



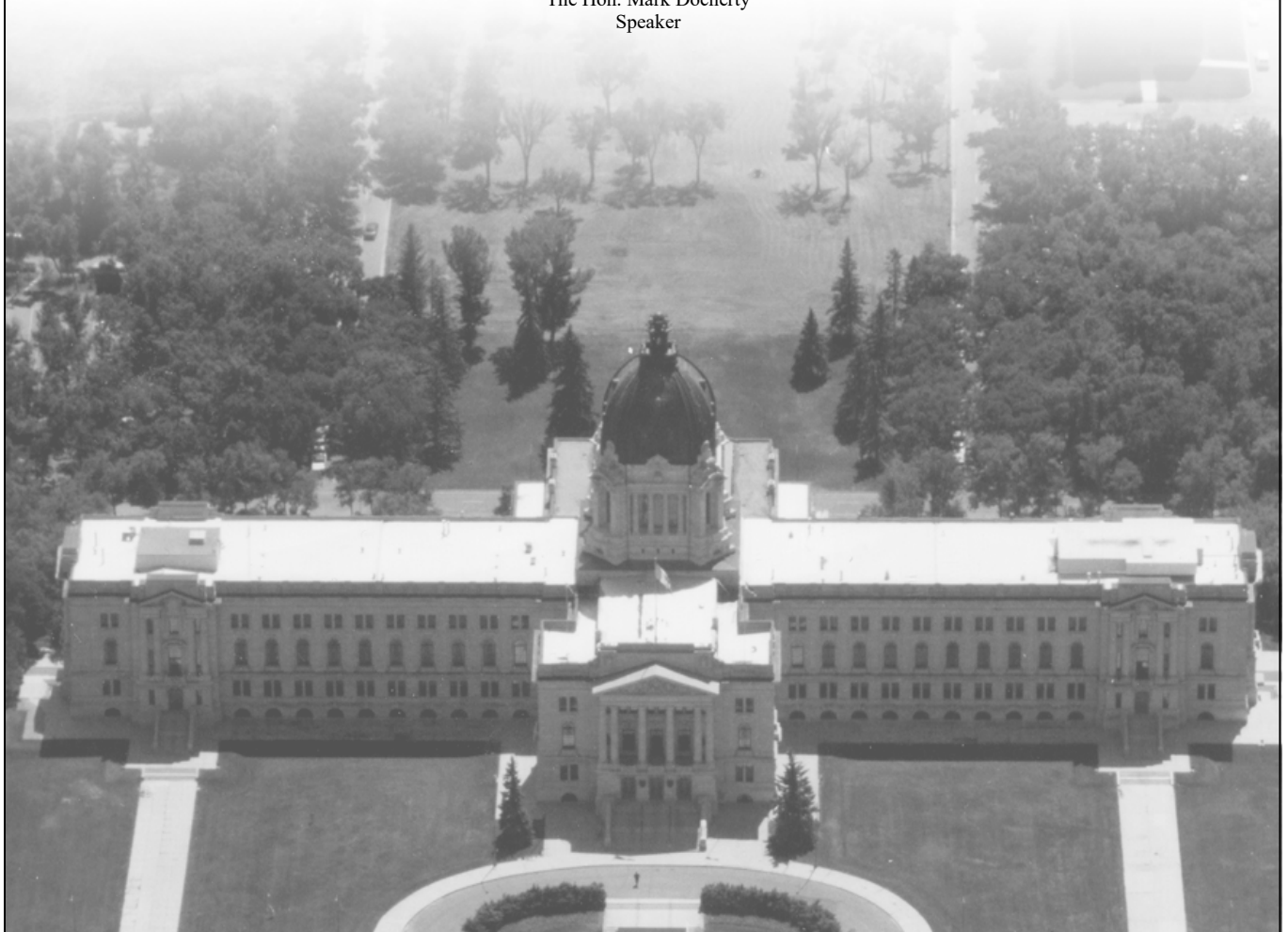
FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

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



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
4th Session — 28th Legislature

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

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Lambert , Lisa — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)	Vacant — Regina Walsh Acres
Lawrence , Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)	Vacant — Saskatoon Eastview

Party Standings: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 46; New Democratic Party (NDP) — 13; Vacant — 2

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

The Speaker: — Well welcome back, everyone, to the spring sitting of the legislature.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Pleasure to take my feet, rise in the Assembly, and to make an introduction to someone seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. If I could make a bit of an extended introduction . . . Just so I'm okay with the member from Indian Head-Milestone, leave to make an extended introduction?

The Speaker: — The member has asked for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Great to get off to a good start here. I'd like to introduce to you and all members of the Assembly someone seated in your gallery. I'm speaking of course of Meara Conway. Meara Conway is the newly, duly nominated candidate for the Regina Elphinstone-Centre New Democrats. She'll be carrying the standard forward in the next campaign.

And, Mr. Speaker, in Meara there's someone who's a fine lawyer, an accomplished musician, someone who comes from a family with a long tradition of involvement and engagement in the public life of Regina and Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, Meara's got deep roots in the Cathedral Village part of the Regina Elphinstone-Centre constituency, and someone who's a hard worker, a good listener, and I think will acquit the job finely, Mr. Speaker.

I'm getting a bit of side chatter from my colleagues about various ways in which this is a marked improvement, and I'll let the record speak for itself in that regard soon enough, Mr. Speaker. But it's good to see Meara Conway here today at her Legislative Assembly, and I'd ask all members to give her a warm welcome to this Assembly.

The Speaker: — No more introductions?

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions once again today on behalf of concerned residents, communities, people from across Saskatchewan as it relates to the damage the Sask Party caused to the economy with the

imposition of the PST [provincial sales tax] onto things like construction labour and really a doubling of the PST take. A historic billion-dollar increase to PST in this province that's cost and hit Saskatchewan households hard. The average household is now paying more than \$800 per year more in PST than they were just four years ago, Mr. Speaker, and we see that reflected in so many aspects of our weakened economy, Mr. Speaker.

When you look at the imposition of the PST onto construction labour, quite simply this is the epitome of a job-killing tax, Mr. Speaker, and sadly the results speak for themselves. Permits that are down all across Saskatchewan, important projects that have been shelved, thousands of hard-working tradespeople, Mr. Speaker, that have lost their job and that have been forced from our province.

The prayer reads as follows:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Sask Party government to stop saddling families and businesses with the costs of their mismanagement and immediately reinstate the PST exemption on construction and stop hurting Saskatchewan businesses and families.

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

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Lloydminster.

Ms. Young: — 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 citizens of Lloydminster and Marshall. I do so present.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for a \$15 minimum wage. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm doing this on behalf of the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan who want to bring to our attention the following: that Saskatchewan now has the lowest minimum wage in Canada, and that a minimum wage should never be a poverty wage. But, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people working full time at minimum wage are living in poverty and that a \$15-an-hour minimum wage will improve health and well-being and lift Saskatchewan workers out of poverty. Mr. Speaker, we know that a \$15 minimum wage will benefit local businesses and support local economies by putting money in workers' pockets that they will spend in their community.

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

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Saskatchewan Party government to adopt a plan to raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour for all workers.

Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition come from Saskatoon and Maple Creek. I do so present. Thank you.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise this afternoon to present a petition calling on the government to fix the crisis in our classrooms. Those who've signed this petition wish to draw our attention to a number of points: that the Sask Party government's cuts mean that we have falling per-student funding and fewer supports for students; that the Sask Party government's cuts leave educators without the resources that they need to support student learning; and that this government's ignoring of overcrowding in our classrooms, they are doing that by refusing to track and report classroom sizes; and also that the Sask Party government's lack of funding for school infrastructure has led to crumbling and crowded schools right across this province; and finally, Mr. Speaker, that the Sask Party government's failure to invest in our classrooms is having serious consequences today and will continue to into the future.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call upon the Sask Party government to immediately fix the crisis in our classrooms by properly funding the most important investment that we could make, and that is in our children.

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

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today again to present a petition to end unacceptable emergency room wait times. These citizens wish to bring to our attention that despite the Sask Party government's promise to eliminate emergency room wait times in 2012, wait times in Saskatchewan's emergency rooms continue to grow. And instead of making smart investments to meet emergency room targets, the Sask Party government watered down targets to the point that they no longer exist, and that the Sask Party has cut funding to address emergency room wait times, and has no meaningful strategy to get emergency room wait times under control.

I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Sask Party government to fully fund and execute a plan, as they promised to do in 2012, to lower and eventually end ER wait times across Saskatchewan.

This particular petition is signed by individuals from Saskatoon

and Hagen, Mr. Speaker. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Quality of Life in Saskatchewan

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's an incredible place to live, but life here is getting harder. People are stressed out about whether they can make ends meet. Their costs keep going up while education and health keep getting cut, and families are falling further behind. The fact is that the Premier of this Sask Party government is too busy pointing fingers to fix what's happening for working families. They're letting people down by cutting health care and education, selling off our Crown corporations, letting their friends cash in while the rest of us struggle.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan NDP [New Democratic Party] believes that just getting by isn't good enough. We have a leader and a team that listens and understands the challenges families are facing today. Our team has practical solutions that will stop the cuts, protect the Crowns, and invest in people — health care services when families need them, starting with shorter wait times and expanding home care for seniors; hiring more teachers and EAs [educational assistant] to fix the problems facing our classrooms; creating good jobs by putting Saskatchewan workers and businesses first, not out-of-province and US [United States] companies like the Sask Party is doing; phasing in a \$15-an-hour minimum wage; and clean energy that creates good jobs, lower utility bills, and builds a strong future.

Instead of letting people down, Mr. Speaker, we'll build a stronger province that lifts families up by putting people first.

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

2019 Prince Albert Citizen of the Year

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to be from Prince Albert and any time I can brag about the city and its people I'll gladly do so. Mr. Speaker, in December the Prince Albert Kinsmen Club and the *Prince Albert Daily Herald* announced its 2019 Citizen of the Year, which was Janet Carriere. Janet is truly a one-of-a-kind woman. She's incredibly caring and humble and looks out for the benefits of all people, always putting their needs ahead of her own.

Janet is the executive director of the Indian and Métis Friendship Centre in Prince Albert and she was nominated for her volunteerism and advocacy for homelessness, addictions, and mental health. Mr. Speaker, the friendship centre provides holistic healing to Indigenous peoples by integrating the Indigenous culture into its programs, something Janet is incredibly passionate about.

Janet is a member of several community boards including the Board of Police Commissioners, the Community Advisory Board for Homelessness, Prince Albert Community Housing, and the Prince Albert Indigenous Coalition. She is also the president of the Aboriginal Friendship Centres and advisor for the

commemorative day for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women.

Mr. Speaker, Janet Carriere exemplifies the very best of Prince Albert and the very best of Saskatchewan and I cannot think of anyone more deserving of this award. The city of Prince Albert and the province of Saskatchewan is a better and stronger community with the efforts of people like Janet. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Pink Shirt Day

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to recognize all those who wore pink on February the 26th for Pink Shirt Day. The goal of Pink Shirt Day is to educate and take action against violence and bullying, and this year's theme was Lift Each Other Up. This is the day when we can all take a stand in favour of diversity, compassion, and inclusion.

Although we have seen progress, we all know that bullying continues to be a problem in our schools and in our places of work and on social media. A younger generation is growing up and seeing great potential in their futures, but they also see a rapidly developing world where fear and anger have outlets that many parents hadn't even heard of. And even though we all know that bullying is all too common, we're seeing more and more kids grappling with mental health issues, and the government's cuts have left our schools with fewer and fewer people providing these vital mental health supports. Kids deserve our help, and underfunding has to stop in order to do so.

[13:45]

Pink Shirt Day began in a school after a student was bullied for wearing pink, and that is why I want to especially thank so many teachers and students who led this observance in their schools and in their classrooms, Mr. Speaker. Teachers in our province are showing real, united resolve in many ways, Mr. Speaker, to stand up for what is best for their students. And I want to thank them for their efforts today and every day.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood.

Financial Literacy Courses Offered to Saskatchewan Students

Ms. Lambert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to talk about the new financial literacy courses that are now being offered to all high school students across the province.

Financial literacy 20 and 30 were piloted by 20 teachers in 12 school divisions and two First Nations education authorities. The new financial literacy electives can be used to fulfill the practical and applied arts and arts education requirement for high school graduation.

The announcement last month gave me great pleasure, as I was a strong advocate for incorporating financial literacy programs into our education curriculum when I was a Saskatoon school board trustee. Mr. Speaker, I brought forward a financial literacy

resolution to the Saskatchewan School Boards Association's annual general meeting in 2015 with the support of my school board and the SCSBA [Saskatchewan Catholic School Boards Association].

The financial literacy courses will address financial topics and affect decisions that students will have to make once they leave high school and embark on a lifelong financial journey. The classes will touch upon more complex topics such as home ownership, debt management, and planning for the future. The courses will also discuss the importance of investments and consciously using one's skills, ability, and time to enhance the well-being of community and self. Having even a basic understanding of financial management will help prepare students to make important decisions, like buying a first house or a first vehicle, a little easier. Thank you.

