



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

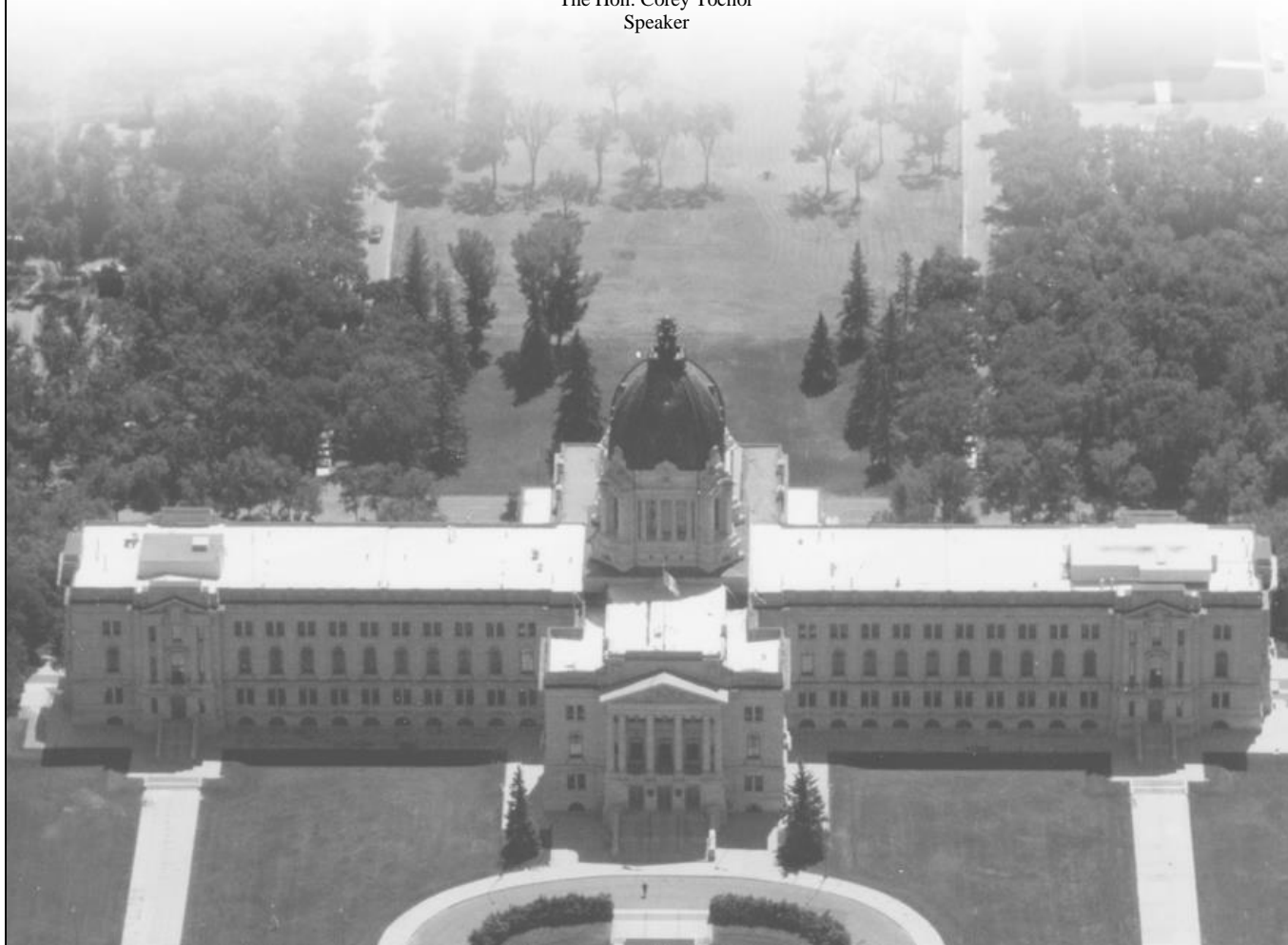
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

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The Hon. Corey Tochor
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
1st Session — 28th Legislature

Speaker — Hon. Corey Tochor

Premier — Hon. Brad Wall

Leader of the Opposition — Trent Wotherspoon

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Wyant, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)

Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

Party Standings: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 51; New Democratic Party (NDP) — 10

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to this Assembly, it's my pleasure to introduce in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, some officials here from SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association]. Today is SUMA Advocacy Day, and these officials have been meeting with a number of my colleagues on a variety of different issues. I understand the discussions have gone well.

We have here the CEO [chief executive officer] of SUMA, Laurent Mougeot. We have the mayor of Torquay, Mike Strachan. We have Saskatoon city councillor Darren Hill and Prince Albert city councillor Lee Atkinson.

Mr. Speaker, it's great to have them here. They're no strangers to this Assembly, but we welcome them once again, and we hope that they're going to stick around for the proceedings today. And I'd ask all members to please give them a warm welcome.

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, and on behalf of the rest of the members of the opposition, I want to welcome the SUMA representatives here too. I want to thank you for all the work that you do in supporting the urban municipalities. I've been talking to a lot of people that are representatives of different municipalities, and they say that they get a lot of support from SUMA, so I appreciate that.

I also would like to take this time to welcome the Prince Albert city councillor, Lee Atkinson. Lee has been the ward 3 councillor in my constituency since 2000. Mr. Speaker, having lived in ward 3 myself, I can confirm that Lee works very hard for his constituents. He can always be counted on to advocate for those who go to him with an issue involving the city. So I want to take this opportunity to welcome Lee to his Legislative Assembly and all the SUMA representatives. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Corrections and Policing.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to introduce to you and, through you, to all members of this Legislative Assembly Stephen Foster and Lee Brown. Mr. Speaker, Stephen Foster is the chief operating officer for Revera and oversees retirement living for Revera. Lee Brown is Revera's regional director of operations for Saskatchewan. Just on a side note, Mr. Speaker, Stephen showed up here today and flew in just to have lunch and to be in our Legislative

Assembly. So I think that's pretty awesome.

Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of having lunch with these gentlemen today where we discussed the recent ground breaking for their 216-suite retirement facility right here in Regina. There will be more details about this in a member's statement to come. I would like all members to welcome Stephen and Lee to the Legislative Assembly and ask all members to join me in welcoming them. Thank you.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, requesting leave for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to recognize just a few people that are in the Assembly here today of various groups and the first being the two individuals that were just introduced by the minister. I'd like to join with the minister in welcoming Stephen Foster and Lee Brown with Revera. Thank you for your investment. We look forward to seeing it come to fruition. We wish you well with your time here and thanks for being in your Assembly.

I'd also like to welcome the leadership of SUMA that's here today. Certainly Laurent Mougeot. And SUMA plays a very important role within our province. I want to thank Mike Strachan, Darren Hill, and Lee Atkinson for being here also. It's a good representation of SUMA's membership when you have Torquay — a small community in the Southeast with abundant pheasant in and around it as well, Mr. Speaker, I should say — through to Saskatoon and then in Prince Alberta also here represented. So I thank those leaders within their communities and those leaders within SUMA for being here today also. And I ask members to welcome them as well.

I'd also like to introduce two other guests that are also here. I'll start with a very special leader within the province, Dwayne Lasas, vice-chief with Meadow Lake Tribal Council, former councillor with Waterhen First Nation — someone who's incredibly active and an advocate within the arts, an incredible musician, an incredible hunter and fisher, has a wonderful family, has served as an addictions counsellor and a great support within the community. He also served as the NDP [New Democratic Party] candidate in Meadow Lake this last election. So I ask all members to welcome Dwayne Lasas, vice-chief of the MLTC [Meadow Lake Tribal Council] to his Assembly also.

I might as well introduce everyone in the Chambers here today. Seated in the east gallery I see Brett Estey, a lifelong season ticket holder and avid Roughrider fan — someone who's done a lot of work as it relates to cancer advocacy within our province, someone who's worked within SAMA [Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency] within our province, and someone who's an all around good person and community

leader who ran as the candidate for the NDP in Regina Rochdale the last election. So I ask all members in this Assembly to welcome Brett Estey to his Assembly also.

And before I sit down, I should reference Chantel Sebastian sitting in the west gallery, one exceptional teacher along with her students here today. It's a pleasure to have Ms. Sebastian and her students here today. Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I ask all members to welcome all these folks to their Assembly.

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

Hon. Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce, sitting in the west gallery, a group of 25 grade 5 students from the Harvest City Christian Academy. Give us a wave. Excellent.

And accompanying the students today are their teachers Mrs. Justine Glover and Mrs. Bethann Ruecker. It's always great to see them. We'll have a little time this afternoon for them to stump me as per usual, and the Finance minister is looking for some ice cream for you. I ask all members to join me in welcoming these students and teachers from the Harvest to their Assembly, Mr. Speaker. Thanks.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I too would like to join with the member for Regina Coronation Park and welcome Mrs. Glover and her grade 5 class to the Legislative Assembly today. I've known Mrs. Glover for a number of years now, as her husband Matthew has been working in my office for the past six years.

Mrs. Glover is a math specialist and has been working very hard to help her students meet or exceed the goals set out in the education sector strategic plan of being at or above grade level in reading, writing, and in math. In fact, last month she organized a math fair in which parents were invited to participate in a variety of math activities and games. The students were having so much fun they didn't realize they were doing math.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention that I'd sent her a Facebook request, and after about 15 months, last week she accepted my Facebook request. So to her, I would say I promise I won't put stuff on her page.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd ask for leave for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce to you and, through you, to the Assembly some very special visitors that are with us today

in your gallery. Earlier today we announced a province-wide expansion of Family Matters, assisting families through separation and divorce, which is a program I'll speak about in a little while, Mr. Speaker.

We have a few guests in the gallery who are Ministry of Justice employees and greatly involved with the Family Matters program. With us today, Mr. Speaker, Suneil Sarai is legal counsel in the Ministry of Justice family justice services branch and is also a Family Matters service provider. Give us a wave, thanks, Suneil. Suneil has worked with the Ministry of Justice for nine years, and in that time has proven to be an invaluable resource. His dedication to the Family Matters program as well as other services provided through the family justice services branch is truly remarkable, and other guests would say in the ministry that we are very, very lucky to have him

With us today as well, Mr. Speaker, is Coralee Peterson who also joins us, who has worked in the Ministry of Justice for six years and is currently the program manager for the social work unit of the family justice services branch. There she is. Before this, Coralee was a Family Matters service provider who carried out family mediation. In every position she's held with the ministry, Coralee has demonstrated her commitment in helping Saskatchewan families.

Also here with us today is Robbi Behr — there she is — assistant director of the Ministry of Justice's family services branch. Robbi is one of the many staff who has worked tirelessly to make the Family Matters program a success. However this is just one of Robbi's many contributions to serving Saskatchewan citizens. She has been with the Ministry of Justice for 22 years and in that time has proven to be a valued and dedicated leader in the ministry.

Lastly and certainly not least, Mr. Speaker, we have Lionel McNabb joining us. Lionel has been with the Ministry of Justice for 24 years and is currently the director of family justice services branch. Through Lionel's direction, the family justice services branch helps countless Saskatchewan citizens on a daily basis. He is very important to the ministry, and I'm very pleased to have him join us today, and I want to thank him personally for all the support he's given me and the ministry over his many years.

Mr. Speaker, I'm always proud to introduce employees of the Ministry of Justice. As you know, they do a great job and impressive work to help the citizens of Saskatchewan, so please join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and to all members of this Legislative Assembly, I'd like to join with the minister in welcoming the folks from Family Matters: Robbi Behr, Suneil Sarai, Coralee Peterson, and Lionel McNabb. And I can attest personally to the hard work that all you folks do as I, in my past life, had quite extensive involvement with the Family Matters program. And I want to send some special love out to Suneil Surai, a lawyer with the Family Law Information Centre. I know how many files you work on personally is absolutely astounding, and the minister is

correct in that the ministry is very, very lucky to have you — and all of you and all the very hard work that you do. So I ask that the members join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, when I was on my feet, I was remiss in not introducing a good friend of mine who has already been introduced in the House, Darren Hill, a city councillor from Saskatoon. As many of you know, Darren is the executive director of JA, Junior Achievement of Saskatchewan, and he does a great job in educating young entrepreneurs who will ultimately take over some significant roles in the business community in the future.

He's also the city councillor for ward 1, as has already been mentioned. I had the pleasure of serving on city council with Darren for four years, four long years. But Darren's here today as a member of SUMA, as has been mentioned by the minister already. He'll be meeting with a number of ministers today on some important issues to SUMA and to the Government of Saskatchewan and the people. So I would again ask members of the legislature to welcome Darren to his Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Batoche. If he's not going to be up, all right then, Regina Pasqua.

Mr. Fiaz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you, through you to all members of the Assembly, I have the privilege to introduce, seated in the west gallery, 25 grade 5 students from Ethel Milliken Elementary School. They're from my constituency, Regina Pasqua. Wave your hands — good, thanks. They are accompanied by their teacher, Ms. Chantel Sebastian.

Mr. Speaker, they are here to observe the proceedings in the Legislative Assembly today, and later on this afternoon I will be meeting with them, and I'm sure they are having quite a number of questions for me. And I would like to ask all the members to welcome them to their own Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too want to welcome our special guests as introduced by our leader, Mr. Dwayne Lasas. And I can tell you that Dwayne is a gifted musician. He's a great friend and:

[The hon. member spoke for a time in Cree.]

[13:45]

And just a translation, Mr. Speaker, I explained to Mr. Lasas we can pretty much say anything in our Aboriginal language of Cree because most people don't understand what we're saying. So we agreed to conspire, Mr. Speaker.

So once again I also want to point out in my closing comments that I'm sure glad Dwayne is here to take in the proceedings because it's always highly valuable when our Aboriginal people come to their House and their home. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Estevan.

Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and to all the members of this Assembly, I'd like to introduce His Worship Mayor Mike Strachan who is sitting in your gallery today. Mike is the mayor of Torquay, and not only that, he works at the local coal mine which supplies coal to Boundary dam station 3, our clean coal facility that we're running in Estevan. As well as that, he's the southeast director with SUMA and, I might add, he has a great voice for the Estevan constituency and all of southeast Saskatchewan.

I've had the privilege of knowing Mike since I was an officer in air cadets, and he was one of my cadets in the program. So I would like to ask all members to join me in welcoming him to our Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise again today to present a petition to improve PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder] coverage for Saskatchewan workers. Mr. Speaker, the petitioners point out that post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, can severely impact the lives of all people, and the delay in diagnosis and treatment for PTSD can be detrimental to recovery. The petitioners, Mr. Speaker, are asking the government for timely access to necessary services and supports for Saskatchewan workers who are exposed to traumatic events on the job and then end up with a diagnosis of PTSD. 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 Saskatchewan government to make the necessary changes to ensure that if Saskatchewan workers are exposed to traumatic events on the job and are then diagnosed with PTSD, it is presumed to be caused by the worker's employment, and the worker will subsequently be covered under workers' compensation and receive the same benefits as others with work-related injuries.

Mr. Speaker, this petition today is signed by citizens from Saskatoon and Moose Jaw. I so submit.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition from some individuals from Saskatoon, North Battleford, and Cut Knife. They would like to bring to our attention the following: *The Surface Rights Acquisition and Compensation Act* is an old and outdated piece of legislation that remains largely unchanged despite amendments over the years. It is in desperate need of modernization to reflect the current challenges that farmers and ranchers are facing today. So I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Government of Saskatchewan to introduce legislation

that would modernize *The Surface Rights Acquisition and Compensation Act*, classify land valued as industrial rather than agricultural when oil and gas development takes place, removing pipelines and flow lines from the surface rights Act, and establish a new maximum in compensation to be paid for damages.

Mr. Speaker, I so submit.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition in support of funding heritage languages here in Saskatchewan. And we know that, after 25 years, the Government of Saskatchewan is discontinuing all support for heritage language learning here in Saskatchewan. Since 1991, heritage language schools have depended on this modest funding from the Ministry of Education to help sustain their programs. As a result of the announcement by the Ministry of Education, many of these non—profit heritage language schools will be faced with the difficult decision of whether they can continue to operate. And we also know it's increasingly important to work towards improving access to indigenous languages, many of which are in danger. Heritage language programs provide support, not only for immigrants, refugees, and their descendants, but also Aboriginal peoples and all Canadians who recognize the benefits of learning additional languages.

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

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly call on this government to reconsider this decision and restore funding for heritage language education in Saskatchewan heritage language schools.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition today are from the city of Saskatoon. I do so present. Thank you.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Corrections and Policing.

Construction Begins on Retirement Community in Regina

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had the privilege of introducing guests from Revera earlier and would like to talk about an exciting project they recently broke ground for in my constituency.

Mr. Speaker, this company provides high-quality retirement living for seniors across Canada and operates eight retirement communities right here in Saskatchewan. On May 10th I attended a ground breaking on the new Green Falls Landing

site. When it opens in 2018, it will become the ninth community Revera operates in our province, and according to Revera people, they have said that it is a flagship facility.

Mr. Speaker, I was joined by Her Honour the Honourable Lieutenant Governor Vaughn Solomon Schofield and dignitaries from Revera and with the city of Regina.

Currently one in seven Saskatchewan residents is 65 or older and that by 2036, seniors will comprise 23 to 25 per cent of the Canadian population. Seniors remain an active and vital group in our province, and as the Premier often references, they are the greatest generation.

Mr. Speaker, private sector investments like this are helping make life better for all seniors in Saskatchewan. Revera is investing \$75 million in this new 216-suite residence that will create around 300 jobs during construction and 150 permanent jobs once completed.

