



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

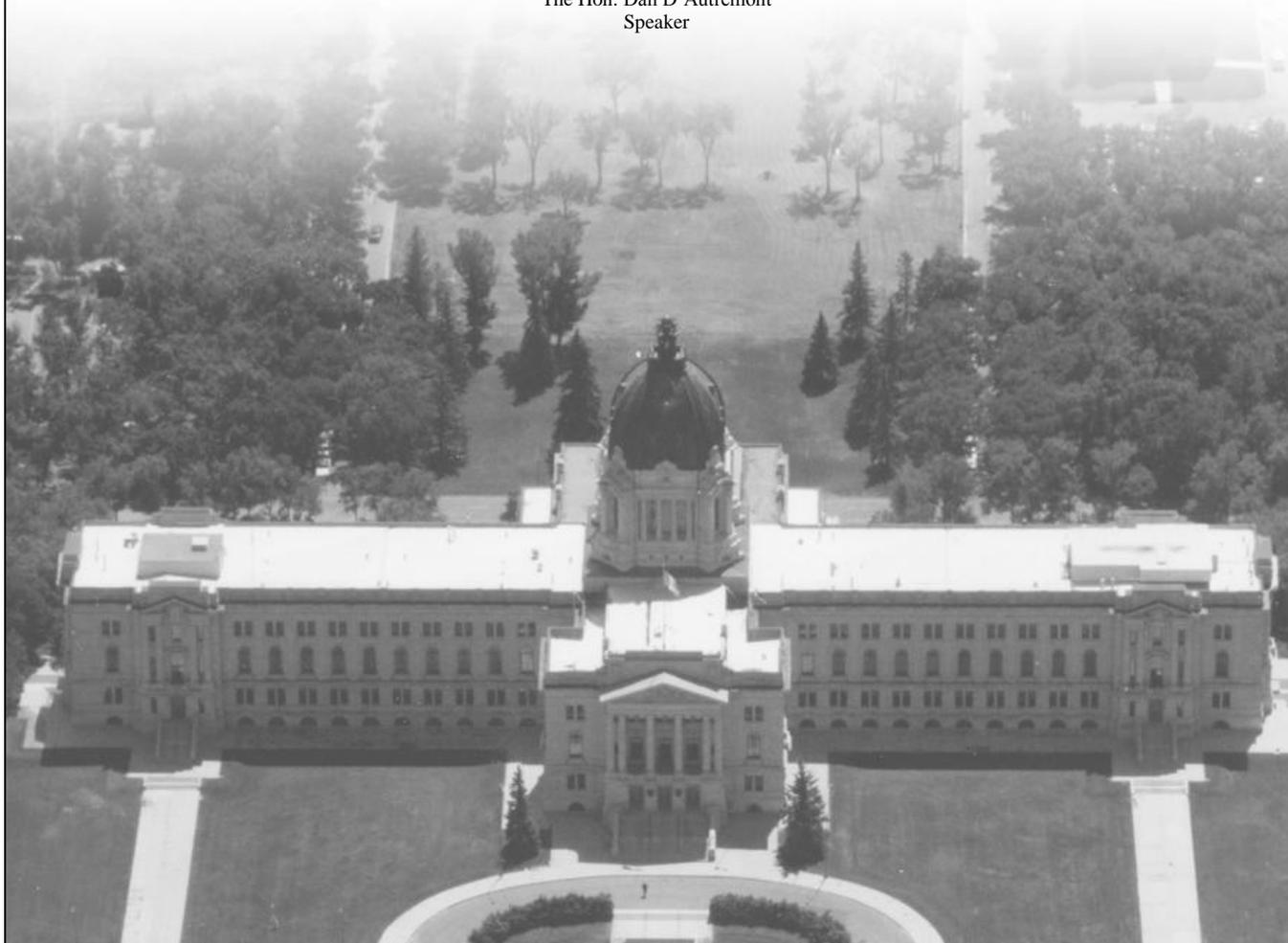
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Dan D'Autremont
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. Dan D’Autremont
 Premier — Hon. Brad Wall
 Leader of the Opposition — Cam Broten

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Broten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Campeau, Jennifer	SP	Saskatoon Fairview
Chartier, Danielle	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Cox, Herb	SP	The Battlefords
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Docherty, Mark	SP	Regina Coronation Park
Doherty, Hon. Kevin	SP	Regina Northeast
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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
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Hutchinson, Bill	SP	Regina South
Huyghebaert, D.F. (Yogi)	SP	Wood River
Jurgens, Victoria	SP	Prince Albert Northcote
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Krawetz, Hon. Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
Lawrence, Greg	SP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Makowsky, Gene	SP	Regina Dewdney
Marchuk, Russ	SP	Regina Douglas Park
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMillan, Hon. Tim	SP	Lloydminster
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Merriman, Paul	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Moe, Scott	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Hon. Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Greg	SP	Yorkton
Parent, Roger	SP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Phillips, Kevin	SP	Melfort
Reiter, Hon. Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, 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]

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Introduction of Page

The Speaker: — At this time I would like to introduce to the Assembly a Page for this session, Keshia Cooper.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, I would like to introduce some special guests that are seated in your gallery: Margaret Knowles, the senior vice-president of development for Morguard Investments Ltd.; Nathan Worbets, the senior development manager for Morguard; and Dale Griesser from Regina here is a president/broker with Avison Young.

Margaret, Nathan, and Dale are here today to mark an important milestone in the development of the Global Transportation Hub. Our new partnership includes facilities that are under construction at the hub right now and many more developments, we hope, in the future. Margaret, we have more land for sale if you're interested.

Mr. Speaker, we had a great event out at the Global Transportation Hub yesterday that my colleague, the member for Regina Qu'Appelle will be elaborating a little bit more on in a member's statement. But I would ask all members of the legislature to welcome these people to the legislature and welcome the investment that they're making in our province.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to join with the minister opposite and welcome the leaders here today with Morguard Investments and thank them for the investment that they're making in our province out at the Global Transportation Hub. I was tracking some of the announcements as it's come forward, and I followed the reports here yesterday as well.

So thank you for that investment and certainly encouraged by the work that you're conducting. As well, a warm hello to Mr. Dale Griesser. Welcome to your legislature. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Estevan.

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of this Assembly, I would like to introduce a very special young lady in my life. Seated in your gallery is my granddaughter, Bailee.

Bailee is a grade 9 student at the Estevan Comprehensive

school, and today is the day that students get to go to work with their parents. Bailee has went other years to work with her mother, and this year she asked if she could shadow me. And I'm delighted to have her here, and I ask all members to join me in welcoming Bailee to her legislature.

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's in the same vein that I'd like to recognize a grade 9 student from Walter Murray in Saskatoon. She's a member of the girls' senior soccer team. She's involved in a number of activities regarding community service. She does some babysitting. She plays the guitar pretty well and getting better. I think she took some lessons last night at the concert of Deep Dark Woods that she convinced her dad to take her to. And most especially I'm very, very pleased to be able to introduce Jacqueline Norris to this Assembly. She probably had another option today — her mother is supervising comprehensive exams, and that was to sit for five or six hours in complete silence — and she opted to come and join us in the legislature. So I would ask all members to introduce Jacqueline to her legislature.

TABLING OF COMMUNICATION

The Speaker: — Before we get to petitions, I have a message or a note from the Lieutenant Governor that I would read. It says:

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Pursuant to section 67 of *The Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act, 2007*, I hereby inform the Assembly of the membership of the Board of Internal Economy effective October 10, 2013:

Hon. Dan D'Autremont, Chair
Hon. Nancy Heppner (executive council nominee)
Hon. June Draude (executive council nominee)
Hon. Jeremy Harrison, MLA (government caucus nominee)
Doreen Eagles, MLA (government caucus nominee)
David Forbes, MLA (opposition caucus nominee)
Warren McCall, MLA (opposition caucus nominee)

Yours sincerely,

Vaughn Solomon Schofield
Lieutenant Governor
Province of Saskatchewan.

I so table.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for reasonable funding so all Saskatchewan students can do well. And we know classes in

Saskatchewan schools are growing so fast that many classes have well over 30 students in them and many classes are now being taught in hallways and boot rooms. Students who need support for educational assistants and other resources are not getting this support because of chronic underfunding. New Canadian students are often not receiving as much support as they need for learning English. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: cause the government to immediately increase financial support for all Saskatchewan students, including resources to limit class sizes, to provide resources for students with special needs, to support English as an additional language, and to provide more support for Aboriginal education.

[Mr. Speaker], as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

I do so present. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition. Many northern residents benefited from the rental purchase option program, also known as RPO. These families are very proud homeowners in their communities. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly cause the Sask Party government to restore the RPO rent-to-own option for responsible renters in northern Saskatchewan, allowing them the dignity of owning their own homes and building community in our province's beautiful North.

It is signed by many northern residents. I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition in support of replacing the gymnasium at Sacred Heart Community School. The petitioners point out that the gym at Sacred Heart has played an important role in the school's efforts to become a literacy leader, having served as a gathering place for the very successful reading assemblies and reading nights.

They point out that Sacred Heart Community School is the largest school in North Central with 450-plus students, 75 per cent of whom are First Nations and Métis. They point out that the enrolment has increased by 100 students over the past four years and that attendance and learning outcomes are steadily improving. And they also finally point out, Mr. Speaker, that as a matter of basic fairness and common sense, Sacred Heart Community School needs a gym.

In the prayer that reads as follows:

The petitioners respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to

cause the Sask Party provincial government to immediately commit to the replacement of the gymnasium of Sacred Heart Community School.

This petition is signed by citizens from Canora and Perdue in this fine province of Saskatchewan. I so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Sisters in Spirit Candlelight Vigil

Mr. Vermette: — On October 4th I was able to partake in a spiritual candlelight vigil at the Kihkinahk Friendship Centre. I was honoured to give opening comments on behalf of myself and my family. The vigil was hosted by the local Native Women's Association. It started with the opening prayer, and the New Dawn Drum Group performed a drum song. These four girls are from Lac La Ronge Indian Band.

This is an annual event designed to offer support to grieving families and friends of missing Aboriginal women and girls. The violence experienced by Aboriginal women and girls in Canada is a national tragedy and a black eye on our international reputation. I support the Sisters in Spirit in calling for a national inquiry.

I would like to thank all members of the La Ronge Native Women's Association for organizing the candlelight vigil. I ask all members of this Assembly to join me in recognizing this important event.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Wood River.

Service of Remembrance

Mr. Huyghebaert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a wreath was laid this morning at the Saskatchewan War Memorial as part of the government's annual service of remembrance for the public service. Today we gather as a public service and as a province to remember the deeds of those who have given the ultimate sacrifice so we may live in a land that knows peace and prosperity. Mr. Speaker, I, along with all Canadians, look back in awe at the sacrifices that a generation of Canadians made, not only for our country, but for the world.

To mark the 60th anniversary of the armistice of the Korean War, this year has been declared the Year of the Korean War Veteran. We must never forget that more than 26,000 Canadians travelled halfway around the world to stand up for their rights, nor the 506 Canadians who paid the price of freedom with their lives. We remember these brave women and men by wearing poppies, attending ceremonies, and visiting memorials.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to express my deepest appreciation for the sacrifices of the women and men that served in the past and acknowledge the dedication and bravery of current soldiers serving around the world. I, along with all Canadians, owe them for all the great quality of life we have here today. Lest we forget.

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

Walk to Breakfast and Extreme School Makeover Challenge

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This September I was honoured to take part in the seventh annual Walk to Breakfast which took place in my constituency at E.D. Feehan High School. E.D. Feehan was chosen as the winner of the Mosaic Extreme School Makeover Challenge.

The Extreme School Makeover Challenge encourages grassroots initiatives that promote student nutrition and health. E.D. Feehan has developed a plan that includes teaching cooking skills to grade 9 and 10 students who will be responsible for the lunch program in their school. This will provide them with the knowledge and skills that they can carry forward in both their school and home lives.

“We believe that if our students are well fed they will be more successful in school,” said Feehan principal Brandon Stroh. He goes on to say, “What makes our program unique is having students involved in preparing meals for their peers. They are learning valuable skills that could lead to a job and will definitely help them make healthier choices.”

Mr. Speaker, the Walk to Breakfast encourages all schools and students to help create awareness in their community on the importance of good nutrition and physical activity. Research tells us that children who are well nourished perform better in school, are more energetic, and have longer attention spans.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating E.D. Feehan High School in winning the Mosaic Extreme School Makeover Challenge and to the Breakfast for Learning program for all their hard work in helping bring good nutrition to over 28,000 students in over 300 nutrition programs here in Saskatchewan.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Lieutenant Governor’s Military Service Pin

Mr. Hutchinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday I had the honour of attending the launch of the Lieutenant Governor’s Military Service Pin at Government House. The Honourable Vaughn Solomon Schofield was accompanied by our Premier and Canadian Chief of Defence Staff General Tom Lawson, both of whom provided remarks at the ceremony.

Mr. Speaker, the Lieutenant Governor’s Military Service Pin symbolizes the gratitude of the Crown and the people of Saskatchewan for those who have served with honour and valour. The pin is available to current Canadian Armed Forces members, both regular and the reserve force; Canadian Armed Forces veterans; and current and retired members of Canadian police forces who have served in military operations. Several inaugural recipients were presented with the Lieutenant Governor’s Military Service Pin at the launch event, including the member from Wood Mountain who, as members will know, is a retired Royal Canadian Air Force lieutenant colonel whose

service included leading the world-famous Snowbirds team.

Remarks were also given by Lance Sergeant Denis Chisholm, a World War II veteran; Lieutenant Colonel Ken Garbutt who served in Korea; and Captain Gillian Dulle who recently returned from two tours of duty in Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, we owe a great debt of thanks to the Lieutenant Governor for spearheading this very important and timely initiative.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in recognizing the recipients of the Military Service Pin and thanking them for their service to our country. Thank you very much.

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

Global Transportation Hub Groundbreaking Ceremony

Ms. Ross: — I rise in the Assembly today to talk about the official groundbreaking ceremony held yesterday at the GTH [Global Transportation Hub] site to signal the beginning of development with Morguard Investments Limited. The GTH and Morguard finalized an agreement for Morguard to build and lease world-class facilities for the transportation and distribution sector. The agreement includes the purchase of 50 acres of land, another 50 acres in 2014, and an option for additional land in future years.

[13:45]

Morguard’s senior vice-president for development, Margaret Knowles, remarked on our province’s opportunity by stating that “The tremendous growth and prosperity that you folks have been generating here has caught the attention of us less fortunate in Ontario.” Ms. Knowles further commented on the GTH, stating that “The foresight that has gone in here, there’s just nothing like it.”

And to mark the beginning of our strong relationship with our partners, Morguard, Avison Young, PCL Construction, and the Healthcare of Ontario Pension Plan announced that they will be donating \$10,000 to the Regina Trades and Skills Centre. This generous donation will assist several young people in achieving their goals in attaining a skilled trade while developing and alleviating Saskatchewan’s skilled trade worker shortage.

Morguard leads the Trans-Link Logistics Centre project team, partnered with PCL Construction Management on construction, and Avison Young on leading the leasing. The first two buildings of the centre total 142,000 square feet, targeting a LEED [leadership in energy and environmental design] silver designation delivering for occupancy in spring of 2014. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Investment in Trades and Technology Centre

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise in the Assembly today to share some exciting news from

my constituency. Yesterday the Mosaic company announced a \$1.225 million investment in support of Parkland College's Trades and Technology Centre in Yorkton. I had the pleasure of attending and speaking at the event on behalf of the Minister of Advanced Education and acknowledging Mosaic for their kind contribution. Thanks to Mosaic's gift, contributions to the college's capital campaign now total 4.79 million.

Following the announcement, Bruce Bodine, vice-president of Mosaic's Esterhazy operations, commented:

Investing in developing a skilled workforce supports growth and sustainability. For communities and industry alike, long-term success relies on attracting and retaining people in the areas where we operate.