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

2019 Moose Jaw Citizen of the Year and Group of the Year

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On January 28th, the 2019 Moose Jaw Chamber of Commerce Citizen and Group of the Year Awards were held. This year Krystal Chow was named the 2019 Citizen of the Year. Krystal is the friendly face you'll see at the Warriors game, and she lends a hand with the Warriors Booster Club. And, Mr. Speaker, she has been an integral part of the numerous fundraisers for the Dr. F.H. Wigmore Hospital and the Moose Jaw Humane Society. She is a big sister in the Big Brothers Big Sisters program and last month she was one of the fantastic volunteers who made the Scotties Tournament of Hearts the success that it was.

Mr. Speaker, the awards also recognize the outstanding community group in Moose Jaw. This year Moose Jaw Families for Change was presented with the 2019 Group of the Year Award. Families for Change has been promoting opportunities for people of all abilities in the community since 2000. Mr. Speaker, they have raised funds for other organizations and this past year the organization opened the Kinsmen Cafe to employ people with varying abilities.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating the nominees and winners for being fantastic community leaders in Moose Jaw.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Rosetown-Elrose.

NHL Alumni Play Fundraiser in Beechy

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sometimes, Mr. Speaker, the show must go on and that's exactly what happened this past weekend in Beechy. Originally there was a hockey game scheduled between the local Beechy team and the Montreal Canadiens Alumni team to raise funds for major upgrades to the community arena. But unfortunately the alumni team had to cancel their plans. This left organizers in a tight spot. Either cancel the fundraiser they'd been planning for months or work quickly to find a solution.

Mr. Speaker, we all know Saskatchewan people aren't quitters,

so the organizers sprang into action contacting as many people as they could with connections to former NHL [National Hockey League] players. With help from Darcy Hordichuk and the NHL Alumni Association, the response was overwhelming. Former players like Todd Warriner, Mason Raymond, and Clarke Wilm all took the ice, along with Stewart Valley's own Travis Moen.

Mr. Speaker, comedian Kelly Taylor was also able to attend and he had the crowd in stitches. The game was extra special for some local kids who were invited into the locker rooms between periods. Mr. Speaker, what a great event it was. Justin Dubasov and his committee of organizers did an absolutely amazing job.

Saskatchewan communities have a long history of banding together in the face of adversity and, Mr. Speaker, if we ever need another example of Saskatchewan small-town resilience, Beechy is a shining example. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

University of Saskatchewan Teams Win Canada West Championships

Mr. Olason: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our student athletes at the University of Saskatchewan have always made our province proud and this weekend was no exception. Mr. Speaker, on Friday night the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] Huskies women's basketball team beat the Alberta Pandas 62 to 51, winning the Canada West finals. The U of S Huskies women's basketball team is now heading to the U Sports national championships in Ottawa this week.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the women's basketball team wasn't the only Huskies team to win big this weekend. The U of S men's hockey team also won the Canada West finals. Mr. Speaker, on Saturday the Huskies battled the UBC [University of British Columbia] Thunderbirds at Merlis Belsher Place and won 3 to 1. The men's hockey team now gets a week off before they head to the University Cup in Halifax on March 12th.

Saskatchewan's student athletes demonstrate incredible amounts of courage and determination in their athletics while also balancing their academic studies. Mr. Speaker, I now invite all members of this Assembly to join me in congratulating the U of S Huskies women's basketball and men's hockey teams on their impressive victories and wish them well as they represent us on the national stage. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Well I'm sure we're going to have nothing but a high level of decorum. So with that, question period.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Preparedness for COVID-19 Outbreak

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Welcome back. Saskatchewan people are concerned about the worldwide spread of the COVID-19 novel coronavirus, concerned about the potential health impacts as well as the potential impacts on the Saskatchewan economy.

I want to thank the Minister of Health for accommodating my request a couple of weeks ago to have a briefing from public health officials. It's very important that we are informed on this. And now that the legislature is back in session and there are a growing number of cases around the world, including in Canada, people are concerned about the potential health and economic impacts locally.

Will the Premier update us today on his plan to prevent infections here in the province, to keep people safe, and as well on how he is preparing to counter whatever economic impact the coronavirus pandemic may have on Saskatchewan, and commit to regular updates here in the Assembly?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank the member opposite for a question on something that is front of mind for myself, front of mind, I know, for the Minister of Health, the Leader of the Opposition, front of mind of so many families, and those in our medical community here in Saskatchewan, across Canada, and really around the world, Mr. Speaker, in the COVID-19 challenge that we are facing here in this world.

I had an update and a briefing from the chief medical health officer late last week, Mr. Speaker. We have discussed this briefly on a premiers' call with respect to what diligence we are taking here in our nation, at our airports, in our preparing in our communities, preparing in our health centres, Mr. Speaker, as well as we are going to quite likely have some further discussions in the next number of days at the Council of Federation table, Mr. Speaker, on an issue that is so paramount and so top of mind here today.

So we continue to work with Dr. Shaw who is co-chairing the federal, territorial, provincial table right now with the federal chief medical health officer, Mr. Speaker. We continue to work with our other provinces and continue to work with the global community to ensure that we can deal with the cases that we have here in Canada, of which we have none to date in Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, we'll continue to work with our partners to ensure that we are taking the greatest steps to keep our families, keep our communities safe.

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

Management of Provincial Economy

Mr. Meili: — Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the economic and trade risks posed by what's happening with coronavirus around the world, the Saskatchewan economy is already in serious trouble. Half of the people in the province describe themselves as being in debt hopelessness, meaning that they wouldn't be able to make their expenses this year without going further into debt.

Under this Premier's watch, since this Premier took office, the wage growth in the province has grown to the lowest in the entire country. And one in four Saskatchewan children are living in poverty. Think about that — one in four children in this province. The Premier tries to spin, tries to tell us that everything's fine, but the fact of the matter is it's not fine. Things are not going well. Will the Premier admit that families in Saskatchewan are

struggling today because of his choices?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, never have I alluded to the fact that there aren't challenges in our economy here in the province of Saskatchewan, an economy that is based on exports, Mr. Speaker. That's why we have taken the initiative, made the investments to enhance our trade relationships around the world, Mr. Speaker. And we'll have more to say on that in the days ahead.

Mr. Speaker, we have faced some headwinds in natural resource prices here in this province. We have faced some headwinds at times with respect to the regulatory environment that is coming from Ottawa. But despite that, Mr. Speaker, over the course of the last decade we've been able to increase the jobs in this province by some 76,000 jobs.

Mr. Speaker, with those careers we have attracted people here from all around the world into our communities. They've brought their families here, Mr. Speaker. Over 175,000 people have chosen to make Saskatchewan their home. We're at the highest population that we've had in the history of the province. It's notwithstanding the headwinds that our export-based economy has experienced more recently in the last few years.

But, Mr. Speaker, as we move forward, we have a plan. We have a plan with 30 targets out to the year 2030, 20 action items to take us through the 2020s. A plan for growth of our communities, a plan for the growth of our populations, a plan, Mr. Speaker, that will continue to build on the strengths of the people and the industry and the economy that we have here in this province, Mr. Speaker. We're proud of that plan. We're proud as we have consulted with the people of the province to bring that plan together. And we look forward to the next number of years of putting it into action.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again with the spin. Once again with taking no responsibility for his own actions and his own choices that have worsened the Saskatchewan economy.

The Premier needs to do his job, acknowledge the problems, and get to work fixing the problems that Saskatchewan people are facing. Bankruptcies are up 24 per cent in this province. That's the highest increase in the entire country. More than half of Saskatchewan families say that if they faced an unexpected \$200 expense, it would break them. They're living paycheque to paycheque. People are stretched. We've got the lowest wage growth, the lowest minimum wage, and the highest number of people walking away from their mortgages.

Will the Premier stop — stop the spin, stop pointing fingers, stop the sweetheart deals for friends and donors, and start working to fix the problems facing Saskatchewan families by raising the minimum wage and committing to a Sask-first procurement model to keep dollars here and employ Saskatchewan workers?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I wasn't

trying to spin any of those facts that I had put on the floor of the legislature, Mr. Speaker. They're facts that are available in documents that the Government of Saskatchewan has put out, Mr. Speaker.

And I have never alluded to the fact that we don't have some challenges in our export-based Saskatchewan economy. I also have never alluded away from the fact that we are taking action where we can to enhance and advance the health and wealth of our economy here in the province, Mr. Speaker, starting with opening up trade offices in three countries around the world to advocate for specific Saskatchewan industries so that we can grow our export-based economy, Mr. Speaker, which is up some 45, 50 per cent over the course of the last 10 years. And that is a source of wealth in our communities, Mr. Speaker.

And we will continue through our plan for growth and ensuring that we make decisions that will allow us to achieve some of the targets that we have put forward to advance our export-based economy, Mr. Speaker, to continue to advance a strong economy here in the province that's relative to the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, that most certainly would result . . . Their governance would result in a weak economy here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

[14:00]

We plan for growth in this province. We plan for that economic growth so that we can reinvest back into our communities with hospitals, with schools, Mr. Speaker, with long-term care facilities in our communities across this province and to ensure that we're able to hire the teachers and nurses and the doctors to offer the services that the people of this province expect their provincial government to be providing.

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

Mr. Meili: — Mr. Speaker, once again and as always, I didn't hear about the Saskatchewan people in that answer. I heard nothing about the people that are stretched and struggling, the people who are hurting because of this government's choices. He fails to acknowledge the way that people are hurting because he knows he's responsible and he knows he's got no idea what to do to fix it. He's got no idea what to do next.

So no wonder he's talking about the potential for a spring election because the last thing he wants, the last thing he wants is for the people of Saskatchewan to have more time to see all the ways he's letting them down, to see all the ways he's failed on the economy, to see all the ways that his choices are hurting them in their real lives.

So the question today, Mr. Speaker: is the Premier going to keep playing games, keep floating trial balloons? Or is he going to give us an honest answer today about whether he'll be breaking Brad Wall's law and calling a snap election?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, what would not help the economy in Saskatchewan today would be the imposition of a carbon tax by the members opposite on our industries, on our industries here in this province, Mr. Speaker, a federal

government carbon tax that is being implemented, supported by the leader opposite, Mr. Speaker, supported by the members opposite — a tax on our economy here in this province that simply isn't necessary. It most certainly does not work, Mr. Speaker.

What we need to do and what we do not hear out of the members opposite is to advocate for our ability to get our products to port, to advocate to ensure that people aren't blockading our rail lines across this nation, Mr. Speaker, to advocate for further pipeline construction so that we can get our product off of the rails, a product that never should have been on the rails in the first place, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is what we will be advocating for so that we can continue to grow our economy and reinvest right back in the communities here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

What would not advance the economy is to promise a billion dollars' worth of items that you have no plan, no plan to pay for, Mr. Speaker. That's what the Leader of the Opposition has done. He has a billion-dollar deficit before we even get going this spring, Mr. Speaker, and that's his starting point.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier likes to talk about the carbon tax because a lot of people in Saskatchewan don't like it. We don't like it either. I don't see a single member on this side of the House that likes Justin Trudeau's carbon tax. It's not right for Saskatchewan. It was designed in Ottawa . . .

[Interjections]

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now this government has put a price on carbon. There is a reasonable role for a price on carbon for the biggest polluters to pay, just like this government has put in place. But Justin Trudeau's carbon tax was designed in Ottawa and it doesn't work for Saskatchewan. No members on this side like it, but I'll tell you who loves it. I'll tell you who loves it, and it's that Premier. And you know why? Because every time we talk about the problems in our economy, he talks about carbon tax. Every time we talk about the problems in health care and education, he talks about carbon tax.

The fact of the matter is he could have come up with a better plan, but he didn't want to. Why would he kill the goose that laid the political golden egg? Why will this Premier not stop trying to profit off people's pain for his own political gain?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, here's a quote: ". . . we applaud the federal government's recent announcement of a minimum price on carbon." That was in the CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] news on October 30th, 2016. That was the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker.

The fact of the matter is, is that he does support Justin Trudeau, Mr. Speaker. The fact of the matter is, is we have a government in this province that are going to continue standing up for the people, the families, the communities, the economy, and the

province of Saskatchewan. We have a Leader of the Opposition that is standing shoulder to shoulder with Justin Trudeau and he quite simply is not on our side, Mr. Speaker, in this province.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Let's keep it down to a dull roar. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, when it comes to what to do with the proceeds of the strength of that economy — and we do have a strong economy, and we are going to continue to build on the strengths of our economy — as I said, we're investing in hospitals; we're investing in long-term care homes, Mr. Speaker. The members opposite closed hospitals — 52 of them. And they closed 1,200 long-term care beds. Mr. Speaker, we're putting the people in those hospitals. We're hiring doctors; we're hiring nurses, Mr. Speaker. Those members opposite, when they had the opportunity, were firing doctors and firing nurses, Mr. Speaker.

