



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

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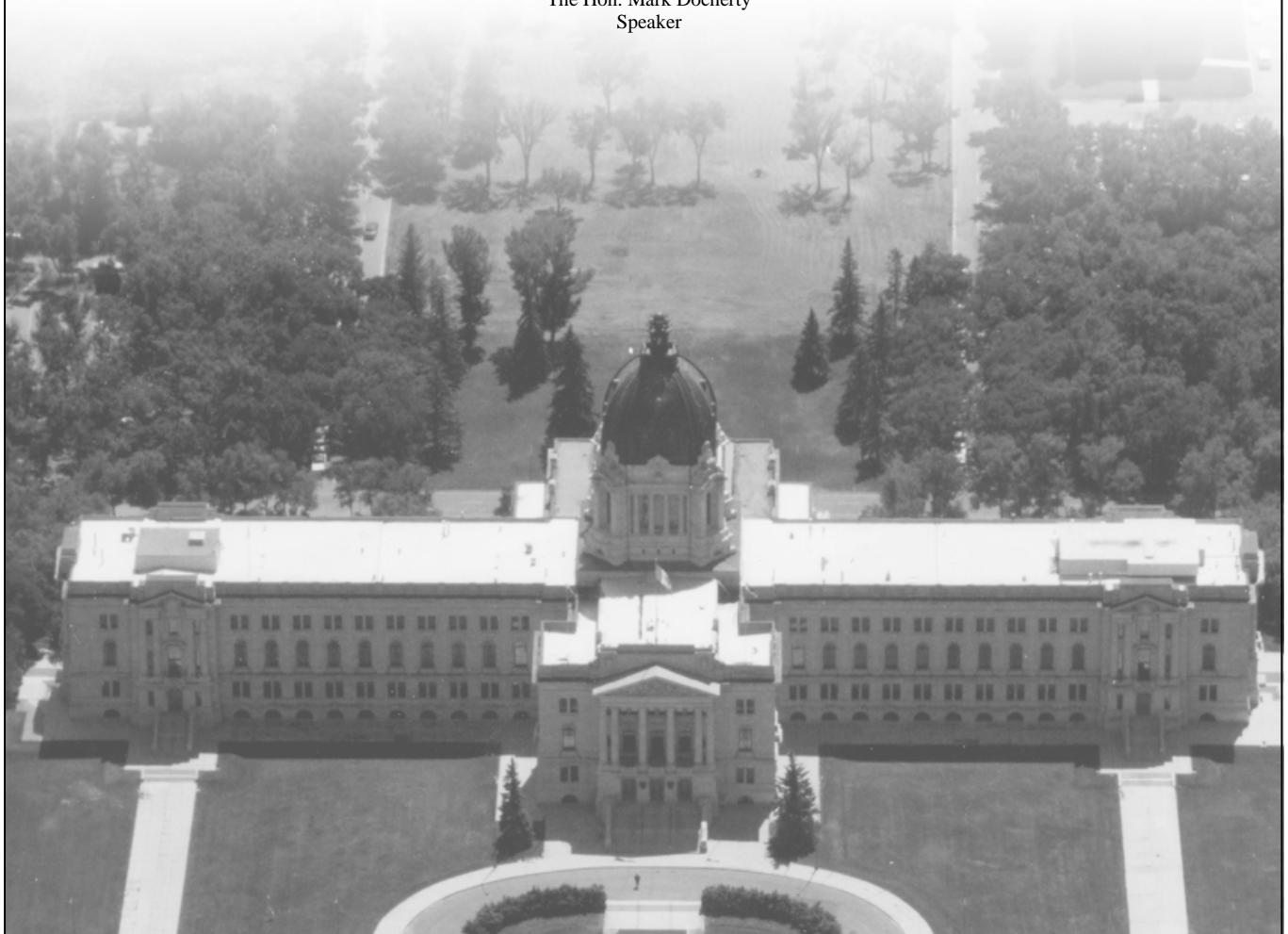
**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)  
Published under the  
authority of  
The Hon. Mark Docherty  
Speaker



**MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
**2nd Session — 28th Legislature**

**Speaker** — Hon. Mark Docherty  
**Premier** — Hon. Scott Moe  
**Leader of the Opposition** — Ryan Meili

<b>Beaudry-Mellor</b> , Hon. Tina — Regina University (SP)	<b>Lawrence</b> , Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)
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<b>Hindley</b> , Everett — Swift Current (SP)	<b>Wilson</b> , Hon. Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (SP)
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<b>Kirsch</b> , Delbert — Batoche (SP)	<b>Wyant</b> , Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)
<b>Lambert</b> , Lisa — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)	<b>Young</b> , Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

Vacant — Regina Northeast

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**Party Standings:** Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 48; New Democratic Party (NDP) — 12; Vacant — 1

**Clerks-at-the-Table**

**Clerk** — Gregory A. Putz

**Law Clerk & Parliamentary Counsel** — Kenneth S. Ring, Q.C.

**Principal Clerk** — Iris Lang

**Clerk Assistant** — Kathy Burianyak

**Sergeant-at-Arms** — Terry Quinn

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[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to introduce two friends of mine seated in your gallery. One is Paul Lavoie who is a retired Canadian Tire manager from Saskatoon, and his partner, Bill Peterson. Bill was the editor of the *Saskatoon StarPhoenix* from 1987 to 1994. Following his retirement from the *StarPhoenix* he was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. He went to the Mayo Clinic and was told at the Mayo Clinic that he should go back to Saskatoon, that the world leaders in treating Parkinson's were in Saskatoon. And he went back to see Dr. Rajput and has been getting strong and effective treatment since.

After that he left Saskatoon and moved to North Saanich, and he's in Elizabeth May's federal riding. I asked him yesterday if he had an Elizabeth May sign up during the last federal election, and he said he would've considered it but there was no room in his yard because of the large pro-pipeline sign.

Mr. Speaker, on a personal note, I can advise that Bill and Paul are good friends. I've received political advice from Bill over the years and, Mr. Speaker, he bought a turkey.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to join with the minister in welcoming Bill Peterson to the legislature here. I had the pleasure of doing my internship as a reporter at the *StarPhoenix* when Bill was still there. But following Black Saturday, which wasn't a great time in reporting history, Bill went on to found the *Free Press* in Saskatoon and Regina where he hired me, Mr. Speaker. And I had the opportunity to work for the *Free Press* for a few years until I had my oldest daughter, Hennessey.

When Bill moved on to Creative Fire and I was the Co-Chair of the children's museum, he was very kind to sit down with the Co-Chair and I and provide some advice in terms of connecting with sponsors. But I haven't seen Bill in a few years, but it's great to see him here today and I'd like to welcome him to the Saskatchewan legislature, to his legislature.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Provincial Secretary.

**Hon. Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to introduce and recognize Se-Se-Wa-Hum School from Victoire, Saskatchewan. They're seated in the west gallery. And it's a real gift for myself to have a school group because of the distance that they've come. So I hope they enjoy the school proceedings today. There's 28 grade 9 students. They're accompanied by their teachers, Marla

Netmaker, Doreen Netmaker, the educational assistants Dallas Joseph, Anya Whitefish, and the bus driver, Donnie Dreaver. I hope they enjoy their day today. I'll be meeting with you later. So please help me welcome Se-Se-Wa-Hum School to their Legislative Assembly.

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Swift Current.

**Mr. Hindley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to present a petition from citizens who are opposed to the federal government's decision to impose a carbon tax on the province of Saskatchewan.

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: to cause the Government of Saskatchewan to take the necessary steps to stop the federal government from imposing a carbon tax on the province.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the citizens of the great communities of Shaunavon, Swift Current, Frontier, and Climax. I do so present.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned citizens as it relates to the underfunding and the cuts to post-secondary education by the Sask Party.

The prayer reads as follows:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan immediately restore funding to Saskatchewan's post-secondary institutions and stop the damaging cuts to our students.

These petitions today are signed by concerned citizens of Regina. I so submit.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present a petition calling on the Sask Party government to stop the cuts to our classrooms. Those who signed the petition wish to draw our attention to some of the following points: to the fact that despite having an additional \$67 million in education property tax collected last year, there were cuts totalling over \$55 million to classrooms across this province. Of course, Mr. Speaker, those cuts have had devastating impact to classrooms and students and families around the province, such as those that we heard yesterday in this Assembly.

I'll read the prayer:

We, the undersigned, call upon the government to reverse the senseless cuts to our kids' classrooms and stop making

families, teachers, and everyone who works to support our education system pay for this government's mismanagement, scandal, and waste.

Mr. Speaker, those who have signed this petition reside in Canora and Regina. I do so present.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition to get big money out of Saskatchewan politics. And the people signing this petition want to bring to our attention the following: that Saskatchewan's outdated election Act allows corporations, unions, and individuals, and even those living outside the province, to make unlimited donations to our province's political parties. And you know, Mr. Speaker, that the people of Saskatchewan deserve to live in a fair province where all voices are equal and money can't influence politics.

And this is something that really draws a lot of attention from the government. Every time I stand, they have a particular interest in this petition. And we know that over the past 10 years, the Saskatchewan Party has received \$12.61 million in corporate donations, and of that, \$2.87 million come from companies outside Saskatchewan.

You know, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan politics should belong to Saskatchewan people, and that the federal government, the provinces of Alberta, Manitoba, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and now British Columbia have moved to limit this influence and level the playing field by banning corporate and union donations to political parties.

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

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan call on the Sask Party to overhaul Saskatchewan's campaign finance laws, to end out-of-province donations, to put a ban on donations from corporations and unions, and to put a donation limit on individual donations.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition come from the city of Regina. I do so present. Thank you.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise yet again in this House to present a petition calling on the government to appoint a seniors' advocate. Mr. Speaker, the petitioners point out that the concerns of Saskatchewan seniors have not been a priority of this government. They point to the cuts as recently as the last budget around the hearing aid plan, podiatry services, shuttering STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company], increasing long-term care rates, increasing drug costs for seniors, Mr. Speaker.

The petitioners point out that Saskatchewan does not have legislated minimum care standards for long-term care, and even despite continued reports — one of their own just a month ago — and concerns from families on the issues in long-term care, the Sask Party government has failed to ensure quality of life,

safety, and dignity for seniors in long-term care. They also point out that other provinces have a seniors' advocate who successfully works to ensure seniors have the supports they need and deserve . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I'm so glad they're very interested in the prayer, Mr. Speaker.

They point out, Mr. Speaker, that the petitioners . . . Petitioners point out that a seniors' advocate would provide vital support for seniors and their families across the province.

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

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Sask Party government to immediately appoint a seniors' advocate to ensure the rights of seniors are upheld and that all seniors across the province have the supports they need and deserve.

Mr. Speaker, this petition today is signed by citizens from Saskatoon and Regina.

I so submit.

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Hindu Society of Saskatchewan Hosts Annual Banquet

**Mr. Olauson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On March 17th I along with many of my colleagues, including the Premier, attended the Hindu Society of Saskatchewan's 33rd annual vegetarian banquet in Saskatoon. It is a day for the Hindu Society to celebrate its contributions to communities across Saskatoon and Saskatchewan.

The evening was filled with inspiring speeches, including an address from the High Commissioner of India to Canada, Mr. Vikas Swarup; wonderful food; and awards for members of the society who serve as role models in community service and leadership. The Indian vegetarian cuisine was very well done, and I thank the hard-working staff and volunteers for organizing this great evening.

Mr. Speaker, this province is proud of its diverse culture, and events like this are a great time to come together and learn more about each other's backgrounds and traditions. What started as a small group of families who were immigrants to Saskatchewan has grown decade by decade to be a strong society, deepening their family roots right here in our province, sharing the practices and lessons of the Hindu culture.

It was also an important night to strengthen and solidify this province's strong relationship with the country of India. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to please join me in thanking the Hindu Society of Saskatchewan for this wonderful banquet. Thank you.

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

### Snowlandia Outdoor Program Held in Saskatoon

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to tell you about Snowlandia, a SaskOutdoors program designed for girls ages 10 to 12 to encourage outdoor winter adventures with experienced, supportive teachers; to learn about winter ecology and nature stewardship; to develop leadership skills; and to enjoy making new friends.

Despite the recent frigid temperatures, the 10 participants spent much of their February school break outdoors embracing our Saskatchewan winter. Snowlandia is a single-gender program to encourage participants to step forward in a space uniquely carved out for young girls to develop their own leadership style.