Mr. Speaker, because of Revera and the thousands of private and public long-term care providers in the province, we are ensuring seniors can enjoy a great quality of life right here in Saskatchewan. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

North Central Community Association Celebrates 40th Anniversary

Mr. McCall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's no secret that I take great pride in calling Regina's North Central neighbourhood my home. It's also no secret that the North Central neighbourhood is not without its issues, and certainly these issues have changed with the times. But one thing that has remained constant is the willingness of North Central neighbours to pitch in, to take on the challenges, and work to build a better North Central.

Today I want to say a few words about the North Central Community Association having celebrated its 40th anniversary on June 4th. Along with the member from Regina Pasqua, it was my honour to be in attendance. It was an excellent day with a big block party. Hundreds of folks came out. And at night there was a banquet to honour community champions including the likes of Brenda Dubois, Jan Morier, Brandon Brooks, Rob Deglau, and one Clifford Robert Douglas McCall — my dad, Mr. Speaker.

A special word of congratulations to the community association executive, especially president Jessica Hanna and executive director Michael Parker and chief celebration organizer Arlene Bray and everyone on the organizing committee who did a tremendous job — very well done.

These have been people that exemplify the fighting spirit of we're all in this together coming out of North Central. The good folks of the North Central Community Association continue to make a positive difference, and I most sincerely thank them and commend them for it. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Provincial Secretary.

Prince Albert Regional 4-H Show and Sale

Hon. Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. “I pledge my head to clearer thinking, my heart to greater loyalty, my hands to larger service, and my health to better living for my club, my community, and my country.”

Following this pledge and the motto, “learn to do by doing,” my local 4-H region did just that. 4-H Canada is made up of over 25,000 members and over 7,000 volunteers across our nation.

Yesterday the Prince Albert regional 4-H show and sale took place at the exhibition grounds. Over 80 4-H members participated with 78 steers to be auctioned off to the general public. I was fortunate to be able to support the 4-H members by purchasing some of that AAA prime beef. The average sale price was \$3.10 a pound, and the charity steer raised a total of 27,000 for the Karen Pilon Organ Donor Awareness Foundation.

I’d like to acknowledge Canwood, Weldon, West P.A. [Prince Albert], Wild Rose, and Torch River 4-H beef clubs, and all parents and volunteers for their dedication and contribution to this organization. I ask all members to join me in congratulating 4-H on their successful event, as well as the parents and all these leaders of these clubs. This is something we can all get behind. Thank you.

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

Riverside Community School Holds Aboriginal Arts Festival

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Riverside Aboriginal Arts Festival is a multidisciplinary arts festival hosted by Riverside Community public school in my constituency. Performances for the festival took place June 8th and 9th at the E.A. Rawlinson Centre for the Arts and the John V. Hicks Gallery. This event was sponsored by the Saskatchewan Arts Board.

The show at E.A. Rawlinson Centre for the Arts featured the Riverside Jigging Club as the main feature of the program where traditional dances were performed. The show also featured “O Canada” sung in Cree. The Riverside choir performed a number of pieces and students recited poetry and spoken-word pieces. The grand finale was a fusion of traditional Métis jigging and modern hip-hop dances.

The festival also featured an art exhibition at the John V. Hicks Gallery in downtown Prince Albert. The gallery contains work done by students throughout the school. Much of the artwork follows the theme of Aboriginal issues through time and they range from the concrete to the abstract. The students’ work was put on display June 1st and will run until June 23rd.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join with me in congratulating the staff and students at Riverside Community School who helped to make this year’s Aboriginal Arts Festival a success.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from

Melville-Saltcoats.

Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association’s 103rd Annual General Meeting

Mr. Kaeding: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday and today, ranchers from across the province are gathered here in Regina for the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association’s 103rd annual general meeting. The event, hosted at the Conexus Arts Centre, includes two full days of presentations, market information, and best practices, as well as an opportunity for producers to network.

Mr. Speaker, last night they held a banquet where they handed out some awards to members of the SSGA [Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association] who have demonstrated excellence. Outgoing SSGA president Doug Gillespie was honoured for his service, and Miles and Sheri Anderson of Fir Mountain won the TESA, The Environmental Stewardship Award.

Mr. Speaker, the final award went to someone who we all know well in the Assembly, former minister of Agriculture and MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] from my constituency of Melville-Saltcoats, Bob Bjornerud. Bob was awarded a lifetime membership to the SSGA for commitment and service to the agriculture sector and to the hard-working ranchers and producers of this province.

While Bob was an MLA he served as Ag critic and was our government’s first Ag minister. But, Mr. Speaker, what set him apart was not only the roles that he fulfilled but that he was always a strong advocate for what was best for family farms and ranches. Mr. Speaker, I ask members to join me in congratulating Bob, Doug Gillespie, and Miles and Sheri Anderson on their well-deserved recognition. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Westview.

Caroline Robins Community School Celebrates 50 Years

Mr. Buckingham: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On June 1st, Caroline Robins Community School celebrated 50 years of learning and community in Saskatoon Westview. Mr. Speaker, the celebration included tours of the school, a brief program, a barbecue supper, and a social for former staff and students. This evening also featured family entertainment including face painting, a pet zoo, and a photo booth.

An interesting point about this school, Mr. Speaker, is that the Minister of Education actually helped his father build this school. Now if the school is celebrating its 50th anniversary, I assume the Minister was in his 30s at the time.

A few days before the celebration, Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to visit the school to mark this anniversary. During my visit, I met the school’s principal and vice-principal, and I had the opportunity to tour the school. The school has recently completed some upgrades which includes new classrooms and outdoor learning spaces for kindergarten and pre-K [pre-kindergarten] classes, as well as a new music room.

Mr. Speaker, as a community school, Caroline Robins

contributes to the well-being of the community by serving as a hub for community activities and organizations. I ask all members to join me in celebrating Caroline Robins Community School's five decades as a pillar of the Westview community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Finally, I am excited to introduce the member from Batoche.

National Blood Donor Week

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to recognize today as national blood donors day and June 13th to 18th as National Blood Donor Week. We set aside this time each year to celebrate the thousands of blood donors across Canada and the thousands of lives saved through our national blood system.

[14:00]

Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes blood donors and the vital role they play in the health care system. Surgeries and treatments for diseases such as cancer would simply not be possible without blood donors. We appreciate them very much and commend them on their selfless gift of life.

Mr. Speaker, the need for blood affects many of us. In fact half of all Canadians will either need blood at some point in their lives or know someone who does. Right now less than 4 per cent of eligible Canadians support 100 per cent of the country's blood system. We are counting on more people to join the movement and consider donating blood for the first time. This year more than 100,000 new blood donors will be required across Canada.

Mr. Speaker, during this very important week, I want to thank every Saskatchewan blood donor, and I want to encourage my colleagues and all of Saskatchewan's citizens to donate blood and give the gift of life.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Carbon Capture and Storage Facility

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party's mismanagement and financial fiascos are getting hard to keep up with. Turn after turn after turn, they've blown money on failed projects favouring foreign contractors and consultants over Saskatchewan workers and businesses, land deals with supporters that are now being investigated. And every time we think we've seen the peak of questionable deals or the bottom of boondoggles, there's more.

Now with their carbon kind-of capture, I guess, we're seeing that the waste has gone beyond what they thought was even possible. Mr. Speaker, the debt the Sask Party has piled on SaskPower and Sask people has gotten so big it's actually about to break the law. So instead of stopping the bleeding, they're changing the law and increasing the maximum debt SaskPower can take on by 25 per cent to \$10 billion.

Mr. Speaker, it's clear that the Sask Party's failure on carbon capture has taken a lot more of Saskatchewan's cash than it has carbon, Mr. Speaker. When will the Sask Party stop making Saskatchewan people pay for their failures?

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, this technology that's being used at BD3 [Boundary dam 3] is world-leading technology. It's an effort to mitigate CO₂ down at Estevan area of the province, Mr. Speaker. We've had international guests from around the world.

Most recently we've had the environment minister from Ottawa tour the facility down there, and she had some interesting things to say about it. She said, in terms of the technology, there is the opportunity for \$50 trillion worth of technology transfer in China alone. They're going to need clean energy and solutions, so "[I think] it's a real opportunity . . . When you have carbon capture and storage, that's certainly an innovative solution — a made-in-Canada solution." So looking at how we can improve it here and how it's a real opportunity for Canada to move forward.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, that's just one example of many things that people from around the world have said about BD3.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, with due respect, that minister should have been punted as a minister a long time ago — scandal plagued, Mr. Speaker, and is making now Saskatchewan people pay the price.

You know, we see this is a government that actually broke their owned balanced budget law. So what do we see? They're scrapping it, Mr. Speaker, pretending actually that they meant to do this all along. And since they are ready to break another law, as far as debt around SaskPower, they're changing that law also, Mr. Speaker. And all the way along they're undermining the bottom line of SaskPower and really making a dangerously high level of debt within this very important Crown corporation.

You know, members opposite can shake their heads or they can argue otherwise, but the reality is that for, you know, whether it's hedge fund managers or whether it's bondholders, Mr. Speaker, this is good news. But for Saskatchewan people, Saskatchewan businesses, for ratepayers across Saskatchewan, it means one thing. Well, two things, Mr. Speaker: two rate increases, big rate increases in just one year. When will this government stop passing the cost of its mismanagement on to Saskatchewan people?

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, in 2007, late 2007 when we took over government here in the province of Saskatchewan, SaskPower had about \$1 billion worth of infrastructure needs at that point in time. Since that time we've seen the amount of customers of SaskPower grow dramatically here in the province of Saskatchewan, about 60,000 new customers. About 82,000 more new customers are expected to come online here in the

future, Mr. Speaker.

SaskPower is investing about \$1 billion on an annual basis to meet the needs of Saskatchewan people and businesses into the future of our province, Mr. Speaker. That's a far cry from what was invested by the members opposite when they would invest about \$300 million a year, not even enough to keep up with the infrastructure needs which alone are simply about \$400 million a year, Mr. Speaker.

So the fact of the matter is that SaskPower is doing a great job on behalf of the province of Saskatchewan to meet the needs of a growing province.

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

Carbon Capture and Storage Agreement

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, it's been almost a decade. It's time for this government to take responsibility for the mismanagement that they foisted on the people of Saskatchewan. Yesterday, yesterday, they're getting desperate. They called in SaskPower's president and CEO to answer questions that the minister wouldn't. He confirmed that SaskPower has intentionally backed the plant off.

And, Mr. Speaker, the whole reason we were told they went with Cenovus was because they were supposed to take all of the carbon. Now according to the SaskPower president, they'll only take somewhere between "50 and 99 percent." That's one heck of a range. And apparently SaskPower will start looking for another off taker in "the next year or two." In the meantime, CO₂ that could be captured will be released. So what was the point of the billions they spent on this thing, Mr. Speaker?

From the start the Sask Party has let the interests of Cenovus and SNC-Lavalin come ahead of the needs and expectations of Saskatchewan people. So, Mr. Speaker, how can the Sask Party justify taking a plant they've thrown billions of dollars at and intentionally make it work at less than its best?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Economy.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, Cenovus continues to purchase CO₂ from BD3. And BD3 continues to be operating very well capturing, we expect, about 800 000 tonnes of CO₂ this year. That's the equivalent of about 200,000 vehicles in the province of Saskatchewan.

It was something that the member, at one time, from Nutana supported, but apparently she's jumped off base with respect to that. She's most recently, of course, has signed on to the Leap Manifesto. And as everyone in the province of Saskatchewan knows, Mr. Speaker, she would close down the coal industry. The guests from places like Torquay should be aware of that. She would close down the coal industry. She'd shut down the oil and gas industry here in Saskatchewan. She'd take away GMOs [genetically modified organism] here for agriculture here in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. If they were ever allowed to be the government of this province, Mr. Speaker, it would devastate the economy of our province.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I wish the member opposite would get his facts straight, but in addition to that, I wish they would try hard to stop painting a rosy picture. There's only one way to describe the situation at Boundary dam, and that is bad. Delays, failures, and problems have piled up from the start. SaskPower has had to pay millions of dollars in fines, and this Crown corporation that belongs to all the people of Saskatchewan is tied up in tens of million dollars worth of lawsuits.

Mr. Speaker, SaskPower was about to be on the hook for a \$92 million penalty for Cenovus, but Cenovus agreed to renegotiate in exchange for dropping the amount of carbon dioxide they have to accept. Cenovus agreed to walk away from the \$92 million but, Mr. Speaker, no corporation walks away from that kind of money without getting something better in return.

The SaskPower president, he said he wasn't around when that deal was signed. But you know who was? That minister. So he has avoided talking about this penalty, but now will he tell us how much the cut in Cenovus quotas will cost the people of Saskatchewan?

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, in 2015, SaskPower made a profit of about \$2 million from the sale of CO₂. In '16, this current year, there's expected to be a profit of about \$16 million to the people of Saskatchewan through SaskPower, Mr. Speaker. Not a loss, but a gain of \$16 million, Mr. Speaker.

It is normal for Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker, to negotiate their own contracts. Ministers do not negotiate their own contracts. Ministers do not renegotiate the contracts with respect to these kinds of things, Mr. Speaker. And the fact that there was a \$91 million penalty at one point in time is a little bit moot, Mr. Speaker, because it is no longer there.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the scrum, the head of SaskPower indicated that the minister was briefed on the renegotiation of the deal. And the question that I think we have to put to the people of Saskatchewan here and to this minister is, okay, we know that Cenovus is looking after their shareholders, but is this minister looking after the ratepayers of SaskPower?

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — You know, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite makes it sound like this was something that just happened yesterday, Mr. Speaker. The fact of the matter is we had extensive discussions with respect to this back in January at the Crown Corporations Committee meetings that she attended and spoke on behalf of the opposition at that point in time, Mr. Speaker.

I would say to the people of Saskatchewan that SaskPower's

doing a great job in ensuring that the power needs of this province are met going forward. About 82,000 more people are going to be tied into the system in the future, Mr. Speaker, here in the province of Saskatchewan — a far cry from when members opposite used to operate the province of Saskatchewan when we had a shrinking economy, when we said goodbye to the young people of this province, Mr. Speaker. We will never go back to those dark days.

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

Funding for Education

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, we keep hearing about the Sask Party's choices when it comes to helping out oil companies or business friends with land surrounding the GTH [Global Transportation Hub], but they're not making choices that benefit our kids in the classroom.

Last night the Education minister admitted, "Each and every . . . year until this year, we have fully funded the cost of the collective bargaining agreement." Mr. Speaker, this government helped negotiate the deal with teachers, and this government approved a 1.9 per cent increase.

The minister himself admitted that the point five per cent that boards will receive is "less than what that upward pressure would be." Mr. Speaker, he outright admitted that they shortchanged school boards, teachers, our kids with this budget, and somehow they still try to claim that this budget was about maintaining the services that people rely on.

To the minister: since it was clearly known that education was getting shortchanged, how does this government still manage to claim that they are setting our kids up for success?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, once again we have to stand in the House and correct things that are said by the members opposite. Yesterday the member for Regina Lakeview referenced a June 11th *StarPhoenix* article talking about imposing cuts on school divisions. She quoted me as saying, "We certainly have the right to do it. We have the ability to do things like that." And, Mr. Speaker, she stopped there. Had she continued, the next sentence of the quote in *The StarPhoenix* goes on to say, "So I don't hold it out as a threat or anything. I say to the divisions, 'Work with us,' and they've been good in the past."

So, Mr. Speaker, I would ask the member again opposite to please stop torquing and twisting the quotes. And I would ask her, Mr. Speaker, and give her the opportunity to stand in the House and correct what she said earlier so that the record is complete and accurate.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, I will let the quote that the minister just read in stand, but I don't think it changes the meaning of the quote or the veiled threat to school boards.

Again the minister himself last night said, "This was the first year that we have not fully funded those increases." The Sask Party signed the CBA [collective bargaining agreement], the minister acknowledged that the teachers bargained in good faith. School boards and teachers assumed that the government did too. They assumed that if the provincial government signed on to this agreement, then they would fund it.

But you know what happens when you assume, Mr. Speaker. You . . . Well with the Sask Party, you get shortchanged and you get asked to make up for their cuts. How is it that the Sask. Party keeps finding money for their carbon capture boondoggle, but are asking students to pay the price for the government backing down on their own signature?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, in the last year to year and a half we've seen the resource revenue fall off like we have never seen before. No analyst in the world predicted the catastrophic collapse of oil prices in the world. Mr. Speaker, we are going to work through that as best we possibly can. We are going to look to our health regions and we're going to look to our school divisions to work with us, find savings, find economies, and to make sure that the resources are committed where they belong: to the front lines so that students can continue to be educated as well as they possibly can.

And, Mr. Speaker, we'll make no apologies for asking the school divisions to look for economies, to look for savings, looking for them to share resources, looking for them to consider consolidation, looking for them to do a variety of other things that will save money so that we can continue to commit where money needs to be saved, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

[14:15]

Support for Post-Secondary Institutions

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party's record on transformation of post-secondary institutions shows less than desirable outcomes, but this is a government that allows neither fact nor failure to get in the way of plowing ahead. So after the release of the long-awaited budget, they hit the so-called transform button again and now want to make cuts to make up for their own mismanagement.

The former Advanced Education minister, now Finance minister, muses about merging university programming. Obviously this has the universities concerned. The faculties at the universities of Saskatchewan and Regina already work collaboratively on many of their programs. Thomas Chase, University of Regina vice-president, academic, said the Sask Party's suggested changes would be "tremendously disruptive."

