



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

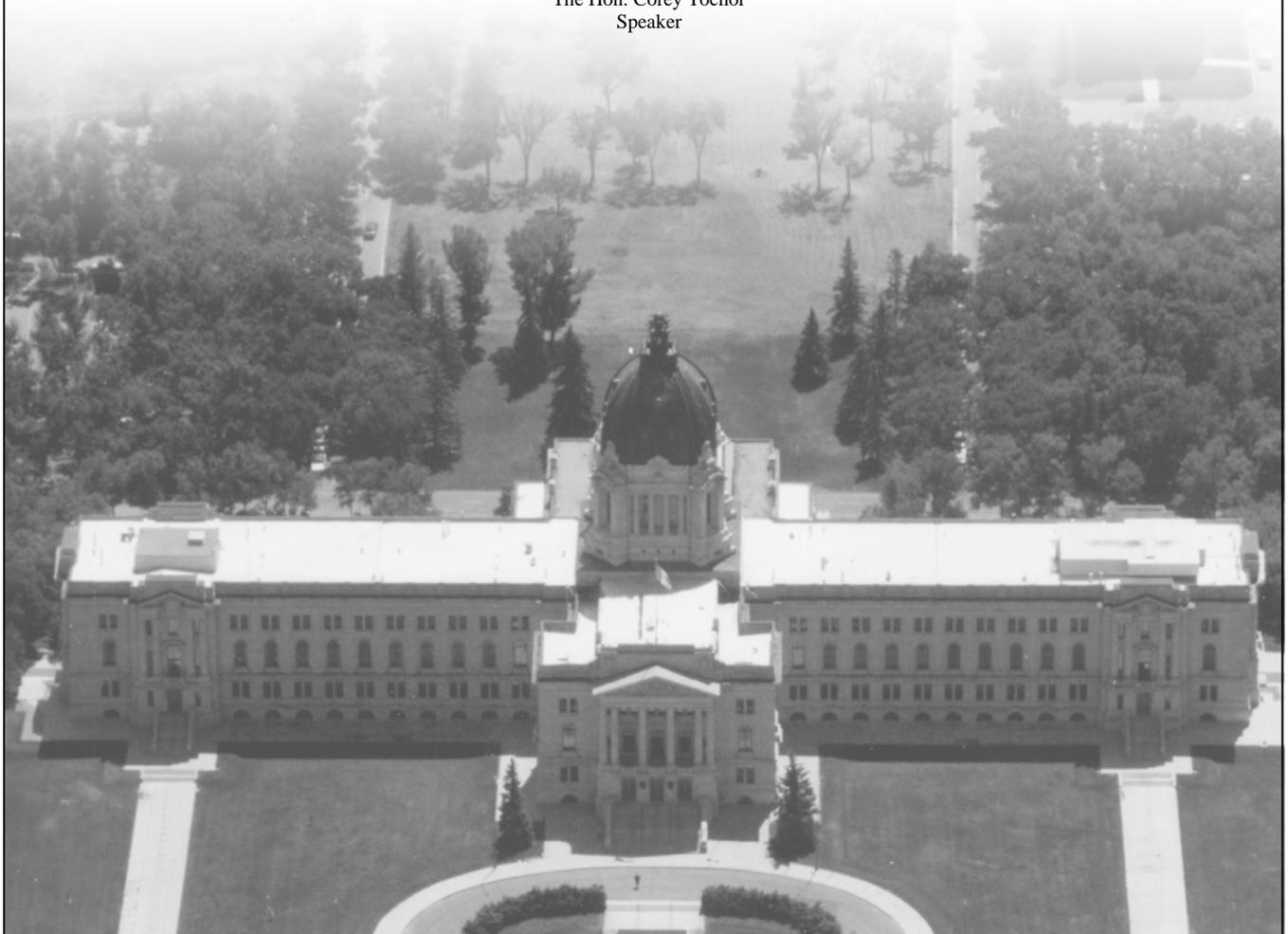
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(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

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Wilson, Hon. Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (SP)

Wotherspoon, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)

Wyant, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)

Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

Party Standings: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 50; New Democratic Party (NDP) — 10; Independent (Ind.) — 1

Clerks-at-the-Table

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Later this day . . . with leave for an extended introduction please.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Later this day, the Minister Responsible for SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] will be introducing measures so that our province can react in a more effective way and be proactive in a more effective way on the issue of driving while impaired in this province.

Mr. Speaker, we have the dubious distinction in Saskatchewan of being a national leader in this regard. And we are reminded today with great clarity as to the implications, the results, from the fact that this province leads in this dubious way because quite literally drinking and driving kills people. And so, Mr. Speaker, I think the minister responsible will also want to introduce the group that's with us, but permit me please to introduce some very brave families who have joined us today who were here earlier today for the announcement, the technical briefing, by the minister.

In no particular order, Mr. Speaker, I want to introduce, sitting in your gallery, Louis and Linda Van de Vorst and their daughter Angie White. We know well the Van de Vorsts lost their son Jordan, daughter-in-law Chanda, granddaughter Kamryn, and grandson Miguire this past January.

As well we have with us today, and no stranger to the Assembly itself, Allan and Melanie Kerpan are here. They have both been very courageous in speaking out for change in Saskatchewan. They lost their daughter in October of 2014.

We are joined, I believe, as well in the gallery by Craig and Bonnie Stevenson. The Stevensons' son Quinn was killed in August of 2013.

And we have family and friends of Tanner Kaufmann that are here with us today. Tanner was taken from us just last month by an impaired driver. Tanner's wife, Alyscia, and friends Dave Limacher and Catharine Yates join us today, as well as Brent is here now. I believe he stayed with us as well.

Mr. Speaker, these families know better than anyone on the floor of the Assembly the costs of drinking and driving in Saskatchewan. They have been very courageous in the case they have made for change. But you know, all of the laws, all of the

tougher administrative restrictions that we can place so we can empower our law enforcement and traffic officers to bring to bear upon drivers and onto the roads of our province, all of that just pales in comparison to what we could accomplish in Saskatchewan if we just stopped this, if we just resolved that this was absolutely unacceptable.

So there'll be much more to say on this, I know, later on, and I appreciate the fact the opposition will as well. But I do want to ask all members if they would please welcome these courageous friends and families to their Legislative Assembly today to witness this historic day in the Legislative Assembly.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to introduce another very special guest in your gallery that has joined us today. With us on her first official visit to Saskatchewan is Ms. Caroline Saunders. Ms. Saunders is the British Consul General in Calgary. Accompanying Ms. Saunders are Melinda Carter and Anne McRorie. Those are folks with our Intergovernmental Affairs office. Mr. Speaker, Ms. Saunders was appointed to her position earlier this year. She is a career diplomat. She's served in Kuala Lumpur, in Delhi, in Brisbane. Most recently she has served as the head of global challenges and innovation, and the head of global low carbon growth at the Foreign & Commonwealth office in London.

Mr. Speaker, the consul general has a busy schedule during her stay here in our capital city. I'm going to be meeting with her a little bit later on. As well I think the Lieutenant Governor will also be meeting with her later on. We hope actually to be both very busy, the Lieutenant Governor and I and all members of the House, on some legislative work that we're going to do, but we're going to work this meeting in.

Mr. Speaker, she will also meet with officials from SaskBuilds, Innovation Saskatchewan, SaskPower and the two universities, as well as the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership. I believe she had a meeting already today with the Minister of Agriculture. The schedule is a reflection of the specific interests of the consul general, namely energy, carbon capture and storage, climate change and innovation, and student exchanges.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we want to welcome her to this Assembly today. We want to welcome her to the province of Saskatchewan and wish her well in her work representing the mutually beneficial relationship that has existed for many, many years and will continue to exist between the province of Saskatchewan and the UK [United Kingdom]. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise with the Premier here today and recognize these courageous families that have endured a loss that we can only imagine. And I thank them for joining us at our Assembly here today.

We have so many that have endured so much, and heartbreaking losses that have occurred. We've had moms and dads and friends and neighbours and brothers and sisters and sons and daughters that have been stolen from their families and

from communities.

And we need not only to stand together and to show respect to these families that are enduring a loss that many of us can only imagine, but to work to make improvements, which is why the work that we'll be undertaking here today is important and, reflecting the words of the Premier here as well, why it's so important that we each play the role that we can on this front.

And without a doubt, we have to address the problem of drinking and driving within Saskatchewan. It's taken far too many from so many across our province. We each play that role and we need to work together. We have some legislation that we'll be talking about here today and advancing, but again each and every one of us needs to take this on in our own lives and with our own relationships as well.

I can only imagine the courage that it takes for these families to be here today, and I want to thank them for coming. It does help all of us as a problem . . . respond to a problem that needs to come to an end.

And here we have, as have been introduced, Mr. and Mrs. Van de Vorst. Thank you for being here. We have Mr. and Mrs. Kerpan, somebody that's served our province and our country here as well. Mr. and Mrs. Stevenson are here also. And then we have Tanner Kaufmann's family here also: his dad, Brent — thank you for being here — and his wife, Alyscia, friends Catharine Yates, Cathy Yates, and Dave Limacher.

And I guess just as a point, I don't know, didn't know Tanner incredibly well, but I did have the privilege in my life to get to know Tanner. He was a special individual. And I know, as described by his friends, he was — and family — he was somebody that was loyal and loving. In the ways that I knew him, he was always someone incredibly interesting, incredibly caring, taking on all sorts of adventure, an avid hunter and fisher, incredible with his two young boys, a great hockey player, and just a really good friend to so many.

We stand together. I think of this family and as I say, we each have a role to play. And we'll do our part as legislators here today for these families — for those that have been lost, and for all those that are living — to make sure that we have the protections in place and to change this horrible culture that's taken far too many from people all across the province.

While on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I would also like to welcome the British consul from Calgary to Saskatchewan. Your presence is important and it's valued. We have a long and historic relationship with Britain as a province, a valued relationship that dates back to the signing of our treaties with indigenous peoples and one that extends on so many other fronts, including standing together against tyranny and abuse and standing together for peace, for human rights.

And we've fought together on these fronts for well over a century, Mr. Speaker. We have a lot in common and a lot to share and a lot that can be accomplished together. I know during the Second World War, of course, we had hundreds of British pilots that came to Saskatchewan and received care and training here in the province. And so many of our brave soldiers trained in Britain, including my grandfather, and fought. And

some died alongside the Allies from the United Kingdom in places like the beaches of Normandy.

So this is a relationship that's lasting, a relationship that's valued. And through your visit here today and through your meetings, this is a relationship that will continue to grow and to strengthen. Those mutual ties that bind will continue to bring benefit to the people of Saskatchewan, the people of Canada, and to the people of the United Kingdom. So thank you very much for your presence here today.

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

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition as well in welcoming some families who I've had the privilege of spending some time with over the past couple of weeks and some time with this morning as a group. I was very honoured to be able to spend this time with them and meet with them and talk with them and hear their stories. And it's very moving, I tell you, Mr. Speaker. It's been very moving.

Joining us today are the families of Jordan, Chanda, Kamryn, and Miguire — that's Lou and Linda Van de Vorst — as well, the families of Danille Kerpan, Allan and Melanie; the family of Quinn Stevenson, Craig and Bonnie Stevenson; and the family and friends of Tanner Kaufmann: Alyscia Kaufmann, his father Brent, as well as his friends Dave Limacher and Catharine Yates. And I say their name first, Mr. Speaker, because they were real people and we can't treat them as though they were just statistics. They were real people and these families up there loved them dearly.

So, Mr. Speaker, these families know very well the devastation caused by impaired driving, and they suffer through it every day. They're getting stronger. They're taking action, and they're being strong advocates against drinking and driving on behalf of their loved ones that they've lost, Mr. Speaker. And I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming them to your gallery. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Assembly, it's my pleasure to welcome three guests in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. With us today are Dr. Rob Haver, Dr. Amanda Waldner, and Dr. Brent Janzen. They're here today from Moose Jaw, Mr. Speaker. They join us following a meeting that we had this morning in my office with the two MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for Moose Jaw.

These doctors, Mr. Speaker, are from Moose Jaw. They're products of our post-graduate residency position training that happens in Moose Jaw. As you know, we have residency positions outside of our major centres, and they completed in Moose Jaw and they continue to practise there, Mr. Speaker. We had a great discussion, look forward to hearing more about their experience in members' statements to come from the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow, Mr. Speaker.

But one thing of encouragement to me as we were meeting —

and Dr. Janzen actually communicated this, but I think it's the sentiment of most family medical practitioners if not all, I know of the three in attendance today — he called himself a friend and an advocate of patients, Mr. Speaker. And I think that's so commendable, that our practitioners do think that way, and they do serve our people in our province so very well.