We're building schools and putting teachers in those schools. The members opposite, they closed 176 schools. They fired teachers in those schools, Mr. Speaker, and sent them to Alberta and other areas of the province. We will always stand up for the people of this province, Mr. Speaker. We will stand up for the families. And quite simply, the leader opposite, the NDP are just not on our side, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Meili: — Mr. Speaker, this government has failed to get us a better deal with Ottawa, so we have Justin Trudeau's tax instead. They failed to invest in our classrooms, so we have a crisis in our classrooms. They failed on the economy, so people are struggling and stretched all over the province. They failed when it comes to access to health care. Their record is abysmal and getting worse. No wonder the Premier wants to cut bait as quick as he can.

He failed to answer the question as well: when will the people of Saskatchewan be going to the polls? Straight answer, Mr. Premier.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, that's coming from an individual that applauds the federal government's recent announcement of a minimum price on carbon. And to interpret what exactly a minimum price on carbon is, it's a carbon tax on families and industries in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and that member supports it. He supported it each and every step. He's standing shoulder to shoulder with Justin Trudeau on his federally imposed carbon tax.

Mr. Speaker, here's what this government is doing. We're investing in health care centres, Mr. Speaker. You don't have to drive very far from here to see a new hospital in the community of Moose Jaw. While you're in Moose Jaw, you're going to be able to see new schools coming up very shortly, Mr. Speaker. You can drive north to the community of Saskatoon. You can see

the Jim Pattison Hospital, and you can see school after school after school after school in that community. And carry on to Martensville and Warman and see more schools, Mr. Speaker.

And in all of those schools you will see classrooms, additional classrooms with teachers that have been hired, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that our classroom size is approachable and to ensure that the investments that we are making on behalf of the people of this province, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that we will always stand with the families in this province. Again the NDP are not on our side. They are on Justin Trudeau's side.

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

Review of Emergency Health Care Services

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Absolutely no clarity from the Premier in that answer.

But the letter sent by the Saskatchewan Health Authority CEO [chief executive officer] to the Health minister last week was crystal clear about what is needed: “. . . continued investments from the Province to keep pace with growth and address gaps . . .”

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan hospitals and emergency rooms have been over capacity for months. Investments have failed to keep up with growth. And on Thursday the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] released a letter outlining the issues.

Beyond previously announced and already open beds, what is the Premier going to do to deliver on that request from the health authority CEO to get the situation under control?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The letter that the member opposite is referring to is part of a report or review that was done, if you will, by the CEO and senior officials at Saskatchewan Health Authority that I asked them to do last October or November, I believe it was, Mr. Speaker. The issue was raised many, many times in this Assembly.

The situation, Mr. Speaker, with long wait times in ER [emergency room] is a complex one, and it affects not just Saskatchewan but all provinces across the country. It's been discussed many times at Health ministers' conferences and conference calls, Mr. Speaker. The letter the CEO released, Mr. Speaker, it speaks to investments that we've already made, investments that are coming on stream right now, Mr. Speaker. I think the member referred to the announcement I made last week — 36 more medicine beds at Royal University Hospital in Saskatoon — we think will have a significant impact there, and it talks about investments that will be needed in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, government has a responsibility to ensure that the people of this province get the care they need when they need it. Our emergency rooms and hospitals buckle

under the pressure of flu season, something that happens each and every year. I'm hard pressed to see how our health system, already stretched to its limits, would handle the arrival of COVID-19.

The letter to the Health minister last week highlighted a GE Healthcare report commissioned by the SHA and the report of the Accreditation Canada review. In the letter, the CEO notes a few places where things are going well in ERs, but it doesn't tell the full story. Only releasing the best scores is like bringing home your report card and only showing your parents the As but neglecting to talk about the Ds and the Fs. Will the minister show us the full story and release those reports on our ERs today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would respectfully disagree. The CEO in his report talked about . . . I think the scores she's referring to are Accreditation Canada where they said that generally speaking processes put in place by the Saskatchewan Health Authority were rated very high but, Mr. Speaker, the reports also speak to there is where we need to do better.

Mr. Speaker, we need to do better in patient flow. We need to do better in patient flow between the emergency room and acute care and long-term care facilities, Mr. Speaker. So there is a number of areas that we need to improve, Mr. Speaker.

Attached to the letter is some appendices that refer to what we've done so far, Mr. Speaker, things that are in the works that we're going to be doing very soon, Mr. Speaker, and plans for doing more long-term solutions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Management of Government Program Funds

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, over the last 10 years the FNMF [First Nations and Métis Fund] has lost millions of dollars of public money in bad investments and has paid millions more in management fees for those bad investments, Mr. Speaker. Yet just two years ago, the minister responsible said on the record that the FNMF was designed “. . . specifically to help indigenous peoples with start up businesses and encourage that segment to grow.”

So to the minister: how many jobs were created for Indigenous people with the 1.8 million fund that they invested in Brigden Welding back in 2013, a company owned by a then Sask Party MLA's [Member of the Legislative Assembly] stepson?

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

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the First Nations and Métis Fund was created in 2005 with a mandate to provide funding in the form of equity and loans to First Nations and Métis businesses, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this fund was set up by the then NDP government. And the management, I would mention, was sole-sourced to Westcap Mgt. and no RFP [request for proposal] was issued.

Apparently at that time when they were in government, they had

full confidence in Westcap Mgt. to manage this fund, and we still have full confidence in Westcap Mgt. to manage it as well. This fund was set up so that all projects go through a comprehensive due diligence process. And once the due diligence was completed, it was brought back to an independent board of CI [Crown Investments] officials for approval — a process, I might add, that was also set up by the NDP.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, some of these investments were not as successful as we had hoped for, Mr. Speaker. However, I won't apologize that this government wanted to invest in First Nations and Métis businesses that intended to create jobs and economic opportunities in their communities, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, no answer about how many jobs were created and absolutely no answer about that bad investment back in 2013. But, Mr. Speaker, we know that in 2015 right here in this Assembly, Brad Wall described the family in question in that investment as “extended family of the Saskatchewan Party caucus.”

So again to the minister: how many jobs were created for Indigenous people with the 1.8 million public dollars that Brigden Welding got in 2013? Why has this investment tanked so badly? And what's the plan to get that \$1.8 million back?

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

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the First Nation and Métis Fund invested 1.8 million into Infinite Investments, Mr. Speaker. Now Infinite was the economic development corporation of the Western Region of the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan. Infinite had an independent board of directors that provided oversight into the economic development activities of the region. The investment facilitated Infinite's ability to purchase a 30 per cent interest in a welding company called Brigden alongside of its existing owners, two of which were also Métis. Brigden ran the generators and light standards primarily in the oil and gas industry, and the company was hit hard in the downturn.

[14:15]

Mr. Speaker, the member from Nutana, in an attempt to smear someone else, made a reference that there's a connection to a former MLA. Yet I would hope the member opposite did some further research to discover that another owner of that company is a former provincial NDP candidate that has donated thousands of dollars to the NDP, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, everyone knows there's been a downturn in the oil patch, but when public money is invested there's an expectation that it turn a profit or at the very least create jobs. And certainly the gentleman we invested in seems to have done quite well, Mr. Speaker. In May of 2015, his family was right here in this Assembly and Brad Wall took that opportunity to describe the new sports car that Mr. Brigden had just purchased:

... Al's son Preston yesterday took delivery of the province's only 2015 Hellcat Hemi Challenger. There will only be nine of them in Canada. I saw a picture of it. It's sublime, is the name of the Mopar colour. It's a great modern muscle car, Mr. Speaker, so I'm sure Al's a very proud grandfather today.

So, Mr. Speaker, that car had a \$100,000 price tag back in 2015. So if Preston Brigden could afford to put down \$100,000 on a muscle car, what's to stop CIC from realizing on our investment? And what's the holdup in getting that money back?

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

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. It's good that the member opposite has such a keen interest in vehicles, Mr. Speaker. I do as well, and so that's very nice.

Mr. Speaker, Brigden Welding was not lent money by the fund. Mr. Speaker, that money was lent to Infinite, which was an economic development arm of the Western Region 3 Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I won't apologize for the good work and the intention of that fund to help First Nations and Métis businesses get established in this province, Mr. Speaker. And if the members opposite don't believe that, why don't they just ask some First Nations, maybe the Muskowekwan First Nations or maybe the File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council, for their thoughts on the fund? And maybe ask what they thought of how the fund was managed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

New Regulations for Legal Name Changes

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to rise today to announce that new regulations in *The Change of Name Act, 1995* were implemented February 18th to prevent convicted sex offenders from legally changing their name. The Government of Saskatchewan is very concerned that individuals who have been convicted of committing sexual offences may change their name in an attempt to hide their identity and to offend again.

Mr. Speaker, this is why our government has taken action in the interest of public safety. We will now require criminal record checks when someone applies to legally change their name. If a criminal record check shows a criminal record or is inconclusive, then that person will need to be fingerprinted and provide a certified criminal record check that shows the offences.

Mr. Speaker, over 20 different offences now prohibit an individual from changing their name. Most of the offences are offences against children. However some of these offences, such as sexual assault and incest, can also be committed against adults. These offences can have a lifelong impact on victims, their families, and their communities.

Mr. Speaker, every province has a law that allows people to

change their names. Some provinces even require people to get a criminal record check before they get a name change. However, I'm proud to say that Saskatchewan is the first province to prohibit legal name changes for convicted sex offenders. Our priority is to ensure the safety and security of Saskatchewan families and communities. These amendments to *The Change of Name Regulations* continue our ongoing work in combatting child exploitation and abuse.

For years the Ministry of Corrections and Policing has provided funding to internet child exploitation units, also known as ICE units, in Saskatoon, Prince Albert, and Regina. These ICE units are a critical component of this province's fight against child abuse and often work closely with their counterparts in other provinces to rescue children from abusive circumstances. The Ministry of Justice and Attorney General also funds community-based outreach and support services to help sexually exploited youth, and our victim/witness services positions provide court orientation and support for child witnesses and other vulnerable victims and witnesses to help reduce fear, anxiety, and trauma when testifying.

Mr. Speaker, we are working hard to make Saskatchewan a place where all citizens, especially our children, can be safe. As the government, we will always stand with the victims and do everything we can to ensure that justice is served. These changes are another example of our ongoing commitment to protecting our children and securing a safe future for Saskatchewan families. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the minister for providing a copy of his remarks prior to question period for my review. This is a consideration that the government has been looking at for the past couple of years. We first saw it in a May 2018 news article, Mr. Speaker, and then the subsequent announcement about a month ago in February, Mr. Speaker. It's a regulation change — it's not a statutory change — so we learned about it through the media reports. It's a different level of scrutiny than we would normally have in statutory changes, Mr. Speaker.

As had been mentioned, this change is largely because of some recent high-profile stories about some offenders who came to Saskatchewan and changed their names, and the problems that resulted because of that. The government, as has been mentioned, will be requiring that anyone who will request a name change to also provide a criminal record. Mr. Speaker, we will be monitoring this new change to watch for any intended and unintended outcomes. Thank you.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on House Services.

Standing Committee on House Services

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on House Services to inform the Assembly that the

committee filed its 14th report with the Clerk on December 5th, 2019, pursuant to rule 136(6). The report reflects the changes made to the ratio of the members on the standing committees, as well as changes to committee membership. And, Mr. Speaker, as you recall, those ratios had to change because of the two seats that are currently empty: Walsh Acres and Eastview, Mr. Speaker. So those absences have reflected the change in the membership on the committees.

Therefore I will move:

That the 14th report of the Standing Committee on House Services be now concurred in.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Deputy Chair:

That the 14th report of the Standing Committee on House Services be now concurred in.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask for leave to move two motions with regard to committee membership.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has asked for leave. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

MOTIONS

Committee Membership

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

That the name of Delbert Kirsch be submitted for the name of Eric Olauson on the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

The Speaker: — It has been moved:

That the name of Delbert Kirsch be substituted for the name of Eric Olauson on the Standing Committee of Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the Government House

Leader.

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

That the name of Eric Olauson be substituted for the name of Delbert Kirsch on the Standing Committee on the Economy.

The Speaker: — It has been moved:

That the name of Eric Olauson be substituted for the name of Delbert Kirsch on the Standing Committee on the Economy.

Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 183

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Duncan that **Bill No. 183 — *The Fisheries (Saskatchewan) Act, 2019*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Pedersen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan we have over 100,000 water bodies and over 50,000 of those, Mr. Speaker, are fish-bearing water bodies. In Saskatchewan we've got 69 fish species, most of which are native to Saskatchewan, although there's around a dozen that are introduced or invasive.

Mr. Speaker, fisheries are a very important part of our provincial economy. A recent study found that there was over \$600 million of spending alone, that fisheries contributed just shy of \$400,000 to provincial GDP [gross domestic product]. Mr. Speaker, fisheries create and sustain thousands of jobs. My information, Mr. Speaker, is that over \$2.8 billion of employment income in Saskatchewan on an annual basis is due to fisheries and \$80 million of tax revenue for the provincial treasury.

And of course, Mr. Speaker, there's other benefits, the benefits to bringing thousands of tourists to our province from around the country, from around the globe, to take part in angling. There's the very intangible but important benefit to our own residents of Saskatchewan of simply being able to get out in nature, enjoy time with their family, enjoy some quiet time away from the hustle and bustle of their ordinary life perhaps.

