakeholders an opportunity to fully analyze and comment on the proposed changes? I don't think that's too much to ask, Mr. Speaker. This is 100 years of legislation that we're messing with here, and to give three months, it really doesn't give any kind of time for these people to analyze it. Even if it's 50 years of legislation or 20 years of legislation, it shouldn't matter. The right amount of time needed is not three months, Mr. Speaker, and that's all the time that these people were given.

One of the main issues that was identified by SGEU is the scope of union membership. Now in Canada we know that

employees are entitled to belong to a union generally, and rare exceptions are employees who actually exercise decision-making authority in setting management policy. And I'm going to talk a little bit about the ILO standards in relation to that, the International Labour Organization. But what we see in Canada generally is that employees are entitled to belong to a union if the union exists in the workplace, with some exceptional circumstances. And what we have in the current Saskatchewan trade union Act actually adheres to those principles, because under section 2 of the Saskatchewan trade union Act, 2(f)(i)(A), it defines somebody excluded as "a person whose primary responsibility is to actually exercise authority and actually perform functions that are of a managerial character."

And I'm emphasizing the word actually in this section, Mr. Speaker, because those are key words. It's one word, but it's critical to the definition itself.

And the second person that's excluded would be in section (B) of this section, "a person who is regularly . . ." And again I'm going to emphasize regularly because that's a key word: "a person who is regularly acting in a confidential capacity with respect to the industrial relations of his or her employer."

There's two key words there: regularly and confidential.

What Bill 85 does is it goes way further than that in excluding employees from the union. And the result of that is depriving those employees from their right to freedom of association. And I will outline some of the ILO descriptions of how that's inappropriate.

Under Bill 85, let's take a look at the new section and what it looks like. So what it says here is section 6-1(1)(h)(i)(A). And it says the following workers are excluded from belonging to a union: "a person whose primary responsibility is to exercise authority and perform functions that are of a managerial character."

So we lose the word actually and we have the word primary being substituted in that case. Then when we get to the second part of the definition where they're talking about activities of a confidential nature, the subsection reads as follows:

a person whose duties include [and I'm emphasizing include] activities of a confidential nature in matters relating to any of the following:

- (I) labour relations;
- (II) business strategic planning;
- (III) policy advice; [and]
- (IV) budget implementation or planning;

The sheer scope of that section, Mr. Speaker, is breathtaking. When you look at it, you could see an employer saying anyone that's involved in any of the lean training in any of the public workplaces could actually be excluded from the union. And the ability to make that kind of interpretation is not far-fetched at all, Mr. Speaker. And I think this is something that this minister really needs to reconsider and hopefully will accept amendments to that when we get into the stage where we need to look at this particular section. I think this is, for me, one of

the scariest clauses in this legislation, is section 6-1(1)(h).

And so the big change as we see in this section is that it said actually. It used to say actually exercising authority, actually performing functions. And now it says, their primary responsibility is to exercise authority and perform functions.

These are the kinds of things that 200-page court decisions are written on, Mr. Speaker. These are wording changes that are very, very significant and I think to just brush it off and say oh no, this is just an overhaul and a modernization of language, is divisive. And it's insidious because it attempts to give people a sense of calm where we know the unions are saying, wait a minute, Mr. Minister, this is something that's going to significantly affect the shape, the look, the feel of workers' labour unions in the workplace.

And the other thing about activities of a confidential nature used to say they're regularly acting in a confidential capacity and now it says their duties include activities of a confidential nature in policy advice, budget implementation, or planning. Before it had to be a regular part of their work, now it's only included as part of their duties. So if in one afternoon of the year the employee is asked to provide feedback to the manager on some budget implications for their upcoming year, they could be effectively excluded from the union.

What the paper says here is that new duties that will exclude employees from belonging to the union are vague and open to interpretation. Again it's that problem with wording. So when we say policy advice, the Act describes policy advice. Well what does that mean? What kind of policy advice would exclude a union member from membership in their union? And it's not an uncommon occurrence for an employee to make a recommendation about how the workplace should run. Is that policy advice? Is that something when they do that that an employer is now going to say, hey wait a minute here, under section 6-1, you are now in a confidential relationship and you no longer belong to the union.

Now that simply can't be the intention of the minister. I can't believe that this ministry would intend to do that. But by having vague and open language in a legislative section, we have a real problem here, Mr. Speaker, because it can be interpreted that way and it's open to employers to make that type of interpretation. And this is something that I think is inappropriate; it's dangerous. And I'm hoping that the ministry and the minister will take this very seriously because that's a concern that I think, if he doesn't, he's going to end up in court and we're going to have to go through the whole process of re-establishing workers' rights and the protections that they're entitled to under our Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the freedom to assemble.

Again the notion of, what does business strategic planning mean? You can be excluded if your duties include activities of a confidential nature relating to business strategic planning. Now that's a wide open concept that could be construed as a part of the duties of many employees in many workplaces where — and this is something this government does — they encourage diverse groups of staff to engage in organizational strategic planning exercises. That's a common activity in many workplaces and certainly in government workplaces across the



board.

So why is it, Mr. Speaker, that we have workers being excluded from the union for being part of those discussions? It simply doesn't make any sense. And I think if you extend the definition to its logical conclusion, employers will be able to exclude people from the right to assemble, which is against the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

So we urge this ministry and this minister to slow down and take a close look at those types of definitions because they are loaded with danger. And I think the minister is just asking for all kinds of delays in collective bargaining, all kinds of delays in court actions which could be simply avoided if they would just slow down a little bit and take a closer look at some of these drafting problems that are being identified by the workers themselves.

As I mentioned earlier, the International Labour Organization has a fairly extensive description, and I'm just going to refer to it, if I can find it. I know it's in this package. Oh, yes. They have a document called *Freedom of association: Digest of decisions and principles of the Freedom of Association Committee of the Governing Body of the ILO*. And this is the 2006 edition, so it's a fairly recent edition.

And what the ILO is saying is that these wide open types of exclusions will be a violation of our commitments under that organization. So we're a member of that organization. This bill has some very clear problems when it comes to meeting our obligations to the International Labour Organization.

The changes that could exclude greater numbers of employees from union membership could be seen as contrary to the principles of freedom of association. So according to ILO decisions — and this is a learned body that has considered a number of these issues — their decisions have said that managerial staff needs to be limited. It needs to be limited to persons who have the authority to appoint or dismiss, period.

Management should not be such a broad definition as we find in this new Bill 85 where their primary responsibility is to exercise authority and perform functions of a managerial character. There's all kinds of decisions and activities in a workplace that could fit under that definition. But the ILO is clear. Managerial staff should be limited to persons who have the authority to appoint or dismiss. When it comes to unions, it means whether you can hire or fire. That's pretty straightforward, Mr. Speaker, so I'm not sure where the ministry missed that when they were doing the drafting of Bill 85. It's not there. It will be challenged, and it should be fixed.

The other thing that the ILO has pointed out is that we should always avoid an excessively broad interpretation of the concept of worker of confidence. If the definition has the net effect of denying workers the right of association, that will limit trade union rights and in smaller enterprises could even prevent the establishment of a trade union, which is contrary to the principle of freedom of association. And we've seen time and time again employers using various tactics to avoid the formation of a union in their workplace, and this kind of legislation will facilitate that.

So again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I ask, who is asking for these changes? And that's one of the concerns that the SGEU has pointed out in their paper that they provided. So again ILO has said managerial staff needs to be limited to persons who have the authority to appoint or dismiss, and I would encourage any of the people that are involved in the drafting of this bill or providing advice to the ministry to take those points seriously. And if they want to avoid court action on this, which will likely be forced if the government hammers this through, there's time still to make the necessary amendments to bring the definitions that I've been referring to under the scope of what the International Labour Organization has set out as appropriate.

[15:00]

So I'm just putting this government on notice. If they want to make changes, now is the time. Ramming this bill through at this point in time is going to cause all kinds of problems. The SGEU's paper says that this bill will exclude far more people from the benefits of union membership than other Canadian jurisdictions. It's going way beyond what we see in other provinces and obviously it breaches the principle of freedom of association as set out by the International Labour Organization. We strongly urge, as the opposition, that this government revise that particular provision. Either the definition needs to be deleted because it's overly broad, or just go back to the established definition that exists in the current trade union Act. It's simple, Mr. Speaker, it's not a big change, and it's one I think that has raised the most concerns for organized workers in this province.

And again, why do we need to be ahead of . . . or behind other jurisdictions is a better word. Why do we need to regress into this kind of language when other jurisdictions in Canada certainly haven't even considered it? Why do we need to be regressive and go against the principles set out by the International Labour Organization? It simply doesn't make sense. It's not modernizing the workplace. It's actually regressive language and regressive legislation. So we strongly urge the government to make some sort of review to amend the bill and make these changes so that they can avoid all the pain that's going to exist if they insist on going ahead.

The other issue that's of considerable concern to the SGEU is the fragmentation of bargaining units. What happens here is that there are some changes under Bill 85 that will lead to all kinds of disruption and instability in workplaces because what it's going to do under — this is section 6-10(1) — it's going to encourage and invite small groups of disgruntled employees to break away from their own bargaining unit. And I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you've ever been involved in any organization, there always will be people who aren't entirely happy with the way things are going. That's a given. That's human nature. That's just the way it works.

But to allow them under trade union law to break away without a large support from the larger organization and the larger membership is simply asking for trouble, Mr. Deputy Speaker. At this point in time 45 per cent of the members of a bargaining unit has to show support for decertification. So it's not even 50 per cent; it's only 45 per cent. And that's a large enough number under the current law — which I don't think anybody was complaining about — to get rid of or decertify or replace

an existing union. And then once that happens, all members have an opportunity to vote. So again democratic principles apply. And if only 45 per cent are unhappy, they have to call for a vote. The vote occurs and the majority have to rule. So we're back to the principles of democracy.

This change is anti-democratic, Mr. Deputy Speaker. What happens now is that a small portion, if they're unhappy, can be carved out of the main unit. And as SGEU describes it, it's an invitation to small numbers of disgruntled employees to disrupt the ongoing work of the union. And then the union's going to have to spend time working on that and not representing their own members' interests, for one, and as they see pockets of the dissension emerge from time to time in any union, as in any organization.

So there's ways for dissenting groups to make change within the union. But just deciding to walk away is not something that makes any sense at all, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The fracturing of these bargaining units are not only going to hurt unions — think about it; employers now are going to have to deal with two bargaining units where they used to deal with one — so it's going to slow down and frustrate the whole collective bargaining process. And what if there's 10 disgruntled units of five people? You want employers to have 5, 10 different types of collective bargaining sessions? Again, what the purpose of this is, we're not sure. We don't know what's motivating it, and there's been no sort of adequate explanation by this government as to why this change is seen as necessary.

Fragmented bargaining units are not in the best interests of either unions or employers. Here's a section that will lead to this kind of disruption. It's section 6-10(1). And what it says is that if a union has been certified as the bargaining agent for a bargaining unit — so we have an existing union — another union may apply to the board to be certified as a bargaining agent, either for the bargaining unit or for a portion of the bargaining unit. So that's the word I want to emphasize is the word portion. That's the significant change that's causing considerable concern. And I would imagine employers are concerned about it as well, but we have heard from the SGEU on their concerns in relation to that one.