We did communicate congratulations to them, but I thought more appropriate, Mr. Speaker, was a sincere thank you on behalf of the government, but mainly on behalf of the people of our province, that they've taken up this task of being a family practitioner but also choosing to practise in a rural setting, Mr. Speaker. So I ask all members to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly and bid them thank you.

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

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have, seated in the west gallery, 23 students from MacNeill School. These grade 7 and 8 students are accompanied by their teacher Ms. Alana Nelson, and educational assistant Ms. Kari Deics. We also have as a member of this school group a very special student, Drayden Hornoi. Drayden, do you want to give us a wave? Yes, Drew asked me to say . . . and make sure that we had you acknowledged in the House today. So thank you very much.

[13:45]

So please welcome each and every one of these students to the Legislative Assembly. I will be meeting with them later on after question period to have a wonderful discussion that they would be able to . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . No, I'm not buying them ice cream. Drinks. But we're going to have a fulsome discussion on their opinions of question period today. So with that, I would like everyone to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

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

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the Government of Saskatchewan to take the necessary steps to stop the federal government from imposing a carbon tax on the province.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the citizens of Marshall, Lloydminster, Battleford, Frenchman Butte, Dinsmore, Wiseton, Rapid View, St. Walburg, Paradise Hill, Martensville, Lone Rock, and Maidstone. I do so present.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition regarding wetlands in the province of Saskatchewan. Wetlands are home to wildlife, including waterfowl. They clean the water running off of agricultural fields. They protect us from flooding and drought. And they are a playground where families can explore and play. In the worst cases, such as some areas on the prairies, as much as 90 per cent of our wetlands have disappeared. Sound wetland policy will allow Saskatchewan to provide sustainable development for all sectors of business in the province. The prayer reads as follows:

They 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 the environmental harm whenever 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.

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by citizens from Saskatoon and Regina. 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 Wakamow Valley Authority. And we know that as a result of the passage of *The Wakamow Valley Authority Amendment Act, 2016* on June 30th, the Wakamow Valley Authority in Moose Jaw lost its statutory funding of \$127,000 from the Saskatchewan government, in addition to \$30,000 of supplementary funding. This loss of annual funding negatively affects the ability of Wakamow to maintain its lands or repair its facilities and provide services to its community in Moose Jaw. This funding resulted in a layoff of one-third of park staff, which included two summer students and two regular employees.

But, Mr. Speaker, on June 21st, 2016 the provincial government, including the two members from Moose Jaw, voted in favour of this bill, resulting in cuts to Wakamow and subsequent job losses. I'd like to read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

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

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your

honourable Legislative Assembly call on this government to immediately repeal *The Wakamow Valley Authority Amendment Act, 2016* and reinstate statutory funding to the Wakamow Valley Authority.

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

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

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to present to you a petition condemning the Sask Party's cuts to the SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability] program. After nearly a decade of wasting the economic boom and blowing through the savings, the government is now forcing the province's most vulnerable to pay for the Sask Party mismanagement.

The Sask Party's latest cold-hearted cut will take money away from people who are unable to work due to a disability. Many of these people who are being hurt by this Sask Party cut live with serious illnesses such as multiple sclerosis, cancer, autism, among other illnesses. And contrary to the Minister of Social Services's claims, the government underfunds clients in regards to shelter allowance, and that shelter allowance should be reflective of the current rental costs. I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Saskatchewan Party government to stop their plan to cut the SAID funding and immediately restore funding for those living with a disability; that shelter allowance is reflective of the current rental costs; and that the Sask Party government implement the recommendations of the advisory group on poverty reduction.

These petitions were signed by residents from Saskatoon and Wynyard. I do so present.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition regarding child care centres in Saskatchewan. Those signing this petition wish to draw attention to the following: across Saskatchewan, licensed non-profit child care centres are taxed inconsistently. Many of our licensed non-profit child care centres pay commercial taxes, and this is not done in Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, BC [British Columbia], or New Brunswick.

Child care is essential to the economy yet most centres struggle to balance their budgets. This issue threatens both the number of child care spaces and also the quality of care. Quality child care has an enormous positive economic benefit on a child's future outcomes and yields a high rate of economic return. Child care centres are institutions of early learning and childhood development, and it is appropriate that they have the same tax treatment as schools. I will read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request

that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan recognize that licensed non-profit child care centres provide programs that are foundational to a healthy society by including them in the Saskatchewan education Act and to exempt all licensed non-profit child care centres in Saskatchewan from property tax through changes to the appropriate legislation.

Mr. Speaker, those signing this petition today are citizens of Carrot River and of Yorkton. I do so submit.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition calling for a stop to the Sask Party sell-off of SaskTel. Among other things, the petitioners point out that in the last five years alone, SaskTel has returned \$497 million to support government programs and services like education and health care. They point out that SaskTel is an important part of building a stronger and fairer Saskatchewan together. And they point out that once SaskTel is gone, there's no getting it back and there's no telling what else the Sask Party will then sell. Mr. Speaker, in the prayer that reads as follows:

The petitioners respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Saskatchewan Party government to keep their promise, stop their plan to sell off SaskTel, and keep our valued Crown corporation in the hands of the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this particular batch of petitions is signed by individuals from Cabri, Lancer, and Swift Current. I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition to stop the redirection of funding of the Northern Teacher Education Program Council, Inc. A recent report shows that 94 per cent of the NORTEP [northern teacher education program] grads found employment in the North. NORTEP has improved teacher retention rates in the North. NORTEP has a positive economic impact in northern Saskatchewan.

NORTEP provides highly qualified, face-to-face instruction and service to students. The province's financial deficit cannot be fixed by cutting indigenous education in the North and a program that has served the North for over 40 years. And the prayer reads:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Saskatchewan Party government to immediately restore their five-year agreement to fund the Northern Teacher Education Program Council, Inc. and continue to fund NORTEP/NORPAC programs in La Ronge.

It is signed by many good people of the North. I so present.

The Speaker: — Why is the member from Rosthern-Shellbrook on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Moe: — I'd ask leave for an introduction.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the member.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you and to all members of the Legislative Assembly, I see just entered into the Assembly is Ms. Jenn Bustin from the community of Spiritwood. And I know Jenn has some questions and concerns with respect to her daughter. And I would just ask all members to welcome Jenn to her Legislative Assembly here in the capital city of Regina.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you. With leave, I'd like to make an introduction.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the member.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of this Legislative Assembly, I'd like to join with the minister or the member in welcoming Jenn to her Legislative Assembly. She's also here with a supporter and an advocate as well, so I understand that . . . and I know we've had the opportunity to speak a few times on some concerns that she has with respect to the health care field and how it's impacted her daughter, and not just her daughter but all people in Saskatchewan with similar afflictions. So I'm happy that you're here today and partaking in your Legislative Assembly. I ask that all members join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Action in Response to Tragedy

Ms. Rancourt: — Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise in the Assembly today to bring attention to yet another death by suicide in northern Saskatchewan. Six girls have taken their own lives in the last number of weeks. Six families are in mourning and are left to wonder what these precious lives could have been and what potential these children could have reached.

But, Mr. Speaker, the causes of these deaths aren't a mystery. They aren't anything new. These deaths are the result of generations of colonial violence, generations of governments that sought that destroy indigenous families and build barriers to block indigenous peoples from reaching their full potential, barriers like the *Indian Act*, the pass system, the peasant farming policy, residential schools, the Sixties Scoop, and the underfunding of First Nations schools and child welfare

agencies that continues to this day.

But there is a way forward, Mr. Speaker. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's calls to action offer us a path to partnership between indigenous and non-indigenous communities, one based upon the treaty relationship and mutual partnership. That's the path we all need to embrace if we're ever going to see an end to these tragedies in our province.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all the members to join in calling for immediate action to address this long-standing crisis.

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

Diwali Celebrations

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I had the privilege of bringing greetings to the 2016 Regina Diwali festival for the last two Sundays. This is where the local Indo-Canadian community join together to celebrate this major festival.

Mr. Speaker, Diwali is known as the festival of lights, and it takes place every fall. It's a significant day that includes five days of preparation where often you see people refreshing their homes. On Diwali night, people dress in their best and light up the inside and outside of their homes, their offices, and their cultural centres.

Mr. Speaker, it was an evening of dancing and singing and great food and celebration, but best of all it was spending time with amazing people. Diwali has come to be considered an opportunity to show our community the richness of their culture.

Mr. Speaker, this festival is bright. It's fun. It's full of energy and friendship. But best of all, it's also a celebration of good over evil. So it's fitting that the festival of lights signifies victory over darkness and hope over despair. Now this is a very important reminder to all of us.

Mr. Speaker, last night was a demonstration of diversity in our province. And, Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members in this Assembly to join with me in wishing everyone Happy Diwali, and also Happy New Year in India.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This Saturday, alongside Opposition Leader Trent Wotherspoon and over 700 other members from the community, I was honoured to attend the Hindu Temple to celebrate Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights, and mark the 25th anniversary of the temple's opening.

Diwali is celebrated across the globe every year on the 15th day of the month of Kartika in the Hindu calendar. It spiritually signifies the victory of light over darkness, good over evil, knowledge over ignorance, and hope over despair. Alongside many others, I found great meaning and took great inspiration from these words. Celebrating the light, Diwali is an upbeat festival of sights and sounds, and on Saturday we were treated

to an abundance of delicious sweets, cultural entertainment, and stunning fireworks.

[14:00]

I want to acknowledge the hard work and hospitality of Yashu Bither, the president of the Hindu Samaj of Southern Saskatchewan, and thank him for hosting a fantastic celebration and for the great work he does throughout the year. Yashu also was my dance partner at the India Supper Night last month but lucky for him and everyone at the temple, no one had to suffer my dance moves this time.

I ask members to join me in congratulating the Hindu Temple of Regina, a cultural and spiritual staple in our community, on their 25th anniversary and a successful Diwali celebration.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Provincial Secretary.

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Hon. Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As members may know, October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Each year many Saskatchewan businesses, organizations, and families go out of their way to raise funds and awareness about the impact of breast cancer and the need for continued research and support.

Two of the many fundraisers this month were CIBC [Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce] Run for the Cure events in Saskatoon and Regina which helped the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation raise an estimated 17 million across Canada.

We are proud of the work of the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency, including the screening program for breast cancer which has saved lives by providing mammograms for the past 26 years, Mr. Speaker. Screening and early detection are among the best defences against breast cancer. The screening program performs approximately 39,000 mammograms through its clinics in Regina and Saskatoon, satellite offices in six communities, and a mobile unit that travels to rural and on-reserve locations. Approximately 200 cancers are diagnosed through the program annually. Our government's commitment to the fight against cancer is strong, providing more than double the amount of funding since 2007.

Every family is affected by breast cancer. My own mother passed away from this disease. Mr. Speaker, I would like to remember all the brave women and men who have been touched by breast cancer. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

New Physicians Choose to Stay in Moose Jaw

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week it was announced that dozens of new physicians had recently begun practising in Saskatchewan following the successful completion of the SIPPA [Saskatchewan international physician practice assessment] program and the postgraduate medical program at the U of S [University of Saskatchewan].

In 2014, the University of Saskatchewan expanded its family

medicine residency program to the Five Hills Health Region. Mr. Speaker, this expansion allowed four individuals to complete their family medicine residencies right in Moose Jaw. Three of those doctors are here with us today: Dr. Rob Haver; Dr. Brent Janzen; and Dr. Amanda Waldner. I'm proud to announce that all four physicians who completed their residency in Moose Jaw, including the three with us here today, have decided to stay and practise in Moose Jaw.

Overall, Mr. Speaker, the retention rate of family medicine graduates trained at the U of S has jumped by 17 per cent over the last three years to 75 per cent. Drs. Waldner, Haver, and Janzen are great examples of the success of our government's efforts to recruit and retain local medical grads, especially in rural communities. I ask all members to join me today in welcoming these new doctors to Moose Jaw and in thanking them for choosing to stay in our province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

SaskBuilds Wins Silver at International P3 Awards

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In 2012, SaskBuilds was created to modernize how our province builds its roads, schools, and hospitals. Mr. Speaker, four years later, a team at SaskBuilds is being internationally recognized as world leaders. It is my pleasure to inform the House that last week at the 2016 International P3 Awards, SaskBuilds was awarded the silver medal for Government Agency of the Year in the Americas. This award is considered among the most prestigious in the industry.

In receiving silver, SaskBuilds outperformed the national agencies of Brazil, Colombia, and Honduras, as well as state and city authorities from the US [United States] and Canada. And it's no wonder. In only four years, SaskBuilds' four P3 [public-private partnership] projects have saved taxpayers \$586 million — that's \$586 million, Mr. Speaker — provided work to over 190 local businesses, and supported 12,500 construction jobs.

