



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

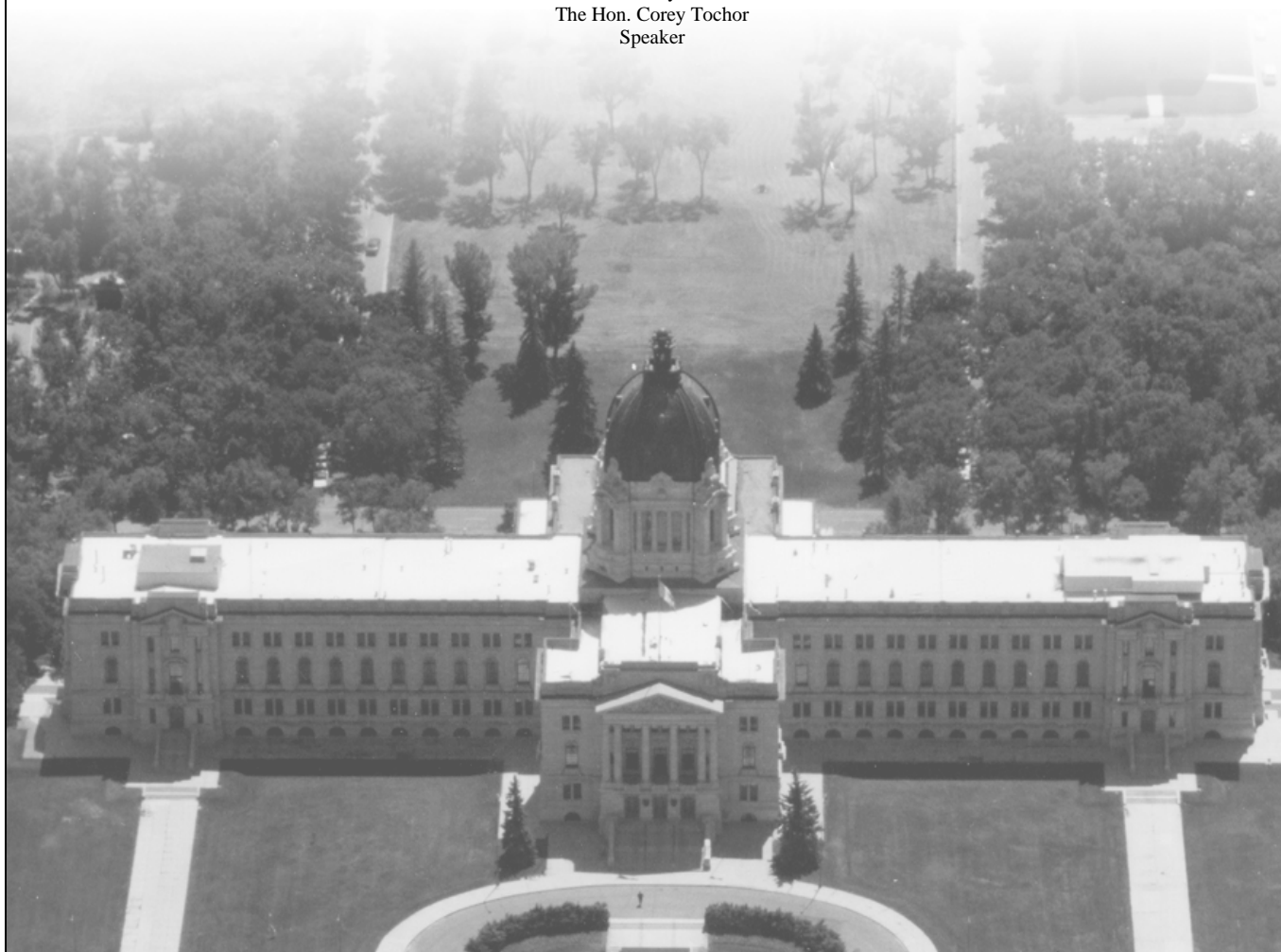
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
authority of  
The Hon. 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

**Beaudry-Mellor**, Tina — Regina University (SP)

**Beck**, Carla — Regina Lakeview (NDP)

**Belanger**, Buckley — Athabasca (NDP)

**Bonk**, Steven — Moosomin (SP)

**Boyd**, Hon. Bill — Kindersley (SP)

**Bradshaw**, Fred — Carrot River Valley (SP)

**Brkich**, Greg — Arm River (SP)

**Buckingham**, David — Saskatoon Westview (SP)

**Campeau**, Hon. Jennifer — Saskatoon Fairview (SP)

**Carr**, Lori — Estevan (SP)

**Chartier**, Danielle — Saskatoon Riversdale (NDP)

**Cheveldayoff**, Hon. Ken — Saskatoon Willowgrove (SP)

**Cox**, Hon. Herb — The Battlefords (SP)

**D'Autremont**, Dan — Cannington (SP)

**Dennis**, Terry — Canora-Pelly (SP)

**Docherty**, Hon. Mark — Regina Coronation Park (SP)

**Doherty**, Hon. Kevin — Regina Northeast (SP)

**Doke**, Larry — Cut Knife-Turtleford (SP)

**Duncan**, Hon. Dustin — Weyburn-Big Muddy (SP)

**Eyre**, Bronwyn — Saskatoon Stonebridge-Dakota (SP)

**Fiaz**, Muhammad — Regina Pasqua (SP)

**Forbes**, David — Saskatoon Centre (NDP)

**Hargrave**, Joe — Prince Albert Carlton (SP)

**Harpauer**, Hon. Donna — Humboldt-Watrous (SP)

**Harrison**, Hon. Jeremy — Meadow Lake (SP)

**Hart**, Glen — Last Mountain-Touchwood (SP)

**Heppner**, Hon. Nancy — Martensville-Warman (SP)

**Kaeding**, Warren — Melville-Saltcoats (SP)

**Kirsch**, Delbert — Batoche (SP)

**Lambert**, Lisa — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)

**Lawrence**, Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)

**Makowsky**, Gene — Regina Gardiner Park (SP)

**Marit**, David — Wood River (SP)

**McCall**, Warren — Regina Elphinstone-Centre (NDP)

**McMorris**, Hon. Don — Indian Head-Milestone (SP)

**Merriman**, Paul — Saskatoon Silverspring-Sutherland (SP)

**Michelson**, Warren — Moose Jaw North (SP)

**Moe**, Hon. Scott — Rosthern-Shellbrook (SP)

**Morgan**, Hon. Don — Saskatoon Southeast (SP)

**Nerlien**, Hugh — Kelvington-Wadena (SP)

**Olauson**, Eric — Saskatoon University (SP)

**Ottenbreit**, Hon. Greg — Yorkton (SP)

**Parent**, Roger — Saskatoon Meewasin (SP)

**Phillips**, Kevin — Melfort (SP)

**Rancourt**, Nicole — Prince Albert Northcote (NDP)

**Reiter**, Hon. Jim — Rosetown-Elrose (SP)

**Ross**, Laura — Regina Rochdale (SP)

**Sarauer**, Nicole — Regina Douglas Park (NDP)

**Sproule**, Cathy — Saskatoon Nutana (NDP)

**Steele**, Doug — Cypress Hills (SP)

**Steinley**, Warren — Regina Walsh Acres (SP)

**Stewart**, Hon. Lyle — Lumsden-Morse (SP)

**Tell**, Hon. Christine — Regina Wascana Plains (SP)

**Tochor**, Hon. Corey — Saskatoon Eastview (SP)

**Vermette**, Doyle — Cumberland (NDP)

**Wall**, Hon. Brad — Swift Current (SP)

**Weekes**, Randy — Biggar-Sask Valley (SP)

**Wilson**, Hon. Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (SP)

**Wotherspoon**, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)

**Wyant**, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)

**Young**, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

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

**Clerks-at-the-Table**

**Clerk** — Gregory A. Putz

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

**Principal Clerk** — Iris Lang

**Clerk Assistant** — Kathy Burianyak

**Sergeant-at-Arms** — Maurice Riou

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

### TABLING OF REPORTS

**The Speaker:** — Assembly, it has been . . . Pursuant to section 29 of *The Advocate for Children and Youth Act*, I am submitting one copy of the special investigation report, *The Silent World of Jordan*, to be tabled in the Legislative Assembly on Wednesday, June 15, 2016.

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Hon. Mr. Boyd:** — With leave, Mr. Speaker, for an extended introduction.

**The Speaker:** — Leave granted. I recognize the minister.

**Hon. Mr. Boyd:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce eight distinguished guests to the Legislative Assembly today. They are members of the Rising State Leaders delegation, participants in a special program organized by the Canadian embassy in Washington, DC [District of Columbia].

The program is designed to bring outstanding state-level legislators and leaders from across the United States to Canada to build and foster greater ties among leaders in our two countries. The last time a Rising State Leaders delegation visited Saskatchewan was in 2009.

Please welcome the following guests seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker: State Senator Katie Hobbs of Arizona, State Representative Aundre Bumgardner of Connecticut, State Representative Tom Demmer of Illinois, State Representative Sarah Roberts of Michigan, State Representative Drew Christensen of Minnesota, State Representative Jeramey Anderson of Mississippi, State Representative Travis Bennett of New Hampshire, and State Representative Melissa Sargent of Wisconsin.

They are accompanied here this afternoon by two officials from the Canadian embassy in Washington: Mr. Dan Abele, head of intergovernmental affairs; and Mr. Weston Bachman, international government relations officer, congressional and intergovernmental affairs.

Our guests have a busy schedule during their time here in Saskatchewan. The delegation will learn about our vast resources of our province, and tomorrow they will travel to Estevan to tour the Boundary dam 3, our leading-edge carbon capture and storage facility.

Canada and the US [United States] share the largest trading relationship in the world, and Saskatchewan is an important partner and participant in this relationship. The US is by far our province's largest trading partner. Last year Saskatchewan

exported \$17.7 billion worth of goods to the United States, representing 54 per cent of our province's total exports.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members of the legislature here today to join with me in welcoming our guests from the eight Rising States, the eight Rising States leaders to the Assembly this afternoon.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, it's an honour to join with the minister and welcome this delegation from the United States here today, the senator and the representatives that have joined us here today, the Rising State leaders delegation along with those that serve our Canadian embassy.

Certainly the United States is an incredibly important friend and ally to Saskatchewan and to Canada. We're thankful for your presence here today, for taking the time to come to Saskatchewan and to strengthen that relationship that's critical to us and to our country on so many fronts.

As was mentioned, you're certainly our largest trading partner, and as an exporting province we have a very vital trade relationship with the United States. You're a crucial customer of potash, energy, and our mining exports and so many other exports like our agricultural implements. And it's always clear as well that our greatest export to the United States has been, and always will be, our hockey players. And certainly we're reminded by that with the passing of hockey legend, Mr. Hockey, Gordie Howe from Floral, Saskatchewan, who was loved by both Americans and Canadians.

We also share strong agricultural ties. It's important for you to know that we have a showcase, the Farm Progress Show, that's opened up here today, and I hope you're able to take some of that marketplace and that showcase in at this point in time.

And I guess it would be remiss to say . . . It's very important that I want to share with you that we mourn with all of you in the wake of the horrifying attack of hate and terror this week in Orlando, that we stand together, that we stand against hate, and that we stand together with the LGBTQ [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or questioning] community.

So thanks once again to this delegation for taking time here in Saskatchewan. Thank you for nurturing and strengthening this very vital relationship, and I ask all members of this Assembly to welcome these leaders to our Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — I too would like to welcome the delegation and acknowledge and welcome the visiting Rising State leaders delegation, including members from the Canadian embassy in Washington, DC. I thank you for coming to Saskatchewan and Canada. I would especially like to thank the Government of Canada and the embassy in Washington, DC for organizing this year's event. Events such as this allow us the chance to continue fostering special economic and political ties between our countries. I ask all members to please join in welcoming our guests to the Saskatchewan legislature.

**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 some municipal officials from the great town of Nipawin. In your gallery, Mr. Speaker, we have His Worship Mayor David Trann — give us a wave if you would, Your Worship — also councillor Mike Botterill and director of community development, Chris Hudyma. These gentleman are here today, as I mentioned, from Nipawin.

Nipawin is not only home to one of the best golf courses in the province, they also received some very exciting news a couple days ago concerning a huge new infrastructure project that we're going to hear more about in just a few minutes during members' statements. Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members to please give these officials from Nipawin a warm welcome to their Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through and on behalf of the opposition members, I also want to thank the municipal leaders from Nipawin as well. I'm looking forward to hearing more about this infrastructure announcement, and I want to welcome you to your legislature. So thank you.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too want to welcome some very special guests that travelled a great distance to be here today. They're good friends and family of mine. And I would ask the Assembly members to recognize and welcome Willy Desjarlais of Buffalo Narrows and Cheryl Chartier of Buffalo Narrows and Ashley Daigneault of Ile-a-la-Crosse. Mr. Speaker, they know the distance that we travel as the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly], not only for Athabasca but for Cumberland. So I'd ask all members of the Assembly to give a special welcome to these long-distance travellers, and to point out that this is your Legislative Assembly. So please feel welcome, and again thanks so much for being here today.

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

**Hon. Mr. Docherty:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome some special guests sitting in your gallery today. They're from the Saskatchewan literary community that are here with us today. We've got Ken Coates who's the winner of the University of Saskatchewan Non-fiction Award. Give us a quick wave. I've got Courtney Bates-Hardy who's the executive director of the Sask Book Awards. I've got Daniel Parr, the Chair of the Saskatchewan Book Awards, and I've got Melissa Bennett who's the Legislative Librarian.

The Saskatchewan Book Awards are important in recognizing the great literary works that are being produced right here at home. And I had an opportunity to listen to not only Mr. Coates but Rita Bouvier — I think she's already left — but producing

some amazing literary works right here in this province, Mr. Speaker. I'd like everybody in the Assembly here to join me in welcoming these special guests to their legislature.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition, I'd like to join with the minister in welcoming these important figures to their Legislative Assembly. Certainly the annual Saskatchewan Book Awards luncheon and reading at the Legislative Library hosted by our great Legislative Librarian, Melissa Bennett, is always something that folks look forward to and sometimes regret the fact that there's not enough time or hands to do the work, that you can't enjoy the whole thing. But thank you very much to the folks from the Saskatchewan Book Awards for the great work they do all the year through, but especially for the showcase that they provide with this event.

And a very special hello and congratulations and keep up the great work to Ken Coates, a tremendous academic in this era of reconciliation, Mr. Speaker. This is an individual that lives that out every day and has a tremendous impact on the way that hopefully the future of this province will go. We see that in his work. We see that in his teaching, and we see that here today. So again, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with the minister opposite in welcoming these very important people to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Hart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's certainly always a special day when a member has a school group visiting from his or her constituency and especially, Mr. Speaker, if the school group is from your hometown. That is my case today, Mr. Speaker.

Seated in the west gallery are 49 students from the Cupar School. They are made up of the students from grade 8 and 9 and 11 and 12. And when I asked the principal, who is accompanying them today, why the grade 10s are missing, he said, well first of all, we didn't have enough room on the buses for them. The grade 10s are going on their annual canoe trip in northern Saskatchewan next week, so they had to stay home.

So the students, Mr. Speaker, are accompanied by their principal, Mr. Murray Bruce, and one of their staff members, Mr. Mike Smith. Also the two bus drivers, Ms. Patsy Santo and Mr. Joe Brodner, are with them. They did the tour of the building earlier over the noon hour. I'd met with them, and we had some questions. I asked them not to act like some of us do during question period, and they assured me they would do that, Mr. Speaker.

I should mention, Mr. Speaker, that being that the school is from Cupar and my office is a very short block away from there, you might expect that there may be a couple of students with the last name Hart in the group, and there is. Actually there should have been four, but two of the family members aren't with us today. There's a grade 12 student sitting in the front row by the name of Ethan Hart. I think he's the fellow there with the slightly red face. He's my nephew's son. And also in the front

row there is my granddaughter, Alyx Hart.

And, Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to mention that on Friday is the grade 12 graduation, and most of the grade 12 students are with us here today. So, Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to welcome them to their legislature.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too want to join my colleagues in recognizing the two writers that we honoured today. First of all, I wanted to recognize in my home community of Ile-a-la-Crosse, Rita Bouvier, who gave us some very powerful writing today about a young man who in 1966 at the age of 12 years old tried to hitchhike home, hitchhike home and try and make a 600-mile journey to try to be home with his family and friends, as he was going to a school in Ontario. And they found that young man in 1966, dead beside some railroad tracks, Mr. Speaker. And it really spoke about the history, and Rita's words brought his story to light. So it was a really powerful presentation that we heard today.

But, Mr. Speaker, on the optimistic side and the growth side, we also had the opportunity to visit with Ken Coates today. I'm sorry I missed his presentation, but Professor Ken Coates is also giving the northern and Aboriginal people great opportunity to rebuild from our tragic past by engaging Aboriginal leaders, by being seen in northern Saskatchewan, and just by being a great human being.