So the next section that causes problems is section 6-11(1). So what happens here is if the union applies for certification as a bargaining agent for a unit or a portion of a bargaining unit or to move one portion to another portion, then the board has to determine if it's appropriate for collective bargaining or whether it should be moved.

Employees and employers want certainty, and these will cause considerable disruption in the workplace if these changes go forward. The recommendation? Just remove these sections. It's not a big change. It won't take a lot of time. Strike out 6-10(1) and strike out 6-11(1) — simple fix in my perspective, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And we certainly would think that the ministry and the minister should take a close look at that. The potential disruption and conflict that are going to result from these changes are not going to embellish or enhance the work, the workers' relationship in working units here, or workplaces here in Saskatchewan. Why? We don't know why.

Again we just don't understand why these changes are

necessary and the minister has not provided any information why he feels that this is a change that's needed. Nobody asked for it. Nobody wanted it, but we're going to get it anyways. So hopefully saner heads will prevail and the ministry will take some close looks at this particular addition to the Act and to the rules that affect trade unions and maybe — sober second thought — consult with not just workers themselves but with employers and say, do you really want this? Maybe we should change it. That's all we're asking. Take time; sober second thought.

The last area that I want to speak to, as far as SGEU's concerns, is the notion of splitting bargaining units into units of supervisors and employees. So this is another area where the view is that this will create considerable instability and division in workplaces by splitting bargaining units into units of supervisors and employees.

As we know, for decades, the norm in Saskatchewan and across Canada has been an all-employee bargaining unit. That's the way it's been. It's been working just fine. There's been no significant problems with this approach. Therefore the view is that there's no rationale for such a dramatic departure from the existing legislation and the precedents that have come about as a result of that legislation.

Obviously there's been a lot of discussion about what is management, what is supervision. But the basic principle, I think, that's been accepted across the board in Canada and also with the International Labour Organization is that management is excluded from unions, but supervision, people at the supervisory level, there is no conflict between that job and belonging to a union. So I spoke about it earlier about the definition and management and that, you know, that's hire or fire basically — those kinds of abilities and strengths. But supervisors can be supervising all kinds of things in the workplace. The more complex the workplace, the more complex the supervisory roles that exist.

And I know that even in my previous employment, I mean I was often responsible for supervising support staff, but I was not considered to be the employer because the hiring and firing was done by the managers in my work unit. So I was responsible for their work and assigning them work, which is a supervisory responsibility, but I was a member of the union because I was not engaged in the hiring and firing of those individuals.

What's happening here under the new bill, Bill 85, is that it's casting a wide, wide, wide, wide net — a very wide net, an extremely wide net — that I think is going to not only draw a large number of workers into the category of supervisors, but it's going to draw a significant amount of litigation because it is infringing on workers' rights to assemble. And again, if this government wants to avoid those types of what I think will be highly successful lawsuits that are going to result if this bill is passed as is, then they need to slow down, take a careful look at this, do a legal analysis, talk to people that are affected by these provisions, and make sure that it's going to work, and it works for not just employers and not just workers, but for both.

And again, we keep questioning this government. Why the need for change? Who was asking for the change? We don't know.

We can't figure that out, and certainly the minister isn't making that clear. So who is he working for here? And we want to understand this so we can understand why these significant changes — which will face legal challenge because they have to be challenged — they're quite likely not going to be successful in a legal challenge. So what's left is forcing people to take these to the courts to have them review it because this government simply won't slow down and take the time to do the proper legal analysis.

What Bill 85 states in section 6-1(1)(o), and this is the list of definitions that you'll find in the legislation, here's a definition of "supervisory employee." It means an employee who regularly exercises — and I'm going to emphasize here — one or more of the following duties. So even if they do one of these duties, they're going to be excluded from the work unit and they're going to be deprived of their right of freedom of association under the Charter. First of all:

- (i) supervising employees;
- (ii) [Secondly] independently assigning work to employees and monitoring the quality of work produced by employees;

Why would you deprive someone from the right of association if they are assigning work to other employees?

- (iii) scheduling hours of work or overtime;

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's a simple matter of workplace management, and it's got nothing to do with the right of assembly. So that alone, in and of itself, I think would be struck down very quickly if it was challenged in court. Fourthly:

- (iv) providing comments to be used for work appraisals and merit increases for employees.

Those are the exact kinds of things I did as a government worker when I was working before I took this position on. And I would be providing quality work comments on other employees. It made sense. But it didn't remove me from the bargaining unit, and there was no feeling from those employees that my contribution to their work reviews had anything to do with their union rights. There's simply no connection here, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And this is something I think, for me, is one of the most egregious points in this new proposed legislation.

And finally the fifth or sixth, I guess it's the fifth category is recommending discipline of employees.

So the view of the SGEU is that this attempt to split supervisors out of the main bargaining unit is definitely cause for concern. But a provision in this section is even more dangerously out of step with established labour relation principles because it gives employers the power to veto supervisors' rights to remain with their existing bargaining unit.

So the problem here is in Section 6-11(4)(a) where "the employer and the union make an irrevocable election to allow the supervisory employees to be in the bargaining unit." And the way they described this is that, in other words, the employer will have the ability to withhold agreement, which would

amount to a unilateral rejection of the union's decision. So what they're saying here is this violates the most fundamental premise of labour law, that an employer may not interfere in the right of employees to collectively determine who will represent their interests.

And maybe that's what's offensive to this government, Mr. Speaker, is that the idea of people working collectively together to determine who represents their interests is somehow offensive. And that's very disturbing when you think of the history of this province and the importance of *The Trade Union Act* and all the things that went into it, and all the work that went into it, and all the successful relationships that have come about because of that balance. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's frightening in some ways that this government is considering tampering with that premise.

This bill will give the employer the right to determine how these supervisory employees will be represented. No longer do they have the choice to see how they or where they will belong and choose where they need to belong.

There are all kinds of costs and consequences that are going to come out of this. First of all, splitting established bargaining units by determining that the supervisors have to be in a unit of their own is going to result in all kinds of conflicts and administrative difficulties. I mean, just think about it. This unprecedented move will create deeper human resource problems that are going to have a long-term impact on the quality and effectiveness of the Saskatchewan public service. Is that what this government wants? I really hope not, but it appears that it may very well be.

You're going to see all kinds of extra issues in any kind of public service bargaining process. There's going to be doubling of two sets of collective bargaining, two different contracts, two distinct terms of employment such as hours of work, two unique grievances procedures, two classification plans, two pay scales, two benefit scales, two pension plans, two of any administrative committee, such as occupational health and safety committees. I mean the list is long, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And is any public employer wanting to take on the costs, the significantly higher costs that are coming about that? That's contrary to this government's whole premise. So it simply doesn't make any sense. Even if you look at how this government operates now, it's contrary to the position that we see in terms of lean and all those kinds of things. But I mean fundamentally what we're talking about is the violation of people's right to assembly which is enshrined in our Charter, and I think we have to keep hammering that point home.

[15:15]

There's another issue about the movement of personnel between non-supervisory and supervisory positions. This happens all the time in the workplace. So how are these movements going to be dealt with? And I don't think that there's enough thought, obviously there isn't enough thought being given to that impact on the workplace as well. If there's two separate bargaining units with those, with some of these supervisory duties as defined in the new bill, and how are . . . They go on to say, if there's two separate bargaining units,

there will be significant difficulties with continuing long-standing practices. How are their benefits going to accrue? How is their seniority and sick leave and vacation leave going to accrue if they move between these units? And if they lose seniority in their home position, are they going to lose it if they go to a short time for a supervisory unit?

Again, my experience in government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that people are filling acting positions all the time. This is the state of life in the public service because people are moving on with their careers. There's vacancies; people are temporarily replacing them. Do they lose their seniority or their vacation benefits if they leave their work unit? These are all kinds of questions that are going to cause, I think, an insurmountable amount of headache for our public servants, not only the workers but also the people that are managing. Is there going to be time double counted? Is there going to be infringement on seniority rights of other people? Are there going to be two different health benefit plans or pension plans? How are you going to have that time managed if people are moving back and forth?

And there's all kinds of issues, other issues that the union has raised, for example, limiting the horizon for supervisors. It's going to be much smaller than the employee unit. They're going to have fewer options in terms of bumping rights or transfers. Employees will be reluctant to move into these supervisory units, bargaining units, if they're going to lose all their entitlements. Why would you even want to take on that supervisory role? It's going to be more difficult to get supervisors as defined in the new bill. It's going to set up conflicts, rivalries in the workplace. It's going to have impacts on the career options for people in an employee unit.

And so the question is, on balance, are the consequences worth it? All employee bargaining units have functioned effectively for decades. That's the point. We don't understand why these need to be changed. The additional administrative costs, the potential and stability in the workplace, all of that suggests that a move to shunt supervisors into a separate bargaining unit are going to create significant problems for no immediately apparent reason.

So those are some of the concerns I think that the SGEU has raised. They've raised them with me. They came to my office and explained these to me. And I haven't had enough time to significantly spend time on delving into the details. So I really appreciated the fact that they came to my office and took the time. I understand that they've tried to visit every MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] and had been turned down by a number of MLAs who won't take the time to meet with them and understand these concerns. And that concerns me as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I think it's a responsibility of each one of us to take the time to try and understand what the impacts of these wording changes are going to have on not only the working people but on the work unit itself, on the roles of the employers and all the considerable administrative work, every aspect that I've described. I think all of us need to understand what those impacts are. And it's disappointing to me that MLAs won't take the time to put their mind to these issues because this is a significant piece of legislation that's being put forth. It's being

rushed through, and I think it's going to have grave, grave consequences for this government if they continue to go down this path.

Again our Labour critic has made significant presentations wherever he can about this bill. And he did so just as recently as last Saturday where there was basically a panel, a one-day panel . . . Or what was it called?

**An Hon. Member:** — Forum.

**Ms. Sproule:** — Forum. Thank you, mister opposition critic for Labour. It was a panel that was put together, and there was a number of people that spoke about all aspects of this. And unfortunately I couldn't be there. But he made a presentation. I'm just going to highlight for you some of the recommendations that he made on our behalf to the panel.

First of all, he's talking about the time frame. So the first recommendation is that this government really should start over. Just take a breath and start over. The time frame for the review should allow for due diligence and ample opportunity for meaningful public engagement. So that's the first recommendation.

The second recommendation is that this government really, really should take a view that emphasizes a balance. We don't see this as being balanced. We're very concerned that this is upsetting a balance that has existed, and it created harmony in the workplace for decades. And so if this balance is going to be upset, as we are afraid it will, then why not scrap the bill and start over again? And fix essential services while you're at it.

Taking time to actually talk to people, and the MLAs have been given the opportunity to talk to people. Take that time and understand. And I don't know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you had an opportunity to speak with SGEU, but it's a very compelling presentation. And I would strongly encourage you take the time to do that and that all members take the time to do that because they have some pretty good points, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Recommendation 3 is that the government really should not be considering in its review the principles of the 40-hour workweek, the standard eight-hour workday, three weeks vacation leave, and standard province-wide statutory holidays. And there's a broad consensus in the province that these standards work. So that's the third recommendation that we've made.