The recent program offered two days of winter adventure in Saskatoon's Gabriel Dumont Park and two days in Holiday Park in my constituency of Saskatoon Riversdale. Focused on learning to stay warm and dry, implementing first aid, and enjoying winter pursuits like snowshoeing and cross country skiing, participants also spent some daily hours indoors for lunch, reading, crafts, and drying mitts, scarves, and toques.

Experienced outdoor leaders accompanied and taught winter outdoor schools. Jana Miller from Wildernook Fresh Air Learning facilitated the program with the help of Rebecca Basset from Back 40 Wilderness First Aid, and Sam Gunn from the outdoor school program, who shared their expertise while teaching new skills and ensuring the safety of all participants.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in thanking SaskOutdoors and these experienced outdoor leaders for developing a fun and healthy program for the education and enjoyment of young girls in Saskatoon. Thank you.

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

### Last Mountain Distillery Recognized at Canadian Whisky Awards

**Hon. Mr. Stewart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, three years ago Last Mountain Distillery developed a single-cask, 100 per cent rye whisky at their distillery in Lumsden and left it in a barrel to age. Last month this rye whisky netted the distillery a gold medal at the Canadian Whisky Awards in Victoria, BC [British Columbia].

The company was also awarded two bronze medals, one for its Canadian whisky and the other for its cherry whisky. And perhaps most significantly, the company was chosen as this year's best North American craft microdistillery.

Mr. Speaker, much like their whisky, Last Mountain Distillery came from humble beginnings. The distillery was launched in August 2010 by Meredith and Colin Schmidt in their garage in Lumsden. Meredith and Colin originally met in the United States while Colin was playing hockey. And after his hockey career concluded, they decided to move to Saskatchewan to start this new venture. Today they have a 9,000 square-foot facility also in Lumsden. These humble beginnings only make all this success even more impressive, and like any good whisky, as their company continues to age, I have no doubt they'll only get better.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of everyone in this Assembly, I'd like to congratulate Meredith and Colin and everyone at Last Mountain Distillery for winning these prestigious awards and wish them the very best moving forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Cheers.

[10:15]

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

### Small Homes Exhibit Featured at Saskatchewan Science Centre

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Every year the Saskatchewan Science Centre hosts an exhibition which is unexpected, visually beautiful, and thought-provoking. This exhibition is meant to focus attention on local people and businesses doing inspiring work and in turn stir scientific curiosity in Saskatchewan.

This year's exhibition created by John Robinson of Robinson Residential Designs Inc. meets all these criteria and more. It's called *Canada 150 Small Homes*. Like tiny houses, small homes require a more modest lifestyle. The simplicity of tiny houses and their mobility is really inviting for many. They're easy to maintain, easy to keep clean, and of course, cheaper. Small homes are gaining popularity for many of the same reasons, except they're geared to a more permanent location.

The Canada 150 Small Homes exhibition challenges our traditional views of housing based on assumptions of size and space. It asks provocatively, "How much space do we really need to be happy? Can less space actually improve our lives?"

Mr. Speaker, John Robinson created this innovative project as a tribute to Canada's 150 years, and includes floor plans from 13 unique small homes, 3-D printed models, and some very beautiful pieces of art based on the designs. These floor plans represent our 13 different provinces and territories. Mr. Robinson describes them as "a perfect mix of art, design, and technology." Mr. Speaker, I encourage all members and the people of Saskatchewan to check out these creative designs and thank the Science Centre for their role in inspiring curiosity.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Government Whip.

### Moose Jaw Warriors Win Scotty Munro Memorial Trophy

**Mr. Lawrence:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to send congratulations to the Moose Jaw Warriors, who won their fourth East Division title, as well as winning their first Scotty Munro Memorial Trophy as the 2017-2018 regular season WHL [Western Hockey League] champions.

This is the first-ever Scotty Munro Memorial Trophy for the club. This past '17-18 regular season serves as the best in Warriors franchise history. They finished their regular season with a record of 52 wins, with 109 points through 72 games. From start to finish this season, the Warriors found themselves among the top clubs in the Canadian Hockey League as they were placed in the top 10 for the vast majority of the year.

I would also like to congratulate Jayden Halbgewachs, centre

for the Warriors, who was named CHL [Canadian Hockey League] Player of the Week on March 14th, and won the Bob Clarke Trophy as the WHL's top scorer in the eastern conference, as well as Player of the Year with 70 goals and 59 assists.

Mr. Speaker, the Warriors have headed into their playoff rounds as they push closer and closer to solidifying their spot at this year's 100th Mastercard Memorial Cup, which will be held here in Regina this May.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to please join me in congratulating the Moose Jaw Warriors on a successful season, and wish them the best of luck in this round of the playoffs. Thank you.

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

#### **Basketball Teams Advance to Provincial Finals**

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Davidson senior boys basketball team has had a very impressive year. In conference 8, held in Coronach March 9th and 10th, Davidson beat Coronach 87-71 in the final game. This past weekend, they won the 1A regional semifinals, which was held in Buffalo Narrows. This win allows them to advance on to the provincial finals, which will be held this coming weekend in Prince Albert.

Mr. Speaker, my nephew Clay Murfitt is also a member of this team. This team of dedicated and hardworking players is coached by Kim Rettger, along with assistant coach Luke Edwards.

Mr. Speaker, another team in my constituency, the Kenaston senior girls basketball team, will also be heading to the provincial finals as well.

Like many sports teams in rural Saskatchewan, these kids, along with their families, have put in endless hours and countless miles traveling to tournaments and games in their quest to qualify for provincials. This dedication to their sport and honest display of school spirit is a part of what makes our province of Saskatchewan as great as it is.

It is with immense pride that I wish good luck to not only the Davidson and Kenaston teams, but also to all the teams this weekend as they head to the provincial championship tournament.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Martensville-Warman.

#### **Opposition Claims**

**Ms. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well the opposition may have a new leader, but it's the same old NDP [New Democratic Party]. Mr. Speaker, the new Leader of the Opposition promised to do politics differently. Yet just yesterday the member for Saskatoon Nutana, their leader's sole supporter in caucus, stood in this Assembly and alleged that the government held a secret meeting last weekend at a Regina hotel. Well, Mr. Speaker, there was no secret meeting. And just

like the mayor of Regina stated yesterday, there have been no formal or informal talks to sell the GTH [Global Transportation Hub].

The NDP have a history of making unfounded allegations in this place. The member from Regina Rosemont once accused the former premier, Brad Wall, of accepting a trip to Mexico from a Regina developer, and we all know that that was inaccurate. The very next day the member from Regina Rosemont had to stand in this House and apologize for his statements.

Mr. Speaker, just like the old NDP, their new leader is all talk and no action. And while he promises to do politics differently and bring a greater level of decorum to this House, it took less than two weeks and the NDP are back to their old tricks of drive-by smears, shoddy research, and making accusations with no facts to back them up. It's weak leadership, Mr. Speaker, and the same old NDP.

Mr. Speaker, the member for Regina Rosemont showed character when he apologized for his comments. Will the member for Saskatoon Nutana show the same character, stand in her place, and apologize for her outrageous accusations? We're about to find out.

#### **QUESTION PERIOD**

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

#### **Rail Transportation Issues**

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, while they were championing the scrapping of the Wheat Board, the Sask Party ignored warnings of inevitable logistical problems for producers. These backlogs were only made worse when they cut grants to shortlines. But we're glad that they now are seeing the light and we look forward to the discussion this afternoon.

We agree with the government's call for federal action on interswitching options and join them in calling for quick passage and implementation of C-49 to address these issues in the future. But, Mr. Speaker, more needs to be done now. We've written a letter calling on the federal government to take immediate action and also implement joint running rights that would allow grain companies to use CN [Canadian National] and CP [Canadian Pacific] tracks to choose the fastest option.

Will the Sask Party government join us and sign this letter so we can have a united call for federal action needed to end this backlog?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, this was raised with the Prime Minister when he visited the legislature here just a number of days ago. Mr. Speaker, I raised this along with a number of other issues pertinent to the economy and the people in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

In addition to that, I've spoken with a number of individuals within both CP and CN, our major rail lines in the province of Saskatchewan here, Mr. Speaker. They've made all sorts of

assurances that they are increasing their capacity, Mr. Speaker, and ensuring that not only can they address the grain that we need, the product that we need to get . . . It's more than grain, Mr. Speaker. It's potash and it's refined fuel products as well that need to get to port. And they've assured us that they can address that volume and address the backlog, Mr. Speaker. We'll wait to see, and ensure that they do, and we'll hold their feet to the fire, Mr. Speaker.

But the longer term solution to this, Mr. Speaker, and the start of it is Bill C-49, Mr. Speaker. And the Minister of Agriculture and myself, the Minister of Infrastructure did discuss this the other day. And C-49 is beyond helping this crop year, Mr. Speaker, so we need to ensure that we add some amendments to it to get it right. Amendments such as interswitching, Mr. Speaker, need to be put into Bill C-49, as well as some volume-based allocations and other issues, Mr. Speaker.

And as well we need to always advocate for other modes of delivery of our products, Mr. Speaker, such as the safe and efficient pipelines that are approved by the federal government need to be built, supported by the Leader of the Opposition and the Premier in Alberta, the Premier in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I would invite the members opposite to encourage their Leader of the Opposition in this province to get on board.

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

#### Government's Fiscal Management

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm glad that the Premier is placated by kind words from the federal minister and from the rail companies, Mr. Speaker, but I'm afraid that producers need more than that. We need action, and that's what we're calling for.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party's cuts to health care, education, and supports for the vulnerable are hurting families all across this province. Yesterday we heard from the family that has struggled to find the right supports for their daughter with autism. Earlier we heard from someone affected by the cuts to special diet funding for people with disabilities. And Chief Louie Mercredi is speaking out about the lack of mental health supports in the North.

The Sask Party won't commit to putting these needed supports in place, but there's no limit, no limit on what they'll spend on the GTH. How can the Sask Party justify cutting supports for people across this province while wasting so much public money through their bad management of the GTH?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, there's a number of questions in there, ranging from the Global Transportation Hub to supports in the North, Mr. Speaker, to what I think was some conversation around the increase in supports that we have experienced in this province over the last 10 or so years, Mr. Speaker. And I may single that out and speak to that in the spirit of co-operation, if you will, Mr. Speaker.

I understand that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition's father, Ray, is watching, and I want to ensure that we have a good

conversation here today. As well as we have members from a school up in the northern Saskatchewan where I think from time to time my mother, who is a retired teacher, may show up at that school and others in the area. And I would be very concerned to not be on my best behaviour and have someone tell my mother next week when she's teaching, Mr. Speaker.

But the fact of the matter is, is the investment in health care here in the province of Saskatchewan over the last 10 years, Mr. Speaker, is up significantly, Mr. Speaker, across the province. We have doctors working in our communities across this province. Part of our mental health care approach, Mr. Speaker, are access to those physicians, nurse practitioners in communities right across the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we have increased our education funding in this province most recently with another seven and a half million dollars, annualized to a \$30 million investment, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that we have those supports in our classrooms for our next generation, Mr. Speaker, that are down visiting today, representative of the youth across the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, 40 new schools, 25 more major renovations — this is the record of the Saskatchewan Party government. More to do but, Mr. Speaker, we are proud of the investment that we have in communities, youth, and our health care across the province of Saskatchewan.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, it's not just my father and the Premier's mother who are watching today. It's the people across Saskatchewan, people who can't get their kids into special needs programs, people who have had their diets cut while they struggle with disabilities, Mr. Speaker.

And the question was this: how can they justify all of those cuts while wasting so much money on the GTH? Those answers simply don't cut it. They have no one else to blame but themselves for their heartless cuts and their bad management. And they are the ones who cut funding and supports for kids in the classroom. They are the ones who chose to make cuts in health care that are making wait times longer, and cut care for our seniors. And they are the ones who chose to raise the PST [provincial sales tax] by a billion dollars and hike power bills and double the debt, Mr. Speaker. That's all on them. This mess is entirely of their own making. And instead of choosing to invest in things that matter for Saskatchewan people, they have chose to squander millions — millions, Mr. Speaker — at the GTH.

How does cutting health care, education, and supports for the vulnerable make any sense whatsoever while the Sask Party continues to waste millions at the GTH?

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

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That question crossed about nine different ministries, Mr. Speaker, so I'm going to try to address the one that came up first, Mr. Speaker, on what we've done as far as our poverty reduction strategy, Mr. Speaker.

I think first and foremost what we've done is taken 112,000 people off the provincial tax rolls, Mr. Speaker. They're looking for some numbers, Mr. Speaker: a thousand new child care spaces that we've implemented since 2007; \$253 million, Mr. Speaker, that we've increased in income assistance. We've almost tripled the amount of money that's gone into income assistance. In all of our programs, Mr. Speaker, we're very proud of our record that we've done with the most vulnerable people.