[13:45]

And I want to thank both Rita for bringing these stories to light, and Professor Ken Coates for helping many of the northern Aboriginal people in forging a better and bolder and braver and new path. And it's important that I share those words with him and to point out to the Assembly that the readings today by both of these authors are very powerful statements.

And I think, as the MLA for Athabasca, I just want to say to both of them, thank you very much for your contribution to mankind and humanity in general, and to point out that the work that you're doing is so valued. And we must continue to strive for a better and stronger North, and that affects the Aboriginal people tremendously. I thank you, sir, for your kind service, and certainly to Rita for her great words. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Phillips:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of the legislature, I would like to introduce a couple of friends of mine that came down today, Charles and Elva Boulanger up there in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. These are the type of people that we meet as politicians where, when you're newly elected and you go into a community to an event for the first time, there are some people that make you feel so welcome when you show up at the event. That's the way that Charles and Elva were when we started, and I am just pleased to welcome them today to their Assembly. And just in part of their history, not only have they worked on my campaign to help me be elected, but also worked on a couple of other members including the member for Meewasin.

So I thank them for that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And to you and through you on behalf of the members here, I'd like to extend a welcome to some producers that are here today from the Southey area. I just want to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you very much for taking the time out of your busy schedules to bring your concerns to your Legislative Assembly. This is your space, and we know how busy you are, so for you to take the time to come and express your concerns is something that is very important to our democracy. And I want to really thank you for doing that. So again to all members, please welcome these producers, these important contributors to our economy to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Hart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with the member opposite in welcoming the constituents of mine that are here from the Southey area. I can't quite see them all, but I recognize some of the faces. I was out meeting with some of my constituents last night over an issue that I'm guessing we may hear more about in a little while. But I'm certainly pleased to see them here this afternoon, and I would ask all members to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of this Assembly, I'd like to introduce two individuals sitting in the east gallery: my cousin, Ken Sarauer, and his son who also happens to be my godson, Jonah. Give a little wave, Jonah. He's a little shy.

Ken along with his wife, Kim, and their other two children, Celeste and Brennan, live in Humboldt, but Ken farms the family farm in the Lake Lenore area, the farm that his dad and my dad grew up on and our grandpa farmed. And hopefully maybe, who knows, one day Jonah will be farming as well. They're in town here to check out the Farm Progress Show, and I'm hopeful that we'll be able to join them after question period. So please join me in welcoming them to their Assembly.

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

**Ms. Lambert:** — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, I would like to introduce Richard and Wendy Basnett in the west gallery. Give a wave. Hi.

Richard and Wendy live in my constituency of Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood and have been members of the Saskatchewan House of Prayer for several years. Richard recently retired from the Rabbit Lake mine where he worked as an auditor and a senior mine geologist. Wendy retired some years ago after 37 years as a physical therapist. The

Saskatchewan House of Prayer prays for all MLAs and encourages our work. I am grateful for their support and their prayers. I look forward to chatting with them a little later this afternoon. I ask all members to join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Fiaz:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you, through you, and to all the members of the Assembly, I would like to introduce some of my constituents of Regina Pasqua: Mr. Ravinder Singh and his wife, Kulwinder Kour, and their daughters, Amber Kaur and Anika Kaur. They are accompanied by Ravinder's mother and father-in-law, Daljeet Singh and Sukhwinder Kour, who are visiting from India. They are here today visiting this beautiful building and watching proceedings. Next week they are planning to leave for Alberta and BC [British Columbia] to explore this beautiful country.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all the members of the Assembly to join me welcoming them to their Legislative Building.

**The Speaker:** — I too would like to welcome everyone who's joined us today. It's an honour to have you in our galleries. But I just would like to remind all people here today in the galleries not to take part in the debate, and that includes applause.

#### 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 PTSD or post-traumatic stress disorder can severely impact the lives of Saskatchewan workers, that delaying both diagnosis and treatment can be detrimental to recovery, Mr. Speaker. The petitioners basically are simply asking for fair treatment under workers' compensation, that when you are exposed to traumatic events on the job and receive a subsequent diagnosis of PTSD, that it would be presumed that those traumatic events caused the PTSD which would lead to quicker treatment and hopefully the return to work, Mr. Speaker. The prayer reads:

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 other workers with work-related injuries.

Mr. Speaker, this petition today is signed by citizens of Govan, Strasbourg, Earl Grey, and Saskatoon. I so submit.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to stand today to present a petition as it relates to the

rental purchase option for home ownership in northern Saskatchewan that the government cancelled without warning in 2012. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly cause the Saskatchewan Party government to restore the rental purchase option, rent-to-own option for responsible renters in northern Saskatchewan, for all of northern Saskatchewan including La Ronge, Air Ronge, Creighton, and Denare Beach, allowing northerners the dignity of owning their own homes and building communities in the province's beautiful North.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed this petition are from all throughout the province, and the ones that have signed this particular page are primarily from La Ronge and Air Ronge. And I so present.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition. The people who have signed this want to bring to our attention the following. Wetlands serve a very vital function in our ecosystem. They take the form of marshes and bogs, fens, swamps, and open water. Wetlands are home to wildlife, including waterfowl, and they clean the water running off of agricultural fields. They protect us from flood and drought, and they are a playground where families can explore and play. And in the worst cases, such as some areas of the prairies, as much as 90 per cent of our wetlands have disappeared. As they continue to disappear, so too do the many benefits they provide.

So I'd like to read the prayer:

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

Increase funding to do the proper inventory work, putting Saskatchewan in a better position to manage the water resource.

Speed up the evaluation of high-risk watersheds where there is significant damage annually from flooding. This evaluation must include a recognition of drainage works that could be closed or restored that will alleviate some of the issues downstream with respect to flooding and nutrient loading.

Create a sound and transparent mitigation process that adequately addresses sustainable development. The sequence should first focus on avoiding environmental harm wherever possible before a secondary focus on minimizing the harm, with compensation being sought only when the development is deemed essential and the first two stages cannot be met.

Sorry for the long prayer, Mr. Speaker. This is brought to you from the individuals from Regina and Pilot Butte. I so submit.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today 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 in Saskatchewan. Since 1991, heritage language schools have depended on this modest funding from the Ministry of Education to help sustain their programs. But 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.

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.

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

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Farm Progress Show

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, today we kick off the 39th annual Farm Progress Show, one of Canada's largest trade shows that attracts 45,000 visitors from around the globe each year. It's the place to be for opportunity, innovation, and excitement. This year organizers look forward to new programming that adds even more value for exhibitors, sponsors, and the visiting public.

Mr. Speaker, one in eight Canadian jobs are in the agriculture and agri-food sector. That's over 50,000 jobs in Saskatchewan from engineering, research, processing, to sales, finance, and everything in between. And as the world population continues to grow, the demand for skilled people to work in agriculture and our products will continue to grow as well.

I'm looking forward to attending the show once again, along with colleagues. And as a former teacher, I value the new *thinkAG* Career and Education Expo which allows students to explore the endless career and entrepreneurial opportunities in agriculture, learn about modern food production, and discover the diversity of agriculture-related post-secondary options.

Mr. Speaker, the international buyers program is also a feature that sets this show apart from other shows. International guests and buyer delegations from over 50 countries are matched with products, services, and suppliers that they need. Our province's and country's leading manufacturers can meet international customers, Canada's farmers, Canadian farmers face to face in

one marketplace. It's just one more reason this show is the best in the country. I encourage all members and everyone in Saskatchewan to attend our annual Farm Progress show. Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we all know, this week is the 39th annual Canada's Farm Progress Show in Regina. The Farm Progress Show is the largest dryland farm technology show in Canada, showcasing the latest in farm equipment, technology services, and practices. It attracts over 700 exhibitors and more than 45,000 visitors annually from over 50 countries.

Every year, Farm Progress generates over \$500 million in sales; \$50 million of that are from farm machinery alone. Dozens of agricultural innovations are showcased and unveiled for the very first time at this show. Companies also use this show to introduce improvements, upgrades, and new developments in their products.

New to the show this year is a *thinkAG* Career and Education Expo. This expo will allow students to explore the endless career and entrepreneurial opportunities in agriculture, learn about modern food production, and discover the diversity of agriculture-related post-secondary options. Some additional attractions for this year include modern lifestyles pavilion, the farm progress forum, outstanding young farmers, the livestock centre, and the antique truck and tractor show.

Mr. Speaker, I'd encourage everyone to come and enjoy one of Canada's premier agricultural events.

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

#### Global Wind Day

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, today is Global Wind Day. Every June 15th, people around the world mark this special occasion to highlight the importance of wind as a source for renewable energy. Here in Saskatchewan, Prairie people have a long history of harnessing the power of wind in order to provide the power they need. Going back to the days before Tommy Douglas's rural electrification brought coal-fired electricity across the prairie, farmers used turbines to run generators and windmills to operate pumps at water wells.

In 2016 wind is again being looked at as a valuable source for our energy needs. Over the last 20 years, governments in Saskatchewan have opened small-scale operations to explore the potential that wind offers in our province. We all know that rapid action is needed to transition our electricity system to more renewables, including wind.

[14:00]

Fortunately, new technologies are driving down the cost of wind power, making it as cheap or cheaper than other sources of electricity. Increasingly it's becoming obvious that wind energy is a mature and cost-competitive technology that we can use to help meet our electricity needs while strengthening the

economy and creating green jobs. More jobs in renewable energy will help to make our economy more diversified and resistant to fluctuations in the price of natural resources, meaning fewer surprises for government and less need for transformational change with the boom-bust cycle.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in recognizing Global Wind Day and in committing to working together to build a greener electricity grid to bring Saskatchewan into the 21st century. Thank you.

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

### Governments to Fund Nipawin Water Treatment Plant

**Mr. Bradshaw:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Monday the federal government, the town of Nipawin, and our government were pleased to announce funding for the new Nipawin water treatment plant. This \$20.8 million facility will provide clean, safe drinking water for Nipawin residents and will meet the water needs for population growth in the community well into the future. The new plant will improve the quality of the town's water and reduce the level of minerals in the water, eliminating the need for residents and local businesses to have private water softening systems. This project also includes the installation of new distribution pumps and emergency power generation equipment to ensure a reliable supply of water during power outages.

Mr. Speaker, since 2008 our government has invested more than \$8 billion in infrastructure alone across Saskatchewan. Three hundred and fifty million of that has gone directly into municipal infrastructure in communities large and small across our province. We know that infrastructure investment is key to keeping Saskatchewan strong. Mr. Speaker, we are proud of our partnerships with our municipal and federal partners and will continue to work with them on important infrastructure projects as our province continues to grow.

I ask all members to join me in thanking the town of Nipawin as they continue to plan for growth and advanced projects like this that help improve the quality of life for all residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Readings From Saskatchewan Book Award Winners

**Ms. Lambert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it was an honour today to attend, with some of my colleagues, readings only an hour or so ago from two of 2016 Saskatchewan Book Award winners. The Saskatchewan Book Awards are yearly awards given out to Saskatchewan authors who have demonstrated excellence in their published works. There were 10 winners this year across the categories, and many more nominees.

The Legislative Library hosts an annual reading where they showcase Sask Book Award winners. Mr. Speaker, the authors showcased today were Rita Bouvier, for her collection of poetry called *nakamowin'sa for the seasons* that explored the history

of First Nations culture, and I quote, “echo a quiet manifesto for change.” And Ken Coates's non-fiction *#Idlenomore and the Remaking of Canada* discusses the Idle No More movement and how it is shaping the future of our nation.

Mr. Speaker, the readings show the great talent these authors have and how they are drawing attention to such important issues. Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members of this Assembly to congratulate Rita and Ken on their awards and to congratulate all the 2016 Saskatchewan award recipients and nominees. Thank you.

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

### Warman and Martensville Business Excellence Awards

**Mr. Buckingham:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise in the House to acknowledge the first-ever Warman & Martensville Chambers of Commerce Business Excellence Awards Gala. Partnering together, these two organizations hosted their first annual awards ceremony, celebrating and recognizing the leadership of local businesses in their communities.

I, along with the member for Saskatoon University, had the privilege to attend the event in Warman on May 27th. It was a terrific evening which showcased the entrepreneurial spirit and energy within the Warman and Martensville business communities. Mr. Speaker, I also had the honour and privilege of presenting the 2016 Community Involvement Award on behalf of SaskTel, which was awarded to Lakeview Insurance.

This year's other award recipients included Marla Janzen Realty, the Warman Small Animal Hospital, and Passions Beauty Studio.

Mr. Speaker, it was just a few years ago, in 2009 and 2012, that Martensville and Warman were officially designated city status. This awards night exemplifies how these two communities have thrived economically and attracted businesses and industries to their region.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate all of this year's award winners and nominees. I also ask all members to join me in thanking the two chambers for their continued work and dedication supporting local businesses in our communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Prince Albert Citizens Support Project Triple Play

**Mr. Hargrave:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a great honour to talk about some exciting things that are taking place in my home city of Prince Albert.

As some of you already know, the 2018 Junior Men's World Softball Championship tournament will be hosted by our great northern city. This event will have tremendous economic impact on Prince Albert and the province in general and will attract world-class athletes.



Mr. Speaker, I also want to talk about Project Triple Play, an initiative that is taking place to help modernize the softball facilities and help make it possible for the city to host such a prestigious tournament.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Prince Albert are generous and the sponsors are already coming in. However, I would like to highlight a few in particular. Major contributions have come from Rusty Clunie and family, Russell Clunie Senior and family, Gord Broda and family, Ken Berkosky and family.

Further, the title sponsor of Project Triple Play is Broda Group. Broda is a name familiar to many members of this Assembly since they are a Saskatchewan company headquartered in Prince Albert that is one of the major builders of the Regina bypass.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members of this Assembly to thank the sponsors and organizers of Project Triple Play for their leadership in this community. Thank you.

### QUESTION PERIOD

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

#### Carbon Capture and Storage Project

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, a lot has been said by the Sask Party about their carbon capture projects, so let's take a little trip down memory lane. On October 2nd, 2014, the then-\$1.4 billion CCS [carbon capture and storage] project was officially launched. On October 26th, 2015, it was revealed that about \$12 million in fines were paid to Cenovus. On October 28th, documents showed that the CCS had been down, had downtime and produced at 40 per cent capacity for the year. Still the Premier said it was on target.

But SaskPower confirmed it had never run at 100 per cent capacity. On October 29th the Premier defended the government's silence but admitted the Sask Party could have been more forthcoming about the problems. Then on November 2nd it was admitted that they should have been clearer about the problems from the beginning. Later in November the Sask Party had to apologize in writing to a delegation that had been visiting the carbon capture project to clarify the truth and share the reality.

Mr. Speaker, after all of this, along with the secretive Cenovus deal, how can Saskatchewan people be sure they and world leaders are getting the accurate story of the Sask Party's expensive experiment?

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

**Hon. Mr. Boyd:** — Mr. Speaker, while we're taking a ride down memory lane, perhaps we could remind the member opposite of what the member from Nutana said about the facility at one point in time. She was just amazed at the facility, she said. She thought it was a great step forward for the people of Saskatchewan. And then not too much later, a few months later, she said that the project wasn't in keeping with what the NDP [New Democratic Party] would do, Mr. Speaker — a direct flip-flop there. Now they would have the people of Saskatchewan believe that they are in favour of the facility

except that it's cost too much, Mr. Speaker.

The fact of the matter is, is this is world-leading technology. There are groups from around the world, Mr. Speaker, including a group that's in the gallery today that are going to be touring the facility, Mr. Speaker. They believe that this facility is working very, very well. It's capturing on target of about 800 000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> for this year, Mr. Speaker, the equivalent of taking about 200,000 cars off the roads of our province, Mr. Speaker. It's the right direction to move, Mr. Speaker. It's time the NDP got on board.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, it's astounding that that scandal-plagued minister is still rising in this Assembly to answer questions. The only thing that's really clear about this project is that it's captured a whole lot more Saskatchewan cash than it ever has carbon, Mr. Speaker.

You know the problem with this project did not end with the refusal of that government to be up front. The Sask Party chose SNC-Lavalin to work on the carbon capture project, then promptly sued them for their work. But before that lawsuit was even settled, they gave them another contract, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party's strange commitment to SNC-Lavalin was made even more concerning when the company was named in the infamous Panama papers. They allege SNC-Lavalin paid secret commissions to offshore companies. Was the Sask Party even aware of this at all?

And just this week media found out that the carbon capture project had more than 6,800 work orders on it since just May 2013 and now we're told that there were thousands more with SNC-Lavalin, but the government won't come clean on the number. Mr. Speaker, when can Saskatchewan people expect a full accounting of these ongoing costs — including those with SNC — and how they contribute to the massive overrun that this project is clearly driving up the cost of power for everyone in Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Mr. Boyd:** — Mr. Speaker, this project has been very positive for the people of Saskatchewan. In 2015 about \$2 million were made from the sale of CO<sub>2</sub>. This year it's expected to be about \$16 million of sales, from the sale of CO<sub>2</sub> to Cenovus, Mr. Speaker. And people from around the world think this is a very good project, including the Environment minister from the federal government, Mr. Speaker, who visited just recently and identified the magnitude of the opportunity in the world — just in China alone at \$50 trillion, Mr. Speaker. I think that's very important to note as well.