Parkland College president, Dr. Fay Myers, graciously thanked Mosaic for their generous contribution adding:

Mosaic's donation is further proof that colleges build communities and communities build colleges. It will add strength to Saskatchewan and create wonderful new opportunities for the people in the Parkland region.

Parkland College's Trades and Technology Centre is designed to bring new programs and services to the Parkland Regional College and to help sustain the economic growth of east central Saskatchewan. The facility will provide the space to train more than 350 skilled graduates per year and upgrade the skills of 2,000 workers annually.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to help me acknowledge Mosaic for their investment in Saskatchewan and its people, and thank the Parkland College for their commitment to growing their province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Estevan.

Saskatchewan Family Physician of the Year

Ms. Eagles: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am excited to rise in the House today to recognize a remarkable constituent of mine. Dr. Werner Oberholzer, who practises in Radville, won Saskatchewan's Family Physician of the Year award from The College of Family Physicians of Canada. Also known as the Reg L. Perkin Award, this honour is presented to the top family physician in each province. The formal award ceremony takes place on Saturday as part of Family Doctor Week in Canada celebrations, which runs from November 4th to November 9th.

With a motto of "put patients first, always," Dr. Oberholzer has long been known for providing exceptional rural family medicine in his hometown. He was honoured as Saskatchewan Physician of the Year in 2009, received the Saskatchewan Health Care Excellence Award as well as the Dennis Kendel Distinguished Service Award. He and his wife, Dr. Nelleke Helms, also a family physician, have been practising family medicine at the Radville Marian Health Centre since 1999.

In addition to practising, Dr. Oberholzer serves on various committees and groups within the medical community and is an associate professor at the University of Saskatchewan where he

mentors students and graduates of family medicine. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating Dr. Werner Oberholzer on this great honour, and thank him for his tremendous service to our province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Special Care Standards and Staffing

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government still hasn't given a decent answer as to why it watered down the seniors care regulations and completely got rid of minimum care standards. They claim, Mr. Speaker, that the standards were out of date. Well we agree, Mr. Speaker. That's not reason to get rid of them; that's reason to strengthen them. They claim, Mr. Speaker, that the standards weren't good enough for levels 3 and 4 care. Well we agree, Mr. Speaker, but that's not reason to scrap them. That's reason to make them even better.

My question to the Premier: will this government revisit its decision and bring in up-to-date, relevant care standards for seniors here in Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Like many . . . Like a number of other provinces in the federation, our province is moving to individualized care for residents in long-term care facilities in the province. And, Mr. Speaker, we take that care very, very seriously. Witness the important changes that have been announced by the Minister of Health, including a \$10 million urgent fund to deal with some pressing issues, as well as a longer term vision around greater home care.

Mr. Speaker, we just finished debating the Speech from the Throne where we're expanding the Home First home care program to two other communities beyond Regina, Mr. Speaker. I would also note that the new house calls program, which is new in the province, is going to be especially important for seniors, Mr. Speaker. We take the issue very seriously, and we back up words with actions.

And with respect to standard of care, our expectation is that that individualized care designed by the front-line health care workers is and will be the very, very best possible care for seniors in the province of Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, when we look at the actions the government has taken, even the CEO [chief executive officer] of the Saskatoon Health Region says the steps that this government has taken to address seniors' care doesn't get to the root of the problem that seniors face.

The Premier brought up the issue of individualized care. And that's another reason that he's provided on why this government would make the decision to remove minimum standards — because of individualized care. Mr. Speaker, that's a completely bizarre rationale. By that logic, a minimum wage would prevent anyone from making more money. But that's not how

minimums work, Mr. Speaker. Minimums act as a floor. Minimum care standards do not limit individualized care. What they do guarantee, Mr. Speaker, that seniors in this province can expect a minimum level — a level of respect, a level of dignity, a level of safety.

To the Premier: will he revisit his government's decision and establish a reasonable floor when it comes to the care of our grandmas and grandpas, of our moms and dads?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the care of seniors who are in our care across this province is certainly a high priority for this government, Mr. Speaker. That's why we instituted the first review of our long-term care facilities in this province's history, Mr. Speaker. That's why we made the report public in full, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we are dedicated to addressing this issue that we face in long-term care, for residents of today but also those in the future, Mr. Speaker. We believe, Mr. Speaker, by individualizing a plan around each and every resident within long-term care, Mr. Speaker, is a more appropriate way to deliver care to a senior, Mr. Speaker, that is in our care. Mr. Speaker, it's responsive to their individual needs.

Knowing that we have 8,700 residents at any given point within the health care system living in long-term care, Mr. Speaker, each of them have their individual needs, and we believe that we need to treat them as individuals as if they were living in their own home.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, when concerns came forward last spring, this was the minister who said there was no cause for alarm. This is the government, Mr. Speaker, that was forced into doing a report. When the report was completed, this is the government who said they weren't even sure if they were going to release the report, Mr. Speaker.

When we look at the concerns that they have raised, Mr. Speaker, when we look at the actions they have done, Mr. Speaker, here we have the removal of minimum standards and then using this bizarre rationale that it is somehow about individualized care.

We can also look, Mr. Speaker, at what other jurisdictions have done and what other studies have said and what experts have said. We know that one of the largest studies was commissioned by the US [United States] Congress and it was conducted by the Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services. It looked at 5,000 seniors' care facilities and it found that 4.1 hours of care per day is the minimum level needed to avoid poor resident outcomes.

So let's get this straight. We have, Mr. Speaker, this government removing the two-hour minimum. We have experts, Mr. Speaker, saying that four hours is the level that is more ideal, but instead of strengthening standards what we see from this government is the scrapping of minimum standards and a bizarre rationale about individualized care.

My question to the Premier: will he listen to the experts? Will he admit that his government made a mistake and will he reinstate minimum care standards for seniors here in Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, it's interesting that the member opposite would reference a study from the United States. Mr. Speaker, let's look closer to home here within Canada. In Ontario a recent study came out over the last . . . in 2008. It says, and I quote:

I am also convinced that any approach must be sensitive to the particular circumstances of each LTC home and the needs of their residents. Consequently, for this reason, I'm not recommending that there should be a regulation under *The Long-Term Care Homes Act 2007* that provides a provincial staffing ratio or staffing standard [Mr. Speaker].

It speaks to the specific circumstances of each resident.

Mr. Speaker, we have 156 facilities in this province that provide long-term care. Some of them are newer. Some of them are aging facilities. In some cases it may take staff to . . . Because of some of the circumstances, either of the resident or perhaps of the equipment available, Mr. Speaker, it may take a half hour to provide a bath for a resident. It may take an hour to provide a bath for a resident. Does the Leader of the Opposition believe that the resident that it takes an hour to bathe has had twice the care of somebody that would take half that time, Mr. Speaker? That's the problem, Mr. Speaker, with the minimum hours. It doesn't speak to the specific circumstances of every person.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, this argument that we should scrap minimum standards because of the need for individualized care is horribly flawed, Mr. Speaker. Why can't we have, why can't we have a base of care for people, and then let's have the individualized plans so that for those who need better bathing, Mr. Speaker, can receive it? Does this government actually think that people believe that if they're not getting a bath once a week as they should, if they're being forced to soil themselves in their bed, if they're not getting meals like they need to because there isn't staff there to help them eat, do they really think that individualized plans are taking place, Mr. Speaker?

We have a minimum wage in this province so that we know a base level that people get paid. And, Mr. Speaker, we are happy when people get paid more than the minimum wage, but we ensure that there is a floor. And we should ensure that there is a floor and a base level for care for seniors here in the province. My question to the Premier: why is he using this bizarre rationale that individualized care somehow makes minimum care standards irrelevant?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, to the member, the Leader of the Opposition's question, I would say that in terms of the regulations that we did change, what they have not yet

acknowledged is that those regulations go back to the mid-1960s, Mr. Speaker. They spoke to a time when residents within long-term care were considered what we would consider today level 1 and level 2. When they made the decision in the 1990s to scrap level 1 and level 2 from long-term care, what did they not do, Mr. Speaker? They didn't adjust the minimum hours, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, they left those in place even though it spoke to a different time.

What we believe and what other provinces are moving towards, Mr. Speaker, is personalizing the care, ensuring that there is a plan in place for every single resident. What we have in place, Mr. Speaker, is a policy that within 14 days of moving into long-term care, there is a plan put in place based on the specific circumstances of that resident. It's updated on a quarterly basis to ensure that it is in keeping with the needs of that particular resident, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, not only is that the case in terms of what was recommended in Ontario; as well in British Columbia, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, my first question recognized that the two hours per day was not up to date. We agree with that, but that's not a reason to scrap it; that's a reason to make it better, Mr. Speaker. This government has watered down the regulations. This government has removed any reference to sufficient staffing, Mr. Speaker. And then we see the care crisis that seniors have here in the province. We hear, Mr. Speaker, the heartbreaking stories that families face when they are confronted with the reality that their loved ones have in many care facilities because of the chronic short-staffing.

We have nurses in the province, Mr. Speaker, saying that they are very fearful for patients' safety because of the lack of staffing, Mr. Speaker, and the lack of care. We have experts, Mr. Speaker, studies saying that four hours is a more ideal level than two hours. But what do we see from this government? Movement in the opposite direction — completely removing the floor, removing the base.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is for the Premier: if he stubbornly refuses to actually regulate and ensure a base level for seniors, will he at least establish a target?

[14:00]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, I've indicated what was the recommendation in Ontario in 2008. Here's a recommendation from British Columbia in 2008: "Research supports that [and I quote] no specific ratios or levels to indicate the minimum or maximum levels of staff that are required for quality resident care." The report goes on to say that . . . BC [British Columbia] reports that their decision are evidence-based, and I quote:

Staffing decisions developed for publicly funded residential care should be made following consideration of many variables that positively affect resident and staff outcomes and, once made, should be evaluated to ensure the level and mix of staff result in positive resident and

staff outcomes.

Mr. Speaker, that's exactly what we're doing in Saskatchewan, looking at the resident as an individual, based on their own care needs, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we believe that that's the proper model for residents in our care.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, the excuse that this government got rid of minimum care standards in order to allow for individualized care is absolutely ridiculous. We have heard repeatedly about seniors in care facilities not even getting basic care, let alone individualized care, so this government spin makes absolutely no sense.

And instead of addressing the real problems and instead of restoring appropriate minimum care standards and ensuring that appropriate staff is in place, this government's only solution has been to create a one-time payment fund. But we're hearing from health regions that this is just a drop in the bucket. It will address some small problems, but it won't address the larger underlying causes.

To the minister: when will this government address the short-staffing crisis in seniors' care and in health care in this province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, I believe it was on October 1st where we released the results of the CEOs' tours of long-term care facility. Mr. Speaker, I would have the expectation that the members opposite would've had in that time enough time to read the entire report, Mr. Speaker.

While there are some parts of this province and some facilities that do have some staffing issues — and we've committed to looking at those, Mr. Speaker, through our \$10 million Urgent Issue Action Fund, Mr. Speaker — that wasn't the case in every single long-term care facility, as the members would suggest, Mr. Speaker, partly because we have worked to address long-term care staffing issues over the first six years of this government's term, Mr. Speaker.

Keeping in mind that there's the same number of long-term care facilities, Mr. Speaker, keeping in mind that there's roughly the same number of beds, Mr. Speaker, in long-term care, we've increased the full-time equivalents within long-term care by 700 in the last six years, Mr. Speaker. That includes an increase, Mr. Speaker, when you look at RNs [registered nurse] and LPNs [licensed practical nurse], 13.8 per cent, and a 10 per cent increase overall, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, the CEO of the Prince Albert Parkland Health Region recognizes that this government's plan is not sufficient to actually address the seniors' care crisis. She says the P.A. [Prince Albert] Health Region is going to try to make the business case for some more lifts and some staff

training, but she isn't confident that the region's identified needs will be met through this one-time payment fund.

The CEO knows that the needs in her health region and in all health regions are tremendous, and that this one-time fund will only go so far. A one-time fund cannot hire more permanent staff, and that is what is needed. To the minister: why doesn't this government have a real plan to address the short-staffing crisis in seniors' care?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, we certainly do have a plan to address the issues within long-term care facilities within this province, Mr. Speaker. The beginning of that was to actually identify what our challenges are in long-term care. Mr. Speaker, we've done that through the CEOs' tour. Mr. Speaker, as I indicated on October 1st when we reported on the findings of that, we've put in place \$10 million, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that is to address the urgent issues that have been identified in that report, Mr. Speaker. What I indicated publicly at that time is we would look to see, Mr. Speaker, how many of those challenges that the \$10 million can alleviate and then make decisions going forward into the future, Mr. Speaker. We're also going to bring together stakeholders in December for a two-day visioning session, Mr. Speaker, to look at the future of long-term care.

Unlike, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite who closed 16 long-term care facilities, kicked out level 1 and level 2 out of long-term care, closed 1,200 beds, Mr. Speaker, and put a proposal before the people of this province to drastically raise long-term care fees in this province for our seniors — we're not going to do that, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, it's not just the CEO of the P.A. Health Region that is raising concerns. We have already heard from the CEO of the Saskatoon Health Region who said that the real problem is the level of staffing. Maura Davies says that this government's one-time payment fund "won't ultimately address the larger issue of adequate staffing or the condition of some of our facilities."

So now we have the CEOs of two of our largest health regions saying that this government's plan won't go far enough and it won't address the real problems in seniors' care. To the minister: they know what the problems are. When will we see real solutions?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, well we are seeing real solutions. We're seeing \$10 million in an Urgent Issue Action Fund to address some of the challenges that were raised in the CEO tour, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, we're seeing a renewal of long-term care facilities across this province: 13 in rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker — three of them I believe are already open; one in Saskatoon which the members had a hard time supporting that one, Mr.

Speaker; and the replacement of three long-term care facilities in Swift Current. Mr. Speaker, right now, either through construction, planning, or completion, we are approaching 10 per cent of our long-term care facilities being rebuilt by this government, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the CEO of the Saskatoon Health Region also had this to say — which I don't believe was in the member's quote — on September 27th: "The issue isn't so much funding as having the right mix of services in the right place." Right now that's the mismatch we're dealing, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we're going to try to address that going forward in the future.

But I will remind the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, of their record: 16 long-term care facilities closed, 1,200 beds closed, level 1 and level 2 removed from long-term care, and a proposal, Mr. Speaker, to drastically raise long-term care rates for seniors across this province.

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

IPAC—CO2

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, this government failed to answer in the House the question yesterday as to whether they retained all records, files — electronic, hard copy, or otherwise — of IPAC [International Performance Assessment Centre for geologic storage of CO₂]. But they admitted to the media they're in the possession of files and records.

Can the minister or the Premier confirm to the House today, when this government stepped in to oversee the wind-down of IPAC, did this government retain everything or did they alter, dispose of, shred any of the contents that may now be relevant to the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] fraud investigation?

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — First and foremost, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite needs to know that we didn't step in to shut down IPAC. IPAC had a five-year term and that term was up, Mr. Speaker. And no, there was no interference in the wind-down of IPAC nor in the containment of the information. The financial records, the personnel records, and the HR [human resources] records are all in the possession of CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan] at their Regina office, and all other records, Mr. Speaker, are in the Regina offices of the Ministry of the Economy.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, when troubles emerged, including conflicts of interest and allegations of wasted taxpayers' money, this Premier and that cabinet failed to get to the bottom of this file. When it comes to IPAC, one of the Premier's closest advisers was there every step of the way and surely provided guidance on the matter and would have shown him that any of the reports brought forward were inconclusive and did not exonerate anyone from wrongdoing.

Mr. Speaker, this government has dismissed accountability

every step of the way. It's past time for them to take this waste seriously and this whole affair seriously. Will that government finally act to locate all of the IPAC records referenced here today in the government's possession and immediately turn all of them over to the RCMP fraud investigation?