Is there more work to be done? Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. But we look forward to working with our stakeholders and our community-based organizations and our leaders to be able to get that work done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

[10:30]

### Management of Global Transportation Hub

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, I can understand that the Sask Party is starting to get nervous about the mess at the GTH and that they would do anything to make all their problems and all our questions go away. But a fire sale to the city of Regina isn't going to solve anything, Mr. Speaker. The most notable thing the GTH has managed to do over the last few years is to build their debt to \$37 million. And after all of the downloading the Sask Party has put on to the city of Regina through cuts, abandoning their responsibilities for grants-in-lieu funding, the last thing the city needs is another download of problems from the Sask Party.

So besides some hare-brained scheme to slough the GTH off onto the city of Regina, what is the minister's plan to turn things around at the GTH?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, we spent a good portion of yesterday's question period trying to deal with the rumours that were going around about the secret meeting, when really we're having a turkey delivery program.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want to put anything on what the members opposite want to ask questions about. But, Mr. Speaker, today I would like to give that member the opportunity to apologize to the people of Saskatchewan for having misled them about what took place last weekend. Because, Mr. Speaker, nothing took place last weekend. And I would ask that member to stand in her place today and say there was nothing there, whatever background they had does not exist, and give them the opportunity to set the record straight with the people of Saskatchewan that there was no meetings, no discussion.

And, Mr. Speaker, people would have heard Mayor Fougere on the radio and on the television yesterday saying there was no discussion, formal or informal. Mr. Speaker, what there was, after David Fraser asked the question, I phoned Mayor Fougere and said, you can anticipate there may be a question from them. So that's the level of the discussion there was at an informal

level, and I'd like to give them the opportunity to stand up and set the record straight.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, day after day I've asked that minister the same question. Again, no answer today. What is the plan to get the GTH back on track? And the minister has no answer about how to get the GTH back on track. Saskatchewan people . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I'd just ask the members to be patient; the question is coming.

Saskatchewan people have to foot the bill for this multi-million-dollar pipe dream, this multi-million-dollar pipe dream of Bill Boyd's. And even though he is long gone, the GTH and all of its problems are still around. Giving the GTH away is not going to allow the minister to get out of this hot water, but neither is denying that a meeting did happen. After I brought it up yesterday . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Listen, listen. Did the minister look into the situation? And today, will he tell us — yes or no — has there been a meeting of some kind, at some level — formal or informal, on a plane or in a train, in a box, with a fox — at the GTH?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, some of the meetings that I had on the weekend were with the members opposite because some of them were at the same Hindu event that I was at. Another one of the meetings that I had was with my wife in the vehicle as we were driving around delivering turkeys, thinking about how the NDP were doing. Mr. Speaker, I answered the question yesterday. There was no meetings. Nothing happened. There's no discussion with the city of Regina. Period. Full stop. End of discussion on that point, Mr. Speaker.

Like any other real estate development, you pay the costs on it before you start making money out. Whether it's the cost of buying land, building roads, providing services to it, doing subdivisions, whatever else you need to do, you pay for those costs first.

Mr. Speaker, at the Global Transportation Hub, 700 acres are sold. There in total is 1,800 acres out there, so there are 1,100 acres left to sell. Mr. Speaker, it is making progress slowly but steadily. Mr. Speaker, the economy has slowed down in the last two years, but we will continue to work with them. And do you know why we're doing it, Mr. Speaker? Because of the 860 full-time jobs that are out there, because of the \$485 million in private investment, because of the 4,800 trucks that move in and out of that facility every week.

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

### Funding for Classroom Supports

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, let me set the record straight on this point: my question was to the Premier. And the people of Saskatchewan deserve an answer from that Premier. How can he justify cuts to kids who have special needs and require



special pre-K [pre-kindergarten] programs while they're wasting money hand over fist at the GTH? That's the question.

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

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Mr. Speaker, the beginning of the questions talked about cuts to education, Mr. Speaker. Not five weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, our Premier stood in the rotunda of this legislature, announcing seven-and-a-half million dollars in mid-year funding, Mr. Speaker, for education to support children in the classroom, Mr. Speaker. That will annualize to \$30 million, Mr. Speaker. And we've made commitments to continue to have our ongoing dialogue and discussion with teachers, with school board trustees, Mr. Speaker, with parents so that we can continue to work to support children in the classrooms, Mr. Speaker.

That's the record of this government, Mr. Speaker — record investments in capital, record investments in operating over the years since this government has been in these chairs, Mr. Speaker — and we'll continue to do that.

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

#### Costs and Benefits of Carbon Capture and Storage

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, those kinds of questions and that lack of transparency is nothing new. For years the Sask Party has bragged and bragged about how great the carbon capture plant at BD3 [Boundary dam 3] is. But we know the real story now. Four years later it's still working only at 61 per cent of the time. And now we found out that in the past year alone its operation and maintenance costs have skyrocketed to almost \$27 million, and that isn't even for the full 12 months, Mr. Speaker. That's up \$5 million from the year before, and these costs have increased every single year.

So can the minister tell us just how much money are they going to keep throwing at their carbon capture project?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, only would the members opposite think that capturing 2 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions and sequestering it safely underground would be a bad thing. Only the members opposite would think that 500,000 vehicles, the equivalent of 500,000 vehicles being taken off the road, Mr. Speaker, would be a bad thing.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite know that SaskPower, in terms of operations, maintenance, and administration, is a company that spends well over \$600 million a year in this area. We have facilities all across the province that require maintenance, Mr. Speaker. And the members opposite should also know, Mr. Speaker, that BD3 has been operating at 100 per cent since January 19th, Mr. Speaker. We've have a successful run over the last number of months where the plant has been fully operational, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this is technology that, if we're really interested in actually reducing emissions, this is technology that's actually

going to do it in a world that is not going away from coal today or tomorrow or next year.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, these guys just don't want to talk about money. I can't figure that out. The costs — the costs — this is what we're talking about. No answer. Costs are out of control for 2016-17. They estimated their operation and maintenance costs at \$14 million, but that grew to well over \$25 million. We get 7 million back in education, but they grew the debt there over \$11 million, Mr. Speaker. This isn't chump change.

It's interesting, but that's not something we hear from the member from Estevan's statements. The Sask Party's inflated bragging about CCS [carbon capture and storage] never seems to include how much money this project keeps costing the people of Saskatchewan. Now in the TD's [Toronto Dominion] economic forecast, here's what they say. And I'm going to quote:

Going forward [and this is in Saskatchewan], household finances will continue to be constrained by rising interest rates and a 3.5% increase in electricity rates, which marks the third increase in two years, and a total hike of 12%.

So, Mr. Speaker, can that minister tell Saskatchewan families and businesses how many more power bill hikes they should expect for the Sask Party's mismanagement of this project and all of the rising costs?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, certainly what we're not going to do is take the position of the members opposite and bring forward a carbon tax in this province. What we're not going to do is stand by and wave the white flag and ask the federal government to impose a carbon tax. And what we're not going to do is accept a legal opinion by another jurisdiction without relying on our own constitutional lawyers within our own branch of the Ministry of Justice. That's not what we're going to do as well.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite, who has been known from time to time to maybe get her information incorrect, she put out a news release not that long ago, and she said, "... it hasn't even captured half of its one billion tonnes per year target..." Mr. Speaker, 1 billion tonnes per year target? That's more than this entire country emits in a single year, Mr. Speaker. So again, the facts were not correct from the member opposite.

Mr. Speaker, the member also referenced a document from the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer just last week. What she missed in that is, and I quote, "A number of sectors would potentially benefit from its ongoing development and deployment..." meaning carbon capture and storage, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, this is technology that we're pioneering here in the province, Mr. Speaker. We're going to focus on technology. We're going to focus on a made-in-Saskatchewan plan, Mr. Speaker. The members opposite can get on board with that plan or get out of the way.

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

### Release of Information on Oil Spill

**Mr. Forbes:** — Mr. Speaker, one year ago tomorrow the Sask Party wrapped up its investigation into the Husky oil spill and turned its report over to the prosecutors. This was a major environmental disaster where more than 200 000 litres of oil flowed into the North Saskatchewan River. Communities along that river valley had to go days without regular access to safe drinking water.

But one year after handling the report off to prosecutors, there's still no sign of that report that the Sask Party promised to make public. Spills are not good for the environment and they're not good for the industry either. Secrecy is even worse. Saskatchewan people and our customers need to know, need to have faith in the processes. So when will the Sask Party keep their promise and release the report?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member opposite for the question. Mr. Speaker, officials, along with Husky and community partners, took action immediately once the spill was detected. The cleanup was completed in the summer of 2017. The members opposite, I believe, will know that over \$1.1 million was reimbursed to the government.

And, Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Justice is still reviewing the case, and it would be certainly appropriate for that report not to be released until after the Ministry of Justice makes their determination. And yes, I do want to also add it's the Saskatchewan Ministry of Justice, not other provinces, that we're relying on for this legal information.

But I would say this, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the government has taken action on this file because what we do is we . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well the member from Elphinstone may want to listen. We release publicly any incidences through the IRIS [integrated resource information system] system so that it is publicly reported. This is a far cry from when that member was the Environment minister, Mr. Speaker: 300 000 litre spill November of 2004 near Lloydminster, no public notification; a 171 000 litre spill March of 2004 near Kindersley, under that minister, no public information.

Mr. Speaker, we're working to improve *The Pipelines Act* in this province, and we're publicly disclosing all of that information. And I hope the member has another question.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's becoming more and more clear that we can't count on the Sask Party to give us the straight goods or follow through on a promise. They won't come clean on the GTH. They won't answer questions about Boundary dam no. 3, and they won't give us answers on the Husky spill.

Back in 2016 we asked the government for copies of the inspection records of the Husky pipelines. These are public documents. They promised to release them and the Sask Party

was reprimanded by the Information and Privacy Commissioner for refusing to turn them over. Still nearly two years after the spill, there's no sign of those inspection records. Will the Minister of Energy and Resources table those inspection records today?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, again, there is an investigation under way. The investigation has been complete and Justice is reviewing that to determine which, if any, charges will be laid. And, Mr. Speaker, once that is complete, Mr. Speaker, then we can provide an answer to the member opposite.

But in terms of transparency I just want to remind the members, we provide, every week, information on any incident through the IRIS system, unlike the members opposite: a 1.65 million litre oil spill April of 2006, no public notification; a 1.3 million litre spill in January 2002, no notification. Mr. Speaker, there's times where that member was the Environment minister — spills, no notification. The time that the member from Athabasca was the minister, no public notification.

Although, Mr. Speaker, we did find one notification. July 13, 2004 when the member from Saskatoon Centre was the Minister of Environment and I quote, "Saskatchewan Environment has learned . . ." This is a news release, so they publicly notified. "Saskatchewan Environment has learned that a recent storm resulted in the spill of an oily substance into the North Saskatchewan River, originating in Edmonton."

So, Mr. Speaker, they never publicly notified anybody of a spill unless it was somebody else's spill.

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

[10:45]

### Second Bridge for Prince Albert

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Mr. Speaker, last week I offered members across the chance to stand up for Prince Albert and support a second bridge. But instead, he tried to claim that their lack of action is justifiable because the previous government ". . . never spent a dime on repairs of the bridge." Well, Mr. Speaker, the fact is, and the minister can check this on his own government website, as recently as 2005 the NDP contributed 4.3 million dimes in that year alone. So will the Premier, will the Premier do the right thing and correct the record for the minister, the member from Prince Albert Carlton, and will he commit to a timeline for a second bridge for Prince Albert?

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

**Hon. Mr. Marit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've had the pleasure since being minister, I've met with the city council of P.A. [Prince Albert]. They came down and had a meeting with me. We talked about the second bridge. We have taken a position in the Government of Saskatchewan that they can seek federal funding for a second bridge. We'd be a partner and they would be a partner also, Mr. Speaker.

We have invested over millions of dollars into the bridge. We have just recently put sensors on the bridge, Mr. Speaker. We're working with the city on the maintenance of that bridge and those sensors will stress test every load that's going over that bridge, Mr. Speaker. We are working with the city; we are open to meetings with the city on the bridge and the maintenance of the bridge. The city's in charge of that, and we reciprocate and compensate them for the work on the bridge, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Mr. Speaker, facts are facts, and the fact is the bridge was built while the NDP was in government. The government of the day worked with the city to develop the 50/50 funding agreement for its maintenance. This agreement has been in place for 60 years.