Mr. Speaker, to whom will the current minister listen: his predecessor, whose new job is to cut wherever possible, or to the experts in the educational institutions whose priority is doing their job and educating our future in this province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Advanced

Education.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As we go through the next number of weeks, months, Mr. Speaker, we look forward to the collaborative conversation that we'll have with our post-secondary institutions across the partner . . . our post-secondary partners, Mr. Speaker, that offer the high-quality education that the people of Saskatchewan have come to know and to expect here in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And we're going to have conversations around accessibility of our institutions, Mr. Speaker. We're going to ask questions alongside our institutions with respect to responsiveness of our institutions to the people that attend them and to the communities across the province, Mr. Speaker, have conversations with respect to sustainability of our institutions now and into the future, accountability of our institutions, Mr. Speaker, again to those that are investing in their education and to the people of Saskatchewan that invest and invest so heavily in post-secondary education, all the while, Mr. Speaker, ensuring that we can retain, as I said, the quality of education that the people of Saskatchewan have come to know and expect from each of our post-secondary partners here in the province.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, the changes being bandied about by the Sask Party don't end with universities. Both the Finance and Advanced Education ministers are discussing significant changes to how regional colleges serve students, you know, regional colleges being our edge in terms of accessibility.

Regional colleges use just 4 per cent of the close to \$660 million programming budget for advanced education. As Ivan Yackel, president and CEO of Humboldt-based Carlton Trail College said, "If you're looking for significant savings, I'm not sure that's where you would find them. Particularly not when you look at the kind of work that we're doing."

Mr. Speaker, regional colleges deliver educational opportunities to rural residents and provide important job training to support rural communities. What transformational change does the minister have in mind for Saskatchewan's regional colleges? To what extent will these cuts help fill the growing Sask Party deficit, and has the minister considered the long term effects of undermining our regional college system?

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

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the member opposite for the question, Mr. Speaker. With respect to our regional college system, they've done a great job throughout rural Saskatchewan and many of our communities including, Mr. Speaker, those First Nations communities and engagement in things like adult basic education, Mr. Speaker, some pre-employment training, some of the free trades training that happens.

Mr. Speaker, our regional colleges have done a great job with regards to accessibility, Mr. Speaker. But we are also going to, as I said, have that collaborative conversation, not just with our

universities, not just with our technical institutes, Mr. Speaker, but all of our post-secondary partners, including regional colleges, when it comes to responsiveness, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to sustainability, accountability, and quality.

Mr. Speaker, this is unlike what has happened in years previous, Mr. Speaker, when the members opposite, a day before the 2007 election, Mr. Speaker, released a paper with a number — after 16 years of government — with a number of requests that they would do when it comes to post-secondary institutions, such as a \$1,000 reduction in tuition, Mr. Speaker.

It's this government that delivered on that with the Saskatchewan Advantage Scholarship, Mr. Speaker. They asked for increased student financial assistance. We delivered on that, Mr. Speaker, with things like the advantage grant for education savings, the graduate retention program. And we'll continue to support our post-secondary education here in the province of Saskatchewan.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, this is the minister and a government that last budget gave an increase to the university, and then long about mid-year came around and asked for half of it back.

In terms of what's happening in the regional college sector and again across the post-secondary education sector in general, in terms of transformational change, this is an agenda that was precisely nowhere in the election campaign, Mr. Speaker. So I guess my question to the minister is this. We're finding out more about what the transformation change agenda, so-called, means for the post-secondary education sector, but I guess I'd ask him this: can he point to me one place where talked about transformational change in the election campaign when they went to the people of Saskatchewan and asked for their support?

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

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, the Government of Saskatchewan with our post-secondary institutions, our post-secondary partners across the province have always talked about things like accessibility, Mr. Speaker, responsiveness, and sustainability now and into the future. And we're going to continue to have those discussions, Mr. Speaker, in light of fiscal financial challenges that we have: a billion-dollar revenue hole, Mr. Speaker, if you will.

I'll tell you what we won't do, Mr. Speaker. What we won't do is make policy decisions that result in tuition increases across the board like the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, over their 16 years of government: a 175 per cent at the University of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker; the University of Regina, up 144 per cent. Sask Polytech or SIAST [Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology] at the time increased 336 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

We're going to continue to work with our post-secondary institutions, Mr. Speaker, to find out and to ensure that we can continue to sustain the quality of the education we have now

and into the future for our children and our children's children. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Domestic Violence Reduction Strategy

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, far from taking positive action on the poverty reduction strategy, the Sask Party's cuts to poverty programs throughout the province are significant. We know that investing in poverty prevention can play an important role in saving women and families from violent situations. But, Mr. Speaker, if that's not reason enough for the Sask Party to invest, let me tell them that it saves money too.

A recent report put together by Regina's Circle Project association calculated that the financial cost of a single instance of domestic violence in Saskatchewan is more than \$100,000. The Regina Police Service agrees with these numbers and state that it is a "pretty compelling figure." Policing is often the default sector for a lack of capacity in other areas.

Mr. Speaker, since none of the other more obvious — to us at least — reasons for investing in poverty reduction have motivated the Sask Party to do anything but cut, will they at least commit to prevention programs based on the fact that they are economically sound?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I reject the premise of the member's question. We have made some significant investments in domestic violence reduction strategies, Mr. Speaker. Just last year we changed *The Victims of Domestic Violence Act*, Mr. Speaker, to enhance the ability of police and justice system to engage in more protective measures, more protective measures for victims, Mr. Speaker, by expanding definitions and providing additional tools, Mr. Speaker.

We've also made some significant investments, Mr. Speaker, in domestic violence outreach programs, Mr. Speaker, in domestic violence shelters over the term that we've been in government including, as of yesterday, the opening of the first domestic violence shelter in Saskatchewan in many, many years, Mr. Speaker.

So we're proud of the record that we have. Much more work to do, Mr. Speaker; we acknowledge that. But we'll continue to work on this programming, Mr. Speaker, to make Saskatchewan a safer place for every member of Saskatchewan.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, it's clear that those solutions aren't sufficient and we need to be doing more things right now. Saskatchewan has the highest rates of domestic violence amongst all provinces. It's actually more than double the national rate. More services are needed, Mr. Speaker, and it's clear, as a province, we can and must do better.

Of course we know that there are significant benefits to funding prevention. The Sask Party says they won't implement a plan to prevent and reduce interpersonal violence and domestic abuse until "the province's fiscal capacity allows." How can they continue to refuse to be proactive? Mr. Speaker, how can the Sask Party tie this important work to the price of oil? And how many more victims before this government takes real action?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I find that question to be remarkable, to be honest with you. I mean, just last week, over the last period of time, last week we announced some further information with respect to our domestic violence death review which is currently ongoing, Mr. Speaker. We're about to announce the names of those people that are going to be participating in that review, Mr. Speaker.

We acknowledge that we have the highest domestic violence rates in the country, Mr. Speaker, and we're not proud of that. But we have instituted some programs over the last number of years, Mr. Speaker, to get directly at that. And part of the domestic violence death review is part of that strategy, Mr. Speaker.

As a result of the work that they're going to do, we'll expect a review in the fall, an interim report with some recommendations, with the final report in the fall of next year, Mr. Speaker, which will point out some ways that we can further utilize the resources that we have, other programming that might be acceptable that might end up reducing the incidents of domestic violence in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. But to suggest that this government has done nothing on this file, Mr. Speaker, is ridiculous.

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

Decrease in Foster Homes

Ms. Rancourt: — Mr. Speaker, foster families were honoured at a gala this weekend. But the minister is not showing them any honour day to day. Between 2011 and 2015, the number of foster homes in Saskatchewan dropped from more than 600 to fewer than 500. At the end of 2015, 251 children were in a home that was overcapacity.

Mr. Speaker, if you don't like that statistic, they can take it up with the Children's Advocate. Me, I don't like the policies that made that number a reality for 251 Saskatchewan children, so I'm taking it up with the minister.

Under the Sask Party, funding for early childhood intervention programs is stagnant. There are northern foster families that can't access services at all. They're mismanaging the files so badly — with poor supports, late and unpredictable payments, and the list goes on — that families are leaving the program. When will the minister start caring for these children and support the families who want to help?

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite

isn't correct. We have fewer foster families in our province than we have in the past. That is not unlike every other province in our country, or every state in the US [United States] either, as many countries are struggling with getting foster families. It is a societal change, Mr. Speaker. As families, we are choosing to have less children. We have more two-parent working families. There's a number of reasons why it's becoming a struggle across our nation to gain foster families.

However a statistic that perhaps the member opposite also should not like is the fact that when the NDP were in government there was 21 children in one foster home, Mr. Speaker. We still have some homes that have more children. Some of those is from lack of capacity, some of those are sibling groups, Mr. Speaker. I've always said publicly that we will have, or we will try to keep sibling groups together wherever possible.

What we have done is putting supports in those homes, Mr. Speaker, that have more than four children, which is unlike what the members opposite did when they had a chance to have this file. So, Mr. Speaker, we will always be working on this along with our partner in the Foster Family Association, but we do not want to go back to the stats that were under that . . . [inaudible].

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Attorney General.

Family Matters Program

Hon. Mr. Wyatt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to recognize the province-wide expansion of a successful program that's been helping to minimize the effect of separation and divorce on family members, especially children, that are now being offered throughout Saskatchewan.

Family Matters, assisting families through separation and divorce, is a successful program delivered by the Ministry of Justice, with nearly \$1.3 million in financial support from the Law Foundation of Saskatchewan. The program provides early intervention solutions to help citizens navigate through this difficult transition in their lives. Previously the program was only available in Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Regina, and Moose Jaw. Earlier today, Mr. Speaker, we announced the program is now available to all Saskatchewan residents.

Family Matters offers families in transition access to an early, affordable, and informal opportunity to resolve issues outside the courtroom. There's a lot of information on separation and divorce, making it difficult for people to identify what is applicable to their specific needs. Family Matters has consolidated all these resources so that when citizens contact the program, a service provider can tell them what types of help are available for their particular situation. This support and guidance, combined with early intervention, can have a positive effect on couples going through this transition. Stress is alleviated on all family members, which, Mr. Speaker, is especially important for children.

[14:30]

From parenting plans to custody arrangements to property division — Family Matters can provide assistance on a number of topics related to separation and divorce. The issue of separation and divorce will always exist, Mr. Speaker, and it's important that we address the needs of those involved. Since the launch of the Family Matters program in November of 2014, the program has received nearly 1,300 inquiries. Mr. Speaker, that's a powerful number which clearly indicates the need for the type of assistance Family Matters provides. Traditionally, separating and divorced couples have used the courts to resolve matters, and this continues to be an option. However it is preferable to resolve these issues through an early intervention rather than traditional and costly court processes.

Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to improving access to justice for all Saskatchewan citizens, and Family Matters is one very important example of that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, and I would like to first thank the minister for providing me with a copy of his statement in advance.

As I said earlier, the folks at Family Matters do very good work, and I can attest to their good work personally. And the Family Matters program is an important program and is quite good in theory, and it's very important to be innovative especially in the area of family law. In Saskatchewan, as we all know, there's some serious gaps in access to justice in that area.

As the minister stated, the funding for this program is exclusively provided by the Law Foundation, a third party organization. It's \$1.3 million, Mr. Speaker, which is a significant amount of money, especially at a time when interest rates are lower. And in an ideal world, Mr. Speaker, government wouldn't be competing with community-based organizations for this important money, so we'll be monitoring that, as well as who exclusively this program is assisting. Ideally this program will be assisting those who are in highest need in our community, those who are of low income, those who don't qualify for legal aid, and those who theoretically cannot afford a lawyer, which is what would make sense for providing this type of service.

So as I said, it's very important to be innovative in this area. I'm happy to see that they're being innovative, and we as an opposition will continue to monitor the work of this program. Thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 32 — *The Automobile Accident Insurance (Benefits) Amendment Act, 2016*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 32, the automobile accident insurance amendment Act, 2016 be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Deputy Premier that Bill No. 32, the automotive accident insurance (benefits) amendment Act, 2016 be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time? I recognize the Deputy Premier.

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 33 — *The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 2016*

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 33, *The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 2016* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Social Services that Bill No. 33, *The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 2016* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Social Services. When shall this bill be read a second time?

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 34 — *The Provincial Lands Act, 2016*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 34, *The Provincial Lands Act, 2016* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It is moved by the Agriculture minister that Bill No. 34, *The Provincial Lands Act, 2016* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time? I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

**Bill No. 35 — *The Small Claims Act, 2016*
*Loi de 2016 sur les petites créances***

The Speaker: — I recognize the Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 35, *The Small Claims Act, 2016* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Attorney General that Bill No. 35, *The Small Claims Act, 2016* be now introduced and read the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

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

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 36 — *The Small Claims Consequential Amendments Act, 2016*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 36, *The Small Claims Consequential Amendments Act, 2016* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Attorney General that Bill No. 36, *The Small Claims Consequential Amendments Act, 2016* be introduced and read the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be read the second time? I recognize the Attorney General.

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

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

**PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING
AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

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

Standing Committee on Privileges

Mr. Forbes: — I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Privileges to present the committee's first report. I move:

That the first report of the Standing Committee on Privileges be now concurred in.

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

That the first report of the Standing Committee on Privileges 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.

Some Hon. Members: — On division.

The Speaker: — On division. I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Standing Committee on Human Services

Mr. Lawrence: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Human Services to report Bill No. 3, *The Teachers Superannuation and Disability Benefits Amendment Act, 2016* without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be considered in the Committee of the Whole?

I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and that this bill be now read the third time.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Education has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 3 and that this bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. Minister may proceed with the third reading. I recognize the Minister of Education.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 3 — *The Teachers Superannuation and Disability Benefits Amendment Act, 2016*

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Education that Bill No. 3, *The Teachers Superannuation and Disability Benefits Amendment Act, 2016* be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 17 — *The Power Corporation Amendment Act, 2016*

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to move second reading of Bill No. 17 — *An Act to amend The Power Corporation Act* henceforth known as *The Power Corporation Amendment Act, 2016*.

Mr. Speaker, SaskPower has the responsibility to provide safe, clean, reliable power to the people of Saskatchewan and industry within our province. SaskPower and our government believe these amendments to the Act will enhance SaskPower's ability to do so. SaskPower's borrowing limit was last increased in 2013 from \$5 billion to \$8 billion, and under SaskPower's current business plan they expect to exceed the current limit by the end of 2018.

SaskPower continues to make substantial capital expenditures to replace aging infrastructure and to meet the province's energy requirements to support a growing Saskatchewan. SaskPower has added 60,000 new customers and increased production by nearly 800 megawatts since 2007. In the next 10 years, SaskPower projects 82,000 more new customers here in the province with over 2 000 megawatts of production required for that time period.

Also as members know, SaskPower is in the process of moving to 50 per cent renewable capacity by 2030 including 1 600 megawatts of new wind power and capacity to reduce emissions by over 40 per cent below the 2005 levels.

Overall, the corporation is expecting to spend an average of \$1 billion a year to grow and maintain our system. Increasing the borrowing limit to \$10 billion is projected to be sufficient for SaskPower's needs through 2021 with borrowing forecast to begin falling by 2023.

It is well known that in the North American market, utilities are all having to undertake significant borrowings to support large capital plans to renew and expand infrastructure. These changes and investments are required due to the regulatory regimes, movements towards renewables, and changes in the way individuals consume electricity. Taking these factors into consideration, SaskPower has established a target debt ratio of between 60 per cent and 75 per cent. A debt ratio in this range is comparable to other corporations in the industry.

It is important to note that SaskPower's debt does not affect the province's credit limit because it is considered self-supporting by credit rating agencies.

The remaining amendments are primarily of a housekeeping nature and do not expand on the current powers currently maintained under the Act. Some will add gender-neutral language to the Act. Some will clarify existing language, and others will increase readability by deleting redundant plural forms of certain words.

The proposed amendments are intended to strike a balance between the needs of the corporation and the people of Saskatchewan as a whole for an efficient, reliable, and safe power system. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of *The Power Corporation Amendment Act, 2016*.

The Speaker: — The Minister of the Economy has moved second reading of *The Power Corporation Amendment Act, 2016*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Saskatoon Riversdale.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to be the first opposition member to respond to Bill No. 17, *The Power Corporation Amendment Act*. Mr. Speaker, we've had an opportunity to take a look at the bill, and hearing the minister's comments upon second reading always helps to flesh things out just a little bit. But we'll need to take some time to look at this further.

But the one thing this bill does, the simple thing, was around gender-neutral language to more gender-specific language. That's the smaller, more housekeeping details of the bill, which again I've talked about this in the House, that language is important. The language that we use sends a message to both men and women, and I think moving to gender-specific language is very important.

But the big part of this bill, Mr. Speaker, is increasing SaskPower's borrowing capacity by \$2 billion, Mr. Speaker, because in large measure of this government's decisions to basically foist upon SaskPower the carbon capture boondoggle and SaskPower . . . the smart meter fiasco which ultimately has a huge impact on Saskatchewan residents and what they pay for power, Mr. Speaker. Alone this year, there will be two rate increases which will have an impact on many families, Mr. Speaker.

So I do know that, as time goes on, we'll have further comments on this bill, but with that I'd like to move to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate on *The Power Corporation Amendment Act*. Is the Assembly willing to adjourn debate?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 19 — *The Film and Video Classification Act, 2016*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of *The Film and Video Classification Act, 2016*. This legislation repeals *The Film and Video Classification Act* and replaces it with new legislation.