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, all of the records are fully available to the RCMP. They know their contact person is the president and CEO of CIC.

Mr. Speaker, that member also knows that the accusations were made while IPAC was under the management of the University of Regina. The cheques were being paid by the University of Regina at the time. He knows that when the government discovered or government members on the board discovered that there were difficulties, the funding to the university was suspended. There was a forensic audit ordered, Mr. Speaker. There was an independent IT [information technology] consultant that was hired to review the value of the IT equipment, Mr. Speaker. The funding control was taken away from the U of R [University of Regina] as well as the management control, Mr. Speaker, and there was a severed relationship with the IT company they were dealing with.

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

Educational Assistants and Other Resources in the Schools

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, switching gears just a bit, educational assistants are critical for our kids, for students who need one-on-one attention, for students with intensive needs, and for the growing number of English as an additional language students in our classrooms. Mr. Speaker, having EAs [educational assistants] in classrooms is also critical for those students who don't need extra help because they need and deserve teachers who devote his or her full attention to teaching the class and not being pulled in all directions.

My question to the Minister of Education: has the government come around to supporting the critical role of educational assistants in today's classrooms?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the question. Directly to answer the question, I would place a great deal of value on the services provided by educational assistants. They were working in the school system when I was a trustee and when I was a board Chair. We value and respect those services and continue to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I can advise the members opposite and advise the House that there has been an increase in each and every year to the overall operating grant for school divisions. Since November 2007, there has been an increase of some 23 per cent in operating funding. This is over and above the \$600 million record capital investment and \$165 million historic relief for property tax.

Mr. Speaker, we continue to provide the services and the

funding that are necessary to ensure that our schools are able to deliver good services to our students. These services are provided through a variety of different professionals within the classroom: psychologists, therapists, and a variety of different supports that are there. There are high-needs children that require special assistance, and we're going to continue to ensure that they are receiving the necessary funding.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, that government cut about 300 full-time equivalent educational assistants over a three-year period out of our schools, out of our kids' lives. Since EAs typically don't work full-time, Mr. Speaker, that's probably more like 600 caring professionals that this government took away from kids who need them. A growing student population should be celebrated, but it also comes with a need to provide more resources, including EAs.

Mr. Speaker, there are 1,235 more students in Regina compared to 2007. But I understand there are zero — zero — extra educational assistants. My question to the minister . . . And they applaud the population piece. It should be celebrated, but there should be an investment back into our students.

My question to the minister: does he think 1,235 extra students deserve zero educational assistants?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite ought to check their facts before they have the nerve to stand up in this House and ask questions. They ought to be right on the accusations that they make.

Mr. Speaker, I will give you some facts and some statistics. We have increased operating funding since we formed government by over 23 per cent. But let's talk specifically about EAs. Compared to 2008, there are more regular teachers, 439; more student support teachers, 86 more; psychologists, 21 per cent more; speech-language pathologists, 22 per cent more; medical facilities and nurses up 105 per cent; social workers up 6 per cent. And, Mr. Speaker, we can talk specifically about EAs. In 2007 there were 3,546; 2013, 3,560. So in addition to the other supports, the number of EAs has gone up.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — The reality of today's classrooms, if that government would actually listen to students and teachers, is a more complex, more challenging classroom with a larger class size, Mr. Speaker.

Here are the school divisions that actually have fewer EAs today than they did in 2007: Christ the Teacher School Division, Good Spirit School Division, Holy Family School Division, Holy Trinity School Division, Horizon School Division, Living Sky School Division, North East School Division, Northwest School Division, Prairie South School Division, Prairie Spirit School Division, Prince Albert Catholic School Division, Regina Catholic School Division, South East Cornerstone School Division, Sun West School Division.

My question to the minister: do the students in these school divisions have fewer needs, deserve less attention, or require less investment in their education than students did seven years ago, Mr. Speaker?

[14:15]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I gave the number that are in the province. I also indicated to the member opposite, Mr. Speaker, that the number of other facilities that are there, some things, medical facilities, up over 100 per cent. There's a variety of services that are available. I don't do anything to minimize the good services provided EAs and want to continue to urge them to do it.

Mr. Speaker, under our government we have built 20 new schools. We're talking about building nine more joint-use facilities. Mr. Speaker, under their government they closed 176 schools and scared people off to Calgary where they're living in another school division completely, Mr. Speaker. Those members opposite ought to be ashamed of their . . . [inaudible] . . . And to come in here and put fear into the parents of this province is not right, Mr. Speaker.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

The Speaker: — Order.

Bill No. 110 — *The Senate Nominee Election Repeal Act*

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill 110, *The Senate Nominee Election Repeal Act* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General that Bill No. 110, *The Senate Nominee Election Repeal Act* be now introduced and read the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Clerk: — First reading of this bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave for the said bill to be read a second time immediately.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave that the said bill be considered a second time immediately. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Leave has been granted. I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General to move second reading.

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 110 — *The Senate Nominee Election Repeal Act*

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of *The Senate Nominee Election Repeal Act*.

The Senate Nominee Election Act was introduced in 2009 based on a desire to introduce elected representatives for Saskatchewan to the Senate. It was this government's hope that if the federal government was committed to appointing provincially elected nominees, responsibility in the Senate could be incrementally improved through this voluntary process, at least for Saskatchewan. Given the uncertainty that an elected Saskatchewan nominee would actually be appointed, the costs of this process could not be justified. Therefore no election under this Act was ever held.

Mr. Speaker, *The Senate Nominee Election Repeal Act* will repeal *The Senate Nominee Election Act*. Repeal of this Act reflects the conclusion of this Legislative Assembly that reforming the Senate is no longer viewed as a viable option and that the Senate should be abolished rather than reformed. Repeal of this Act, in conjunction with a joint resolution of the House supporting the abolition of the Senate sends a strong message to Ottawa and the rest of Canada that Saskatchewan now supports the abolition of the Senate of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of *The Senate Nominee Election Repeal Act*.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General that Bill No. 110, *The Senate Nominee Election Repeal Act* be now read a second time.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Clerk: — Second reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this bill be committed? I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I designate that Bill No. 110, *The Senate Nominee Election Repeal Act* be committed to the Committee of the Whole on Bills and that the said bill be considered in Committee of the Whole immediately.

The Speaker: — The bill stands committed to the Committee of the Whole on Bills.

Clerk: — Committee of the Whole.

The Speaker: — I do now leave the Chair to go into Committee of the Whole.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ASSEMBLY ON BILLS

Bill No. 110 — *The Senate Nominee Election Repeal Act*

The Chair: — Okay, I will call the Committee of the Whole to order. The item of business before the committee is Bill No. 110, *The Senate Nominee Election Repeal Act*. Clause 1, short title, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — It's carried.

[Clauses 1 to 3 inclusive agreed to.]

The Chair: — Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly, enacts as follows: Bill 110, *The Senate Nominee Election Repeal Act*.

I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you. I move that the committee report the bill without amendment.

The Chair: — It has been moved that the committee report the bill, Bill No. 110 without amendment. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — That's carried. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Mr. Chair, I move that the committee rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again.

The Chair: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the committee rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — That's carried.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of committees.

Mr. Hart: — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the committee to report Bill No. 110, *The Senate Nominee Election Repeal Act* without amendment and ask for leave to sit again.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a third time? I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave that the said bill be read a third time immediately.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave that the said bill be considered a third time immediately. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. The leave is granted. The minister

may proceed to third reading.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 110 — *The Senate Nominee Election Repeal Act*

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 110, *The Senate Nominee Election Repeal Act* be now read a third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General that Bill No. 110, *The Senate Nominee Election Repeal Act* be now read a third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Clerk: — Third reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — Call in the members.

[The division bells rang from 14:24 until 14:27.]

The Speaker: — All those in favour please rise.

[Yeas — 53]

Wall	Morgan	Stewart
Duncan	Draude	Krawetz
Boyd	Eagles	Cheveldayoff
Harpauer	Toth	Huyghebaert
Doherty	Norris	Reiter
Heppner	Harrison	Wyant
Weekes	Hart	Bradshaw
Bjornerud	Brkich	Hutchinson
Makowsky	Ottenbreit	Campeau
Wilson	Marchuk	Ross
Kirsch	Michelson	Doke
Cox	Merriman	Jurgens
Steinley	Hickie	Lawrence
Tochor	Moe	Parent
Phillips	Docherty	Broten
Forbes	Wotherspoon	Vermette
Belanger	Chartier	McCall
Nilson	Sproule	

The Speaker: — All those opposed please rise.

[Nays — nil]

Principal Clerk: — Mr. Speaker, those in favour of the motion, 53; those against, 0.

The Speaker: — The motion is carried.

Clerk: — Third reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the committee sit again? I recognize the Government House Leader.

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

[14:30]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the answers to questions 85 through 87.

The Speaker: — The Government Whip has tabled answers to questions 85 through 87.

GOVERNMENT MOTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Abolition of the Senate of Canada

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'll note at the outset of my remarks that I'll be moving a motion, the government motion for the Assembly's consideration.

Mr. Speaker, this is an important issue that we are about to debate in the Legislative Assembly and that we're about to decide on. It's not the most important issue facing the province of Saskatchewan. For most Saskatchewan people, it probably wouldn't rank in the top 20 including, I would expect, for most members of the House. And so, Mr. Speaker, we're not going to spend a lot of time on the bicameral nature of our federal government and whether that should change.

But we are going to make an important pronouncement, I believe, in a few moments. Not presuming the votes of hon. members, but I believe we're going to make an important pronouncement, and not just to our own provincial citizens to whom we are responsible, for whom we work, but I think as well to the country, to let them know that the province of Saskatchewan after some considerable deliberation — and not at all, Mr. Speaker, revolving around current affairs, though perhaps informed to some degree by them — have come to a view of what might be best for the country with respect to that bicameral parliament.

Mr. Speaker, we have had a history of upper chambers in our country, not just at the national level but at the subnational level. I think it's interesting to quickly canvass the history — some of them very short — of these senates, if you will, at the provincial level, of these upper chambers.

Mr. Speaker, in 1876 Manitoba abolished its senate, its upper chamber. In 1876, the same year, the province of Ontario also abolished its senate. New Brunswick did it in 1892, Prince Edward Island in 1893. Nova Scotia in 1928, and more about them in a moment.

And in Newfoundland, their legislative councils stopped in 1934, and there wasn't a reappearance at all, Mr. Speaker. When they came into Confederation in 1949, they came in as a unicameral House without a senate. So they had obviously made a de facto decision that an upper chamber was not necessary in the interests of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Mr. Speaker, the latest province to move away from an executive chamber, executive council or legislative council or a senate chamber was the province of Quebec in 1968.

I don't want to belabour the points with respect to each of these decision points in each of these provinces, but I do want to focus a little bit if I can on the decision in Nova Scotia, both because I think it provides some symmetry now and informs us in this debate today, but it also provides a cautionary note about how difficult it is — and we ought to be under no illusions in this Assembly — about how difficult it might be to move away from an upper chamber.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned earlier, Nova Scotia had an upper house until 1928. Their upper house began in 1838, so almost 100 years of experience. In the period following Confederation, the legislative council came under increasing fire as unnecessary, expensive, and anachronistic. Interesting, the people of Nova Scotia, at least a good many of them, came to the conclusion that in 1928 the senate of that province, the upper chamber, was an anachronism.

And so pressure mounted for the legislative council to be abolished, and what followed was almost 50 years — this is the sobering part for those of us who might think, well this might happen in short order — it took 50 years for Nova Scotia politicians to actually be rid of the senate. There was a Conservative government under Premier Rhodes that replaced a four-decade regime, a Liberal regime. And they first, Mr. Speaker, tried a hefty severance salary for their provincial senators. That didn't work.

And so they came up with a novel solution, Mr. Speaker. And by the way, this has been tested to some extent at the federal level, or at least replicated. The premier of the day — I get through the Lieutenant Government in Council, I would presume — just simply started appointing, because they could do it constitutionally, appointing a lot more senators who were of the same mind who were abolitionists. And they effectively voted themselves out of existence.

Mr. Speaker, I think there is an interesting lesson in this particular story because again the people of Nova Scotia didn't find, didn't see the use in an appointed upper chamber dating back to 1928, and it took five decades actually to move from that resolution to the actual abolition of that particular senate.

So, Mr. Speaker, in each of these provinces — and you know, we can't canvass the history of each one since they've made their decision to go to a unicameral system — but I would expect if you asked the respective political scientists or historians in those provinces, they would probably agree, they'd probably offer that the democratic life of those provinces has not been any worse for not having an upper house. The governments, the orderly . . . you know, the peace, order, and

good government that Canadians want at the national level, at the provincial level has not been vulnerable to the lack of an upper chamber in those particular jurisdictions. Life's moved on, Mr. Speaker.

When they've needed perhaps sober second thought — as is often attributed, one of the attributed qualities of the senate — those provincial legislatures do what our provincial legislature has done: you know, whomever might be, whatever party might be in power, they use their powers of inquiry. Sometimes it's committees of the legislature. Sometimes it's special commissions. But to think that these provinces that moved away from a senate then lacked sober second thought because they didn't have an appointed chamber of peers of some description, I think would not bear out against the facts, against the historical facts of these particular provinces.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think it's fair to say that we have examples of the abolition of senates at the provincial level. I understand this is not a perfect . . . it's not perfectly analogous to what we're debating today, but at least it's instructive, and I think it's informative.

Mr. Speaker, quickly, what about the history of our own national upper chamber, the Canadian Senate? Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to reflect on the words of our first prime minister and I think the undisputed founding father of our country. Sir John A. Macdonald commented on . . . Well at the outset during the Confederation debates, he would have been commenting on the very nature of the country and its fabric and its institutions. And certainly the Senate was no exception. He said this, by the way, of the principle of equality in the Senate. This is what John A. said, and I quote, "In the Upper House, equality in numbers should be the basis. In the Lower House, population should be the basis." Interesting, Mr. Speaker.

The definition though of equality at that time — when John A. Macdonald uttered those words, before the entire nation's family came into existence and, you know, principally Western provinces but also Newfoundland and Labrador — wasn't the equality of the subnational units. He wasn't talking about that. Their concept for the Senate representing equality in the country, if the House was rep by pop and represented the population, was that the Senate would represent the regions. And at the time, I think that would probably be a reasonable measure of equality.

But what happened in the intervening years of course is that provinces, great provinces like Saskatchewan and Alberta, came into the national family. And when all of that was done, finishing in 1949 with Newfoundland and Labrador — well much more recently actually with Nunavut as a territory — when the family was complete, so to speak, Mr. Speaker, then we had this strange situation where the Senate, its principle was supposed to be equality, was based on an equality of the regions where a region like Western Canada would basically have the same number of representatives in the upper house as the region of Ontario. But of course we know that Ontario's not a region; it's a province.

So you almost have this hybrid equality in terms of that E — and I'll get into this in a moment though — of the Triple-Es. We westerners want the Triple-E. We always think about

equality of the provinces, not equality of a region to a province or to another province. By the way, this is not the fault of Ontario or Quebec. Just the way it's always been; they get the same number as large regions of the country.

And so I think the Senate has lost the opportunity then to provide the balance of a truly equal body. If the House of Commons is representative of the people, the Senate, if it's working, should be representative of the units, of the subnational units — the provinces, in this case — of Confederation. So I don't think it's passing the test of equality today. Maybe the early test that John A. would have applied.

What did he say, Mr. Speaker, about how effective this body should be? Well, Mr. Speaker, here's what John A. Macdonald had to say again. It's a brief quote from the Confederation debates. He said, "It would be of no value whatever were it a mere chamber for registering the decrees of the Lower House." John A. Macdonald is saying the Senate wouldn't be much good if it's just a rubber stamp. The Senate should actually . . . And we would have problems with this now, because it's accountable, but bear with me. We're on the effective measure of a senate. When it comes to be effective, John A. wanted it to be that way. The founders wanted it to be that way, Mr. Speaker, and so they said it should be more than a mere chamber for registering the decrees of the lower house. It ought not to just be a rubber stamp, Mr. Speaker.