Mr. Speaker, now the members opposite can't seem to get their opinions, let alone their facts, straight when it comes to the second bridge. We have a member from Prince Albert saying one thing and the Minister of Highways saying another. On March 14th the member from Prince Albert told *paNOW* that he only supports a second bridge if there is federal P3 [public-private partnership] dollars involved. Then when questioned about a second bridge at last week's SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] convention, the Minister of Highways said, and I quote, "A second bridge for P.A. is not on our radar at all right now."

So are they even thinking of building a second bridge or not?

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

**Hon. Mr. Marit:** — Mr. Speaker, as I said in my previous answer, Mr. Speaker, we have met with the city officials from the city of P.A. We have said as Government of Saskatchewan we will partner with the city of P.A. for a second bridge when, if they want to seek funding from the federal government. We've even offered, Mr. Speaker, that the Ministry of Highways' officials will work with the city in making the application and working with the application with the city of P.A. if they want to proceed as a partner in a second bridge, Mr. Speaker.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

## WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Government Whip.

**Mr. Lawrence:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 175 through 177.

**The Speaker:** — Question no. 175 to 177 is tabled.

## SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Carrot River.

### Delays in Rail Transportation of Commodities

**Mr. Bradshaw:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is going

to be a great debate to have and I plan on moving a motion at the end of what I'm speaking here, Mr. Speaker. talking about grain movement in Western Canada — not just Saskatchewan — and it's a very important topic that needs to be discussed. And when I say discussed, I talk about disgusting because it's disgusting some of the things that we've had happen with both CN and CP and the fact of moving our grain.

You know back in 2013-14 the farmers in this province lost a lot of money. Actually it was up to \$6.5 billion in lost sales. CNCP [Canadian National and Canadian Pacific] said that this would never happen again. They claimed it was due to, you know, the winter weather, things like that. And, Mr. Speaker, I don't know how they can say that because it seems that we have winter every year in this province. Global warming hasn't taken off good enough yet unfortunately to help out on the movement of grain in the wintertime.

But they said it wouldn't happen again, Mr. Speaker, and it did. And this winter, back in December, CN went down to 57 per cent of the orders being filled. CP was down to 76 per cent. But, Mr. Speaker, that was just the beginning. It gets a whole lot worse. In week 31 CN hit 32 per cent of their demand and CP hit 52 per cent. And they thought they were doing good, or we thought they were doing good at that time only to get that much. Because in week 29 CN was down to less than 20 per cent of their cars; CP, 43 per cent. Meanwhile in Vancouver, nine vessels were loading and 20 were anchored. In Prince Rupert, one was loading and four were anchored, Mr. Speaker. You have to realize that our Canadian farmers, our Saskatchewan farmers, are paying demurrage on all these ships.

This is absolutely unacceptable, absolutely unacceptable. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, I was talking with the Deputy Speaker this morning, and I happened to look at his tie. And he had a bunch of anchors on this tie that he's wearing today. And I said, what are all the anchors on that tie for? And he says, it's for all the ships that are parked out in Vancouver harbour that are all anchored there because they can't get loaded, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government has to move on this. They have to put some teeth into Bill C-49. And I don't know what it is about the Liberal government that we have down there. They won't move on pipelines, or very little. They won't move on helping us ship our grain. It's almost as if they want to try and break Western Canada, Mr. Speaker, and I'm putting a lot of the blame on the Liberals. I would also like to see that the NDP here would help support us on this, and I'm kind of guessing that they will actually go along with this motion, Mr. Speaker.

And I can give you some personal things, like Arborfield which is in my constituency — actually Arborfield's my hometown — has a small grain company called Linear Grain. Now their major export are oats, and most of those oats actually go down to the States. Well just a little while ago, they had 65 cars loaded with oats waiting to be shipped. They couldn't get them out. They couldn't get them out. And what happened back in 2013-14 when they couldn't get them out? They ended up . . . They had contracts that they were committed to, and they had to start shipping this out by truck, which gets very expensive, just to fill their contracts. And they were actually losing money on every single truckload they had going town to the US [United States].

Very fortunate up in our neck of the woods to have two shortline rail companies. We have Thunder Rail and Torch River Rail, and, Mr. Speaker, they do a fantastic job but all they can do is take it out to the main lines. Then they are captive to CN and CP. We need Bill C-49 to get through the House. Actually we need some more teeth put into it. And the federal Liberals have to look at what's going to happen there.

And I can tell you all sorts of stories about how our two rail companies are holding us at ransom, Mr. Speaker. About a half a dozen years ago there's a shortline running from . . . Or there was a line, not a shortline, it was a CN line running from Crooked River over to Hudson Bay, and CN put it up for abandonment. And what happened was I don't think they expected anybody to go after that line. Well at that line, Thunder Rail and two more shortline companies went after that line and all of a sudden CN said, oh no, we're not going to put it up for abandonment. We're going to take it back out of abandonment and we're going to fix it. And actually I met with a couple of CN people right here in Regina and they promised me that they were going to put that line back in good running order and run on that line. Mr. Speaker, needless to say, nothing's ever been done on that line but they won't put it back up for abandonment again. I say, use it or lose it, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, our government has taken many actions on this . . . But I can see I'm going to run a little bit short of time because I want to ask precisely, precisely what the NDP has done on this end of it. What have they done to talk to their counterparts, to their federal people, to their federal leaders, their federal NDP? Because part of the problem is their leader. Their leader is dead set against pipelines, Mr. Speaker. And when their leader is dead set against pipelines, he's going along with the Liberals and trying to get pipelines not approved. And what is happening is CN and CP are shipping oil by rail, which happens to be about four and a half times worse, accident wise, than pipelines. But yet what's the NDP doing here on that? Are they going to follow their federal cousins and go against the pipelines also? I would almost think so because well, you know, you can go right to the Leap Manifesto, who the member from Saskatoon Nutana thinks is a great thing, where you don't want any pipelines and just leave that oil in the ground even though it's very important to the province of Saskatchewan, along with our grain, along with our potash.

But, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to quote the leader from the NDP down in Ottawa. And I'm going to quote here, and he said, "I've made a really clear no to Kinder Morgan and Energy East." He also said, and I quote again:

So if an energy project is proposed that's going to increase our emissions, then it's not in line with what we want to do as a nation in terms of reducing our emissions, then it's also a project that doesn't satisfy that criteria.

And I'm going to do another quote:

With respect to Kinder Morgan, outside of the three criteria, it's also something that's going to have a significant and potentially devastating impact on the coastal region. And that's also something of grave concern.

So, Mr. Speaker, are they going to follow their federal cousins

and do that?

But I will say one thing, the Leader of the Opposition has come up with a great way to make our grain movement go simpler because, in all the promises that he made that also they never funded . . . And by the way, I happen to have this here. I know that yesterday the NDP got a pledge of these promises, five and a half billion dollars that was never funded. And he said, to protect our farm land and pastures, by providing incentives to producers who want to produce for local markets, use fewer pesticides, or diversified food production.

In other words, Mr. Speaker, he wants us all to go into organic farming. Well I guess we could do that. And if we all went into organic farming — which I'm sure the member from Saskatoon Nutana would be very happy about — if we all went into organic farming, we're only going to produce about 25 per cent of the grain. So therefore, under the NDP's great thoughts, this would make shipping grain way easier because we only have to ship 25 per cent of the grain out of this province out to the ports.

**An Hon. Member:** — And people would starve.

**Mr. Bradshaw:** — Of course we have to worry, yes, we worry . . . And the member from Yorkton just mentioned it properly. People would start starving. Yes, this is a great thought put behind on the NDP but of course, you know, they didn't factor in that to do this just for their starting cost would be about \$18 million, Mr. Speaker. It's just another one of the things that the NDP never ever cost factored in to all of their promises.

Mr. Speaker, what we have to do is we have to get the NDP on side to talk to their federal counterparts to be able to help push our movement of grain forward, and get it done.

[11:00]

Mr. Speaker, I want to go to some of the things that our government has done, and I just lost that chunk of paper. I'll find it here in a second. I've got it, Mr. Speaker.

I don't know if I'm going to have time to get through this before I have to make my motion, Mr. Speaker, but let's just start out with what was done on this side of the House, from our people.

August 22nd of 2017, our Ag minister met with the Saskatchewan Barley Development Commission to discuss transportation issues. August 30th, 2017, the deputy minister of Agriculture met with the port of Vancouver to discuss West Coast capacity growth potential. August 2017, the Minister of Agriculture, and Highways and Infrastructure, sent a letter to the standing committee on transport, infrastructure and communities, identifying Saskatchewan's concern with the *Transportation Modernization Act*, Bill C-49, before it started a review of the bill in September. August 28th, 2017, Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan wrote a letter to federal Transport Minister Garneau with concerns about closure of producer car loading sites in Saskatchewan.

September 11th to 14th, 2017, the standing committee on transport, infrastructure and communities held hearings on Bill

C-49. October the 5th, deputy minister of Highways and Infrastructure, Agriculture, and Economy met with Mark Hemmes to discuss grain transportation, railway operations, and Bill C-49. October the 12th, Minister of Agriculture, and Highways and Infrastructure, sent a joint letter to the federal ministers of Transport and Agriculture regarding CP Railways' closure of 10 producer car loading sites in Saskatchewan. Ministers suggested an abandonment process be applied to producer car loading sites that are similar to abandonment of metropolitan spurs and sidings.

October the 12th, deputy ministers of Highways and Infrastructure, Agriculture, and Economy met with CP to discuss grain transportation, railway operations, winter plan, and federal Bill C-49. October 16th, deputy ministers of Highways and Infrastructure, Agriculture, and Economy met with CN to discuss grain transportation, railway operations, winter plan, and federal Bill C-49.

It continues on and on. It goes right up into . . . I'm going to have to skip some of these. On December the 4th, ministers of Agriculture, and Highways and Infrastructure, sent a second, stronger joint letter to the federal Minister of Transport regarding the asking for legislative changes to be made to the process for abandonment of rural sidings so producer car loaders and shippers and municipal governments would have an opportunity to purchase the siding. December the 5th, the minister attended a meeting with CP Rail to discuss its involvement with Saskatchewan and potential for intermodal freight.

Mr. Speaker, we have been going through this. Our ministers have been working very hard to try and get this through. But, Mr. Speaker, we were held captive to CN and CP, and we were also held captive to our federal government, which doesn't want to do anything. And I truthfully don't think that we're getting any help from the members opposite.

So, Mr. Speaker, what I would like to do is I would like to move the following motion:

That this Assembly urges the Government of Canada to pass an order in council, including minimum movements and interswitching options, to help address the transportation backlog of all commodities, and further supports the implementation of Bill C-49, the *Transportation Modernization Act*, to address this issue from occurring in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I so submit.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the member for Carrot River Valley:

That this Assembly urges the Government of Canada to pass an order in council, including minimum movements and interswitching options, to help address the transportation backlog of all commodities, and further supports the implementation of Bill C-49, the *Transportation Modernization Act*, to address this issue from occurring in the future.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member

for Regina Lakeview.

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today and enter into this debate I guess, Mr. Speaker, with regard to the transportation, rail transportation of grain in this province. I'll read the motion:

This Assembly urges the Government of Canada to pass an order in council, including minimum movement and interswitching options, to help address the transportation backlog of all commodities [important point], and further supports the implementation of Bill C-49, the *Transportation Modernization Act*, to address the issue from occurring in the future.

Well, Mr. Speaker, when I read that I had to make sure that my mind wasn't playing tricks on me, so I looked up the definition of "debate." This is the definition I found: "a formal discussion on a particular matter in a public meeting or legislative assembly [I think we tick that box] in which opposing arguments are put forward." Mr. Speaker, I think on that point we may have failed to meet the definition. There's no debate here.

As you heard in my questions today, my letter to the minister, we concur. This is needed; it's past needed. And we hear every day from farmers around this province, from producers who are struggling, struggling to get their grain, get canola to markets. And the risk, so many risks, Mr. Speaker, with regard to international reputation, for example when we can't deliver contracts on time, at a time when we've seen producers hit by other setbacks like the tariff on pulse crops in India, Mr. Speaker.

So I'm afraid . . . I'm sorry if the member from Carrot River was looking for a debate. He's not going to get one, but he's going to get some observations from me, Mr. Speaker. I noticed . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well semantics, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Health apparently thinks that it's very important to come in here and talk about semantics today when I think we really ought to be putting our attention on some more important issues. And in fact that's going to be the bulk of my comments here, Mr. Speaker.