The first P3, a long-term care home in Swift Current, finished on time and on budget this spring. The remaining projects, including 18 schools, a mental health hospital, and 464 kilometres of road, are also on track. This well-earned recognition is a testament to the professionalism of our public service.

Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members of this Assembly to join me in congratulating SaskBuilds for winning this prestigious award and literally breaking new ground in the world of infrastructure. Thank you.

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

Hindu Temple Hall Opening

Mr. Parent: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently I had the pleasure of attending and bringing greetings at the opening of the newly expanded Hindu temple hall in Saskatoon. This

celebration was co-hosted by the Hindu Society of Saskatchewan and the temple expansion committee.

Mr. Speaker, the temple, which first opened in 1985 and has been expanded once before, is a beautiful example of Hindu architecture. In addition to its role as a place of worship for Saskatoon's Hindu community, the temple is also an important community hub which hosts music events, yoga classes, language classes, and youth activities. The years of hard work and fundraising that led to the temple expansion is a testament to the Hindu community's work ethic and dedication to volunteerism.

Mr. Speaker, as we know, Saskatchewan's motto is "from many peoples, strength." The Hindu Society of Saskatchewan has made numerous contributions toward strengthening our communities and improving our quality of life of Saskatchewan people. By adding to our province's cultural diversity and promoting a more harmonious society, our growing Hindu population is contributing to the Saskatchewan continued growth.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating the temple expansion team committee and the Hindu Society of Saskatchewan on the inauguration of the temple hall expansion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Prevention of Youth Suicides

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, my heart breaks as I rise again in the House to speak of another young life lost in the North. Just yesterday we heard of a sixth child overcome by despair and darkness. The immensity of this issue has brought it to the nation's attention. But as those in the North will tell you, this isn't new. Each and every year there are far too many funerals for suicides.

The minister has said, "... working closely with the northern regional health authorities to fully implement suicide protocols and mental health and addictions services." Mr. Speaker, that is important, but it's not the entire solution. There are long-standing inequities and inadequacies, too often dismissed by government, that require immediate, long-term action to address this epidemic — through education, through justice, through community health and recreation, through the economy.

Will the Premier commit today to ensure immediate support and real, long-term action and funding that supports the North and builds hope and opportunity?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Hon. Leader of the Opposition for the question. I think when we all received the news of this latest tragic death, we were all suitably motivated to ask the very questions that he's asking of the government today. And I want to share with members of the House that the short answer to his question is,

yes I can commit to the fact that we will continue to deploy existing and new resources in the North on this particular issue. There is a long list of actions that are under way now, and I'll get through as many as I can, but can also provide them to members of the House in any other manner that might be requested, Mr. Speaker.

Since October 12th, 2016 a regional emergencies operation centre has been established at La Ronge and Stanley Mission to aid in better planning and coordinating service and action on the part of the government. The Ministry of Health is working with the northern regional health authorities to fully implement suicide prevention protocols and northern medical officers working to understand the patterns and be able to plan appropriate services. Information's being provided on northern radio, informing people where they can go to help. And we could use this platform to highlight that anyone experiencing any depression or suicidal thoughts can call our HealthLine. It's 811. And the Kids Help Phone is 1-800-668-6868.

Mr. Speaker, there is a long list of specific actions we're also taking to fund within the budgets of Health and Social Services and Justice which I can provide to members of the House as well.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the words of the Premier. But we need immediate and urgent assistance, action to follow the words, and to bring the whole range of funding and supports to address long-standing and too often dismissed inequities and inadequacies that have devastated so many. Mr. Speaker, these kids need our help. The leaders in the North are doing their part. Now we need to have our government act also to stop cutting and start investing in these communities and in these kids. Mr. Speaker, this tragedy may be centred in the North, but it grips all of us.

Tomorrow marks the first day of work for our new child and youth advocate. As one of the steps, Mr. Speaker, just one of the steps, will the Premier join our call to have the northern crisis be the first priority considered by the child and youth advocate, remembering though that that doesn't take away from this Premier and that government's need to act with meaningful long-term supports and funding?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again I thank the member for his question. And I would indicate very much support in principle for the idea that Mr. O'Soup's first order of business would be the plight of northern youth in particular and with specific focus on the issue of depression and suicides that we've seen and the attempted suicides.

Mr. Speaker, our government has moved to increased support for northern CBOs [community-based organization]. We've doubled that since 2007. And with respect to suicide prevention in the North in particular, there has been the participation in the embracing life committee, where Government Relations has funded 17 community-based suicide prevention initiatives through embracing life committee. That has been a \$277,000 investment over in the past two years with that continuing.

Since last year in '15-16 the number of in-person clinics — in other words, not remote clinics obviously, Mr. Speaker — scheduled for northern Saskatchewan has increased by 59 per cent, appropriately resourced by government so that would be the case. This does not include the Telehealth psychiatry services that have been offered. There's currently one child psychiatrist and two adult psychiatrists who provide services via Telehealth.

There's a partnership resource by the government with trainers from Northern Lights School Division to provide suicide prevention training to staff. Keewatin Yatthé RH [regional health] will continue to provide ASIST [applied suicide intervention skills training], that's the acronym, suicide prevention at least four times in a year, in this next year. That's also being resourced by the government. There's a long list of things.

The bottom line is we do want to act. We have been backing up words with actions and obviously, obviously more needs to be done. I congratulate local leaders in the North. The government is fully seized of this issue. I think the child advocate should focus on this particular issue early on in his term. And I look forward to the next question, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Support for Northern Communities

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad to hear that there's finally acknowledgement of the serious issue, that this is a tragic time for all of us. But the answers go deeper. Research and experience shows us the connection between youth suicide and the autonomy of indigenous communities. Working on reconciliation and empowering communities is a large part of that solution. But when our current Health minister was asked about implementing this TRC [Truth and Reconciliation Commission] recommendations, he said, "If there are things that make sense and we can do them relatively quickly, that's what we should do."

Mr. Speaker, thousands and thousands of consultations were undertaken with indigenous communities and residential school survivors for the TRC. They were not done so provincial ministers could decide what made sense to them. If this government really isn't willing to listen, if they really aren't willing to work with the indigenous communities, if they are only going to do what is quick and easy for them, then how does this government expect anything to change?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Government Relations and First Nations, Métis and Northern Affairs.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I cannot agree with the member suggesting that this government is not willing to listen.

There is a long list of the number of meetings, the list is quite extensive, of where different ministers have met with different northern leaderships as well as the leadership through FSIN [Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations]. Mr. Speaker, there has been numerous times where we have spent time in

northern communities, not just myself but a number of other ministers as well, to listen to what the northern leadership has to say. Through that, through those conversations, Mr. Speaker, there has been increased funding in education, a large focus in education through both K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] and post-secondary through the adult basic education, Mr. Speaker, and apprenticeship training. Mr. Speaker, we'll continue to listen to what they have to say and to work on initiatives that we can.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

[14:15]

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, the facts don't back up the minister's words. They've been in power for nearly a decade and have had record revenues, revenues never enjoyed by any government in the history of the province of Saskatchewan. But they didn't reinvest in the North. They cut programs and they cut hope, and they've blown through so much money with their mismanagement, their scandals, and their waste.

Mr. Speaker, one good example of that is the GTH [Global Transportation Hub] scandal which cost millions and millions and millions of dollars. These scandals matter because that is millions and millions and millions of dollars that could have been spent on schools, on hospitals, and giving hope to our communities in the North. And we know, Mr. Speaker, that the cabinet rejected the GTH the first time they saw it, and a year later they accepted it and spent those millions and millions of dollars foolishly.

So once again the question around waste: did the former minister of Government Relations, either the first or second time, stand up to defend the North or did he approve spending these valuable dollars on this horrific waste?

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, again I have to disagree with what the member opposite has said. We have doubled funding for health services in the North. There has been millions of dollars quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, spent on housing in the North. There's been a number of additional housing units.

Mr. Speaker, there has been additional funding spent for education. La Ronge enjoys a brand new school, as do a few other communities in the North, Mr. Speaker. There has been additional funding through Justice for the North, and additional funding through Social Services in the North. So, Mr. Speaker, for the member opposite to suggest that we have not been spending millions more, he would be wrong, Mr. Speaker.

As the leader of the government has said, the Premier has said, there is more work that needs to be done. We'll continue to listen. We will continue to travel to the northern communities to listen to their leadership and what they need. But, Mr. Speaker, the money has been increased substantively for northern communities.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, look at the SAID program. Look at the Buffalo Narrows Correctional Centre. Look at the NORTEP-NORPAC [Northern Professional Access College] program. Look at the housing programs, Mr. Speaker. This minister and that government have cut the North on a continual basis. They have knocked the North down time and time again. And what have they done in exchange, Mr. Speaker? They have spent millions and millions and millions on scandals, Mr. Speaker. And that's what upsets northern Saskatchewan the most.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the questions around the GTH because those scandals really attribute to the fact that they've wasted opportunity they could have reinvested in the North. This approval went to cabinet at least twice. The first time it was rejected. The second time the scandal passed, so it matters how the ministers voted because it shows a commitment to their files versus a commitment to their big donors.

So Mr. Speaker, I'm going to ask the former minister of Government Relations, did he vote in favour of the \$25 million GTH scandal, or did he actually stand up for his file and for the North?

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, again, perhaps the member opposite hasn't been able to hear the answers, but let's just talk about health in specific. Since 2007, Mr. Speaker, there has been a 45.9 per cent increase in operating funding to the Athabasca regional health authority. Since 2007 there's been a 57.8 per cent increase in operating funding for Keewatin Regional Health Authority, since 2007 an 83 per cent increase to the operating fund to Mamawetan Regional Health Authority, Mr. Speaker. That's just in health alone.

He mentioned housing, and again there has been a substantive amount of housing units that have been added to the northern communities. Mr. Speaker, there's been a number of programs. The most recent announcement of course was for La Loche where a number of units were announced. And, Mr. Speaker, I would also like to just use a quote from Bobby Cameron, the chief of FSIN, who said:

The FSIN is grateful for the changes his government made to the education system to incorporate Indigenous history, in particular Treaty education, and the work his government has done so far on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action.

Mr. Speaker, that was said by Chief Bobby Cameron on August 24th, 2016.

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

Global Transportation Hub and Land Acquisitions

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Another day of questions on the GTH land scandal. A lot of questions, not an answer from government. Let's be clear here. The cabinet met on the sale. They pushed it off once because the GTH didn't have the money. And there was no name on the deed at that point, but a

year later they approved it. Of course the \$25 million from SaskPower was now very conveniently in place, and the second Sask Party supporter's name was now on the deed. To the Premier: did no one over there find this a tad questionable?

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We've been focused on moving forward with the GTH. And to that end, I have an important announcement to make today, Mr. Speaker, which is that Doug Moen has agreed — a very distinguished former public servant who served as a deputy minister under their government and under this government — to chair the GTH going forward.

We're focused on the challenges that were identified by the Provincial Auditor. She made 10 recommendations, many of which had to do with communication between the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure and the GTH. We're going to be focused on implementing those recommendations. We accept all of them; we accept the report. And as I said, we look forward to working with Mr. Moen, a very distinguished former public servant, as the new Chair of GTH moving forward.

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

Provisions of *The Interpretation Amendment Act, 2016*

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, day after day, no one over there is willing to take accountability for anything. They want the people of Saskatchewan to just trust them on the GTH land scandal. And, Mr. Speaker, what is a promise worth these days from the Sask Party?

They promised to not privatize the Crowns, of course. Now much more than SaskTel, they're putting everything on the auction block: 49 per cent to the highest bidder. Our Crowns have been built by and for Saskatchewan people, and the people of Saskatchewan are their shareholders. Giving up control of half our Crowns will mean losing benefits for all Saskatchewan people.

Our Crowns are too important to be sold off through word play and semantic games of this Premier, a Premier that clearly doesn't have a mandate to privatize our Crowns. Will the Premier, will the Premier admit that this legislation undermines his promise and, in order to keep his promise, will he finally do the right thing and withdraw this bill?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Well, Mr. Speaker, there he goes again. We just heard in the preamble him characterizing it completely incorrectly, characterizing the changes introduced by the Minister of Justice to *The Interpretation Act* as the ability of government now, if it's passed, to sell half the Crowns. Wrong. And to lose control of the Crowns. Wrong.