The fourth one is the Sask Party government should consider the option of sick time for all employees in the public consultations. Consider it.

Fifthly, that they should leave the rules of overtime the same. There's no call to change them. And if employers want workers to work beyond the standard workday, they should be paid overtime — period. There's no need to change that. And so that's the fifth recommendation.

Sixth recommendation: if this government really desires to streamline legislation — and we're not opposed to that; streamlining makes sense — it should present the various regulations in a clean and understandable format. And I think

what he pointed out here is that many of the changes that are being made — and I haven't even had an opportunity to speak to that — many of the changes that are being proposed will be found in the regulations. I did mention that initially at the beginning of my comments. But the concern is paramount is that we don't know what these regulations are going to look like, so we're being asked to comment on a bill, workers are being asked to comment on a bill where the net impact is not yet determined. And that isn't really fair, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We should take the time. This government needs to take the time to let people know what's going to be in the details. And as you know, the devil is in the details.

So that's the kind of thing that again, if it's not going to be revealed before the bill is passed, we're going to be dealing with this in the courts and through labour hearings and all kinds of rulings that are going to have to be made after the fact. Why? There's no rush here. We've got all kinds of time to get it right. We have a very little bit of time right now to get it wrong.

He went on to make a few more recommendations. The seventh one is that we know the people of Saskatchewan believe that current labour legislation is strong and fair and balanced. And what we're looking for this government to do is educate the public about workplace rights so more people understand how good it is. I mean that's part of the problem. We've had a long history of trade union rights, and I think we're recognized across the world for the strength that we've shown in that area. And why wouldn't this government show that to the people and explain why this suite of labour legislation that exists is there and to ensure that people are educated about the importance of these laws?

The eighth recommendation obviously is to look at improvements, options for improvements to workplace rights for independent contractors in the province.

They should also — recommendation 9 — raise the minimum wage immediately and index it to inflation. We're not opposing this. Indexing it to inflation makes sense, but it needs to be a fair starting point.

Recommendation 10, let unions and their members decide what financial information they'd like to disclose. We don't ask businesses to disclose their financial information. When I file my corporate return for the business I'm involved in, we don't have to disclose our financial information. Asking unions to do that is unfair and unnecessary. And who should receive that information in a business context is the shareholders, and in a union context, it should be the members. Those are the ones who have the right to that information.

Finally, the 11th recommendation is keeping the mandatory collection of union dues in legislation. We will continue to recommend that and don't want to see any changes to that.

And the last three recommendations obviously apply the principles of the Rand formula and don't allow for opting out. We will continue to recommend that.

Recommendation 13, always, always, in any review, how do you make the workplace safer? That should be the concern of government is how to make the workplace safer and look for

continual improvements to occupational health and safety.

And the 14th recommendation is that the government should prioritize opportunities for skill training for Saskatchewan workers. And obviously focus on a need, the great need for increased training opportunities for First Nations and Métis people in our province.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think I've probably gone on long enough. Unfortunately as I say, I've barely scratched the surface of the changes. I think the significance of this ominous omnibus bill is grave. I don't think this government has fully appreciated that. The ominous omnibus bill is I think an appropriate title for this bill.

And I would strongly encourage all members to take opportunity to listen to the people from SGEU. I know a number of the members have turned down the SGEU and have refused to listen to their concerns, and I think that is something that's very disappointing, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Take the time. All members should take the time to hear out these people and hear their concerns because they are valid concerns. I think that to rush through with this legislation at this point in time is only asking for trouble, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And this government needs to heed the advice of the people of Saskatchewan.

So at that point I think, Mr. Speaker . . . I know a number of my colleagues still haven't had an opportunity to comment on this bill, and I think I would like to propose that we adjourn debate on Bill 85.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon Nutana has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 85, *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — That's carried.

#### Bill No. 76

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Reiter that **Bill No. 76 — *The Municipal Board Amendment Act, 2012*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am pleased to weigh into the debate on Bill No. 76, *The Municipal Board Amendment Act*. We'll note that the Act that we're amending is *The Municipal Board Act* which sets out the framework through which the Saskatchewan Municipal Board undertakes its responsibilities related to the approval, oversight, and adjudication of a variety of municipal issues.

So why this bill? Why today in this legislative session? One needs to look to the minister's second reading comments and the minister in his second reading comments outlines that the goal is to . . . that there's been issues identified both by the Saskatchewan Municipal Board itself, the municipal sector, and

the ministry responsible to make boundary alteration processes work better and to provide more flexibility for the board, the Saskatchewan Municipal Board, both in terms of its decision-making abilities and in terms of recruiting new members. So this is the rationale that the minister has given us for amending *The Municipal Board Act*.

But it might be worthwhile actually talking a little bit about what the Saskatchewan Municipal Board actually does. And just going to its website, it lays out very clearly what the Saskatchewan Municipal Board does, which this Act establishes this particular board. It's a tribunal:

... set up for regulatory and judicial purposes in dealing with issues from local authorities [like] (school divisions and municipal governments). [So] the board's regulatory function is to review the debt obligations of some local authorities and oversee the financial health of municipalities. The judicial function is to hear and determine, at the provincial level, appeals from the public in municipal matters relating to property tax assessments, municipal planning and development issues, noxious weed orders, and to adjudicate in matters relating to road maintenance and fixed farmland assessment agreements. The second reason for their existence is to provide a cost effective method of litigation to unburden the court system.

So I think it's important to look why or what may have triggered some of the changes to the Saskatchewan Municipal Board amendment Act. And one might look to some of the issues that have happened. Perhaps it was some of the disputes that have happened in the Corman Park area, or perhaps it could be the very public issue that arose between the city of Regina and the rural municipality of Sherwood around the development of some of the industrial lands around the city of Regina and the fact that there were some fairly direct and major disputes where the minister of this government was required to step in and see if something could be done to resolve those.

So I think that the minister in his second reading comments has said that those are some of the reasons why he didn't specifically mention those cases, but he did talk about making the boundary alteration process work better.

So what are some of the amendments that are being proposed here in this bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Well one of the first ones, right now, as it stands now, members of the board are appointed by Executive Council, and this amendment will now allow the minister to appoint part-time members of the board. So that is a change or a bit of a departure. Related to this as well, the second amendment will enable the minister to appoint for a limited term, suspend, and replace part-time members. So it's amending the language around Executive Council to refer simply to the minister making these ... being able to appoint part-time members.

[15:30]

One of the other amendments: it clarifies that the Executive Council may fill vacancies of full-time members and the minister may fill vacancies of part-time members, consistent with the changes proposed to allow the minister to appoint

part-time members of the Saskatchewan Municipal Board. One of the reasons, and the minister lays this out in his second reading speech, is that these amendments are proposed to provide more flexibility in the appointments of alternate part-time members representing SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] and SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] to sit on the panel that reviews and holds hearings regarding municipal boundary change applications. The minister had said in his second reading speech that this is intended to address issues respecting the availability of these members in potential situations where the member's municipality is a party to or affected by an application. So that is what that is set out to do.

One of the other amendments is actually making sure that processes are more streamlined in terms of when an application comes before the Saskatchewan Municipal Board, that it's full and complete, that the board isn't spending time hearing an application or sitting down with an application and seeing that it isn't complete. So the amendments improves the part of the process so, says the minister, that it clarifies the board secretary's ability to determine the completeness of applications and to notify applicants of deficiencies before it may be considered by the board. And the minister argues that this will speed up the process and save the board's time for higher priority questions. So that makes eminent sense, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that before the board would hear or review an application or an issue that the application be complete.

And the minister also goes on to talk about mediation, that one of the amendments will ensure that councils undertake mediation to settle the dispute if none has been attempted prior to the Saskatchewan Municipal Board's review and decision. So the premise is that a voluntary settlement, even with the assistance of a mediator, is preferable to having the Saskatchewan Municipal Board impose a decision. And mediation, I think again, whether it's in personal circumstances or in other circumstances, makes eminent sense. So to be able to use the mediation function here I think is a very good thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The changes in this bill also include providing clear authority for the Saskatchewan Municipal Board to approve a portion or portions of an application. This change from an all or nothing approach means the board can find and approve compromises and solve at least part of the issue. So instead of having ... seeing a tough issue and saying that it can't be resolved at all, this provides an opportunity to address a small piece of it.

So I think on face value that these changes make sense and I think it's important to note that the minister did talk about consultation. He says, I'd like to quote here:

Mr. Speaker, the ministry has consulted extensively on the changes in this bill with the SMB and the municipal sector. Consultations occurred in 2011 on recommendations from the ministry's review of the boundary alteration process. Further consultations were conducted with the SMB during 2012 on the amendments. The board is supportive of these proposed amendments.

That's refreshing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if this is in fact the case.

On this matter, the government has said that they've consulted, but we've also . . . There's always red flags that come up with this government when it talks about having consulted. We've seen in the past where the government has said that it's consulted with certain groups and organizations and we've learned later that that in fact hasn't been the case. But we also have a government who likes to steamroll ahead with its own ideas and its own plans and then puts the brakes on when there's some public outcry and then takes things out for consultation, which I think when you create any kind of public policy or legislation that consultation — and again, a real and meaningful consultation with people impacted — is absolutely imperative to produce the best outcome, to avoid unintended consequences so you're actually not hurting the organizations or individuals that you are meant to help. I know that that often happens. Or just ensuring that you have a full depth and breadth of understanding of the issue.

My colleague right before me spoke about *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* and the consultation and some of the issues that are going to arise out of that bill. And I would argue that that . . . Those issues that will arise out of that bill will happen because the government did not consult and is refusing to listen to anybody except those of like mind.

The reality is when you embark upon consultation you have to make sure that you are talking to everybody, not just the people who agree with you or share your values. In order to implement good public policy and create and implement good public policy, you have to talk to all kinds of people, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So on this Bill No. 76 it sounds like there has been some due diligence on consultation, which is great, but again this is a government who has a track record of not consulting, putting the brakes on halfway through the process and then deciding that it better take it out to the public, and doesn't often hear what it wants.

But with respect to Bill 76, the changes to the Saskatchewan municipal Act, the amendment Act, actually sound like they will make some of these transitions or the disputes between municipalities perhaps move more smoothly, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So I know I do have colleagues who will also be interested in weighing in to this discussion on Bill No. 76, the Saskatchewan municipal amendment Act, so with that I would like to move to adjourn debate.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon Riversdale has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 76, *The Municipal Board Amendment Act, 2012*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

### Bill No. 77

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Harpauer that **Bill No. 77 — *The Horse Racing Regulation Amendment Act, 2012*** be now read a second time.]

**The Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from

Cumberland.

**Mr. Vermette:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. To join in on debate on Bill No. 77, *The Horse Racing Regulation Amendment Act, 2012* to make a few comments I guess on the proposed changes and the way government had collected a tax on people who wagered bets on horse racing.

But I want to go back to the horse racing industry in the province and talk a little bit about the history and talk about I guess . . . My family was involved in the '80s. We had race horsing. It was something I did with my father as we owned horses. It was interesting to hear about. Those were exciting times to be growing up, and we'd head off to Saskatoon to Marquis Downs to take part in horse racing. It was interesting. It was a time for an industry, a lot of fun.