We know that for the most part, throughout all these decades, that's what it is. Part of the reason for that is that senators are part of their respective parliamentary caucuses. They're going to be a part of a government caucus. They're going to be part of an opposition caucus. And for the most part, they will vote the party line of those respective caucuses. And so they will perhaps not be able to even represent the regions, even though we think equality of the provinces, they might not be able to represent the regions as best they could if they were independent. That's the first point. The second point is they may not be very effective as they would likely wind up being a rubber stamp, with the government senators simply voting with the government caucus.

Mr. Speaker, by those two measures, the Senate has failed the test of being equal, in the modern definition, in terms of each province having equal representation. It's failed the test of being effective. There has been important work done by the Senate. This is not in any way, this debate, a criticism of individuals who've served in the Senate.

But, Mr. Speaker, we have to ask ourselves, could the work they've done that we consider worthy and worthwhile be done without it? We've already talked a little bit about the ability for the Senate to make significant inquiry on issues and then report back to Canadians in a thoughtful and in-depth way. Well, Mr. Speaker, again I would submit that the provinces do this with the unicameral systems, and the House of Commons could do it through their committee system, through the ability of the Prime Minister and the cabinet to appoint Royal Commissions. There is the chance for a sort of thoughtful discussion and the sober second thought that's often touted as one of the attributes of the Senate.

So if it really hasn't worked in terms of the principle of equality

that John A. ascribed to it, and if it hasn't really worked in terms of the quality of being effective then, Mr. Speaker, we need to ask ourselves, is the status quo worth fighting for, worth maintaining, or should we be looking at something else?

Mr. Speaker, I've heard some criticism, and it's been — not criticism — I've heard some constructive comments in debate. We've had it in our own caucus. We had it in our own party, Mr. Speaker. You will know that this represents an evolution of our party policy. In fact we balloted our members here not too many months ago in the late spring, early summer: 3,727 ballots were returned; 3,216 voted in favour of abolition — 87 per cent. And that's why we've changed our position. But as we've had this discussion and debate, there's been many good questions that members of the party have asked and that members of the public have asked because, by the way, we want to also make sure we're representing the people of the province, not just worried about what party members might say.

And one concern that I've noted that's a reasonable part of the debate is, but what happens in our country if there is a prime minister or a federal government that for whatever reason undertakes policies that are of particular harm, that have a deleterious effect on a region, maybe in our case on Western Canada? If we don't have a senate do we lose a last line of defence? Mr. Speaker, again I think it's important that we just canvass our own history with that same question because there have been examples, I think, when a federal government has taken actions that have hurt a region. The one that we would remember in our part of the world with clarity is the National Energy Program introduced by Prime Minister Trudeau. This was very damaging policy to all of Western Canada, very damaging policy.

[14:45]

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure there would have been senators at the time who decried the policy, but I can't tell you their names. I don't know who they are. And so I'm not sure that was or would be in the future the most effective source of opposition to a prime minister or a federal cabinet that's bent on doing things that we don't think are good for the region.

Here is a name I remember: Peter Lougheed, Mr. Speaker. When it came to that particular battle against the National Energy Program, I remember a premier's name. Because, Mr. Speaker, what has happened in our country is the provinces have filled a vacuum left by a senate that maybe John A. wanted to be equal, that maybe John A. wanted to be effective. But because of parliamentary whip votes, party discipline, because of the nature of the appointments to the Senate, and because it represents regions, not provinces — for all of those reasons, the de facto balance to a federal government is the provincial governments of this country, Mr. Speaker.

And some people would say, well but Peter Lougheed didn't stop the National Energy Program. Well did he or did he not? Western Canada, I think, was heard by a national party that was able to contest the next election. And, Mr. Speaker, because the House of Commons is elected and accountable, the next election defeated the Trudeau government, elected a Conservative government, and the National Energy Program was ended. So it didn't happen right away, but that provincial

voice within Confederation, not the Senate, did prove to be the balance against a heavy-handed government that took action against a region that objected strongly to the positions that they had taken.

Mr. Speaker, again I'm sure there were senators who opposed the National Energy Program, but I can't tell you their name. And I'm sure there were even Liberal senators from Western Canada who opposed it who probably did not speak out. Why? Because they're part of a parliamentary caucus. They're part of a whip vote, Mr. Speaker. So there's an obligation there to the centre, not to the provinces from which they come. What good is it, Mr. Speaker, to have a watchdog if he's watching out for someone else's house? It entirely misses the point.

So, Mr. Speaker, if we believe as I believe now, and again it's a subject of debate, but if we believe that the status quo was not on, I actually think there's great consensus across the country, whether we believe that we can reform it or not, I do believe that Canadians understand the status quo is not on. If we think that though, if we believe it though, there are really only four options. And I'll quickly talk about those, and then I want to make way for the Leader of the Opposition who has come to this position long before, long before I did.

Four options, Mr. Speaker. The first is immediately reformed Senate, Triple-E Senate. The second is a marginally reformed or incrementally reformed Senate. We've seen some tinkering around the edges now, and I credit the federal government for trying certainly, Mr. Speaker, but that's the second option. The third is abolition, and the fourth is abolition with a view to rebuilding something in its place that might work.

So very, very quickly, Mr. Speaker, with respect to number one, I used to believe that we ought to advocate always for a meaningfully reformed Senate, specifically a Triple-E Senate. Mr. Speaker, I have come to the considered opinion that this is impossible, that any change is difficult — more on that in a moment — but this is impossible.

I have never heard a premier in the short time I've had this job, at the tables in formal discussions at dinner or lunch, never heard a premier of one of the populous provinces — who you would need, by the way, whatever you believe about the amending formula. What's going to be needed, whatever the Supreme Court's going to tell us, we're going to need the populous provinces to agree — I've never heard one of them say, and I don't fault them for this, that they support a Triple-E Senate.

Even when those provinces were at their most generous with respect to the Senate during Meech Lake — credit Premier Peterson, Ontario; credit Premier Bourassa in Quebec — even then, when they were prepared to move on the Senate, they weren't prepared to move to a Triple-E. I don't blame them. How would you explain that to your citizens, that you've given up one of the advantages you have in a major institution of parliament? So I've never heard any premiers since express that support. I just don't think it is possible.

What about a marginally reformed Senate where we elect a few and maybe put term limits on it? Again, credit the federal government for trying. Credit the Prime Minister for trying.

Couple of problems, Mr. Speaker, with that. Not all the provinces are going to elect senators. That's very, very clear. In fact hardly any of them are.

We just dealt with our legislation, but let's just rewind for a minute and say, pretend for a moment that Saskatchewan would be willing to elect a senator. That would make Saskatchewan and Alberta, maybe New Brunswick — I'm hearing some rumblings from Premier Alward — and maybe the province of British Columbia. But for sure if we rewind back to that last Bill, there was two up until a moment ago — us, the province of Saskatchewan, and the people of Alberta.

So then what would you have? Well you'd have kind of a hybrid Senate with a tiny minority elected, giving some legitimacy frankly to an institution that . . . whose majority, whose huge majority would be appointed in the same old way, by the party in power, by the PMO [Prime Minister's office], by the Prime Minister, whoever it is, beholden more to that party's policy and caucus loyalty, I would argue, Mr. Speaker, than — because of the definition of party discipline — than they would be to the region from which they came.

Mr. Speaker, we've seen elections for the Senate before where people run under party banners, federal party banners, and I think that helps make the point. What else is wrong with the marginally reformed Senate, as I've understood it, is that there's still an appointment for life. You run for office once and you stay there for, well whatever the term is, a long term.

Mr. Speaker, I think all members in this House would agree that we all have a lot more focus on our work here and our responsibilities and how we fill out forms, mindful of the fact that in four years we'll face the bosses in an election. There is the accountability of election, sure. That's not bad. But what good is it if you don't have the accountability of facing re-election, of going back to the voters and explaining what your position was on the potash takeover or why you filled out that form or why you said this? You know, it's Thanksgiving that focuses the mind of us turkeys, Mr. Speaker, and in this hybrid version, it lacks Thanksgiving. It lacks that moment of focus.

So the last two, very quickly. Abolition, it's pretty clear, Mr. Speaker, would just stop being. And I think that we've made the case that the House of Commons has at its disposal all the tools of inquiry, all the moments to pause in between legislation, all the opportunity to consult that a senate would give to it. And it also has the accountability of course of facing a re-election, Mr. Speaker, and so it's preferable.

I also, Mr. Speaker, do think it's more likely — still very difficult; I'm not naive about it — but more likely, and here's why I would say that. Just as I've never heard a Premier say, from a populous province, that we would like to do the Triple-E Senate, I have heard two from populous provinces, the former premier of Ontario and the former premier of British Columbia, Premiers McGuinty and Campbell, support abolition. We can't presuppose what the Supreme Court's going to say. But if the Supreme Court says seven-fifty, and there's British Columbia and there's Ontario, there's a lot more light of hope that shines on getting something done on abolition than there is, in my view, on a Triple-E Senate or a meaningful reform. And that's

why, Mr. Speaker, I understand it would be very difficult — very, very difficult — but I believe it to be at least a greater likelihood of succeeding.

Finally there is the option of abolishing it with a view to starting over. I understand that people are very passionate and support the principles of bicameralism. I understand it completely. I do understand the notion around checks and balances. I think we . . . What's happening in the United States, by the way, and the paralysis there in terms of their ability to deal with a major fiscal problem, relates directly to this question of checks and balances. And we all, if we're interested in politics, should have the discussion of how much is too much, how much actually leads to that paralysis where you can't fundamentally deal with an existential crisis within your own borders. But still I do understand the principles of bicameralism.

And so it's interesting. Some writers are weighing in on it, Mr. Speaker. I'll leave the members with this. Ted Morton is one of them, from next door in Alberta, a well-known provincial politician. He said in the *National Post* on 4 July, 2013:

It might be better to adopt a two-step approach. First, wipe the slate clean by abolishing the current Senate. Then start from scratch in designing a new model for an elected Senate that can be presented to Canadians.

I think if you believe that, you could support this motion.

Here's another one. Andrew Coyne, who has been commenting on the issue as well and is a well-known commentator in the country, said this, and I quote, "So long as the Senate remains in place, the thinking runs, there will be too many vested interests, provincial or otherwise, with a stake in the status quo."

And this is not in his quote, but I would say chief among them, by the way, the senators themselves. But the quote goes on:

Once it was torn down, it might be easier to come up with a reform plan that was satisfactory to all sides. Even if the attempt failed, we should at least be rid of the Senate as it is, sparing the country the embarrassment of an appointed house, well known as a den of patronage even without its recent ethical lapses, substituting its wishes for those of the democratically elected Commons.

National Post, July 13, 2013. That makes some sense to me as well.

Mr. Speaker, I think the only options of these four are abolition, and abolition with a view to starting over. Mr. Speaker, the status quo's not on. The status quo is an anachronism.

This appointed group, appointed by the Prime Minister, appointed by, really, political and partisan interests, again whoever the prime minister is, and then beholden to that political party and not the region necessarily from which they came, is not good enough for Canadians.

Can a unicameral parliament, just the House of Commons facing the accountability of election, with all of the tools of

consultation at its disposal, can it be worthy of the kind of government that Canadians deserve? I think it can be, especially if, Mr. Speaker, especially if in that place, that country where we'd have that kind of a unicameral situation that here . . . well at present fictional place. Especially if that federation had strong provincial capitals that were committed to stand up for the interests of their provinces regardless of who was in Ottawa, that were prepared to be a clarion voice for their provincial interests. Can that work for Canada? Absolutely it can work for Canada, Mr. Speaker. But we're going to need the resolve to move forward. We're going to need the resolve to move past the Senate and, Mr. Speaker, that's what I am hoping the province of Saskatchewan sends as a message to this country.

It's time to move on. It's time to give Canadians the kind of democratic, accountable government that they deserve. So, Mr. Speaker, I move, quite bluntly:

That this Assembly supports the abolition of the Senate of Canada.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Premier:

That this Assembly supports the abolition of the Senate of Canada.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the question? I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Broten: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. And after a question period and a lot of activity going on today, it's good to get to this point to be able to discuss this motion. It's something that we've been talking about in this legislature for some time. It's something that Saskatchewan people have certainly been talking about as of late, to a great deal, and it's something that Canadians have been talking about in a way really that is unprecedented in capturing Canadians' attention and their thoughts, sometimes their outrage, sometimes their frustration and their disbelief with how things have unfolded as we've all been glued to TVs in the past, in the past few weeks and months.

But it's important, Mr. Speaker, to remember that this isn't a discussion simply about the last few weeks, the last few months. And I do appreciate many of the remarks that the Premier made, in a sense providing the historical perspective of some of the background, the background with the origin of Canada, with the experience in other provinces, and the position to where we find ourselves here today.

My remarks, Mr. Speaker, may not be quite as lengthy as the Premier's because I feel he has — that's not a criticism — but he has outlined a number of historical realities and also explained a bit of the evolution of his own personal opinion and that of at least some of the members on the opposite benches.

On this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, this is perhaps an easier speech to give or fairly more of a straightforward speech because it has in fact been our position for a long time. It's been certainly before I was born. Going back to my grandpa and probably back to my great-grandpa, this has been the position that we have held. And in hearing the remarks from the Premier, talking about the historical experience and the current

reality, it really I think is, in my view at least, summed up in our opinion as New Democrats — and the opinion is shared by many Canadians — of where the Senate is now, and that being that it's no longer appropriate and hasn't been for some time to have an unelected, to have an unaccountable, and to have an institution that serves as an antique. And for those reasons, that has been the long-standing view that we have had since before I was born, that abolition is the way to go and that the Senate should be abolished.

[15:00]

If we take that historical perspective, we'd also combine it with the current reality that we see. And when we think of the priorities that Canadians have when it comes to services and what they expect their governments to do for them and with them, when they look at how public dollars should be spent in the most wise manner, we know that the \$100 million a year that it costs to operate the Senate is significant. And those resources, those dollars, could be put to much better use. And that is something that we are very aware of in listening to what matters to, yes, Saskatchewan families but what matters to Canadian families. And we think those dollars could be better spent. And that is another reason why abolition in our view is the way to go.

Because this has been our long-standing view, based on the convictions that in looking at the historical experience and then the reality that people face, we were not in favour of the pro-Senate-elections Act that the government brought in following the '07 election, has evidence of our long-standing view of this position.

I'm pleased, in speaking of that legislation, I'm pleased that it was a unanimous standing vote that we had here, stating that repealing that piece of legislation is the right way to go. I'm encouraged by that, and I hope that we can have that same unanimous voice coming from Saskatchewan as we consider this motion here because I think it is an important message to send. It's an important message to send that it's necessary to be modern. It's an important message to send that it's necessary to spend precious tax dollars in the best and most efficient way, meeting the needs of Canadians. And for those reasons we will be supporting this motion. And as I have said, and as we have said, we will work with the government when it makes sense to do so. In this instance we are happy that they have migrated to our position that this is the best course of action.

And I think this is what Saskatchewan people expect of us. And I know as I've been talking with people again . . . I mean when you walk by a TV it's not uncommon to have a number of people huddled around watching the proceedings on the television as if it were playoffs or a sporting event when in fact it's very serious in nature. It's not something that should be taken lightly. It's not something that should be seen as a sport or as entertainment.

But this really is about what sort of democratic institutions we want to have in the country, what sort of better government we want to have, and how we can ensure we are making the best decisions, yes, for provinces and, yes, for the entire country.

I appreciate, as I said, much of what the Premier said with

respect to the historical experience, and I agree with some components of what he said, many components of what he said. I don't agree with every component. I know when he stated that the Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, has tried to marginally reform the Senate, I think actions with respect to appointing a number of very . . . Well the evidence of stacking the Senate in his favour would speak against that notion. But in terms of the historical experience, there are a number of things that I would agree with.