In fact the exact intention of the changes is to fill a void left by members opposite. They passed this bill to guard against the privatization of the Crowns. They didn't define what it meant. So, Mr. Speaker, the bill that he's engaged in this sort of

hyperbole, and I would just say incorrect descriptions around, actually uses the World Bank definition of privatization so that no government — not this government, not any future government — can sell a controlling interest in the Crown corporations per the Crown corporation protection Act, Mr. Speaker. That's what it says. That's what the bill says.

And I would just ask him, we can engage in a debate around a minority interest expansion, but I would ask him, please on this occasion, stick to the facts. Let's deal in truth in this Assembly. Let's have an honest debate.

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

Wait Times for Child Surgery

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, it's not too much to ask for the people of Saskatchewan to be able to count on their government to keep their promises. Last week we asked about the increasing wait times for surgery. And we talked about Emily, a three-year-old who needs surgery and whose mother is worried about the long wait times for not only her daughter but for children across the province.

The minister's response that day was to send Emily's mom to a website. The website just showed the wait for Emily's surgery would be 80 weeks. Eighty weeks, Mr. Speaker. That's a lot more than the government's stated goal of three months. But, Mr. Speaker, Emily is just one of 70 per cent of people waiting over three months for ear, nose, and throat surgeries.

Will the minister agree that 80 weeks is too long for a three-year-old child who bleeds from the ears and wakes up in agony to wait for a surgery?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I see that Jennifer, Emily's mother, is here today. And I certainly can't imagine how difficult this must be, what her and little Emily are going through right now.

Last week, along with the member from Rosthern-Shellbrook who had spoken to her earlier, I had the opportunity to speak to Jennifer on the phone. At that time, Mr. Speaker, she indicated, I believe, it's tomorrow that she'd be meeting with the specialist. And I would think at that time, Mr. Speaker, that's when they would have a discussion about the priority and the wait-list and where the doctor rates it. Mr. Speaker, that's where those discussions need to take place.

To the point on the website, Mr. Speaker, what the member — I hope by accident — inaccurately portrayed that somehow I referred Jennifer to a website. That's not the case. One of my staff members who had spoken to her earlier pointed out that some time ago there was an initiative done so that people could see potentially where other specialists had shorter waiting periods. Mr. Speaker, I look forward to a follow-up question so I can continue to answer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, last week the minister said, and I quote, "... I certainly hope the member opposite isn't suggesting in any way that politicians should be deciding on who's on the wait-list."

Mr. Speaker, we've heard this line from the past minister, and it would seem that the new minister hasn't even bothered to come up with his own spin. This insinuation is incredibly disrespectful to Emily's mother, Jennifer; in fact Jenn has gone out of her way to point out that this is not just about her little girl. No child, no one should have to wait in pain for a year and a half.

No one is asking for special favours, Mr. Speaker. When will this government take responsibility for a health care system where parents can't get the care they need for their kids? And will the minister apologize for suggesting that this was about anything other than trying to fix the system?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, since we were given the privilege of forming government, we've made health care a priority. Mr. Speaker, we've increased funding by over 50 per cent since we formed government in 2007.

To the issue that the member opposite raised last week on specialists, for example, while overall there's close to 650 more doctors in the province today than there was in 2007, those are not only GPs [general practitioner], Mr. Speaker. Two hundred and ninety of those are GPs; that's a 30 per cent increase over 2007. Three hundred and forty-three more specialists, Mr. Speaker; that's a 44 per cent increase since 2007. That's not to mention other health care professionals, including over 3,000 more nurses.

Mr. Speaker, the point I was simply trying to make to the member opposite is politicians shouldn't decide where patients are in the queue. That needs to be done by medical experts. I'm glad that Jennifer is going to have an opportunity to speak to her specialist tomorrow. It's specialists that need to make those decisions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Coroner Examinations of In-Custody Deaths

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, last week I asked about the Sask Party's latest strategy to deal with the backlog of coroner's inquests: to remove the requirement for a coroner's inquest. Even though these inquests are crucial to providing transparency and justice and giving families some answers, and even though they are key to allowing the system to learn and improve, they are removing the requirement for the coroner to hold an inquest into a death in custody.

Mr. Speaker, when first asked about this legislation, both in the House and by reporters outside, the minister denied the consequences of this bill. Mr. Speaker, this legislation is short and it is clear. Why was the minister, and apparently his ministry, not aware of the content and consequences of this government bill?

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think I was very clear in the House last week. Mr. Speaker, the coroner will continue to investigate all in-custody deaths. The question as to whether or not he will hold an inquest into any particular death is now within his discretion, Mr. Speaker. And there's always the discretion within the Ministry of Justice, in my office, Mr. Speaker, to call an inquest if one isn't called.

But he will continue to investigate, Mr. Speaker, following two other investigations — one by the police, Mr. Speaker, and one by the Corrections people. And that report that he does, his investigation, will be a public document, Mr. Speaker. If, as a result of his investigation, he determines that an inquest is necessary, as with in any other death that happens in Saskatchewan, he will call an inquest.

[14:30]

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, another definition change. And while I appreciate the minister's sincerity, as one journalist pointed out, that government is now asking us to have more faith in his office and the coroner's office, and at the same time he's admitting his office dropped the ball. The minister admitted this and said:

It's a bit ironic, and I should have been better informed with respect to the legislation. I'm going to go back to my office and have a consultation with my ministry officials.

So, Mr. Speaker, has the minister had that consultation? Can he inform the House now if his position on this piece of legislation has changed, and he is prepared to withdraw this wrong and dangerous bill?

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I can inform the House that we will not be withdrawing the bill, Mr. Speaker. We have great confidence in the coroner and in the work that he does, Mr. Speaker, so there will be an investigation that's done with respect to any in-custody death, Mr. Speaker. That will be a public investigation. That will be made public. And if any circumstances arise as a result of that investigation, it gives rise to the coroner thinking then there needs to be an inquest so that he can inquire further into it, that will happen, Mr. Speaker. But we will be proceeding with the legislation and continue to have full confidence in the coroner's office to continue his work.

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

Measures to Reduce Impaired Driving

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, today impaired driving and its devastating consequences are front of mind. Last year 53 people

were killed and 562 were injured due to impaired driving. We simply must do better at addressing this issue.

The changes announced today are important, and we called for the core of them three years ago. But more enforcement on the road is a big part of this too. People need to know that they will be caught.

The combined traffic safety services Saskatchewan pilot project added an additional 60 enforcement officers to the road. This was fully phased in for 2015. Half of the funding came from the Auto Fund and is administered by SGI, one of our province's Crown corporations.

The Premier wants to be able to get rid of 49 per cent of this Crown. If SGI is sold, would there still be co-operative work to ensure that we have the enforcement on the road that we need to deal with impaired driving?

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

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member opposite for the question. Mr. Speaker, impaired driving is a top priority for this government, and we intend to, as we've seen far too many deaths on the road, we intend to deal with that. Mr. Speaker, I've had the opportunity to meet with many families of victims of impaired driving as well as representatives from Mothers Against Drunk Driving and students against drunk driving as well as various members of the police forces, municipal and RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] throughout the province.

Mr. Speaker, this is very important to this government, and we will be taking action on it very, very soon. And we will hopefully drive the numbers down from what they currently are. There's far too many, and our target will be zero deaths from impaired driving, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 42 — *The Traffic Safety (Miscellaneous Enforcement Measures) Amendment Act, 2016*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of SGI.

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 42, *The Traffic Safety (Miscellaneous Enforcement Measures) Amendment Act, 2016* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Government Insurance that Bill No. 42, the traffic safety amendment Act, 2016 be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Clerk: — First reading of this bill.

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

recognize the Minister of SGI.

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — I request leave to consider all stages of the bill immediately.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to consider all stages of the bill immediately. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. Leave has been granted. I recognize the Minister of SGI.

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 42 — *The Traffic Safety (Miscellaneous Enforcement Measures) Amendment Act, 2016*

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of *The Traffic Safety (Miscellaneous Enforcement Measures) Amendment Act, 2016*. Last year in our province, there were nearly 1,200 impaired driving collisions killing 53 people and injuring 578 others. Mr. Speaker, our government takes this issue very seriously. That's why we are taking action.

Mr. Speaker, allow me to outline the specific amendments in this bill, which built on the already significant changes we introduced back in 2014. Currently, for experienced drivers with a blood alcohol content between .04 and .08, vehicles aren't impounded until a second offence. We're changing that to impoundment on the first offence. British Columbia and Alberta have seen success with this approach of impoundment on the first offence, and we're optimistic we will see similar results.

Mr. Speaker, we're also proposing to change the zero tolerance threshold for drugs and alcohol. This is currently limited to drivers under the age of 19. Drivers age 19 to 21 are overrepresented in alcohol-related collisions compared to drivers under 19. That's why we are proposing the zero tolerance threshold apply to all drivers 21 years of age and under. Other jurisdictions such as Ontario, New Brunswick, Quebec, and Manitoba have had positive results with similar legislation in place.

Mr. Speaker, ignition interlock devices prevent drivers from operating a vehicle if they have alcohol in their system. Mr. Speaker, this legislation proposes further strengthening ignition interlock measures. These include imposing longer interlock periods for blood alcohol content over .16 or refusing to provide a breath sample, imposing longer interlock periods on second and third offences for experienced drivers over .08, imposing mandatory interlock for third or subsequent offences for new drivers with any drugs or alcohol in their system.

Mr. Speaker, along with the changes I've just outlined, I'm pleased to announce our commitment to provide \$800,000 for an additional 32 automated licence plate readers to help police catch disqualified drivers. This brings the total to 47, enough to equip all enforcement vehicles in the combined traffic services Saskatchewan pilot. This pilot involves 60 officers dedicated to traffic safety enforcement, targeting problematic roads and

intersections in central and southeast regions of the province.

Mr. Speaker, we are also providing \$500,000 for law enforcement to increase checkstops targeting impaired drivers. Knowing there will be more police checkstops provides an extra motivation for people to plan a safe ride ahead of time.

Further on the education side, Mr. Speaker, SGI is bolstering awareness of impaired driving consequences through multi-media advertising campaigns and social media channels with the goal of changing driver behaviour. Members have likely seen many of those ads which are currently running.

Mr. Speaker, we also know that distracted driving is an issue in this province. In response to recommendations from law enforcement, we are also strengthening cellphone legislation. We are changing the offence to holding, viewing, using, or manipulating a mobile device while driving instead of simply using a mobile device, which is the current wording.

There are also a few smaller housekeeping amendments, Mr. Speaker. The first includes removing all vehicle impoundment and driver licence suspension forms from the regulations and placing the requirements for them in the Act. Currently, regulatory changes are required every time a prescribed form is amended because the form is specifically identified in the regulations. These forms are primarily used by law enforcement to carry out their duties, so we want to make sure we can get them from the updated forms when required.

A final housekeeping change we're making, Mr. Speaker, is around dealer licence plates. This past February, the Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority made changes to *The Consumer Protection and Business Practices Act*, which governs companies that sell vehicles as part of their business. This resulted in the unintended consequence that several businesses and entities that regularly use dealer plates no longer qualified for them. The proposed change to this Act essentially allows SGI to continue to administer dealer plates the way it always has.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of *The Traffic Safety (Miscellaneous Enforcement Measures) Amendment Act, 2016*.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Government Insurance that Bill No. 42, the traffic safety amendment Act, 2016, be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the minister for his comments. And we've just had the opportunity to just now look over Bill 42. Mr. Speaker, not only are we ready to ensure swift passage of the bill today, members from this side of the House were ready to see certain of those measures proposed in this bill enacted over three years ago when they issued a minority opinion on the Special Committee on Traffic Safety final report.

Mr. Speaker, as was noted in 2013, to continue to ignore the profound evidence of the efficacy of a mandatory three-day impoundment of vehicles for drivers found in the warning zone

would be to risk more lives in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, as the families in your gallery know all too well, too many lives have been impacted and lost in our province due to impaired and distracted driving. To the families with us today, and all families impacted by this senseless crime, you have our deep and sincere sympathy. Please know that we will be paying close attention to ensure that the regulations associated with this legislation are robust and provide a clear path. We will also be watching to ensure that the resources needed for effective enforcement are forthcoming, adequate, and secure.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I will call upon the minister to do what he needs to do in order to provide swift passage of this bill. There will be no delay from members on our side. This legislation is long overdue.

The Speaker: — Question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Government Insurance that Bill No. 42, the traffic safety 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 Speaker: — Carried.

Principal Clerk: — Second reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this bill be committed? I recognize the Minister of SGI.

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — I designate that Bill No. 42, *The Traffic Safety (Miscellaneous Enforcement Measures) Amendment Act, 2016* be committed to the Committee of the Whole on Bills and that the said bill to be considered in Committee of the Whole on Bills immediately.