And it actually reminds me, Mr. Speaker, of a time I was out at Echo Lake with my daughter and one of her friends. And as I recall, she was probably about eight or nine years old. And I don't

know if you've ever been fishing with children, Mr. Speaker, but when you do that, at least in my experience, you pretty much have to assume from the get-go that you yourself are not going to get any time in fishing, that you're basically going to spend the time, you know, untangling fishing lines and tying on hooks and putting on bait and pulling weeds off of lines and all that sort of stuff. And so I had basically resigned myself to that, but lo and behold, Mr. Speaker, we went out in the canoe maybe 100 metres from shore and by golly my daughter's friend caught a really nice-sized walleye. And so I then had to make sure that didn't get tangled in my daughter's line, and we had to unhook it.

[14:30]

But this underscores the importance of those opportunities, not just to my daughter and her friend — you know, this is an experience ingrained on their memory — but to so many of the residents of our province. It's a very important part of the legacy of our province. We're still fortunate to have close relationships with nature.

And, Mr. Speaker, I want to mention that because the importance of that relationship also then causes us to think about what the risks are to that. And, Mr. Speaker, the risks to our fishery are significant. There's the risk of improper management whether it's for instance by overfishing. Mr. Speaker, there's the risk of introduced and invasive species. And I know, Mr. Speaker, there's a couple of animal species that have caught our attention recently, most notably Prussian carp and zebra mussels. And if you've spent any time in Saskatchewan over the last decade angling, I think you'd probably be . . . it would come as no surprise to you that zebra mussels are on everybody's radar.

These aren't the only risks. We also have risks of habitat loss. We have the risks of damage to habitat. And there's a multitude of activities, human activities that can cause that, whether it's farming, whether it's industrial activity, whether it's recreational activity, you know, for instance of cottagers. And of course, what we hear about all the time now, there's a risk that climate change will also impact our fisheries.

So, Mr. Speaker, these risks are significant. They require, you know, important monitoring by our ministry to make sure that this extremely important resource is protected, not just for those of us who are living in Saskatchewan today but for hopefully generations and generations to come of future Saskatchewan residents.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is part of the ministry's plan to make sure that there is a solid management plan in place for Saskatchewan's fisheries. But, Mr. Speaker, legislation is only part of the solution. It's only part of the plan. And, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about . . . The Provincial Auditor recently reviewed the operations of the ministry and the fisheries unit of the province and sadly, Mr. Speaker, that report was not great. The Provincial Auditor noted some key shortcomings of the ministry. The Provincial Auditor pointed out that the ministry needs to develop specific management plans for key high-risk fish species and high-usage water bodies. And the auditor gave the ministry basically a not-good-enough grade on that particular point.

The Provincial Auditor also noted that the ministry needs to do a

better job of assessing fish populations and their health, using established, basically proven methods: sampling techniques, scientific-based protocols, and data collection. This is important because it's one thing, of course, for you or I to go out over the years and observe anecdotally what we think might be happening, but really what you need is scientific, repeatable, consistent sampling and monitoring of not just water quality, but fish health.

And lastly, Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Auditor noted that the ministry needed to do a better job of actually reporting to the public, and the ministry of course, on what it was finding and the assessment of those water bodies.

One of the things that the Provincial Auditor didn't really comment on but I have some concern about is whether the ministry's plans, whether the plans themselves are any good. The auditor's report was basically looking at whether the ministry was following its own plan, whether it's living up to its own plans, but the Provincial Auditor didn't really look at whether the plan itself was good enough. And that's a little bit of a concern. And I say that, Mr. Speaker, because of those 50,000 water bodies in the province that are fish bearing, the problem is, is that really there's only a couple of dozen of those that the ministry is checking on a regular, or I shouldn't even say regular basis, on an annual basis.

I just want to find, if you give me a second here, Mr. Speaker, I want to find the actual number because I think it's actually important to get on the record what that number is. Mr. Speaker, I'm having trouble finding it, but it's under a couple of dozen water bodies that are checked on an annual basis. Mr. Speaker, that's just not good enough. When we've got 50,000 lakes and rivers that are fish bearing, a couple dozen just isn't enough.

One of the things the Provincial Auditor noted was that even of the lakes and rivers that the ministry had designated as requiring a more frequent checking, that the ministry wasn't living up to checking those on its own. The auditor noted that since 2010 the ministry had only completed barely half of the actions that it had set for itself. So what we see here is there's just not enough follow-through happening in the ministry to make sure that our fishery health is being maintained.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, what the Provincial Auditor found was that the ministry wasn't checking enough lakes and rivers. It wasn't checking them frequently enough. And one other thing I found out, Mr. Speaker, was that the ministry is actually relying far too much on volunteers to do monitoring of our water bodies. And that's because they just don't have the personnel within the ministry to do that. One of the things that's happened over the past few years is the province has stopped monitoring shoreline alterations. Positions have been cut in the fisheries unit.

And so, Mr. Speaker, what we can see is that while it's great to have legislation, new legislation that will empower the minister to do a bunch of things, it'll empower the minister to monitor water quality. It'll empower the minister to monitor fish populations and the health of the fishery. It'll empower the minister to manage that resource. It'll empower the minister to enforce rules and to respond to invasive species. But, Mr. Speaker, without actually putting the rubber to the road and actually having personnel in place to do that monitoring, actually

making sure that monitoring takes place to make sure that those rules are enforced, Mr. Speaker, the legislation simply on its own isn't enough.

Now this bill will be moving to committee and the official opposition, myself and my colleagues, will be making sure that we are consulting with stakeholders to make sure that the ministry has done the appropriate consultations, whether that's with groups like the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation or with Indigenous stakeholders. There's lots of communities out there and lots of businesses and people in Saskatchewan that are affected by fisheries, as I mentioned. So we'll be checking with them to make sure that the ministry is actually on the mark here with this bill.

And so with that, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to conclude my comments on this.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the minister that Bill No. 183 be now read a second time. Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this bill be committed? I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I designate that Bill No. 183 be referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

The Speaker: — This bill stands committed to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

Bill No. 184

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Duncan that **Bill No. 184 — *The Fisheries (Saskatchewan) Consequential Amendments Act, 2019/Loi de 2019 corrélative de la loi intitulée *The Fisheries (Saskatchewan) Act, 2019**** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Pedersen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't want to outdo my eloquence in remarks in the previous bill, so I think I'll just conclude my remarks and simply say that what I said on the last bill applies equally to this bill.

The Speaker: — The question for the Assembly is the motion by the minister that Bill No. 184 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — Second reading of

this bill.

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this bill be committed? I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I designate that Bill No. 184 be referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

The Speaker: — This bill stands committed to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

Bill No. 200

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 200 — *The Saskatchewan Employment Amendment Act, 2019*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today to enter into the debate on Bill No. 200, *An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Employment Act*. I think that some of these amendments are outstanding and I'll be speaking to them specifically. I understand really, if you would think in the past, this would be amending three bills or three pieces of legislation: the labour standards leaves Act, a section of that Act; and the occupational health and safety and *The Trade Union Act*.

The parts that deal with the Labour Relations Board, talking about decisions and adjudication processes, I've had the opportunity to canvass various unions. And they are supportive in fact of many of those amendments, and in fact I understand that they were asked for. So this is a good thing and so we are supportive of that.

There are major amendments around the radiation health officers or radiation health. And I understand, I would assume this would be something that would come up in committee, that that in fact had probably gone through the committee process. It's very complex and very technical, and I would assume that the committee would have been fully engaged in that.

There's two other parts, and these are the leaves that I think are very important to speak to and recognize, and that is extending parental leave from 63 weeks to 71 weeks and also providing for 86 weeks of parental leave if two employees are taking leave with respect to the same child. So it's a very important thing, a very good thing, especially as we try to create workplaces that are more family friendly. And we know the more that we can do to support young children in their families and get that great start to a family is really, really critical. So we're really excited to see that.

The one part that I am very excited to see in this legislation, it talks about expanding the candidate and public office leave to include employees that are running for election for band councils. Now you may remember and you may even have taken advantage of this, Mr. Speaker. For anyone running for federal office, provincial office, school board, or municipal office, they had the right to ask for leave to engage in the campaign and, if they were successful, ask for leave for their job when they finished their

term in whatever position.

Ironically that wasn't the case with Indigenous people. If they were running for their band office, they could not ask for leave. Now some people might say, well it's a federal issue. Well of course the rules around First Nation largely are federal, but the workplace that they would be leaving largely are governed by *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*. And that's what that speaks to, where you are working and that you can leave a Crown corporation or an independent business or whatever, take leave for a nomination and run for your band council now, and if you're successful, work and do your work as a band councillor. I think this is a very, very important move. I think this speaks to truth and reconciliation. I think it's a very good move for the minister.

[14:45]

I would tell you that I've kind of named this Janna's Law after Janna Pratt, Janna Pratt of Muscowpetung First Nations. She approached me back in 2016 at a SFL [Saskatchewan Federation of Labour] convention and she pointed out to me the inconsistencies in this legislation. I wrote the minister at the time to say we should look at section 254.

Now I've talked to the minister. The minister tells me he's been approached by several other people about the same idea. So like any good idea, it comes to many people at the same time. They recognize there are problems, and we should fix. And like the minister said in his second reading speech, this is a good idea. It's the right idea; we should do it. And I agree. We should do this and we should support it.

So I call it Janna's Law for Janna Pratt who brought it to my attention. She's an exciting First Nations woman who wants to serve her community well. But she felt that she was being held back by our labour laws, and now we've fixed that. And I'm really excited to see what will happen to Janna and First Nations people across this province. And maybe this will be a way to help First Nations people engage in their First Nations band council elections. I certainly hope so, and if that's something we can do in this room, in this Chamber, then we are here to support that.

So, Mr. Speaker, there are some good things in this. I really want to say to the minister, congratulations on the Janna's Law aspect, amending section 2-54 to allow First Nations people the leaves that are necessary to run in their band council. That won't be a barrier. And if we can do all that we can do to stop these barriers, that's a good thing. So, Mr. Speaker, with that we will now be moving Bill No. 200, *An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Employment Act* to committee. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the minister that Bill No. 200 be now read a second time. Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this bill be

committed? I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I designate that Bill No. 200 be referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

The Speaker: — This bill stands committed to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

Bill No. 205

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 205 — *The Children's Law Act, 2019/Loi de 2019 sur le droit de l'enfance*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, it is a delight to stand and enter into the debate on *An Act respecting Certain Family Law Matters concerning Children and making consequential amendments to other Acts*. This as well is one that I'm very interested in, and it's one that's taken an interesting path. And of course as we know, in our communities, families are all so unique and wonderful and different and special, and this piece of legislation recognizes that. It's a good piece of . . . There are some really good pieces in here, and I really want to reflect on some of these things.

It updates definitions from previous legislation including decision-making responsibility, parenting time, guardianship of the property of a child, assisted reproduction, and talks about family violence, which we need to make sure in a province like Saskatchewan that we do all that we can to protect the rights of children who are in circumstances where there is family violence. And it's one that we have seen and recognized, unfortunately, in Saskatchewan, that we have amongst the highest rates in Canada, if not the highest rates of family violence. So this is very, very important. And it sets out the rights and obligations of parents and guardians with regards to decision making and parenting time and measures to enforce compliance with those obligations.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is no small piece of legislation. It's an update from, I believe, the '90s. And when I pull it out, it's a pretty big piece of legislation and it's one that we really need to pay attention to. And I think that these times — when we try to make our province the best place to raise a family, raise our children, make sure they are educated, and they are in the best health that they can be — it's very important that we have updates to legislation like this. And I want to say that, particularly when we're dealing with issues around mental health for young people, particularly around suicide rates, this piece of legislation should go a long way to help that and we really hope that it does.

Mr. Speaker, the reason that I am so interested in this piece of legislation is friends had come forward and pointed out some of the shortcomings in the current legislation that we had, and these are people who are no strangers to this House. They have been very active in human rights in Saskatoon, and I'm talking about Jai Richards and Nicole White. And they have been so strong in advocating for queer rights that when they became a couple and then they had a child, they became acutely aware of the shortcomings of the legislation and how Jai would have to become — even though he's recognized as the father — that he

would be recognized as other parent because of the current regulations and laws and that just wasn't satisfactory. He really wanted to say, this is not right. Families today. . . He is the father and Nicole is the mother. And so it was interesting.

We brought forward a private member's bill a couple of years ago, and I'm delighted that the minister at the time took a look at that and recognized that there was a need to do more work in this area. And that work led to the Law Reform Commission report, very significant report, *Assisted Reproduction & Parentage*. A very important piece of research. And this is important because this is happening right across Canada, right across Canada, and the issue around assisted reproduction technologies. And so this was, whether it was same-sex parents or parents that could not have a child through natural reproduction but chose to use assisted reproduction, there are major, significant issues that they would face in this old, outdated legislation.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I have to say that the part that I'm very interested in is part 7 and child status and parenting. And if you will allow me, Mr. Speaker, I was talking to Nicole this morning, and I said this would be really actually referred to Alice's law because Alice is the one who really caused this to happen. And so I'm pleased that in *Hansard*, that when we look at this section about child status that, in my mind and I hope in others, that they will think about Alice and this is Alice's law, and the good work that Jai Richards and Nicole White did.