[14:45]

Mr. Speaker, this legislation will do the following. It will allow the administration of the industry to be performed by an official, the director of film classification, and not by a board, and allow registration of exhibitors and distributors to continue in perpetuity provided that annual reports are provided by registrants. Mr. Speaker, these measures are consistent with other programs administered by the Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is unique because it has an agreement with British Columbia film classification office to classify most films to be shown in our province. British Columbia collects our fee and remits half to us. This works very well and makes the decision to have a director instead of a board all the more logical.

Mr. Speaker, this is also an opportunity to address other issues within the Act. For example, the director is given the discretion to limit classification to a specific exhibitor, time, or location. As well the new Act will be more logically organized. Consultations respecting the legislation with exhibitors, distributors, industry association, and other jurisdictions revealed no issues with the proposal.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation also updates *The Film and Video Classification Amendment Act, 2006*. That legislation was passed to enable a classification of video games and consequent restrictions on access to video games by underage children and teens.

The primary objective of classification, Mr. Speaker, is to assist viewers in making informed choices. Equipped with this information, parents, guardians, and film patrons can knowledgeably exercise individual responsibility and discretion in selecting films for themselves and their children. So, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased with that and pleased to move second reading of *The Film and Video Classification Act, 2016*.

The Speaker: — The Attorney General has moved second reading of Bill No. 19, *The Film and Video Classification Act*,

2016. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion? I recognize the member from Saskatoon Riversdale.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to be the first opposition member to put a few remarks on the record with respect to Bill No. 19, *The Film and Video Classification Act*. Mr. Speaker, this is a new Act replacing a previous Act, so there will be . . . we'll need to take some time, Mr. Speaker, to take a look at the former Act and this one side by side and compare some of the differences. I know the minister has pointed out some of the things in the bill, and it's always good to have the minister's comments to give you a little bit of perspective.

As a parent, Mr. Speaker, film classification and video classification is a very important thing. I have an eight-year-old and an 18-year-old. And I know as a parent you try to be vigilant, and classification systems allow you the opportunity to know if something is appropriate or not appropriate for your child. And I think leaving that . . . knowing what you may find in a particular video game or in a particular movie or TV show, Mr. Speaker, is helpful. And then in the context of a family, how you go about parenting, it's good to have that individual responsibility and up to individual parents' discretion.

Mr. Speaker, I know that it will be important. The minister talked about consultation and said that there were no issues that were found, but I think in our discussions, including in committee, it'll be important for us to know with whom the government consulted and to get some feedback as to what exactly was said, Mr. Speaker.

And also I think it's important to reach out to folks who remain here in the film industry here in Saskatchewan, although those numbers are much fewer than they were just a few years ago when this government cut the film employment tax credit, but also as well in the art communities to make sure that this Act strikes the balance between protecting that freedom of expression, while having appropriate controls on film and movies and videos, Mr. Speaker.

So I look forward to the opportunity that we'll have as an opposition of looking at the two Acts and seeing how they compare to one another, finding out a little bit more about the consultation process, Mr. Speaker, and just digging a little bit more deeply into this bill. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I move to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment of debate on Bill No. 19, *The Film and Video Classification Act*, 2016. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 26 — *The Patient Choice Medical Imaging Act*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 26, *The Patient Choice Medical Imaging Act*. Providing timely and quality

diagnostic imaging services to Saskatchewan patients is a high priority for the government. We're also interested in removing legislative barriers and adding choice for residents right here in Saskatchewan where there's an opportunity to improve patient access and satisfaction with health services. That's why we've launched the private-pay MRI [magnetic resonance imaging] services in Saskatchewan in February and why we're expanding private-pay services to include computerized tomography, CT scans.

This new Act will provide the option for patients to directly pay for MRI and CT services at licensed private facilities in the province. The Act sets out quality standards and requirements of facilities. Regulations will define specific categories of licence that enable a facility to accept private payment for services.

Two categories of licence have been defined. Category I is for the publicly funded MRI and CT service delivery, where a facility provides services under a contract with a regional health authority, the minister, or another public funding source. Category II enables a facility to accept private payment for MRI and CT service delivery. Payment can be received from an individual or an organization such as Workers' Compensation Board, and a private facility can apply for both one or both categories of licence.

As part of the category II licence, the Act also outlines the unique requirement that for every privately purchased scan the licensed facility must also provide a second scan of similar complexity to an individual on the public wait-list at no cost to that individual or the health system. Essentially, for every patient who receives a private MRI or CT scan, two patients will be removed from the public list: the patient who received the private-pay scan as well as the second patient on the public wait-list. In order to facilitate this legislative change, the existing MRI facilities licensing Act and regulations will be repealed at the same time as a new patient choice medical imaging Act and regulations are created.

It will also allow for other medical imaging modalities to be added in the future through changes to regulations. This will streamline administration and provide greater flexibility going forward. However, at this time the government has no plans to make these changes and will publicly state any plans to do so in the future.

Mr. Speaker, reducing wait times and giving patients more choice over their own health care decisions is a high priority for the people of Saskatchewan. It is also a high priority for our government. We've been focused on increasing capacity for diagnostic imaging, and MRI scans in particular, for some time. We know that among specialized medical imaging services, patients wait longer for MRIs than any other service. Demand for an MRI has doubled from 15,700 patients in 2007 to over 33,000 last year.

To respond to that demand, our government has more than doubled the number of MRI units in the province since 2007. That represents an increase in capacity of about 115 per cent. We currently have seven MRI units in hospitals across Saskatchewan, including four units in Saskatoon and two in Regina. The first MRI located outside of those two centres

officially began operation at the Dr. F.H. Wigmore Regional Hospital in February.

Extending MRI service into the new regional hospital in Moose Jaw was an important step toward meeting increased demand and ensuring that patients can be diagnosed and treated sooner and closer to home. There's also a mobile MRI unit that visits Lloydminster.

The Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region has also entered into a contract with one private firm to provide community-based MRI service in two locations in Regina through the publicly funded and administered system. As part of the 2016-17 budget, \$2.1 million has been provided to the Saskatoon Health Region to engage with providers in the delivery of community-based MRI services. This will further increase the number of MRIs in the province and provide more access to timely medical imaging exams for the residents of central and northern Saskatchewan.

It is anticipated that a community-based MRI provider in Saskatoon would also apply for a category II licence to provide patients in Saskatoon with the opportunity to choose to pay for their private MRI scan closer to home.

As I noted earlier, despite increased capacity for MRI services in the public system, demand has outpaced that capacity. Mr. Speaker, our government is focused on patient satisfaction. We're making improvements, but we knew that we could do better. That's why at the end of February this year our government introduced the ability for patients to choose to pay for a private MRI in our province. At that time there were approximately 7,197 patients waiting for MRI services at Saskatchewan hospitals in Moose Jaw, Regina, and Saskatoon.

There are currently two licensed facilities that are providing patient MRI services in Regina, and these services are already benefiting the people of this province. Between February 29th and April 30th, 77 patients have chosen to pay privately for their MRI scan. Private facilities have also provided 181 scans under the category II licensed organizations such as WCB [Workers' Compensation Board]. That means in the two months that private-pay MRI services have been available, 258 patients have benefited from private-pay services. It also means that another 258 patients from the public system will receive an MRI at no additional cost to the health care system.

Mr. Speaker, the addition of private-pay MRIs to complement publicly funded exams is already freeing up capacity within the health system and helping to reduce overall wait times. *The Patient Choice Medical Imaging Act* will expand these benefits to patients wishing to pay for a CT scan.

Currently CT services are provided in the public system at provincial and regional or district hospital sites in Regina, Saskatoon, Lloydminster, Moose Jaw, North Battleford, Prince Albert, Swift Current, Yorkton, and now in Estevan. Mr. Speaker, our government contributed \$600,000 toward the replacement of the CT scanner in Yorkton which recently began operation in April. This new technology is improving the quality and safety of diagnostic services for patients in east-central Saskatchewan.

Along with CT units in health facilities, there is also one community-based provider of CT scans in Regina. Demand for CT services at all of these sites has increased. In the 2014-15 fiscal year about 98,000 patients received a CT scan in our province. Last year that rose by 2.6 per cent to about 101,000 patients. From the end of March 2015 to the end of February 2016 the number of patients waiting for CT services increased from approximately 2,900 to 3,800, and between December 2015 and February 2016 nine out of ten patients in Saskatchewan had their CT scans in 56 days or fewer.

Providing patients with the choice to privately pay for MRI and CT scans will allow Saskatchewan people to access that service right here in their own province, while also providing additional capacity within the public system.

Currently there are several other jurisdictions across Canada where patients can choose to pay for specialized medical imaging services. British Columbia and Alberta have had private MRI and CT clinics since 1993. Quebec has been offering private MRI services since 1997, and Nova Scotia since 2002.

Concerns have been raised about the possibility of staff moving from the public system to the private system. In Saskatchewan we are committed to keeping the public system strong while increasing options for patients. For each licence application, regional health authorities will be required to report on the expected impact of the private facility on the public system operations. Furthermore, facilities applying for a licence must also submit a human resource plan that outlines how its staffing plan will not negatively impact the health region in which it plans to operate. This will ensure that the addition of private services do not have a detrimental effect on the public system.

Mr. Speaker, our model provides options for Saskatchewan people closer to home without the added costs of travelling to another province for quicker access to an MRI or CT scan. We believe that residents shouldn't be forced to leave the province to exercise the ability to purchase a service that many of our fellow Canadians have access to. At the same time as providing choice at home, there is also a benefit to the public system. The money provided for a private MRI service will stay in the province and will also have the effect of pulling someone off the public wait-list at no expense to the taxpayer.

Mr. Speaker, the regulations under the proposed new Act are similar to those under the current MRI facilities licensing Act. It provides Saskatchewan people with the option to directly pay a private facility for a medical imaging scan and ensures that licensed facility also provides a second scan of similar complexity to an individual on the public wait-list at no cost to that individual or the health system. The licensed provider sets the fee schedule for the initial private scan and ensures the second scan is provided at no cost to the patient on the public wait-list.

[15:00]

As with all other medical imaging services, regardless of whether the services are publicly or privately funded, a physician referral will be required to ensure appropriateness of the scan. Inappropriate care includes overuse, underuse, misuse,

and variation in diagnostic testing and treatment options offered to patients. This can lead to negative patient outcomes and incur unnecessary costs to the health care system. Mr. Speaker, by requiring a physician referral for all MRI and CT scans in our province, it ensures the appropriate use of medical imaging so that we can make the best use of our existing capacity. The Ministry of Health is also working with physicians on other projects aimed at ensuring the appropriateness of medical imaging. Quality and patient safety is also a top priority for the government. All licensed medical imaging facilities must meet the same rigorous operating requirements, and each facility must also maintain accreditation standards.

Mr. Speaker, our government will consult on the development of regulations with stakeholders who have a direct interest in MRI and CT services in Saskatchewan. This includes our regional health authorities, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Medical Association, and current MRI and CT scan providers in our province. This will build on the consultations that occurred in the fall of 2015 related to private-pay MRI services. That feedback provides a solid foundation for expanding private-pay MRI services to CT scans. Once *The Patient Choice Medical Imaging Act* and corresponding regulations are brought into force, private-pay services will be expanded to include MRI and CT scans, with the opportunity to add other medical imaging modalities in the future.

Mr. Speaker, our government is committed to moving forward with innovative patient-first solutions that enhance access to services and result in improved patient satisfaction. Expanding private-pay services will increase capacity, help reduce wait times, and provide a benefit to the public system by providing a second MRI and CT scan to a patient on the public wait-list at no cost to the health system. With that, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to move second reading of *The Patient Choice Medical Imaging Act*. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Health has moved second reading of Bill No. 26, the patient choice medical imagery Act. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to stand up and give the initial comments on behalf of the official opposition on Bill No. 26, *The Patient Choice Medical Imaging Act*.

And I should point out, Mr. Speaker, as the minister alluded to, that it was really important that the people of Saskatchewan paid attention to a lot of the changes that the minister is proposing. And quite frankly — to be as abrupt and straightforward as I can — as the intent of this particular bill, is it repeals the government's MRI facilities licencing Act that was introduced last session and replaces that Act with a new law that includes MRIs and CT scans. And under this bill patients will be able to pay for an MRI or a CT scan out of their own pocket, and the clinic will need to provide a second scan to the public waiting list at no cost to the taxpayer.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that's what's being proposed. The Sask Party refers to it as a two-for-one deal. And the people of Saskatchewan are basically saying, well what does that mean?

Well what that means, Mr. Speaker, is that a person with the ability to pay for a CT scan or an MRI can do so out of their own pocket with their credit card. If they're well to do, then they can certainly pay for these services ahead of anyone else. The only condition is that somebody on the public wait list also be taken in, so they have actually two people that are being looked at in terms of the actual priority when it comes to the MRI or CT scan service.

So if I had the resources to get a private MRI done as an individual, and I jumped the line or the queue in terms of being next on the list, Mr. Speaker, if I can afford to do that, then what would happen is I would do this, but the clinic that I am going to see, the MRI clinic or the CT scan clinic, what they would have to do as a result of seeing me is that they would have to see somebody on that list as well at no charge for that person.

Now at the outset, Mr. Speaker, the bill itself is actually talking about defining the medical imaging services as it includes MRIs, CT scans, and any other prescribed services. That's what the bill basically says. This gives the Premier and cabinet a back door to add any other medical imaging services such as scope procedures or X-rays. And with this two-for-one patient system that is being proposed in this particular bill, some people might say that makes sense.

And I would say very quickly, Mr. Speaker, that you got to be very careful that you assess the impact of some of these proposals very, very carefully. Because some people would argue the counterpoint, saying that obviously if you have more money then you would have quicker access to an MRI or to a CT scan, Mr. Speaker. And what that does, it obviously allows that person to jump the queue, but then the trade-off, as the minister alluded to, was the fact that somebody on the list that couldn't afford it would also get it done, so it's really a two-for-one procedure and it really helps those on the list, Mr. Speaker.

But you've got to be careful on two fronts, very quickly I would add, Mr. Speaker. First of all, when you look at the new feature of this bill, when it talks about medical imaging services, what exactly does that mean? What it does, the bill does, it allows the cabinet and the Premier to decide other procedures. And this is what we caution people in the province, is to pay very closely to some of these bills because there are certain languages being used and certain leeway being afforded to cabinet to determine what other procedures that they will allow under this two-for-one scenario as being proposed by this particular bill.

So it's important that we pay attention to the process. It's important that we pay attention to the language. And I'll point out to people, the two-for-one deal, some people might think that that makes sense, Mr. Speaker. What I will say to them, the two, three areas that you ought to be concerned about and pay a bit more attention to those issues because it does have an effect on our publicly administered health care system.

The first is that it allows people to jump the lineup. So if you have more money, you obviously get to the MRI or you get the CT scan done ahead of anybody else that may be ahead of you on the list, if you have the cash. Well, Mr. Speaker, what that means is obviously that they get the service sooner, and as a

result of that they also get diagnosed sooner. And as a result of the earlier diagnosis, Mr. Speaker, one would say that they also get the treatment necessary to deal with any medical issues that might arise from the CT scan or from an MRI, and that's where the area that is of some concern to a lot of organizations out there, Mr. Speaker.

And the other fact is that, as you have a lot more of these private clinics pop up, then obviously there should be a process to make sure it doesn't come at the detriment of our publicly funded health care system. Because obviously a private clinic that can take money from people that are well to do, Mr. Speaker, may be able to afford . . . Nurses or X-ray technicians or CT scan personnel, they might be able to pay them more. And as a result, as you draw some of these staff members out of the publicly funded health care system, it does create a problem for the public health care system in itself.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of different issues and angles that we've got to pay very close attention to as a result, or as it is summarized by the minister in terms of what the intent of this particular bill. And I'll very quickly summarize them, Mr. Speaker. First of all, the language in the bill that again refers to "medical imaging services." Mr. Speaker, we need more definition as to what that means. Obviously the cabinet and the Premier have the determination to rules and regulations as to how they would provide those particular services. The language is in there and the wording should be there attached to that particular language.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, as a result of this, at the outset some people might say they make sense to do the two-for-one deal. But, Mr. Speaker, what you've got to worry about is those that are jumping the queue, are leaving others behind in the queue while they obviously get the service sooner, they get the diagnosis sooner. And if there's any health problems that they find out as a result of a CT scan, and thereby they get treated sooner than the average person on that line, that's another significant challenge.

And of course the third particular aspect that we've got to pay very close attention to, Mr. Speaker, is the draw of our professional health care service providers within the publicly funded health care system. As more and more of these private systems set up, Mr. Speaker, they will start to begin to draw some of the professional people that work in various departments in our public health care system, and there isn't that particular assessment being done and attached to this bill to determine if there is a real problem with that possibility.

And finally I will say, Mr. Speaker, it's one of those things. Where you have a two-for-one deal, you ought to be very careful in the time frame. When does this deal end? Is it going to be in perpetuity in terms of offering the two-for-one forever? Is it going to end next year? Is it going to end six months from now? We don't know those details. And obviously when you look at some of the salesmanship of product where people say, well we'll offer you this deal, and it's a great deal, and all of a sudden you enter into the deal and you find out that the deal ended midnight the day before. Well this is the same kind of scenario that people ought to be worried about, that how long is this two-for-one deal going to last. And these are some of the questions that we have attached to this particular bill, Mr.

Speaker.