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

Principal Clerk: — Committee of the Whole on Bills.

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

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ON BILLS

Bill No. 42 — *The Traffic Safety (Miscellaneous Enforcement Measures) Amendment Act, 2016*

The Chair: — Members, the item before the committee is Bill No. 42, *The Traffic Safety (Miscellaneous Enforcement Measures) Amendment Act, 2016*. Clause 1, short title, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

[Clauses 1 to 21 inclusive agreed to.]

[14:45]

The Chair: — Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows: Bill No. 42, *The Traffic Safety (Miscellaneous Enforcement Measures) Amendment Act, 2016*.

I recognize the Minister Responsible for SGI.

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — I move that the committee report the bill without amendment.

The Chair: — It has been moved that the committee report Bill No. 42 without amendment. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Chair: — Carried.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

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

Mr. Hart: — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the committee to report Bill No. 42, *The Traffic Safety (Miscellaneous Enforcement Measures) Amendment Act, 2016* without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be read the third time? I recognize the Minister of SGI.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 42 — *The Traffic Safety (Miscellaneous Enforcement Measures) Amendment Act, 2016*

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

The Speaker: — It has been moved that Bill No. 42, the traffic safety amendment Act, 2016 be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Principal Clerk: — Third reading of this bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — At the next sitting of the House, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answers to questions 92 through 96.

The Speaker: — The Government Whip has ordered answers to questions 92 to 96. I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answer to question 97 through 100.

The Speaker: — The Government Whip has tabled answers to questions 97 to 100. I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answers to questions 101 through 112.

The Speaker: — The Government Whip has ordered questions from 101 to 112.

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 40 — *The Interpretation Amendment Act, 2016* *Loi modificative de 2016 sur l'interprétation*

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today for the second reading of *The Interpretation Act, 2016*. Members of the Assembly will be aware that *The Interpretation Act, 1995* operates as a law of general application to provide interpretative direction and assistance to all forms of statutory instruments.

This bill makes two changes to the Act, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Section 27 of *The Interpretation Act* sets out a series of definitions in terms of other bills, unless they are specifically overwritten within the text of a specific bill. For example, the terms like “bank” and “lawyer” are defined so that they don’t have to be defined in each legislative instrument that they are used in.

Mr. Speaker, this bill clarifies the term:

‘privatize’ means, with respect to a Crown corporation, the transfer to the private sector of all or substantially all of the assets of the Crown corporation, the controlling interest . . . or the operational control of the Crown corporation . . . [by a variety of listed methods].

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it will not include a winding up and dissolution of a Crown corporation or other restructuring of the Crown corporation. The bill will also provide the ability to use the regulations to add additional methods of transfer of control that will constitute privatization, if appropriate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the definition is based on the World Bank definition of privatization. It will clarify what transactions will be considered a privatization under *The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Act*. It will also clarify what the term “privatized” means in any other Act, regulation, or bylaw that uses that term going forward.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is not about privatization of any particular Crown corporation. This definition clarifies the transactions that would be considered privatization and provides government the flexibility to restructure Crown corporations while still owning them.

The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Act will continue to govern the process to be followed in the case of a privatization. With these changes, we will now have a better idea of what privatization means. Mr. Deputy Speaker, legislation without definition is meaningless. This legislation simply serves to provide clarity to legislation based on an authoritative and well-recognized definition.

Mr. Speaker, the amendments also propose to ensure that the death of the monarch would not create undue legal problems or complications in our statutes. This is an interim measure until each of these references can be changed individually. These amendments will provide that when the sovereign is a king, any reference to “queen” in the statutes shall be interpreted to mean “king” and vice versa going forward. An amendment will also be made to the standard enacting clause for legislation so that “Her Majesty” will be changed to “His Majesty” where applicable.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of *The Interpretation Act, 2016*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Justice has moved that Bill No. 42, *The Interpretation 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 rise in my place today to give our initial comments as the official opposition in reference to Bill No. 40, *An Act to amend The Interpretation Act*. And what I want to do for folks back home, those that may be tuning into this particular part of the Assembly process, is to understand what the bill is all about.

Now what happens is we know we have Crown corporations that are owned by the people of Saskatchewan: SaskTel, SaskPower, SGI. These are all Crown corporations that are owned and certainly operated for, and by, and with the people of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, we often maintain on this side of the Assembly, within the NDP [New Democratic Party] ranks, that some of these Crown corporations are very important for the people of Saskatchewan. They’re very important for the province overall.

And as a party position, the New Democratic Party position is that there should be no privatization of any of the Crowns whatsoever in any way, shape, or form, Mr. Speaker. And it's something that we certainly have continued to uphold as a party that believes in the Crowns, Mr. Speaker. So it's really important for the people of Saskatchewan to hear from the party perspective, that the New Democratic Party of Saskatchewan and the people of Athabasca always believe that the protection of the Crowns, ownership of the Crowns is so very important for the future of our province, for our children and grandchildren.

Now what this bill does, Mr. Speaker, and this is where we get kind of confused as to what the Saskatchewan Party is all about. And make no mistake, the Saskatchewan Party has a lot of conservative leanings, Mr. Speaker. We all know that half the caucus over there are either card-carrying federal conservatives, Mr. Speaker, or certainly are supporters of the Conservative Party of Saskatchewan overall.

But, Mr. Speaker, it's really important . . . Now they come along and they're talking about the Crown corporations in general. And this bill talks about, of all things, what is meant by privatization. They are playing a bit of word semantics here, Mr. Speaker, in the sense of saying, well what does the actual interpretation of privatization mean?

Well, Mr. Speaker, the question that we have on this side of the Assembly, any time you begin to meddle in those interpretations of wording within the ownership of the Crown corporations, it all denotes, certainly to my colleagues and myself, the fact that they do have a nefarious agenda when it comes to the future of our Crowns. And no matter what kind of wordsmithing or what kind of interpretation that they wish to throw our way, when it comes to privatization I'd like to echo the sentiments and comments of our current leader, the member from Regina, in which he says, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, where he says quite frankly that privatization is privatization is privatization.

Now what this bill does, Mr. Speaker, is according to the minister's initial comments, as he says, this bill creates a new definition of privatization that allows the government to wind down, dissolve, or sell up to 49 per cent of the shares of a Crown corporation without holding a referendum.

Now I want to re-indicate the gist of what the bill is all about. Bill 40, what the bill does, Mr. Speaker, is it creates a definition — a new definition — for privatization, that allows the government to wind down, dissolve, or sell up to 49 per cent of the shares of a Crown corporation without holding a referendum.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this to me, I think the point that I would raise, Mr. Speaker, is if that doesn't spell out privatization, Mr. Speaker, well let me assure the people of Saskatchewan that on this side of the Assembly, and many corners and quarters of our province of Saskatchewan, that spells privatization to many people across the province, Mr. Speaker. And this new interpretation Act that defines the word "privatize" is just silly games being played by the Saskatchewan Party to do exactly what they wanted to do all along, Mr. Speaker, is really begin the process of selling our Crowns.

Now what's really important, Mr. Speaker, is that they never went to the public on this one. In the last election, the word "privatization" didn't come along as something that they needed to interpret properly, Mr. Speaker. The Premier, the cabinet, and every candidate on that side of the Assembly that were elected, Mr. Speaker, didn't have the courage to talk to people about laws of this sort or interpretations of privatization, so they kept very quiet during the election, Mr. Speaker. They didn't mention privatization all along. They kept away from this and the Premier kept on indicating to people that that was not on the agenda. And, Mr. Speaker, a mere seven months later, we have this Act that says, well we're now trying to interpret what privatization means, Mr. Speaker.

And this is where we get a . . . It would be funny if it wasn't serious, Mr. Speaker. When you look at the whole notion of, well the World Bank, the World Bank is indicating this is what privatization means, that we're allowed to sell 49 per cent, and it's still considered not privatization, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan are not that silly.

[15:00]

Now how does this affect our communities, Mr. Speaker? So let's be clear: from the party perspective, the New Democratic Party supports the continued 100 per cent ownership of all Crown corporations in Saskatchewan by, and for, and with the people of Saskatchewan. We're not going to interpret what privatization means as per the conservatives' way of dealing with this whole notion of trying to sell off Crown by Crown by Crown, Mr. Speaker. We're simply not buying that argument, Mr. Speaker, and we never will.

Now here's what the crux of the problem is, Mr. Speaker. Because the Saskatchewan Party refused to be truthful, Mr. Speaker, before the election on the future of the Crowns, Mr. Speaker, they went into the election with their lips sealed. They never had the courage to tell the people what their plan was. Now today, seven months later, they're saying, well we're going to look at this now. Now, Mr. Speaker, to me, I mean that spells out betrayal in its most purest form, Mr. Speaker. Because the bottom line is because you don't have the courage to tell the people the exact fact of what you had planned for the Crown corporations, then perhaps you should have been more forthcoming with your position. And you chose to not say anything, Mr. Speaker.

Now what I want to point out to the people out there in Saskatchewanland what exactly are the values of the Crown? And I can tell you from my perspective and my history that, as you manage the provincial economy of Saskatchewan, as you look at some of the challenges facing the economy overall, you've got to make sure that there's a role for large corporations and the small business community to thrive in Saskatchewan. We understand that on this side of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker. We know that investment by a wide variety of companies — big and small and certainly medium — are very necessary to our economy.

We also know, Mr. Speaker, that we've got to have a good balance between making sure that we support and protect the labour force that's going to help these resource-based companies develop these opportunities. We understand that as

well. That's the second most important cylinder in this whole economic engine that we're trying to build here in the province of Saskatchewan. So that's really, really important.

So we lay it out as a New Democratic Party. There's three or four pieces that are pretty crucial to the future of our economy, pretty crucial to the future of continuing to look at Saskatchewan, and promoting a better and brighter future for many people to come to our province and to make it their home.

So what's really important, Mr. Speaker, is that you have a good atmosphere or a good environment to invest for big, small, and medium-sized businesses, Mr. Speaker. It is important for us to make sure that we have the proper skilled labour force, that we also protect that labour force through organizations, and certainly the collective strength of things like unions, Mr. Speaker. They're also really important because the unions have to make sure that they protect their workers. They're there for the workers, and their rights need to be incorporated. And some of the things that we're doing to really stimulate our economy all provide services, Mr. Speaker.

The third part, which is really important, it's incumbent upon governments, Mr. Speaker, to try, and part of their process to create the environments to make sure that we take care of our environmental challenge as well — that there's water, there's air, there's oil, there's soil. There's all these issues that we have to incorporate.

And when we looked at issues, Mr. Speaker, that talked about investment for Saskatchewan, the environmental guidelines were pretty darn important as well because people obviously expect that. Because a good example on the Husky Oil spill, Mr. Speaker, there was a number of communities that were in an uproar. They wanted to see what was going on. How did this happen, look at the damage that was created, look at the cost for the city of Prince Albert and some of the First Nations along the Saskatchewan River watershed, Mr. Speaker. These were some of the issues that really came to bear and really came to light when this whole oil spill occurred, Mr. Speaker.

So it's important that people understand there's four or five moving parts to building the economy of Saskatchewan. As I said, one is of course to make sure we have a good climate to attract investment, again from big, small, and medium-sized business, that we do our best to ensure that the workforce is available to help drive the economy forward by making sure that there's some good representation that protects workers' health, workers' benefits, and of course, salary as well because they're all part of the economy, Mr. Speaker. And also of course, you look at the environmental protection of any development. That's also an important consideration when designing the economy of the province of Saskatchewan.

Now the fourth cylinder, Mr. Speaker, if you will, in this economic engine-building process, is our Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker. I want to sit and talk about the Crown corporations for just a minute because it's all interconnected. The province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, has the opportunity to enjoy ownership of a number of Crown corporations.

And let me be very, very clear that these corporations, these

Crown corporations, offer a lot of benefit and value to the people of Saskatchewan. And I'll say it again: they offer a lot of value and benefit to the people of Saskatchewan. And it's no small part on their effort, Mr. Speaker, that we recognize that they have had a huge, a huge commitment to the Crown corporations — I'm talking about the employees and the managers — to make sure that some of these Crown corporations are doing what they can for the people of Saskatchewan.

And I'll go so far as to say this, Mr. Speaker, that as you look at some of the Crown corporations . . . I'll use SaskTel as an example. SaskTel is able to do what the Saskatchewan Party cannot do for the economy of Saskatchewan. SaskTel has created services, Mr. Speaker; they have created employment opportunities, and they have created profit for the people of Saskatchewan. That's something that the Saskatchewan Party cannot do, and that's where we begin to tell the people of Saskatchewan that there is a difference between the Saskatchewan Party politics and the reality of a Crown corporation called SaskTel.