But, Mr. Speaker, I will add one more comment, that any time that SaskPower or any other government agency feels that they haven't been dealt with properly by a provider here in Saskatchewan, indeed we will take action with respect to that, Mr. Speaker. We will not back off in any way, shape, or form with respect to that, Mr. Speaker. And that's why we are in court action with respect to this project.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party should at the very least come clean about the billions that they've blown and the problems that they've hidden from Saskatchewan people. The minister touts \$2 billion in a deal, a bad deal with Cenovus, Mr. Speaker, on a \$1.5 billion project? That's ludicrous, Mr. Speaker. And he refuses to give a straight answer about that deal with Cenovus. You know, the one that had to be renegotiated, the one the minister had been briefed on that put taxpayers, ratepayers on the hook for a \$90 million penalty. And even through renegotiation it's clear that Cenovus saw a real benefit, at least a \$100 million advantage to getting out of that commitment to take our carbon.

Cenovus is certainly standing up for their shareholders, but it's clear that the Sask Party isn't standing up for Saskatchewan people. Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party's excuse for going with Cenovus in the first place was that they were going to take all of the carbon. So now they've got to find another buyer. The government says, and SaskPower says that could take up to two years. That means losing 8 to \$9 million a year. So, Mr. Speaker, what's the plan to find new buyers? And what guarantee do we have that this time they'll put the interests of Saskatchewan people first?

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

**Hon. Mr. Boyd:** — Mr. Speaker, when the original RFP [request for proposal] went out for interest in terms of the sale of CO<sub>2</sub>, there was a huge amount of interest from a number of different companies with respect to that sale of CO<sub>2</sub>, Mr. Speaker. Cenovus was eventually selected because they did the most on the CO<sub>2</sub>. Indeed there are a number of companies SaskPower is talking to right now with respect to that, as offtakers, if there is a need for additional CO<sub>2</sub> to be sold outside of the contract with Cenovus, Mr. Speaker.

This is a project that is certainly beneficial to the people of Saskatchewan. The NDP at one time were onside, then they're offside, then they're back onside. We're never sure where they are, Mr. Speaker. I suspect it's because the member from Nutana is a signator to the Leap Manifesto and of course they don't want anything to do with that, Mr. Speaker.

But you know, you would think there had never been a . . . You'd think there hadn't been a recent election here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, given the fact that in the Estevan area the NDP got less than 10 per cent of the vote of the people of Saskatchewan, and they haven't accepted it yet.

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

### Funding for Education

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Yes. You know, it's a good thing that scandal-plagued minister doesn't let the facts stand in the way, Mr. Speaker. You know, behind closed doors they signed a sweetheart deal with Cenovus, but now they're turning their back on our kids' teachers.

It's bad enough that on front after front, people are learning they can't trust this government's word. But now it's obvious that you can't even trust their signature, Mr. Speaker. Not honouring the contract they signed, shorting school divisions

and classrooms, making students pay for the Sask Party's mismanagement is an absolute disgrace. This can't stand and it has to be reversed. Though the Education minister admits that he isn't holding up his end of the bargain on the teachers' salary agreement, he's washing his hands of the consequences.

[14:15]

So I'll ask the Deputy Premier: how can he possibly defend not honouring this contract, making students and our kids pay the price? Will he stand up here today, honour the deal, and commit to supporting students and classrooms that are strained all across Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I want to clarify some facts for the members opposite and for the teachers of our province. The teachers' collective bargaining agreement will be fully honoured, and teachers will be paid the amount that was negotiated. I want to make that abundantly clear. The teachers in our province worked hard. They deserve to get paid, and this government will never see that they don't get paid.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, a few years ago there was one of the divisions that was paying their teachers slow. As soon as we learned about it, within hours we provided some additional funding to make sure that that never happened again.

This is a difficult budget year for our province, Mr. Speaker, and we're going to ask the school divisions to absorb an amount that is less than half of one per cent of the entire education budget. Mr. Speaker, the operating grants provided to school divisions is unrestricted. They can move things between budget lines and we expect them to work with us and find some savings and find some economies.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, the minister tried that line yesterday. But let me give him some facts. Regina Public will not be filling vacancies. That means fewer teachers and more students in each classroom. Prairie South is cutting school assistants including two social workers and a helpline position. Sask Rivers has cut 1,100 hours. Saskatoon Public is looking at ending involvement in the provincial education sector strategic plan.

Mr. Speaker, this is the cost of this government's bad faith negotiations. There is a reason that the government is part of these salary negotiations: they have the money. School boards can't expand their funding envelope. They can't increase production and make more money. If the Sask Party had no intention of being true to their word, why were they even at the table?

What message does this send to other government employees who will negotiate with the Sask Party? That deals don't matter? And if the government can negotiate in bad faith, how will they enforce labour laws with private companies to make sure that they act any differently?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, during tough times, governments of all stripes need to make difficult choices. In 1992, during difficult economic times, the then-NDP government gave the teachers a salary increase of zero, nothing. In 1993, again during difficult economic times, the NDP gave the teachers yet again another zero, nada, nothing. In 1995, again during difficult times for the province, the NDP gave the teachers a zero, and an overall education increase of negative point nine per cent, an actual decrease in 1995.

Mr. Speaker, in 2015, during that challenging . . . [inaudible] . . . this government gave teachers a 1.9 per cent salary increase and an overall education budget increase of, Mr. Speaker, 12 per cent. In 2016, also challenging economic times, this government again gave the teachers a 1.9 per cent salary increase and an 8 per cent, almost 8 per cent increase to the total budget. Mr. Speaker, we will never apologize for asking the divisions for look for economies and to make sacrifices and to work hard to make sure the money stays in the classroom where it belongs, as opposed to the members opposite that closed 176 schools.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — What is it with this government that they can't accept responsibility, Mr. Speaker? They walk away from their signature on contracts for our teachers, and now they're shoving even more risk and costs onto the backs of already struggling municipalities and Saskatchewan families. Like school boards being faced to pay for a deal that the government agreed to, under this government's new scheme, cities are being forced to take responsibility for maintaining the sites until new schools are built. Saskatoon came close to being stuck with a big bill for this already, and now the mayor of Regina is concerned that this practice is yet another example of the Sask Party downloading their responsibilities onto the city. He said, "This leaves a distinct taste of downloading. I'm not happy with that."

Mr. Speaker, school sites were and should be the responsibility of the provincial government. So will the government end this practice or will they once again ignore legitimate concerns and plow ahead?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, we've had in our province legislation that was passed under the NDP government that provided that 10 per cent of new subdivisions is held in municipal reserve for parks and schools — land that is provided by the developers for the benefit of the community so they can have schools, so that they can have park areas. And, Mr. Speaker, that's what we've done with these areas.

The mayor of Regina asked us for money for that instead, so what did we do? We said, okay, how much do you want? He asked for \$1 million per lot. We gave him \$1 million per lot. Then he said, we'd also like to have \$1 million to service each one. So in each and every one of the Regina properties, he received over \$2 million. And that was the same practice that took place with all nine of the joint-use schools. The other cities

are pleased that they're getting a school and I'm sure the citizens of Regina will be as well.

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

### Proposed Potash Project

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, many residents, land owners, and producers from Southey and surrounding area have joined us here today. They have concerns about the proposed Yancoal potash solution mine.

Mr. Speaker, this is a large project and these people want to make sure the right checks and balances are in place, that their concern about the land acquisition process be taken seriously, that their concerns about pitting neighbour against neighbour be dealt with, and that the Sask Party stands up for local citizens to ensure that projects and jobs are secure. Given the Minister of Economy's history of boondoggles and scandals, you'll forgive these folks for wanting assurances.

So what can the minister tell those here today to ensure them that he will listen to the concerns they have brought forward? And will he commit today to ensure full and complete consultations — consultations that recognize the size of this proposal — are undertaken before they approve this project?

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

**Hon. Mr. Boyd:** — Mr. Speaker, I would join with the member opposite in welcoming the guests from the Southey area of the province of Saskatchewan, and I would want them to know that the Government of Saskatchewan has a strict regulatory regime, but it supports the responsible development of Saskatchewan's resources.

Officials from the Ministry of the Environment, SaskWater, and the Ministry of the Economy have accommodated meetings with the public to answer questions and concerns on Yancoal's potash project. It's also our understanding that Yancoal has accommodated open house and consultation.

There is much more in this process of Yancoal moving forward with their operations, if they have operations in the future. The environmental assessment is just one step in that process, Mr. Speaker.

So we would welcome the opportunity at any time to have a discussion further about it with representatives of the group here today if that's what they would wish.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, of course we want concerned residents to get a fair hearing. And the Sask Party and the scandal-plagued minister may have forgotten, but we're here to represent Saskatchewan people. And like many of them, we want any new development to be done right and include protection for the water we drink, the air we breathe, and the land we use to grow food.

But, Mr. Speaker, we're also concerned about Saskatchewan's potash industry. China is one of our largest customers. The introduction of this state-run mine could have huge impacts on our industry and thousands of jobs. And from the bypass scandals to the failing carbon capture project, the P3s [public-private partnership] for everything from hospitals to schools and bridges that will indebt communities for decades, Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party has shown no ability to plan long or even medium term.

So what is the Sask Party's plan to make sure they are not allowing China to have undue control over the price of potash, and eliminating China as one of the biggest customers for Saskatchewan's current potash mines?

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

**Hon. Mr. Boyd:** — Mr. Speaker, successive governments in Saskatchewan, including the NDP over the years, welcomed international investment into our province. We have the French people that are involved in the mining industry in uranium in this province, Mr. Speaker. We have, most recently, west German folks that are involved in the potash industry out at Bethune. We have BHP from Australia in Saskatchewan as well, at Jansen, Mr. Speaker. We have been involved as a government, as governments over the years, in many, many different resource developments here in the province of Saskatchewan.

In fact, if the truth is known, Mr. Speaker, the NDP liked the potash industry so much, they nationalized it back in the '70s, Mr. Speaker. So for them to suggest somehow or another that they aren't in favour of the development of potash resources here in the province of Saskatchewan is just false, Mr. Speaker.

To get to the important point in her question, if ever there is a development with respect to this one that is being talked about, Yancoal, Mr. Speaker, the province of Saskatchewan, the Government of Saskatchewan, would never allow potash to be sold lower than the international world price to anyone, including the Chinese.

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

### Closure of Correctional Facility

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Buffalo Narrows correctional centre has shown the importance of having northerners serve their sentence in the North where they can be close to the land, close to their families, and close to their elders. It's a minimum security facility so the inmates that are serving their time can also serve the community, as the community serves them. But the Saskatchewan Party just doesn't get that. The people of Buffalo Narrows and area are still very upset as they see the Sask Party is ignoring the North once again.

Some of the workers that the Sask Party kicked out of their jobs are here today. Can the minister explain to them why the Buffalo Narrows correctional centre was singled out and targeted, and why these good people can no longer work in and serve their community?

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

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said earlier when asked the question later . . . or earlier on last week, these were not and are not easy decisions.

I want to thank all of the staff and the ones that are here today for the great work they have done.

These decisions are not easy because we have people working in these institutions. As of today, Mr. Speaker, there are two offenders left in the Buffalo Narrows facility. Closing this facility, Mr. Speaker, was about how to achieve the best results in our service delivery and the most efficient use of our existing correctional facilities. This was not an easy decision. My colleagues on this side have had to make difficult decisions also.

This funding for Buffalo Narrows, I mean all of the funding was up against the living unit at the Prince Albert Correctional Centre, was up against the 96-bed correctional mental health facility in Saskatchewan, in North Battleford, Mr. Speaker.

These are tough decisions, Mr. Speaker. But we are paid and elected to make tough decisions, not just when they're easy. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Mr. Speaker, with the Sask Party, it's nothing but scandal after scandal. And all these scandals cost a lot of money. But instead of taking responsibility for their mismanagement and waste, they have targeted the North, Mr. Speaker.

And let's take a history of that waste: \$47 million on the smart meter mess; \$43 million to demolish and rebuild a brand new overpass; \$41 million to one American consultant on lean; \$1.5 billion on a carbon capture project full of setbacks, delays, and repairs; and of course, Mr. Speaker, your bypass scandal that ballooned from \$400 million to over \$2 billion, Mr. Speaker.

Why didn't the Sask Party take responsibility and cut the billions of billions of dollars that they wasted? Why, Mr. Speaker, did they choose to ignore all that wasted money and try and balance the budget on the backs of Buffalo Narrows correctional centre and their workers, Mr. Speaker? Why did they target the North, gut this northern community, overcrowd other facilities, and put good people out of work and eliminate effective correctional programs, all to save a million dollars a year? Why?

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

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — Mr. Speaker, we again reject the premise of the member's question. The comments he made in his preamble were absolutely ridiculous. Over \$109 million has been invested since 2007 on targeted policing initiatives and programs which include, Mr. Speaker, the North. This government has added over 380 bed spaces and invested over \$60 million in our correctional facilities throughout the province.

This side of government has created over 200 well-paying jobs in Prince Albert and area due to our recent expansions. We expanded our facilities by also focusing on demand reduction, and that's one thing that the member did not mention, of course: police and crisis teams, Hub and COR [centre of responsibility], Whitespruce training facility, and of course the serious violent offender response, Mr. Speaker. We have spent, invested a lot of money within the province of Saskatchewan. We have invested money in the North for the betterment of all people. Thank you.

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

[14:30]

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm trying to understand what about this they don't understand. Today the Children's Advocate reported that correctional facilities need to do a better job when it comes to dealing with complex cases and unique needs.

The Buffalo Narrows correctional facility is not a youth facility but does check all of those boxes, and that's important because the same logic applies. It is a community-based, minimum-security facility. There is a local understanding about how to work with the inmates and how to get them to work too. Culture is part of the rehabilitation, and local context assists in providing relevant services. But the Sask Party keeps making the same tragic mistake of closing the smaller centres and adding more inmates to bigger centres where unfortunately people are falling through the cracks.

Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party cut a lot of Justice and Corrections programs in this budget, programs that are supposed to keep our streets and communities strong and safe. Mr. Speaker, with all of the evidence calling for investment, why is the minister closing facilities like the one in Buffalo Narrows?

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

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said earlier, this decision, these decisions that we end up having to make are very, very difficult and they are not easy. And all of the staff, please . . . It is never about the quality of the staff within our facilities.

The member opposite fails to recognize the Whitespruce facility in Yorkton. This was a young offender facility that was converted into a low-risk offender and what it's supposed to do, what it is going to do, and what it will produce are skills training for offenders. Mr. Speaker, while culturally sensitive programming is important, it's not just about that. It is about making sure that they have jobs, that when they are released into the community — and they will be, Mr. Speaker — that at least they have the jobs that are needed to provide for their families, Mr. Speaker.

We have done a number of initiatives over the time. I'm going to draw the attention of the member about the healthy families, Mr. Speaker. We are focused on reducing demand into our system because I do know on this side of the House that if we

continue to do things the same way, we'll end up with the same result that we have today, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### Bill No. 37 — *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2016*

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

**Hon. Mr. McMorris:** — Mr. Speaker, I move Bill No. 37, *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2016* be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Deputy Premier that Bill No. 37, *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2016* be 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:** — [Inaudible] . . . Deputy Premier. When shall this bill be read a second time?

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

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting of the House.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### SECOND READINGS

### 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 am pleased to rise today and move second reading of the automobile accident insurance amendment Act, 2016. Mr. Speaker, these amendments will impact all of Saskatchewan auto injury programs, be it no-fault, tort, or reduced no-fault. In total there are more than 30 changes. I'll touch on a few of them now, Mr. Speaker.

When an impaired driver causes a collision and is killed, the family impacted will now be able to sue the estate of the deceased impaired driver for pain and suffering or bereavement damages. The list of offences that trigger the ability for an innocent party to sue has also been expanded to cover criminal negligence causing death or bodily harm, criminal negligence causing bodily injury, flight from a peace officer, and dangerous operation while street racing.

Mr. Speaker, in addition there are many changes that improve coverage for those needing specialized cars and recreation

equipment, rehabilitation benefits, and counselling for immediate family members. Mr. Speaker these are very positive changes and they'll help improve the quality of life for people who have been seriously injured in a collision. Mr. Speaker, we have decided as a government to defer — and I say defer — two of the more financially significant injury programs: changes to the living expenses, and the CPP [Canada Pension Plan] benefit. Mr. Speaker, I want to emphasize that these changes remain a priority for our government and will be implemented when it is financially prudent to do so.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I want to thank the many interested parties who influenced these changes through the consultations in 2014 and '15. With that, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of the automobile accident insurance amendment Act, 2016.

**The Speaker:** — The Deputy Premier has moved Bill No. 32, *The Automobile Accident Insurance (Benefits) Amendment Act, 2016*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion? I recognize the member from Batoche. Or sorry, Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Give us a couple of more years and you'll be able to say that and look in this side of the House in terms of the member from Batoche.

But, Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that as the member of the opposition, I want to be able to give some very brief comments about *The Automobile Accident Insurance Act* that is being presented today by the minister as it relates to the Bill No. 32. I think the amount of pages that are in the actual bill itself, Mr. Speaker, run to about 181 pages of some of the changes that are going to occur under this particular bill. And that's why it's important that as the opposition or the official opposition, that we take the time to scrutinize these bills as some of the changes that are being identified in the actual bill itself are fairly comprehensive.

There's a number of the sections of the Act that are being changed as to certainly address the issue that the minister alluded to as it relates to death caused by accidents that are, that can be prevented as a result of somebody's, as the example being used, the drinking and driving issue.

So I think it's really important, as the official opposition, that we make sure that we look at all the wording that is being presented in this particular bill. We obviously want to seek out some of the families that have been impacted by this bill and see certainly some of the changes that they would support. And we also want to be able to talk to the legal community, people that have a lot of knowledge and background in terms of how to deal with the tragic event of a death, and in the case of SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] getting involved with that particular aspect of dealing with the pain and suffering as a result of that accident.

So, Mr. Speaker, a lot of the legal community needs to be contacted. And some of the people that are involved in this particular discipline when it comes to practising law, they certainly have a lot of perspectives and a lot of advice for a number of people that they might work with, but also for the official opposition and the government.

So as we look at some of the changes, it's 181 pages of some

change. And while the focus is on the issue around accidental death, Mr. Speaker, as a result of negligence, we still want to be able to ascertain as to what the changes are as it relates to the effectiveness of supports to families, whether there is an effective settlement for some of the families that may lose a loved one as a result of the accident. These are all the different angles that are really, really important in this particular bill that we have to investigate.

So one of the things that's really important as we sit here in the Legislative Building is to give the legislators, the lawmakers if you will, give them the opportunity to study the bill, not only from the government perspective, but more so from the official opposition and more so from the neutral parties, if you will, in terms of the lawyers that might be looking at this particular Act and some of the families that have been impacted by some of the issues that this Act brings forward.

So I think it's really important, Mr. Speaker, that as the official opposition we have the bill. We are going to read very carefully through the bill. And as I mentioned in my preamble on a number of other bills that were presented in the past few days, we have some very capable legal people within our official opposition caucus that can look through these bills and certainly decipher some of the terminology that we often are accustomed to as lay people when it comes to the application of law. And I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that we always look forward to the very sound advice and sage advice of those that have taken training in law, so that they're able to assist us in this regard.

So again to all the families out there that are impacted by this law, as the official opposition we want to do what is right for you. We want to make sure that we seek your advice, and that's part of the process of understanding this bill. To the lawyers that might be specializing in automobile accidents, Mr. Speaker, they also need to be able to look at the bill and see what changes are being heralded, what changes are being proposed. And if they can add or take away some of the more aggravating aspects of the bill, if there are any, Mr. Speaker, then we need to make sure that they are given the opportunity to do that. And of course, Mr. Speaker, as the official opposition, we would like to invite those organizations and individuals and law firms that might be able to give us some very good advice on where the strength of this particular bill is and where the weaknesses are.

Mr. Speaker, it's always about, it's always about oversight and to ensure that what is being proposed by the minister is, that this is exactly what the groups and organizations would like to see happening in the Act, and that there is no disregard for some of the opinions that other people have shared with them. This is really, really important and this is our job and our role as the official opposition.

So we will certainly undertake a comprehensive review of the bill itself. We will also network with some of our own people that certainly have a lot of background in this. And more importantly, Mr. Speaker, we want to talk to the families that may be impacted by this to ensure that this bill meets the criteria that they have been expressing from time to time to the government or to any other organization in terms of the concerns that they might have as it relates to the bill itself.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have a bit of work to do on this bill. Like I

said, it's 181 pages. We want to understand it very well, and we'll undertake the research of this bill almost immediately. And following that, my other more learned colleagues within the caucus, the opposition caucus, will certainly have a lot more to say from the legal perspective as to what this bill means to the people of Saskatchewan. So on that note, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 32, *The Automobile Accident Insurance (Benefits) Amendment Act, 2016*. I so move.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 32, the automotive accident insurance benefit Act, 2016. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to agree with the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

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

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 33, *The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 2016* now be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, the renewal of our province's child welfare legislation is a key priority for the Ministry of Social Services and its child welfare transformation strategy. *The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 2016* includes proposed amendments to existing provisions regarding the Indian child welfare agreements, disclosure of information, and several minor amendments to update language and titles of legislation and conform to current legislative drafting standards.

The first major change is to the Indian child welfare agreements and is reflected in revisions to section 61 and a new section 62.1. Section 61 allows the minister to enter into agreements with the First Nations Child and Family Services agencies for the purpose of administering services under the Act on behalf of the minister. In the subsection 61(1), the word "Indian" is replaced with "Aboriginal." The *Constitution Act, 1982* describes Aboriginal as Inuit, Métis, and First Nations. Using the term Aboriginal rather than First Nations or Indian provides the minister with flexibility to enter into agreements with any agency to provide child welfare services to Aboriginal communities in the province as was the original intent of section 61.

A new provision, section 62.1, is included which enables a termination-with-notice right of the minister for Aboriginal welfare agreements where in the opinion of the minister it is in the public interest to do so or where existing agreements do not include a fixed contractual termination period, and includes criteria by which Aboriginal child welfare agreements will be developed, reviewed, and terminated. When the minister's authority under the Act is delegated to any agency, it is imperative that the entity be accountable to provide services in compliance with the Act.

[14:45]

The overall purpose of the new provision is to bring consistency to terms of the delegation agreements to ensure that children and families are provided equivalent supports and services regardless of where they reside in the province, on or off reserve. The new provision will also give the minister the power, where it is in the public interest to do so, to terminate and end an agency's delegation agreement by providing 90 days written notice of intent to do so. This is standard contractual language.

Mr. Speaker, the second major proposed change are to the legislative provisions which support disclosure of information. In 1989, provisions regarding disclosure of information were proclaimed in *The Child and Family Services Act*, CFSA, and in 1992 in *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, FOIP. The amendments to provisions governing information sharing, including regulation making, are being advanced now due to the need to align the Act with similar amendments being proposed for other provincial information-sharing legislation. Current legislation limits the disclosure of information to circumstances where disclosure is required in order to carry out the intent of the Act to promote the well-being of children in need of protection.

Subsection 74(1)(b) is amended to by adding enabling authority to describe criteria regarding disclosure of information in regulation.

The regulations will provide clarity regarding disclosure and allow ministry staff to participate in common and in integrated service tables where goals are to improve the coordination of services for children and their families.

The circumstances under which disclosure is permitted will be set out in regulation pursuant to new provision 80(r.5) and are intended to enhance clarity regarding disclosure of information collected pursuant to the Act; enhance integrated case planning and service coordination, example for the Hub and the healthy families initiative; to strengthen the ministry communication and relationships with families, stakeholders, service providers, and community; to encourage overall efficiency; and to improve services to children and youth and their families.

The new provision 74(5.01) will permit the disclosure of confidential family information if necessary without consent or if there is no active Social Services involvement with the family, to enhance the ministry's ability to contribute in an effective, efficient, and meaningful way in integrated case planning and service coordination.

As mentioned earlier, the remaining changes include the replacement throughout the Act of "department" with "ministry" and the children's low Act with the children's low Act, 1997.

The proposed amendments outlined today are a demonstration of government's commitment to improve the lives of vulnerable families, children, and youth who receive child welfare services in the province. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Social Services has moved second reading of Bill No. 33, *The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 2016*. 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 once again get up and respond to Bill No. 33, *The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 2016*. And, Mr. Speaker, as the minister alluded to, she described various parts of the bill that they want to work towards and certainly the consultation that is necessary to incorporate some of the players when we . . . Shouldn't say players; it's a very bad word to use. But some of the partners, I guess, Mr. Speaker, some of the partners in caring for our children and being there to support the families that are struggling.

With a wide variety of issues, Mr. Speaker, a lot of these partners, Mr. Speaker, offer a great service to the people of Saskatchewan and to the government. I can certainly attest that there are organizations out there that have through the years provided a great degree of good, solid advice but more so, Mr. Speaker, good, solid support in critical times as the minister has a great amount of responsibility in terms of strengthening families and supporting children.

One of those partners, Mr. Speaker, of course is the First Nations communities. There are some Métis agreements throughout the province, Mr. Speaker, but not to the extent that we have with the Indian Child and Family Services partner that the First Nations certainly have provided in terms of support and input over the years to the Ministry of Social Services.

So, Mr. Speaker, as you look at the bill itself, it creates a framework through which the ministry can terminate an agreement with the First Nations Child and Family Services agency or other prescribed agencies, Mr. Speaker. We have to be very careful as we look at some of these agreements. The Indian Child and Family Services agreements are very, very valuable in a sense that we have First Nations language, First Nations culture, First Nations involvement, their valued input as to what decisions are made around many First Nations children that are in need of care, either foster care or certainly the better alternative, and that's the adoption process, Mr. Speaker.

As you look at the continuing challenge of providing good service to the many children and youth that may need intervention and supports, as a province I think we should really pay very close attention to that challenge and what role we can play to complement what the child and family services agreements or the partner communities are also doing to help the situation better.

Mr. Speaker, the other part of the bill that I want to pay a bit of attention to is the . . . It allows the Social Services ministry to disclose certain information under certain circumstances under the rules set out in the regulations. Now this is certainly something that's really, really touchy, Mr. Speaker, in a sense that there's a lot of confidential information. As one could certainly surmise and certainly, you know, with a great degree of certainty, could probably hypothetically understand there's a lot of very special situations and circumstances and some very troubling evidence or some very compelling testimony of children that, as members of the Assembly and certainly the minister would know this well, that many ministerial staff are subjected to. And she may be, from time to time also you know, come into contact with certain information or certain case

studies in which there are some troubling and some very challenging issues that need to be dealt with.

And this is the whole question behind that particular section of the bill, Mr. Speaker. Those regulations in terms of how she shares the information publicly, they aren't released yet. Again I go back to the whole premise that, as you're dealing with these confidential family matters, some very compelling, confidential family matters, that you know there certainly you have to have the aspect of confidentiality. I think it's the cornerstone of our professional service, not only as the government, but certainly the people that are working within the government. That is a key, crucial component of what we would expect of all civil servants and departments within our governments.

So I think it's important that we don't compromise that in any way because there's obviously some very, very, as I mentioned, some very touching and traumatic issues that will come up from time to time to the attention of the ministry officials. And how we deal with that — whether it's in the best interests of the ministry, the best interests of the public, the best interests of the family, the best interests of the child — these are all things that have to be weighed. And obviously we've been hearing on a regular basis that the best interests of the child, and rightfully so, should trump any of the previous partners that, you know, that I made reference to.

So I think it's important that we look at the changes that are being proposed in the Act. The wording changes, while it may be innocuous in the sense of changing certain words from department to ministry, for example *The Children's Law Act* to *The Children's Law Act, 1997*, or the word "Indian" to the word "Aboriginal," these are some of the things I think are housekeeping issues. And obviously we would want to update our Acts and certainly bring them into modern language, if you will, on a continual basis, and more applicable language as in the case that I identified a few seconds earlier.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that again we look through the bill, we seek the advice . . . One of the issues that was raised in this particular bill relates around the Indian Child and Family Services agreements with many First Nations child and family services agencies. There is language in there to terminate some of these agreements. We need to know what that means, what exactly is required by the department where you're able to, with authority, terminate certain agreements. We want to find out the basis and rationale and logic behind making that change, changes to this particular bill.

So on that note, Mr. Speaker, like many of the bills before me, we are going to take the time to have other of my colleagues come along and certainly read what is being proposed in the bill, take their own position, and seek advice from many of the people that they network, and bring forward some of those concerns to the Assembly as those concerns come forward. So on that note, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 33, *The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 2016*. I so move.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 33, *The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 2016*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to



adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

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

**Hon. Mr. Stewart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the end of my remarks I will move second reading of *The Provincial Lands Act*.

I am pleased to speak today about amendments to *The Provincial Lands Act*. Saskatchewan's vast land base is critical to our economy. Our province spans 161 million acres. More than 100 million of those acres are Crown land either located in agriculturally productive areas or in forest- and resource-rich parts of Saskatchewan. It's our responsibility through the ministries of Agriculture and Environment to take care of this land with proper legislation. With changes to the PLA [*The Provincial Lands Act*], we will ensure Crown land is protected and productive for generations to come.

In 1930 Canada transferred the responsibility for Crown lands, mines, and minerals to the province but, Mr. Speaker, as you know, a lot has changed since then and parts of this legislation have been living in the past. The entire PLA is largely unchanged from 1978, with clauses and language dating back to the 1930s. Portions of it are no longer used and some are inconsistent with other pieces of legislation. As the legislator, government is held to a higher standard by the courts. The new Act ensures we reduce any potential risk by clarifying language and standards.

Across government we are committed to modernizing legislation for the people of Saskatchewan. That is good government. We need the PLA to reflect today's uses of Crown land. We need it to be efficient and accountable to protect the land for generations to come. Revising the PLA will allow our province to benefit from an improved investment climate. The legislation will have the potential to increase investment and economic development in Saskatchewan. Where appropriate, longer term leases would be allowed on Crown land. This would ensure potential investors — whether in oil and gas, potash, or wind farms — have the opportunity to create long-term projects.

Modern development on Crown land is important. We want Saskatchewan to be an appealing place for investment. When a new use such as wind turbines is identified, the Act was silent on how that development could occur. That creates difficulties for industries to reach agreements on projects and puts opportunities for development at risk. We want to ensure this land is available for long-term investments. We want to make sure that Saskatchewan does not miss out on any opportunities.

We recognize some projects require longer term tenure of land to secure financing or to justify the economic investment required. By offering longer leases and potentially increased access to Crown land, businesses will be more willing to make investments in Saskatchewan and, Mr. Speaker, as you know,

investments in our province have an amazing ripple effect. When Saskatchewan is an attractive place to do business, our people benefit. Revisions to the PLA would also allow government to manage Crown land in a way that is more responsive to the people using Crown land. For example, this would let us adjust rates and lease terms to create different categories of leaseholders such as grazing, cultivation, or wind farms.

The PLA would also provide clarification around the use of Crown land leases as collateral when our lessees try to secure financing. Updates to the PLA would allow the value of the lease to be used as security. That would give farmers and ranchers more opportunities to access funding to expand their operations. It would also provide financial institutions with assurance that they will be notified if the lease is in jeopardy. With the updated Act, it may become an option to use Crown land leases as security when applying for financing, something that the Ministry of Agriculture has not done in the past. This would encourage growth in the agriculture industry and lead to economic benefits for both agriculture and the province as a whole.

[15:00]

Mr. Speaker, we also recognize the importance of Saskatchewan's land base for our future and need to protect it. Changes to *The Provincial Lands Act* would give the government the ability to respond and take action when land is being misused. If there is an issue jeopardizing the land, such as illegal drainage for example, the government could step in immediately and issue a stop work order. Without these changes to the Act, action would be delayed as only a court order or cancellation of a lease is available as remedies. Both of those options take time and could create a situation where the land is misused for weeks or months before action is taken. Amendments to the Act would let the government immediately step in to ensure the land is respected and protected for the future.

While the government is focused on protecting the land, we also recognize its importance to the many people of Saskatchewan and, in particular, our First Nations and Métis communities. Revisions to the Act will not impact those communities and their ability to exercise treaty or Aboriginal rights or carry out traditional uses. The duty to consult was triggered in relation to these proposed amendments, and the province met its legal duty to consult and accommodate. The Treaty Land Entitlement Agreement remains unchanged. Amendments to the Act will not affect that agreement or have any effect on its process. The government will continue to meet obligations and commitments under the Treaty Land Entitlement Agreement.

A revised PLA would create more opportunities for the industrial and recreational use of Crown land. There will be the option to create special management zones of land. This allows for specific policies to be put in place for certain lands while still allowing portions to be open for public use and development. Vacant Crown land could be categorized to allow for different uses on the same piece of land. For example, the public and local communities could benefit from the ability to use a portion of non-occupied Crown land for activities like camping, snowmobile rallies, or quadding, while the rest of the

parcel of Crown land could remain under restrictions for such things as caribou management, for example.

Without the creation of these special management zones, decisions are made by creating land use plans that apply to large parcels of land. Land use plans can be time consuming and restricting. We also recognize the diversity of Saskatchewan's Crown land base. No portion of Crown land is completely the same. It's inefficient to treat land like it is. These special management zones would allow us to be specific and accurate. They would ensure the best possible direction for diverse parcels of land.