But having said that, like everything else we spent a lot of time, you know, talking back and forth as we travelled from Prince Albert to Saskatoon and, you know, we had some good days and we had some not so good days; we thought we should have won but unfortunately didn't. But I mean the excitement was there. You watched it in the crowd. You watched it in individuals. And yes, it was very competitive and people, they all want to win. Just like we have a race going on right now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, going on. And we have three fine young men that are leading the charge. And I hope, you know, coming out of the gates they're going strong and hard. And I know at the end of the day, whoever wins that race, we'll all respect. Whoever wins that race, we will totally respect. And we'll work hard. And you know, I'll hang my hat behind whoever does win, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and support them 100 per cent.

So it's pretty exciting times. Just like back in the day, we would go off to Saskatoon. We're excited about the race. This Thursday we'll be heading off to Saskatoon. There's another race going on. Exciting times ahead for our party and the people of our province.

But having said that, let's get back, I guess, to the bill. And we're talking about race, horse racing. And some of the members opposite want to talk more about horse racing or an interesting political race. But having said that, I'll go back to the bill before you cut me off, anyway.

Bill 77 is clearly an opportunity for, I guess, the industry to raise some money. And government would return in different ways. And I think there's about three racetracks in the province that are currently, were receiving some of the money from the tax collected was turned back. And if you look at the notes from the minister's comments, I think most of that money was turned back to the industry to help them operate and do whatever, and I'm not sure the details on exactly how it is.

But I think it's clear we have to make sure that we consult, we talk to individuals — whether it's the industry, whether there's three, two. How will they survive? And we want to make sure that they do survive, an industry. And they've had some tough times in the racing industry. We know that. It hasn't been easy, but I think here you have a government who has made a decision to cut. And they're going to repeal, and there might be reasons why they're repealing it. And I don't know at this point why they are doing it, but I think we have to ask some of the

tough questions. And we want to make sure, is it best for the industry?

And if they are taking away money from the industry, are they going to be making sure they put some of that money back in different ways? So where are they are going to get that money? So we're not sure, and I think those questions need to be clear. Will they get more money? Is it less money? So how will this impact the industry? And I think that's clear. How will it impact individuals who actually own the horses that they bring to the horse racing industry and they bring it to the facilities and they utilize that?

Having said that, you know, what type of operations are going on, and how will they be successful? When you talk about a province that talks about being successful, moving forward, how is this dealing with the industry and how will this move the industry forward? It's a small business. They have a limited time that they operate. We know that.

So if they've really done their homework and they've talked to the industry and if this reason they're introducing a bill like this to repeal the tax collection on it, is there another way that they're going to help the industry or is this going to harm the industry? And I'm not sure one way or the other. Those questions need to be asked by the minister, if that will be clearly identified. And will they consult? And they may have talked to some of the industry players. We don't know that for sure. There might be comments going on, letters back and forth. There might be meetings. We're not sure. The minister can refer to certain meetings and that's fine.

At the end of the day we'll be very clear on some of the discussions that need to go on to make sure that the players and those that are involved in the racing industry have a place to go, to take whether it's family and sometimes it's a family business who get into the racehorse. Sometimes it's a hobby. For some people, it is a way of life. It's training. It's a life that's enjoyable that they train. You have your trainers. You have your owners. You have people who are working in the industry for jobs. Let's make sure that we're not losing jobs. So there's a lot of questions that I know individuals will want to ask about this.

So you know, going back to that, I want to talk a little bit about examples and use some examples, you know, when changes are coming in that the government has. A lot of times this government and clearly even the public when you talk to the public, they feel truly that this current Sask Party government is not listening. They're not hearing. They're not consulting. They're not going out and getting the information before they make the decisions. They just go ahead on what their idea is. And I don't know if it's all the backbenchers even get input in it. There might be a few of the ministers and key people that have the ear of the Premier and the government. And that's unfortunate because there's so many good things that could be going on in this province.

And there's nothing wrong with changing regulations and making changes to legislation but if you're consulting, if you're consulting, there's nothing wrong with that, if you're doing the work that needs to be done. And a lot of my colleagues have expressed that, debating these bills about how this government

just goes ahead regardless of consulting, regardless of what they're being told by the industry. If it's their idea, they're going to push ahead with it.

And you know, they don't like admitting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that they're wrong, that they made a mistake. No, it's deny. It's push. It's push. And that's unfortunate because sometimes the changes that government could introduce . . . And maybe they are good changes for an industry and maybe they are good changes for the province, but unfortunately the way this current government's handling it, it doesn't show that by a lot of people. And I mean there's the public sector. There's our Crowns. You're looking at all the different areas that we can look at. You know, there's so many different bills coming. You look at the labour one, and my colleague talked quite long today about it and gave some good arguments about, slow down. Sometimes it's okay to slow down and rethink these things out. But no, the government doesn't. It has its agenda and it's going to push ahead.

And that's unfortunate that . . . And this bill might be one of those bills. We don't know. We've got some tough questions on Bill 77 and we'll ask those questions. I know my colleagues have. But having said that, I just want to go back, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and reflect on that. Because I think it's so important to talk about the people of our province, you know — our seniors, our Aboriginal population, our youth, our middle-class people, people who live in poverty, people who are struggling out there — making it in this province. And we've seen some of the tough questions today, and we've seen yesterday and there are tough questions going on and people are concerned.

It's a trust thing. They want a government that will take care of every dollar and they will manage those dollars to the best of their ability. It's a trust thing. And when you lose the trust of the public that elect you, don't be shocked when you start hearing the kind of coffee shop row talk that I've been hearing.

[15:45]

People are not real happy right now. They're very concerned. They're very concerned about the way you're managing. And they can sit there and yell and laugh about their 70 per cent. That's good. You know, have it. Whatever they want to say, whatever. If it's 50 per cent, if it's 30 per cent, it's whatever they want. They can have their little laugh with it. But at the end of the day it's about the trust and it's about the dollars. It's about the public dollars that this government has been asked to look after, they've been entrusted to look after it. And trust me, they'll get their message. That's all right. You're not humble. You're not a lot of different things. You'll pay a price for it. You don't listen to the public. You don't consult. You don't hear what the industry is saying, whether it's the film industry, whether it's our motorcycle . . . You look at the different things, the increases all over. The public, our seniors, drug costs — there are so many challenges facing . . . The rents. This government, and I've watched it, you know, they have their days where they chuckle about things and everything's fine in their world, but there's a lot of people not making it in this province. They're struggling. They're struggling to pay their rent, to provide food on the table for their family. And that shouldn't be happening. Our seniors are struggling. Which medications do they buy? How do they pay their rents? They're



on fixed income, so there's a lot of challenges.

So when we look at that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about all the different challenges facing the people of our province, they expected better.

But it's amazing to watch government make the decisions it makes based on . . . Well I don't think they consult with anyone out there, very few if they do. Certain connections, insiders, their buddies, they consult with them. They sure get their input. So at the end of the day you see people who are suffering and not doing so good under, I guess, a province — and I'm proud of this province — but unfortunately the people are not feeling a part of it. A lot of people are struggling. They truly aren't having a good quality of life that everyone thinks Saskatchewan is.

And I mean, the government can boast all it wants. At the end of the day it's going to be about the people. It's about our seniors. It's about the Aboriginal population. It's about people living in poverty. It's about people on fixed income. It's about middle class struggling. There's a lot of people struggling in this province. And we see the government carrying on the way it's carrying on. And some of the money I guess that we're looking at, the public's paying attention to. And we'll see as things unfold over the next while how well this government does. And you know, they can look at their numbers, and if it's 63 per cent or 50 per cent, whatever their numbers are they want to say, that's fine. At the end of the day, the people will make a decision, and it's trust.

And I know that we're going to move forward on bills like this. We will ask the tough questions and we will debate these bills and it's important. But you know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what's important? The people want a leader and they want a government that will manage their affairs properly, that will manage every dollar. That they will make sure that, when the individuals hand a government the dollars, their hard-earned dollars — and I say that — hard-earned. There's some people working very hard in this province. Some of them have to have two and three jobs to make ends meet to provide for their family. But when their dollars are handed to the government, they will hold the government to account for those dollars and we, as official opposition, will hold that government to account for what they're doing or what they're not doing. And it's clear.

And you know, I think about our northern trappers and I think about some of the proposals they've put in. They haven't asked for a lot but they've . . . [inaudible] . . . for a little bit of help from the government and unfortunately, pretty sad, but this government turns down even northern trappers who are just trying to do some good, trying to help their industry, their economics. And there's some of them that are truly traditional trappers, and I want to make it very clear are not commercial trappers in the sense of the business where the government refers. You know, we've got some challenges. We know that. But I know you have a group of individuals in northern Saskatchewan and in the trapping industry who are truly trying to do their best. It's an industry. And we see some move in pricing, and that's great to see for them and I hope that continues. But having said that, they have some challenges, and they've asked the government for some help. And of course the government turned their back on northern Saskatchewan like it

always does, and that's a sad reality. And they'll pay a price. The North's not going to forget about this Sask Party government, the way they treat northern Saskatchewan. And they won't forget that — our trappers, our commercial fishermen, the roads.

And you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to go back to Bill 77 because I know it's important that we refer to those bills. But I'm using examples of a government not listening to the people. When you introduce Bill 77 or any other bill or any other program or you take care of individuals' dollars — and we're talking about the public dollars this government's been entrusted to take care — they are going to have to answer to the public, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They will have to answer to the public. And I don't think the public's going to be happy when they start finding out some of the information that we're seeing unfold. And over the next while we'll see some of that stuff unfolding. And we look at . . . and I think the universities, the challenges they're having. And I think a lot of different groups are having challenges out there. They expect better from our government.

So at the end of the day we'll see where this all goes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we'll see how exactly this industry will continue to operate in the province. And maybe one of them is going to receive other grants, other types of money to keep them going. But I think there's three facilities utilizing the tax dollars that were collected on wagering bets, on the tax that was collected from individuals wagering a bet on horse racing, and to pardon that.

So we'll see where the government goes. I mean there's a lot of questions that have to be answered. And I think it's an industry that's asking for support to make sure that it continues to thrive, and an organization and, I guess, an industry that's asking government to make sure they don't turn their back on them like they've turned their back on so many others, like the film industry and so many other individuals like our seniors, people who are renting, this government.

So having said that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at this point I'm prepared to adjourn debate on Bill 77.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 77, *The Horse Racing Regulation Amendment Act, 2012*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

### Bill No. 78

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Draude that **Bill No. 78** — *The Social Workers Amendment Act, 2012* be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Nilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise to speak to Bill No. 78, *An Act to amend The*

*Social Workers Act.*

Simply put, this legislation is being introduced to allow master's of social work qualified social workers to have a practice of diagnosis. And the definition in section 2(3)(b) of this legislation says that a:

**'practice of diagnosis'** means the communication of a diagnosis identifying, as the cause of a person's symptoms, a neuropsychological disorder or a psychologically-based psychotic, neurotic, or personality disorder.

Now this definition has been clearly worked out in consultation with the social workers, the psychologists, and also the medical practitioners.