So look at SaskPower, Mr. Speaker, look at SaskTel. They are able to do something that the Saskatchewan Party has not been able to do, Mr. Speaker, and that is create jobs, create profits, and create good services. And this is why, Mr. Speaker, it's totally beyond reason as to why a government would come in and try and sell these Crown corporations off from the people of Saskatchewan.

So once they are sold, Mr. Speaker, we can never get them back. That's the important argument that I have to the people of Saskatchewan that might be listening to this debate around the Crowns because it's not an interpretation debate as the Minister of Justice would have us believe, Mr. Speaker. It is clearly a definition, and privatization or not to privatize, Mr. Speaker. From our perspective, that's all we're going to add to the people of Saskatchewan. That's the angle we're taking on Bill 40. We know that's their agenda, Mr. Speaker, and no matter what the definition is, privatization is privatization is privatization.

Now, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that's really important is, look at some of the wording. This is what's really perplexing to myself as a layperson. When we use the legal jargon, I understand from the minister some of the jargon that he's used in describing this bill: transfer of control if appropriate. Like what does that "if appropriate" really mean? These are some of the wording that we look at . . . [inaudible] . . . the bill and we see some of the language that is being used, and people of Saskatchewan should be very, very worried. Because if you look at some of the legal jargon that is being used, the average person such as myself, we don't have a lot of legal background in terms of being trained or even understanding what some of the jargon means. But to me, as an everyday person, "if appropriate" . . . Well "if appropriate" by who? Or for whom? And from whom?

See, these are some of the questions I would have right off the cuff, is how do you begin the process of understanding what their intent is through *The Interpretation Act*? Because to us, if they start meddling with the definition for privatization, Mr. Speaker, it really begins to beg the question: what is their agenda? What is their agenda?

Now I want to point out, some of the people that I speak to that are conservatives in general, they tell us . . . This is what they tell us. They say, well we know the province is in debt. But you know, a lot of the conservatives folks say, well we don't like to see tax increases. A lot of them tell us that. And they also tell us, we don't like to see a lot of waste either. We kind of hate that stuff, that waste that the governments do from time to time.

And I talked to a lot of them, Mr. Speaker, and a lot of them give me some other perspectives on what they think of the debt, what they think of the Crowns. And a lot of those people that are of the conservative thinking. They think that yes, the Crowns are a good thing to have. And I ask, why? And they say, well because it gives us a certain security that our insurances won't go through the roof, as an example, with SGI. It gives us a certain perspective on, for example, power rates, that they're not going to go through the roof all of a sudden for my business or for my home. And, Mr. Speaker, these are some of the points that they make. But more importantly what they say . . . Well they talk about the security the Crown provides them. Many of the people that don't want to see tax increases highlight that as well.

But then they turn around and say the most perplexing thing to me when I ask them, well what do you think of the sale of the Crown? The vast majority of the conservatives that I speak to, Mr. Speaker, they say there's no value in selling the Crowns because they'll see the Saskatchewan Party just simply squander that money once again through mismanagement or through some of the scandals that they've been having. So what's the use of selling the Crowns if all they're going to do is play with the profit, end up wasting all that money through scandals and mismanagement, and we're no further ahead when it comes to the scheme of things?

So a lot of the conservatives share that stuff and some of their points with me. And so they, themselves, a lot of the conservatives, they tell us that the vast majority of them don't believe that the Crowns should be sold. And the reason they say that, Mr. Speaker, is for a number of reasons. Like I said earlier, these Crowns create jobs. They create services and they maintain services, Mr. Speaker. And more importantly, they create profit for the people of Saskatchewan, something that the Saskatchewan Party can't do. And that's where you begin to deviate that the lines, or certainly explain the lines and describe the lines between what a Crown corporation is and what the Saskatchewan Party stands for, Mr. Speaker.

There's no question in my mind that *The Interpretation Act* is simply a Trojan Horse to try and achieve the agenda for the people of Saskatchewan without going to a referendum, Mr. Speaker, to try and allow them to privatize where they are able to do, under the guise of *The Interpretation Act*. And I say to them, Mr. Speaker, shame on them for not coming forward with this kind of agenda. Prior to the election they should have been talking about this, but not one Saskatchewan Party MLA or candidate said a peep about this, Mr. Speaker. It's because they never had the courage to go to the people of Saskatchewan with these particular Acts and these particular bills.

Now I want to go on further about the Saskatchewan Party and how this Act, Mr. Speaker, that is going to define privatization for our Crowns, how is it going to affect the finances of our

province? How is it going to affect the finances of our province? Well we on this side of the Assembly, we maintain over time that there is a number of moving parts to our economic plan that's important. I talk about the labour unions. I talk about the investment opportunity, the environmental protection, Mr. Speaker, and the role of the Crowns.

A lot of people also say that we have to make sure we keep our taxes low. A lot of the conservative people that I sit down with talk about keeping the taxes low. But this is what I'll tell the conservative people out there that are maybe listening to this particular component of our Assembly. Number one is that if you look at the Saskatchewan Party themselves, they have put the province in debt. We all know that. We're going to find out fairly soon what that debt load is, and the vast majority, the vast majority of people know that the debt is big and it's getting bigger each day.

We know that when the Saskatchewan Party took over, they had record revenue. Debt was falling. The economy was certainly pumping on all cylinders, and the population was growing. And a scant eight years later, Mr. Speaker, we're now in debt. We are now in the hole so bad, Mr. Speaker, that Saskatchewan won't see light for the next 10, 12 years.

Now what's really important, Mr. Speaker, is that the conservative people that I speak to understand that we're going to have more debt. They understand that. And what worries them, Mr. Speaker, is how is that debt going to be paid? They don't think selling the Crowns is going to help because they believe, a lot of them believe that the Saskatchewan Party will just squander that money. It's going to be either mismanaged or it's going to be eaten up in some scandal, and six, seven years later that money that we sell the Crowns for will be gone. That's what they think right now, Mr. Speaker.

And you look at the Crown dividends. I'm talking about the taxpayers' perspective here. So if you don't have the money from the sale of the Crowns to work with, Mr. Speaker, if you don't have the dividends, the dividends that the Crown corporations give to the people of Saskatchewan each and every year. And I think the amount that we're giving to Saskatchewan each and every year, 2015 and 2016, Mr. Speaker, the Crown corporations almost returned almost \$300 million, \$300 million, Mr. Speaker — \$300 million that the Crown corporations gave to the province of Saskatchewan in 2015-2016, Mr. Speaker. So they make \$300 million for us each and every year and that's profit for the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

[15:15]

Well guess what? That profit displaces pressure on the government to go back to the taxpayer and ask them for more money. That's how simple this is for the Saskatchewan Party not to understand it. That's how simple it is. This way, and I tell a lot of my conservative friends, this way you don't have to keep going back to guys like you that are complaining about paying more taxes because the Crown corporation makes \$300 million a year for you.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we see the debt going up. We see that they want to sell off the Crowns. That money will be blown through mismanagement or scandal; we know that. That's going to

happen for certain, Mr. Speaker. And then just to add more problems, Mr. Speaker, to the future of our finances by selling off the Crowns, to add more problems, Mr. Speaker, they also, the Saskatchewan Party added a new concept to really put the nail in the coffin of the future of Saskatchewan. And those concepts are called P3s, Mr. Speaker, because we're going to be paying P3s for the rest of our natural lives in this room right now, Mr. Speaker. For the next 20, 30 years, for the next 20 or 30 years we'll be paying for P3.

And the members opposite know exactly what they're doing when they're really mortgaging the future of our province through expensive P3s. And I'm going to explain a bit later how that's connected to the Crown corporations because it's all, it's all connected, Mr. Speaker. It is all connected.

So every single year, when a company comes to Saskatchewan and says, I want to build a school, and the people of Saskatchewan kind of like that idea of having brand new schools, but they need to know . . . And that's exactly what our argument is. When the NDP proposed the P3 accountability and transparency bill, Mr. Speaker, the NDP wanted to know, what were we going to pay for these P3 deals? And accountability and interpretation, the interpretation Act for the P3s, Mr. Speaker, guess what? It didn't come out. There is no interpretation Act for the P3s. Then we asked for an accountability and transparency in the P3s. Well that didn't come out.

And surprise, surprise, a couple of years later, six months, seven months after the last election, now there's an interpretation Act for the Crown corporations of the province of Saskatchewan. And if they think they're fooling anyone, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to the backbenchers, talk to your constituents; talk to the people out there. They'll tell how they value Crowns. But they won't even have that conversation today, Mr. Speaker.

So what's really important is that as you look at the debt, the debt that's piling up under the Saskatchewan Party — and it's piling up, folks — and then you look at the fact that they have saddled future generations with expensive P3 deals from out of . . . never mind out of province, but out of country, Mr. Speaker. They've saddled the future of our province, and saddled the future generations with debt. And every single one of their names on the Saskatchewan Party caucus today will be attached to that particular aspect of how they governed in 2007 to 2016 and counting, Mr. Speaker.

That will be the sad legacy for every single member across the way. They knew this was happening. They put Saskatchewan in this predicament, and they should be ashamed, Mr. Speaker.

So now we look at this whole notion, Mr. Speaker. Look at this whole notion. The fact is they had the debt piling up. They want to sell off the Crowns so the dividends are gone. They got these P3 deals that they're going to saddle us with for a number of years in the future. And then you also have your future demands. As a community and a province, we really have some future demands that we need to meet as we begin the process of building a brand new Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

So all those factors . . . The dividends are gone. Dividends are

gone from the Crowns. Well guess what? We've got to go to the taxpayers to replace those dividends. The debt is there, Mr. Speaker. The debt is there. So guess what, people? We've got to go to the taxpayer to help cover that debt. And you look at the P3s, the expensive P3s, and we've got to pay for them, right, because these deals are signed for 20 or 30 years. Well guess what? We've got to go to that taxpayer again.

And then there's, look at future demands and needs that our province had. Well we have to go to that taxpayer again, Mr. Speaker. And there you have an embattled taxpayer that is going to be required to pay more and more and more because the Sask Party couldn't manage their way out of a wet paper bag when it comes to the economy, nor the future of our finances in the province of Saskatchewan. And that's an absolute shame, Mr. Speaker, in this day and age.

And the people of Saskatchewan are finally starting to get it. So I say to my conservative colleagues, a lot of them that I talk to, I tell them, is this what you guys really want? Because in the future, that's exactly what you're going to get.

There's only one taxpayer, Mr. Speaker. There's only one taxpayer and the Saskatchewan Party is making sure that the next 10, 15, 20, 30 years that that taxpayer is going to be required to pay more and more and more and more, Mr. Speaker. And this is one more plan that they have in their ill-advised strategy, Mr. Speaker, is to look at selling off the Crowns. Why would you sell off the Crowns? Mr. Speaker, that's what we simply cannot understand.

So as you look at all the arguments we've made and the interpretations, Mr. Speaker, it is quite frankly, it is absolutely alarming, Mr. Speaker, that they would propose this kind of concept in this day and age.

Now I look at SaskTel. I want to talk a bit about SaskTel. When SaskTel first came, Mr. Speaker, came to the North many, many years ago, it was actually a tremendous improvement to the lives of people in the North. And when we were in government, we certainly added dimensions to SaskTel. And one of these dimensions we had was, of course, the cell coverage. And SaskTel really looked at the North and the Aboriginal communities as a good place to invest.

But the fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, little did SaskTel realize how wanting the Aboriginal communities were of some of these services. Not just the everyday consumer, Mr. Speaker, but the business people and certainly the emergency preparedness people like the police and the ambulance services folks, the health care personnel. All these organizations really wanted to have cell coverage, Mr. Speaker. And as a pilot project, we undertook cell coverage to four communities in my area, Mr. Speaker. La Loche, Buffalo Narrows, Beauval, and Ile-a-la-Crosse were the first four communities that really were looked at as an opportunity for these northern communities to have cellphone coverage in my region because I think La Ronge enjoyed that already.

Now what SaskTel at the time were thinking, well how much is this going to cost to put in these services and how much could we recover? Well, Mr. Speaker, on a very limited basis, they were very careful not to project the use too high because they

wanted to make sure because . . . I won't use the word conservative but, you know, it kind of gives me a headache every now and then when I use that word. So they were trying to make sure that they were realistic in what they could expect and what they could expect for the use of the cellphone coverage. But to make a long story short, Mr. Speaker, the amount of use that SaskTel projected that the northern Saskatchewan community would use on this pilot project for the four towns I think was almost quadruple what they anticipated.