Changes to the PLA would also remove some of the administration burden for small land transfers between ministries. These small parcels of land could include decommissioned roadside campgrounds or rest sites, for example. The owner of that quarter section of land adjacent may be interested in purchasing the small parcel, but before that can happen the land must be transferred to the Ministry of Agriculture and the ministry can then sell to the owner directly. Without these amendments, an order in council is required to transfer land between the ministries of Environment and Agriculture. The PLA would now have a clause allowing transfers of up to 1 section of land or 640 acres or less between ministries without an order in council. That is a more efficient process and would reduce red tape and government process. The PLA would also provide a modern avenue to transfer forested lands with no agricultural potential to the Ministry of Environment.

Before we proposed these revisions, we completed an extensive consultation process. It started in 2013. Throughout the process, we have met with and engaged with key stakeholders, including the public, lessees, and First Nations and Métis groups. During these in-depth consultations, we had a lot of feedback. Many of our stakeholders told us they were concerned about environmental issues like the care and conservation of land. They needed clarity on who to contact for administration of Crown land, and they wanted to eliminate red tape and confusing language in the Act.

We took everything we heard seriously when working on the amendments. Then this spring we returned to those who previously had provided feedback, and again connected with lessees, stakeholders, and First Nations and Métis groups. All the information we heard was taken into consideration when updating the legislation.

The revisions to the PLA will bring this document into the present day. We know the people of Saskatchewan want up-to-date legislation that keeps our land protected and productive now and into the future. So that is what we present here today, Mr. Speaker.

Both the ministries of Agriculture and Environment support modernizing the PLA. We do not want outdated language open to misinterpretation. We do not want legislation that is silent on key issues. We want legislation that is accurate and modern. With these changes, the PLA will better represent how the Government of Saskatchewan does business.

Mr. Speaker, I propose that amendments to this Act be passed.

Updating *The Provincial Lands Act* would result in economic benefits for the province, public benefits for Saskatchewan people, and a more efficient government process. The alternative would leave the province with outdated legislation that is not forward looking and does not reflect the current and future needs of Crown land management. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move that *The Provincial Lands Act* be read a second time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Agriculture has moved second reading of *The Provincial Lands Act, 2016*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We are going to be paying a very, very . . .

**The Speaker:** — Why is the member on his feet?

**Hon. Mr. Cox:** — Mr. Speaker, request leave for introduction, please.

**The Speaker:** — Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Mr. Cox:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to introduce in your gallery a very courageous and dynamic young man, a good friend of mine, Curtis Weber. Give us a wave, Curt. Curtis joins us after giving the keynote speech today at the Farm Progress Show where he shared his story of triumph over tragedy and spoke about importance of workplace safety.

Mr. Speaker, when Curtis was 17 years old, he survived an electrical surge of 14 400 volts three times. It had been his third day on a job with a crew building steel grain bins when the accident occurred. Curtis had been holding two support beams of a hopper when the crane attached to the hopper hit a power line. Curtis had been given a zero per cent chance of survival. After months and months of medical procedures and years of recovery, Curtis overcame the accident and persevered and rebuilt his life.

Today Curtis is a motivational speaker. Since the accident, Curtis has devoted his life to raising awareness about workplace safety. He has travelled all across North America to share his story of triumph over tragedy. And Curtis lives now with his wife, Lori, and I understand three kids now — Curtis, recently? Congratulations on that — in the Battleford area.

Mr. Speaker, in spite of all of that, to me Curtis is still most famous as being one of my stars on my novice hockey team — many, many years ago, Curt. So, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming Curtis to his Legislative Assembly and thanking him for his continued devotion to workplace safety.

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

## SECOND READINGS

### Bill No. 34 — *The Provincial Lands Act, 2016* (continued)

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And again I apologize to the member from The Battlefords, as he did ask to get up and introduce a guest, and I just simply forgot. But I'd also point out, Mr. Speaker, that we too, on behalf of the official opposition, welcome Curtis. It's all about triumph of the human spirit and to say that your words are very much necessary in this modern day and age. So we would encourage you to continue your fine work and Godspeed on your attitudes and your support for many people that would face challenging times if the awareness was not there. So please continue your great work.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would point out that Bill No. 34, *The Provincial Lands Act*, there's a lot of organizations that are going to be paying very close attention to this particular Act, Mr. Speaker, as I know that the bill represents an overhaul of *The Provincial Lands Act*. And there are many organizations at one time, Mr. Speaker, came to the government and gave them some, in no uncertain terms, some of the grief that they wanted to express to the current government on what they were trying to do to *The Provincial Lands Act*.

So, Mr. Speaker, the government did the consultations in 2013, and the changes were widely criticized. There was a lot of organizations that basically told the government, what do you think you're doing here? And the government backed down, Mr. Speaker. They backed down because it was convenient at the time, and there was an election on the horizon, Mr. Speaker. So over the period of a year, year and a half, they simply backed down, sat on their hands and hoping all the issues that were raised by the stakeholders as a result of their initial consultation would simply vanish and go away, Mr. Speaker. But they didn't. Those criticisms came, and they'll continue to come as to what the minister is trying to propose under this particular Act. And earlier this year, the government decided to restart this whole process and a consultation phase. And, Mr. Speaker, these consultation phases didn't last for three months. They didn't last for six months. They didn't last for a year, Mr. Speaker. The consultations were, quite frankly . . . The time frame for all the consultations on this, Mr. Speaker, was 21 days. Three weeks and that was it.

So I'm telling all the organizations out there as far as we can, is this bill is going to take a lot of the opposition's time in understanding what exactly the minister is trying to do when he uses the terminology, protected for generations to come. Protected from whom, Mr. Speaker? That's the biggest question that, you know, that we have. And then he talks about investors coming to our communities and looking at modern development of land, Mr. Speaker. Well what does that mean? Illegal drainage, well what does that mean, Mr. Speaker? We already know that there's a huge problem with illegal drainage throughout the entire province. And then he talks about special management zones. Well people want to know what is up with all this terminology and this particular bill.

And what kind of gets me, Mr. Speaker, is that I think it should be the Minister of the Environment doing this kind of particular bill, not the Minister of Agriculture. Again I go back to my earlier point that the Minister of Agriculture is primarily involved with agriculture, not land disposition, Mr. Speaker. But if you look at what's occurring across the way, the Minister of Agriculture is leading the Minister of the Environment — who should be looking after provincial lands — by the nose around this particular bill.

And I would say to the people of Saskatchewan, the wording and the terminology attached to this bill is worrisome. We need to make sure what the minister's intentions are around *The Provincial Lands Act*, Mr. Speaker. And it's not about updating, Mr. Speaker. We think there is a lot of worry right now as you look at what they're trying to do with this particular bill around land disposition and control of land.

And there are a lot of organizations. The FSIN [Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations] was quite angry about the time frame of three weeks. I know that the Métis people throughout the province were also very concerned about this three-week time frame. Industry as well, Mr. Speaker, they're also very concerned about the time frame. And, Mr. Speaker, the people that want to protect the land for generations to come, the environmental groups and organizations that take that responsibility very seriously, well they weren't even consulted by the minister, Mr. Speaker.

So here is it in a nutshell. Basically we have a government who is making provincial lands disposition decisions through the Minister of Agriculture. The consultation phase is 21 days for anybody that's concerned. They went through this process once. They got extreme grief. Now they're back at it after the last election, Mr. Speaker.

And now the people are asking, what's all in this bill? What concerns should we have? And this is the reason why we're going to pay very close attention to this particular bill, because quite frankly, from my perspective, we do not trust the Sask Party government to do land dispositions fairly, Mr. Speaker, because they have not offered consultation, they have not accepted criticism, and they have not engaged the proper stakeholders to the extent and level that they should be engaged, Mr. Speaker. And I say, shame on them for that.

And this is the reason why I think if there's any bill that we're going to pay very close attention to, it's going to be this bill, Bill 34, because quite frankly we don't think the minister knows exactly what's going on when it comes to a number of organizations that do have aspirations around land ownership and management, Mr. Speaker. And we don't think that the current minister has a clue of the different organizations and different people that have all this interest on how land is being managed. And he ought to take the time to consult. He ought to take the time to consult, Mr. Speaker, because quite frankly, in their first round of consultation, it was a miserable failure, Mr. Speaker. And now they're doing a time frame for three weeks.

That doesn't take away from the argument that their consultations didn't provide any consensus and didn't provide any direction for them to undertake. All they got was criticism and fairly so, Mr. Speaker, and now we have three more weeks

to complain about how they're doing the land disposition in the province of Saskatchewan. And I can tell you that a lot of organizations are paying attention to this lands Act.

[15:15]

The opposition is going to be paying attention to this lands Act, and we're going to make sure that every organization that is involved and concerned get a copy of this bill and give us the information that they're concerned about, because we think that there's an agenda over there, Mr. Speaker. And we're going to expose that agenda when the time comes. And we're going to tell the people of Saskatchewan exactly what is being proposed by that minister from that government on this particular bill.

And until that time, Mr. Speaker, when we're going to get all the information back to the Assembly, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 34, *The Provincial Lands Act, 2016*.

**The Deputy Chair of Committees:** — There's a movement to adjourn debate on *The Provincial Lands Act*, No. 34. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt that motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Chair of Committees:** — Carried.

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

**The Deputy Chair of Committees:** — I recognize the minister.

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of *The Small Claims Act, 2016*. Mr. Speaker, this bill will repeal and replace the existing small claims Act and make numerous changes to enhance and modernize processes and procedures at the small claims court.

The Ministry of Justice developed the justice innovation agenda in 2014 with a vision to create understandable, timely, and affordable justice for Saskatchewan citizens. As part of that agenda, the ministry is reviewing the way justice services are delivered and what improvements can be made to ensure Saskatchewan citizens have access to these important services.

Last year the Ministry of Justice conducted a review of the small claims process in Saskatchewan. During that review, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a consultation paper was released to the public to gain feedback and identify potential changes and enhancements to the small claims process. The ministry received responses from various groups and citizens, who provided meaningful feedback and demonstrated widespread support for enhancing the small claims process in general.

The first recommendation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that was implemented as a result of review, occurred this past February when regulatory amendments increased the small claims monetary limit from 20 to \$30,000.

This bill will implement additional legislative changes that were identified during the consultation and that review process. First the bill will expand the court's authority to award costs to be

paid from one party to another. In particular, the changes will grant the court authority to award costs where a party fails to attend or purposely delays any step in the proceedings.

Additionally, the court will be granted authority to award general costs at the conclusion of a matter based on factors such as the behaviour of the party. By discouraging disruptive and uncooperative behaviour by the parties in court, these changes will help provide timely and cost-effective dispute resolution.

Mr. Speaker, this bill will also require all defendants to file a reply to a claim. Under the current rules, a defendant is not required to file a defence unless they are ordered to do so by the court. In practice this means that a claimant may receive no notice of a defendant's defence until the day of the trial. Requiring all defendants to file a copy of a reply to the claim will ensure that claimants have early notice of the defence that will be made. This change is intended to encourage parties to actively engage in an early stage in the proceedings and promote a timely resolution of the matter.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, where a defendant fails to file a reply and does not attend proceedings, the bill will clarify the powers of the court to award a default judgment in favour of the claimant. In particular, the updates will address the court's authority to award a default judgment at the earliest stage of a proceeding, otherwise known as the first appearance. Existing protections will remain in place that will allow defendants to apply to overturn a default judgment where a defendant demonstrates that they have had a reasonable excuse for not appearing and have a valid defence for the claim.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to the changes that I have noted, this bill will grant the court authority to cite individuals for contempt in appropriate circumstances. It will provide judges express authority to question parties in order to obtain all necessary facts and details of a case, and it will implement additional housekeeping and administrative changes to modernize the Act.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, access to justice remains an important issue within the legal community as well as the public at large. This bill will make important changes that will enhance access to justice for Saskatchewan residents by providing timely, cost-effective, and citizen-centred dispute resolution through the small claims process.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of *The Small Claims Act, 2016*.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Minister of Justice has moved that Bill No. 35, *The Small Claims 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 almost called you "his honour." But one of the points I would raise, Mr. Speaker, as a result of listening to all the legal jargon attached to this particular bill, it's really important that, again as I mentioned in my previous comments, that some of the changes being proposed in Bill 35 . . . And obviously we'll hear the consequential amendments Act component as well in Bill 36. Mr. Speaker, there is a significant overhaul of *The Small*

*Claims Act*, and again what's important is any time you have what we . . . [inaudible] . . . to as significant overhaul, there are a number of changes that we have to really pay close attention to.

Obviously, as we mentioned in the other comments from the legal Act perspective, we have to do all we can to make our justice system more effective, more affordable, efficient, but at the same time not compromise the integrity of our justice system. And that's constantly what you would call a work-in-progress with any government across the country, Mr. Speaker. Because obviously it's a very, very complex service delivery system, and there's so many different parts of the justice system that intertwine with a lot of our lives and a lot of the issues that we deal with on a day-to-day basis. So it's important that we understand it as best we can.

Now anytime you have an overhaul of any particular aspect of justice — in this case *The Small Claims Act* — we have to pay very close attention to make sure that the judicial system remains neutral, that it's not construed to be benefiting one party over another. As we always know, justice is supposed to be efficient and fair. And part of the efficiency and fairness, certainly one would suggest that being neutral on some of these issues is a key building block to dealing with people's issues, especially when it comes to, for example a single person taking on a large corporation under, say for example they purchase a vehicle and they don't feel that they're dealt with fairly. Then they'd have the recourse of small claims court afforded to them, but that process cannot favour the other party to the extent where justice is compromised.

So these are some of the bases that we would certainly want to go forward in terms of researching this bill. If there is a comprehensive overhaul, as suggested in the language, then we would look at that as being a comprehensive overhaul. So it's important that we go through the bill entirely and thoroughly to see what kind of changes are being proposed. And if some of those changes are in effect putting one party at a disadvantage over another, well that's not fair and that's not efficient. And that's not consistent with the theme around justice, Mr. Speaker.

So I would certainly want to point out that we would have more learned colleagues in our caucus that would look at this and determine what changes may occur, as they would understand the basic difference legally between very simple wording. As an example I would use, sometimes wording in our provincial Acts would say "shall" and another word would be "will" or "may." These words have different meanings in law, and they certainly have different meanings in some of the Acts that guide our companies or guide our towns and villages or guide businesses overall, Mr. Speaker. So it's important to watch the terminology and to understand what the wording is intended to do. And sometimes you do need some legal people to guide you through that process, and our caucus certainly has those individuals available to help us along the way.

So, Mr. Speaker, we look at this. It's a comprehensive change. *The Small Claims Act* is going to be overhauled. We need to pay attention to this as well. So on that note, I will make the motion and move that we adjourn debate on *The Small Claims Act, 1997* and Bills No. 35 and 36, *The Small Claims Act, 2016*

and *The Small Claims Consequential Amendments Act, 2016*. Oh sorry, sorry, Mr. Speaker. I would move that we adjourn debate on Bill 35, *The Small Claims Act, 2016*. I so move.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 35, *The Small Claims Act, 2016*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

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

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

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I now rise to move second reading of *The Small Claims Consequential Amendments Act, 2016*.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the purpose of this bill is to make consequential amendments to non-bilingual legislation to accompany *The Small Claims Act, 2016*. In particular, references to the current small claims Act, 1997 will be updated to refer to the new Act. These changes are entirely housekeeping in nature and will not have a substantive impact on the legislation that's being amended.

Mr. Speaker, updating the small claims process is an important step toward enhancing access to justice for the residents of Saskatchewan. And so with that, Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to move second reading of *The Small Claims Consequential Amendments Act, 2016*.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Minister of Justice has moved that Bill No. 36, *The Small Claims Consequential Amendments 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. Again, not wanting to take shortcuts, Mr. Speaker, following my very brief comments on this particular bill, Bill 36, *The Small Claims Consequential Amendments Act, 2016*, I will certainly move that we adjourn debate because obviously this bill is tied to Bill 35. They're a complementary piece of legislation that obviously has to be undertaken if you want to change the original intent of 35. The consequential amendment Act attached to Bill No. 36 is also a complementary piece that follows.

So I'll point out the comments are pretty similar to my earlier comments around Bill 35. Mr. Speaker, these consequential amendment Act changes are really important to assess as well. Don't forget the premise is that under Bill 35, that there is an overhaul of the small claims court system. We have to pay attention to that, and this consequential amendment Act is part of the process as well. So while the Acts are separate, they are certainly tied at the hip, if you will, in terms of the whole intent behind overhauling our small claims system.

So it's important that, as I mentioned, we focus on Bill 35 and the complementary role of Bill 36 is also focused on by the opposition and people that we network with. And that's why it's

important we take the time to understand it and to study it.

So on that note I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 36, *The Small Claims Consequential Amendments Act, 2016*. I so move.

**The Deputy Chair of Committees:** — We've asked for adjourned debate on No. 36, the small claims consequential Act. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

## 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 Deputy Chair of Committees:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Riversdale.

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter the debate on Bill No. 21, *The Growth and Financial Security Repeal Act* 2016. Mr. Speaker, this is a very brief Act, basically with one section that repeals the government's growth and financial security plans basically, or Act, which winds up a fund in which there's actually nothing currently in it, Mr. Speaker.