And why is this bill here today? I think what has happened is that this is an area of trying to provide service to Saskatchewan people when we have a shortage of professionals to provide that service. I note that the Minister of Social Services, when she was introducing this bill, identified that there were 114 professionals that are both social workers and psychologists and psychiatrists who were able to provide this diagnosis. And the numbers were not sufficient to deal with the particular issues.

Also we know that this area of providing services to people across rural parts of Saskatchewan meant that it took a long time before people could get the services identified. And so what this legislation is intended to do is to make sure that the citizens of Saskatchewan who require services, professional services for these disorders, that they will have access to them in a more straightforward way.

And I want to commend the Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers for the work that they've done in setting out the parameters for professional responsibility as it relates to this particular amendment. Sometimes it takes a long time to work with these particular issues, and the Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers has worked very closely with the psychologists. It's worked with the people who are in the ministry who are responsible for these issues. What we know within the civil service is that we get very good advice from the policy people within particular departments. But we also get very good policy advice on professional legislation from the Ministry of Justice.

And so what we need to know is, has this issue been fully vetted by the various groups? And it's quite clear that it has been because it's been worked through a number of different ways. Now unfortunately this particular area of multiple jurisdictions to deal with issues that cross over between professions is always fraught with difficulties.

And I want to say again that I commend the people who have worked on this one to come up with what appears to be clear wording that will allow for these services to be provided to the people of Saskatchewan. Now it also is a method whereby people can be encouraged to get the appropriate education so that they can actually do this kind of work, whether they're a social worker or whether they're a psychologist. And that's also an appropriate situation for people who are involved in this particular area.

Now when one spends a lot of time in court, like I did in my professional career as a lawyer, there were many instances where people who required services had a number of hurdles to jump over to get those services. My hope is that this technical or this legislative concern will be behind us so that the people who need these services will get them. Now we'll have to make sure that there's sufficient resources in this area, because clearly mental health issues are a huge area of concern for people throughout the province but also throughout the country.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that this bill has taken quite a bit of the information that's required. I know that one or two of my colleagues may wish to speak to this as well and I will move to adjourn debate.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Leader of the Opposition has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 78, *The Social Workers Amendment Act, 2012*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

**Bill No. 79**

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 79** — *The Representation Act, 2012* be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm glad to rise and join debate this afternoon. I'm talking about Bill No. 79, *The Representation Act, 2012*. And again, this is a particularly interesting piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, because of course it's the fruits of not the poison tree necessarily, but certainly the dubious tree in terms of the way this government across the way came forward with a plan to launch three more MLAs into public life here in Saskatchewan.

Of course they did this right after the election where they'd not said a darned thing about three more MLAs. They did this at the same time: making choices to increase the monies that seniors have to pay for seniors' drugs. They did this at the same time as pleading poverty on different fronts in health care and education. And I guess they did this after having campaigned from one corner of the province to the other saying that, you know, here's our platform. Here's our pitch to you, the people of Saskatchewan; do you support it or not? The people supported it, and that's the way it goes in democracy, Mr. Speaker. The platforms are put forward. But they didn't say anything about three more MLAs.

[16:00]

And I don't know about you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but for every doorstep I was on where the cry was, I've got this problem with housing or I'm wondering about the future prospects for my kids or I'm interested in the safety and vitality of my neighbourhood or, you know, we need a new school or the roads are in trouble — you know, there are different sort of

concerns that get raised on doorsteps.

Not once, Mr. Deputy Speaker, did I have anybody say, and you know what really needs some attention in this province, what needs some quick action? You know, you should get on it right before Christmas, right after the new government comes in. You should announce three more MLAs because we've obviously got a problem that needs solving, and that is not enough politicians here in this province of Saskatchewan. You know, nobody said that to me on the doorstep, Mr. Speaker. And I'm sure that nobody said that to a great many people in this legislature. I think the only people that talked about it were the in-group on the other side that call the shots when it comes to the agenda of this party.

So why did we need three more MLAs? You know, was it because as a percentage of or as a ratio of population to elected officials somehow Saskatchewan is a laggard and has got a big problem and, you know, we need to get with it? Well that's not the case, Mr. Speaker. The numbers would show that in the rest of the country, Saskatchewan at 58 MLAs already stood pretty fair in terms of the ratio.

So let's do a little bit of a review here, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In Ontario where you've got 107 members of the provincial parliament, the average there on a population of 13.3 million, the average one of those MLAs represents about 124,981 constituents. Interesting, interesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Quebec, where they've got 7.9 million in population and 125 members of the Assembly there, they represent about 63,838. Again interesting. British Columbia, 4.5 million, a bit more than that but 4.5 million, 85 members of the legislature. They've got 53,804 constituents apiece.

Then in Alberta — you know good old Alberta, Alberta bound — and you've got the population of about 3.7 million and 87 members of legislature for about 43,441 constituents per. Manitoba with 1.2 million in population, 57 members of the Legislative Assembly there for again about 21,940. Again this is on maybe a bit dated numbers, but they've changed a bit but not that much, Mr. Speaker, but on some of the old census data in Saskatchewan with 58 members of the legislature at that time, you had about 1.1 million in population. That worked out to be about 18,240.

And again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's not like, it's not like you look throughout the West and see oh, oh my goodness, we've got an emergency. We better get on it with a quick injection of three more MLAs. It's not like there's a great hue and cry from the public for this. But instead we see the in-group over there, the Sask Party, bulling ahead with three more MLAs, not having said a darn thing about it at election time but coming forward, you know, almost as soon as they're packing up the ballot boxes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to do the job of bringing in three more MLAs.

And then on top of that, Mr. Speaker, you've got the three more MLAs on the one side, but you've got them changing the way that used to, the formula was handed off to the Electoral Boundaries Commission wherein we used to count everybody in the province. And for everybody that stands in this Legislative Assembly and introduces school groups or talks about the importance of children and how they're the future and

this, that, and the other thing, everybody knows that that has an impact in terms of the work that you do in your constituency. Or if you don't, you should, Mr. Speaker. And if you don't understand that impact, I'd suggest maybe that you're not doing your job.

But I know for myself, coming out of my home community of North Central, which is the youngest neighbourhood in the city of Regina, we have a lot of young people. And that has an impact in terms of the way that you organize resources in terms of schools and health care and education. You know, Mr. Speaker, if you don't have that sort of democratic voice being accounted for or the need to account that, the way that those concerns arise on a constituency basis, then you're not getting the whole picture. And you're not really . . . You can talk a lot about how children are the future and the importance of them and so on and so forth, but if you haven't built that into the very foundations of your electoral system, into the very working blocks of your democracy, Mr. Speaker, then there's a problem.

And it's interesting that that was called out by no less than the Children's Advocate in the province in terms of, you know, how could you do this to the children? And again you know, the members opposite, once the in-group sets out the marching orders, away they go. So you know, Children's Advocate be darned. The way that different people commented on this and the way that they had opportunity after opportunity to say, yes, maybe we got this wrong. Maybe when we're calling for austerity in other places, maybe when we're . . . You know, we didn't come clean with this measure at the election time, maybe after, you know, we didn't have it in our hundred. They certainly didn't have it the 2007 list of promises kept, Mr. Speaker.

And you know, after 2007 there's this great deal made of promises made and promises kept. And you know, very fine and dandy, but for this round of the Sask Party, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it would seem there's been a bit of water under the bridge and a bit of distance gone down the road away from what were reasonable propositions in terms of if you make a promise to the people of Saskatchewan you should keep it. If you're going to seek governance, you should seek a mandate and you should be clear about that in the platform that you're bringing to the people. And if you don't have something that's anticipated in your platform, then you should be very cautious in terms of how you proceed.

But on a number of fronts after the 2011 election, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we saw a government that wasn't quite straight with the people in terms of the plans they had for it. And I'm not sure if it's just the in-group over there, but I do know this: that all members on that side have voted for this bill that put this into the amendment to the Electoral Boundaries Commission, and then were considering this representation Act here today, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So it may be the in-group that's calling the shots, but certainly everybody's walking along behind them. And maybe they're happy about that, maybe not, but they're certainly moving as a block, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So you know, *The Representation Act*, in terms of the work that was done by the Electoral Boundaries Commission, fair enough, there doesn't seem to be any egregious, shall we say, gerrymandering that went on in terms of the construction of the

boundaries. The boundaries themselves were fair enough. And I compliment the folks that did that work and the report that they made, but again Mr. Deputy Speaker, they had a job to do that was, I think, flawed in a really regrettable way in the 21st century of Saskatchewan democracy by the addition of three more MLAs and the elimination of everyone under the age of 18 for the consideration of boundary construction.

And so why they'd want to weight it against young people, Mr. Deputy Speaker, why they'd want to run away from young people in terms of building the electoral boundaries of this province, well maybe it's because constituencies with a preponderant young populations don't tend to vote for the members opposite. And again, if you can't beat somebody at the ballot box, one of the hallmarks of governments that are losing their way is, you know, if you can't beat them at the ballot box and have the force of a better argument, well you see the games start to emerge.

And you know, this is a piece of gamesmanship . . . [inaudible] . . . Mr. Deputy Speaker. So, *The Representation Act*? Fair enough. Sixty-one seats in the province? You know, that's not what people voted for last time. But those are the boundaries that we'll contest the next election on. And I'm hoping that people will remember at that point that the Sask Party candidates that show up on their doorstep and say, you know, here are all these great things that we're going to do for you, here's all the hopes and dreams and aspirations that we share with you, and here's how it's reflected in our platform. I hope people will remember to say, you know, well that's all fine and good, you've given me the headlines. How about you tell me about the fine print? How about you tell me about the asterisks that you got or what do you got for the appendices to the platform? You know, what else have you got under the counter? Because maybe that's what people should have been asking in 2011.

And you can't fault the people for supporting something they did not know about, that they weren't given a chance to say, you know, I support that or I don't. And in the case of this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I hope the people don't forget about it. And I know that in the official opposition, I don't think we're going to forget about it in terms of, again, the way that this popped up as a surprise for the people of Saskatchewan to address a concern that nobody raised in the election as an order of urgency for this government.

So again, Mr. Speaker, some fine work done by the Electoral Boundaries Commission. They were working with the hand they'd been dealt, but the hand had been dealt from the bottom of the deck by the members opposite when they came out after the election, having not told anybody about it, that they were going to put in three more MLAs and they were going to eliminate everybody under the age of 18 in terms of the consideration for the construction of electoral boundaries.

So again, Mr. Speaker, there are members in this House I know that place a great deal of pride in terms of getting out to talk to people on coffee row, on the doorstep, at the kitchen table, at the big table at the town hall, or you know, pick your place. And again, in terms of all the issues that people of Saskatchewan raised in this time of growth, in this time of opportunity, you know, growth is fine and good. And I guess

one of the things I worry about, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that when the government ran on their platform *Ready for Growth* in 2007, I wish they were ready for growth.

I wish they were ready for growth in terms of housing. I wish they were ready for growth in terms of infrastructure. I wish they were ready for growth in terms of health care and education. I wish they were ready for growth when it comes to making sure that post-secondary education, the price tag doesn't keep rising higher and higher into the sky. I wish that they were ready for growth when people were invited from around the globe to come to Saskatchewan to join in this economy, to join in this society, to make sure that the educational opportunities are there for kids, to make sure that the ways that we can come together as communities were there.