So I think it really shows the fact that the Saskatchewan people are proud of their Crown corporation. And you look at some of the commercials that we have right now, Mr. Speaker, and J.D. Power has given numerous awards to SaskTel. So we look at how they've expanded to the Aboriginal community, look at how they've served the business community, look at how they've really given a number of services in some of the areas that were underserved and remote. Look at the far North as an example, Mr. Speaker. These are valuable economic tools, being able to use a cellphone for services and just to use technology overall, Mr. Speaker.

And SaskTel has won numerous, numerous awards in a wide variety of categories that really I think depicts what our argument is, that these Crown corporations are highly valuable and they have done something that the Saskatchewan Party cannot do. They've created jobs, they've provided good services, and they've created profit for the people of Saskatchewan.

And yet these political masters, so to speak, Mr. Speaker, they want to come along and sell some of these Crowns. And how are they going to do it? They weren't bold and brave to do it during the election, Mr. Speaker. They were not bold nor brave to do this before the election, Mr. Speaker, but seven months after the writ has been dropped and they were re-elected, now all of a sudden we're hearing them scream from their seats that this is something that is pressing for the future, something that we have to do. And, Mr. Speaker, I say shame. I say shame.

So I want to reiterate to the people of Saskatchewan that are looking at this particular bill, there's one thing I think is really important that I want to say to the Premier and to the cabinet: if you want to sell a Crown corporation, how about the proposal that I have? How about we simply wait for another three years — in the scheme of time for the people of Saskatchewan, three years is not a lot of time — and let's have an election on the matter. Let's have a general provincial election where you guys state with courage, something you didn't show last time, with courage, your position on privatization, and we will state ours. And we'll have the people of Saskatchewan vote on whether they want to keep the Crown corporations as they are or whether they want to sell them off as the Saskatchewan Party is proposing to do through interpretation and bills of this sort, Mr. Speaker.

Why doesn't the Saskatchewan Party have the courage to call an election? Let's go to the people on this. Let's call an election on this issue. We'll wait three years, and see if you guys win that election. You know you won't win. So you want to do that seven months after the election? You want to do this seven months after the election? It's because you never had the courage to talk about this before the election. You lacked the

courage to tell us about our finances. You lacked the courage to tell us about the GTH scandal. You lacked the courage to tell us where the cuts were coming. And finally, Mr. Speaker, you lacked the courage to tell us what your plans were for the Crown corporations.

So I think one of the things that's really important, Mr. Speaker, is the members opposite can sit in their places and do all the catcalling they want. But what I say to them: on this side of the Assembly, we have been very clear. We have been very steadfast. We have been very firm. And we have been very definitive that there will be no privatization of any part of any Crown corporation under the NDP watch.

And if they want to play on certain words on that side of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, go ahead. But I say this to them. I say this to them. We had the conviction and the courage to say that prior to the last election. They did not. They hid behind a guise of deception, Mr. Speaker, and they refused to tell the people their true agenda on the Crown corporations. You know why, Mr. Speaker? Because they're afraid that they would lose.

And I would suggest to them, I would suggest to them, sometimes leadership is about doing the right thing. It may not be the most popular thing, but it's the right thing to do. And that's why, Mr. Speaker, when we sit here in the Assembly . . . Yes, we only have 10 members on this side of the Assembly. But rest assured, the 10 members on this side of the Assembly are . . . Their convictions around the Crown corporations are clear.

The Saskatchewan Party refused to be forthright and direct with the people of Saskatchewan on the Crown corporations prior to the election. And, Mr. Speaker, they got elected with 51 members. And I say today that if they had the courage . . . My second call for them to come to rise to the challenge of courage is, let's have a debate on this, whether the Crowns should be sold or even the interpretations changed, as suggested under this Act, to have an election within three years. I think within three years, the mandate will be clear for us to go to the polls. Let's have the election in three years.

And how about the whole notion that privatization of our Crowns being the central plank on their campaign versus our position on the Crowns being the central plank? And I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, they know it across the way. They know it very well that had they run on this last spring, Mr. Speaker, they would have lost because the people of Saskatchewan have traditionally and will always, will always support ownership of the Crowns, Mr. Speaker.

Now the Minister of Finance chirps from his chair, Mr. Speaker. And we had been waiting, we had been waiting for the minister to speak in this Assembly about the finances. And here's another example. He was one of the members that was very quiet, Mr. Speaker, during the campaign. During the campaign he was very quiet. You know why he was quiet, Mr. Speaker? Because he knew full well how bad the finances were. And they did not have him speak anywhere, Mr. Speaker. He was told, you be quiet; don't talk about the finances because if the people find out how bad a shape we're in, then we're all in trouble, Mr. Speaker.

[15:30]

And that's exactly why the Minister of Finance is chirping from his chair now, because the election's over. But the people of Saskatchewan, the people of Saskatchewan's memory will run long, Mr. Speaker. And soon after the finances of our province become very apparent, Mr. Speaker, then I suggest three-quarters of them will either not be elected or they'll head out of Dodge as quickly as they can because that's going to be their legacy, Mr. Speaker, their legacy. That's going to be their legacy, Mr. Speaker.

So if you look at this whole interpretation Act, all it is, this is a Trojan Horse for them to do what they always wanted. And you know why? We can certainly point to evidence, Mr. Speaker, is they've done this with the liquor stores, Mr. Speaker. They've done this with the Information Services Corporation. And eventually, Mr. Speaker, all Crowns are now open to this interpretation. And I would suggest to the people of Saskatchewan that the Saskatchewan Party was not honest with you when it came to their position around the Crowns, and there should be a price to pay for that, Mr. Speaker.

So again I want to go out to the taxpayers, the people out there that are concerned about this. The Crowns make \$300 million a year, \$300 million a year we take out of the dividends of the Crown. Let's set aside the amount of jobs that the Crowns create and also the services that they provide and the fact that these Crown corporations are on good financial footing. Mr. Speaker, let's talk about what the government takes from them each year, 300 million bucks. And that's a lot of money, Mr. Speaker, and once that money is gone, as SaskTel would be gone under the Sask Party's watch, then those profits will be gone too. Rest assured, once the Crown corporations are sold, they are sold forever.

And, Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the Assembly, the 10 that have been elected and the many others that should have been elected, Mr. Speaker, we will continue holding up the argument that the Crown corporations are not for sale. They are not for sale, Mr. Speaker.

But I'll say this, I'll say this, that the Saskatchewan Party didn't have the courage to come forward with their conviction around the Crown corporations or how well they've managed the finances of our province. They were very, very quiet. I suggest that 70 per cent of them didn't know what was going on anyway, to begin with. But the 30 per cent that did know were very, very quiet. Had they had the conviction, Mr. Speaker, to tell the people the true state of our finances or what their intent behind the Crown corporations or the truth behind the GTH scandal, Mr. Speaker, the makeup in this Assembly would've been radically different, Mr. Speaker. It would have been radically different.

And I think the Saskatchewan Party know that. They know that. So they didn't win on principle. They didn't win, Mr. Speaker, on their agenda. They won on keeping the true facts from the people of Saskatchewan, and I can tell you, that has a price to pay. And these are some of the examples around Bill No. 40, an Act to amend their interpretation of what privatization is all about, Mr. Speaker. Well we all know what that means on this side of the Assembly.

Now one of the things that's really, really important, Mr. Speaker, is the Premier made the notion that he was talking about the World Bank. The World Bank requires this of us; we'll follow their interpretation. Well why don't you follow what the people of Saskatchewan want? Ask them what the people of Saskatchewan want.

So they're going into this argument: the interpretation of the World Bank around privatization is, well anything below 49 per cent is fair game. So the question is, why didn't you talk about that stuff prior? Why didn't you talk about that stuff prior to the election? That's what gets people so upset, Mr. Speaker. That's what gets people so upset that they're doing this now.

And I say to the folks out there across the way, why didn't you have the courage to tell the people of Saskatchewan what your agenda was around the Crown corporations before the last provincial election? Why didn't you have the courage to tell people that's what your plans were? Because you would've all had some significant problems on your hands.

And, Mr. Speaker, when I watched on election night the results pour in, and you could almost see the Premier was shell-shocked at his celebration. He didn't think he was going to win, again, that many seats. He really didn't, Mr. Speaker. And do you know why he was shell-shocked, Mr. Speaker? Do you know why he was shell-shocked? Because he knew. The Premier knew and 90 per cent of them didn't know that now they had to pay the piper, not only on the finances, Mr. Speaker, but all the other problems that he knew were going to be hitting Saskatchewan people. But he kept, he kept all that information away from the people of Saskatchewan.

So to those conservative people that have those issues which you want to see our finances run properly, we agree with you on the NDP side. Finances should be monitored and managed properly. But we also know there's only one taxpayer. So the Crown corporations actually ease the burden on the provincial taxpayer because they share the dividends and the profits from their operation to help buffer the taxpayer from all these challenges. So, Mr. Speaker, I think what's really, really important is that they understand that and we understand that.

So I tell them again, selling off the Crown corporations, no matter how the Saskatchewan Party do it, no matter what language they create or whatever bill they propose, it's not in the best interest of anyone in Saskatchewan, even those that want to see the ... have this right-leaning or extreme right-leaning ideology. They know the value of the Crowns because the Crowns provide, as I said, they provide a level of stability to many of these people that are concerned about high taxation. They also provide what I think is important, a buffer for high taxes in the sense of giving us what we call dividends from the Crown corporations on an annual basis that really displaces the pressure that government need to put on their taxpayers.

So, Mr. Speaker, as you look at all aspects of this bill, it is a shame. It is shame. And as long as we stand here in opposition each and every day, each and every day, we stand here with conviction around the Crowns. We stand here, the fact ... knowing that the government of the day, the Saskatchewan Party government, didn't have the courage to tell the people of

Saskatchewan the true state of our finances, and certainly didn't have the courage to talk about their agendas around interpretation Acts when it comes to the privatization of our Crown corporations.

So as you look at the issues that I've raised, Mr. Speaker, it is shameful that we're seeing this particular action occur. And I'm glad to see that the Premier has joined us in the sense of indicating, Mr. Speaker, that, as he should have done prior to the last election . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Why is the Government House Leader on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — I ask the House Leader to briefly state his point of order.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Point of order. The member from Athabasca well knows that he cannot reference who is in or outside the Chamber, and I ask him to withdraw and apologize.

The Deputy Speaker: — The latest edition of the rules that have been developed over the years by the members indicates that a member may refer to an absence or presence of a member, but may not reflect on the reason why. That is something that I believe changed with the latest edition. And so I take . . . The member's point of order is not well taken. I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I would ask the Premier this question today, Mr. Speaker. We have an election plan for 2020. I would ask the Premier to accept the challenge laid down by the NDP around the future of the Crown corporations and this particular bill, *An Act to amend The Interpretation Act*. I'm going to ask the Premier of Saskatchewan that he accept the NDP challenge to have an election — maybe 2019 at the earliest convenience — to have an election on the future of the Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker, especially around SaskTel and this particular bill, what the bill is talking about. That's the important point that I will raise.

The Premier of Saskatchewan, had he had a conviction to tell the people of Saskatchewan what his plans were prior to the last election, not only around the Crown corporations but the state of our finances, Mr. Speaker, the makeup in this Assembly would have been radically different today. The Premier knows it. We know it, Mr. Speaker, and that's why I think it's important that we challenge him to the notion that they can hold off on your privatization agenda. Don't go all crazy on us on trying to privatize everything, because the bottom line is we should ask the people of Saskatchewan if they want that to happen.

So I would ask the Premier today: would he accept the NDP challenge to have an election on the future of our Crown corporations in 2019, which is probably the earliest that he could possibly hold an election? And we'll go back to the people. I say, the referendum, to heck with the referendum. Let's have an election on this, Mr. Speaker. Let's have an election on the future of our Crown corporations.

And I would challenge the Premier to do that, because obviously I think, Mr. Speaker, when I look at what happened in Alberta, I look at what happened in Alberta . . . And they've since lost their former premier. Premier Prentice certainly was a gentleman that I certainly watched in politics. And he'd done a lot of work federally and certainly provincially, and the Alberta people made him their leader and thus their premier. And over time he certainly stuck by many of the things that he believed in, Mr. Speaker. And even though we didn't share politics, I still certainly admired the courage that he had and the conviction he had to state a lot of things. And prior to the last election in Alberta, Premier Prentice basically told the people of Alberta at the time that, here's where our finances are, and we're in this really tough spot.

So we have a lot of soul searching to do. And, Mr. Speaker, Premier Prentice certainly had, I think, the conviction to tell the people the full story. And of course, as history shows, he lost the election, and certainly the bottom line is he told the people of Alberta the exact fact of where their finances were and certainly he paid the price for that.