I heard the member from Carrot River get up and I believe I heard him blame the federal Liberals. I heard him blame the NDP in Ottawa and the NDP in Saskatchewan. I heard him take credit for a list of things that they had done including news releases by APAS [Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan] and the standing committee, Mr. Speaker, but I didn't hear a lot of responsibility taken by members opposite on this.

The fact is they have been in government for over a decade. This issue is not new. This issue cost Western Canadian producers billions of dollars back in 2013-2014. And you know, I'm going to read fairly extensively from an article that I came across. This is written two years ago so it's almost like *Back to the Future* and it's almost like the person who is writing this article was clairvoyant. Because they outline some of the issues that we are dealing with today with great accuracy.

Using some reports by Quoram Corporation, of course the

2013-14 crop year was a disaster. With some changes made, there was some improved movement in 2014-15. But there was a caution there that governments, that grain companies, that they not rest on their laurels because they predicted at that point that this day would come again if we didn't get some things right, including the passage of bill 49 but other measures as well.

So I'll go . . . This is from Wade — I'm sorry if I'm going to mess up his name — Wade Sobkowich, executive director of the Western Grain Elevator Association, saying, this doesn't mean that the system is fixed. Now is the time . . . Remember, Mr. Speaker, this is in 2016.

Now is the time to prepare for the inevitability of demand for rail service from all industries converging at a high point again.

If those forecasts are accurate then long-standing systemic . . . failures will re-emerge.

Well guess what, Mr. Speaker? Here we are, and we have the same old excuses and finger pointing. We have finger pointing from the member, from the members opposite. We have finger pointing from the rail lines. And guess what is happening again? Those products are not getting to market on time. We are not meeting our contracts. And farmers are left wondering how they are going to pay to put the crop in the ground again this year, and it's unacceptable.

We've heard excuses like, it's winter. And I concur with the member from Carrot River. If we're surprised that we have winter in Saskatchewan, then someone hasn't been paying attention. But we've also heard, I heard Ian Boxall speaking before the committee — there was a tweet that went out earlier this week — very eloquently. This excuse was started back in October where we're using excuses about winter in October, well before the snow even started to fly. This is not solely an issue of weather. This is an issue, this is a political issue of will and, I have to say, a failure to get the job done by all levels of government. And it is unacceptable.

So the member will get no debate from me that this needs our urgent attention. Many days, Mr. Speaker, we sit in this Assembly and we talk about things that maybe people at home find a bit silly and inconsequential. This has great consequence to our whole province. Anyone who's been near a farm knows how important it is to get that product to market and get the cheque in the bank. We have contracts that have gone unfilled for months. And you have so much anxiety, concern on the farm with regard to how you're going to get a crop in the ground.

And even if there is a grant program or some lending available to producers, that still doesn't meet the other problem and that is our international reputation to actually deliver these contracts on time, Mr. Speaker. And that is a risk to all producers in this country and something we can ill afford to lose, our reputation as being a reliable source of food for people all around the world.

And, Mr. Speaker, we would love to do our part. We are willing to do our part to do what we can to lend our voices. But let's

remember, members opposite earlier were talking about waving a white flag. That's what I'm hearing from these comments, Mr. Speaker: it's not our fault; it's the federal government's fault; it's the federal NDP's fault; it's CN, it's CP's fault. This is a matter that people need to put their big-boy pants on and stand up and get the job done, Mr. Speaker. And sometimes there's room for debate, there's room for, you know, the back and forth here, Mr. Speaker. But we need the grown-ups at the table to get a job done, and maybe don't get away from the table until we actually come up with some action. Because all of the nice words and all of the intentions are lovely, but at the end of the day they're just that if you can't actually get that grain, get that canola to port.

You're right, it is unacceptable that we've got vessels sitting moored at a cost to the producers, sitting there waiting to be loaded and we can't deliver it on time. Mr. Speaker, as I've said, there's no debate on this side. We will do whatever we can, if you need us to attend a meeting with you, if you need us to write more letters, to write more news releases. We did write a news release this year, I believe it was in February, calling on action here. I know that Minister MacAulay was here earlier in the week sitting right here. I didn't know that it was solely up to us to get this done. I would have tapped him on the shoulder and, you know, told him how important this is. But I assumed that the minister and the government was doing their job there. I assumed that they were making sure that our voice, the voice of producers, the voice of this province was being heard. But we are very happy to enter into that and help you out, and it does sound like perhaps the member for Carrot River is suggesting that they need a little help from us. We're happy to provide it, Mr. Speaker.

There is nothing . . . I'll go back to this article again. Again this is not . . . If anyone's surprised that this crisis has come up again, they shouldn't be. They shouldn't be surprised. They should be no more surprised than the fact that we had snow again this year, Mr. Speaker.

So again I'll just go back to my opening remarks that were these. This is a 75-minute debate. I understand, Mr. Speaker, but there really is no debate from us. Let's get things moving on those rails. Thank you.

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

[11:15]

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course now, Mr. Speaker, with the news this morning, I don't know if we can call you Mr. Speaker; we might have to go to just Speaker.

Thank you to the members of this House for the opportunity to speak on this very, very serious situation of grain transportation. The situation as it stands is as follows: as per usual, the farmers have their bins full of grain, a pile of bills are due this spring, and no way of getting the grain to market.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to quote Daryl Fransoo of the Western Canadian Wheat Growers, and I quote, "A lot of farmers are taking out more debt to pay off more debt. A lot of farmers are hurting."

Ian Boxall, the vice-president of the Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan said, and I quote:

The blame rests largely on deep operational cuts that reduced both manpower and locomotives.

“The fact that we’re talking about this again is quite ridiculous.”

“We get winter every year in Canada, the railroad should know that after operating for a 100-plus years. Using winter as an excuse to me is a scapegoat for them. They need a better plan in place to move our products in winter.”

Mr. Speaker, I could read off many more quotes. The statement ag producers are trying to make is the situation of grain movement is critical, Mr. Speaker — critical. It’s not a new situation; it seems to be a yearly thing. The farmers have high-quality products that the world wants. The markets are waiting for our products. We have booked our grains for sale. The only problem is getting it to market.

Mr. Speaker, there’s a young man in my hometown of Middle Lake and he has his railway engineer’s ticket. He tells me he can’t get work with either CN or CP, so it’s not a shortage of operators. When I travel around Batoche constituency and also travelling back and forth to Regina, I see up to half-mile long stretches of parked railway cars. They’re not at a siding to be filled. They are parked in a stretch of the line. This unfortunately is not an occasional sighting, but a regular sighting.

So it’s not a shortage of railway cars; it’s a shortage of movement by the railway. We have two railways in Canada, but most farmers only have one choice, and they are being held hostage.

In the *Leader-Post* the other day, CNCP said, “The focus is on clearing the backlog of grain.” My question is: when? Did they not know we had a bumper crop this year? It is March, and now they’re focusing on a backlog? Mr. Speaker, this seems to be a common occurrence.

We should also look at the history of grain movement. Getting grain to ports by rail has been a problem longer than anyone here can remember. That includes even the member from Cannington. Even I can remember in the late ’60s, that grain would finally start moving after spring seeding. We were hauling in last fall’s crop. The trucks were lined up 20, 25 deep at every country elevator. I wonder if the World Wheat King, Seager Wheeler from Rosthern, had that same problem getting crops to market.

We are known as the breadbasket of the world. We have the best wheat, barley, oats, canola, flax, soybean, lentils, and whatever else we can grow. The problem is getting it to market. Mr. Speaker, in my travels I meet a lot of people and I tell them about the importance of agriculture to the Saskatchewan economy. In our province, ag is second only to oil. Potash comes in about fourth. Saskatchewan has, depending on the year and the acres sown, from 44 to 47 per cent of all of Canada’s cropland. Ag has been and still is the lifeblood of this province.

My dad always said, they can print more money but they can’t make more dirt. Mr. Speaker, most people don’t realize the impact and the scale of agriculture. The number of jobs in agriculture is impressive, but even bigger is the footprint of ag in our economy.

Mr. Speaker, this week the member from Regina Rosemont blamed the railway, and rightly so. He also said it was costing jobs. Yes, Mr. Speaker, it is costing jobs, but the cut is much deeper than that. How about the family farm? For them it is not just a job. It is their life. It is their future. It is their community. They have the product and buyers but they can’t get it to market. So they take out another loan, and eventually the bank tells them, you’re done. And they have to give up, or in some cases they’re told. Mr. Speaker, it’s not just the loss of the job. It’s the erosion of the rural way of life; it’s the erosion of the foundation of Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to offer some solutions. I do understand that the railways also have other products that they are delivering to ports, products that are also very important to our province’s economy, like potash, oil, natural gas, and the list goes on. These products also need to get to market. The obvious answer, of course, is pipeline for oil and gas. That would free up a lot of railways. Some people say it isn’t safe on a pipeline. Ask that question to the people of Quebec, what can happen with a trainload of oil.

A lot of opinions are based on emotion, not on facts. Without facts you have nothing but emotion and we can’t build our province on emotion. The following is the main conclusion from the Fraser Institute. They did research on *Safety in the Transportation of Oil and Gas: Pipelines or Rail?* Their conclusions were as follows:

Transporting oil and gas by pipeline or rail is ... [generally] quite safe.

But when the safety of transporting oil and gas by pipelines and rail is compared, taking into consideration the amount of product moved, pipelines are found to be the much safer transportation method.

Specifically, rail is found to be over 4.5 times more likely to experience an occurrence when compared to pipelines.

Over 70 percent of pipeline occurrences result in spills of 1 m<sup>3</sup> or less, and only 17 percent of pipeline occurrences take place in actual line pipe, meaning that the vast majority of spills occur in facilities, which may have secondary containment mechanisms and procedures.

The next point is rail can only take oil to points in North America. Rail would not be feasible to get oil to ports for export. It would be too slow and too inefficient. We need pipelines. Of all the products we export, only oil and natural gas can make the use of pipelines. The conclusion is, put oil and gas in pipelines and free up railway space for our grains.

That leaves but one question for the NDP in Saskatchewan: who do you support, our neighbour NDP Alberta or federal NDP? We need the rail space for grain. Speak now. Saskatchewan agriculture is waiting for your reply and looking

for your support. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. This is an important debate that we enter into here today. This is an issue that should've been top of desk, top of priority for the past premier who failed to address this issue, and it needs to be top of desk for this cabinet, for this Premier.

So I'm glad that the motion's been brought forward. We'll stand unanimous on the motion. But there's so much more that's needed to make this rail system that has failed our economy, failed producers for far too long, actually perform.

I want to just first quote Todd Lewis, the president of APAS:

Farmers are stuck with more grain in their bins just when they need . . . to pay bills and prepare for spring seeding. They need a plan to address the backlog and get the 2017 crop to port.

Todd Lewis, president of APAS. This is the reality that producers are facing all across Saskatchewan. Producers who have crop in the bin that did their part, did their work, worked in adverse weather conditions as well to do so, and now it's time that our rail system perform and allow them to get that crop to market.

It's the same reality that, in fact, many across our economy are facing — our manufacturers, our exporters across our province. It should be a concern to all in this Assembly that the refinery hasn't been running at full capacity, meaning job loss, Mr. Speaker, because of the fact that the refinery can't get its refined oil product onto the rails and to market as well.

It should be a concern that this is a reality for all manufacturers across Saskatchewan. It should be a concern how this impacts the Evraz steel mill right here in Regina, Mr. Speaker. So this is critical to our economy.

I was chatting recently with potash producers within the province, and they're impacted in a big way by this. The fact is, we have a lot of knowledge in this province through producer groups, farm groups, Mr. Speaker, through our potash producers, through Canpotex who know rail transportation like few others, Mr. Speaker. We have folks like Federated Co-op and the refinery, all of our manufacturers within this province, world-class agricultural equipment manufacturers who have so much skin in this game, Mr. Speaker, and who are directly impacted when they can't get their fine products to the world. We should be bringing all of those groups together, and that should be led by this Premier and by this government to find solutions.

The weak measures or the measures brought forward here today by the government simply are just, you know, are simply insufficient to make this underperforming rail system actually perform. The fact is we have a duopoly that doesn't focus on the interests of Saskatchewan producers or Saskatchewan businesses or the Saskatchewan economy, and it's failed us for far too long. And it's, you know, past time that this government . . . In fact the Sask Party has treated those rail companies with

kid gloves every step of the way at a time where we need to be tough and we need to be strong for the people of our province.