So as we learn the details, as the minister describes the bill, these are some of the immediate reactions and questions we have. And our people that are following the particular bill, in particular our health care critic, will be paying very close attention to this bill because there are some serious issues that we need to address. And, Mr. Speaker, those issues of course are open to the public, and those that have any information or advice for us on this particular bill, we would encourage them to contact our office and we will certainly engage them and get their perspective because this is about our health care system.

And every change that the Sask Party undertakes in the health care system ought to be scrutinized wholly, Mr. Speaker. And that's one of the biggest challenges that we have as an opposition. And that's why we ask the public for their assistance, and certainly their comments and advice on issues of this sort, and certainly of issues of this magnitude.

So on that point, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 26, *The Patient Choice Medical Imaging Act*. I so move.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 26. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 28 — *The Extension of Compassionate Care Act, 2016*

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education and the Minister Responsible for Labour Relations and Workplace Safety.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to move second reading of Bill 28, *The Extension of Compassionate Care Act, 2016*. The amendment of *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* respecting compassionate care leave is the result of changes made to federal legislation. On January 3rd, 2016, the federal government amended the *Employment Insurance Act*, allowing employees to collect up to 26 weeks of benefits after observing a two-week cooling-off period.

Saskatchewan's current legislation no longer aligns with this. Currently, Mr. Speaker, employees in Saskatchewan are entitled to eight weeks of job-protected leave which, until recently, was in alignment with the federal legislation. During the election, we promised to increase compassionate care benefits and this proposal fulfills that promise. With these amendments, Saskatchewan employees will have job-protected leave up to 28 weeks. We will be one of the first jurisdictions to increase this leave.

Mr. Speaker, family is important. People are living longer, which is a good thing, but it also creates new challenges. Many working people feel the squeeze of caring for children, aging parents or grandparents, and loved ones with a disability.

Sometimes they need to step away from a career just for a short period of time, to honour those family commitments. Family is the bedrock of society. Family is there to support, to assist, to advocate, and to care. This government is here to support families. Extending compassionate care benefits is one more way we're meeting that commitment.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 28 will also amend part IV of the Act. The change will give authority to the registrar of the Labour Relations Board to select adjudicators to hear an appeal, rather than the board. When *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* was drafted, these provisions were not included, and it has resulted in some confusion. By amending these provisions we will provide clarification. We will also address the concerns of the Provincial Ombudsman who noted interested parties need better information on appeal processes. These amendments will provide clarification. They will also expedite the appeal process.

Mr. Speaker, we are committed to keeping Saskatchewan strong. These new provisions will ensure employers and employees continue to benefit from modern labour legislation. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of this bill. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Education, Minister Responsible for Labour Relations and Workplace Safety has moved that Bill No. 28, *The Extension of Compassionate Care Act, 2016* be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

[15:15]

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again I'm pleased to stand up and give initial comments on the Bill No. 28, *The Extension of Compassionate Care Act, 2016*. And to summarize for those that might be listening, this particular bill allows employees to take up to 28 weeks off work in order to care for a family member who is at significant risk of death as a result of their health. And, Mr. Speaker, it also introduces a bunch of amendments, technical in nature, that gives a number of powers to the registrar from the Labour Relations Board including, and I would identify those two points, the ability to select the adjudicator for a wage assessment, the responsibility to set the date and time of hearings before the Labour Relations Board and to serve papers upon the interested parties.

Mr. Speaker, what this is, is obviously when people hear the notion that the government is looking at a bill that recognizes compassionate care and allows people that are working, family members that are working, up to 28 weeks away from their job to look after their loved ones, now, Mr. Speaker, at the face value it is certainly something that a lot of families would be supportive of. I have that same situation in my particular family where my younger sister has been trying to take leave from her work to care for my mother, who had a stroke. She obviously needs to have that day-to-day attention. And, Mr. Speaker, she looked at that opportunity and, you know, and which is actually really a powerful position on her part where she was willing to leave work for that time frame and to help with my mother.

But the problem we have, Mr. Speaker, is that there are so many

rules and regulations attached to that. Like we have the intent to try and recognize compassionate leave, but as you look at the bill itself, Mr. Speaker, it talks about the adjudicator process; it talks about regulation. These regulations have not yet been released. It talks about the final section of the bill that allows cabinet to make wide-reaching regulations regarding the duties of the adjudicator, the rules for appealing decisions of the board, or any other rules regarding hearings and appeals.

Now what that is, Mr. Speaker, to me . . . I'm saying, I'm telling the people out there that on one hand people generally like the idea of having some time off granted to some family member as a result of somebody in their family being quite ill. But then we have the government come along making all kinds of rules, not only on the adjudication process but who is eligible, not being forward and coming clean with some of those rules and regulations. Mr. Speaker, it confuses people. So either you're going to do the compassionate leave or you're not going to do it. Don't announce it and then put a whole bunch of conditions and rules and regulations and processes behind it to hamper the original intent.

So that's what's the most important message I would have as result of this particular bill, is that we're going to pay very close attention to this because at the outset, if the bill is there intended to help those families that want to take care of their loved ones who are quite ill, Mr. Speaker, I think everybody in Saskatchewan would look at that and say, well that's a good idea. But if the people of Saskatchewan saw the amount of regulations or obstacles that might be put in front of this bill to discourage that activity, then I think the average person in Saskatchewan would say, well what's the use of putting this bill forward if you're going to pile on a bunch of regulations and rules and processes to discourage that particular expression of love and support for a family member that's quite ill by someone who wishes to leave their place of work?

So, Mr. Speaker, I think it's really important we pay very close attention, especially the fact that the history of some of the changes that the Saskatchewan Party government has undertaken in the last several years as it pertains to workers and to working with the labour movement, Mr. Speaker. They have gone to war with many of the working men and women in this family. We have seen layoff after layoff in recent weeks, Mr. Speaker.

So for my perspective, I do not trust the Saskatchewan Party when they talk about putting in processes in place, putting in processes in place when they talk about compassion and care, Mr. Speaker, because behind that compassionate care bill, there's 50 rules and 50 regulations all designed to discourage family members from undertaking the compassionate leave that's identified in this particular bill.

And that's why we've got to pay close attention to everything that that government does when it comes to workers, when it comes to people that have contributed and have sacrificed their lives in the employment to the Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. And that's why it's important that we pay close attention to what they're doing on any bill, especially when it comes to protecting the rights of working men and women of this particular province.

So on that point, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 28, *The Extension of Compassionate Care Act*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 28, the expansion of compassionate care Act, 2016. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 29 — *The Justices of the Peace Amendment Act, 2016/Loi modificative de 2016 sur les juges de paix*

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of *The Justices of the Peace Amendment Act, 2016*. Mr. Speaker, this Act provides for the appointment of justices of the peace and sets out different categories of justices of the peace as well as their respective powers and responsibilities.

Mr. Speaker, the Act was last amended in 2013 to establish an independent commission process for the determination of salaries for justices of the peace. The Saskatchewan Justice of the Peace Association has requested some amendments to improve and clarify the commission's process. Making these changes will now allow the commission to make some additional recommendations in its next report in December of 2018 that it would not be able to make under the current Act.

Mr. Speaker, the amendments that I am proposing will create a new assistant supervising Justice of the Peace position. The sitting Justice of the Peace will be appointed to this new position to provide additional administrative support for the supervising Justice of the Peace. The determination of the salary for this new position and the existing supervising Justice of the Peace position will also be moved to the independent commission process. Currently that amount is set in the regulations made by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

Mr. Speaker, the amendments will also allow a Justice of the Peace who has been suspended to receive his or her salary subject to any conditions imposed by the chief judge. This new provision is consistent with the payment of salaries to provincial court judges who have been suspended under *The Provincial Court Act*. Mr. Speaker, this bill will also establish the process when seeking clarification from the commission of recommendations in a report.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, this bill will make changes related to *The Traffic Safety Court of Saskatchewan Act, 1988*. There has not been a traffic justice appointed under that Act since April of 2006, and I propose in the Act we repeal this part of these amendments. The powers formerly accorded to traffic justices under that Act, which includes powers requiring attendance at driver improvement programs, will now be made applicable to all senior justices of the peace in Saskatchewan. These changes will be more reflective of the current court practices and will help to streamline court operations.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Justice of the Peace Association has been consulted on an ongoing basis during the development of this bill and is supportive of these amendments.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of *The Justices of the Peace Amendment Act, 2016*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 29 — *The Justices of the Peace Amendment Act, 2016* be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think what's important on this particular bill, Mr. Speaker, as the minister has briefly explained, it repeals *The Traffic Safety Court of Saskatchewan Act* and creates a regime where traffic safety issues can be resolved outside of the courts. Now, Mr. Speaker, it allows, once you're outside of the courts, who would be hearing some of these particular problems, that it relates to the traffic safety.

Obviously as you pointed out, they'd be creating an assistant supervisor Justice of the Peace who will take over the supervising Justice of the Peace in his or her absence to assist with him or her in his or her duties. So, Mr. Speaker, it also creates a new category of Justice of the Peace, senior Justice of the Peace, and this senior Justice of the Peace could then impose fines or order a driver to take driver's training for traffic offences. Now, Mr. Speaker, what's really important here is that we've got to understand there's two or three things I think people are generally thinking on the opposition side.

We're certainly all . . . It's always important for us to make sure that our justice system works as efficiently and effectively as possible because obviously we have to make sure that we are modernizing everything, using the proper tools in the right way, that we can indeed have speedy justice for the people of Saskatchewan. So bringing technology options forward, defining the roles of some of the cases that might be clogging up the justice system so they're dealt with more effectively, more efficiently, Mr. Speaker . . . it's all about utilizing the dollars as best we can to ensure that our justice system maintains its integrity, but more so also provides very efficient and effective service, thus creating, I think, a value-for-money audit, if you will, for the people of Saskatchewan, who are the taxpayers, who are paying for those particular costs.

So I think as I looked at this particular one and saying, well are we taking it outside the court and that senior justices of the peace, who we will be paying will begin to determine and play a greater role in resolving some of these traffic violation issues and thus leaving the main court system not burdened by some of the traffic safety issues.

So there may be some savings as a result of this. It may be efficiently improving the delivery of justice. We're not certain of that. We have to ascertain that by having various discussions with various groups and organizations, and this is the reason why we take the time to hear the bill and also take the time to reach out to different organizations to get their valued input.

So finally I'll say this, Mr. Speaker. Creating a senior Justice of

the Peace, we have to make sure that when they're looking and evaluating the processes around traffic violations, for somebody to go before a senior Justice of the Peace, we have to ensure that there are rules and regulations prescribed as to what the Justice of the Peace, the senior Justice of the Peace can impose, what powers that they might have conferred upon them, and what appeal processes may be in place for those that are appearing before these senior justices of the peace as it relates to traffic violations.

So all those questions need to be answered, Mr. Speaker. And we also have to talk about the pay of these senior justices of the peace. What pay range are we looking at? How will they be selected? How about regional matters in terms of ensuring that we have the senior justices of the peace all throughout the province? These are compelling critical points that we need to find out before we're able to give the bill any further passage in this particular Assembly, and certainly that's a role that we will embrace and will continue undertaking as the official opposition.

So on that note, Mr. Speaker, I will defer this to our critic, and the critic will take more time to understand the bill and the ramifications attached to it. So on that note, I move that we adjourn Bill No. 29, *The Justices of the Peace Amendment Act, 2016*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 29. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 30 — *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Amendment Act, 2016*

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Amendment Act, 2016*.

Members of this Assembly know that *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* is the cornerstone legislation in ensuring open government and protecting individual privacy. And not long after his appointment, I asked the Information and Privacy Commissioner to identify the priority changes he would like to see in FOIP [*The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*].

In his annual report issued last summer, he identified a series of amendments for priority consideration. *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Amendment Act, 2016* is being introduced to respond to the proposed amendments by the commissioner. These amendments include a duty to assist the applicants for information, a duty to protect personal information, extension of LAFOIP [*The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*] to police services, creation of a new offence for snooping, and extension of the privacy requirements under the Act to MLA

offices and to cabinet ministers' offices.

Mr. Speaker, these are the changes that will significantly update Saskatchewan's legislation. By applying privacy protection to MLA offices, FOIP in our province will be the first legislation in Canada to include this requirement.

Amendments are also being made to provide for a number of other things, Mr. Speaker: introduction of mandatory breach notification where personal information has been leaked that places individuals at serious personal risk; broadening the grounds for review by the commissioner to include reviewing complaints regarding fees, transfers of access application, and improper handling of personal information; allowing the rejection of frivolous or vexatious access requests; recognition of electronic access requests and responses; updating the list of existing exemptions from disclosure; authorizing the commissioner to disclose personal information to privacy commissioners in other provinces to facilitate investigations or reviews regarding government institutions in more than one jurisdiction; and increasing the penalties for offences.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've consulted with the commissioner to identify these priority changes, and we appreciate his leadership, energy, and expertise in promoting these changes. While the large majority of the recommended changes are being made, there are recommendations by the commissioner that have not been included in this package. We will continue to collaborate with him and consult with stakeholders on most of the outstanding recommendations. For example, some of the recommendations may be addressed through changes to practice rather than amendments to the Act.

[15:30]

However rather than wait for further consultations, additional recommendations, or further reports, it was time to get these priority changes done. Mr. Speaker, we will be working closely with police services and other stakeholders regarding these changes, including the development of the necessary regulations before the Act comes into force.

This government remains committed to protecting personal information while providing access to information held by government institutions. The bill and the changes to be made to *The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* will go a long way toward resetting the careful balance in our modern electronic age.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I am pleased to move second reading of *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Amendment Act, 2016*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Justice has moved that Bill No. 30, *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Amendment Act, 2016* be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This particular bill is straightforward as the minister basically gave us a rundown of what the bill is all about, Bill No. 30, *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Amendment*

Act, 2016. There is a complementary bill that's soon to follow that we'll also add certain comments to as well, Mr. Speaker.

I think the important thing that we picked up in terms of the comments and the general intent of this particular bill, it's really around the notion of the language, the duty to protect personal information.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as MLAs, all of us in this particular Assembly and across the country, we have access to a lot of private information that different people come and share with us. And it's always very, very important that they have that trust and faith and confidence that when they do disclose private, personal information, that it doesn't go anywhere.

And obviously in the offices that we have, the physical offices you have, you have a lot of storage areas. You have filing cabinets, and there's a lot of private information in these particular cabinets that you have to really protect. So having an office that is secure, filing cabinets that are locked, and doing your very best to ensure that you protect private information, that is the cornerstone of the trust that people have in us as publicly elected officials, and it's something that we ought to make sure that we undertake on a continual and daily basis.

And, Mr. Speaker, you also look at some of the reciprocal protection that you might get as you, as an MLA, inquire about certain constituents. You often run into the argument that some organization or some department or some official might say, well we can't disclose that information to you. It's private and confidential information. Unless and until you get the written permission of the person you're inquiring about, we can't share that information with you. These are some of the responses that we often get and rightfully so.

I think confidentially people do confide in different government agencies and different staff members, bureaucracies. They'll make inquiries that affect their personal information being sent to them. And they certainly want to do all they can to safeguard that information. And when the officials or the people that get the information, when they get inquiries from MLAs, they obviously want to protect their law and their effort to protect that confidential information. So they'll often say, can you get written permission from this individual to allow us to share information with you? And I think that's a really good treatment in terms of the integrity attached to protecting freedom of information. And so you run into that as the MLA.

There are times, Mr. Speaker, as you look at the freedom of information Act, when we ask questions about any particular issue that affects or plagues the Saskatchewan Party government. We find out that the cost of getting information from them sometimes runs \$200,000 plus, you know. And we get information from them, you know, on a particular document. Then we pay for that information. And then we get it, and 99 per cent of the report is blacked out, you know. So what we see, what we see, Mr. Speaker, is we see the government saying, oh it's important to protect private information, at the same time ensure that public interests are maintained. But, Mr. Speaker, they don't practice what they preach because the moment we ask for that information — which is very public information; it's not private information — the provincial government really starts to put barriers in front of

not only the opposition but the media as well.

So sometimes, it's very difficult to take any advice when we approach the current government because they, a lot of times, don't give us the information that the public has a right to know on some very important matters, if they come along on bills of this sort. And I'll always say that it is important that we have access to information for the public, but the same time, there's a fine line to protect personal, private information.

So, Mr. Speaker, we want to make sure that we look at this particular bill and we ask the question to the people of Saskatchewan. I think it's important that as MLAs you protect that information. I often tell constituents that come to see me that it is their business, it is their private information, that they have to have the trust and faith and confidence that information they're sharing with me as the MLA, that we'll not betray that trust. And we do our very best to protect that information. And most times, Mr. Speaker, I'd much rather shred some of that information that we get in the office because then you know it's not out there.

But a lot of times to follow up with your casework, to follow up with some of the issues, you have to file some of that information. And we do our best. We have our filing system locked. We have our offices locked. We have the building secure. Unless somebody really makes an effort to break in there and start getting a bunch of information, Mr. Speaker, then it's, you know, it's obviously a break-in, and that's something that you can't control as the MLA. But you have to make and take every measure.

And that's again unlike what happened a few years ago. I can remember a colleague of mine going through a dumpster and finding a bunch of medical information that some company threw out in the dumpster and that was very available to the, you know, to the public. So, Mr. Speaker, again, you know, you look at what the current government does and you begin to shake your head in terms of how they're . . . They can talk about protection of private information, but a lot of times we see huge gaps, and them protecting their own political interests or providing the venue to dump private health records in a dumpster for the public to have a look at. And, Mr. Speaker, that's not what people expect when you talk about duty to protect personal information.