I am pleased to see the migration that the government has had on this issue. But the government has had a very mixed approach with respect to what is the best course of action for the Senate. And that was clearly shown through the pro-Senate legislation that was put in place for after the '07 election.

But it's my hope, Mr. Speaker, is that we do have the unanimous voice coming out of this legislature because we have seen messages from the government side where there's been a real willingness to play along with many of the undemocratic and many of the less-than-favourable actions of the Senate in different occasions.

We know, Mr. Speaker, that the government has been very happy to have Conservative senators play a role in campaigning and in involvement with the party, and so we know that there are strong ties there. And I, for that reason, Mr. Speaker, do hope that we have a unanimous voice coming out of the legislature, whether it is from members in urban areas or rural areas. I think that is an important message that can be sent from this province.

I'm glad that the Premier has clearly come to this position that abolition is the way to go. We do know that in 2006, the Premier said that senators would have a far more meaningful voice in Ottawa if they were democratically elected instead of simply appointed by the government of the day, and the Premier expanded on his view on this issue in his earlier remarks. But I do want us to have an unanimous voice coming out of this legislature on the issue and the importance of abolition.

I remember being a fairly newly elected member after the '07 election when we were going through the discussion about the pro-Senate legislation that the government brought in. And at that time, the current Health minister said that "The Senate as an institution has served this country for 141 years, and there's nothing to suggest that this will change any time soon no matter how many times members opposite chant the words abolish, abolish, abolish."

So I'm not expecting or requesting any sort of chanting of abolish, but I think it is important, Mr. Speaker, to have a clear voice coming from the province with respect to the position that we do want to take. And this is a common-sense approach, Mr. Speaker. It's what Saskatchewan people have clearly expressed to me and I think, Mr. Speaker, it's important as we consider this motion and we consider what steps that are next.

The Premier talked about a lot of the interaction with other provinces and the need to have some change and to make some progress. And I would hope, Mr. Speaker, through a unanimous voice coming out of this legislature, that we would be able to be a constructive voice in the process for pursuing abolition and

gaining the support of other provinces.

So, Mr. Speaker, I've spoken for perhaps even longer than I intended, and I know that there are a number of members on both sides of the House who would like to enter into the debate on this issue and go on the permanent record. But I will say, Mr. Speaker, that we will be supporting this motion, and we're glad that we've arrived at the position where the government also agrees to this approach. And we want to be constructive in the process with respect to working with other provinces and making some progress on abolition of the Senate. So with that, I'll conclude my remarks.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to add some comments to the ones that have been made already. The time this bill was initially introduced, I was the minister of Justice and was responsible for bringing it forward, so I think I would like to add some commentary to it. And I know the bill has been repealed, and certainly I think it was a unanimous choice. I hope that that doesn't happen with a number of other pieces of legislation that I introduce through my career.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, prior to my time as a provincial politician, I was active on committees and executives with federal executive. I worked hard and spent a lot of time merging the Conservative Party and the federal Reform Party, and one of the things that I felt was important at that time was senate reform and the notion of a Triple-E Senate. I realized at that time the difficulties that may be there or may come about because of the constitutional requirements, having the support of the larger provinces. But I believed it was a good step, and it was something that would enhance democracy in our nation. So I worked for that, and the parties came together. Unfortunately there has not been the support for that since, and it's something that remains outstanding on the federal list.

Mr. Speaker, we have had a senate in our nation for nearly 150 years. In many ways we have been very well served by the Senate. We have a situation in our nation where it's the same as all but one of the states in the United States. The United States federal government, United Kingdom, and Australia, among others enjoy the pleasures of a bicameral legislature.

There's certainly some significant benefits to having a bicameral legislature. You've got a better opportunity to deal with committees, better opportunities to have people go out and listen to the population. It's often been referred to as a chamber of sober second thought, and certainly I think that's part of the history that it enjoys in our country. Things that go through are not done on a knee-jerk or a quick reaction. They're given some due consideration. And just the process from going from one House to the other often provides some time to have something that goes through too quickly in response to a specific political event.

So there's certainly issues that would indicate there's some substantial benefits to having a second chamber in our government. We know that over the last period of time, the public acceptance of the Senate has fallen off, and there's certainly been some issues around the Senate. We look at issues with the Senate, and we try to wrestle with that as Canadians.

There are within the Senate many politicians that are very good, hard-working, and committed. I will mention, Mr. Speaker, specifically, Denise Batters, who was my former chief of staff. She was my chief of staff in this building for some five years and has been a tireless advocate for mental health issues. During the time that she was my chief of staff, her husband committed suicide, and she has taken up advocacy for mental health as her cause and she champions that cause, Mr. Deputy Speaker, very well, very effectively. And it's a voice that I would want to see continued for that type of purpose and want to wish her the very best for that.

As we go through this, this is a difficult decision. We ought not take this type of thing lightly and ought to take it with a lot of due care and due consideration. At the time the bill for an elected senate was introduced, it was something that I believed, and I think most of our members believed it was a pragmatic approach. It was moving towards reform of the Senate on an incremental basis. We would have some elected senators over a period of time. We could perhaps move towards a constitutional amendment. I spent a significant amount of my time preparing the drafting, going around having discussion with people. The member from Weyburn spoke at the House at the time and provided some history, some interesting dialogue, and also spoke about the necessary of a pragmatic, incremental approach.

As we prepared the bill, we talked and we got into the detail of how the Senate would be divided up, how you would have senators representing districts, even how you would apportion expenses. We saw the benefits of having elected senators from the province of Alberta, and we saw those people actually, with the current federal government, actually get appointed to the federal Senate. And we thought, yes, that's something where we may be able to have a voice.

But when we got into the reality of it, Mr. Speaker, that's where the problems set in and the realization that this could not and was not working. In Alberta it was a different situation — fundamentally different. Alberta had a long history of provincial Tory governments. There was a Tory government in Ottawa. It was easy for the Prime Minister to say, well yes, the Tories in Alberta have elected an individual. They prepared a list. It will be easy for us to appoint that person as a senator. That person will represent Alberta in the Senate of Canada.

Unfortunately in our province, we don't have a Tory government; we have a Saskatchewan Party government. And in spite of what some commentators may say, we have active federal Liberals in our caucus and in our cabinet and also in our membership. And we have people that have also come across from the NDP [New Democratic Party], and we have very active support from members of trade unions in our party. And, Mr. Speaker, it could very well be a situation where one of the people that was elected in our province would not be an acceptable choice to the current Prime Minister.

What would happen for example, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if Roy Romanow decided to run as a senator? Would the current Prime Minister be willing to appoint him as a senator? What would happen if say the current opposition leader were to run as a senator and were to win as a senator, whose caucus would that person sit in in Ottawa? Would he sit as an NDP member?

Would he sit as a Conservative member? Would he sit as an independent? Would he, because we supported his election here in the province . . . Whose voice would he be speaking from? Would he be speaking as a Saskatchewan resident? Would he be speaking part of a provincial NDP caucus? And we were never able to resolve that.

We had discussions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with some of the elected people in Alberta, and they said, oh well of course you'd sit with the Conservative caucus. But we didn't hear from the Prime Minister a willingness to support somebody that came from another party. Nor would I expect to, Mr. Speaker. It's just not a realistic option.

We also had the simple answer as to who would pay for the election. When would the election take place? Would it take place in conjunction with a provincial election or a federal election? We left the legislation open-ended enough that those options continue to exist. Who, Mr. Speaker, would control the vote of that person? Would they vote along party lines? Would they be able to vote independently? Would they vote in accordance with provincial directions? Those were issues that have not nor can they be easily or readily answered. The reality of it is the Senate of Canada is a federal institution and must always be a federal institution and must be accountable to the people, that electors support that as a federal institution, and cannot be seen as a provincial one.

[15:15]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to conclude my remarks by saying that I'm still a fan of and support having major changes to the Senate. I support the notion of a Triple-E Senate. I recognize and appreciate the problems there may be with other provinces. But I think this is an opportunity for all Canadians to stand up and say, we'd like to have a true dialogue. We'd like to have some other options on this. We know that the current model does not work, is not democratic, is not seen to be democratic. We'd like to set this one aside. We'd like to start with a clean slate.

And what I'd like to do as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is challenge some of the current senators, and I know some of them are more than willing to, when that institution comes into place, I would like to see some of those people run, put their names forward, and test their public support. I suspect they may be surprised at how much there is for them if they choose to run because many of them have worked very hard. They've worked on committees. They've travelled back to their home provinces.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to set aside some of the differences that have taken place in the past or urge Canadians to see this as an enormous democratic opportunity for them to move forward and urge their federal politicians to embrace this as a challenge for all us. Thank you very much for the opportunity to participate in this, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to enter into this historic discussion here today and to support the motion of this Assembly here today as it relates to abolishing the Senate.

This is, as the Leader of the Opposition spoke, a position that has been long held by the party that I represent, that we represent, the CCF-NDP [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation-New Democratic Party] dating all the way back, certainly well before I was born.

And in fact I stand in this place and I think a little bit of stories and conversations with my grandparents who are no longer with us. And I certainly think of even my own dad and mom and some of their positions and these discussions on a Senate that certainly our family and our party has felt has been outdated and wasteful and unelected and unaccountable for many, many, many years, Mr. Speaker.

But this is a historic occasion. We welcome the position of government, the actions of government here today. This is a powerful statement to send to our country, to send to other jurisdictions. And we each play an important role by standing up here today and in voting. We play an important role moving forward from here in having our voice with other jurisdictions. And certainly as it relates to the NDP or the New Democratic Party, that's a consistent position I believe right across, right across Canada and certainly nationally. But on the side opposite, certainly there's a place for those conservative members to speak to fellow conservatives across Canada, share their position, share what brought them to their current position and to speak up for Saskatchewan people and Canadians.

We see the Senate, as we say, as something that's outdated, as something that's certainly unelected and unaccountable and wasteful. And if we think of all the priorities of Saskatchewan families and of Canadians, that are pressing in their lives, whether it's in health care or in long-term care, whether it's in educational needs and in post-secondary education, if we look at the pressures in housing or the needs for municipal infrastructure, the demands are many. And here in Saskatchewan in a growing population, in growing communities, those dollars can be better utilized. So when we look to the \$100 million dollars that is spent annually for this wasteful, unelected Senate, we see a better place in the lives of Saskatchewan families, which is also why it's important for us to stand up here today, take our place, and to support the motion to abolish the Senate.

As was mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition, we didn't support the pro-Senate legislation that was brought forward by the government a few years back. In fact I recall being in this legislature when someone I respect, former Premier Lorne Calvert took to his feet and in response to their Triple-E Senate, of course laid out our position of the Triple-E Senate being abolish, abolish, abolish. And certainly commended him at that point in time, knew that was certainly a reflection of our party policy but something that was deep to his convictions as well.

We don't come to this position because of a crisis that we see in Ottawa right now. We don't come to it because of the spending scandal that we see, although boy, it sure enhances the call for scrapping the Senate. We come to it because we see the lack of purpose, the lack of representation for regions. The Premier spoke at some length about the voice of premiers, voice of provinces in our nation, and I concur that those voices are valuable and are important. And certainly I think of the voices of premiers like Allan Blakeney and Roy Romanow and Peter

Lougheed, and taking the voice of a region and a province and representing it on the national stage and advancing the needs of their jurisdictions. That's a prime example of the kind of regional leadership that's important.

Often, you know, it was referenced that the upper chamber or the Senate was a house of sober second thought. Certainly it failed to be that, and it failed to be little more than a rubber stamp for many, many years where you had these unelected Senators that were beholden to their caucuses and to their parties, and that played a role in supporting the election of the party as opposed to supporting the best interests of the regions that they were supposed to be represented.

So today is an important day. We welcome the voice of the Premier on this. We've been calling for this, for abolition of the Senate for many, many years. We do so not simply because of the Senate spending scandal or the fact that it's probably this matter has surged in the polls as something that people want to see addressed. We do so because it's a long-standing policy, and we believe that it's in the best interests of Saskatchewan families and Canadians to abolish our Senate to better utilize those resources, those \$100 million a year that are spent.

So we've heard clearly from Saskatchewan people that they support abolition. They support our actions here today. I'm pleased to stand and take my place, both in the short speech I'm providing here today, but also in voting to abolish the Senate. So I'm pleased to support the motion and pleased to finally be able to support a unanimous call of this legislature to abolish the Senate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I look forward to . . . appreciate the opportunity to enter into the debate on this matter. Before I begin my remarks, I actually would like to acknowledge the co-operation of the official opposition in, firstly, the repeal of *The Senate Nominee Election Act* bill, and also in facilitating the debate here today on this motion. So I want to acknowledge that. We've been in discussions on this for nearly two months now, so I thank my friend the Opposition House Leader for that.

In terms of my arrival at this position, Mr. Speaker, I would say my journey would be very similar to that of the Premier's. I had been a long-time proponent of a Triple-E Senate, but I think we've just got to the point where it just isn't possible, Mr. Speaker. And I really don't take this decision to support this motion lightly. The Senate has served as a foundation stone of our system since Confederation. Our nation's founders fashioned their Senate after its venerable forerunners in the British parliament and the United States Congress. The Senate was an undeniably important factor in bringing the colonies together in Confederation. We must not depart from the example provided by our founders without careful consideration.

However it's also important to address the challenges of our time. When a foundation stone begins to fail, it must be repaired or replaced regardless of its past service or the bedrock from which it was carved. And our current situation is becoming

increasingly urgent. A crack that starts in the foundation can spider and spread and make an entire structure unsound. We must act now regarding the situation in the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, it's important to consider the nature of the Senate's fatal flaw. The recent allegations stemming from the upper chamber are serious and merit closest scrutiny, but they are the symptom rather than the cause of the Senate's decay. Very simply, the Senate is an institution without a mission. Elected members of parliament have a clear mandate to serve their constituents. Elections regularly reinforce this message.

Senators have no such clarity, and Canadians have no such mechanism of enforcement. I spent three years on Parliament Hill and I can say first-hand that while some senators work hard, and the vast majority do work very hard, there are others that hardly work. And there is no means of measuring the accomplishments or negligence of either. Nor is this lack of mission without consequence. Ecclesiastes says, because of idle hands, the house leaks. The truth of scripture is evident as leaks from the Senate are flooding the front pages of our newspaper.

So, Mr. Speaker, what is to be done with the Senate? I, like many others, had hoped that the Senate could be reformed to serve a meaningful purpose in our democracy. In my younger years, I had the great privilege of working closely with Prime Minister Harper. I know first-hand his commitment to fixing the Senate. He has tried and been thwarted at every turn, primarily by senators themselves, including those whom he appointed and had committed to support reform when accepting their appointment. How quickly they forgot.

But all of these efforts have brought into stark relief the senate's continuing failures. The foundation stone that is the Senate is too flawed to be repaired. Therefore it must be removed and replaced. It's at this point that we find a ray of hope.

Another foundation stone is becoming larger and stronger and has in a real way already replaced the Senate's role in our federation. At the time of Confederation, a strong central government was considered a necessity. Provinces were mere satellites orbiting the centre of power in Ottawa. The Senate was to counterbalance central power by representing regional interests.

Times have changed. Provinces, particularly in Western Canada, are no longer colonies that require supervision by central government. Today the interests of Saskatchewan are not dimly reflected by appointed members in a chamber of sober second thought. Today the interests of Saskatchewan are powerfully projected by our elected members of this Assembly and by our Premier.

What is true in Saskatchewan is true across Canada as citizens empower their provincial capitals to represent their regional interests. In fact provincial governments have completely eclipsed the Senate as regional representatives. Therefore let us resolve to remove the Senate as a foundation stone of Confederation. It has served its purpose, and its flaws are now beyond the point of repair.