My colleague from Saskatoon Nutana . . . I'd like to start with a little bit of a history. My colleague in Saskatoon Nutana, the Finance critic, laid out a very good history of where this bill came from, a little bit about what has transpired over the last several years. And I'd just like to go over that a little bit, Mr. Speaker.

So the story of this bill. So when this government came into power in 2007 there was a rainy day fund of about, I understand, about \$1.6 billion, close to \$2 billion. And what happened, starting in about 2007 with this current government's first Throne Speech, they laid out a plan for their version of a rainy day fund, Mr. Speaker. So how does this . . .

[15:30]

So in December of 2007 this government's first Speech from the Throne, page 4 of *Hansard* on December 10th, 2007. I'd like to outline what was said there:

My government and its growth agenda will be built on a foundation of . . . [solid] financial management. That is why my government will introduce *The Saskatchewan Growth and Financial Security Act*.

This Act will require that the budget of this province be balanced each and every year, instead of every four years as current legislation dictates. This new Act will also set out a formula for allocating budgetary surpluses — half to securing the future by paying down debt, and half to

investing in the future through economic growth initiatives. *The Saskatchewan Growth and Financial Security Act* will also ensure the size of the public service will not grow at a rate faster than the population it serves.

So from the time of that Throne Speech in 2007 there were high hopes about this Act, Mr. Speaker, about balanced budgets, about putting money away for future use, Mr. Speaker. And we can fast forward to 2016, and I will get to that part of the record here in a little bit, Mr. Speaker. So that was some high hopes back then.

So in 2008, a bill was introduced in this House on March 10th, 2008, Mr. Speaker, so about eight years ago. So I'd like to read from *Hansard* on page 231 of the March 10th, 2008 where the Minister of Finance had this to say about his particular Act that we're now repealing, Mr. Speaker:

This Bill reflects that this government and its economic growth agenda will be built on a foundation of sound financial management. It recognizes that sound financial management requires more than just fiscal stabilization. Sound financial management will be achieved through balanced budgets, the establishment of the Growth and Financial Security Fund, the establishment of a Debt Retirement Fund, stipulations on the use of annual surpluses, and ensuring efficient government services.

He goes on to say:

Mr. Speaker, in this Bill the government is required to plan for and achieve a balanced budget each and every year with exceptions only in the event of natural disaster or war. To ensure long-term planning, each year a financial plan and a public debt management plan for the next four years are required to be tabled.

I just want to draw your attention, Mr. Speaker, to a report actually from 2013, a special report that the then provincial auditor did that actually points out that this high hope of no deficits, Mr. Speaker, has not been achieved under a government who actually likes to talk about running surpluses.

I will draw your attention to the auditor's 2013 . . . It is called in fact the 2013 special report, *The Need to Change — Modernizing Government Budgeting and Financial Reporting in Saskatchewan* And that is the provincial auditor's report. If you look to section 4.22, there's a chart there that points out in 2010 this government ran a \$409 million deficit. In 2011 again they ran a \$13 million deficit. In 2012 they ran a \$105 million deficit. And we know that we've just wrapped up a fiscal year, Mr. Speaker, and there is another deficit, and they're projecting a deficit this year as well, Mr. Speaker. So that's five deficits in this government's life in the sunniest times that Saskatchewan has ever seen, Mr. Speaker, thank you to our natural resources.

So and what did they also do in that time? This is a government who has taken unprecedented wealth, drained down to zero, Mr. Speaker, the short-term . . . the rainy day fund, as well as not put a single cent away for your children, grandchildren, their children, their grandchildren, Mr. Speaker. That is the record of this government.

So we can go back to 2007 and 2008 in the heady days of this government and high hopes of a government who is going to be fiscally prudent and do good things for the people of Saskatchewan. In fact they've gone exactly the opposite. This is a government who boasted about reducing debts and not running deficits. I remember the billboards from just a few years ago, Mr. Speaker. But it's not me, Mr. Speaker, talking about deficits. It's the auditor of Saskatchewan who has pointed out that this government's own track record has been one of not being a great fiscal steward in this time of record revenue, Mr. Speaker.

I think, as the member for Saskatoon Riversdale, I have two former premiers on whose wisdom I have the occasion to draw sometimes, Mr. Speaker. I have a little bit more access sometimes just because I'm filling some pretty big shoes, Mr. Speaker.

I know Mr. Romanow. I've had this conversation with him on many occasions, and I've heard him tell this story on many occasions. So in 1991, Mr. Speaker, when you come into power as a social democratic government, you want to do good things. It's about levelling the playing field. It's about recognizing that treating people the same or equally is not the same as being fair — they're very different things — that we don't all start at the start line. In fact some people, because of race, class, gender, those kinds of things, there are people who unfortunately are pulled back from the start line.

So generally, in principle, Mr. Speaker, we want to be able to give everybody that opportunity to get to the start line and have an opportunity to fulfill their potential and contribute as they'd like, as I think every citizen in Saskatchewan wants the opportunity to fully contribute and be an active and involved citizen.

So my conversations with Mr. Romanow . . . This isn't once he's told this story, it's not twice, it's not three times. I've heard this story in small groups, Mr. Speaker. This isn't him standing on a platform talking about this. But the day in 1991 when he and his government learned that there was literally no money, Mr. Speaker, and far from having no money, there was a huge amount of debt and our public policy was at risk of being created by bond raiders, Mr. Speaker, because we were in such poor financial state.

I know Mr. Romanow laments the fact or Premier Romanow laments the fact that his legacy — instead of being one of creating those opportunities for generations, those universal programs, that levelling of the playing field, making sure that that start line is the same for everybody, Mr. Speaker — instead of that getting to be his legacy as a social democratic premier, his legacy is instead one of fiscal stewardship, of setting the . . . making difficult decisions and getting Saskatchewan's finances on track. And you know, I think it's a really good thing that that happened.

And then we had Premier Calvert who . . . Many of the changes to our royalty structure, Mr. Speaker, come from the NDP that allowed some of the growth that we saw here in Saskatchewan. So it was about dealing with a really awful mess, getting the books in shape, and being able to set the stage for growth, Mr. Speaker. But I think it's incredibly sad. Again, just I've heard

Mr. Romanow truly lament the fact that that is his legacy, financial stewardship, just financial stewardship in getting things on the right track rather than being able to take more people and get them to that start line, Mr. Speaker. So that's some of the conversations I've had with Mr. or Premier Romanow.

Premier Calvert actually, it's interesting. He tells a funny story about oil, about \$50 a barrel being fantasy, Mr. Speaker. About, there was a day, Mr. Speaker, that there was a time when reaching \$50 a barrel was unheard of, Mr. Speaker. The revenues in this province were not nearly what they are right now. I think I cast your mind back to the last NDP administration in 2007, Mr. Speaker, and it was, it was about \$8 billion, where this government now has about \$14 billion at its disposal, Mr. Speaker. That's a vast difference, Mr. Speaker.

Saskatchewan became a have province, crossed that threshold in about 2005, Mr. Speaker, and in fact . . . the member from Walsh Acres is heckling, but it's actually, it's interesting because he also doesn't remember that there is, Mr. Speaker, the reality is there is a lag time. The Premier has recognized there's a lag time between transfers from the federal government to the provincial government. So that is a previous off-the-record conversation that the member from Walsh Acres and I have had. And there is a lag time. Saskatchewan became a have province in about 2005, Mr. Speaker, under the former government.

Anyway the point is this government has had unprecedented revenue. Unprecedented revenue. And what have they done with it? They have drained the rainy day fund, the short-term saving account to zero, Mr. Speaker, to zero. Have they saved a single dime for your grandkids? They haven't saved a single dime. They have . . . In fact, I would argue that services are not better under this government as well. As the Health critic, I can tell you I hear story after story about difficulties people have accessing services, and I know my colleagues can tell you stories in their respective critic areas as well.

So that has been the legacy of this government, Mr. Speaker. So what did they have an opportunity to do, Mr. Speaker, and an opportunity they should have pursued? An opportunity they should have pursued.

So in the 2000 election, the NDP ran. One of our platform planks was on a sovereign wealth fund, establishing a sovereign wealth fund. And the Premier recognized after that campaign that that was a good idea. And you know what? He commissioned the former president of the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] to write a report about a sovereign wealth fund. So this is a . . . I'd like to take you to a little bit about what a sovereign wealth fund is and what Mr. MacKinnon's report said.

So in the introduction of that report, entitled *A Futures Fund for Saskatchewan 2013: A Report to Premier Wall on the Saskatchewan Heritage Initiative*, so Mr. MacKinnon writes that:

The concept is a futures fund — not a rainy day fund, a reserve to be tapped opportunistically, or a source of money to finance projects in Saskatchewan in the absence

of capital and operating commitments to pay for them.

So it's not a short-term political tool, Mr. Speaker. In fact he goes on to say:

It is a permanent fund for saving a portion of the revenues from non-renewable resources to be invested for the benefit of future as well as present residents of our province for generations to come, hopefully forever.

Mr. Speaker, and we can look around the world. There are many governments who have taken that approach. We can look to Norway that has close to \$1 trillion, Mr. Speaker, \$1 trillion, Mr. Speaker, for future generations. And you know what? It was interesting. The day after the budget, I heard the Finance minister. I heard the Finance minister on CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] the next morning, and he talked about natural resources fluctuating and this is why we need to approach transformational change. Well this government has been in power for almost a decade, Mr. Speaker, and they're just realizing now that natural resources fluctuate? It was actually a bizarre interview, Mr. Speaker. I found it quite unusual.

So the creation of a sovereign wealth fund, so you think about when the day comes when . . . so every day that we draw down on our natural resources, that takes us a day closer to when we won't have them any more. Also the reality is natural resources fluctuate, Mr. Speaker. We're part of a global economy, and that is the cold, hard reality that we don't control those kinds of things. We don't control the price of potash. We don't control the price of oil. We are part of a larger economy in the world that we have to accept what comes that way in terms of prices. So the good thing about a sovereign wealth fund too, not only is it about future generations, but it's about, hey, if oil drops to unprecedented levels . . . and I have to add that the prices now aren't unprecedented levels. I can tell you that previous governments governed under these as regular, everyday levels of oil, Mr. Speaker.

So I want to read into the record a little bit more about what Mr. MacKinnon wrote:

For this purpose to be realized we must guard against temptation. History teaches us that readily available sources of large amounts of money are temptations for government, advocates of special interests or projects, and others. Governments seek relief from budgetary pressures of the day, and there is no shortage of competing claims and ambitions. We owe it to our children and grandchildren, and to their children and grandchildren, to resist this temptation. We need to remind ourselves that our natural resources will not last forever and that provincial budgets should not be unduly dependent on them to fund the annual, ongoing expenditures of the province. Experience tells us that as markets change, an overreliance on non-renewable [resources] . . . can lead to painful cuts and punishing debt accumulation.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that's exactly where we are in 2016 — painful cuts, many little cuts. I mean, we heard today a closure of a correctional facility, Mr. Speaker, \$1 million dollars. It's not a big cut; it's an incredibly painful cut. The cut to the

employment supplement, I think it's \$2.5 million. I stand to be corrected on that. That's not a huge cut on a budget of \$14 billion, but I can tell you it's an incredibly painful cut for those families who have children who are between 14 and 18, who are low-income workers, who are working their butts off to make a living, Mr. Speaker, and to ensure that their families have what they need. So these might not be big cuts, but they are painful cuts.

We can talk about the increase in seniors' drug costs. That's not a cut, but it's an increase. And I can tell you, hearing from constituents, that that is a painful cut . . . or a painful, painful thing to experience. When you have multiple drugs and you're on the tipping point or the . . . you don't qualify for any other programs . . . You're not getting rich as a senior on most pensions, Mr. Speaker. And the thing about being a senior, most seniors don't have the capacity, or many seniors don't have the capacity and shouldn't have to take on a job or a second opportunity to earn more money so they can pay for their medications, Mr. Speaker.

So exactly what Mr. MacKinnon talked about, that painful cuts will happen and punishing debt accumulation, we're at this place right now, Mr. Speaker, where debt by the end of this year in Saskatchewan will be close to \$14 billion under a government who has had record revenues at their disposal. They have run deficit after deficit after deficit — five, as a matter of fact, it will be. And that's not me saying that, Mr. Speaker. That's the auditor of Saskatchewan. And again, services are not better. I can tell you story after story about people's experience with health care here in Saskatchewan.

[15:45]

I know the minister has talked about putting money . . . well wouldn't you pay down your credit card before you start saving money? I know in my own household, Mr. Speaker, the things that I have to do. So I have an 18-year-old who's heading off to university in Quebec here in three months, which is really exciting. I'm incredibly proud of her. She got into McGill, which is wonderful, but it's not the U of S. She can't live at my house and her tuition will be quite expensive as an out-of-province student. But you know what her dad and I started doing when she was born? We put just a little bit of money away every month, Mr. Speaker, not a lot. I think initially it was \$100 a month which, in those days, I was an at-home mom and that was a lot of money to try to set aside.

Did we stop paying our mortgage or did we feel like we had to pay our mortgage before we had to start saving for Hennessey? No, Mr. Speaker. And had we taken that approach, Hennessey would not be going to McGill this year. Because I can tell you, we don't have enough money to pay for her four-year degree, but we do have enough to get her through the first year and a half. She wouldn't have been able to get student loans, Mr. Speaker. She was in a position where she wouldn't be getting student loans and she would not be able to go to McGill, Mr. Speaker.

So the reality is, you have to pay down debt and you have to save money for the future. That's what Saskatchewan families know you have to do. And it isn't always easy, but that's what you need to do, Mr. Speaker. And this is the opportunity that



this government missed.

So because they weren't able to meet their requirements or obligations under this legislation, we see them repealing it instead of fixing it, Mr. Speaker. So there's a gap. There will be a gap in legislation. The Minister of Finance has talked about putting forward a bill at some point to deal with some of these things, but we don't know when that bill is coming, if that bill is ever coming. So we have a huge gap here, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to holding the government accountable, when it comes to financial stewardship, Mr. Speaker.

So I think it's incredibly disappointing that after almost a decade in power, the people of Saskatchewan have experienced a lost opportunity because of this government's mismanagement. Five deficits, not a single penny saved for the long term. They've taken a short-term savings account and drained it to zero, and they have not improved public services, Mr. Speaker. I think that that is an incredibly sad legacy of this government.

But we will have an opportunity in committee to dig into this a little bit more. I know my colleague from Saskatoon Nutana, the Finance critic, will have many questions for the Minister of Finance. But at this point, so I would just like to let you know we will be letting this bill move to committee. Thank you for your opportunity to speak.

**The Deputy Chair of Committees:** — The member has moved that Bill No. 21, the growth and financial securities Act, goes to committee. To which committee shall it go?

This motion . . . The question before the Assembly is to adopt this motion. Is it agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Chair of Committees:** — Carried.

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

**The Deputy Chair of Committees:** — When shall this bill be read again? To which committee shall this bill go? I recognize the House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I designate that Bill No. 21, *The Growth and Financial Security Repeal Act 2016* be committed to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

### 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 Deputy Chair of Committees:** — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair of Committees. Good to join the debate today here on Bill No. 22,

*The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2016*. You know, a number of interesting measures certainly contained in this piece of legislation, some of it good, some of it not so good, some of it kind of ugly, Mr. Speaker. But it's interesting to look at these things over the long haul and see how some of these things evolve through time.

Certainly I recall in the 2007 election where a fresh-faced young member from Swift Current, heading up the official opposition at the time, ran on the active families benefit and then later expanded that to include cultural activities, but certainly the way that that looked to address the fees around sports for families to make sure that families were active. And certainly, Mr. Speaker, having had the pleasure of being hauled to any number of hockey games and ball games and swimming lessons and so on by my mom and dad, I'm sure that they would have found something like that to have been helpful.

And then later when the active families benefit was expanded to incorporate cultural activities, you know, again, Mr. Speaker, the myriad of piano lessons and violin lessons and art lessons and the things that go on out there in terms of what kind of activities we try to put in front of kids and to enrich their lives and to provide them with new opportunities and new experiences, again the active family benefit seemed to be of interest in that regard. And certainly at the time when this was part of the 2007 election campaign, there was some questions raised from our side of the aisle in terms of, you know, is this going to be meeting the targets that it sets out? Is it going to be, you know, something that helps folks that don't need the help? You know, we've got entities such as KidSport or Creative Kids that can certainly play a meaningful role in helping lower income kids pay the bills to get out there on the football field, on the hockey ice, or pick your opportunity there, Mr. Speaker. At the time that was the cry was simply, you know, negative thinking, and you know, that this was the way forward and why not proceed with the active families benefit.

And again this was something that built very much on a measure that had been introduced by I believe the federal Conservatives in the 2006 federal election and the way that that had unfolded in a campaign that started before Christmas, ran through January. And certainly I can remember being in a hockey rink at the time there and that particular proposal being talked about and different folks saying, you know, wouldn't that be a nice little bit of help for our family in terms of paying the fees for hockey? So that it became part of the 2007 election was not surprising. But certainly the arguments that were put forward for it, in terms of this is something that we have to do, and you know, the very framing of it around active families and, you know, but for this tax benefit, you know, it might not happen.