I wish that when this government said they were going to be ready for growth that they had a plan in place to do more in terms of engaging on education and employment the First Nations and Métis people of this province which has been, the record of this government of which has been condemned fairly routinely by people like Eric Howe, who this is what they study, Mr. Speaker. This is their expertise.

And you know, the fact that on the First Nations and Métis education and employment file that Saskatchewan has fallen behind Alberta, has fallen behind Manitoba in terms of that work that is needed, in terms of engagement and, you know, for all the different fronts like that or the activity that is needed, you know, to not just be ready for growth but to do that work of genuinely representing the population and making sure that their hopes and dreams and aspirations are accounted for in the legislated and the financial agenda of the government of the day, for all of that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there wasn't . . .

You know, I talk to a lot of people. It's a great privilege of this job that you have an opportunity to talk to folks from all different kinds of walks of life and, you know, not one of those people have ever come to me and said, you know, I've got a problem and I think three more MLAs is the solution to that problem. I would defy anyone in this House to come forward and say, you know, here's a documented case of where a constituent or citizen in the province of Saskatchewan said, three more MLAs; that's exactly what we need. And you know, maybe they've brought them forward in caucus. Maybe there's some great cases being made for three more MLAs in caucus. And you know, I guess I would urge members to bring that out into the rotunda or get on the record or, you know, explain to their local paper or to the media how this is needed.

[16:15]

And I guess, you know, one concern I'd have with that is I wish they'd done it during the election because I think that would have been a very unpopular plank to bring forward for the members opposite, but at least it would have been honest, Mr. Deputy Speaker. At least it would have been straightforward. At least it would have given democracy and the people who vote in elections its due. And that due is that you bring forward what you're going to . . . your plans as the government. You bring forward your platform. You say, this is how we're going to balance the budget; these are the different sort of legislative items we're going to bring forward; and here are the plans and

programs that we have that respond to the needs of people of Saskatchewan. And that wasn't done, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by this government.

And again today, here we are debating *The Representation Act*. And you know, representation is an interesting word, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Representation — implicit in it is this idea that you're going to actually represent the hopes and dreams and aspirations of people that sent you to the legislature. And again, that representation is based upon, is built upon the understanding of what you as the person on the campaign trail say you're going to do, and how people out there in the electorate say, yes, that's either a good plan or a bad plan or what. But again there isn't a single person in this legislature, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that was elected to represent on a platform of, hey, let's increase the number of politicians. And you know, if they're saying that's the case, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd suggest that they're taking liberties with the people of Saskatchewan's support. That will be rewarded for what they are come the next election, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So again, my hope is that people remember three more MLAs. My hope is that folks remember how people under the age of 18 were taken out of the calculations for building the constituency boundaries. And I know that again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, governments that engage in this kind of chicanery or these kind of ploys, it's covering up for something — that if they have to sneak it in like this, you know, it doesn't speak very well of the courage of the convictions of the members opposite. So you know, it may not be any small wonder that they didn't include it in their platform. But again it's part of their record, and I think it speaks volumes to the kind of interests and priorities that the members opposite are pursuing. Again alongside the interests and priorities, that you can talk to a lot of different people in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and have a lot of urgent issues raised with you, and you'd be going a long, long, way to find one person that thinks, oh somehow we need three more MLAs.

Anyway, I know that other members are interested in participating in other of the debates in front of the Chamber, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so with that I would move to adjourn debates on Bill No. 79, *The Representation Act, 2012*.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Regina Elphinstone has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 79, *The Representation Act, 2012*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

### Bill No. 80

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Boyd that **Bill No. 80 — *The Power Corporation Amendment Act, 2012*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to stand today to speak on Bill 80. And Bill 80 is being proposed by the Minister Responsible for SaskPower, the member from Kindersley, who also serves as the, I believe, the Minister of the Environment, Mr. Speaker. And what the bill does, Mr. Speaker, is that it allows . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . or Minister for the Economy, for the Economy, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to make sure we got it correct.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to make sure that the people out there that may be paying attention to this particular process and certainly to the Assembly today on Bill 80, what the minister is proposing to do today. Primarily the focus of the bill is to allow SaskPower to borrow money from up to 10 to \$13 billion, Mr. Speaker, to increase the amount of money that they would need to bring SaskPower to a modern standard as a company that is certainly going to need to upgrade and to continue to build a future for SaskPower so that the Crowns of Saskatchewan remain strong and vibrant for many, many years.

But, Mr. Speaker, what's amazing about this particular bill is the minister alludes to the fact that SaskPower can certainly take on more debt. But what's happening, Mr. Speaker, and we've seen this happen last year and this is really interesting, it's very interesting overall, when you see a Sask Party government that everybody in the province knows that they don't want to defend the Crowns and yet they come here today under this particular bill and they say we would like to increase the amount that in this instance Sask Power can borrow to replace aging infrastructure and to make the Crown stronger.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there's no question in my mind the people of Saskatchewan want the Crowns to stay. As you can see, in 2003 there was an overwhelming message delivered to the Sask Party indicating to them that people in Saskatchewan like the Crowns. They support the Crowns. And it's really important that people out there note that they will stand for nothing when it comes to a government, they'll stand up if the government is doing nothing to protect the Crowns. And the people of Saskatchewan wanted that message to be heard loud and clear.

So on that front, Mr. Speaker, I think Bill 80 that talks about the debt of SaskPower, to try and increase the debt, one would wonder, okay what's the game plan here from the Saskatchewan Party? And I think it's fair to say, Mr. Speaker, that from our vantage point, again from where we sit and analyze this particular bill, there's no question that the increase in debt for SaskPower, as the Sask Party maintain, is allowing the company to reinvest into their aging infrastructure and continue building for the future.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that part of the bill is certainly something that we would support because obviously a strong Crown sector is really important for the province. The people of Saskatchewan want that. I think we understand that. But what's really disturbing to us on this side of the Assembly and my colleague, the member from Riversdale pointed this out so eloquently, is what the Sask Party's doing on the other hand in the backroom of this particular Assembly, in the backrooms, is that they are stripping all the profits of SaskPower to pay for their poorly managed provincial budget.

And that stripping of all those dividends, Mr. Speaker, does

have two effects, Mr. Speaker. First of all, it leaves SaskPower as a corporation with nothing to operate under, absolutely nothing in terms of retained earnings, nothing to continue building a game plan for the next five to ten years as to how they could use some of the profits to replace the aging infrastructure as opposed to the debt that is being proposed in this particular bill, Mr. Speaker. And that is really where the problem begins, Mr. Speaker.

And a second point that I think is worrisome to the people of Saskatchewan: as you strip these dividends, Mr. Speaker, and you put these dividends into your provincial budget, it also shows that the provincial budget itself is not balanced because you have to start, as one of the phrases used in the Assembly some days, robbing Peter to pay Paul. It really doesn't make for sound economic nor fiscal sense, Mr. Speaker. And that effect certainly is going to be felt at SaskPower for a number of years.

So my point that I would make on Bill 80 is that when you have the Crowns that are functioning well, they count on a thing called retained earnings. So each year SaskPower, that delivers all the power to our people, they profit so much per year. And that profit that they use in theory should be used to reinvest into the company. That profit should be used to replace the aging infrastructure, Mr. Speaker. But hold it. The Sask Party don't want any of that because what the Sask Party want to do is they want to turn around and take that profit from SaskPower and use it to balance their ballooning deficit as a provincial government when it comes to operating their annual budget, Mr. Speaker.

So what's happening here with this particular bill is the minister is saying, we need the ability to borrow more money. We need anywhere from 10 to \$13 billion to regenerate and to refurbish the Crown corporation called SaskPower. Perhaps I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the first place that they should start looking at in strengthening SaskPower is to stop taking their dividends from them as a government and let the dividends stay within SaskPower so they wouldn't have to assume all that extra debt.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's kind of an awkward situation for the Sask Party to try and figure that out because we know a lot of their members, the backbenchers, they see what's going on. They're a bit confused yet as to how this is going to work because they see dividends being taken from all the Crowns, not just SaskPower, but SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance], not just SGI but from SaskTel, and not just from SaskTel but from places like the Information Services Corporation.

All these Crown corporations make a significant amount of money, Mr. Speaker, and instead of using that money to strengthen their companies and keep the rates low for the people of Saskatchewan, the Sask Party is raiding their bank accounts to put it back into the provincial government coffers and then claim, as the Minister of Finance likes to do every now and then, that their budgets are balanced.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan know full well, as well as the Provincial Auditor, that their books are not balanced, especially if they start seeing some of those choices being made this budget year that they are really, really in a lot

of trouble, Mr. Speaker, as a government. And this is their way of dealing with it, is to allow the Crowns to assume more debt and they take all their profits.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would point out that SaskPower itself is a very, very important part of the Crown family, the family of Crowns. I think that as you look at the future growth of Saskatchewan, the people of Saskatchewan jealously guard the notion that they own their power company. They own their telephone company. They own their insurance company. They own their Information Services Corporation. They own all these companies.

And the people of Saskatchewan know full well that the common sense plan is to allow these companies to continue building for the future because we own them. We're all shareholders in SaskTel. We're all shareholders in investment services corporation. And we're all shareholders in SaskPower.

So from the comforts of their home, from the comforts of their home they say, well at the very least, we own these companies. And these companies generate profits. These companies generate profits and yes, we believe that some of the profits should come back to us as taxpayers to reduce our taxes. But they also believe that some of those profits should be reinvested in the company so you don't have to assume more debt.

And that's exactly the problem that the Sask Party is undertaking with this particular bill, Bill 80, is they're allowing SaskPower to go into further debt because the Sask Party is taking their profits out. And, Mr. Speaker, that does not spell a promise, nor does it allow the Crown corporations to continue to build for the future.

How is it that you're only saddling them with debt and not allowing them to use their profits? How does that make any sense for SaskPower? And that's the crux of the problem with Bill 80. It doesn't make any sense, Mr. Speaker. It's going to have a significant problem. It's going to add a significant burden to many of our middle-class families that pay these bills, that pay their power bills and telephone bills each month.

It's an amazing phenomenon, Mr. Speaker, is the amount of pride and the amount of accomplishment and satisfaction that the people of Saskatchewan have when they tell other provinces that in Saskatchewan we own our power company. In Saskatchewan we own our telephone company. We own it is as the citizens of Saskatchewan and people are quite proud of that, Mr. Speaker. And that whole sentiment, that whole sentiment, I believe is very, very apparent throughout all parts of Saskatchewan.

And what I would point out is that when you look at some of these bills and how the Sask Party is caretaking the future of the Crowns, I tell the people of Saskatchewan pay very close attention to what they're doing because what they're doing is they're trying to discredit the Crowns. They're trying to saddle the Crowns with all this debt. They're assuming they're going to use the Crowns to blame them for any mistakes and problems they have. And in the meantime, Mr. Speaker, they're taking every cent and profit from some of these Crown corporations including SaskPower to try and balance their books on a budget that nobody on that side of the Assembly can ever stand up and

say that they're proud of.

[16:30]

There's no question in my mind, Mr. Speaker, that the people of Saskatchewan need to pay very close attention to this matter. They need to pay very close attention to how the Sask Party is managing the Crowns and what they are doing to protect the Crowns.