I'll conclude with a quote from Oliver Cromwell in his final address to the Long Parliament in 1653, I think, is somewhat

apt:

It's high time . . . to put an end to your sitting in this place, which you have so dishonoured . . .

Ye are grown intolerably odious to the whole nation. You who were deputed here by people to get grievances redressed, are yourselves becoming the greatest grievance.

. . . depart immediately out of this place.

Take away that shining bauble and lock up the doors.

In the name of God, go!

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

Mr. McCall: — I don't know what to say at the start other than, amen to that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And it's interesting because in my remarks, and I guess I'll get to the quote right off the hop here, but I'd like to quote the member from Meadow Lake, the Government House Leader from an editorial he'd written for the *National Post*, August 13th, 2013 entitled "Why Saskatchewan supports abolition." And the first sentence of that article states, "In Saskatchewan we know what to do with machinery that's broken down and impossible to repair." I couldn't agree with that sentiment more, Mr. Speaker.

I come from the inner city of Regina, and I grew up with a lot of friends where their folks worked out at IPSCO, now Evraz, Mr. Speaker. And of course, they found a way to take a lot of scrap steel from right around this province and put it to good use out at the old Interprovincial Steel Corporation, now Evraz. And the idea that you have to put up with broken machinery forever because there it is, and you can't do anything about it, I think that's odious to the people of Saskatchewan.

And I think that we look at the circumstance in Ottawa. It may be more acute these days, Mr. Speaker, but coming from a CCF-NDP perspective, the Senate isn't a problem of a few bad apples, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The problem is the barrel's bad itself and has no place in our democracy. And in terms of the arguments that have been raised over the years in terms of better regional representation, in terms of sober second thought, the speeches that have preceded me have put paid to those arguments rather elegantly, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I think that as we look to the history of this province, you think of someone like Justice Emmett Hall and the work that was done heading up a Royal Commission under Diefenbaker and what that did to lay the groundwork for medicare in this country. Or you think more recently about the work done by another royal commissioner, Roy Romanow, and the kind of not just sober second thought but foresight that can be brought to bear through an instrument such as the Royal Commission. And I think about the work that has been done in this province over the last decade where individual private members from this Assembly have been tasked to go forth to the province and ask the people what they think, to do that close work of thoughtful consultation with the people and coming back with ideas that

can be brought to bear in public policy.

[15:30]

There are many instruments that can be brought to bear that, you know, you hear about the great work that various Senate committees have done or certainly the champion work of certain senators throughout the history of this country. And this is not to take away from that good work, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but it is to suggest that that is not the only venue that is fruitful for that kind of endeavour. There are other ways to get that policy work done, and surely to God the cost that we pay in terms of the health of our democracy isn't worth it for a good committee report out of the Senate.

I think about the anti-democratic nature of the Senate. And again I'm on a bit of a, you know, a streak lately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in terms of thinking about Jack Layton apparently. But I think about the climate change bill that was brought forward in a minority parliament and which passed the House of Commons which received the endorsement of the people's representatives in the House of Commons only to be killed in the Senate by unelected, unaccountable senators. And to me that's odious.

I may not like things that are brought forward by members opposite, but the thing I know is this: they've got a mandate from the people. And if you're a democrat, Mr. Speaker, and you respect the people's will, then you respect the measures that receive majority endorsement in parliament. And for an unelected, unaccountable senate to have then turned around and killed that piece of legislation, to me I find, you know, no clearer argument need be considered in terms of the way that that institution should be wrapped up.

In terms of the days that are upon us with the various scandals coming out of the Senate, Mr. Speaker, I'd say again it's not a question, I think, of a few bad apples; it's a question of a bad barrel. There are good people serving as senators as we speak, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That has been the case historically, and if the Senate is allowed to continue I'm sure that will be the case.

But in terms of the sober second thought, there are safeguards in our Constitution, the way that we've come to practice federalism, that stand up for those provincial rights, that in this province more than many others, we know well the battles that were joined in the '70s and the '80s in terms of the question of who calls the shots on natural resources, and fights that went back and forth between the provincial government and the federal government, and the clarity that eventually came to be brought to bear in terms of who has what power under our Constitution.

And when I think about the patriation of our Constitution and then the establishment of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms — again steps taken along the evolutionary path of our Constitution and our federalism in this country, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I would submit render some of the initial impulses for the Senate invalid.

And I say all of this mindful as well of the remarks of, I believe it was Premier Ross Thatcher once upon a time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, who had said that on a list of 100 priorities for the

people of Saskatchewan, the Constitution would be about 104th or 5th, and its signal to just the sort of opening of the historical window that we have here today, where we do have this measure of agreement in this Chamber about the need for action now.

And again it's been very well dealt with in terms of the remarks that have preceded, but where the Premier closed in his remarks, he talked about the fact that there are those that question the ability for Canada to proceed as a unicameral chamber in terms of its parliamentary institution.

And, Mr. Speaker, historically that's not been the case, but I'd also posit that history is made by the first-timers. History is not just to be observed and studied, it's also to be made. And surely we've come to a place in our evolution as the good country of Canada where we can look to doing the initial sort of objectives that were set out for the Senate. Surely there are better ways to accomplish that, and surely we can clear this path and proceed once and for all, escaping this paralysis that comes up again and again.

This has long been the policy of the CCF-NDP, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the reasons that I've stated previously. But we as a party have not been beyond good faith efforts in terms of trying to come forward for Senate reform in the wake of Meech and with Charlottetown. We did not stand back from that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We joined to it. But those efforts to reform proved futile as well, and at the end of it I think confirmed for the CCF-NDP the futility of efforts put towards the reform of the Senate.

I'll end with a thought upon, once upon a time for myself, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I had the privilege to work in Ottawa for a gentleman named Lorne Nystrom. And Lorne was elected at a pretty early age in 1968 and served through different of the historical battles and some tremendously interesting times. And he was an individual that made some of those good faith efforts around Charlottetown. He was also an individual that voted against the majority of his caucus on a question of provincial rights that saw him side with then Premier Blakeney against then leader of the federal party Ed Broadbent in terms of what was best for Saskatchewan. So this is an individual that had been through the mill in terms of the constitutional battles of this country, but had also been there in moments of good faith and trying to accomplish something for this country.

But when I went to work for him in 1997, Mr. Deputy Speaker, having gone through these different paths of evolution for the question of the constitution and the Senate, he came back to the House of Commons in 1997 as a devout abolitionist for the Senate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and did his part in trying to raise the need for action on the Senate. And he, as well as other individuals throughout the years in the CCF-NDP, did so from a perspective of having been considered for a Senate position themselves. And you know, it was always a good gig, particularly for the federal Liberals, to think about which CCFers or NDPers they could offer up a Senate position to. And I'm quite proud to say that in the main those folks said, you know, you can keep moving. They didn't take that blandishment.

And when I showed up in Ottawa in the fall of 1997 to work for

Lorne Nystrom, I got to hear from one of my Liberal friends about how the office of then Senator Dan Hays, also the president of the Liberal Party of Canada, had played a fundamental role in the electioneering of the victorious Chrétien Liberals in that '97 election. And it just affirmed for me, Mr. Speaker, the fact that you've got unelected, unaccountable senators injecting themselves, you know, worse, Mr. Speaker, over into the electoral life of a country and of a province.

And again we weren't raising it for mischief last week, Mr. Speaker, in terms of questioning the role that Senator Pamela Wallin played in the electoral life of this province. And the question I would like to have answered, Mr. Speaker, that gives me hope, I guess, is that if we can abolish the Senate, then that particular concern of myself is well taken care of because we won't have any more senators to come forth and to inject themselves into the electoral affairs of the country or of the province.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to be part of the debate here today. I'd like to say as well, it may be a question that the speeches of the Premier's that I like in particular tend to be eulogies. The Premier, in my experience, had given a particularly fine set of remarks at the memorial for Allan Blakeney, and this is not to overextend the metaphor, Mr. Speaker, but I thought he gave a fine set of remarks here today. And may it be the beginning of the end for the Senate, the actions that we take here in this House today. I'll be supporting the motion.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's certainly a pleasure to stand in this Assembly and to raise a few thoughts regarding the debate we are currently in today. And no doubt, Mr. Speaker, this debate, and the debate that's taking place across the country, has a lot to do with . . . Well a number of members have been thinking about this for years and constituents across this . . . and Saskatchewan residents as well. It in some ways may be seen as having been spurred on a bit by what's been going on in Ottawa.

But I want to, first of all I want to just throw out a quote. And some of you may have taken the time to read *The Parliamentarian* that we just received and a quote by Jean-Rodrigue Paré in his article "Don't Throw the Senate Out With the Bath Water." "The Senate has only one problem, but it is considerable: it has no popular legitimacy."

I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, through the years, I've been in debates on a number of occasions, and the debates have been anywhere about we should have and we must have a second body, a second body of sober thought, the importance to have a house of sober thought; to it's time we moved on to a Triple-E, a duly elected, equal, and effective Senate; and now to the debate that's taking place before us, the abolishment of the Senate.

One of the concerns I have and I guess one of the thoughts that I'm bringing to this debate is the fact, have we, while there's been ongoing debate through the years, have we actually, given recent happenings in Ottawa, actually taken the time for some second sober thought? My colleague, the Minister of Education

and Labour, commented about the endeavours through the years to address and bring some changes that would make the Senate a more responsible and effective upper house. And, Mr. Speaker, while we've had a senate in Canada for a number of years — and members in the debate already have pointed out the number of years that the Senate has served this country — there are other countries in the world where there are senates. And Australia, for example, has a senate where there are basically equal representation. There are 12 members per state voted to the senate, and that election takes place at the same time as the general election. And from what I've been able to surmise, that seems to be working fairly well in that jurisdiction.

We also have Germany, for example, has two houses — the Bundestag and the Bundesrat — an upper and a lower house. And the upper house there as well is made up of members appointed or elected by the . . . actually I believe in that case appointed by the regions. And there seems to be some ability of both houses being able to work together.

[15:45]

Earlier this afternoon we rescinded legislation calling for an elected senate that had been part of this Legislative Chamber's bills, and there was no doubt that everyone has come to the understanding that electing a senate wasn't possible and so why would you continue to have a bill sitting in the Chamber that really had no relevance at this time? However I would say having . . . Should we not make a further attempt to reform the Senate before we determine to abolish this institution?

Finally I'm concerned that this motion, while reflecting the view of many members in Saskatchewan residences, brought forward at a time when the whole country is emotionally engaged in this debate — not because they have given it a lot of thought at the time, but more so because of recent happenings in Ottawa — and I'm also concerned that this motion is taking place and judgment being passed before due process is being followed. One of the senators in last night's debate who abstained from the vote said this, and I quote, "I believe that we have rushed to judgment pending an RCMP investigation, and I don't believe that we have taken all the facts into consideration."

This morning we gathered in the rotunda of this magnificent building to remember the many men and women who, through the years, through World Wars I and II, the Korean conflict, and the most recent Afghan conflict, who have stood for the rights and the freedoms that we take so much for granted. In fact in one of the messages this morning, it was spoken of the fact that we have the ability today to stand in this Chamber and debate because of the freedoms that were offered through the sacrifice of so many. We were reminded of the freedom of being able to speak our views freely and that all citizens have the right to due process and that we as individuals are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

Mr. Speaker, as I bring forward these thoughts and these comments, I'm not oblivious to the fact that there's a strong view of abolishment of the Senate. But I believe there's a process, and it would have been my preference that this debate would have taken place at a later date, following closure of the

debate in Ottawa where all members and all individuals would have had the opportunity to have taken the time to really look at the debate and whether or not we move forward with the total abolishment of the Senate. So having said those few thoughts, I take my place and allow other members to speak. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to enter into this debate which really is not necessarily a debate, but it's a chance to talk about the future of our country as it relates to one of the constitutional parts of what we've had for many years. As my colleagues have stated and now the Premier has stated, we support abolition of this particular institution within the Canadian context.

And this is a long-standing position of CCF-New Democrat politicians and people. And I think it relates to many questions around the fact that there was some power given to people who were appointed by the Prime Minister and effectively the executive side of government. And that particular concern has been there for a long time. So to have now the Premier and the Government of Saskatchewan come forward with a recognition that there's something that needs to be changed, I'm very pleased about that, and I look forward to maybe a few other issues where the government will listen to the good advice that they get from this side of the House.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when the negotiations took place around the development of the Constitution of Canada which, as we all know, includes the *British North America Act*, those two gentlemen who are on either side of you up there, here in this legislature — Mr. Macdonald, Mr. LaFontaine — were very much a part of the discussion about what we would have as the democratic structure for the country. And I think, to give them their due as the Premier has already done, they worked very hard to figure out a role for traditional Westminster institutions, both an upper house and a lower house. But unfortunately, it didn't take too long in our Canadian history to understand that that upper house, the Senate, had outlived its usefulness.

I'm often reminded when I'm sitting in this legislature or talking to people in Saskatchewan, that we have this legislature, we have this building, we have this form of government here in Regina because of the Senate. And people kind of forget this story. But the story goes that one of the negotiations around the establishment of a new province in the West was should it be the province of Buffalo, a great big province which would include Alberta and Saskatchewan, probably parts of northern Manitoba, and basically maybe have its capital in The Battlefords or some other spot, not Regina. But one of the considerations that came down to some of the final discussions in Ottawa was a discussion about how many senators would there be. And one of the things that they realized is if they had more provinces, they'd get to appoint more senators. And so here we are with Alberta and Saskatchewan.

Now that's I think probably a time when it started to dawn on a few people that maybe this institution really wasn't part of what we needed for our Canadian governance, for our Canadian democratic situation. Now as has been identified, there are a whole number of ideas about how the Senate might have been

reformed or changed or dealt with. And as we all know, constitutional change is very, very difficult. And, Mr. Speaker, from this side of the House, having an institution that is unelected and not accountable has always been something that we would want to get rid of.

Now it was quite curious to have the member from Moosomin mention the German senate, the Bundesrat. The Bundestag is the parliament or the house of commons and the Bundesrat is the senate or upper chamber. And one of the very interesting things about that institution is that it's designed very much like what we have as our extra constitutional governance that the Premier referred to, which is the conference of the federation, the premiers. And basically the Bundesrat has six, five, four, or three members for each state. The biggest states get six. The smallest ones get three.

And guess who the number one senator is from each state? It's the premier. So you'd have, you know, the premier of Saskatchewan and the senior representative at the Bundesrat. And then every person in the Bundesrat from a state gets sort of a pecking order about when they could go. Really serious issues, the premiers are all there. Really minor issues, it's some of us, maybe even from opposition, that would get to go. I'm not sure. But it's interesting that some other countries . . .

But the other side of that is, what we know this last summer and the summer before when the president of Germany Angela Merkel was having difficulty dealing with financial issues, it related to the fact that her government was elected as part of the . . . as a result of the vote in the upper house, or I mean in the house, the parliament side. But she didn't have control over all of the states, and they were basically raising a lot of very good questions.

So I guess I'm raising that because I know within the Canadian context we do not have a history of proportional representation or a whole number of other things that go with the German system, but that there are people who have looked at and tried to figure out whether some of those kinds of things might work in Canada.

Now I think that practically, and our party has said for a long time, that the abolition of the Senate makes the most sense because the institution as it is set up in our Constitution no longer serves a function. And as we've seen over the last couple of years, this has even added even more problems to the public perception of it, and it may be a time that this will allow us to get rid of the Senate.

Now one of the other aspects of any constitution relates to the issue of control or balance or dealing with the power of the prime minister or the premier. And a question that arises in Canada and is showing up in our papers over the last few months is that connection between the prime minister and the House of Commons when the prime minister has a majority government and therefore the executive power in there, and then the prime minister over and against the Senate.

And practically it's an issue that a number of Canadian political scientists have been asking about for quite a long time but especially a man named Donald Savoie. You've heard me talk about him before in this legislature. But one of the points that

he made, about 20 years ago now, was that in Canada we have moved toward a form of court politics. And that's a specific term that he used so you should put that in quotes, but basically the point is that our system of democracy, whether it's on the provincial level or a national level, has seen more and more control go into the premier and cabinet but primarily the premier's office or the prime minister's office.