And anyway the members opposite of course won the argument at the time. And it's been interesting that now, lo these many years on, in the train moved by the Justin Trudeau federal Liberal government having come in at the federal level and said that, you know, the active families benefit, was that a tax benefit that was really working in terms of getting folks out into different sports or cultural activities? Who was that serving? All the different kind of analysis that comes with a new government coming in, as is certainly the case with the Trudeau Liberals. So that they should proceed with a move like that was certainly not

surprising. But the fact that now after the budget, or in the budget speech, that they moved to eliminate the active families benefit — this provincial government, Mr. Speaker, having campaigned on it not in one election, not in two elections, but in three elections, Mr. Speaker — that so soon after this third federal election where these members have formed government, that they would then move to take it out, this is pretty interesting. For one, it's interesting that, you know, there's a lot of guff that goes on in terms of the way that these . . . You know, sometimes they like the Trudeau Liberals. Sometimes they don't. But I guess on this one they're quite happy to follow the path blazed for them by the Trudeau Liberals. So interesting enough, Mr. Speaker, but it's certainly not . . . They've come a long way from 2007 when this was first campaigned upon.

When that particular measure gets to committee, we'll of course be interested to hear about the analysis that was undertaken by the folks that work in Finance in terms of who is benefiting, who is taking advantage of this particular measure, what the annual tax expenditure had been — in short, the different things that you'd expect a government to be doing all along and maybe even talking about before an election, especially since it had been one of the great, shiny measures put forward in 2007 and then again expanded in 2011.

But you know, not so, Mr. Speaker. The case remains to be fleshed out in terms of what this government, what kind of analysis was undertaken and how that actually was being availed of, or how Saskatchewan people were taking it up or not. But again, Mr. Speaker, having seen the way, the long and winding road that's gone with this active families benefit, it certainly generates a number of great lines of questions for, you know, that kind of detailed examination that can take place at the committee level when you've got the officials there and you can get that complex analysis undertaken.

In terms of other measures in the piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, it's another interesting point, certainly one of the things that members opposite campaigned on. And it was certainly, you know, acknowledged that, in different of the statements we have opportunity to make in this House in terms of interventions and budget speeches or budget speech debates or in Throne Speech debates . . . but certainly the move around the graduate retention plan enabling the use of some of those credits to be eligible for helping out on a down payment on a home and again reaching out for those unable to take opportunity with the first-time homebuyers tax credit.

That's interesting as well, Mr. Speaker, and Lord only knows what maybe next year will bring for this particular program. Because of course, Mr. Speaker, when members opposite first campaigned on this in 2007 it was alongside a similar measure from the then NDP government where it was a non-refundable tax credit being proposed by the members opposite versus the tax credit that had been proposed by the then government of the day, of which I was a part.

And so in terms of the non-refundable tax credit, it certainly involved a bigger expenditure, no question about it. It was a more lucrative benefit for folks. It didn't address the front-end part of the equation in terms of accessibility and affordability getting into school. But certainly on the back end of graduating, it was a more lucrative benefit than what had been brought in

by the government of the day in terms of the tax credit on the one side versus the non-refundable tax credit on the other side.

[16:00]

And certainly we heard a lot of self-congratulation over the years from members opposite. There wasn't enough attention paid on the front end of things. You know, you can increase the Saskatchewan advantage grant all you like but if tuition is going up at the same time, then what you're giving with the one hand gets taken with the other. And we get to a place where of course right now Statistics Canada says that on average our tuition is second highest in Canada. And because the attention hasn't been paid on that side of the equation, it makes these back-end measures all the more important. But certainly it shouldn't be at the expense of front-end measures. And I would submit that this government has got a lot of work to do in that regard.

But in terms of what's happened with the non-refundable tax credit that was at the heart of the graduate retention program, Mr. Speaker, of course last year's budget saw that they . . . Before the election we saw that that graduate retention program was changed from a non-refundable tax credit wherein it's operated like a grant and it wasn't dependent on income. You didn't have to earn income to be drawing on the benefit. It was changed from that back to a tax credit.

And it's interesting. I never thought I'd see the day, Mr. Speaker, but of course if you stick around long enough I guess all that is old is new again. So be darned if it wasn't something that bore a striking resemblance to the graduate retention program that was in place in 2007 in terms of being a tax credit versus the non-refundable tax credit that these members had operated on for close to two terms.

So that was very interesting, Mr. Speaker. And of course, you know, the fact that it didn't kick in until income was being earned and the different sort of less advantageous aspects of the program of course got glossed over by members opposite in terms of how this was presented to the public was pretty interesting. But again, that they would run on something that was fundamentally, you know, building upon an NDP initiative, it's never any shortage of irony in public life, Mr. Speaker.

So and then what the . . . Making the move in terms of allowing a certain portion of the graduate retention program to be eligible for first-time homeowners, you know . . . And again a fine measure, but it's sort of like the track record with tuition and, you know, back-end measures that are all fine and good in and of themselves, but are they really addressing the more acute problems that are presenting throughout the sector? And certainly folks that are looking for that, you know, putting together that down payment on a first home, this will come as a welcome measure. And certainly I've heard that from different folks throughout the province, and that is fine and good.

The program of course is administered by the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation and got off to a bit of a rocky start in terms of the inclusion of personal information. And that's been referred to the Information and Privacy Commissioner and we'll await with interest to see how that is adjudicated, Mr. Speaker. But you know, certainly it wasn't a minister stepping forward to apologize for that. It was of course an official, which

tends to be another tendency of this government. But there you go.

In terms of what need this is meeting in terms of the housing situation throughout Saskatchewan, again this is a fine measure in and of itself but I can't help but wonder if we aren't going to arrive at a point down the future where after the ballyhoo of an election campaign is long ago in the rear-view mirror and you get around to the analysis, and it turns out that in parallel to arguments that were made around the active families benefit, whether or not those were actually valid arguments.

And in terms of who's going to benefit from this, does this really meet the most acute needs out there in the housing market? All of which are questions that you'd presume there's been some analysis gone into the program and again which lends itself to the more precise questioning that can be undertaken at the committee level. But you can't help but wonder that it will not reach a point in the future where the kind of hype and faith that is placed in approving things through proclamation as opposed to argumentation or rationale that we see go on with this government, you can't help but wonder if it isn't going to eventually hit a similar destination as we've seen in this very piece of legislation with the active families benefit, where of course it was ballyhooed at the outset and now here we are.

And again, maybe emboldened by the Trudeau federal Liberals, this government is moving to eliminate the active families benefit altogether on the argument that it's not targeted enough. It doesn't meet needs in a way that they present more acutely out in the community. And again we'll see how this works with the graduate retention programs and the changes that have been made to that in this particular budget.

And again, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to see that the fundamental component of this program is a tax credit which, again in Saskatchewan's immediate history, found its origin way back in the midst of the early 2000s in different forms. But certainly there was in the budget of 2007 a fairly advantageous tax credit that was brought forward. That wasn't good enough for members opposite so they had the non-refundable tax credit, but lo and behold they eventually came around to the tax credit. And so again, how this all works out, what the projections are, what the analysis is that has gone into this, who this will serve, will all be questions that we'll look to get some kind of a response to in committee.

Moving along in the bill, Mr. Speaker, and again there are a number of tax measures that are wrapped up in this particular piece of legislation. But it's interesting to note and certainly there are things where they are literally following on the heels of the federal government to make changes to certain measures in the tax code, and again, in this case, not just being inspired by the federal Trudeau liberals apparently, but actually prompted by the federal government in terms of the small business tax rate and the changes around the taxation of dividend income, the change of dividend income. Referencing the minister's second reading speech, "... automatically impacts the provincial taxation of that income." And again holding the line for the government to take a step that holds the line on small business taxation, small- and medium-sized enterprises being so crucial to the fire of the economy and what

makes an economy go. You know, again, a fairly good measure in that regard.

But again, we'll be interested to see how measures that are taken here responding to federal changes, how those work into the broader agenda of this government, a government that, you know, in the not-too-distant past was talking about reducing corporate income tax. And of course we see nothing about that in the speech, from the budget speech. We see nothing about that in the years to come. We know from questions asked previously that it has been regarded as outstanding business on the part of members opposite, but certainly it's nowhere here.

And it'd also be interesting to know the trade-offs that will be involved in terms of, if you're going to be doing these measures, what's the total tax expenditure involved? What's the impact throughout the sector? And how does that impact your tax room and perhaps curtail other possibilities around tax measures.

In terms of the, you know, following in the train of the federal moves on the taxation of trusts, again a similar thing. We'll be interested to see with that closer questioning that's possible at committee level just the magnitude of the tax expenditure involved and how this will change going forward, and again how it affects the other taxation rates around trusts. We'll be interested to see how that goes as well.

Moving on, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the manufacturing tax incentives and the head office tax incentive that this government has put forward in the past and the way that this is now being brought forward, in the years to come it will be very interesting to see again what sort of oversight is given to the effectiveness of these tax measures. Who is availing themselves of these tax measures and what the net benefit or not, how that is maintained. So we'll be watching for, you know, better explanation of how this is working out and how this is playing out on the ground.

It was also the new tax incentive to encourage capital investment in primary steel production. Again, Mr. Speaker, I grew up in north Regina. Certainly it was always ... I had a bunch of friends whose primarily fathers worked at IPSCO. And certainly I have the privilege of representing a number of steelworkers to this day in Elphinstone. And in terms of how this advantages what is now Evraz steel, we'll be interested to see.

But how the steel sector generally in Saskatchewan has been ... It's fine to put an advantage on the one side of the equation, but if you're not paying attention to the way that other jurisdictions are advantaging their local economy and local steel-producing sectors, and then at the same time playing Boy Scout to the country and the world in terms of the refusal to take up trade measures to ensure that that Saskatchewan benefit is there. You can spend a lot of money on the one side of the equation, but if it's all sort of drifting out on the other, what good does that accomplish? So in and of itself, this looks like a fine measure, but what that broader sort of front of activity that needs to be undertaken, we'll of course have some questions about that as well to ensure that this is in fact a benefit to those who produce steel in Saskatchewan.

I guess I've not got many more comments than that, Mr. Speaker, to add at this time, but certainly the . . . Again to recap, we'll be watching the changes to the graduate retention plan and the tax expenditure there. We'll be watching for the, you know, what the broader story is around the active families benefit being eliminated, again this being a measure that played, you know, a fairly significant part in not just one but certainly two campaigns. They were a little quiet on a bunch of stuff last campaign, Mr. Speaker.

We'll be interested to see how the changes in the manufacturing and processing export or hiring incentives are actually working or not. We'll be looking for the impact of the clarification of definition for the primary steel production rebate. And of course with the housekeeping measures following in the train of the federal government making changes to tax code, we'll be interested to see how that provides stability to our taxation situation here in the province.

[16:15]

But with that, Mr. Speaker, I would move to conclude my remarks on Bill No. 22, an Act to amend *The Income Tax Act* in order that it might move on to committee so that we might undertake a more detailed and closer examination of this piece of legislation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 22, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2016* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

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

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I designate that Bill No. 22, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2016* be committed to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — This bill stands committed to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

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

Saskatoon Centre.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is a pleasure to get up and speak on this bill. I know it's an important one. It's one that the government wants to move quickly on and, as I said, they campaigned on that.

But I do want to put a few words onto the record on this because it is one that clearly impacts a lot of people. And it's one that we're looking at carefully and we'll have lots of questions in committee because it's one where we worry about the unintended consequences of this. And we do support the modernization of how we do our . . . deliver and maintain our liquor systems in the province. But it is one that we want to make sure that it fits the communities, that we know that not every community is like each other community.

And I just want to say, it was an interesting story yesterday when my colleague from Nutana got up and talked about her grandfather who was the local pharmacist but also sold the local booze in Lafleche. And that was an interesting scenario for her to grow up in. Whereas where I grew up, in Mortlach, Saskatchewan — if you know, that's a community 30 miles west of Moose Jaw — it essentially was a dry, dry community. There was no bar. There was no hotel. There was no place to buy any liquor at all. And so that had an impact on the community for sure. And you either had to go 30 miles further west at Chaplin to go to the hotel there or into Moose Jaw onto River Street, which always provided some interesting excitement, or you went to Coderre to the south, or you went to Keeler. Now if you see those communities now, Keeler and Coderre, they're in pretty rough shape. But I can remember a few visits to the Keeler hotel and it was interesting times.

But it was something that was . . . the way that liquor was viewed in our community, and I don't think we were overly religious. You know, we just didn't have that stuff happening in our community. We were a vibrant community. We had a bank. We have banks. We did have hotels at one time, but it was all pre-World War II.

And then post-World War II, things, the community started to change. People started to travel more. Of course they would travel to the larger centres for more selection and more choice.

And of course that was interesting when you went into Moose Jaw, into the local liquor board store. And what you actually had was all the liquor was in the back, and you wrote down your selection on a little piece of paper and you hoped that you got it right. And of course the . . . And I can remember as a young adult, you know, the glaring eyes of the clerks to make sure you were of correct age and that you weren't doing something untoward. And they'd slip that bottle into a brown paper bag and out the door you would go. And that was our early experiences with buying liquor.

But now that's changed. It's changed an awful lot. And we have wine stores and, you know, specialty stores and that type of thing. And it is exciting to see what's happening with the development of local craft beer and growlers. It's just pretty neat to see and it's an exciting, exciting time.

And of course we want to make sure things are fair and that

there's, there is a level playing field. But you know, I always have to say that. You know, whenever you hear that phrase, level playing field, you have to be careful. You have to check because that seems to be code for something else and not necessarily a level playing field, but somebody's going to get an advantage.

And you know, we've grown accustomed in Saskatchewan that SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority] is a good Crown corporation and has provided services and has provided a source of income to the provincial treasury. And we don't want to see them disadvantaged. So if it's a level playing field, fair enough. That is fair enough. But we want to make sure that it's there, fair right across the board, that it's not something that is untoward or disadvantaging or creating barriers.

We know, for example, this government for many years has created barriers for the local liquor board stores to really become more modern and has disadvantaged them in a way to see that people then would demand better services. And they thought, they associated poor services with the local board, liquor board store and that they thought that only a private store could provide that kind of service. And actually the liquor board store could provide that service if it was given a half a chance.

And I saw that particularly in our own store on 1st Avenue in Saskatoon where they had an incredible wine selection. And it was really interesting to go in and see what that store on 1st Avenue was offering in terms of wine, and what the French wines were, what the organic wines were. It was kind of neat. But then all of a sudden, one time I went back into the store and all the wines were back, mixed in, and you just had to figure it out yourself. There was no wine expert there any more. There was no interesting selections or marketing. It was just back to the plain old store.

So I mean this is the kind of thing when you talk about a level playing field, is it really going to be a level playing field? Are the liquor board stores going to be disadvantaged and those good jobs at the liquor board stores are going to be at risk because we're seeing a drive? A level playing field is often also known as bottom of the barrel, you know. And there you go, the wage is the bottom of the barrel. And so are we seeing a drive to the bottom of the barrel in terms of wages? And this is a concern, Mr. Speaker. And you know, when you see . . . [inaudible] . . . coming from the government, what do they really, really mean?

So modernization, we're definitely for it and we can see other competitors involved. But we do want to see that the liquor board stores, SGLA, are given a fair chance to be part of that market because people are expecting them to deliver dividends to or resources to the provincial treasury. And that is really, really important.

And I do want to say . . . And when the minister talks about, most importantly these changes, and I quote, "most importantly these changes will provide consumers with more choice, more convenience, and competitive pricing." And fair enough. But you know, when we hear and particularly . . . Some communities really are having some significant challenges with alcohol in their communities, and I'm thinking of Prince Albert for one. And I was just talking to my colleague about, you

know, now in Prince Albert they have two drive-throughs in a community that size to buy liquor. And you wonder why does the community need two drive-throughs to pick up their liquor. Now maybe there's a rush at supertime for a bottle of wine, but you know, at the same time we really do need to think about, is there a balance in terms of what kind of communities we want to have in our province.

We do want to see competitive pricing. We do want to see a modernization of the rules. And we don't have a problem with buying a bottle of wine and making it easier. We are excited about supporting local, especially local companies developing their own markets, particularly when it's coming to wine and beer.

And I'm thinking of particularly a couple of wineries, one down in Cypress Hills who does a great job, has a great wine product, and one outside of Saskatoon. And I get into trouble, Mr. Speaker, because I pick up the odd bottle of rhubarb wine. And I kind of like that rhubarb wine that is out there. Now you apparently have to have a particular taste for rhubarb wine, but I happen to have it. But it seems to work. It seems to work, so I'm glad that we're getting modern in Saskatchewan. It says it all, rhubarb wine.