So on that note, we have a lot more questions to ask on this bill, and we would now move adjournment on Bill 30, *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Amendment Act, 2016*. I so move.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 30. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 31 — *The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Amendment Act, 2016*

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of *The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Amendment Act, 2016*.

As I noted in my earlier comments regarding FOIP, several of the recommendations from the Information and Privacy Commissioner apply equally to *The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Amendment Act, 2016*. These include: a duty to assist applicants for information, a duty to protect personal information, extension of the definition of the local authority to include police services, and creation of a new offence for snooping.

Amendments are also being made to provide for the introduction of mandatory breach notification when personal information has been leaked that places an individual at serious personal risk; broadening the grounds for a review by the commissioner to include reviewing complaints regarding fees, transfers of access, applications, and improper handling of personal information; along with the rejection of frivolous and vexatious access requests; recognition of electronic access requests and responses; and increasing the penalties for offences.

For the most part, these changes are parallel to the changes being made to FOIP. The amendments will keep the access and privacy requirements between the Acts equal, whether information is held by a government institution or a local authority such as a municipality or a university.

Mr. Speaker, one of the major changes in this bill is the extension of the application to municipal police services under *The Police Act, 1990*. The chief of police services will serve as the head for that local authority and will be required to comply with the access and privacy procedures under the Act. Our municipal police services are already both accountable to the public in their conduct, and tremendously discreet in the handling of personal information. That being said, they also recognize that Saskatchewan will be one of the last provinces to take this step. We are confident this step will not impair police operations. We will be working closely with police services and other stakeholders regarding these changes and the development of necessary regulations before the Act comes into force.

As previously stated, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the government — and I am sure our local authorities throughout the province — are committed to protecting personal information while providing appropriate access to information. The changes to be made to *The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* will maintain this careful balance in the modern electronic age.

So, Mr. Speaker, with that I am pleased to move second reading of *The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Amendment Act, 2016*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Justice has moved that Bill No. 31, *The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Amendment Act, 2016* be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As we

begin to respond to some of these bills, you all seem to look my direction assuming that I'm going to be the first to speak to some of these bills. So I'm pleased to stand up and do so, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to point out that Bill 31, it's really important that you look at the local authority, as the government looks at the role of government. When you look at the federal government, you look at the provincial government and also the local government, whether it be the RMs [rural municipality] or whether it's the town council or the city council, the mayor and all their affiliates — how would *The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Amendment Act*, how would that affect them and impact their role?

Well I think as the result of the provincial legislation, that a lot of these local councils, whether they be RMs or town councils or city councils, well they're an extension of government, and they are part of the governance structure of the province as a whole. So any of their affiliates, whether it be their police departments or other affiliates, that they also be subjected to this whole notion that protection of information is very, very important.

And, Mr. Speaker, as a result of them becoming an extension of the provincial government, then obviously some of the points when we talk about the integrity of keeping information private is really, really important. Certainly we need to set the standard and the bar in that regard and that everything from the process of snooping to the fact that given the modern technological opportunity to be able to hack into a computer, as an example, to retrieve information, these are ongoing challenges that many organizations and businesses and corporations face every single day.

And it's always a work-in-progress, Mr. Speaker, to try and protect people's private information. As you or many people out there would know, even some of the largest banks in the country often have to protect a lot of private information as they put firewall upon firewall to protect hacking. And obviously given the fact that they have a greater risk from the financial perspective, their measures of protection are enhanced.

And so you look at some of the challenges overall, faced with snooping, with hacking, and trying to retrieve valuable information from a number of clients. This is an ongoing battle. It's an ongoing challenge in that every level of government, whether it be provincial or federal or local government, Mr. Speaker, they have to really — or any extension of the local government — they have to undertake some of the effort as well.

So it's important to note that this particular duty to protect private and personal information extends to not only the provincial MLAs or the provincial departments that operate in the province, but it also applies to local communities, local authorities. And that goes for the reeve and RM councils, to the mayor and the village councils, to the mayor and their town or city councils. All of the organizations attached to those particular forms of government ought to be called to account to ensure that they are protecting that private information, and that we're all in this together to ensure that the integrity of people sharing information with us is shared right across the board

with as many organizations as possible.

So, Mr. Speaker, again it's a complementary bill to the previous bill, Bill 30. It just expands the responsibility to local governments as well. And I don't think people of Saskatchewan would certainly object to the fact that, as we undertake effort to protect information and to protect people's confidential information, that we're all in this together and all the parties that are engaged should be given the proper rules and regulations and supports to ensure that the integrity is maintained.

[15:45]

So on that note, our Justice critic will be looking at this bill with her very capable eyes, ensuring that there isn't any parts of the bill that need to be strengthened or parts of the bill that are weak. And certainly on that point, Mr. Speaker, a lot of us that are in the business of protecting private information will certainly be paying close attention to what her analysis and her take and her advice on this particular bill is.

So until we get to that point, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 31, *The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Amendment Act, 2016*. I so move.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 31. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 1 — *The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Amendment Act, 2016*

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 1, *The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Amendment Act, 2016*.

In 2015, the government concluded significant consultations on the future of liquor retailing in this province. Through this process, we saw more than 6,000 people completing a survey and more than 3,000 people posting additional comments, not to mention the many, many stakeholders that I was able to meet with. We heard loud and clear that people were ready for change.

Since then, the government announced that we would convert a number of SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority] stores that currently do not meet the target of efficiency to private retailers. We also identified some communities where additional private retail opportunities could be created. *The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Amendment Act* is one step in the process of bringing about those changes. This bill removes Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority from the list of Crowns subject to the Act. By doing this, we will simplify and expedite the process for expanding the private retail system of alcohol in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of *The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Amendment Act, 2016*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Deputy Premier has moved that Bill No. 1, *The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Amendment Act, 2016* be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Bill No. 1, *The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Amendment Act, 2016*. And, Mr. Speaker, all I can say to the people of Saskatchewan is that . . . well, well, well. There's been quite, quite, quite a change, quite a change, Mr. Speaker, prior to the election and certainly the last six or seven years where the Saskatchewan Party quite frankly told the people of Saskatchewan that they weren't interested in opening up the sale of our Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker. And here we are, 2016, the first bill. Bill No. 1 talks about the corporate public ownership amendment Act, 2016 now.

Mr. Speaker, one of the points that the minister spoke about, the Deputy Premier when he spoke about, well that's what we campaigned on. Mr. Speaker, they didn't campaign on that. They didn't campaign on that, Mr. Speaker. They campaigned on the fact that they were going to keep these Crown corporations publicly owned, Mr. Speaker. But here we have by stealth, Mr. Speaker, they're slowly eroding the value of our Crown corporations. They are actually making our Crown corporations become weaker and weaker through debt so they're able to justify selling off some of these Crown corporations.

Now I'm going to tell the people in Saskatchewanland this particular point. When we talked about the privatization, the sell-off of Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker, what happened was with SLGA, this particular bill as I pointed out earlier, it removes the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority from *The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Act* and allows the government to sell 40 liquor stores, Mr. Speaker. But it's not just 40 liquor stores, Mr. Speaker, they're selling. It takes all of SLGA out of *The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Act*. They're taking the entire SLGA out of the public ownership Act, Mr. Speaker, so that Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority is no longer protected by *The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Act*.

And why didn't they have the courage to tell the people of Saskatchewan that? It's all about how you frame the debate, Mr. Speaker. Prior to the last election, Mr. Speaker, I listened with great amusement when the Premier gets up and said, we will not spend a single dime building liquor stores in the province of Saskatchewan. That's what the Premier said, Mr. Speaker. But what he didn't tell the people of Saskatchewan is, I am going . . . as a result of that, I'm going to sell the liquor stores to my friends, my corporate friends. And secondly, any profit from liquor is heading down east. It's heading down east, Mr. Speaker, to large chains that are not going to increase employment in the province of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, what the Premier didn't even talk about and the Deputy Premier didn't talk about was the fact that in SLGA, they make hundreds of millions of dollars in profits for the

people of Saskatchewan. And the Premier didn't mention that. What did he do? He said not a single dime will be going towards building new liquor stores, Mr. Speaker. That wasn't the issue, Mr. Speaker. That wasn't the issue at all.

The Premier was disingenuous in the sense of telling the people of Saskatchewan really what was at stake here, Mr. Speaker. What was at stake, Mr. Speaker? It's not just the employment opportunity attached to the SLGA employees and the taxes that they pay in the province but, Mr. Speaker, it was about the profit of tax to SLGA. It was going back into Saskatchewan coffers. It was actually reducing the strain and pressures on the Saskatchewan taxpayers because, Mr. Speaker, the taxpayers didn't want to see an increase in their taxes, and rightfully so.

So as a result of that, Mr. Speaker, what the Saskatchewan Party is now doing is they're telling the people of Saskatchewan, well look over here; we're not spending a dime, a single dime, on building new liquor stores. But what they're not saying is, we're selling a valuable asset that generates profit for the people of Saskatchewan. It generates profit for the people of Saskatchewan, thereby keeping your taxes low because we're getting revenues from another source. They didn't say that, Mr. Speaker. They certainly didn't say that, Mr. Speaker.

And now today we see Bill No. 1, *The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Amendment Act* coming forward, saying that we're now going to forgo, we're now going to forgo the billions of dollars generated by SLGA. We're going to sell everything within SLGA. And the people of Saskatchewan, well we didn't tell them that before the election because it was important we not share that information because they would not have liked what we had planned. So we'll get them to . . . We'll distract them with another statement. And that's why I tell the people of Saskatchewan that the Saskatchewan Party had these intentions all along. They had these intentions all along, and they betrayed the trust of the people of Saskatchewan as it comes to protecting the interests of our publicly owned Crown corporations.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I speak to a lot of people in my constituency and throughout the province and the vast majority, even the right wing people in our province, they like, they like, Mr. Speaker, the comfort and they like the assurance of and certainly the stability of public ownership of our Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker. Even the most fervent right winger that I bump into in my travels, they like the idea of publicly owned Crown corporations because they understand, Mr. Speaker, they understand that it's a stability thing. There's a comfort level amongst many of the right wing thinkers in our province that owning our own Power Corporation, owning our own insurance company, owning our own telephone company, and yes, even owning our own casinos. And liquor stores do generate a lot of money for the people of Saskatchewan. That money that's being generated, Mr. Speaker, comes back into the province. It's part of what our budget has been based on and relies on over the years in the past, and certainly used in the future.

Now what happens now, Mr. Speaker, as they forgo those revenues, as they forgo those revenues, as they sell off these Crowns and they forgo those revenues, Mr. Speaker, sooner than later they have to go back to the taxpayers and say, well

we sold off the farm and we're now in debt. We've got to come back to you guys as taxpayers. You've got to pay more just for us to keep our head above water. And, Mr. Speaker, they didn't campaign on that at all, Mr. Speaker.

And today now we see, today now we see how, through this bill, they have hampered the stores within SLGA. They have really cornered them, Mr. Speaker, and really disabled a lot of these publicly owned stores to really do what the private sector has been allowed to do, and that is to bring in new products, to have their even basic things like having more advertising. They have hampered publicly owned liquor stores and really protected the private liquor stores so that the profits can go further . . . [inaudible] . . . it doesn't affect or help Saskatchewan people when it comes to employment. And, Mr. Speaker, here we are.

Here we are, Mr. Speaker. They are now in full gear to begin the process of selling off our Crown corporations, something they said they would never do when they were just starting to form government, Mr. Speaker. And a mere eight years later, evidence mounts, mounts, and mounts that they did have this plan all along. And it's very unfortunate and it's very unfair that the Saskatchewan Party betrayed that trust, Mr. Speaker, because here's another example of how this government quite frankly do not respect the people of Saskatchewan when they say, you leave our Crown corporations publicly owned because those publicly owned entities create profit. Those profits begin to subsidize our operations in health care and education, thereby lessening the strain on individual taxpayers, Mr. Speaker.

And that's why, when I'm sitting there and I listen to some of their language around the budget, the two and a half billion dollars that they've been in the hole the last couple of years, Mr. Speaker, and when they say the phrase, no new taxes, but in the meantime through P3 [public-private partnership] debt and borrowed money and other debts that they have, Mr. Speaker, we're surrounded by debt. And yet all they can say is, no new taxes.

Well we have a little update and a news flash for the Saskatchewan Party. Sooner than later, all the assets that you're selling and all the debt that you're putting us in through P3s or through your mismanagement or through your waste, somebody's got to pay the tab. Somebody's got to pay the bill. And that somebody's going to be the taxpayers.

But do you know what? They won't have the courage to tell the taxpayers that down the road, and that's why I think, Mr. Speaker, they're punting that debt down the road because the people of Saskatchewan, they think they can hoodwink them again.

But the bottom line is, I tell the people of Saskatchewan this: is that they're putting the province deep in debt. They're selling off the Crown corporations that are generating profit. They're putting us further into a complicated debt scheme through the P3s. And that's why the taxpayers of Saskatchewan, I warn you today, 2016, that the so-called Saskatchewan Party that's announcing no new tax increases, there are tax increases coming. They're coming to you and your neighbour sooner than you think, primarily because they're selling off money-generating opportunities like SLGA. They're putting us

in debt, Mr. Speaker, and after a while they'll soon realize that as you sell off profitable companies like SLGA, there's only one person you can go back to, and that's the taxpayers of Saskatchewan. And I say, shame on the Saskatchewan Party because this is their first step in doing an attack on SaskTel, SaskPower, SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance], and the list goes on.

On that notion, Mr. Speaker, we have a heck of a lot more to say on this particular bill, and many of my colleagues are going to do that as we begin to unravel and unfold the Sask Party's ill-conceived, idealistic effort to try to sell off our Crowns, which is a shame on them and certainly a warning to the people of Saskatchewan. Watch out, because they're after all our Crowns.

On that notion, Mr. Speaker, I move we adjourn debate on Bill No. 1, *The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Amendment Act, 2016*. And it's a shameful day for the people of Saskatchewan.

The Speaker: — The member has moved adjournment on Bill No. 1, *The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Amendment Act, 2016*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 21

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Doherty that **Bill No. 21** — *The Growth and Financial Security Repeal Act* be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to get up and get into this debate on *An Act to repeal The Growth and Financial Security Act*. And I just want to say right off the bat, I think my colleague from Nutana did a fantastic job laying out the context of this bill. It's a relatively simple one, just three sections and really says, *The Growth and Financial Security Act* is repealed.

[16:00]

But for the folks over there, it must be quite a day, as my colleague said. What had started so brightly in 2007 and '08, when they set the stage of what *The Growth and Financial Security Act* would be for the people of Saskatchewan in the Throne Speech and what it would mean, and here we are today repealing it. And of course the minister will say, well it's just because it refers to the General Revenue Fund and therefore we've got to get rid of it. But he gets rid of it all. Completely. Every single part of it.

Now he says that we will be seeing in the near future some new legislation that will provide more transparency, more accountability. But we will wait and see what that really looks like. He says he wants to consult with the auditor and other academics about this but, Mr. Speaker, we are dubious about what really will come out of this. We are not sure that we will be in a better place as a province. We've seen this government go through almost a decade of record revenue, record revenue. And where are we at now but swimming in debt?

And we've talked about it here and we had an opportunity, but that government over there failed to live up to its own commitment in *The Growth and Financial Security Act* that it had put into place in 2008 when things were just going . . . starting to really . . . Well actually it was going really well, had been going well for a year and it looked like we could really do some amazing things.

We saw the revenues in the provincial treasury go higher than we'd ever seen them before. You know, our revenues were somewhere in the \$8 billion range and over the course of time it hit up to the \$14 billion range. We'd never seen those kind of numbers, and still we see them, and this government . . . [inaudible] . . . I don't know when we've ever seen that kind of numbers, revenue, in the past years. And whatever the number is, we've got to say that we've never seen the good fortune we've had in the province.

And the opportunity we had with *The Growth and Financial Security Act* that had put out there, you know . . . And it's interesting when you have a new government like we did in 2008. And now we're getting a bit of a tired one that gets out on the campaign trail and makes as few commitments as possible, and even the ones they do, like they . . . And I'll talk a little bit about this in a little while, that they're committing to a new fund once oil hits \$75 a barrel. And we'll see if that really happens.

I mean oil may hit \$75 a barrel. We hope that. That would be good news for us here in Saskatchewan. But whether they will actually live up to the commitments that they set in this past campaign. I think they're probably hoping that people forget that because, you know, when you look at the old bill — and we'll take a minute and just take a look at it — it was really in many ways . . . It talked about a requirement for a four-year financial plan. And who could argue with that? This is something that good governments should be doing. Here we have a government that has switched over to summary financial systems, and you would think — and that was a few years ago — that by now they would be able to have a four-year financial plan.

And what that four-year . . . And it also talks about a four-year public debt management plan. And of course this is one of the things that the auditor has talked about and really stressed that in fact we really do have a plan to manage our debt. And we see something that's missing, particularly in this bill. It's just a simple bill, but it doesn't have the other part that goes with it. What will come to really replace this piece of legislation, growth and financial security? I think that's really, really critical.