And so one of the considerations that comes with the abolition of something like the Senate, which is this supposed place of second sober thought, is also to ask questions about the rest of the structure of our governments, both on a national basis and on a provincial basis, around how decisions are made and how some of that balance can be maintained in the structures that we have. And what we know is that within caucuses there are great debates, but much of that is not in the public so that the public understands how the actions of the premier or the prime minister have been tempered by work within the caucus.

And so I think that we need to keep in mind when we're looking at how today we're proposing that we should support the abolition of the Senate that we shouldn't just say, well that's going to solve everything. Because there are a whole number of issues around how our government works that also needs to be addressed. And this may be actually a chance for us to go and address some of those issues and at the same time take some resources — \$100 million a year — and place them in spots where they could be used to more advantage.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased that this particular motion is here in front of this legislature today. I'm going to support it, and I'm very pleased that it also gives us a chance to look at some of the other issues that we have within our Canadian democratic system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm certainly pleased to be able to present my remarks on this important issue, on this motion that we have before the House here this afternoon.

I've been listening quite closely to all members who have entered into debate. All the members have made some excellent points, and I must say that, for the most part, I agree with most of what has been said here. But I do have an opinion on the Senate, and I thought it incumbent upon me to state my opinion.

I think I've heard all members who have spoken this afternoon who have said that our current Senate that we have in Canada is broken. And I certainly agree with that; it doesn't do the job that it was initially intended to do. You know, with the recent controversy that we see in Ottawa has certainly attracted a lot of attention and so, you know, people are tuned in. I hear stories last week of people . . . And I think someone mentioned, you know, in an airport the question period was on or debates were on in Ottawa, and people were gathering as if it was the seventh game of the Stanley Cup or the gold medal hockey game and so on, Mr. Speaker.

[16:00]

I wonder if this is the time for a nation to make a decision on this very important issue. Certainly we need to debate it, talk about it. I subscribe, and it's sometimes difficult for me to subscribe to the old adage: never make an important decision in the heat of the battle. Take a breath. Step back a bit. Think about it and then make an informed decision looking at all points of view. And I think that's something we need to do and so on. But on the positive side, this current attention that the Senate has attracted to itself has certainly spurred the discussion across the country. And I certainly think that's a good thing.

I'm a firm believer, Mr. Speaker, that at least at the federal level that we need to have some sort of chamber of, the old cliché, a chamber of sober second thought.

I have to admit that I never was a strong supporter of a Triple-E Senate, and I'll tell you why. Because it seems to me, the problem with the current Senate that we have, amongst many things, but one of the problems is that the senators are appointed by the prime minister of the day, and they are part of the federal caucus. And so there is really no division between the House of Commons and the Senate.

You know, we've seen in recent days, Whip votes, those sorts of things. Well if you're going to have that, you're not going to have an opportunity for members of that House to speak their own minds, give their own views because they are part of a political party. And we all know, being members of this House, we're all members of political parties. We know how parties work.

There are good reasons for having a unified voice and those sorts of things, but sometimes I think the mindset of our caucuses are that you cannot publicly speak, you know, take an opposite view of your caucus. I have, you know, I've seen it on a rare occasion since I've been in this House, but generally it's an unwritten rule that there may be a price to pay. At the very least there's shunning will happen and so on, you know. And I mean that's the nature. It's not a criticism, but it's the nature of the beast, I would say, Mr. Speaker.

In Canada, in our province, we have three levels of government. We have the municipal level, which is closest to the people. It's very easy. If your garbage doesn't get picked up or your street doesn't get cleared, you can get a hold of your city councillor, your municipal councillor and, you know, express your concerns.

The provincial level, we're a little bit more removed from the people we represent, but all of us I believe go home almost every weekend. We have constituency assistants in our constituency and, you know, we are somewhat more accessible, you know. At the federal level, they sit much longer. Our members from Saskatchewan have long flights back to Ottawa, back and forth, although they do come home. And I know they try to keep in touch as much as they can with the constituents, but they are I think, if you ask them, at least it's my impression they are more isolated from the people that they represent.

So putting that all into a mix of being a bit more distant or quite distant from the people that you actually represent, you know, the whole politics of the party structure and caucus solidarity and so on, I think sometimes elected members can perhaps be

rushed through some decisions, feel that they can't adequately stand up and represent their constituents or, at the very least, present their opinions. I mean we do see the case of . . . And it's been an ongoing thing over the years where in Ottawa the Prime Minister's Office has been increasingly more powerful and more powerful over the daily procedures in the House of Commons.

You know, we see it here within our own legislature. I've been in this legislature for 14 years. I can't remember a time . . . Perhaps there has been one or two times where a member on the government side — whether it was when the members opposite were in power or now when we are; this party is in power — where a member of the government stood up and actually spoke to, in second reading debate, to a piece of legislation. The odd time maybe, if it does. Well as I said, I can't remember.

Going to our committee structure, we have government members always have the majority of the committee members in the committees but yet very rarely that government members actually participate in the committees. And in the past, government members had, you know, participated. But it's generally to make some sort of a political point, so there really isn't that sober second thought. And I mean like I said earlier, there are reasons and I understand that. But sometimes I feel that the control is too much control from the centre, if I could use that term.

And I must say, Mr. Speaker, when I have an opportunity to meet with other elected members from across Canada, it doesn't take too long before the members, we get around to having this discussion, the amount of power we have ceded as elected members to our senior staff. Again, you know, there are reasons, but I think sometimes we as elected members are a bit guilty in ceding as much power to our staff as we have, and so on.

So getting back to this motion today and to the Senate, I think that it's important that we do have that chamber of sober second thought. If you look around the world at the matured democracies, most of them do have a second chamber. The member from Lakeview outlined the system they have in place in Germany. We know about the House of Lords in London. We have . . . The Australian parliament has a Senate that's representative from the states. There are 150 members of the legislative . . . or the House of Commons there and 76 members in the Senate which are made up of representatives from their states and territories. And so there are models out there that perhaps we could look at.

I liken the current situation here in Canada to a family that has a house that's quite old, not serving the purpose, in desperate need of repair. And the question is, do we renovate or do we tear the thing down and rebuild, rebuild something that works and will serve the purpose? I would say that with the Senate, I would say that yes . . . I don't know yet. I'm not at that point where whether the Senate in its present form can be reformed. It may not be able to. But one of the things that absolutely needs to be done is there has to be that break has to be given between the House of Commons and the Senate because as long as there's that political tie, you will never . . . the Senate will never be that independent body.

So there are certainly examples out there in other countries and

other mature democracies that I think we need to look at. So I think perhaps that at this time we perhaps are maybe a bit hasty in calling for tearing down the house. Maybe we better take a breath and step back. But certainly I would like to make it abundantly clear that the current composition and the way the current Senate in Canada operates, its day is long past, and we need to make some significant changes, whether that's tearing the current one down and rebuilding a new one that actually works and serves the people of Canada or reforming it.

However we're one province. There are 10 provinces and 3 territories in Canada. The Supreme Court has been asked for an opinion as to how . . . dealing with the Senate. All those things need to transpire before there will be any action I'm sure in this country, Mr. Speaker. So with that, I've been very pleased to be able to add some remarks to this debate this afternoon.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I hadn't intended to rise and make comments this afternoon in the debate, and after hearing many of the comments that have been made so far, I thought I'd like to weigh in with just a couple of my own. So I thank the House for the opportunity to do that.

There's just a few comments. I've been thinking about this for a while, and in response to some of the comments that were just made, I don't feel like this is a rushed decision. This is something that has been considered by the public and certainly by the members on this side of the House for many, many decades. So this isn't a rushed decision, and it needs the impetus and the kick-start I think to start a serious debate amongst legislatures to test the will of the country.

And in fact I would have liked to have seen the motion go a little bit further and challenge other legislatures to have the same debate and to put forth the view of the people, then take a snapshot of where we are right now in Canada in each provincial legislature. And I'm hoping if they're following this in the news — and I know they will be — that other legislatures will be prompted to follow the initiative of this legislature and have this debate.

I don't feel it's being rushed. I think that this is a long-standing topic for, I think some members pointed out, since the beginning of Confederation almost. And so I would urge members opposite to consider that or members to consider that and say, this is just the first step in a long discussion. And hopefully the rest of Canada will have the same discussion.

One of the things that concerned me when the whole recent scandal started unfolding was a comment made by our former lieutenant governor and Clerk of this Assembly who was interviewed. And he was talking about his time in the Senate back in the '90s I believe or sometime in the last millennium anyways. And he talked about what happens when you have people who are appointed for life, and he talked about the sense of entitlement that some of these people . . . It slowly crept in. When they first arrived in the chamber, they were gung-ho to do the work that the Senate was set out to do. And then all of a sudden a sense of entitlement started creeping in.

And I won't want to attribute this to every member of the Senate, Mr. Speaker. We know there are some very honourable and duty-bound senators who take that very seriously. But I worry about the sense of entitlement. And when there is largesse available on the taxpayers' dime, it always concerns me when I see people that have unlimited and unaccountable access to taxpayers' money to do different actions, either on behalf of Canada or not, maybe on some of their own motives, and no accountability. I think that's a very dangerous situation to put people in. Good people are put in that situation, and sometimes I think, as we've seen, make some very unfortunate decisions as a result of that.

We heard lots about the original purpose of an upper chamber. When you think of the development of the Westminster tradition of parliament, and that's where the House of Lords didn't quite trust the commoners. They didn't think the commoners were able to make the right decisions. And these were the House of Lords people who had all the property. They had the power, certainly on a property level and an economic level. And it was those pesky commoners that had the ability to pass laws simply because of the way England developed and the way that people started demanding more from their Crown and the royalty.

And when the royalty realized they needed the people in order to make the country work . . . You need the workers. You need the labourers. You need the commoners to make the country work and to pay the taxes. So when we had lords that were worried about their own personal interests able to sit in an upper house and oversee the commoners, Mr. Speaker, then you could see why it was important to them at the time to be able to override those decisions.

[16:15]

I think Canada is a very different place here in 2013. I don't think that we need to have lords, and in this case senators second-guessing what we do as a House of Commons in our federal state. And certainly we see in the provincial level, we don't need a sober second thought chamber here in Saskatchewan for us to make reasoned and good laws. And for us to think that it's still necessary at the federal level I think overlooks the reality of the evolution of Canada, who the commoners are now.

Who are the commoners? They're people that are all walks of life, all professions. And we all work together to elect those commoners' representatives in the lower chamber. And that we see is . . . It's not to say that the lower chamber doesn't need any reform either, Mr. Speaker, and that's not the subject of today's debate. But I think, as my colleague from Regina Lakeview indicated, there may be opportunity for discussion at that level as well.

When you think about evolution in our democracy, one of the things I think that's really important to mention is that women got the vote. And when Canada was formed, women were not allowed to vote, and that was seen as proper and acceptable in those days. Slowly women's groups started organizing. Suffragettes came along. Nellie McClung had her say. And then the discussion started, and then eventually women were recognized as people or persons for the purpose of the Senate

and for the upper chamber. And all of a sudden, with a lot of work on the part of the suffragette movement, women were recognized as people and they were given the vote and the franchise. Now that doesn't happen overnight, and we need to see that kind of discussion happening in chambers like this throughout the country. This is another example to me of just evolution.

I was fortunate last weekend to attend a Canadian parliamentary association conference in Newfoundland. And one of the topics that was headed up by a Clerk from the Winnipeg legislature was about parliamentary conventions and when it's appropriate to maintain conventions. And we know those conventions are very cherished . . .

The Speaker: — Order. This is a very important debate. I would hope that members would take that into consideration. If you wish to have private conversations, take them to the lounge. I recognize the member for Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I was talking about parliamentary conventions and how they are very cherished in houses of legislature across the country, and the speaker from Winnipeg indicated a number of conventions that we don't always understand why they exist, but then she gave us some of the reasons behind them.

One of the ones that I'm very interested in in this Chamber is the notion of petitions. And I'm hoping that we can have a discussion at some point about the role of electronic petitions in a modern legislature. We see other legislatures and other jurisdictions that are starting to move along that road. We need a discussion about that and what the role of petitions are in the day and age when we have the Internet, when we have easy access and, you know, what do they call . . . push-button activism. So can any yahoo sign up a petition and get 100,000 people? Perhaps. So how would we as a legislature want to receive those types of petitions?

But to insist on people going around with a photocopied sheet of paper and physically presenting themselves in a day and age when electronic communications is pretty much accepted across the board in other areas, why would we not have that discussion here in the legislature? And I'm saying the same thing applies for the Senate discussion. I think it's one that every legislature should be considering, and I'm very proud that Saskatchewan is one of the first legislatures that is debating this type of motion.

My final point, Mr. Speaker, is on the fact that the \$100 million that are currently being expended in the Senate are taxpayer dollars. These are dollars that are paid for by the hard work of Canadian citizens. And, Mr. Speaker, it just really disappoints me, and in some instances disgusts, me when we see that extensive entitlement and that unelected, unaccountable activity going on on the backs of the hard work of Canadian citizens. And it bothers me to no end and I can see how largesse and that sense of entitlement can creep in at all levels. And I think we all have to really, you know, think about it in terms of our own activities and something I know that members keep in the back of their mind. This isn't our money. This is taxpayers' money that we're spending.

It's something that was really hammered home to me when I

worked as a public servant for 17 years with the federal government, and my senior lawyer that I worked with was always talking about, this isn't our money and this isn't our time. This is Her Majesty's time and it's the people's money. And I think that's where our Senate has failed us. I think it's let us down. It's lost course. We've heard many metaphors as to a house that's needing repair or a piece of machinery that needs repair. I also think it's also not so much needing repair, but it simply isn't functioning as it could or should, and it's time that we get rid of it. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Mr. Norris: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today on this day where we have marked the sacrifice of others in the service to Canada and the principles that we all would consider core values, we in this legislature, in this Assembly, are in a rare and privileged position to offer our reflections on Canada's parliament, most specifically regarding our Canadian Senate, which means that we are speaking about a key part of the fabric of Canada in the 21st century.

Canada, among the most highly cherished and easily recognized countries for the quality of life afforded our citizens. Canada, where our Coat of Arms offers a model drawn from Hebrews that speaks to the desire for a better country. And so we turn our attention, collectively, to the Senate where we would casually refer to the Senate as the upper house or upper chamber or the chamber of sober second thought. This chamber of sober second thought, we're told by C.E.S. Franks in his book, *The Parliament of Canada*, was absolutely vital for the creation of our country. To quote, "Confederation would not have happened without the creation of the Senate." So we begin to understand the weight and the significance of our deliberations.

I'll speak quite clearly. I am of two minds on the issue of our Senate. First and quite consistently, I have been a supporter of the idea or notion of a senate — that is, a supporter of bicameralism — and to this value I remain true. And I'm not alone. The roots of bicameralism can be found in the ancient world stretching from Asia across the Middle East and to Rome. The notion was refined in the medieval era, and as democracy was recognized in North America through the revolution, we saw that even the revolutionaries of the United States paid great tribute to the bicameralism that had been formed and founded in the modern sense in Great Britain.

The constitutional delegate to the convention where the fate and future of the American constitution was deliberated upon and ultimately decided, the representative from Pennsylvania and Delaware, John Dickinson, offered a very frank assessment about the significance of British traditions: "In the formulation of the Senate, we ought to carry it through such a refining process as will assimilate it as near as may be to the House of Lords in England." To this there was aroused no controversy. That is, even in the heart of revolution, principles were recognized in the value of a chamber of second thought given credence and weight.

So if that's the first portion of the two minds that I have, the second that has been equally consistent is that I have been very hard pressed to support the status quo of our Canadian Senate,

in part out of regional grievance, that is, some notion of equality in part because of the democratic deficit that we see through an appointment process, now quite consistently regardless of partisanship that simply reflects and reinforces increased powers in the House of Commons and ultimately in the office of the Prime Minister — any prime minister.