I have to recognize the minister was willing to meet with Nicole and Jai. In fact we had met just last summer and we were all hopeful that something like this would happen and it did. So this is good news.

Jai takes note that it took them 18 months since Alice's birth that they had actually started on a legal process. And they did actually go through the legal process which is something that families shouldn't have to do. It takes a lot of time but it also takes a lot of money. And he writes that the law currently states that only biological parents can be listed as mother or father, but a judge could also rule that another parent can be listed.

But this is very, very important and I think in recognizing the changes here, this is a good thing. And I want to say to the minister, thank you for visiting with Nicole and Jai to hear their story and actually meeting Alice. Alice was at the beginning as well. And this is good to see this here. But as I said, it is a process at work from a private member's bill to the Law Reform Commission doing their good work here. I want to thank them for that work. It's a very thorough document and the outcomes are, I think, very good. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move this to committee.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the minister that Bill No. 205 be now read a second time. Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this bill be committed? I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I designate that Bill No. 205, *The Children's Law Act, 2019* be referred to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

The Speaker: — This bill stands committed to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Bill No. 206

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 206 — *The Children's Law Consequential Amendments Act, 2019*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to move the bill to committee. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the minister that Bill No. 206 be now read a second time. Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this bill be committed? I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — To the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

The Speaker: — This bill stands committed to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Bill No. 187

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 187 — *The Administration of Estates Amendment Act, 2019/Loi modificative de 2019 sur l'administration des successions*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise this afternoon and enter into the debate around Bill No. 187, *The Administration of Estates Amendment Act*. Mr. Speaker, this bill makes several changes to *The Administration of Estates Act*. Some of them are to mirror some changes that are in another bill, Mr. Speaker, that's already been moved to committee. Others are to update some language, to amend some sections to coordinate more closely with what is current practice, and again to make some changes to the fee provisions, Mr. Speaker.

And that's the one in particular that I think most of the public would be interested in, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't necessarily make any changes to probate fees. It will not increase probate fees, but there will be a new application fee for every application for letters made pursuant to the legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I will have the opportunity to ask some of the more specific questions that I have about the legislation to officials, and to further that work I am prepared to allow this bill to move on to its next stage.

The Speaker: — The question for the Assembly is a motion by the minister that Bill No. 187 be now read a second time. Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this bill be committed? I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

The Speaker: — This bill stands committed to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Bill No. 189

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 189 — *The Coroners Amendment Act, 2019*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's always a pleasure to join in to adjourned debates on especially the first day of our spring session that's happening today. It's exciting to get back to work and get back to this legislative business.

So today I'm going to talk a little bit and add my remarks on some of the proposed changes for *The Coroners Amendment Act*. We know that the Saskatchewan Coroners Service provides a very valuable service in our province, and so making sure that whatever legislation that we have available helps them do their job more efficiently and effectively, that's very important. They provide a service for everyone in Saskatchewan that has lost a loved one when they investigate the sudden and unexpected and unnatural deaths so that they can provide some recommendations hopefully so we can improve the health and safety and quality of life for all citizens of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

[15:00]

So my understanding is that there's approximately 80 coroners in Saskatchewan, and their job is to determine the identity of a deceased person and how, when, and where the person died, and identify the dangerous practices or conditions that may have led

to their death and help educate the public with regards to what we can do to make our communities and environments safer for all.

So this is very sensitive in nature, the services that they provide. And individuals who work in this office are very professional, but whatever resources we could provide as a province to help make their services better for families that are having a loved one have their death investigated is important. And I believe some of the changes that are going to be made within this particular bill is meant to do that.

We also know another important role that the coroner services provide is they provide coroner inquests, which is generally for public hearings and is fact finding, not fault finding, for individuals who maybe have died while being held in custody or under police services. And so my understanding is that there's five individuals who are inquest coroners and they're all Court of Queen's Bench lawyers. So very highly trained individuals and professional as well.

So when I was looking to do some research with regards to this bill, I found the number of deaths in Saskatchewan. And we know our population has been growing and also the number of deaths have been growing as well. So we've got to be mindful of that as well when we're talking about how many individuals are working within the coroner's office because the more deaths that we have in the province, the more likelihood that they're going to have more work to do there as well.

And I couldn't find information from last year, but I found stats from 2017 that indicated that there was 1,994 investigations completed by the coroner's office. So that is an incredible amount of investigations when you think there's only approximately 80 people working in that office. So I could imagine that they are busy and trying to do what they can with the resources that they have.

Some of the changes within this piece of legislation come because, in the March budget, there was an additional \$1.6 million added to the coroner's office to help address some of these recommendations. And with these recommendations I believe that there will be a new forensic pathologist that will be hired, as well as 5.5 other positions which would include a full-time liaison for families for the coroner inquests, and this individual will be stationed in Regina. And it came to me as quite surprising that for 1,994 investigations that I saw that was indicated for 2017, there was one family liaison within the organization.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'm not completely familiar with all the services that the coroner's office provides, and I know our critic will be more familiar with that. But I think it's really important that we be mindful that every investigation that they do, there is a family behind this loved one and the fact that they're in the process of grieving, and when they get news like this, it's real tough news and it's hard news. And I know I had a friend that lost her dad in a sudden death and they had a coroner that investigated his death as well. And she told me that just . . . She got an envelope of the report and she was not prepared for what she read in that report, and felt that they could have maybe prepped her a little bit about the detail that she would be reading and how that could potentially impact her.

So I think we need to be mindful of what kind of information families are receiving and making sure that they have the supports in place to help them with whatever the results of that investigation is. So I'm hoping there'll be some discussion of that in committee and how the organization is going to ensure that all families will receive the supports that they need.

So some of the changes here as well will be that they'll grant the minister authority to appointing a deputy chief coroner, grant the Chief Coroner authority to appoint regional supervising coroners. So I'm assuming that will all fall into the 1.6 million that was allotted in there. And there may be some more discussion on how all of that will play into the changes within this legislation and how that will help going forward.

When I looked at some of these statistics, it looks like there's some issues that Saskatchewan also has that the coroner's office deals with. And we have one of the higher average times for autopsy reports to come in and we also have one of the higher average times to receive toxicology reports. So when you compare that to other provinces, I find that that is troubling, and hopefully within ministries they can work on ensuring that those reports come more timely so that the coroner's office can get reports to families in a real timely fashion.

It also said that Saskatchewan has the second-highest investigation rate compared to other provinces examined. So that is interesting, and I think some more discussion in committee about why we have some of the highest rates would be a really important discussion to have. Because there's some changes here with regards to the coroner's inquest as well, I think it would be really important to ensure that other agencies that are oftentimes involved in some of these inquests should be consulted, and I'm thinking of agencies like the John Howard or the Elizabeth Fry Society. I think they would be really good to connect with and make sure that you get their feedback on what's been their experience with working with the coroner's office or families who have dealt with the coroner's office.

Also a big component of the coroner's office is to provide recommendations after they do their investigation. Mr. Speaker, I wonder if these recommendations are being really seriously considered. It takes an awful lot of work to complete these reports and to submit them. I really hope that each and every recommendation that's being brought forward by the coroner's office is something that's considered by this government on changing things that need to be changed in the province because if they aren't, then there's a lot of issues with regards to that. So I know we get an auditor's report, we get a Children's Advocate report, and I think it's important to look at what the coroners' reports are as well. And so we want to make sure that there's action after these recommendations and see that there's due diligence done.

So I guess questions that would be important to have in committee would be what measures will be put in place to ensure that recommendations are being followed through and what measures are being put in place for the delays in the toxicology reports and what is the plan to implement the following recommendations and implement an inquest review committee, putting in place a formal child death review committee and addition of a forensic toxicology laboratory potentially where they'd have more access to it. That might be a good option as

well. What about what happens when there's a mass casualty plan, increasing training for the community coroners, in hiring more advocates for families, the cultural awareness and respect to cultures and rituals of Indigenous people and new Canadians, and making sure that the application to the Calls to Action from the TRC [Truth and Reconciliation Commission] are completed?

And so there's a lot more room to grow with regards to advancements in the coroner's office, and I hope a lot of this is taken into place. I think about the suicide rates in my community, in the northern community. Every week I hear of someone who has committed suicide. And so I know the coroner's office has more so recently decided to release numbers of that so that the public is aware of the high rates of suicide we have in this province. And so I'm hoping the recommendations that the coroner has put in place as well is something that the government is following through with.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that's about all of the remarks I planned on putting on the record with regards to changes to this piece of legislation. I know the critic, that when she goes into committee with regards to discussion with the committee with these changes, will do her homework and consult with agencies that will be important to consult with. And my other colleagues have much more to add to the discussion with the changes to this legislation. So with that I adjourn debate on Bill No. 189.

The Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 194

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Carr that **Bill No. 194 — *The Miscellaneous Municipal Statutes Amendment Act, 2019*** be now read a second time.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To join in on Bill No. 194, *The Miscellaneous Municipal Statutes Amendment Act, 2019*. It's quite a thick bill and a number of amendments that are being proposed throughout, and I think it's with good reason that some of the amendments are coming forward. And why they're coming forward, I think, is making sure . . . We have elections in many municipalities throughout our province, and they do good work, many mayors, councils, individuals, whether they're in the South, the urban centres, the North. They're elected by the community members to take care of day-to-day operations and business. Staff sometimes are hired. Administrators are hired as well. And they're to conduct the business on behalf of the residents and citizens that they're asked to take care of and take care of the assets.

But they're also asked at that time . . . And I know different times there have been situations where there's been some issues or some problems in municipalities. So you have amendments. You have different reasons why people will ask to have legislation amended. And I think it's to hold people accountable, and that's

what the residents and voters want. They want their municipal leaders to be held accountable just like . . . Well I think about elections. And you know, it's interesting; we don't know . . . There's legislation that's passed and you're supposed to follow laws. And if legislation is the law, you should adhere to it. Governments should follow it and everyone should be held accountable.

Same with the government. The Sask Party government should be held accountable, ministers and MLAs on the other side. We all should be held accountable for our actions and make sure we're doing what's been asked by the voters on behalf of the province when you're voted to come into this Chamber. I think about different work and I just want to show comparisons. We're holding municipalities accountable because the residents, citizens, voters have asked us to do that. They've said, hold municipalities accountable; make sure that, you know, if there is wrongdoing . . . And I'm not going to say that . . . And everywhere there's a lot of wrongdoing obviously.

[15:15]

But what I am saying is when municipalities . . . And there's even some protection in here, Mr. Speaker, for municipal employees who find wrongdoing and want to report it to the minister — or those municipalities — that oversees municipalities to make sure they're adhering to the legislation and the rules. So now there's some good there and that's one amendment that's in here. It protects the employees that work with the municipality. If they do see some wrongdoing or think it's wrongdoing, that they're not going to be attacked or fired or, you know, reprisal on them because they're protected now. And that's a good amendment and that's good and I think that's important and needs to be there.

But I also want to talk a little bit and take it back. We want to hold municipal mayors and councils and individuals who are elected by Saskatchewan people in the municipalities accountable. Well we need to make sure we're holding our Legislative Assembly members and government accountable as well. And I think about some of my colleagues have been doing some great work in committee work. They have gone to committee and there's been concerns raised about some of the situations that government has been doing.

And I think about the GTH [Global Transportation Hub]. There should be a judicial inquiry — should be — but in a committee where our colleagues and our members have made it very clear that it needs to happen and are calling for it, and we're hearing from Saskatchewan voters, people saying something is not right here; something went wrong. Why? Hold government accountable. Hold those individuals accountable. And have a judicial inquiry. Do what you need to do to make sure. You know, let's do what we need to do once and for all to make sure. Was there wrongdoing?

And you know, that's one way my colleagues that were on the committee have brought, but unfortunately members from the Sask Party have not supported that. You know, they just don't want to go there. No, no, not interested. Because they have more members on that committee. But why wouldn't those members that are in that committee want to hold everybody accountable for the residents who vote in this province? Why wouldn't . . .

You'd think members in this Chamber, and I'm sure if they have questions, a part of the committee would say, yes, everybody should be held accountable, government, ministers, anybody who takes care or is supposed to be looking after residents. It's their tax dollars that we're dealing with. And I think all of us have to take that to heart and do your best.

And you know, there's mistakes. You know, things happen where you make a mistake. I understand that. It happens with many different situations people are dealt with. But at the end of the day when you have taxpayers saying they want to know; something's not right here and they know. And I've heard so many people saying, why, as opposition how come you guys aren't holding them accountable? Your Majesty's Loyal Opposition should be holding government accountable, and we need to do that.

And I say, look, we're trying our best. My colleagues have done the work that they need to do and they've gone to work. They've done what they need to do, Mr. Speaker. They have, on behalf of residents that have asked me that. And I've had some people frustrated. And probably not even my supporters who would vote for me are frustrated, saying something is not . . .