We certainly support C-49 being passed. This is an improvement and this is important. We need to support interswitching as well. And critical to that, as I hear from many producer groups, is that we need to make sure when those measures are brought forward that there's actual enforcement then. So we need to support and be pushing the federal government as well, to ensure enforcement within the CTA [*Canada Transportation Act*] to make sure that when that's passed, that interswitching is actually enforced as well.

We certainly need to realize as well that this is a time for us to push further. And the fact that joint running rights aren't something that the Sask Party's willing to advocate is disappointing. There's no reason that we shouldn't be able to push for actual competition on our rail system, a system that has full control for those rail companies but that far too often fails producers within our province.

[11:30]

And of course, the costs are borne by the people of our province — billions of dollars of economic activity, jobs, thousands of jobs impacted all across our province. And producers who are left in the lurch and who are left with bills that are mounting as vessels sit in port on the coast of BC while awaiting the grain to arrive on train, Mr. Speaker. And that demurrage of course isn't paid by the rail companies. It isn't paid by the grain companies. It's paid by hard-working and world-class producers across our province, and it's not right. So we need to push as well for some penalties and reciprocity for producers.

This is a government that hasn't been helpful. This is a government that heard, as the discussion occurred around the elimination of the Wheat Board, from both sides of that debate, Mr. Speaker, that there was going to be a concern around transportation, the logistics, the organization of transportation. And what this government failed to do was to step up and work with producers to ensure that we had some logistics in place, some organization to the transportation that served producers, that ensured some clout for producers here in the province.

Further, they've of course recently cut grants to shortlines across Saskatchewan who are certainly critical to grain movement and rail performance within our province. They sold off of course the Grain Car Corporation, which was one lever within this, Mr. Speaker.

And as I say, we need to be pushing for joint running rights to be part of this discussion in a way that actually gets some performance and some competition from those companies. And I'm getting heckled from the Minister of Agriculture here, Mr. Speaker. What I'd ask him to do is to roll up his sleeves. You know, the tough talk is one thing, but to roll up his sleeves and get the job done for producers and not be afraid to push those rail companies and to push Ottawa to do something meaningful around interswitching and joint running rights, and then make sure that it's actually enforced as well, Mr. Speaker.

We've got a lot of answers in this province. We've got producer groups and businesses across this province, across industries,



who are ready to be a part of this discussion. And the fact that we're failing to get our product to market at a time within a sluggish economy should be a concern to all.

So yes, we need to make sure we improve all transportation. Yes, we need pipelines. Yes, we need pipelines to get our product to tidewater, Mr. Speaker. This is important from a fiscal perspective. It's important from an economic perspective. It's important to make sure they're well regulated and well managed. But it should be a concern to this government that they're failing to get the job done with our rail system at a time where our economy is weak. Because what we should all aim for, Mr. Speaker, is to expand new markets, to ensure new trade opportunities, and we should work and hope for our economy to be back into full stride at some point here, Mr. Speaker.

But the fact of the matter is, our underperforming rail system isn't up to the task. And if this Premier wanted to do something that the past premier just couldn't get done, Mr. Speaker, he'd address this issue. And at a time where our economy is far too sluggish, it provides a bit of an opportunity for this Premier to lean into this issue of transportation, this issue of rail, to address this for future generations, Mr. Speaker, so that as we advance new markets around the world, as we advance the cause of our exporters, as we prepare for stronger economic cycles across our commodities, that we can ensure that when that happens, Mr. Speaker, that we don't have a backlog that chokes off that activity.

Because we've got world-class producers in this province, but it's no good if they can't get their product from bin to market, Mr. Speaker. We've got world-class resources in this province, but if they fail to deliver that product in a timely way to the world, to our global customers, then they're put in a position that's compromising them from their bottom line. It impacts jobs and it impacts their future. So this is a critical time for more than lip service from backbenchers in this debate, Mr. Speaker. It's time for a Premier to actually roll up the sleeves, for an Agriculture minister to do more than heckle in a debate here with backbenchers that are in that debate, but to work to make the system perform for the people of our province.

Right now we've got vessels that are sitting out there in English Bay and off the Port of Prince Rupert, and those vessels that are sitting there waiting for grain shipments are costly, Mr. Speaker. And again those costs aren't borne by the rail companies or by the grain companies or the handlers. They're borne by hard-working Saskatchewan producers, Mr. Speaker. So it's past time that we get the job done and make this rail system actually perform for people today, for producers across Saskatchewan, for the future of our province.

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

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to join in this very important debate. I get to talk about a lot of my favourite things: the railroads, the Senate, the Liberals, Justin Trudeau, and the NDP, and possibly even the CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation].

But this is a important debate. As we move . . . To move forward, I listened to the member, I listened to both the members. I'm going to address a little bit on what they've said.

The one member that just spoke, the member from Regina Rosemont, you know this is a federal initiative. We could try to pass a bill in the House. It'd be thrown out of court in about 10 seconds, you know. Railroads are under the federal transportation Act. I know our Ag minister and our Premier and our past premier have spent a lot of time on this file. They spent a lot of time in Ottawa on this file, on this file with prime ministers, with the federal ag transportation minister, with the federal Ag minister.

You know, I don't want to beat up too much on the railroads, Mr. Speaker. I mean they move the commodity. But they have responsibility, and I'll briefly touch on why they have responsibility. They were given a monopoly by our forefathers, because our forefathers that set this country up knew that for a country to survive and to grow and prosper, you have to get your product to market. So to do that, they knew they had to build a railroad right across Canada. So they gave the railroads a monopoly. With that, they gave them huge tracts of land. But with that understanding was that they would move the product to port as fast as they could, I mean, and naturally with a profit. That's totally understandable. But that should be their main priority.

And every now and again, it seems like every four years or five, they kind of forget that a bit. They forget that and they have to be reminded. Well we might be past the point of just reminding them of that. There is things that we have to . . . the federal government has to do to improve that.

You know, I was in Missouri in January talking to farmers down there. And you know what an old farmer told me? He said, "Do you know why here in Missouri we consider Jesse James a hero? Because he robbed trains." You know, that means there's transportation problems right across North America as we move forward, you know, and it has to be addressed.

And I don't think the feds are doing a good enough job on it. They put a bill in the Senate that has sat there for three . . . for months. And what did they do with that bill? It was omnibus bill, dealt with other transportation issues. The Senate asked them to peel off the railroad end of it. The House of Commons wouldn't. But the Senate could have also amended that bill, sent it back, just that portion. They didn't. I believe, from what I understand, it's still on the order paper in committee on the Senate.

So that's how much the Justin Trudeau Liberals think of Western Canada. They do not seem to want to push this issue at all. And I know that we've worked very hard to know that there has to be changes in the rail, whether it's actually moving some of the product through the United States, is through putting it on the interswitching, different things instead of just putting another fine on them.

I think we have to look at the ships that are sitting in Vancouver. Instead of the farmers paying for that, maybe the railroads should start paying demurrage charges for that. Those are things that we've talked about with our federal, but that has to come from the federal government. You know, we can push them ideas to them, which we have.

You know, the member from Regina who spoke two times ago, Regina Lakeview, talked about how she could help. Well I'll make a suggestion. I'll make a suggestion. You know, you offered to write a letter. Okay, did you write a letter to the BC premier? To the BC premier? A respectable letter. I'm not asking to get over the board, but saying, you know, explaining how not pushing that pipeline or stopping that pipeline, a pipeline that was approved environmentally by the federal government, by Environment, has passed all the regulations. Have you asked, why are you holding that up?

Not only, it's hurting our oil producers in Saskatchewan, it's hurting the steelworkers in Saskatchewan, but majorly it's hurting our grain producers of Saskatchewan. I will ask . . . And you said you would write a letter. I will call on you now to write that letter, your opposition. We've tried to talk to him. It's like talking to a wall. I'm hoping you can make that argument on behalf of the grain farmers, for the oil producers, for the steel producers, of this. Because if we can at least get oil moving more by pipeline, we will be able to move grain more by rail. Those are things we also have to look at as we move forward.

I mean, the railroad companies, there's a lot of commodities being moved by them. One of the issues with rail companies — and I've dealt with them and had meetings with them over the years — when this happens, they seem to pick it up and they're always late, but then they always seem to forget the winter. They have executives in Toronto that seem to forget that winter comes every year.

You know, they don't want to consult much. They don't want to work with each other even, the CP, CN; and the shortlines, they don't want to work with. I've been through rail abandonments. The first thing they want to do, the rail company, is to do a salvage. And usually then it takes some public meetings, public pressure, some letters, and they will then change and sell it to a shortline. Selling to a shortline, working with a shortline, should be their first option, not their last.

The grain companies, a lot of the old elevators, they sit on CNCP property. They lease it from them. They lease it. I've had producers buy the elevator and then not be able to make a deal with CN, not being . . . They won't sell them that quarter of an acre, trying to hold it up. They should be trying to work with producers.

And I think . . . well I know that there has to be some changes made but it has to come on the federal end. That's why we're up discussing it. That's why they're being made aware of this, what's happening today with this speech, you know. And we'll keep working on it. And I'm glad that you agree with it, that we need your support. But we also need the support of your party to move oil too. We need that greatly. That is part of this whole problem because there's more commodities being moved by rail.

This is a growing province. Our crops, we talk about a bumper crop this year and a few years ago. That's going to be normal. You know, the way farmers are producing crops nowadays and the ingenuity that they have, the equipment they have, farming acre to acre, this is going to be normal, these kind of crops. We're hoping our oil is going to keep growing in this province, our steel industry, all our manufacturing.

We are a landlocked province. We are a landlocked province. We need transportation out of here. We either need transportation east, we need it west, we need it to the south even. And there seems to be a reluctance with CN and CP to look at moving grain through the United States. And those are things that I think they have to look at as we move forward.

I believe that the Prime Minister and the federal Liberals have did an awful job on this file. They, as usual, forget about Western Canada. The Prime Minister will offer some lip service as usual, but he has the power, and his transportation minister, to make changes to the transportation Act. And I believe that has to come because our farmers are the ones that are suffering, as the speeches that have been made today. They're the ones that are paying the demurrage charges. They are the ones that are sitting with their crop in the bins not able to move. And the federal Liberals, which the transportation Act of the railroads is under that, has to look at this rather than just trying to adjust maybe different fines at that end of it. So to myself, this is a great motion and I'm glad everybody in the House is supporting it.

[11:45]

**The Speaker:** — Nobody else? I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I wasn't quite on top of this for the first few seconds here, but I am ready to roll and happy to be involved in this debate. And it's one of those weird moments in the legislature where I find myself in agreement with much of what has been said on both sides here today, Mr. Speaker. I mean, maybe we are ushering in a new era of mutual understandings and common agreements.

And certainly when it comes to our grain farmers here in Saskatchewan, we are 100 per cent onside in making sure that that grain gets moved in a timely fashion, that farmers aren't being put on the hook for demurrage charges. We don't want to see this gap in the basis of the price like we did last time back in 2014.

And, Mr. Speaker, it is in some ways a bit of a déjà vu feeling as well. You'll recall these debates happening back in 2014 when the railways failed Western Canadian grain farmers horribly. And as the member from Carrot River said, to the tune of over \$6 billion went out of farmers' pockets because of the failure of the privately owned railways to not handle the volume that needed to be handled.

We know that the goal is always to have as large a crop as possible, and if the railway system cannot handle the crops that our producers are growing, then we need to see much more pressure put on those private companies. And not so that their shareholders make more money, Mr. Speaker, because you've got to remember what the priority of CP and CN is, and that is to enrich their shareholders. That's their only goal. And if that goal means cutting locomotives, cutting staff, cutting cars, and not dealing with Canadian winters, which by the way have been around for quite a while, Mr. Speaker. The winters have been here since the railways came in, and that's a long time ago. So maybe even winter existed before the railways came along, you know. I know the member from Carrot River is seeming to hope

that we'll get rid of winters through climate change, but I'm not sure that that's always a good thing, Mr. Speaker, and would love to debate him on that issue as well sometime.

Because it's déjà vu all over again. We had a bill that went through the House back when the crisis happened a few years ago. Now we have a Liberal government and again I can't be in more agreement with these guys this time around. They weren't so hard on the Harper government last time, or Gerry Ritz. They weren't too hard on Gerry Ritz last time, but at least now they're standing up to Marc Garneau, the minister responsible for transportation federally. And of course, Mr. MacAulay who was here yesterday for the installation of the new Lieutenant Governor.

So we need to know that this government is not just paying lip service to this, is not just calling people up and having conversations. We need to have this government stomping its feet and being as mad as heck about this, Mr. Speaker. Because last time — and the Minister of Agriculture will recall — all those polite phone calls and public statements about concerns didn't get us all too far, Mr. Speaker. We got those temporary orders issued but the changes that we need to the grain transportation system in this province simply have not been made.