Before I go on, I would like to offer, I hope, some marks that we can all take stock in. And that is there are many, many hard-working, professional, constructive citizens and senators that contribute to the success of key aspects of our upper chamber. They come from Saskatchewan. They come from Alberta. They come from the West. They come from Ontario. They come from Quebec and they come from the Atlantic provinces. To these people, we all obviously turn our minds. They have done their best and continue to do so.

I'd also like to acknowledge some of the important work that has been undertaken by the Senate — work in foreign policy, work in national security, work in affairs regarding Aboriginal people in Saskatchewan. There are many stories to tell here, but I'll offer just one.

During a recent gathering of Métis peoples and others at Back to Batoche, senators quietly and without fanfare gathered in a basement asking the advice and insights of elders and others from those communities, took note, and listened attentively as informal testimony was gathered and many lessons learned. I was fortunate to have been invited by a senator to simply sit in and observe this informal but vitally important session.

But with these two comments deliberated upon and today delivered, fundamentally as I weigh the value of bicameralism, which I continue to support, and the challenges that plague and continue to plague Canada's upper chamber, fundamentally it is to the latter, and that is that I have not been a supporter of the status quo of the Senate in this country.

Indeed, among my first, if not formative, democratic acts as an adult, perhaps uniquely offered on this occasion, was a simple act of citizenship that, in the autumn of 1989, I voted for a senator, Senator Stan Waters.

[16:30]

Another act that many of us undertook in this House was that we then passed an Act to again, in good faith, attempt to reinforce that spirit of incremental, if uneven, change that we all hope for, for our Senate. But this hope, this faith in an incremental, if uneven, progress for Senate renewal has turned to a source of frustration. And hence, after much deliberation, my support for the motion today, but with a condition that this statement allow Canadians to think deeply about ways to rebuild or upon reflecting upon some of the statements and commentary of my colleagues, perhaps a refashioning of Canada's upper chamber.

As I support this motion, I cannot turn my back on the spirit and support that I continue to have for bicameralism. Provinces play a remarkably important role, perhaps an increasingly important role in checking national powers of our federal government. But I will hope that the deliberation and debate that ideally comes from today, not simply across Saskatchewan but across our

country, I hope that it will allow us to think carefully about the categorical difference recognized in our constitution as well as in our culture of substate jurisdictions, provinces, and territories versus the role of a national government, our national government.

In the deliberation, as today we recognized Remembrance Day, in the deliberation of war and peace, of international commerce, of national infrastructure, of federalism itself, provinces certainly have a role. But I would submit that so would an upper chamber. Quite simply there are key roles, fundamental roles to be played by an upper chamber when we think about sustaining our motto, the motto on our coat of arms: “They desire a better country.”

I would also welcome the opportunity to ensure that the debate included potential dollars that could be saved by removing an upper chamber. I will posit, this is a slippery slope. Democracy costs money, but based on history, the alternatives cost a lot more. I hope that through this Act and our statement, there is to be another type of upper chamber that could maximize public dollars through thorough and professional accounting standards and at the same time strengthen Confederation, strengthen Confederation and Saskatchewan’s role in that Confederation, as manifest in a renewed or refashioned upper house.

And so it is to strengthening Saskatchewan’s role in Confederation, Confederation itself, and the hope that an upper house would better reflect the long-held values that we have come to associate with Canada, our Canada, where we perhaps can turn our attention, where Saskatchewan may be able to play a leadership role. A generation ago, Alberta took a lead role in fostering the discussion and acting upon incremental Senate reform and renewal. Perhaps it will be to Saskatchewan — as Peter Gzowski described our dear province, the most Canadian of provinces — where we can play a key role, a fundamental role, in refashioning an upper house for Canada.

Today I believe what we see is the close of an era. The end of the era of incremental senate reform and renewal as it has been tried in contemporary Western Canada. And I hope, as we turn the page, that we will help to write the next chapter of nation building, especially as it relates to future options for an upper chamber for our Assembly in Ottawa. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Arm River-Watrous.

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, I am honoured today to join this debate on the Senate. You know, with the Senate . . . When I was first . . . I wasn’t very political. I always thought the Senate, I thought they were independent members. I was fairly politically naive in my twenties; I wasn’t very politically active. I thought they were actually what they were designed to be like in the States, that they were a second House: equally independent, that each province had a say.

As I became more politically active with the Reform Party, and our party started with the Triple-E, and I know I remember being part of that, our policy. And that was very well received at the doorstep — was, you know, the Triple-E, the reform. Because the people knew for a very long time that the Senate was fatally flawed, right from the start when you look at how it

was even formed.

And as I watched it evolve, I could . . . I realize now that unfortunately they’re not going to change. They’re not going to . . . we’re not going to get any decent reform. So I believe that we may have to abolish it. I mean, that’s the will of the people. Just that’s not this legislature; it’s just a motion.

But I know when I talk to constituents, they’re very unhappy with the way the Senate has been set up unfairly. And I’ll go back to when it first started with Upper and Lower Canada. There was 24, I believe, 24 senators; the Maritimes had less, got less. As the provinces each came on, they were given less than Ontario and Quebec. How is that fair?

In the States they started with 13 colonies. That’s what formed the United States. As each state came on board, it was given the equal number of representatives, the same as each one of the 13 original colonies. In Canada that didn’t happen, and to me that’s why it’s fundamentally flawed right from the start. It seems like the base of power wanted to be controlled by Upper and Lower Canada, then transferred to Ontario and Quebec. I would think with time that they would want that resolved. Myself, coming from the province of Saskatchewan, I mean we don’t have as much population as Ontario and Quebec but we have more population than the Yukon, the territories, Nunavut. I feel that they should have an equal say just the same as the province of Saskatchewan does, even though they don’t have the same number of people involved.

And that’s what I feel an upper house is. That’s what I understood an upper house to be when I was a kid, when I wasn’t that politically astute as what, you know, exactly how our house was set up. To me an upper house was supposed to be like the States. You have one area or the lower house, you have one set up by population, the other by area. So a state the size of Montana, very little population, has as much say in one house as the state of California, state of New York. I’ve always admired that, and I’ve always thought we’ve been fundamentally flawed.

And as time gone on I’ve got to talk to, unfortunately very few senators. I don’t see many. But I’ll talk a little bit about the personal, some personal interactions I had. I was in the CPA [Commonwealth Parliamentary Association] event in Quebec. This is many years ago. This is when we were still in opposition. And there was a senator there. He was from Quebec. And naturally our stance then under — we were in opposition — was still you know, supporting Triple-E, reform. You know, he went on to explain why that was fundamentally wrong.

You know, he said there was people in the Senate . . . How do you put it? It would be beneath them to actually ask for a vote, that you wouldn’t have the quality of people there. And I’m thinking what, like me? Like my counterparts on both sides of the House? I felt like saying, is that what you mean, you know? And he went on to say, no, we need a better . . . He didn’t say better, but he said we need a certain quality of people in the house, and that’s why it has to be appointed. You wouldn’t have that quality if they had to go door to door to knock, to ask for the right to represent the people. And that’s what senators are. They’re the same as us. They’re representing constituents.

They're representing provinces. You should be out there talking to the people to find out their views.

You know, the only senator I've ever seen at an event in rural Saskatchewan was Pamela Wallin. We were at Dafoe when we were doing the . . . dedicating the base there, an old World War II base. And I mean, she was there. She was out talking to people, stayed there all day.

I'm not discounting the work that senators have done. But do they deserve to be there for life? We have many defeated candidates that worked hard, on both sides of the House — maybe more on that side — but they worked hard. Do they deserve to be, you know, do they, would they deserve to be here for life? No. The people, the constituents have spoke. There's been a, maybe, change in policy. That is why I have a problem with the Senate being the way it is.

You know, I look back in the history, I've got many pages of it here. The only reform that I could actually see that have happened, in the information I got from our library, was in '65, 1965. They changed from when you were there to the day you died, till age 75 you had to retire. In 100 years that's the only change that they made, the only meaningful reform. That was 50 years ago. I mean, how much longer do we have to wait to make meaningful reform in the Senate?

I mean, I just believe just the way it is set up that there needs to be reform. And if it has to start right from scratch, we may have to do that, because there doesn't seem to be, with the senators now, any desire to change. If there is any little bit of talk of change, they always say automatically, they're grandfathered in. The ones that are there are grandfathered in. I mean, how . . . You have been there for 10, 20 years. You can't go out. And many of them could probably go out and win an election. And you probably should, because it's public money that's supporting you. You're there to represent the views. When we're there, in a democracy — and this is a democracy, this country — you're here to represent the people, you know. It's an honour to represent them.

We go back to . . . I've got another story on another CPA trip. And it was Ottawa; it was international. And we were sitting around a table. And there's a small African nation, and I forget the name of it. But there they have districts. They call them districts, I believe. They have an elected representative, but they also have somebody that's appointed for five years. The government gets to appoint them for five years. So you really have two representatives from that district. The government in power gets to represent them, so it's kind of an offset if too many members get voted in in the opposition, you know. But it's only for five years. You know, and we were kind of like, we were just sitting around and thinking that's not right, whatever.

And then we were talking about constituents and how we deal with constituents. And the one that was appointed for five years, you know what she said? I can remember that. She said, you know, constituents, they can be a bloody nuisance. You know, well yes, I imagine they could be if you don't have to answer to them, you know. You don't have to, you know, if you're not elected, where you have to actually ask for the vote.

But then there was a guy from, and I forget his name, Ray

somebody. He said, you know, how does your upper house work in Canada? I said, well they're appointed. He said, for how long? I said, well just to 75. Okay, they're five years; you're 75. Okay. By who? Well the party in power. Yes, yes, the party in power. And then he said, but they're independent, right? He said, they're not . . . No, I say, they actually sit in caucus, so you know, from what I understand they're party partisan. He said, really? How is that a democracy? He said, you know, I always thought you guys were pretty high on democracy. And I said, well we are, up till we hit the Senate, I guess.

And I changed the subject to rugby even though I don't know nothing about rugby because . . . But you know what? He actually wanted to discuss it a bit, you know, go on to more and more. But I actually couldn't defend it. Like, I had nothing. Like he said, do you think that system's kind of right? And I had nothing. I just . . . You know, that's our system, but when you lay it out like that, to me it doesn't seem right, you know, that you're appointed for life.

[16:45]

Another thing I went through here, some of the provinces had upper houses. And the main reason they got rid of them, it says in the library here, was partisan appointments. The people lost confidence in that upper house. There was a couple that said economy of scale, money. But the more reasons I think, the extra . . . There was four reasons, I think, that said partisan appointments. And the people lost confidence in the upper house and then naturally, you know, it just dissolved.

And unfortunately I think our people have lost confidence in this upper house. And I'll admit, to me, it's a great institution. I mean, you know, that's why I love being in this legislature. I love the upper and lower houses. But I just don't like the way that one is set up. And when I talk to my constituents, you know, they don't speak very highly of the upper house. They don't speak very highly of the Senate. It's almost becoming, you know, a joke on the coffee row. And it shouldn't be. These are people that are in, you know, one of our top legislative chambers. You know, they shouldn't be that way, but they are because they've let . . . They haven't adapted to change. And I'll get . . . Well it's an institution.

You know I can remember a long time ago when there was a lot of golf clubs in the States where only male members could join. One of the arguments was, well it's an institution; I mean it's just the way it's always been. But that's changed with time. And I think the Senate has to change, but I don't think there's any will with the senators to change. I've never heard any one of them say, you know what, this is wrong to be appointed for life.

I know at one time we had our Senate bill. I talked about running for the Senate because I respect the House of Commons. I respect this House. I also respect the Senate. I would run in an election. Now I doubt if I would have ever been appointed, but if I was, I think my ego would probably say, yes take the appointment. But I think it would eat at me over the many years knowing that, you know what, I didn't really earn this. It was because I did something that the Primer Minister liked or I raised money or just for whatever reason. I didn't earn

it. And that is fundamentally wrong when it comes to democracy.

We're a democratic nation. I mean right from the Grecian times when democracy started, it started with the will of the people. And the Senate will have to change by the will of the people. We're starting a message here. I'm hoping that that message will grow, because I mean, one province, one motion isn't going to change the Senate. But they need to hear that there is a will for change out there, that people want a change. And if you will not change, if you are stubborn and will not make a change, then maybe you've become irrelevant to politics and to the people of Canada. And if you are, then you need to be abolished.

You know, I support this motion wholeheartedly. You know, I mean I started with the Triple-E and worked and just watched and listened over the years, and just realizing that they're never going to change, that there is no will to change. Yet the people want it. But you know what, they're so far removed from the people unless there's something in the news that brings this foremost — and there is now — then it's on people's minds. But you know what, most people don't even realize that they have senators. They don't realize that we have six. If I was to go around, if you just mentioned the Senate, they'd just say, what do we need them for? They've never seen a senator. So how do you represent a province, any province, if you don't spend a lot of time in it, if you're not out at events, if you don't have an office? I imagine they have something in Ottawa, and maybe an email address. But you're there, the Senate is there to represent the will of its provinces, you know, to be the second sober thought for that province.

But if you're not engaging in that province . . . And there might be some that are, but I think with the election you would get more engagement. You would get where people would say, yes, we support the Senate but these are our views, and this is what we want to hear you talk about.

I know the Premier talked about the energy program. You know, you're right. I never heard a senator ever stand up . . . BHP Billiton, never heard a senator ever just — from Saskatchewan or Alberta or for an issue that's in that province — saying, you know what, I'm voting against my caucus or I'm talking against this or I'm bringing this motion. You know, you never hear anything about them. They're just like they're a silent majority way back in the background, and they really, they almost feel like if they don't say anything, people would just ignore them. And now that it's been brought . . . And it's an issue in the news.

So I'm hoping that the people will start to realize that if they're not going to reform that they need to be abolished. And it'll have to start and it'll start with the will of the people, but I'm glad that we're starting here in this legislature. And I think other legislatures, some of them are going to follow suit. They're going to follow suit with motions along this line. And if the talk is there that we need to get back to democracy, we need to get back to the principles of democracy. And that's not in the Senate. And I mean with partisan appointments, it just doesn't work anymore. And with them being ruled by the caucus and having, you know, some provinces have more senators than others and no accountability. You're there. You

don't have to answer to anybody.

Another thing I heard about, and I forget which news reporter said it . . . I think it was Global, could be on Global. He said, you know, the second day the motion came out in the House, in the Senate, when they were making the motion on the three senators, he said, this is the first time in a long time, he said, they're all here. They're all here. And I'm a betting man, but I don't have the records in front of me, but I'll bet you on one hand, in one session of Senate, you could count the number of days each one is there, that the Senate is full. I could be wrong but I'll take a bet that I'm not.

Because there's no accountability. It's not televised. There is a *Hansard*, you know. And in this day and age, as things have moved on, I think the Senate has to move on. And if it's not willing to move on, then I'm sorry to say but I support abolishing it. And with that I support the motion.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — The question moved by the Premier is:

That this Assembly supports the abolition of the Senate in Canada.

All those in favour say aye.

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

The Speaker: — All those opposed say nay. They ayes have it. The motion carries. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would move:

That the Speaker, on behalf of the Legislative Assembly, transmit copies of the motion and verbatim transcripts of the motion just passed to the Prime Minister of Canada and the leaders of the opposition parties in the House of Commons, as well as the premier of each Canadian province and territory.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Government House Leader by leave of the Assembly:

That the Speaker, on behalf of the Legislative Assembly, transmit copies of the motion and verbatim transcripts of the motion just passed to the Prime Minister of Canada and the leaders of the opposition parties in the House of Commons, as well as the premier of each Canadian province and territory.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — All in favour?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. This House stands adjourned to 10 a.m. tomorrow morning.

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:55.]

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