And I'll give you a good example. Last week we heard about SGI, as it relates to this Bill 80, that SGI was contemplating increasing the amount of registration and insurance on motorcycles, on motorbikes. And the argument that was made at that time is that the motorbike industry or the riders and the people that register under SGI, they're a high-risk group. They're a very high-risk group and they have a lot of claims, so we've got to make sure that claims cover all the risks attached to the motorbike costs. Well, Mr. Speaker, as soon as the motorcycle industry heard about this and the motorbike enthusiasts began getting wind of how SGI was going to increase these rates, they became highly organized. They became highly vocal, and they were very upset at this particular government.

But, Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you what happened on that front. And I think that's a real important point to raise when I talk about how these Crowns are being manipulated by the Saskatchewan Party so that the people of Saskatchewan at the end of the day will look at the Crowns and start questioning the future and certainly start questioning their loyalty and faith to the Crowns. And a good example of that, as it relates to Bill 80, is the SGI rates for the motorbikes. Now what happened is — we think, on this side of the Assembly — that SGI said, okay, we'll look at this problem. We have to increase the rates because of the accident rate and that will certainly get the motorcycle enthusiasts upset, but this is a business.

And what they done, Mr. Speaker, is that when this information broke, when the news broke, everybody was upset at SGI. Everybody was really being critical of SGI. They were saying it's SGI's fault — SGI this and SGI that. The purpose there, Mr. Speaker, the manipulation there is, nobody focused on the government that made SGI do this. The Sask Party government instructed SGI to do this and SGI had no choice but to put those rates into place. And what happened, Mr. Speaker? They achieved two objectives here.

First of all, with SGI rates, people were angry at SGI. We'd tell them SGI, if they let the Crowns operate as they should, then I think SGI will be fine. What happens is manipulation and push by the government to make sure SGI increased those rates and a lot of people were upset with SGI. But SGI was not the problem, Mr. Speaker. It was the Sask Party wanting more money from SGI to take away the dividends so they can balance their books. That's where the problem is.

So what happens is people are upset with SGI. Then along comes the Premier and tweets, well I'll try and fix this. And of course, Mr. Speaker, we see the manipulation of the public. You have SGI being viewed as a bad Crown and the Premier coming along and saving the day. That's the kind of manipulation we see when it comes to the Crown corporations.

And we anticipated on the opposition this is exactly what they'll do. They'll do this time and time again. They'll get the Crowns or some department or some agency or some program announce by the government that's really unpopular and then their intent all along is that the Premier come along and say, oh we're not going to do that.

Mr. Speaker, they done that with SGI. There's a fine example of how they got people upset at the Crown corporation. Because the Sask Party, through the back door, made them raise the rates, and then all of a sudden, through the front door, the Premier comes along and says, oh I'll save the day. We'll look at that thing. Maybe we won't do this.

And Mr. Speaker, that's the manipulation that we see by the Sask Party when it comes to the future of our Crown corporations. And on this side of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, we said this would be done. Time and time again by the Crowns and when SGI announced these rate increases, we sat back and we said look, you watch what happens here. All of a sudden, the people will be angry at SGI and then the Premier will come along and say we've changed our mind. And it's all about manipulation to position their leader, their Premier to look good and to make the Crowns look bad, Mr. Speaker. And that kind of manipulation of the Crowns is very, very bad for the future of the Crowns.

And our job as an opposition is to make sure that people understood, understood the type of games and the games, or the games being played at the expense of the Crowns by the Sask Party government. And it goes right, right to the core, right to the cabinet, to the Premier and all the backbenchers and to all the handlers of the Sask Party. Their intent is to weaken our Crowns so they're able to justify to the people of Saskatchewan why they need to sell these Crowns at a later date, Mr. Speaker.

So there's no question in my mind we're going to see a lot more manipulation of the Crowns and the value of the Crowns than ever before because the right wing agenda on that side, they believe that the Crown corporations, the Sask Party believe that the Crown corporations should be privatized. There's no question about it in our minds. They want to privatize the Crowns. They want to sell it to their buddies. And if they can't sell them to their buddies because the people of Saskatchewan want to keep them, then what they'll do is they'll start the PR campaign to make the Crowns look terrible.

And a good example of that was how SGI was recently in the news about some of the motorcycle rates that were going to increase. And all of a sudden, out of the blue the Premier comes along saying, oh I'll save the day. I look popular again and I'll announce we're not going to look at those increases.

Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what we mean in the opposition of how this doesn't make any sense. Why would you do that to the people of Saskatchewan? The simple message that they have is you must protect your Crowns. You must take care of the Crowns because, Mr. Speaker, in the future we're going to need our Crowns more than ever because there's two sources or three sources of income that we would need in the future to ensure that Saskatchewan remains on a sustainable path, unlike what the Sask Party envision.

The first source of income that many governments have, including Saskatchewan, is some of the income tax, whether it's corporate income tax or personal income tax, that we receive as a government from the people. We use that money to of course deliver programs. So that's the first source of income.

The other part that we can also do as a government is to make sure we don't spend frivolously and make sure that the spending pattern remains on a sustainable path, just so you know that the people in Saskatchewan know that a penny saved is just as valuable as a penny earned, Mr. Speaker. So that's another exercise that we can do.

But when we rebuilt the economy and the shattered remains of a province, when the Conservatives were in charge, Mr. Speaker, we used those two sources of income. We cut programs. We increased the taxes, which we had no choice to do both of them. But the government also had at their will, we had the Crowns, the Crowns that were able to also provide income and help sustain Saskatchewan as a province. And this province was facing some serious debt at the time, Mr. Speaker.

So what happens now in the future if Saskatchewan ever goes through that challenge again? I tell the people of Saskatchewan — the middle-class people, the moms and dads at home, and the people that may be watching this — that if you do not protect your Crowns, that if you do not protect your Crowns, you're really compromising our ability as a province in the future to try and find ways and means in which we can survive financially as a province. And, Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party is not figuring this out at all.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the other challenge when you start looking at the Crowns in general, as Bill 80 would suggest, this minister wants to saddle SaskPower with 10 to \$13 billion in debt. That's what the bill is all about. And over the next couple of years they'll start rolling out, oh we're going to spend 1 billion here or \$2 billion there. And guess who's going to be paying for that, Mr. Speaker? The users of SaskPower — the mom and pop that are at home listening to this, you know, the middle-class families. So then they're going to be paying the increased power bill. There's no question about it in our mind.

It's not coming back from good management in the Sask Party at all, Mr. Speaker. They're allowing SaskPower to go into debt, to increase the rate to people to service the debt. In the meantime, they're taking out all the retained earnings. And once again, Mr. Speaker, there's manipulation at the highest level. We're seeing that, quite frankly, all over the place.

And I can almost guarantee you, Mr. Speaker, that when it comes to those increases in power rates, you won't see the Premier getting up and saying, oh we're going to change that, we're not going to do that. What the Premier will say then, oh we're allowing SaskPower to service their debt. This is the only way they can do it. If you want to keep the Crowns, you have to do this. If not, we could sell it. We can sell SaskPower and then all our problems will go away. It's all about how well you position the Crowns because, Mr. Speaker, we see a lot of evidence that the Sask Party is not doing anything to protect the Crowns. In fact they're using manipulation. They're using PR and spin and they are quite frankly weakening the Crowns each and every single day, Mr. Speaker.

And that's why I keep telling people if you really want to know how the Saskatchewan Party is helping the Crowns, just go simply on the website Save our Saskatchewan Crowns, SOS Crowns, and it gives you a lot of the detailed information as to what they have privatized so far, what they're going to do to manipulate public opinion against the Crowns, how they're going to increase the debt of the Crowns, Mr. Speaker, and how they're going to make sure that people are paying much more for those services that the Crowns provide.

It's all part of a conservative, right wing think tank that says, this is what you've got to do to convince the people of Saskatchewan to get rid of your Crowns and to sell your Crowns. And, Mr. Speaker, after that it's an open market and whatever company comes here to provide power or telephone or insurance, Mr. Speaker, they can dictate the rates. They can dictate the prices. They can dictate whatever they want, because guess what, Mr. Speaker? The people of Saskatchewan no longer own those Crowns. It is owned by a private corporation, and wherever those private corporations are from, they will not allow any government — including the Sask Party — to dictate what price they can or cannot charge, Mr. Speaker. And that's the problem for the future. We can see that happening within the next 5, 10 to 15 years. But the Sask Party does have this plan, Mr. Speaker.

The conservatives on that side certainly see this as a real possibility. And, Mr. Speaker, I've said it once before and I'll say it again: it is my belief that in the future, if they do sell our Crowns and there's new power corporations set up by private interests, I more than guarantee you that we see some of the current cabinet members on some of these corporate boards. That's what I honestly believe will happen, Mr. Speaker, because quite frankly they're looking for a soft place to land after politics. And where best to land? Right amongst their friends, not amongst the people of Saskatchewan who they have compromised when it comes to protection of the Crowns.

I think the Crown corporations need to be protected at a greater rate. They need more transparency, and the people of Saskatchewan have to pay attention to what the Sask Party is doing. And there's some really good logic, some really good points, and some really good information on the website called Save Our Saskatchewan Crowns — SOS Crowns. Mr. Speaker, there's some really good information on that.

Bill 80 proposes to see 10 to \$13 billion in increased debt for SaskPower. Now, Mr. Speaker, we don't know what the debt is today at SaskPower, but what I can tell you is that what could have been saved had SaskPower simply used their retained earnings for their expansion, had used their retained earnings for the renewal of their infrastructure, had used their retained earnings to take advantage of the technology to protect the environment more and to produce more earth-friendly options for power, all that has all gone out the window. And why has that all gone out the window, Mr. Speaker? Because the Sask Party has sucked every penny of profit from SaskPower. They have taken every bit of profit that SaskPower has had and they're using it to balance their budget, Mr. Speaker. And that's an amazing, that's an amazing story, if people would follow what the Sask Party is doing, Mr. Speaker. It is very plain. It is very easy to find out.



And, Mr. Speaker, I think the people of Saskatchewan ought to be very worried. They ought to be very worried, because any time you're allowing the Crown corporation to go 10 to \$13 billion in debt, Mr. Speaker, and take away every cent of profit they have . . . And what does that spell for the future of SaskPower, as the bill I'm speaking about, Mr. Speaker? The problem is it really saddles the Crown corporation with that debt. And the Crown corporation will have no choice; the Crown corporation will have no choice but to come and collect that money from the customers. And when the middle-class families begin to pay a lot more and the lower class families begin paying a lot more, then people will realize that the Sask Party . . . every increase of power, every increase in those power bills, you can thank the Sask Party for that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think if you look at the whole notion of exactly how many millions of dollars that the Sask Party has taken out of the Crowns over the last three or four years, the people of Saskatchewan would be shocked. There's no question in my mind, in our minds that people would be shocked to see exactly how much, how much the Sask Party has taken out of our Crowns. And this is the same party that really, that really were against the Crowns, Mr. Speaker. They were dead set against the Crowns. We're going to get rid of those Crowns if we're ever elected, Mr. Speaker. That's the conservative way. And now today in Saskatchewan, what is saving the budget for the Sask Party government's ineptness in terms of being able to balance it? Well it is the Crowns that were developed by the NDP — that's who's saving their budget today, Mr. Speaker.