I haven't quite got to the choke . . . But I do remember the good old days. Now maybe this isn't so modern, chokecherry wine and the stories that can go along with that. And maybe the chokecherry wine was more interesting because I did live in Mortlach, where you could not go to a hotel and buy anything.

But at any rate, I digress. And I do think that we want to make sure that we take a close look, a very close at this bill because, as I say, it's not . . . I mean when you come out with catchphrases like more choice, more convenience, competitive pricing — good idea at first blush.

But really when you dig down to it, we want to make sure there are no unintended consequences, both for the business people who are putting a lot of money and resources into making sure they have a product and they want a level playing field. But they want to make sure that . . . We also have a consumer that we have to be careful about because we know the whole issue around the impacts on community, the impacts on families, the impact on your health.

We have to have . . . There has to be a balance, and we expect that we will have an educated approach to this, that it won't be completely the wild, wild west and, as I said, a race to the bottom. And so I really do worry about that and if this is the opening the floodgates. I hate to use that word when we're talking about liquor, but maybe that is, that's the scenario that we're talking about, that we have to make sure that we take a look at all these regulations.

And I'm not an expert on the regulations, far from it. But I do want to make sure that we look at these and really consider these fully in a way that we are recognizing that they are complex and we don't want to have unintended consequences. And it isn't as easy as saying we just want to level the playing field because, Mr. Speaker, there is a reason for well-thought-out legislation, particularly when we come to legislation.

We do recognize that the government did run on many of these issues when it comes to changing the liquor system. Of course we agreed with the terms of modernizing our stores and also the kiosks and different approaches to it. But we will look forward to hearing more about this in committee. With that, Mr. Speaker, I am ready to move this to committee. Bill No. 23, *The Liquor Retail Modernization Act*, I so move. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the member that Bill No. 23, *The Liquor Retail Modernization Act* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I designate that Bill No. 23, *The Liquor Retail Modernization Act* be committed to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

**The Speaker:** — This bill stands committed to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

[16:30]

#### 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 Centre.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I always appreciate following up. And when you talk about the consequential amendments, these are really straightforward, and they follow the bill that I was just talking about. And of course I imagine we'll be talking about these at the same time, with the same committee, so that will be consistent.

But at this point, Mr. Speaker, I know that I will have to talk a bit about this. So, Mr. Speaker, it's very important that we do take some time to really think about this. And as I said, for different communities these kind of bills are very important that we think of the consequences for different communities. When we have these kind of regulations and rules, we have to think about the impacts, you know.

As I said, when I was growing up in Mortlach there was no liquor at all. But I think that's changed over the last 40 or 50 years; now they do have a place where you can buy a wine or a beer with your meal. But even now, I tell you, some of the old-timers have a hard time dealing with that. They give you a

bit of a second look and go, that's kind of odd in Mortlach. We don't do that kind of thing. We don't have a beer in the afternoon in the hotel and yes, you know, we just don't do that type of thing.

And then that may be kind of quaint, but we have to really think about the impacts in other communities. We know communities like Prince Albert are wrestling with that kind of thing. And as I said, the issue of having two drive-throughs, why do you have to have two drive-throughs in a community that's, I think, about 30 or 40,000? And you know, the community is really wrestling with how do you have the kind of legislation and who makes that kind of rules. Is it the province that allows the city to do that type of thing or is it the city? Do they have the power to make those kind of regulations?

And so with that, you know, we look at these two bills and we talk. And we will be asking about, is this the kind of thing . . . Have they gone out and done the proper consultations? What does this mean for a province like Saskatchewan, that while we are becoming more and more urban, we are still remaining very much a rural community?

So we do need to take some time where we'll be asking and making sure that there has been proper consultations. And with that though we need to really take a good, good, solid look at this bill. And so it seems to be very much similar to the other one. The two will go hand in hand, and we'll have the same kind of questions about the impacts that . . . We don't want to have a race to the bottom of the barrel. That's not the issue that I think the government should be striving for. We hope not. And as I said, we don't want to set up a situation where they talk about an uneven playing field, but yet they create an even more uneven playing field that disfavours our own provincially owned Crown, SLGA. And so that's really, really important.

And so we'll be having lots of questions in committee, and I know the folks want to move on that as quickly as possible. This is a budget bill. And so with that, I'm ready to move this bill to committee. Thank you very much.

**The Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the member that Bill No. 24, *The Liquor Retail Modernization Consequential Amendments Act, 2016* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I designate that Bill No. 24, *The Liquor Retail Modernization Consequential Amendments Act, 2016* be committed to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

**The Speaker:** — This bill stands committed to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

**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 Prince Albert Northcote.

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm really excited to be talking about this bill. This is the first bill that I've stood up and talked about in the House here. So Bill No. 25, this one is a really important bill for me, *The Wakamow Valley Authority Amendment Act*. I've already talked about, you know, how I'm disappointed with all the cuts to the urban parks in our province here. And I think like this is just a really dismal suggestion in our budget, you know, because these urban parks are really important and we really need to invest in those.

And I was really disappointed that there was no consultation with the municipal governments with regards to this and there was nothing mentioned about this before the election. So I think people might have had a different response if they'd known that their urban parks were going to be attacked within this bill.

But you know, when I say about some of the other urban parks that are also being cut, that includes, you know, there's Wakamow Valley of course, Moose Jaw, but it also includes Prince Albert and North Battleford, Weyburn, and Swift Current. All of these parks are being attacked with regards to this.

But getting back to Wakamow Valley. You know, Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you a little bit about Wakamow Valley. So according to the Wakamow Valley website, Wakamow Valley is a park for all seasons with 20 km of great trails, walking and hiking paths, park grounds, playgrounds, picnic areas, cycling, and canoeing and kayaking, which I find is really interesting. We don't have many urban parks in our province here where a person could go canoeing or kayaking, you know, so that's why I think it's really important that we look at keeping and helping Moose Jaw keep this park.

And so when you think about the money that's been put in this budget, the amount of money that they're taking away from Wakamow Valley, like it's minimal. You know, but even though it's minimal for the provincial government, it's huge for the city of Moose Jaw. You know, so it's important for us to realize that many parts of this Wakamow Valley are provincially owned Crown land and it's not all city. So we've got to recognize that when . . . That's why the province has a responsibility to, you know, also contribute with this.

And so what this Act is saying is they want to take the \$127,000 away from what they provide Moose Jaw with — help with keeping this park vitalized, you know, helping with cutting lawn and the upkeep and what they have to do with infrastructure costs — \$127,000, that's a big chunk of what this

park costs, you know. And so also the government used to give \$30,000, so when you add that together, that's \$157,000 that Moose Jaw is losing, you know. And when this government says that revenue sharing is a main reason of being able to take this money because they've increased the revenue sharing, well from last year's budget to this year's budget, the increase in revenue sharing for Moose Jaw is \$170,000. So when you take \$157,000 of that away, you're just leaving them with \$13,000, you know.

And when you take into account inflation, you take into account wage increases for staff that are taking care of that park and you take into account the power increases that this government is looking at increasing, like 10 per cent increase in power, that's going to impact the city of Moose Jaw big time. The power from their hockey rinks, power from all the other city facilities, like that \$13,000 really isn't going to get them very far, you know. And so basically this is a cut for funding for Moose Jaw, which is really disappointing, and also disappointing that I haven't heard from the members across from Moose Jaw about supporting this. So that's really disappointing as well.

But, you know, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about why is it important to have urban parks, because urban parks are so important in our cities. So like one thing, and one thing that I think should be really a particular interest to the members across, is the investment in the local economy growth with urban parks. So when you have urban parks, oftentimes the property values increase. People want to live around where there's parks, you know, because that gives them more activities to do with their family. The green space is beautiful. In the backyard of my place there's a nice park and I always say it's great to have all that lawn that I don't have to mow. Like you know, it's beautiful. And when I look at the park outside this building itself, like it's beautiful, and I don't have to weed anything out there, you know, and I get to just enjoy the whole area. So the property values will increase, you know, and so when you're looking at buying a house, you think about, is there a school nearby, is there a park nearby. So that's important.

Jobs. You know, when you have urban parks, you have people working in them. They have to maintain them, you know, and so that provides employment in your communities. And when we talk about diversifying the economy, that's one area, is making sure we have parks.

Also tourism. When you go travelling and you've got little ones, Mr. Speaker, like don't you guys like to stop at a park and play for a little bit? And it gets you into the city. It gets you involved. Then you might even go and have a meal at the local restaurant and check things out. And I know I go to Moose Jaw at least two or three times a year. And I love their mineral spa, and so I go to the mineral spa and then I take a little walk in the parks that they have there too, you know. And so that's one of the things I really enjoy about it, all the trees and all the greenery they have in that community. So those tourism dollars are big, you know.

Another reason why, you know, you want to have urban parks is to improve health. And this is a tough budget, and we all recognize this and so there's been cuts, you know. So when we look at trying to promote things, promoting healthy living is

really important. So there's a real correlation between easy access to green spaces and the likelihood to exercise. Like you know, on my lunch hour, I'd love to go for a walk out there outside this beautiful building because it's so gorgeous there. It makes me want to go for a little bit of walk a little bit better, you know. You always see people playing football or having a lot of fun out in the greenery there. So like exercise is really important. You know, Mr. Speaker, obesity is a real issue in this province and so it's important, this solution in reducing obesity, which is associated with public health costs. So then we could reduce our public health costs.

Also the physical activity . . . When you're in wildlife and green spaces, there's a real correlation on how being out in wildlife helps with your mental health also, you know. So there is . . . Direct exposure to nature reduces your stress. Physical health and strong relationships improve mental health. When you're out in these parks you're meeting with people. You're connecting with some of your neighbours and such. And so making those connections and having those relationships also helps with your mental health, right?

You know, and so . . . Also urban parks, they help with our ecosystem, Mr. Speaker, and we really need to pay attention to our ecosystem. So urban trees, they remove air pollution and it also improves our public health. It improves the quality of air that we have in our cities. And you know, we really need to pay attention to that. That will help with, you know, respiratory issues and such.

So we also know that unpaved ground absorbs water, you know, and so trees and grass are more efficient and less expensive than sewer systems. And so if we have the greenery around, then that will just absorb the water and then hopefully we don't have floods in our cities and such . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes.

[16:45]

Also it's oftentimes these parks are the centre of our communities, you know, and so we have neighbours who interact with each other. When you're new in a city sometimes you go to the parks and stuff and you get to meet new people, you know.

And so it's a great space for events. You know, I know a lot of times we'll have events in Prince Albert, and we'll be like, where should we host this? We can't afford to have a facility that costs a lot of money. Well why don't we go have it in the park? Like everybody loves to go to the park, you know. And so it's a great place to have some of your events and socialize with the neighbours and meet new people, engage in recreational activities.

I mentioned how Wakamow Valley . . . You can go hiking, you can go walking, you can go biking, the kayaking and canoeing — all of these physical activities to do. And you know, for some people, you don't have really a lot of money, so just to go out and take a walk in the park, that's a great way to keep in shape, you know. And so also like if you are hiking or you're biking or you're canoeing, you're buying those things from the local stores, right? So you're promoting business there.

So you know, it's really important to keep these parks. Also urban parks are so important for our kids, you know. And you know, parents bond with their children at the park. You forget all about your household chores. You take the kids to the park. You go swinging. You put the kids in the swing and you just play. You just spend that activity to each other, you know, and you're not distracted by all the things that get distracted at home, you know.

And like a lot of childhood memories are made in parks. Like when I think about all the fun I had with my friends and such, oftentimes it was in our neighbourhood parks, you know. And the things that I did with my parents, it was at some parks. And so we've got to, you know, make sure that we have these parks because of the impact of the development of children, and we want to make sure the general happiness of everyone in the community is acknowledged.

And so there's also a lot of studies that show that regular time in nature improves children's ability to learn and reduces symptoms of ADHD [attention deficit hyperactivity disorder]. Like look at all of these things that these urban parks do, you know. And they have a direct correlation with a lot of the other services we provide, you know . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well the member across, we're not shutting down the parks, but when the cities can't afford these parks, they're going to have to make tough decisions too, you know.

So like we have to think about the consequences of our decisions and the rollback that has. So think about like when the schools . . . Like I know a lot of the schools, the teachers will take their kids to the urban parks and they teach them about ecosystems and such within their classrooms, you know, and so when there's been cuts to classrooms and they have to make decisions on maybe buying books, well then the teachers can take the kids to the parks and teach them things. You know, sometimes they can't go for excursions, so then they go sliding at the park, or they go canoeing or kayaking, or whatever they can do, you know, to find activities and use these parks.

I don't think these parks are being underutilized at all. Like they're regularly utilized in these communities, and they're important. And again I stress, like for the amount of money that's being invested in these parks and other areas that this government chooses to support, it just doesn't make a lot of sense, you know. And it seems like these are big losses for these small communities and these small cities. They've been faced with a lot of losses, you know. Like they really feel that they're not getting the support they need from this province, you know. And they need this province to help them, help them build. And so when we take money from things that are such an economic advantage for these communities, it can be huge, you know.

And so we look about how economic advantages, when we think about the health advantages of these parks, the ecosystem advantages of this park, like it just doesn't seem to make sense, you know. And so, Mr. Speaker, I don't understand why we want to make these changes to this Act, you know. And Wakamow is very important and we really hope that this government reconsiders this. But I'm ready for this bill to proceed to the committee, and so thank you for listening.



**The Speaker:** — There's a lot of conversation going on and I missed the member's moving of second reading. So the question before the Assembly is a motion by the member that the Bill No. 25, *The Wakamow Valley Authority Amendment Act* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Clerk:** — Second reading of this bill.

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I designate that Bill No. 25, *The Wakamow Valley Authority Amendment Act, 2016* be committed to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

**The Speaker:** — This bill stands committed to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice. I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To facilitate the work of committees later this day, I move that this Assembly do now adjourn.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried. This House now stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow, on Thursday.

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:53.]

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### TABLING OF REPORTS

The Speaker.....	537
------------------	-----

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Boyd .....	537
Wotherspoon .....	537
The Speaker.....	537
Reiter .....	538
Rancourt.....	538
Belanger.....	538, 539
Docherty .....	538
McCall .....	538
Hart .....	538, 539
Phillips .....	539
Sproule.....	539
Sarauer .....	539
Lambert .....	539
Fiaz.....	540
Cox .....	552

#### PRESENTING PETITIONS

Chartier .....	540
Belanger.....	540
Sproule.....	540
Forbes .....	541

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Farm Progress Show	
Wotherspoon .....	541
Brkich .....	541
Global Wind Day	
Sproule.....	541
Governments to Fund Nipawin Water Treatment Plant	
Bradshaw .....	542
Readings From Saskatchewan Book Award Winners	
Lambert .....	542
Warman and Martensville Business Excellence Awards	
Buckingham .....	542
Prince Albert Citizens Support Project Triple Play	
Hargrave.....	542

#### QUESTION PERIOD

Carbon Capture and Storage Project	
Wotherspoon .....	543
Boyd .....	543
Funding for Education	
Wotherspoon .....	544
Morgan .....	544
Beck.....	544
Proposed Potash Project	
Sproule.....	545
Boyd .....	545
Closure of Correctional Facility	
Belanger.....	546
Tell .....	546
Sarauer .....	547

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 37 — <i>The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2016</i>	
McMorris.....	547

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 32 — <i>The Automobile Accident Insurance (Benefits) Amendment Act, 2016</i>	
McMorris.....	547
Belanger.....	548

<b>Bill No. 33 — <i>The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 2016</i></b>	
Harpauer .....	549
Belanger .....	550
<b>Bill No. 34 — <i>The Provincial Lands Act, 2016</i></b>	
Stewart .....	551
Belanger .....	553
<b>Bill No. 35 — <i>The Small Claims Act, 2016/Loi de 2016 sur les petites créances</i></b>	
Wyant .....	554
Belanger .....	554
<b>Bill No. 36 — <i>The Small Claims Consequential Amendments Act, 2016</i></b>	
Wyant .....	555
Belanger .....	555
<b>ADJOURNED DEBATES</b>	
<b>SECOND READINGS</b>	
<b>Bill No. 21 — <i>The Growth and Financial Security Repeal Act</i></b>	
Chartier .....	556
Cheveldayoff (referral to Crown and Central Agencies Committee) .....	559
<b>Bill No. 22 — <i>The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2016</i></b>	
McCall .....	559
Cheveldayoff (referral to Crown and Central Agencies Committee) .....	562
<b>Bill No. 23 — <i>The Liquor Retail Modernization Act/Loi de modernisation du commerce des boissons alcoolisées</i></b>	
Forbes .....	562
Cheveldayoff (referral to Crown and Central Agencies Committee) .....	564
<b>Bill No. 24 — <i>The Liquor Retail Modernization Consequential Amendments Act, 2016</i></b>	
Forbes .....	564
Cheveldayoff (referral to Crown and Central Agencies Committee) .....	564
<b>Bill No. 25 — <i>The Wakamow Valley Authority Amendment Act, 2016</i></b>	
Rancourt .....	565
Cheveldayoff (referral to Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice Committee) .....	567

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