So I'm just trying to show, Mr. Speaker, the comparisons. We want to hold municipalities accountable, and we want to come up with legislation to do that. But unfortunately we have committees that do good work and should do good work and should see when something's going on. Whether members have good suggestions or recommendations or serious situations that need to be addressed, in those committees they could have done. But unfortunately you have government Sask Party members on that side that will not support my colleagues.

And there's a number of those areas where I've talked about, where they've been shut down or just don't even want to deal with it, don't want to talk about it. And just, you know, it just, oh no, we'll just go on to something else. Shut it down or whatever you want to. And it's sad. But we want to hold one part accountable, a municipal election. We want to hold those leaders. But government? Oh no, let's not hold ourselves accountable, but we'll hold everybody else accountable. You know, a double standard shouldn't be right.

And it's amazing to watch how sometimes you have individuals who are connected, and my colleagues have said there's been connections. And why is that? Why don't you want this looked into? Let's clear the record once and for all. So if we're saying things that are wrong, you know what? Then let's go to committee and let's have a judicial inquiry. Let's have a look into this and let's see who's right or wrong at the end of the day. And was it right? And was it the good thing?

So that's one way of doing it. But having said that, I want to come back into the bill that we were talking about. And I think it's important that there is protection for employees who see wrongdoing when it comes to municipalities. And I know that there's many of them — and I know back home and all throughout our great province — that do great work and do all they can to make sure they look after the voters. And they have the trust of the voters that vote them in, in municipal. And I hope that would happen provincially as well. But, ah, some day maybe we'll have what needs to be done in committee.

So at this point, Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to show a comparison of holding one elected official, you know, accountable and the others not. So at this point I'm prepared to adjourn debate on this bill, Mr. Speaker — thank you — and let the work go on.

The Speaker: — The member's moved to adjourn debate. Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 195

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 195 — *The Lobbyists Amendment Act, 2019*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to rise today and enter into the debate on Bill No. 195, *An Act to amend The Lobbyists Act*. And of course it's one that's been brought forward out of necessity, of some of the things that have been gone on over there when we have all these questions about some of the carrying-on of some of the lobbyists. And out of necessity this government has needed to bring something forward to silence the critics of what they have for *The Lobbyists Act* right now.

Right now they have 100 hours of lobbying before they have to register. And of course that is so huge. That's two and a half weeks of time before they have to register. And so this is really something that we really have called for. We think that it should be eliminated. If there are lobbyists who are working to lobby the Government of Saskatchewan, they should just register and be done with it. And of course they will keep track of their hours and all of that.

But to have that kind of thing . . . And I'll point out some of the issues here. You know, I often refer to what the minister talked about. And the minister, back on November 26th talked about this, and he said . . . And I find this interesting because I didn't realize he actually said this but I'll quote him. When he stood up he said, "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At long last, it's my privilege to rise today for the second reading of *The Lobbyists Amendment Act, 2019*." Even he recognizes that it was well overdue, that it was way past due that they did something. And so I agree with him that it was at long last that he did stand to rise in his place and talk about the effect of lobbyists.

And I have asked many questions, many questions of the lobbyist registrar to ensure that there is fairness and appropriateness going on and transparency and accountability. And even today we've seen some changes in terms of disclosure from cabinet ministers. And we had called for that. We had called and we had said cabinet confidentiality should not extend to their travel expenses and we're glad to see that they're doing a bit more in that.

But, Mr. Speaker, the minister at the time talked about how the 100 hours will be there and then he talked about, this will be . . . And I quote, and he says, "Finally, Mr. Speaker, the registrar recommended that the threshold for registrations be reduced to

promote transparency by requiring more individuals who lobby to register.” And now we couldn’t agree more. We couldn’t agree more. He had called for it to go down to zero. We think it should be zero. That’s a pretty straightforward place.

But the minister, he didn’t actually say that here, but he goes on and says, I quote:

The proposed provisions will reduce the threshold for registration as an in-house lobbyist from 100 hours spent lobbying to 30 hours, which includes time spent on preparation and travel for lobbying efforts. This will ensure that the activities of more individuals are captured by the legislation without requiring registration of every casual encounter with a public office-holder.

And of course, I’ve been on record saying there can be some pretty powerful phone calls made. You don’t need to spend two weeks getting your message across. One phone call. And I’ve raised this about getting big money out of politics, you know, and I can go on and on about getting big money out of politics, both corporate and union donations. I think we need to have a much more participatory process in terms of democracy. And here we see the influence of big money in our politics. And we’ve seen the influence and we just have to look in our own province where serious questions and things look a little grey and murky and we need to make sure we’re as transparent as we can be.

But, Mr. Speaker, when he talks about that — and I want to just go back — he talks about ensuring that we capture more of what a person does in lobbying, travelling, and preparation. And so I said, well that’s interesting; I don’t remember that being in the legislation. So I went back and I looked at the legislation. And of course the bill that we’re talking about before us, Bill No. 195, it says:

Section 2 amended
3 Paragraph 2(1)(h)(ii)(A) is amended by striking out “100 hours” and substituting “30 hours”.

Now if you go to that section, and it’s quite a long handle of how to get there, but that section talks about and I’ll read it. “(A) is performed or is required to be performed for at least 100 hours annually, as the case may be, as calculated in the prescribed manner.” Now it’s interesting, “prescribed manner” would be the regulations. But he referred, he talked about the legislative process.

So it’s not in the legislation that travel and preparation would be covered. It may be in the regulations and we need to look at that in committee to say, hey, how can you bulletproof that? Because that can be changed, that can be eliminated quite quickly. So we want to ensure that as much as whatever the activities are, that they are there, travel and preparation as the minister says. They may be in the regulations right now, I don’t know, but all they’re doing is changing that 100 hours to 30 hours.

And of course, we think that we’d be leaders in Canada if we said every lobbyist would have to register. It’s not an onerous process to register; it’s not onerous at all. It’s something that should be done and something . . .

You know when we have people come into the Legislative

Building right now — how times have changed — people have to go to the front desk. We ask them to do that. We ask them to sign in. We have casual visitors who have to sign in. It used to be that you could just walk in. You didn’t have to sign in. You could sit in the galleries. You could go to the cabinet ministers’ or the MLAs’ offices. You didn’t have to sign in but now you do. That’s because the times require that. And we don’t have a problem with that.

But here with lobbyists somehow they don’t have to sign in until they hit that magic number of 30. And we’re not sure and these will be questions that we have to ask. Is it about travel and that type of thing? And it’ll be very interesting because even 30 hours is . . . you have to be a pretty busy lobbyist to get up there and to be 30 hours. Whereas I’ve said, you know, in this day and age of big money, and you know we have heard, we have heard Saskatchewan being referred to as the wild west of Canada in terms of when it comes to big money in politics. And there’s lots of questions that we have. We had questions today and I’m sure we’ll have many more questions about that.

So we need to do more to make sure people have faith in their elected officials, that the process that we have here in Regina is transparent and accountable. We have gone a long way by having a lobbyist registrar, but let’s make sure we listen to them and their advice. And I think 30 hours just does not cut it. It’s not what we were hoping for. We will still have problems. And of course, as I say, when you couple that with big money in politics, it’s a very slippery slope.

Mr. Speaker, there is the issue around — and some of these I think are interesting and we’ll have more questions in committee — but talking about exempting non-profit charitable organizations with less than five employees who lobby for a total of less than 30 hours annually from registering as an in-house lobbyist. Now again, the travel time, the preparation, all of that, you know, I don’t think it hurts. If you’re lobbying, whether you’re one powerful lobby group, and you might be with only four employees in this province, I’m not sure.

It’d be interesting to say, should it be five employees or should it be that your budget is less than \$20,000 or \$50,000, you know. I mean you could have five employees who manage a very significant non-profit trust fund or something that is non-profit because they’re involved with good organizations. And so I think this is something that we’ll have questions about for sure. And it also prohibits consultant lobbyists and in-house lobbyists from providing gifts or benefits to a public office holder, and we think that’s very good.

[15:30]

So, Mr. Speaker, we have a lot of questions about this. We have a lot of questions about the 100 hours going down to 30. We think it should be nothing. It should be you’re a lobbyist if you’re a lobbyist, you know. To quote some very famous people, if it walks like a duck and talks like a duck, it is a duck. And the same thing with the lobbyists, you know. If you walk like a lobbyist and talk like a lobbyist, you’re a lobbyist. It doesn’t matter how many hours you do in a year. I think it’s only good business that say hey, a spade is a spade and let’s just get with it.

And I think we’ve got a lot of work to do to repair our image here

in Saskatchewan as I said, when we talk about big money in politics, the democratic reforms that we have to have. And so with this, I would adjourn debate on this piece of legislation. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 196

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 196 — *The Members' Conflict of Interest Amendment Act, 2019*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter into debate today on Bill No. 196, *The Members' Conflict of Interest Amendment Act* of 2019. There's a few different things that this bill proposes to do. Overall I would say we're fairly supportive of the changes. Of course we'll look through the bill in detail and we'll have many questions about intended and unintended consequences. But we'll talk about what some of the changes are that are being proposed here.

First of all, these amendments are brought forward. The minister mentions the fact that the Conflict of Interest Commissioner brought forward these recommendations in his 2018 annual report so that they are coming from the Office of the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. It's always good to know who's requesting changes when we see legislation coming forward.

So a couple of things that are being changed here. For folks who don't know, the Conflict of Interest Commissioner receives private disclosure statements from every member of this Assembly on an annual basis. So many of us are in the process of gathering all of our personal paperwork together to be able to make those disclosures, which can take some time. It doesn't take that long for me because I don't have very many assets, but still can be quite cumbersome when you're looking up pensions that you have and what the value of them is and what . . . I know for folks who have ownership in companies, they have to list that as well. And some of these changes are related to that.

So in the current practice the commissioner has used his discretion under the Act to require members to describe their assets of private companies in which they have a controlling interest. So these proposed amendments serve to codify these practices into legislation so that there's no ambiguity here if that practice were to change. So this is certainly a good thing.

The current Act also places requirements on new and existing members to file these disclosure statements. Right now though there's no requirements on a former member. So sometimes what they'll find is that there is a gap in terms of the period of time, since we file annually around March. There's a gap in a period of time where those interests haven't been reported. So the goal

of this section is to amend that so that, you know, a former member has to report up to 60 days after they've been a member as well, just so that there's no disruption there.

This bill also permits a former member to ask the commissioner for an opinion or a recommendation regarding his or her obligations under the Act for up to a year after being a member. So it just alludes to the fact that the commissioner can still be a resource to the member.

And the other request was that the bill add a definition of "gift or personal benefit." So previously there's clauses about having to report gifts of a certain value, but there wasn't any guidance in terms of what that definition looked like. So the goal in this section is to provide that guidance so that it can add some clarity for members in the reporting process and make sure that everyone's on the same page, so providing a bit of a guideline there.

It'll certainly be an important piece of legislation, and we're hopeful that these changes will increase the transparency of disclosures. As we know, conflict of interest is a pretty heavy topic. It's something that certainly the people of the province are quite concerned with, and we have a responsibility as members of this Assembly to report those conflicts to the public so that they know where we stand. So I think that it's something we're going to be watching quite closely. Certainly the changes appear promising.

And with that I will allow my other colleagues to weigh in and I will move to adjourn debate on this bill for today.

The Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 197

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hargrave that **Bill No. 197 — *The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2019*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Pedersen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to enter into the debate on this particular bill. Now, Mr. Speaker, I know it may come as quite a surprise to you, but when I was engaged in the full-time practice of law I avoided completely any questions or discussion or debate about the interpretation or application of *The Automobile Accident Insurance Act*. The 200 pages of that law were just a little daunting to dabble in, Mr. Speaker.

And for the same reason that it was daunting to dig into the details of a 200-page piece of legislation in the practice of law, I must confess I haven't really dug into the details of the amendments to that particular law which is what we are debating today, save for this one point, Mr. Speaker. I do note that one of the proposals in this particular bill is to expand the conditions of every vehicle

operator's conditions of insurance.

And section 3 of the standard conditions says that you shall not operate your vehicle in a way that exceeds the combined proper weight of a vehicle or its load or the purposes for which that vehicle is supposed to be used, or the time when it's supposed to be operated, or the territory in which it's supposed to be operated, or the number of passengers that may be carried in it, or the number or quantity of goods that may be carried in it.

And the change, Mr. Speaker, is that now your conditions of insurance will say that you can't do any of that in any jurisdiction of any place. And I worry, Mr. Speaker, whether that might have over-broad consequences, because my suspicion is that if you break one of those conditions, then you just won't have insurance. And you know, that's one thing when you're operating in your home jurisdiction, but if you're travelling through multiple jurisdictions, of course you may not be aware of, you know, some particular or perhaps even quirky rules of that jurisdiction.

And it brings to mind a story that I recently saw of a Canadian woman who happened to be driving through the United States and found herself afoul of the laws in South Carolina, or at least the police in South Carolina who, even though she produced as ID [identification] her Canadian passport and Canadian driver's licence . . . or perhaps, no. Perhaps it was just her Canadian driver's licence but not her passport.

Anyways the police officer decided that that wasn't good enough and actually proceeded to arrest her. And so she found herself afoul of the local laws even though, you know, as far as she knows, she was just driving, you know, driving on a nice little trip up until that point and thinking that she was in full compliance with the law.