[16:45]

So what's going to happen? Oh, they don't like the Crowns. They never did like the Crowns. But the problem that they have, Mr. Speaker, is they need the Crowns to turn around and justify to the public that we have a balanced budget. And every time the minister says oh, we have a balanced budget, or the Premier says that our budget is balanced, the opposition laughs their heads off. And the auditor, I'm pretty sure she's probably just wringing her hands trying to say well, show me where the balance is. Show me where the balance is. And, Mr. Speaker, the problem is they have not. They can criticize the NDP. The Sask Party can, and they do it on a continual basis. But you can't argue with the Provincial Auditor who is an independent officer of this Assembly.

And, Mr. Speaker, if we need to add more argument, they did argue with the Provincial Auditor. They did chastise the Provincial Auditor, for what? For telling the truth. The truth was their books weren't balanced. Their budget was not balanced. But the problem with the Sask Party is they keep saying it over and over and over again. And, Mr. Speaker, they've got to get it right. The people of Saskatchewan aren't buying your logic that your budget is balanced. Why? Not because the NDP say it's not balanced. We certainly have made our point time and time again. But an independent officer of this Assembly that has no political ties — and that independent officer is the Provincial Auditor — if she says your books are full of it, there's no balance here whatsoever, Mr. Speaker, what does the Sask Party do? Well they go after her. You know, they begin to chastise her in committee. Well, Mr. Speaker, you simply can't do that. The people of Saskatchewan deserve better. They need to know the exact state of our finances today.

So the Crown corporations, all the contributions, retained earnings, are going towards what they call a balanced budget. And despite sucking every penny of profit out of SaskPower to supposedly balance their books, they're still getting grief from the auditor. So we're sitting here saying, well will somebody on the Sask Party kindly lead this file? So we ask for answers. We ask the Premier and he gets up and says, well it's balanced. And of course 80 per cent of the backbenchers are saying, well we're told to say it's balanced even though we know it's not balanced. So they'll continue saying, oh it's balanced.

Well, Mr. Speaker, there are some serious problems in the Sask Party. And from our perspective as an official opposition we're going to make sure we do a number of things to prove to the people of Saskatchewan, (a) their budget is not balanced, and (b) they're sucking every penny of profit from the Crowns to pretend to have a balanced budget. And they're saddling our Crowns with a whole whack of debt that you and I will be paying through our power bill. And their intent is to have the people and public opinion in the province turn against the Crowns so they can make a quick dime and appear to have everything all figured out in a couple of years. And, Mr. Speaker, that could be furthest from the truth, because the people of Saskatchewan are going to pay attention to this, and they're going to pay attention to this on a continual basis.

So Bill 80, Mr. Speaker, when they talk about the future of SaskPower, we will not take any leadership or advice from the Sask Party. We know what their game plan is. We know what this minister represents. We know what they want to do in the long term when it comes to the Crowns. And the trick we have as an opposition is to tell the people of Saskatchewan, the middle class families, the people that are going to be paying these power bills, all the people that are going to be affected by this, be very, very careful and watch what goes on when it comes to our Crowns. Because we need that vigilance in the people of Saskatchewan to make sure the Sask Party doesn't go haywire on us and begin selling all these Crowns on a fire sale basis, Mr. Speaker, or as we like to say on this side of the Assembly, a wall-to-wall sale of our Crowns.

Mr. Speaker, there's no question in my mind that SaskPower needs to be strengthened. We certainly can see that, Mr. Speaker. We think that we can indeed strengthen SaskPower under the smart growth strategy that the NDP employ, Mr. Speaker. And we talk about this on a continual basis. We think that SaskPower can indeed lead the nation, not only in reducing greenhouse gases, Mr. Speaker, but to look at alternative energy sources, Mr. Speaker, to look at alternative energy sources, Mr. Speaker. And there are tons of examples and tons of opportunities of how we can do net metering, of how we can look at solar power, of how we can look at geothermal heat, of how we can look at conservation. There are tons of examples of how SaskPower can be an exciting Crown that not only protects the environment, creates jobs, and keeps the power costs low for an everyday family, Mr. Speaker, but they can do some solid and exciting innovative projects to make SaskPower even something that we can be proud of even more, Mr. Speaker.

At the rate the Sask Party is going, people will look at SaskPower within the next five to ten years, given all the rate increases, as a Crown corporation that gives them higher power bills each month. And, Mr. Speaker, if you're going to protect

the Crowns like you say you are, then you wouldn't do that to the Crowns. You wouldn't put them in that predicament.

And that's exactly what happened with the SGI rate increase. This minister turned around and everybody blames SGI. SGI got their walking orders from the Sask Party and the plan was to get everybody mad at SGI and then the Premier to come along and say, oh we're not going to do that now, and he'd saved the day. And people will say, oh well that's nice.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that, in our position, is manipulation at its finest. And I tell the people of Saskatchewan that had they left the profits in SGI, in SaskTel, and in this case SaskPower, we wouldn't have to have these challenges that we have today, Mr. Speaker. And that is a fact, Mr. Speaker. That is a fact.

Now, Mr. Speaker, again I'll point out the whole notion of the panel that I attended a number of hearings on, and of course the panel was talking about alternative energies. And I can remember one occasion when they were talking about cold fusion and hot fusion, and I made the point in Saskatoon that I looked at the Sask Party participants on that panel and they were all confused. They didn't know what the heck this was. Well I didn't know it either but I wanted to be able to learn more about this whole process.

So I told the presenter that we have cold fusion and we have hot fusion, and then that side of the Assembly or that side of the panel, you have confusion. Because the problem was they weren't even prepared to look at any of these alternative energies. They weren't prepared at all. They were just going through the motion of listening to the people. And when these people had these really good ideas, these really good concepts, well some of the Sask Party members on the committee would look at each other and didn't have a clue what was being presented.

At the very least you should engage the public. Engage the people and ask them the questions at the time. Ask them the questions as what do you mean by these proposals? Could you give us a demonstration? Could you talk about the potential?

Well, Mr. Speaker, they weren't going to do any of that. And all they talked about, the committee members at the Sask Party during this committee hearing, all they talked to the people about in the room, get ready for power rate hikes. That was their continual message, Mr. Speaker. That was their continual message.

And I'll have to say, Mr. Speaker, that people in the room were turned off by that approach. People in the room saying, well I thought we were talking about alternative energies. I thought we were going to bring innovation and excitement and ideas to SaskPower, not hear a message and a PR campaign by the Sask Party to tell us to get ready for rate increases.

And that's exactly the point, Mr. Speaker. We are now seeing, we are now seeing alarming and continual evidence by the Sask Party that their intention is to do two things, two things: manipulate public opinion to try to turn public opinion against the Crown corporations; and number two is they're trying to make sure they saddle these Crown corporations with debt for years to come, for years to come, thus making it very affordable

and very enticing for the people of Saskatchewan to sell these Crowns.

And I say to them that there's an alternative way we can protect the Crowns. And in SaskPower's example, as it relates to Bill 80, there are tons of ways we can build SaskPower to make it a very exciting, a very dynamic, a very profitable, and a very important source of income for the province for many, many years if we build on the premise that we have to keep our Crowns a public-owned Crown corporation. That's the premise that we have to undertake, Mr. Speaker.

And there's a lot more people out there that are paying close attention to this, and I would say to this particular minister and to the Premier and to the Sask Party government that the people of Saskatchewan do not want their Crowns sold. They don't want their Crowns saddled with your debt. They don't want you to suck every penny and profit out of the Crowns to balance, supposedly balance your books when we all know that's your game plan. So why are you continuing on? Why don't you admit your mistakes, admit that your arrogance is getting the best of you, and stop being so stubborn and come clean with the people of Saskatchewan as it relates to the future of the Crown corporations? Stop hiding behind your language that all the people in Saskatchewan can see right through, right through.

And we sit here and we smile as we listen to the backbenchers saying, oh our budget is balanced. Yeah, right. Well, we've got a bridge for you to sell. Well that bridge is not in P.A. [Prince Albert] of course, but there's other places.

But I would point out, Mr. Speaker, I would point out that the people of Saskatchewan, you want to keep SaskPower. You want to keep SaskTel. You want to keep SGI. You want to keep the Information Services Corporation, all these corporations that make good money. They make good money.

If you want to keep the future of the Crown corporations intact, you want to keep the future of the Crown corporations promising. You want to keep the future of the Crown corporations affordable to the everyday family, the middle-class people. You want to keep the Crown corporations dynamic, exciting, innovative, evolving. Well, Mr. Speaker, the first thing you do, you don't trust a right wing government like the Sask Party who fail to admit their mistakes. You don't trust them to look after the future of the Crowns because they ideologically want to get rid of the Crowns. So why would you trust them with something that they don't want to keep?

And that's the fundamental question that we have in the opposition. And, Mr. Speaker, any bill, any bill that they bring forth, especially a bill that increases our debt 10 to \$13 billion, 10 to \$13 billion, Mr. Speaker . . . While some people may not appreciate the \$13 billion price tag they were talking about, it may increase your power bill at home by 50 or 60 bucks, if not 120. And then if they decide to sell the Crown corporation, it might go up as high as \$200 a month.

So the people at home, why should this be an interest to you? Why should you be worried about this particular bill? It is because it's going to cost you more money for your power bill every month. Every month you're going to see an increase to your power bill, and that's why you should not trust the Sask

Party with the future of the Crowns.

It doesn't make any sense at all as to why we would entrust them with the Crowns because at the end of the day, whether you live in Yorkton or whether you live in Wynyard or whether you live in Beauval, the bottom line is under the Sask Party you're going to be paying a lot more for power, a lot more for telephone, a lot more for insurance, Mr. Speaker, because that's exactly what they're going to force the Crowns to do. And, Mr. Speaker, I tell the people of Saskatchewan that we should not accept that.

And there's ways you fight back. There are ways you fight back. And the most important way you fight back is to get rid of the Sask Party. Get rid of them all, Mr. Speaker, and put a party in there that's going to protect the Crowns and build the Crowns. Because why should you trust a right wing government to protect the family of Crowns that people value simply because it doesn't make any sense from the political perspective?

And it's time to fight back. It's time to fight back and get rid of these Sask Party MLAs, Mr. Speaker, because people don't buy their fairy tales. People don't buy any of their arguments as to how they're going to protect the Crowns. And they especially don't buy their whole notion that their budget is balanced. My goodness, Mr. Speaker, we don't see any evidence to suggest that at all.

So on that point, Mr. Speaker, I have a lot more I want to say on Bill 80, but I'm going to make sure that people hear the message, and we'll continue hammering home these very important details as to why Bill 80 is really important and why we need to pay very close attention to what Bill 80 is trying to represent. And, Mr. Speaker, we simply don't trust the minister in charge nor the party in charge when it comes to protecting the integrity of our Crowns and to protect the future growth of our Crowns.

So on that note, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 80.

**The Speaker:** — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 80, *The Power Corporation Amendment Act, 2012*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried. It now being near the hour of 5 o'clock, this House stands recessed to 7 p.m.

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



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