So here we have a bill that came forward I believe maybe a year or so ago — I have some information on it here that I'd like to get on the record — but of course, this is Bill C-49, of course it's sitting in Senate right now, Mr. Speaker. And we had Senator Tkachuk back in December saying, "It's not our fault it's taking so long." Well I don't care whose fault it is that it's taking so long. Governments have to do better. The Senate has to do better. Because when you're taking money out of farmer's pockets, that hurts the people of Saskatchewan. And we have to get really angry about that, Mr. Speaker.

I also know that this isn't just impacting, of course, our grain producers. It's also impacting our mining sector. It's impacting our potash sector, our other mining sector. It's impacting our refineries here in Saskatchewan. We have a wonderful facility here in Regina that is our own value-add for the petroleum industry and they had to shut down, Mr. Speaker, because they couldn't transport their product. What is going on? This is completely unacceptable.

And so I think we need to do more than just write letters, although letters are a good start and I'm proud of my colleague from Regina Lakeview, the critic for Agriculture, who's suggesting at least we're doing that much. But I remember when my dad, if he was still alive, would tell you about when they marched on Ottawa. When farmers actually marched on Ottawa and he was bound and determined to talk to Mr. Diefenbaker, the prime minister at the time. He came from Saskatchewan and wanted to argue with him about what was happening with grain transportation, and unfortunately he was mad till the day he died that he never, that Diefenbaker just pushed him off. And he still was angry about that, you know, 70 years later, Mr. Speaker.

But you know, the thing is is that we also have lost a bit of our orderly marketing. And when we had the Canadian Wheat Board, we had at least two commodities, which was wheat and

barley, that were being marketed orderly. And I don't know that we've talked enough about the loss of orderly marketing in terms of what the impact was having. We have two crises now since the disappearance of that marketing board and if a person was really honest about it, they'd have to look at it and see, does that have an impact?

As you know, Mr. Speaker, when you have one board looking after a commodity, they can pick and choose when the grain's going to be paid. The farmers were getting advanced payments on their wheat so they didn't have to deliver it to the elevator. And the advanced payment itself kept a lot of farmers afloat. And I know the member from Arm River talked about farmers in dire financial straits. We've got farmers that are on the verge, Mr. Speaker. They can't buy their inputs for this year, they can't buy their seed, their fertilizer. And they aren't able to access the deferred payments that they used to be able to get when there was orderly marketing of wheat, Mr. Speaker.

Now there's all kinds of arguments . . . And this is maybe where I don't agree with the members opposite, but I think that the disappearance of the . . . I think farmers were in favour of the Wheat Board last time they had a free vote, Mr. Speaker. But you know, the federal government didn't bother checking in. The federal government took away the right for farmers to be self-determining. And the member knows that. The farmers were not given the right to make that decision. It was taken away from them by the federal government of the day; of course the Harper one.

Well I'm glad we got, we did find . . . We did find an area of disagreement, Mr. Speaker. But I would like to see some logical analysis being done on the impact of the loss of the orderly marketing of wheat and barley. As you know, that orderly marketing allowed farmers to access deferred payments without having to go to the elevator and deliver that wheat. They were able to time the sale of their wheat. Having the board allowed for us to take our top, world-class wheat and market it to other areas that were . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I think the member from Cannington said there has never been a bumper crop till the Sask Party came into power. I don't know about that, Mr. Speaker, I don't know about that. I think there's a few farmers in this province that might disagree with that notion, Mr. Speaker.

Because we know farmers have been working hard in this province for the last 100 years. Farmers did not start working hard when the Sask Party got elected, Mr. Speaker. Farmers have been innovative and have been creating new ways to farm since the day the first ox broke soil on this province. So for the Sask Party to think that they're God's answer to farming, it's something that I think they need to take a look at because it's not true. It's not true.

Farmers are doing the work themselves and they have lots to be proud of. But they need a government that's going to support them and go to Ottawa and kick some butt, Mr. Speaker. They don't need these guys being political. We need their support more than ever. And the Sask Party needs to go forward and stand up for farmers and tell Ottawa to get the job done and get those railways delivering our farmers' grain.

So, Mr. Speaker, I support this motion. I think it's a fabulous

motion, and I'm very glad to have had the opportunity to be in the debate today. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — The 65 minutes of debate has expired. We now have 10 minutes of questions. I recognize the member for Regina Lakeview.

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we know, this government's been in power for more than a decade. We just heard 65 minutes of members largely on that side pointing fingers and blaming everyone but themselves for the mess we currently find ourselves in. So my question is this, to the member from Batoche: what role does this government have to play in ensuring the timely and predictable movement of commodities and why have they failed so miserably to this point?

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

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Failed miserably? Our government has worked harder than any government previous. When you look at the record of what you guys did with the Wheat Board, our government is contact . . . working with the federal government. The move has to be made by the federal government and we are working on them hard — something your party never did.

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

**Mr. Fiaz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The backlog is a significant issue for our local farmers. It has the potential to cost the Western Canadian agricultural sector millions of dollars. But you know what else would cost our farmers millions of dollars? An NDP carbon tax. And that's not the only way the members opposite will cost our farmers. The Leader of the Opposition has also promised to increase corporate tax in his leadership platform. Well many of the farmers who are having trouble getting their products to the market, and who would be hit hardest by an NDP carbon tax, are also incorporated. Where does it end, Mr. Speaker?

My question is to the member from Nutana. How can you say you're helping farmers with one hand when your party plans to use the other to hurt our farmers in a significant tax increase?

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Sorry, Mr. Speaker, I'm not entirely sure I heard the question, but what I can say is that we need to see a strong . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well the question was convoluted and then that's the problem with it. I thought we were talking about grain transportation, and that's the motion that's on the table today. So maybe more political gamesmanship from the backbencher over there, Mr. Speaker.

So, of course we need to take . . . This is a serious issue. It's not a time to be coy about politics, Mr. Speaker. We need to make sure our producers are protected. Our producers need to be protected. They need to ensure that their political leaders are on top of this. Now we have the minister from . . . Actually, I'm going to save that for a question myself, Mr. Speaker. But we need to work harder at protecting our producers.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, this grain backlog is costing producers billions of dollars. It's costing our economy and all manufacturers and exporters billions of other dollars, and it's costing us jobs. My question is to the member from Carrot River. These measures are important, but they're insufficient. Is he willing to champion joint running rights as part of this discussion to actually push for a rail system that'll perform and get some competition on the rail?

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

**Mr. Bradshaw:** — Thank you for the question to the member from Rosemont. Mr. Speaker, I think what they should do is read Bill C-49 to begin with, with what we really want to do. But going even further than that, Mr. Speaker, I suggest that they talk to their federal leader, to their federal leader who is so against pipelines, to be able to put oil in pipelines so we can move oil in pipelines and we can move grain down the rail where it should be.

Mr. Speaker, what they have to do is they have to go back and tell their federal cousins to stand up for us in Western Canada and start moving that oil and the natural gas down the pipeline so we can use those trains for moving the grain that we have to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Kelvington-Wadena.

**Mr. Nerlien:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We can all agree that a significant reason for backlogs in grain shipping is that we in Western Canada, specifically in Saskatchewan, have an abundance of resources to get to market as we feed the world and provide the natural resources and build the economies of our 150-plus nation customers around the world.

One of the prime commodities competing for rail space is oil. Pipeline projects have faced significant opposition by the federal NDP, the BC provincial NDP, and by members opposite who support the Leap Manifesto and oppose the industry. In addition, the new NDP leader repeatedly stands in support of a carbon tax on the people of Saskatchewan.

My question is for the member from Saskatoon Nutana. Given that the mother ship, the federal NDP, oppose the Kinder Morgan pipeline, where exactly do you stand as a caucus on supporting Kinder Morgan to the West Coast, which would by extension support our agricultural community? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[12:00]

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And obviously the member opposite wasn't listening the last time we had a debate about it, when I agreed fully with the notion that Kinder Morgan needs to go forward. And we need to focus on the federal government to make sure that that pipeline goes

through. I don't know what you're not listening to, but that's been clear from day one. And if you want to do revisionist history, that's entirely up to you, but you should be paying attention better.

**The Speaker:** — I continue to recognize the member from Nutana.

**Ms. Sproule:** — Hard to bounce up and down, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask a question to the member from Batoche because just recently the Sask Agriculture minister told media that it was "late in the game" for this season to mandate rail deliveries. But, Mr. Speaker, this issue isn't new. Can you tell me why your minister didn't take the issue seriously and stay on top of it?

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

**Mr. Kirsch:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When you say our minister didn't take it seriously, our minister is part of agriculture. He's worked the land. He understands it. He knows it. And he's been having meetings with the federal . . . I've got pages here of how many times he met with the ministers and working federally. So the answer is, the feds are where the problem is. We've been doing our part. We've been doing our part. We're asking for your support so that we can get the grain moving the correct way, in railway cars.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Indian Head-Milestone.

**Mr. McMorris:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to listen to what the member from Lakeview said really wasn't a debate but has become a debate. I have listened to the three members from the opposition who have all agreed with the position that our government has taken, that we need to do more work on the grain transportation. It's the first time in 10 years that I can remember the opposition being on the right side of an ag issue in this province, Mr. Speaker.

And we certainly heard it. We heard it from the member from Nutana that wanted to relive the Wheat Board debate. We'll have that one any day of the week, Mr. Speaker, and so will all of rural Saskatchewan, when I look across and see the members from rural Saskatchewan on that side.

We also know where they stand on pipelines, Mr. Speaker — on the wrong side of the issue on pipelines. She did mention a little bit about innovation in agriculture. Where do they stand on GMOs [genetically modified organism], Mr. Speaker? That's been an innovation in agriculture. They're on the wrong side of that. They've been on the wrong side of every issue in agriculture in this province, and it's reflected by the number of seats that they hold.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is now against spraying our crops in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. My question to the member from Regina Rosemont, who ran against that very leader: is he too in agreement with, we should quit spraying our crops here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker? As well as the carbon tax. He's against the carbon tax. Does he stand with his leader on those two points?

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, we stand with the producers of this province and their practices, their modern practices. And you know, that was a minister. He was once the Deputy Premier, and he sat in that desk. He was part of a cabinet when we had the last backlog under this government, Mr. Speaker, and didn't get the job done.

And now we see him intervening in the end of a 75-minute debate on an issue that should be top of desk for the current Premier, making light of an issue, playing political games, Mr. Speaker, at the expense of producers across our province, at the expense of those that work at the refinery, at the expense of the very bottom line for this provincial government, Mr. Speaker.

My question back to that member, and I hope he takes his feet again: does he support actually rolling up his sleeves, supporting joint running rights and other measures that will make our rail system actually perform?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for . . . Where are you? Saskatoon Fairview. Last one.

**Ms. Mowat:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Here's my question: does the member from Batoche agree that scrapping the Canadian Wheat Board created a huge gap in logistical and capacity planning, and that the decision to end the Canadian Wheat Board without an alternative has proven disastrous?

**The Speaker:** — Time for debate has expired.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 606 — *The Election (Fairness and Accountability) Amendment Act, 2017*

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise this morning and enter into debate on Bill No. 606, *An Act to amend The Election Act, 1996 to provide fairness and accountability in election fundraising*. And the short title is *The Election (Fairness and Accountability) Amendment Act, 2017*. So, Mr. Speaker, I will be making the appropriate motions to the effect that this is . . . at the end of my comments. But I do want to make some introductory comments to set the stage for this.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if some of what I say sounds a little familiar, it is because it is familiar, familiar in so many ways. In so many ways we are yet having this debate that should not be. We should have passed this bill when it was 602 the last time. We are the last province to get on board with fairness and accountability in our elections.

We see two major issues, news stories that came up in the past year. Last time I rose and spoke on this was April 13th, 2017, not quite a year ago, just shy, 11 months. But essentially the same facts are in place. In fact they're highlighted even more, so I'll be making references to that speech then, because people

say the same thing. We are the wild west. We are the wild west and we're the last of the provinces really to have this kind of outdated legislation that people have come to realize is totally inappropriate, you know. And as I say almost on a daily basis when I raise the petition on behalf of people of Saskatchewan . . . And for some reason this gets people over there very, very upset, and this is one that hits them in particularly sensitive spots. I don't know why. I don't know why they are so sensitive to changing the law.