And I had talked about the change in accounting policies, and

what would be done there and the requirement to offset balances in the next fiscal year if expenses exceed revenues. All of this is part of what the legislation talked about. And of course the government of the day was very, very keen, and that was the Sask Party. It did talk about the use of annual surpluses in the General Revenue Fund. So here we have that General Revenue Fund, summary financial statements. But will the government continue with this? And why not work with amending the legislation so we continue to go with this goal? Because it says:

How surpluses in the general revenue fund [were] to be used

If there is a pre-transfer surplus for any fiscal year, the minister shall:

transfer 50% of the amount of the pre-transfer surplus to the Growth and Financial Security Fund . . . and

allocate 50% of the amount of the pre-transfer surplus to the Debt Retirement Fund . . .

So all those are two good ideas, but what's going to happen to that? Will we see that in the new legislation that's coming forward? We really hope that there is a plan of what we do with surpluses and that the fact that . . . In fact we hope that there are surpluses, but of course we wait, we wait and see what happens with that.

But I do want to say that, you know, when we look at this, that we have some real concerns that the government will not do this. And of course they did go out on the doorstep and they made a commitment that if oil did hit \$75 a barrel that it would in fact create this fund. Will that happen? We're not sure. And we know that this is something that there has been a lot of talk about.

We had in fact the Premier just a few short years ago asked Dr. MacKinnon, or Mr. MacKinnon — Peter MacKinnon — to do some research on a sovereign wealth fund that we could create here in this province. And so he spent some time taking a look around the world to take a look at what other states, other countries have done. And he really did some really outstanding work.

But at the end of the day, again it was a real missed opportunity because we know we went through the 10 years of increasing revenue, and there were a couple of years in there where potash went down but oil still stayed strong. But this is the challenge that a government always has. In fact writers have written about this, that in Saskatchewan we have to plan for those times when one of the resources or a few of the resources may actually take a tumble in price. We have to be prepared for that. It's a known fact that if oil or potash or uranium and natural gas is going up, that in fact they may also come down. So we have to be prepared in our planning and recognizing that, especially when you have record high prices, that you might actually see some days where the price is going to be going down.

And in fact their own budget documents we've been able to take a look at — and I know the Minister of Education often gets up and says, nobody foretold us that the price of oil would be going down — but it's been going down for several months

now, just not the last six months. In fact it's been a while that it's been going down. And of course this is the issue that we have with the minister, that in fact if we had the budget before the election, we could have had a much better discussion on the doorstep about what the government was really planning to do.

In fact they were making promises on the doorstep of what they would do with \$75 a barrel oil instead of the cuts that we see here today that we are debating. And they didn't make a mention at all about this kind of legislation at all. It's like many people would think that they were going to be continuing this and the continuing of this kind of work, but instead here we see just the deep, deep knife in this legislation, that when they repeal *The Growth and Financial Security Act*, it's done and it's over. And so there is no more commitments at this point in time to balanced budget legislation, no more commitments to any kind of savings account, no more commitment to really financial security here in this province. And so we really wonder where is this government going? And you know, I often quote and I really appreciate the fact that we have writers in this province who have the long view, and this is the problem we have with this government.

And I'd be wrapping up in just few minutes, but this is one of the last things I want to put on record, that Bruce Johnstone just wrote an excellent column about a perfect time to dust off the Sask futures fund. And this was on June 4th where he really talks about, you know, that we really need to be able to look into the future and really establish some sort of savings account so we're not at the mercy of these prices of commodities that go up and will come down. We are an exporting province, and we know that for sure. But he says, and I quote, he talks about, he's referring to the minister. And I'll quote:

He also repeated Premier Brad Wall's campaign promise that if and when oil goes back to \$75 US a barrel, every dollar above that would be allowed to accumulate to \$500 million in the Growth and Financial Security Fund (GFSF) — the old rainy day fund. When the government debt is paid off, the government will take that money and put it towards a heritage fund.

These are all valid points, but they miss the main point. And that is, we will never get off this roller-coaster ride of resource revenues rising and falling with the commodity cycle as long as we persist in spending all of our resource wealth as it comes in, rather than putting some of it away for future generations.

And so, Mr. Speaker, with that I do say we look forward to the next piece of legislation that comes. The minister has alluded to it, but we don't know if it really will appear. But we really think it's important because the significance of the bill or the piece of legislation that they're repealing, when he talks about having a debt plan and having some four-year plan and thinking about how are we putting some money away, those are all critical, critical pieces in the new legislation. So I'm hoping it's strong legislation, and I'm hoping that we see it soon so we can have that discussion.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to take my seat and I'm going to adjourn Bill No. 21, *An Act to repeal The Growth and Financial Security Act*. Thank you much.

The Speaker: — The member has adjourned debate on Bill No. 21, *The Growth and Financial Security Repeal Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion.

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 22

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Doherty that **Bill No. 22 — *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2016*** be now read a second time.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to offer my initial few comments on this particular bill. I think what's really important, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that this would be my first opportunity to speak about *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2016*. And I just want to summarize for the folks that might be listening that are really, quite frankly, worried about some of the aspects of this particular bill or may want further information. It could be either/or, Mr. Speaker.

But one of the things I think is really important that, as I look around Saskatchewan, I noticed over the last number of years that a lot of young families really struggled with the opportunity for home ownership. We know in some of the growing cities and some of the growing communities, that at one time you can buy a nice, decent home for 100 and 125,000, well those days are gone, Mr. Speaker. And as you travel around Saskatoon, you will certainly see that a lot of these homes have really increased in value, so thereby making the home ownership opportunity for young families, young people, that it makes it much more difficult and much more out of reach.

And the idea of home ownership for many young families starting off, Mr. Speaker, was really apparent over the last several years as we saw young families getting to work and beginning the process of arranging mortgages. And as they arrange mortgages, Mr. Speaker, they thought it was an opportune time, as jobs were plentiful and Saskatchewan enjoyed the economy that we've enjoyed the last 8 or 9 years, 10 years. And now, Mr. Speaker, we see that some of them are losing those mortgage-paying jobs, as witnessed by the good workers at the Buffalo Narrows correctional centre, not by a downturn in potash prices, Mr. Speaker, but by a rather cold and callous government.

And one of the things that is really, really important to point out, Mr. Speaker, as you look at this Act to amend *The Income Tax Act*, it really puts a lot of young families at another disadvantage if you look at this particular process.

[16:15]

The Act itself eliminates the active families benefit where certain families would get a tax credit for engaging and enrolling their children in a wide variety of sports or cultural programming or other events that were eligible. The other part that really begins to, you know, to add more burden to the

families is it makes those who use their graduate retention plan tax credit to put a \$10,000 down payment on a home ineligible for the first-time homebuyers tax credit. So they withdrew that support mechanism for young families that were looking at buying their first home, and using the graduate retention plan tax credit to be able to afford that down payment.

And, Mr. Speaker, while other parts of the Act are mostly housekeeping, the three that I want to spend a bit of time on includes the graduate retention plan tax credit, where they're taking a \$10,000 opportunity afforded young families, they're taking that away. They're taking away the active families benefit tax program. They're also making changes to the manufacturing and processing exporter hire incentive, that there's a bunch of changes in terms of actual net increase in jobs before the credits will be awarded.

These are some of the things that you have to really assess, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the overall net benefit to the people of Saskatchewan, whether these programs are working. And, Mr. Speaker, this government took no time to try and understand that. They simply put these processes, these new rules in place. And here we are debating this particular bill, Bill No. 22, on a late Tuesday afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that I would point out when we talk about young families — and I've seen a lot of the young families out there suffering from some of the challenges of owning homes — first of all, the affordability factor. The affordability factor, you know, a lot of young families just couldn't get enough money for a down payment. They just had very tough challenges ahead of them in terms of being able to afford these homes. And as the price ranges escape their grasp more and more each year, Mr. Speaker, the young families became more and more discouraged.

Now we're seeing that the Sask Party's adding to that discouragement by taking away some of the tax credits that they could have used towards a down payment for a home. And that's a shame, and I'll tell you why it's a shame, Mr. Speaker. What we find happening is that as the prices for homes increased, a lot of young families couldn't be eligible for home ownership, so they used some of these programs. And what the Saskatchewan Party government basically done was slap their hands away from this opportunity, saying you can't utilize that tax credit anymore so get your hands off there. So they've got a severe hand slapping by the Saskatchewan Party government on utilizing the graduate retention plan tax credit to, you know, to their advantage.

So it's one thing to not be able to afford a new home, Mr. Speaker, but to have a government that would once again callously turn their back on you just when the time that you need it the most, Mr. Speaker, that they would do that. And why would they do that, Mr. Speaker, despite having record revenue, is they had mismanaged the great opportunity that they inherited. They had nothing to do with inheriting a booming economy and a growing population and \$110-a-barrel oil. They just sat there and spent money and wasted money. And now many — seven or eight years later — many families are being impacted by their mismanagement and waste, Mr. Speaker, by taking away some crucial programs like the graduate retention plan tax credit, Mr. Speaker. That hurt a lot of young families.

It may not affect some of them, Mr. Speaker, but it hurt a lot of young families, and the Saskatchewan Party should be ashamed of themselves in the sense of how they mismanaged our provincial economy. They mismanaged our provincial finances. And now the young families trying to afford a home are paying the price for their mismanagement and their lack of skill in being a government. And, Mr. Speaker, they have failed this province miserably, Mr. Speaker.

The other point I would make is that as you notice these young families that are able to get into a down payment, Mr. Speaker, that are able to afford a home, Mr. Speaker, they are able to afford a home, Mr. Speaker, what a lot of the companies and I think the banks as well, they done what they call a market adjustment. And this is really a weird thing, Mr. Speaker, because many of these young families, they got a mortgage, and they paid 400,000 for a home. And then several years later, the market adjustment concept come along and now they're paying \$400,000 in their mortgage for a house that may be only worth 300,000.

So how much more can these young families take, Mr. Speaker? Just from overall the incredible increase in prices for homes, Mr. Speaker, the incredible increases in prices for homes, and then the fact that they're struggling to get the down payment, this government slammed that door shut as a result of this particular bill. And, Mr. Speaker, now along comes this market adjustment plan in which they're paying a \$400,000 mortgage on a home that might be only worth 300,000.

So these are some of the challenges that we see with this particular bill . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And the member from Regina Walsh Acres is chirping from his chair, Mr. Speaker, because obviously he has enough income to afford a mortgage, Mr. Speaker. A lot of young families don't enjoy that \$95,000 annual fee, Mr. Speaker. So he continues, he continues to chirp from his chair. But little does he realize that there are a lot of young families that don't enjoy the support that he enjoys today. He enjoys the support of being an MLA in this Assembly. And he's chirping from his chair, Mr. Speaker, because he has no care, no regard for a lot of these young families that needed the graduation retention plan tax credit for a down payment. And he's sitting there callously smiling and joking and making light of the fact that these young families needed these supports, Mr. Speaker. They needed these supports. But it doesn't matter to that member because, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, they don't care about those young families struggling to make ends meet.

And as a result of some of *The Income tax Act*, the amendments that we're doing today, the amendments we're doing today is attached to the budget. And the reason why they're making all these cuts is that they have mismanaged the affairs of Saskatchewan finances miserably, Mr. Speaker. And now the young families and the young people in this province got to pay for their mismanagement, got to pay for their waste, Mr. Speaker, and this is the reason why some of these bills are coming forward now.

They are getting tired of the Saskatchewan Party, and we sense that every single day, Mr. Speaker. But they've got to have patience. They've got to have patience because four years is still a ways away, Mr. Speaker. But let it be known that the

young people and families in this particular community do not agree with the fact that the mismanagement of the Saskatchewan Party resulted in a number of cuts that hurt the young families' opportunities to own homes.

So between the support mechanisms being eroded by the Saskatchewan Party, between the market adjustment theory that has been thrown in their face, and the fact that the prices of housing has skyrocketed under the Saskatchewan Party, nobody seems to represent, nobody seems to represent those young people and to support them in their effort to achieve home ownership.

And they're all chirping over there, Mr. Speaker. They're all chirping. And the reason why they're chirping, Mr. Speaker, is they don't see the impact on young families as they go to get a mortgage, of how they've got to pay through the nose for prices of houses that have skyrocketed and supports that have been eroded by them. And now, Mr. Speaker, the final icing on the cake, Mr. Speaker, the market adjustment plan where it shows those that were lucky enough to get the mortgage, lucky enough to get the mortgage, Mr. Speaker, they do not now have the value of their home that they originally thought would hold up forever. And, Mr. Speaker, this is what is hurting a lot of young Saskatchewan families, Mr. Speaker.

And I say shame on the Saskatchewan Party as you're withdrawing more and more of these supports from young families, as you're withdrawing more and more of these supports from young families at the same time selling off profitable Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker. All that is a recipe for financial ruin for the future of Saskatchewan. And I think the taxpayers will know, the taxpayers will eventually realize that the Saskatchewan Party have compromised them, and as a result of that, in future years not sooner than later the tax man is going to come calling.

And I can guarantee you one thing, Mr. Speaker, it won't be the Saskatchewan Party being held to account because they'll be long gone, Mr. Speaker. There's going to be a new government coming along and having to explain to people that they sold the Crowns. They destroyed the basis of our financial foundation by selling off the Crowns. They put us deep in debt. They compromised our future due to things like P3s, Mr. Speaker. And today now they have destroyed a lot of the support mechanisms as a result of this bill that would support young families in owning their homes.

And, Mr. Speaker, that is a crying shame. That is a crying shame, and I say to the people of Saskatchewan, don't forget this. Don't forget this because they're doing this today and even though four years is a ways out, Mr. Speaker, I think the people of Saskatchewan will have a message to the Saskatchewan Party as they're tired, and they're sick and tired of your mismanagement. And you should've had the courage to tell the people these issues prior to the election and you chose not to. And sometimes people in Saskatchewan won't forget and, Mr. Speaker, they don't forget, and I would encourage them not to.

So on that note, I look at this as another assault on young families finally owning their own home. And I'd say our colleagues have a lot to say about this bill. They have a lot say about this bill. So on that note, I will move that we adjourn

debate on Bill No. 22, *An Act to amend the Income Tax Act*. I so move.

The Speaker: — The member from Athabasca has adjourned debate on Bill No. 22, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2016*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 23

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. McMorris that **Bill No. 23** — *The Liquor Retail Modernization Act/Loi de modernisation du commerce des boissons alcoolisées* be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And as always, it's an honour to be able to rise here the Assembly today and speak to the bills that are being tabled by the government. This particular one is a modernization of liquor retailing, and it's a fairly extensive bill with a number of changes that are being made to the liquor retail Act, or sorry, it's *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act* and they're making some changes to it, quite a number of changes. And as the name of the bill suggests, it's really in relation to the retailing of liquor and some modernization that the government's attempting to do in that bill.

We didn't get a lot of comment from the deputy minister in terms of the content of the bill in his second reading speech. Fairly terse comments but basically he's pointing out that there is an uneven playing field right now in the liquor retailing system and that only certain types of retailers are allowed to make decisions about their hours of operation, prices, and availability of chilled products, and this is in detriment of consumers.

So there's a whole host of changes that are being made. I think throughout the changes you will note that the definition of franchise is being removed altogether. It's being repealed, and the explanation that's provided for that is that franchises are now going to be brought into the same definition of any other retailer.

So I always think about the fact that my grandfather had the liquor franchise in my hometown when I grew up, and I know it was kind of strange because he was the local pharmacist. So he had a drug store and he sold all the booze in town too, which was kind of a good way for him to earn a little income. And it kind of fit, you know. Whatever your needs were, whenever you wanted to do your shopping there, that was a good thing for the pharmacy itself, the Lafleche pharmacy at a Rexall store.

Now that no longer is with the Lafleche pharmacy. It's been moved over to the local Co-op, so it's always a bit of a surprise to me to walk into the Co-op at home and be able to pick up a bottle of wine to go with your supper.

So it makes sense. Modernization makes sense, and I think the attempts that are being done in this bill generally appear to have some positive changes. And certainly modernization is something that we've been calling for for some time now in relation to liquor franchising, so franchising and other ways that liquor is being retailed. So this does deal with some of the things we've been calling for and I think generally it will be well received. But there's a lot of technical things in here that also are being changed, and I'll point out a few of those as I make my comments today.

As I indicated, there's a couple definitions that are being removed from section 2. First of all, exhibition casino operator is being removed. There's no longer a need for that definition, and obviously the word franchise is being removed throughout the entire Act, *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act*. So the explanation for removing the definition for exhibition casino operator is to reflect the current policy that the agency or authority already has . . . Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority already has, and that is that operators are not granted licenses to operate full casinos. So an exhibition casino is different than a full casino.

And because the Criminal Code does already authorize exhibition associations to operate table games, of course wanting an amendment to *The Gaming Regulations, 2007* will give that additional clarity about the gaming operations that can be provided by exhibition associations.

[16:30]

So that's just cleaning up a piece in relation to gaming regulations or the regulation of gaming, and this is going to be done through a regulatory change so that definition is no longer required in the bill.

Section 14 is also being amended. Mostly it appears that the changes are just to remove the reference to franchise. As I've indicated earlier, under the new liquor retail model, franchises, they're just changing the name of them to retail stores. Much like other retail stores, they're being treated in a similar fashion and therefore there's no need for that reference to franchise. And I think franchises were part of the evolution of liquor sales in Saskatchewan. Obviously the authority wasn't in a position to open up stores in all the small communities. I forget how many. I think there's dozens of franchises throughout the province, but in essence they are retail as well. Obviously they're selling liquor. So I think franchise is the old reference in terms of how things were done, and it's just being brought into the definition of retail as we understand it today.