So I do worry, Mr. Speaker, about whether this is going to result in over-broad reach of the law and unintended consequences. But I expect, Mr. Speaker, that that is something that may come up in committee or that the ministry will have to look at in further detail in considering this bill and its application.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to wrap up my comments and I'll move that debate on this bill be adjourned.

The Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 198

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hargrave that **Bill No. 198 — *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2019*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. McCall: — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. For a moment

there I was thinking the lights weren't on and I was home, though. But good to be recognized by yourself and to join debate this afternoon on Bill No. 198, *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2019*.

Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan there is one thing that we never have a shortage of in this province, and that is geography. And I'm sure that the Minister for SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority] could find that on a map *tout de suite*. He could probably draw that map, no problem. I have every confidence. But, Mr. Speaker, in terms of having all this geography, one of the things that we are also no strangers to in this province are the matters of traffic and traffic safety and getting around our fair province, Mr. Speaker.

And it's also good to join debate this afternoon. I hear with different of my colleagues that have had different sort of points of connection with this discussion over the past decade and then some, Mr. Speaker, because there are different ways where what happens on the Saskatchewan roads and Saskatchewan traffic, Mr. Speaker, are remarkable.

And one of those ways, Mr. Speaker, is the big number of collisions that take place on Saskatchewan roads and along with that, injury and death, Mr. Speaker. So in terms of making progress on what has been in some regards a very concerning file for the people of Saskatchewan, making sure that the traffic safety regime is up to the job and keeping our roads safe, Mr. Speaker, and the drivers on those roads safe is something that the government should be seized with. And we see some steps towards that with this particular piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker.

[15:45]

So in the guts of the legislation itself, it's responding to a circumstance where driver distraction and inattention is one of the top causes of collisions, injuries, and fatalities on Saskatchewan roads. Wherein for 2018, I think the last year that they've got complete statistics for, Mr. Speaker, where that was a factor in more than 6,000 collisions, 774 injuries, and 22 deaths, Mr. Speaker, the government has seen fit to come forward with an increase in different penalties that attach to offences that arise from inattention or distracted driving. And this is an ongoing and evolving field of regulation, Mr. Speaker.

And certainly I know yourself, Mr. Speaker, you can probably remember a time when you could ride your bicycle to the store or, you know, ride a car to the store and you weren't tempted to pick up the cell phone or the iPhone or the smart phone and get distracted and then blow through an intersection with all sorts of, you know, terrible consequences. But, Mr. Speaker, that is, you know, all levity aside, that is indeed a circumstance that is faced far too often across this province.

And so, Mr. Speaker, where we've gone from just bringing in the initial regulations and legislation to try and put a stop to that, Mr. Speaker, we arrive at a day such as today where we're contemplating, oh, the fact that starting February 1st, first of this month, the cost of a ticket for distracted driving more than doubled to \$580, Mr. Speaker — a not insignificant sum — the cost of subsequent tickets escalating for a second offence to \$1,400, Mr. Speaker, and to \$2,100 for a third offence. One can only imagine when you hit the fourth offence, Mr. Speaker,

you're out of money.

But, Mr. Speaker, again in terms of the incidents of distracted and inattentive driving on Saskatchewan roads, we'll be looking to see how those significant increases to the regulatory regime and to the penalties that attach to these offences, we will be looking to see how that impacts the safety on Saskatchewan roads. And of course, Mr. Speaker, we're ever hopeful that it makes them safer and that people are driving and getting home alive more than is the case today, Mr. Speaker.

Dealing with the matter of traffic safety as a whole, Mr. Speaker, it's not just about the different sort of connections with inattentive driving or different things that arise from impaired driving, Mr. Speaker. And again, impaired driving, something that Saskatchewan sadly leads the country in terms of incidents of impaired driving offences, Mr. Speaker, and the kind of carnage that flows forward from that, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of the changes that are made to the interlock program, which I believe there is a fair amount of familiarity with in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, and I'm also glad to be joined today by the member from Regina . . . or from Saskatoon Riversdale. If I call her Regina Riversdale she'll make me wash my mouth out with soap or something, you know, Regina and Saskatoon and the friendly rivalry being what it is. But certainly, Mr. Speaker, an individual who's served, and served well, the people of this province on a committee, a legislative committee that went forth to try and come up with some better responses to the whole situation with drinking and driving and the carnage that it wreaks upon our highways, Mr. Speaker.

But in terms of the ignition interlock program, changes being made there, Mr. Speaker, that's . . . Again we'll be watching with great interest to see how that impacts, hopefully in a positive way, the circumstance we find on our highways.

Again traffic safety being a bit of an omnibus piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker — no pun intended — there is another aspect wherein collisions that involve semis, Mr. Speaker, changes being made to the requirements around class 1 commercial semi licences being required to take a minimum of one hundred and twenty-one and a half hours of training, Mr. Speaker. And again from the minister's second reading speech, he explains that "while the implementation of the mandatory training for class 1 vehicles was done through regulations, changes to rules around drivers' licensing for non-residents require a legislative change." So there you go, Mr. Speaker.

Moving along, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the aspects of the legislation, bringing in changes around the emergence of the transportation of children in taxis or ride-share vehicles, Mr. Speaker, wherein currently the responsibility of the driver of those vehicles is to ensure that children under the age of 16 are properly restrained, it's going to change the onus and instead require parents and guardians accompanying the children, the child, to be responsible for that instead, Mr. Speaker. So again it's always important to know where the onus rests in these things, Mr. Speaker. And to make that clearly the charge of parents or a guardian for those under 16 would seem to make fair enough sense.

As well, Mr. Speaker, another revision wherein allowing law

enforcement to lay a charge for an intentionally obscured licence plate, again from the minister's second reading speech of November 27th, 2019, where it would ". . . not include things like mud or snow, rather when it is intentionally obscured in a manner to deliberately prevent the plate from being read accurately," Mr. Speaker. Again that would seem to be fair enough.

But on a bit of a tangent, Mr. Speaker, one only wonders what this legislation would make of the new licence plate program in the province of Ontario, Mr. Speaker, where by seeming design, the licence plates are in fact hard to read at night, which of course is something that you'd like to have in your licence plates. And you know, we'd also be quite anxious to make sure that the government is not engaging those folks responsible for this bit of a debacle on the part of their cousins in Ontario, Mr. Speaker. Hopefully they're not going to be bringing in any expertise from Ontario on the matter of legible licence plates, Mr. Speaker. But thus endeth the tangent.

Again, Mr. Speaker, wherein SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] — ever attentive organization that they are — where they've charged individuals with operating an unregistered vehicle in circumstances where the driver could not reasonably be expected to know that the vehicle is unregistered, allowing for more discretion for legal authorities to adjudicate how that knowledge was or was not possessed by the individual operating the car. And again this one . . . We live in some interesting times, Mr. Speaker.

And again just in the last decade or so we've seen the legislation come forward and change around inattentive or distracted driving and the way that that relates to the cellphone that all of us spend an awful lot of quality time with, Mr. Speaker, except for you. I don't know if you're on an electronic fast or anything, Mr. Speaker, but who knows. Little ups and downs, yes, just like us all. But that that was, you know, 20 years ago not really an anticipated thing. But given the tremendously wide dispersal of smartphones and cellphones and iPhones and what have you, Mr. Speaker, that of course is a big area of concern for legal enforcement.

And so too, Mr. Speaker — mark this down — another Act change relates to autonomous vehicles. Now, Mr. Speaker, as regards to artificial intelligence and the impact of automation on workplaces and particularly as regards to something like traffic safety, we'll be interested to see how this plays out because certainly autonomous vehicles are, you know, an ever more present component of different jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker.

But when it comes to something like trucking and the transportation of goods and services on roads and highways, Mr. Speaker, autonomous vehicles is a great topic for further concern and deliberation. And I'd had a brief discussion in committee once upon a time with the Minister for Innovation Saskatchewan where, of course, they're doing a lot that promotes the whole burgeoning field of automation and artificial intelligence. And I would submit — and I know this is a minister that does her homework — I don't know that we as the province of Saskatchewan have as clear a picture as we need to have when it comes to artificial intelligence, Mr. Speaker, and the impact on the structure of our economy, of our labour force.

So I'd put a little pin in that one for the minister for, you know,

avenues of continued investigation because certainly there are a lot of ways that our economy will be affected in some very interesting ways by the burgeoning field of artificial intelligence, not the least of which is transportation and trucking. And again we'll be interested to see how this initial sort of stab at this field of regulation works out in *The Traffic Safety Act* and if there aren't lessons to be learned for that legislation itself, Mr. Speaker, or for what's to come in other aspects of the economy and society, Mr. Speaker.

Lastly there is a change wherein administratively SGI, to quote the minister's second reading speech:

... administratively SGI treats a provincial driving-while-disqualified offence similar to how it treats a Criminal Code offence. [Wherein] it comes with an automatic licence suspension for a minimum of one year. SGI does not believe the same sanctions are appropriate in this case.

The amendments will affect the change in the legislation as well.

Mr. Speaker, there are other, more picayune, housework kind of changes to the legislation, but I think I have canvassed most of the important ones as we understand them to date. I'll be looking forward to the interventions from other of my colleagues who are more knowledgeable and with it on this particular topic, Mr. Speaker, than I. But with that, I would move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 198, *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2019*.

The Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 199

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Reiter that **Bill No. 199 — *The Opioid Damages and Health Care Costs Recovery Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour today to add my remarks to the adjourned debate for Bill No. 199, *The Opioid Damages and Health Care Costs Recovery Act*.

I think most people here would know how opioids are having an impact on our communities and across this country and how the addictions of drugs such as opioids is impacting individuals and families across our province. And so it's really important that we have these discussions within this House and come up with a plan of addressing the issues within our province. This is one step into addressing these issues but, Mr. Speaker, it's not the only way about addressing the opioid crisis. And there's a lot of different ways that we could go about helping individuals who already have addictions or preventing future people from having addictions with opioids.

So some of the things that I wanted to put on the record was I'm interested to hear when this goes to committee some discussion on what are they planning on doing to follow the recommendations from the auditor's report to monitor the 385 pharmacies in the province when it comes to dispensing opioids. We know that there is very little accountability for prescriptions and reviews of patients' medical history before prescribing high-risk medications.

[16:00]

Mr. Speaker, I have an article here from CBC. It was in November of 2019 and it was a discussion with the auditor after her recommendations came forward. And she indicated that, she quoted here, "For the six most prescribed opioids, Saskatchewan's prescribing stands well above national averages." Mr. Speaker, that's very troubling.

There's some information here that indicates Regina and Saskatoon have the most hospitalized patients related to opioid poisoning per capita in Canada in 2017. The rate of hospitalization for Regina that year was 28.3 per 100,000 people a day, while Saskatoon was at 26.1 per 100,000 people and, Mr. Speaker, the national average is 16 per hundred per day. So, Mr. Speaker, when we look at how we compare to the other provinces, we're almost double of that, which is not another welcoming record for Saskatchewan.

They also talk about how physicians prescribe 95 per cent of the opioids in the province. So I would ask questions to the minister and his officials, how much consultation with physicians were done with developing this piece of legislation, especially when we know that they're the ones that are prescribing the medication. And so what the auditor suggests here is that Saskatchewan have a prescription review program that is designed to identify inappropriate prescribing.

So it looks like there is a lot more work to be done with ensuring that when doctors are working with patients, that they have all the information that they need at hand so that they know what the patient's history is, so that they can make the best decisions on whether to prescribe what medication. So we have a lot more work to do with having an IT [information technology] system that can meet those needs, Mr. Speaker.

It also here says that there were 119 deaths in Saskatchewan because of opioid overdose last year. So 119 deaths, Mr. Speaker, that's incredibly high. Coming from a mental health and addictions background, we would say that that's 119 preventable deaths, Mr. Speaker, and we need to do better at preventing that. There's also a quote here that says, "Ineffective and ... [inefficient] monitoring of opioid prescribing and dispensing practices may result in increased addiction, abuse and misuse, and diversion of prescribed opioids that can ultimately lead to overdoses and death."

So, Mr. Speaker, this brings me to have to talk about how some of the government's decisions have had an impact on this increase of opioid use. Mr. Speaker, I think our members from both sides, we've met with individuals from associations such as the chiropractic association, and they talked to us about how this government has made decisions to decrease benefits for individuals who are on the supplementary health program that

would provide them coverage for chiropractor services, massage therapy, physiotherapy.

So those benefits are quite substantially reduced, Mr. Speaker. So that means that these individuals who have health issues that could be managed from some preventative or upstream therapy programs, now because they can't afford to pay for that — they barely are making ends meet; they're barely being able to put food on the table — if it comes to having to pay for an appointment with a chiropractor or putting food on the table for their kids but they could get a free prescription because all their prescriptions are free, well then they're going to get a pain treatment prescription. And oftentimes those pain treatment prescriptions are addictive opioids. And then that just spirals individuals into addictions when they could have had pain management plans that didn't include those kind of medications.