We see that BC now has moved their legislation, and in fact they have a task force, I understand. We watch carefully. But I will be talking briefly about that in my comments, because clearly we were touted as the last two, the last two provinces to have such outdated election transparency and fundraising legislation. And now we are alone in Canada — alone in Canada — to have this kind of outdated legislation that clearly allows for questions to be asked.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, I don't know if you follow . . . *Postmedia* just released a news story this week, a website that talks about, follow the money. Now it's hard to follow the money in Saskatchewan, but not . . . You know, we have some very good journalists who have done some digging. And I'll be talking about some of the facts that have become apparent, particularly in the Sask Party leadership race, that causes one to really wonder what's going on in Saskatchewan politics.

Follow the money. Now that seems to be a common phrase we hear when things aren't great, when they're not on the up and up. And you wonder what's going on. Why are people making such decisions? And we saw that and I talked about this last spring, where we saw some \$38 million in tax cuts to the wealthy, and we know that even increased when we saw the changes in the tax regime in the fall. But last spring's budget where we saw tax cuts to the wealthy, but to the working poor we saw in fact tax increases: PST increases to children's clothing, the cut to the STC, all these kind of changes.

And you wonder, so why is it? What causes this government to make these kind of decisions? Are they really working in the favour of Saskatchewan people or is it some other reason?

Now if we had stronger legislation, that answer could be given very much more clearly. But now with all the questions about, where does the money come from . . . And I'll go into some of the details that some of the journalists . . . And I know some of the members, particularly the member from Saskatoon Northwest who did run for the leadership race, and I think his name came up in terms of fundraising, and I'll be sure to include what was said in the media about him because he's very interested in that.

So over the course of time that I have, I'll be reviewing our legislation. It's the same that we had before, talking about the fact, and I'll just review quickly the preamble, that our laws currently allow. . . And this is for the people at home wondering what Bill 606 is about:

. . . currently allow for unlimited contributions from corporations and unions;

AND WHEREAS Saskatchewan's election financing laws

currently allow for unlimited contributions from out-of-province donors [and that was highlighted in spades in their leadership race];

AND WHEREAS the federal government and the governments of Alberta, Manitoba, Québec, and Nova Scotia [and I have to say, now British Columbia] have already banned corporate and union donations to political parties;

You know, but, Mr. Speaker, I write in the bill:

AND WHEREAS Saskatchewan people deserve a democratic system that is free from the influence of corporate, union, and out-of-province donations.

So we talk about this, and we talk of the contributions and who can donate and who can't donate and it's pretty well straightforward. It talks about, in one calendar year an individual's total combined contributions to candidates, political parties, constituency associations cannot exceed \$1,275.

So it's a reasonable bill and it's one that I think we should all be able to get behind, but for some reason this government has decided to stonewall on this and not go there. And I just want to thank the leadership on this side, particularly the member for Regina Rosemont who brought this bill forward previously in Bill 602, and his leadership around this legislation. I just want to thank him and give him a shout-out for that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I said that in BC last fall, they introduced Bill M 201, *Get Big Money Out of Politics Act, 2017*. They ran on that and it was their first priority and this is the kind of thing that they are going to do for sure.

So they're banning organizations to make contributions. And what's interesting and I think this is something that we could even . . . And we would take as a friendly amendment if we got to committee, because they are very much more explicit about who is an organization. We talked about this: a corporation, company, business, or partnership, unincorporated organizations, trade unions, employers' organizations, community or interest group, non-profit organizations, charitable organizations, society, unregistered political parties, unregistered constituency associations, law firms, partnerships, corporations, and business, trade, industry, professional associations. So they're pretty clear about what they want to do and they limit their donations to \$1,200, not 1,275 like we have.

And so, Mr. Speaker, that would be something to take a look at, at what BC's doing, but we are left alone. We are left alone in this pretty indefensible position that we have where we have a situation where we're the last in the country with such backward, wild-west legislation.

Now what I did say, I wanted to highlight . . . So that was one news story that changed since last spring and what was the other one, of course, was the big money that happened in Sask Party leadership race. And I just want to highlight some of the news stories that came out about that. And this is a very informative, enlightening article written by D.C. Fraser of the *Regina Leader-Post*, published on November 24th, 2017. The

title of the report is, “Meet the donors: who is shelling out the big bucks in the Sask Party leadership race?”

Now just keep in mind, Mr. Speaker, this isn't based on the final reporting out of the financial statements, but it is one that was mid-term. There was one later on in January 16th where it's a little bit more updated, where Cheveldayoff — and I'm reading the title — “Cheveldayoff fundraises the most in a race to replace Wall.” But very interesting insight into the inner workings of where these folks go to get their support, and it's very, very telling because it's not a wide base of, a groundswell of people across Saskatchewan. In fact it very much seems to be the opposite, the opposite, in fact. Well we could comment on the leadership and the stats and that, but today we talk about the money.

[12:15]

He writes, “A small group of individuals and associated companies are responsible for one-quarter of the money donated so far in the race to decide Saskatchewan's next premier.”

And the quote, “Twenty-five per cent of that money — or \$141,625 — is just coming from a handful of people and companies.”

That doesn't sound so democratic to me, Mr. Speaker. I have to say that in fact it's much better if it's a larger group of people giving small amounts, but in this case that's not the situation.

And he talks about one example of, and this is a quote: “Thirteen of the 29 corporations listed as donors to Alanna Koch's campaign are companies with which Paul Hill or the Hill Group of Companies are affiliated.” And they gave a total of \$21,625, or 43 per cent of the \$50,500 that she had raised from businesses.

And so it goes on and her campaign manager spokesperson said, and I quote:

“As you know, he runs many companies and invests in a lot of things and it's basically his prerogative to donate to whoever he wants to, and his donations fall within the rules of the leadership race and we've been quite transparent . . . we've disclosed all our donors,” said Gallagher. “It's just a donation from Mr. Hill.”

Well what a donation, what a sizable donation. And the largest donation to her campaign came from a company owned by Trevor Boquist, a Regina businessman. And “one of his companies donated \$10,000 to Koch's campaign,” Fraser writes. So between them they're responsible for 27 per cent of the money raised by their team.

In terms of the Premier's donor list, he lists 27 companies contributing between \$250 and 5,000 but the largest sum came from a single individual, Kelly Panteluk, who “. . . owns one of Saskatchewan's largest privately owned heavy equipment companies, Kelly Panteluk Construction Ltd (KPCL).”

And I'm quoting here:

According to the company's website, it's involved in a number of government-funded projects . . . [including] the

Trans-Canada twinning project [between] . . . Broadview-Whitewood area from 2003-2006, the recent Highway 39 twinning project and work around the Global Transportation Hub.

[He] . . . is listed with his wife as giving \$25,000 to [the Premier's] . . . campaign.

And so at the time the Premier had raised \$128,000, almost \$129,000, so that single donation was almost 20 per cent coming from one couple.

Interestingly, the Premier's campaign manager is Jason Wall who served as chief of staff to the Minister of Highways.

And he said, and I quote, “That one is significant in size, but we appreciate . . .” This is what the Premier said: “That one is significant in size, but we appreciate all of the donations.” And he understood that the construction company “did some work for the province and highways” . . . Well there you go.

So anyways, the other one that was very interesting was the one that was raised by the member of Saskatoon Silverwood, who raised the most money overall, with 30 per cent of his \$165,000 in donations coming from five companies that donated \$10,000 each to his campaign. Now interestingly, between November and January the member was able to raise significantly more money, in fact more money than was allowable. They had a cap of \$250,000. He had raised \$265,000 and I understand that other extra money had to go to the party.

But here is where he was getting some of his money:

These companies include [and I'm quoting] the Millennium III Capital Corporation, which is affiliated with a Saskatoon-based commercial real estate investment firm. An Ontario-based lawyer [I'll repeat that, an Ontario-based lawyer] also gave Cheveldayoff \$10,000 through a numbered company. A Calgary-based investment and real estate company owns Kalmacoff Holdings, another \$10,000 donor to Cheveldayoff.

And then it goes on to Dutchak Holdings gave \$10,000. Thunder Ridge gave \$10,000.

So interesting in terms of where some of these donations were coming from, sizable donations. And here is the one that I know some of the folks were interested in, is the Redhead Equipment that gave money to the member from Saskatoon Northwest. And that company gave \$20,000, which is double the amount of the next . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes. Well it was nice. And you know, I want to say this: all these companies, I'm sure, are on the up and up. That's not the issue.

The issue is fairness and transparency and that we should actually be trying to make sure it's a level playing field. Because there's just too many questions get asked, and we can't answer those questions in a way that makes sense to people. That when you say a handful of people gave donations, then you have to say . . .

And we look at the last budget where they gave such tax cuts to the wealthy and then really hammered the working people,

hammered the working people. You would think . . . And you know members over there laugh. It's not funny when they cut STC, when they pay PST now on children's clothing. And the Regina members over there laugh about that . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . You know, no, I heard somebody laugh over there. That laughing wasn't coming from this side, Mr. Speaker. Too many questions have to be answered.

So we have this and it's just a simple thing. Let's make this, *The Election Act*, work for people so they have a sense of trust. This is what people were saying about this. This is what people were saying. Now I know over there they get really riled up about this, but I quoted many people last year about this.

And the quotes stand before us where we have people like Duff Conacher, the founder of Democracy Watch, agree. And I'll just read this. He agrees "with Kinney's assessment that Saskatchewan is the 'wild west' when it comes to party donations because of its unlimited laws." He says, and I quote:

Saskatchewan is one of the worst — if not the worst — in Canada for political finance system . . .

Under the current rules, Conacher said there is nothing stopping a foreign-owned company based in Canada from paying for political influence . . .

There's nothing stopping that.

We see all across Canada people are waking up and saying, hey maybe we should make our laws more transparent, more fair. But these guys just don't want to do that. And why? Why is it? And that's the question that people ask. So why are we the last? Why don't we get ahead of this? We saw what happened to the BC Liberals because they didn't get ahead of this. They lost the election and then they were out. So I don't know.

He goes on to say, "It amounts to the best government money can buy instead of the best government that voters want." And is that the case? I have to ask, is that the case.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I go on and I talk about it. It's a naive attempt by this government to defend their coffers and clearly it is. They'll do anything to defend what they have. And this is just not appropriate for this Chamber. This is not why people elect us. This is why people don't trust us to the extent that they should trust us. Because you have to follow the money. And if you look at the last news story . . . And they could say it was printed, hey, we're out there, we're transparent. Kind of. That's after the reporters dig it up, and they're forced to. But why don't we have fair and transparent election laws dealing with accountability?

You know the minister, the former minister of Justice, the now Minister of Education, is saying we've got all that information. What more could we want? We want fairness. We want fairness. We want Saskatchewan elections to belong to Saskatchewan people, not to Ontario lawyers, not to Ontario lawyers or Calgary real estate people. You know as nice as those people may be and as fortunate as . . . [inaudible] . . . people have too many questions. And we saw this happen last time, where you have big questions about, why is it they hammer the working poor in their budget and give the wealthy

tax cuts? Is it any coincidence, is it any coincidence at all?

And so, Mr. Speaker, I have lots to say about this, but I know we're running short on time. I know that we'll have many people who want to speak to this issue, but I want to move second reading of Bill No. 606, *An Act to amend The Election Act, 1996 to provide fairness and accountability in election fundraising*. I do so move. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Regina Douglas Park.

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise this afternoon to not only satisfy the procedure of how to further move this bill but also to add my support to my colleague with respect to this bill. It's about fairness, Mr. Speaker. It's about levelling the playing field, Mr. Speaker. I don't know what members opposite are so afraid of, but this is an important piece of legislation that needs to pass and it needs to pass immediately.

This is what we're seeing being passed in other jurisdictions. Often Saskatchewan is called the wild west of donations, of donation rules, Mr. Speaker, so it's just a matter of catching us up to the other provinces and levelling the playing field, Mr. Speaker. And it's what the people of Saskatchewan want. It's what the province wants. It's what our constituents want, Mr. Speaker. They want to be able to have that level of confidence in their elected officials, and this is another piece for us to do that, Mr. Speaker.

So I'm looking forward to further discussion on this bill. I'm hopeful that members opposite will see how important this bill is, see how important it is for us as a province to catch up, frankly, with other provinces. We're not asking for anything more than what we've seen other jurisdictions do, Mr. Speaker, and to allow that level of fairness and accountability and transparency that is required of us as legislators, Mr. Speaker. So on that note, I'd move to adjourn debate on this bill.

**The Speaker:** — The member for Regina Douglas Park has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 606. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

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

**The Speaker:** — The Government House Leader has moved to adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — This House stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:29.]





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