And I think also the explanation points out that the word franchise suggests a relationship. When you think of getting a Kentucky Fried Chicken franchise or a McDonalds franchise, you are in a relationship with that company. In this case according to the explanation, SLGA is going to assume a regulatory role over the franchises, not a typical franchise relationship. So the relationship is changing and therefore the definition itself needs to be removed from the bill.

Section 19, there's a minor change to section 19 that's being made. This is explained by saying that SLGA has the authority to establish a minimum price, and as you know, Mr. Speaker,

that's keystone to the way our liquor retailing system is set up is that SLGA can set the prices. Currently the bill only says the price, but the change here is being made to say that the minimum price. So SLGA currently could also set a maximum price under the current law. But by identifying solely the minimum price, that means SLGA is limiting how it can define the prices to the minimum and not to a maximum price — although I don't think SLGA has ever limited what a maximum is, because obviously retailers are in a competitive business and they want to be able to make money. So they're not going to maximize prices unless they have that rare bottle that no one else can get, then they can maximize it. But I don't think there's any written need to regulate it and that's obviously why it's never been explicitly put into the legislation.

There is another change in here. Section 19.3 of the current Act is being repealed and then replaced with a new clause. And the purpose of this clause was to allow SLGA to implement a bid process to issue full off-sale endorsements in communities where one became available. So that was the old way. Now with the changes to the liquor retail industry, full off-sale outlets will be transitioned to retail store permits and no additional full off-sale licences will be issued.

So full off-sale licence, if you're wondering, Mr. Speaker, I can give you the definition of that right now because I am curious myself. It's not currently defined in the definitions unfortunately. It's probably in the main body of the bill somewhere, but obviously off-sale is something else that's an essential feature of growing up in rural Saskatchewan. And I assume that the hotel in my hometown was an off-sale outlet. I think full off-sale may expand the types of products that could be sold there. At any rate, they're going to be all transitioned now to a retail store permit.

So there won't be a difference between the local franchise in the Lafleche Co-op and the local full off-sale permit that has been issued to the . . . I forget the name of the new hotel in Lafleche. The old one burned down. The Flying Goose, it used to be. But anyways, the Flying Goose Inn, I think it was. Anyways they're both going to be called retail store permits and that just seems to make sense. We're going to . . . They're selling alcohol and they're selling alcohol. So it makes sense that this modernization is going to happen, and certainly we've been calling for that kind of modernization as we go through the changes to this legislation

We also have a change to section 20.1 which now . . . I'm just going to look at the explanation. Oh yes, there was some language in 20.1 regarding subsidiaries and the explanation here is just clarifying the language. So it's simply a clarification of language.

The next Act, or sorry, the next section that's being amended is 26(2)(h) and it's a reference to the exhibition casino operator which no longer is required, as I described earlier.

Also section 26, sorry, section 31 is being amended just for a numbering reason, so that's a minor change.

And we go to section 35(4), and I have to find the page. Again it's a reference to exhibition casino operators, so that's a fairly straightforward change.

Section 47.1 is being changed. Again reference to a franchise is being taken out and I believe the same in section 48 and 49. So those are a number of changes that are being made there. And also section 47.1 as amended "will allow SLGA to enter into agreements with those retail store permittees that wish to issue special occasion permits for family and community events." And I know I've applied through a lot of the charity work I've done and non-profit work that I've done, have had to deal with special occasion permits on a number of special occasions, and it's been quite frustrating, especially for the outdoor special occasion permits. The requirement and the type of application is way more complicated than an indoor application. So it looks like these are going to be streamlined a little bit.

And not only that; you don't have to go anymore to the head office in SLGA for approval for some of those special occasion permits. And I think many people are really going to appreciate this opportunity to apply for a permit at any retail store outlet. So if you're applying for a wedding or for a charity ball or for a baseball tournament or whatever the occasion may be on a special occasion permit, you can now just go to a retail outlet that is selling SLGA liquor and you'll be able to apply for that. So that makes a lot of sense, and I think it's along the lines that we were calling for in terms of modernization of the sale of alcohol in Saskatchewan.

Sections 48 and 49 are amended and they're combining "the municipal notice requirements for permitted premises and retail stores, making the same requirements apply . . ." And again, I know in my experience you used to have to get permission from the municipality first before you could apply for the licence. Again a lot of extra work for often volunteer organizations. And I think the policy behind these requirements is probably no longer as cogent as it was at the time it was implemented. And so it's going to make things a lot easier.

And you know, oftentimes in rural situations the municipality only meets once a month, and then you have to wait for the next municipal meeting before you can apply for your liquor licence, sometimes three or four months in advance to apply for the licence, starting from the beginning getting the municipal approval. If you miss your deadline, you're kind of out of luck, and I know that from experience. However municipalities have been very forgiving and have found ways to help accommodate those kinds of volunteer I guess oversights that, if you don't do this on a regular basis, it's quite complicated.

There's also a new requirement in section 48 now to require that SLGA give notice to a First Nations "reserve, the Northern Administration District, a provincial park, a resort area, or a national park if a permit is being considered . . ." So that is adding to the existing list, I believe, and I think what this does is it actually formalizes an existing practice. So that tends to make a lot of sense.

Section 57 is also being, 57(1) is being repealed. And the reason for that is to allow SLGA "to determine the form and information that are required as part of the application process for a liquor permit consistent with the approach taken for gaming registrations." So this will give SLGA the required flexibility to ensure the appropriate information be collected on which to make decisions respecting different types of permits.

Mr. Speaker, I think there are a number of other changes. I think one that's really particularly interesting though, I do want to talk about, is the amended section 61. And I'm just going to grab that. The existing section 61 talks about restricting permits if the owner has a, what do they call it, an inducement, so that the owner themselves would be able to benefit a contingent interest in the chattels or equipment. And here the new one just says:

. . . no permit shall be issued:

respecting any premises in which a manufacturer, or any of its directors, officers, shareholders, employees or agents, has acquired any direct, indirect, or contingent interest in the ownership or management of the business to which the application relates or in its property, chattels or equipment; or

in any other circumstances prescribed in the regulations”.

So again the addition of a regulatory authority is something that's new and as always, Mr. Speaker, I'm always concerned when we see the removal of authorities from the legislation into the regulations because obviously there's no oversight by this Assembly and those changes are being done through Executive Council. So it's obviously less scrutiny and less ability for comment from the public when these changes are being made.

There are many, many other changes in this bill and I won't touch on all of them at this point. I know we have to keep moving along here. But at this point I think, I know there was one more that I starred. Oh yes, section 129. I do want to talk a little about section 129 and again I think it's very appropriate and helpful changes that will definitely make life a little bit easier for consumers, and I think that is the goal of this.

Section 129 is “Prohibitions affecting permittees” and it says here in the explanation that it “. . . reflects a change in policy that will allow all retail stores to sell to any other commercial permittee. Currently, permittees, franchises and private stores must all purchase their beverage alcohol from either an SLGA store or its warehouse.” And I know that, for example, any time I get a special occasion permit, I have to actually do the purchasing from the SLGA store rather than any retail outlets. So this is going to make life a lot simpler I think for many people who are getting the special occasion permits. So it's a good change; it's a positive change. I think it's one that will be appreciated a lot by individuals who are getting special occasion permits and I think for other commercial permittees as well. If you run out of a certain kind of beer on Friday night, and you know that down the street in Saskatoon, someone else has a lot of that beer for sale in their store, you can go pay the retail price if you want and make sure your customers have access to that particular beverage.

So I think it sort of streamlines and makes things make a little bit more sense. At any rate, Mr. Speaker, there's a number of other changes in here. A lot of them relate to the definition of franchise, but those are kind of the highlights for me in terms of the changes that are being made. Again as I've said, we have called for this modernization and we think it's appropriate to modernize. And so in terms of this particular bill, I think these

changes will be welcomed by many consumers. And at this point, I will adjourn debate on Bill No. 23.

The Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Nutana has adjourned debate on Bill No. 23, *The Liquor Retail Modernization Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 24

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. McMorris that **Bill No. 24** — *The Liquor Retail Modernization Consequential Amendments Act, 2016* be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And again I'm honoured to be able to rise in the Assembly to speak to this bill. This is a very . . . As the long title suggests — the title is almost as long as the bill itself — that it's just there to make consequential amendments to other bills as a result of Bill 23. So Bill 24 is dealing with another piece of legislation called *The Liquor Consumption Tax Act* and there's a number of amendments being made, three or four anyways, in terms of the definitions that are being changed in *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act, 1997* by Bill No. 23, *The Liquor Retail Modernization Act*.

So in this case there's three or four definitions that have been changed, based on the changes, and a couple of clerical changes, for example by striking out “Her Majesty the Queen” and substituting “the Crown in right of Saskatchewan” in clause, section 4, I guess, of the bill. So no more Queen; it's just the Crown. And I think these kinds of cleanups have been happening over many years, so this is one that may have got missed in a previous cleanup. And so the language is being amended to reflect that.

So again it's a very minor bill. There's minor changes being made to reflect the changes being made in Bill 23. And so at this point, I would move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 24, *The Liquor Retail Modernization Consequential Amendments Act, 2016*.

[16:45]

The Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Nutana has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 24, *The Liquor Retail Modernization Consequential Amendments Act, 2016*.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 25

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Docherty that **Bill No. 25 — *The Wakamow Valley Authority Amendment Act, 2016*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise into the debate on Bill No. 25, *An Act to amend The Wakamow Valley Authority Act*. And it's one that, you know, growing up near Moose Jaw, I have pleasant memories of going down into Moose Jaw where my grandmother was and going down to the Kentucky Fried Chicken store that was down by the Moose Jaw River . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, and I think everybody went to the Kentucky Fried Chicken store down by the river in Moose Jaw, and that was a great place. And we'd have our little picnics, and that was my first exposure. And of course many people would remember the Moose Jaw zoo as well, and that was down in that corner as well. So this area really brings home memories for me, and I know for many people here in the province, probably across Canada, Moose Jaw has a special place.

So when this was created in 1981, this was a vision right across the province. We had Meewasin and we had the park here and several parks that were created as a valley authority or some sort of thing larger than an urban park. And I know that people in the association of urban parks and conservation areas were always a little leery about being called an urban park because they felt people would not understand what they truly were. It was too easy to get them mixed up with other urban parks that we have like the Ashworth Holmes Park. That's close to my home in Saskatoon that had just a great Art in the Park event this weekend.

Wascana and Meewasin, Wakamow are not like that. They do have festivals. They do have great social events, but they're larger than that. There's that whole issue around the conservation area.

And what's interesting, and I think that many of us do think of that area as we come on Manitoba Street from here into Moose Jaw and that little nook where Moose Jaw River winds through a green area, we think of that as Wakamow park, but it's actually much larger than that. I think if you were to take a look, I think if you google on your maps, Wakamow Valley map, you can see all the green areas that's south where the Moose Jaw River winds through Moose Jaw and then goes towards Bushell Park, all the parts that have been conserved by the Wakamow Valley or under the Wakamow Valley Authority.

And so this is actually a sad day in Saskatchewan's history in terms of conservation near urban living. And I think of the story — and I'm probably more familiar with the Meewasin Valley Authority in Saskatoon — of the pressures that were happening along the riverbanks in the 1970s. They decided they had to have a bigger answer. And the same in Regina when they created Wascana; they had to have a bigger answer. They had to have a vision that was more than just 5 years or 10 years. And I know Meewasin has a 100-year vision and what does that

mean? And I know Wascana has just released their plan. I'm not familiar with it.

But what happens is you have to have a bigger, bigger plan because as our cities grow, as our cities grow — and we hope that they do grow — that there are pressures on those areas that are very fragile in terms of conservation. And I know the Finance minister would say, pave them over. Pave them over; that's what he would do. He would sell them to the highest price right up to the riverbank, and he wouldn't care. He wouldn't care about the flooding that would happen, you know. And this is a big issue we have in Saskatchewan, especially our little streams that gives the odd flood. And I know the member from Weyburn is very familiar with this, and Estevan, how creeks that appear very small and harmless can actually be pretty dangerous if we get a heavy rainfall or a heavy snowfall. And so these are the kind of issues we deal with.

And I know in Saskatoon we deal with, we have all the issues about building to the 1 to 100 flood plain, or the 1 to 500 flood plain. But we also deal with the Saskatchewan River slumping, and that's a big, big deal.

And so, Mr. Speaker, you know the Minister of Finance, you know, talks about choices. And we do talk about choices. But one of the things that is pretty valuable to our heritage here in Saskatchewan is our conservation heritage, and these parks come at a very, very good price in terms of how we should be investing in them. And I know the minister in his remarks talks about how they have given the municipalities record revenue through the sales tax plan. That's a good plan, and we think that's a good plan but, man, this government has spent it many times over on behalf of the municipalities, and in fact they should be supporting the urban parks in the conservation areas. We are really worried that this is really the tip of the iceberg, and what this really means in Moose Jaw and Weyburn and Prince Albert are the first ones to be hit. But really we need to make sure we protect those fragile areas within our cities, you know.

And I can remember, I can remember the day that we gave core funding to the park in Weyburn, and how happy the city was about that because it was a recognition. It's more than actually just the money. It's the recognition that there's good planning, that they thought this out. This is not just, like I say, a park with swings and a sandbox. This is really talking about long-term visionary thinking, and this is really, really important. And so Weyburn got it and Prince Albert got it. And I can remember when The Battlefords got it because they had done such good work about the North Saskatchewan coming through that region between North Battleford and Battleford and the plains there and what all of that meant. And of course some of it is a developed park, but much of it is wild and it is a conservation area.

And the same is with Wakamow. And I'd like to know — I'd actually like to get the actual map from Wakamow — how much of it is conservation area and how much is developed as a park. And I know the member from Wakamow defended the cuts. He's saying that you've got to make tough choices, and I get that. I get that. But these are the moments that define who we are, and this is the time when we say, hey we really value our urban spaces, and the conservation areas are part of that.

And so when we have a bill like this before us, it's a real, real setback. It's a huge setback. And really I tell you this is the reason why . . . I see this happening up in Saskatoon when they're talking about the northeast swale, and they're talking about the impact that has on the development. There's a real controversy for that. I see the city is struggling with that, and I see Meewasin struggling with it, but I think the Ministry of Environment could play a real leadership role in that because they have the skills. They have the technology. They have the expertise.

And we should have the same sort of application of those skill sets across the province. Cities will have to deal with those challenges, and the province can say, as a provincial interest we will help you out. Cities will have to make the decision. That's why there are plans. That's why there are partnerships between the municipalities, between the cities and the province. For the province, what it brings to the table, they bring cash — about a third of the cost — but they also bring the expertise. They bring the expertise that no city probably should have, you know, because they just can't have.

And I know in the ministry when I was there, there was some very, very skilled people. And they may have retired, but I would bet there are new people there, and I think that's where they should be. And this is what the province brings to the table. They bring the expertise that cities like Weyburn, Moose Jaw, The Battlefords, North Battleford, Prince Albert may not have.

Now Saskatoon and Regina may argue that they have it. Maybe they do. Maybe they don't. But I think there is a role for the province in our urban parks. And one of the key commitments . . . I don't know if many people know this, what's the common thread between these five parks are the rivers or the creeks that run through them: the Moose Jaw creek that runs through Wakamow and the one that runs through . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . What is it called? Okay, here we have a moment . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well hey, I'm not from Weyburn. Give me a break. Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, this is the worst heckling ever. But I know the North Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan.

But, Mr. Speaker, I know the government, it's about to collapse on this. They have been listening, and they understand now why it's important to be full partners, full partners in these urban parks and conservation areas. It really speaks to what kind of province we are, to our commitment to a green future. And whether or not you can remember the name of a creek that runs through Weyburn, that's not really what matters. I think it's the Souris. Is it the Souris? . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . The Souris, there we go. It came to me. There we go. All right. So anyways, I do have to tell you there's some fine statues down there in that park.

But actually, you know, really Weyburn, I have been to their urban park, and it is beautiful. You do the walk around, and it's really a very nice park. They have a lot to be proud of, and so it's not one that we should let go.

So Weyburn, Moose Jaw, and The Battlefords, P.A., Saskatoon, Regina, you know, the common thread — I was getting off on a tangent there — is because they do have a creek or a river

running through it. And we don't have one in Yorkton, and probably Yorkton should get something for that. But this is something that's pretty special in Saskatchewan.

And so, Mr. Speaker, as I say, this is the tip of the iceberg. And I know people are worried in Saskatoon. They're worried in Regina, and unfortunately P.A., and Battlefords. And in Moose Jaw, folks are the first ones to feel it. The folks in Moose Jaw have issued a press release, and they're calling on people to write their MLAs. And I know some of the members from Moose Jaw are very quiet. They're not hollering out like they usually do. But this is something they're going to be hearing about over the weeks ahead.

So, Mr. Speaker, I know that we'll all have a lot of questions about this. This really is, I see, a sad day. This is where the cuts are really happening, and we're worried about where we may go with that.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I know many people will want to speak on this, and there's a lot to say about this. But it just . . . I can remember the folks on budget day who came here and were so happy from ASUPCA [Association of Saskatchewan Urban Parks and Conservation Agencies], hoping to hear some good news, but in fact they heard the worst news possible, and it was a real setback for them. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I adjourn the debate on Bill No. 25. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In order to facilitate the work of committees, I move that this House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — Before we put that motion on the floor, we do have a motion to adjourn the debate on Bill No. 25. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adjourn debate on Bill No. 25?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. Now the next motion, I'll recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. In order to facilitate the work of committees later this day, I move that this Assembly do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. This Assembly will resume tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.]

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