So we have to be mindful of that. That's decisions coming right from this government that is creating this crisis of sorts as well too. And then we have the Minister of Health saying opioids are causing a growing number of overdoses and deaths in Canada. Well, yes. And you have an obligation and a responsibility to help reduce that.

So I also want to know how they plan on distributing the funds received from this cost-recovery plan because we know that we have issues within our province even, not only with opioids but with crystal meth. We don't have a plan for that. We need proper treatment plans. So are we going to have more beds? Are we going to have longer term beds? Because we know that a 28-day treatment plan is not working for a lot of people. And so what's going to be the plan going forward? And hopefully the funds that are, maybe, potentially provided from the implementation of this piece of legislation will help provide some of that funding for those addiction beds that we need.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I don't have a whole lot more that I want to put on the record with regards to the changes to this bill. I know the critic will do the due diligence before committee comes forward and will make sure that all the agencies are consulted with that may have an impact with the changes of this . . . well this is a brand new bill, so the implementation of this new piece of legislation. And my colleagues also have some more that they would like to add. So with that I'm going to adjourn debate on Bill No. 199.

The Speaker: — Member has moved to adjourn debate. Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 201

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Makowsky that **Bill No. 201 — *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2019/Loi modificative de 2019 sur la réglementation des boissons alcoolisées et des jeux de hasard*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As always, it's good to be back and good to have the opportunity to weigh in to the debate today, this time on Bill No. 201, *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2019*.

I think the place where I'd like to focus the bulk of my remarks are on one particular change that this bill will create, Mr. Speaker. There is, in new subsection (4), that:

. . . provides Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority (SLGA) authority to enter into agreements with any person authorizing the person to establish and operate a warehouse for the storage and distribution of beverage alcohol and to sell and deliver the beverage alcohol within Saskatchewan.

So the argument is:

This will facilitate the introduction of specialty liquor warehouses as a mechanism to increase product availability and selection in Saskatchewan and act as complements to the SLGA distribution centre.

So that's the argument of the government, Mr. Speaker. And actually the minister, in second reading comments, points out that the concept of third-party liquor warehousing isn't new here in the province and that there's been third-party beer warehouses for many decades. He points out that there's two warehouses that already distribute the majority of mainstream beer in the province, shipping directly to retailers across Saskatchewan.

And right now at this moment, SLGA relies on out-of-province warehouses to fill many of the wine and spirit specialty orders it receives from retailers. So the argument here, Mr. Speaker, is that "This change means warehouses distributing speciality wine, beer, and spirits can establish operations in Saskatchewan and . . . employ Saskatchewan people."

I would point out, Mr. Speaker, though, that SLGA warehouses also currently employ Saskatchewan people. And so I guess the question to ask in committee is . . . I think it's a good idea to establish the opportunity to create those jobs here in Saskatchewan instead of relying on out-of-province warehouses for those specialty orders. But why would we not continue to enhance SLGA's capacity to do this warehousing instead of further privatization, which has continued to happen under this government, not just with SLGA but with many of our Crowns in many different capacities, Mr. Speaker? So I think that when the critic gets into committee, I'm sure one of the questions that will be asked is, why have you not thought about building this capacity here with the SLGA itself?

Mr. Speaker, I think one thing that is sort of near and dear to my heart is alcohol policy or when we think about impaired driving or substance use. The reality is, alcohol . . . We can talk about opioids, which my colleague prior to me just did, and we can talk about crystal meth, which really is the issue here in Saskatchewan right now. It's been a growing epidemic for the last five or six years that the government has just come to the table to realize in more recent times, Mr. Speaker. But really, alcohol causes more harms, a greater number of harms in our community than any other substance here in Saskatchewan and across the country.

And there's some good work to look at, Mr. Speaker. The Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research out of the University of Victoria and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, CAMH, in Toronto in Ontario put together a paper. It's called the CAPE, the Canadian Alcohol Policy Evaluation project, looking at the provinces and territories when it comes to whether evidence-based alcohol policies were implemented within each province and territory in 2017. They point out, Mr. Speaker, that recent data, the 2014 data, show that in Saskatchewan alcohol sales generated 391 million in revenue but cost the province around 563 million. So that includes cost to health care system, social services, corrections and policing. The impact of substance use and misuse ripples through many people's lives, Mr. Speaker.

And so when we have a bill open before us, as bills don't get open very often, although we've seen in my time here several bills because due diligence hasn't always been done. Lots of bills end up before us way more often than they might otherwise, Mr. Speaker. But we have *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulations Amendment Act* before us. I don't know if the government did any legwork around looking at implementing some of those evidence-based policies.

The framework that has 11 different policy domains including things like pricing and taxation, physical availability of alcohol, impaired driving countermeasures, marketing, advertising controls, minimum legal drinking age, screening, brief intervention and referral, and liquor law enforcement, alcohol control system, alcohol strategy, monitoring and reporting, and health and safety messaging, Mr. Speaker.

I suspect that this wasn't part of their dialogue when they prepared this bill, but I think Saskatchewan got a D across all of these domains. So the average was a D, but in some of these places, Mr. Speaker, screening for a brief intervention referral, we got an F, Mr. Speaker, which would involve collaboration with health care professionals to develop screening, brief intervention and referral practice, guidelines and tools to be implemented in a health care setting and online, or consider adopting the SBIR [alcohol screening, brief intervention and referral] resource developed by the College of Family Physicians.

Anyway, the point is we failed, Mr. Speaker, when it came to screening brief intervention and referral. And from my experience in 2013 on the Traffic Safety Committee, one of the things that we learned is that a lot of people who die because of alcohol-related harms or particularly . . . And I'm speaking of motor vehicle accidents. Those people have very high blood alcohol levels. And those aren't blood alcohol levels of you going out for a couple beer on a Friday night. Those are people who likely have long-practiced habits of overconsumption of alcohol.

And I think one thing that I noticed at that point that, back in 2013, that you can implement all of the measures. You can implement interlock and you can . . . In the warning range, which was something I advocated back in 2016, when I was really glad the government finally saw fit to pass in 2016, was the impoundment of vehicles in the warning range.

But one thing that wasn't dealt with in that committee was the need to ensure that those who do have an impaired driving result,

a high blood alcohol content way above the average, Mr. Speaker, likely are experiencing probably a substance use or an alcohol use disorder, Mr. Speaker. You don't start out with that high of a blood alcohol level.

[16:15]

So it would have been nice with this bill open before us if the government did in fact take a look at this document, the Canadian Alcohol Policy Evaluation, and thought about how some changes might have applied to this particular piece of legislation and regulations.

But with that, Mr. Speaker, I know again in committee that the critic will undoubtedly be asking why more privatization, Mr. Speaker, why didn't the government . . . It's great to create jobs here in Saskatchewan, but we have the SLGA warehousing existing. Why do we need to bring in . . . Why do we need to recreate the wheel and have a company come in when SLGA could have been doing some of that warehousing of the specialty products to begin with?

Anyway, with that, I would like to conclude my remarks and I will move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 201, *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act*. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 203

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 203 — *The Financial Planners and Financial Advisors Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter into this debate on this Bill No. 203, *An Act respecting Financial Planners and Financial Advisors and making consequential amendments to another Act*. And of course this is one that's very important. And I feel I'm getting closer and closer to relying on financial planners and advisors all the time as I start to age and my hair is greying and I'm wondering about how my future is going to be.

And I don't know how the markets were today but, boy, last week it was a tough week in the marketplace. When we think about the pressures that are happening worldwide and the impact they can have on people right here at home in Saskatchewan when you wouldn't think that there should be a connection . . . But in this world now, things are connected and what happens in a far . . . You know, it's the butterfly effect or the chaos effect. When a butterfly flaps its wings in Hong Kong, you feel it here in Regina.

And so it's an important thing that we do, that we talk about, and we get right. I mean it does talk about the definitions of a financial planner, and let me just see if it's something I can grab

really quickly . . . the financial planners . . . the individual has obtained from a credentialing body of financial planning a credential pursuant to subsection 12.1, and it's in good standing, whereas the advisor has obtained the financial advising credential.

Now I don't know if that's really all that helpful. We need a little bit more detail than that. And that's why this would make, it's going to make for some interesting conversations in committee. Because I think we all are in that spot where we want to know, are we getting good financial advice and who's giving that good financial advice? And are people who are in vulnerable situations taking advice from people who are not able to give that? And in fact they're setting themselves . . . And we hear too, too often of situations where people have been taken advantage of and by people who they thought in good faith were giving them good advice, and when it turns out that they weren't, that in fact they were benefiting themselves.

And so this is a very important piece of legislation we have before us. And I know that we have been visited, lobbied by groups that are connected to financial planning and advice, and we do appreciate that. And I think that at the end of the day this is one piece of legislation we have to think of what's in the best interest of the citizens of Saskatchewan.

We have to think about, though, what are the unintended consequences, the situations that might arise. And I hope this is not the case and I hope that the government is prepared to do this. Making sure that financial advice is affordable, that there's some way when people are getting plans and advice from the people who are able to do that, that they are being treated in a fair and equitable way and accountable too. That prices are quoted ahead of time so they know what they're paying for and what they can expect to get and that there's no false promises or people are led down the road.

And you know, today I was listening to the radio. This morning they had a financial expert. I don't know whether she was an advisor or a planner, but I actually thought I was going to phone into the radio because I thought her advice was really solid. At this time of the year I know how people were . . . Like one of the things people are thinking about are RRSPs [registered retirement savings plan]. And so they had her on the radio to talk about that.

But she made the point that, in fact, that if you have a pension plan at work maybe RRSPs aren't the best thing for you. Tax-free saving accounts are better. And I thought, well that's refreshing that she's actually giving something. I've listened to an interview and I've actually learned something from what she was saying. And I thought that was worthwhile when we have people who are giving worthwhile information and people are learning things from them.

One other example — and this is one that's really and I hope that at some point we can address this — is the work around people who save money through RRSPs and they only have about 30 or \$40,000 when they retire and they are low-income workers. And in fact it would have been better for them not to have that because they will be deducted when they get their guaranteed income supplement. And so in fact the government is clawing that back which they would have got because they're a low-income senior.

But they have some savings and they would have been better to think of a way to invest that money, either through buying a car or making a larger down payment on their house or something.

But these are the things that good, solid advisors and planners can help you with. And that's why we need to have regulations in place and good legislation, that is not the intention to upsell or sell products that won't help citizens. But we'll really want to make sure seniors, at the end of the day, have good, solid incomes so they can live to the lifestyle that they wish they do — whether they're in a home or in a condo or an apartment — that they're not being afraid of losing their hard-earned incomes through unfortunate plans that they may have bought in to.

So this is a very important piece of legislation before us. We think that it's important that we consider that the consequences, the intended and the unintended, and that we think about what this means for the future. I think that it's important that we make sure that people, when they do the right thing, when they save their money, that they get the benefits of that savings in their later years.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I have no further comments on Bill No. 203. I know that there will be lots of people that have some things to say about this in the future, and so I would adjourn the debate on Bill No. 203. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 204

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 204 — *The Jury Amendment Act, 2019/Loi modificative de 2019 sur le jury*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Pedersen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to join in this debate. And I might be wrong, but I think that this might be my very first opportunity to kind of shut down the business of the Assembly and be the last speaker of the day.

So, Mr. Speaker, juries are like a really, really important part of our legal and constitutional history. If I recall my history correct, this goes back to the Magna Carta days when the lords and barons banded together and insisted that they be tried by their peers and not by an arbitrary monarch. Now I hope that I'm right on that because now it's on the record. But my colleague from Regina Elphinstone could probably talk for much longer on this topic than me.

But, Mr. Speaker, in all seriousness, juries are an important concept in our legal tradition. I'm fortunate that I've never had the opportunity to partake in a jury trial as a lawyer, and being a lawyer, I will never have the opportunity to serve as a juror because lawyers are one of the automatic exclusions. And I note in looking at *The Jury Act* that in addition to lawyers being

automatically excluded from sitting as jurors, members of this Assembly are as well. Although once you've been removed from office by the voters or of your own volition, you're no longer entitled to that exemption so at that point you might serve.

Mr. Speaker, the underpinning principle of the right to a trial by jury is that you be tried by a jury of your peers. And so it's important that in the jury selection process that people are being selected for the jury which are not only representative of the population but are peers of the person who is accused. And from my quick look at this amendment Act, this will improve that process. There's always the room for error, but I think these amendments will improve the process for jury selection. And so, Mr. Speaker, that's a good thing.

On a very, almost amusing point, I noticed when I was looking at *The Jury Act* and I see that this Act does not apply to a trial held in accordance with *The Legislative Assembly Act*. And I thought, the Legislative Assembly can hold trials? And *The Legislative Assembly Act* doesn't say that we can hold trials, but it does say that we are a court, and so I guess perhaps we can hold trials. But this jury Act would not apply to a trial conducted under *The Legislative Assembly Act*.

In any case, Mr. Speaker, I think that type of comment is starting to verge on an irrelevant tangent. So without saying anything more, I'm going to wrap up my comments here and move that we adjourn debate on this bill.

The Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In order to facilitate the work of committee this evening, I move that this House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — It has been moved that this Assembly do now adjourn. Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. This Assembly stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:28.]

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