But it came to Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, the Premier and the Finance minister knew full well. They knew full well how bad the finances were last fall. And if anybody has any experience in government knows, typically what happens is around December and maybe even November, that pretty much each department knows what to expect in the budget. And the Finance minister should know and would know exactly what to expect next year, in next year's prices, whether it would be oil or agricultural yields, and the list goes on.

So, Mr. Speaker, the Premier knew, the Minister of Finance knew, the entire cabinet knew just how bad our finances were, Mr. Speaker, six or seven months before the election. Why? Because in order for us to fit the election timetable and the election cycle, most of the predictions were on price or the anticipated income for the province of Saskatchewan. Well they have what they call budget finalization. And my experience is budget finalization was usually done in the first part of December, and of course you've got to print the budget document. So I would suspect, Mr. Speaker, and very easy to surmise right now that both the Premier and the Minister of Finance knew full well just how broke they were. And unlike Premier Prentice, this Premier decided not to share that information with the people of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, that's a shame. And what's really hurtful as well, Mr. Speaker, is the 10,000 people that were unemployed as a result of the downturn in the economy. There was no discussion around that as well.

So now we talk about the Bill 40, *The Interpretation Act*. And I think it's really, really important that this be part of the argument that we're making around the courage and conviction of the Saskatchewan Party on not only maintaining our finances but protecting our Crowns.

Now the World Bank, if you go to ask anybody around any particular community in the province, and I'm talking about . . . This is a good example I use. Many, many years ago I saw this commercial where, I can't remember the actress's name, was a spokesperson for Sprint. I think it's Murphy Brown, Candice Bergen. She was doing a commercial for Sprint, I think it was.

And the people of Saskatchewan, rural Saskatchewan, there was a number of people I remember coming up to a few of us on a few occasions, telling us that, well they don't see Candice Bergen shopping in Spiritwood, that they don't see Candice Bergen buying gas in P.A. [Prince Albert]. But these are the people that work for our Crown corporations. These are the people that benefit from our Crown corporations. These are everyday folks that you'd find in a number of our Saskatchewan communities, First Nations, Métis, or municipal communities across the board.

And that's really what's really important, Mr. Speaker, is that the Crown corporations provide a lot of good service to the people of Saskatchewan. So what I can't understand, Mr. Speaker, what I can't understand is the logic behind the Saskatchewan Party meddling in *The Interpretation Act*. If they had no intention of selling off these Crowns, why would they even meddle in the interpretation, talk about 49 per cent ownership? It's because they do have an agenda, Mr. Speaker, and that agenda, they should be very clear and concise as to what their agenda is. And they absolutely refuse to do that.

[15:45]

What's really important, again I'll point out, is that it shows that they don't have the conviction or the courage to come clean with their agenda on the Crown corporations, evidence that we've seen time and time again, before the last election. And I say to you again today, Mr. Speaker, that as a result of the short-sightedness of the Saskatchewan Party, looking at selling 49 per cent of any Crown corporation, is that it affects the income of the province of Saskatchewan for years to come.

And whether it is the debt that the Saskatchewan Party have placed on future generations or whether it's the Crown dividends that will be gone if you sold any of these assets, or the expensive P3s we'll be paying for 20 or 30 years, Mr. Speaker, plus trying to meet the future demands, in many ways, in many ways the Saskatchewan Party government has mortgaged our future a tremendous amount, Mr. Speaker. They have mortgaged our future time and time again.

And I say to the people of Saskatchewan, mark my words that three-quarters of them will be gone. They'll be heading out of Dodge, and what they're going to leave behind is a scorched earth policy when it comes to protecting our Crown corporations, protecting our environment, protecting our labour workers, and certainly, Mr. Speaker, looking after the future of our children and grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, it is something that we have to really, really pay attention to. We in the opposition are telling the people of Saskatchewan that you do have a role to play. You can indeed assist this 10-member opposition caucus in holding this government to account. You can begin that process very clearly by telling the Saskatchewan Party MLAs that you see each day, that is not something that they ran on. Every single voter can say that to the Saskatchewan Party.

Groups and organizations can rally together to tell the Saskatchewan Party government that's not something that should be done. The people that felt betrayed by the current Saskatchewan Party government on the Crown corporations

front should actually get organized and start petitions, start writing letters, coming to the Assembly, start voicing their concerns.

Because once these Crown corporations are sold off, Mr. Speaker, they're sold forever, and what we don't want to do as an NDP caucus is limit this argument and this fight to 10 members of our caucus. We want the public to get up and rise up and to fight back, because these Crown corporations are theirs. They are theirs, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't belong to the Saskatchewan Party. It doesn't belong to any political party. It belongs to the people of Saskatchewan. So which party has the political right to sell these Crown corporations? Absolutely none of the parties that I know have a right to sell something that they don't own, or someone temporarily sitting in the CEO [chief executive officer] position they call Premier and cabinet of Saskatchewan.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of issues that we're going to raise with this particular bill. And I notice that the bill itself is only three or four pages, and that's typical of the Saskatchewan Party. They put their intentions in these innocuous bills that they think that we won't be paying attention to them, and, Mr. Speaker, we certainly are . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Now the Premier chirps from his chair, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to ask the Premier, why didn't he tell the people of Saskatchewan the true state of our finances prior to the election? Why didn't he tell the people of Saskatchewan what his plans were around the Crown corporations? Him and . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — I'd ask the member to make his comments through the Chair. I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would ask these members who knew full well, Executive Council members, the members of cabinet who knew full well how bad the finances were, why weren't they forthright and basically tell the people of Saskatchewan where they were? And that's why, Mr. Speaker, they never had a budget in April which they typically should have.

The surprising thing is that they had an election April 4th, Mr. Speaker, and that was the day the budget should have been released already. But there was no budget until a month later. And for what reason that they spouted off to the people of Saskatchewan? On the New Democratic side, we were just sitting there wondering, well why aren't the people of Saskatchewan being told about our finances? Well, Mr. Speaker, the reason they weren't being told is that I think the Premier very well knew that there'd be a different makeup in the Assembly today had they been forthright and forthcoming with not only our financial information, but more so with what their plan is around Bill No. 40, *The Interpretation Act*, that really allows a much more robust interpretation of how they could sell our Crown corporations.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we look at some of the Crown corporations that have been used by the Saskatchewan Party. A good example is SaskPower, where they actually had to fund up the money for the GTH land deal. Well the Crown corporations weren't built for that, not built for use for political purposes, but they had no choice. Their political master at the time used

SaskPower's money to basically buy land at a much higher value than anywhere else in this province, Mr. Speaker. And it's an amazing story of how and why you should never, ever have folks that would want to sell the Crown corporations in charge of the Crown corporations. And this is what's really important around Bill No. 40, an Act to amend the interpretation of privatization.

Now, Mr. Minister, I think what's really, really also part of the bill is the fact that if you look at the second part of the bill, which is a very small but necessary component of the bill, where they're also talking gender-neutral language when it refers to the monarchy, whether it's the king or queen, Mr. Speaker, it's something that obviously if there's some housekeeping amendments that had to be made, well they had to be made.

But do you notice how the gender-neutral references to the queen or king was part of this whole interpretation Act? Well this, Mr. Speaker, is exactly my point, is they try and hide some of these little interpretations here and there, try and make them as innocuous as possible.

But the fact of the matter is the people of Saskatchewan should know that the Saskatchewan Party have been and will continue to try and employ their agenda to privatize the Crown corporations of Saskatchewan. And these Crown corporations, as indicated time and time again, they create jobs. They create profit. They create services for the people of Saskatchewan. And why in the heck would we try and sell off these things that are so valuable to the people overall and that served the province for generations in the past, Mr. Speaker, and for generations in the future?

This was certainly the vision originally, that we would own some of these Crown corporations. And what happens, Mr. Speaker, in the future? Who knows where our power bill's going to be coming from and how much these power bills are if we don't have a SaskPower? Who knows what our telephone service would be as people of Saskatchewan? Who knows what the cost would be for insurance?

Well, Mr. Speaker, these Crown corporations are ours. The people that get the profit from the Crown corporations are us. Certain people . . . You look at some of the issues around employment, Mr. Speaker, but more so the services. This is what's really key, and it's very simple. And I encourage the people of Saskatchewan to pay very close attention to what is happening with our Crown corporations because the people ought to know exactly what the plan is for the Saskatchewan Party. And that's exactly what we want to do.

So, Mr. Speaker, a lot of questions are going to be asked on this particular Act. We have a number of organizations that we're going to employ to try and get their perspective, Mr. Speaker. And it's amazing. It's amazing, the different organizations that are coming forward, and there will be more. They'll want to talk about this particular agenda by the Saskatchewan Party.

And I go back to my earlier comment. The Finance minister and the Premier, as well as the rest of the cabinet, knew how bad the finances were of our province, and they sat on that information. They didn't have the courage nor the conviction to come

forward with the people of Saskatchewan. So what do they do? The easiest fix in conservative land: have an election before the budget. Have an election before the budget. That's their plan, Mr. Speaker. And now the plan has been employed and now everything's kind of falling apart around them, Mr. Speaker.

The point I would make to the people of Saskatchewan is the voters are always right. The voters are always right. But voters do not like to be fooled either, Mr. Speaker, and that's why I think now they're starting to realize that there were a lot of mistakes. And now we're seeing the Premier begin to plummet in popularity. And that's a really good indicator, Mr. Speaker, of how people feel overall, not just about the fact that there's a lot of information withheld, withheld from the people of Saskatchewan but the fact that some of their agendas around privatization are coming out.

So as we tell the people of Saskatchewan, there's a lot coming Saskatchewan Party's way. There's a lot. And it's not good news either, Mr. Speaker. We're awaiting the budget for next year. We think there's going to be more cuts. I think they're financially in a huge problem, Mr. Speaker, because today now the Minister of Finance is quite . . . He's very quiet in his chair. He's not saying . . . So what other cuts have they got? What other cuts have they got?

But I can tell you this, Mr. Speaker, as we spoke about youth suicide this morning. If they sell off the Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker, if they sell off the Crown corporations and they squander that money, either doing some . . . [inaudible] . . . land deal or some outrageous P3 deal and that money is gone, then what value to the Saskatchewan people, what value do we derive out of that sale? Absolutely nothing.

And the taxpayers out there that think it's going to ease the tax burden on you in the future, well that ain't on either. It's going to be more of a burden, primarily because you have basically sold off the one asset we had, called the Crown corporation, that was actually buffering the cost of taxation for many families across the province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to go on a bit more about the thing that I think is really important around the finances and around the Crown corporations. As you look at SaskPower, let's look at the whole notion around the carbon capture sequestration process that the SaskPower's undertaken. This particular government has spent \$1.5 billion on the carbon capture, which is part of our Crown corporation. We think that the Crown corporations have a very valuable role in helping to address the challenge around carbon.

Now, Mr. Speaker, SaskPower has certainly been out and about getting advice from people around the whole notion of the renewable energies, Mr. Speaker. And I had the pleasure of serving on that committee and going to a number of forums and public hearings as a member of the Committee on the Economy and Crown corporations. And I can tell you the people of Saskatchewan had some phenomenal ideas on how we can actually begin the process of having SaskPower do the green energy and look at the ways and means in which we can generate new opportunities and certainly be more environmentally friendly. So one of the things I think is important is that as you own these Crowns — and SaskPower is

a Crown that has been steadfast in terms of building for the future, Mr. Speaker — when it comes to the renewable energies, some of the ideas we've heard throughout our province were phenomenal, as I indicated.

We've heard all the arguments. The number one argument . . . I think the two outstanding arguments that I heard during this Crown corporation hearing on how the Crowns could be more effective and more dynamic, Mr. Speaker, is around the green energies file, is some of the incredible information we shared. Two of the more compelling arguments we had, Mr. Speaker, is about . . . One area is conservation in which how many people turning off your lights or a better insulated home, the incredible amount of savings that we as a province could have on energy consumption. That was one of the bigger arguments and the best arguments we heard through this Crown corporations hearing process.

The second argument we heard, Mr. Speaker, was around the whole notion of natural gas. Natural gas provided an excellent stopgap in terms of becoming another process of creating power throughout the province. So between conservation and natural gas, there was tons of opportunity to reduce our carbon footprint in the climate overall. So I think these are some of the things that we spoke about.

Mr. Speaker, there was all kinds of other discussions, even around geothermal. People brought some of the information forth. And I think it's only in the southeast corner of Saskatchewan where geothermal really could work well enough to recover some of the costs. There are other areas in the province that could make the argument as well. But in the southeast corner there is more opportunity for geothermal options for heating your home and looking at ways and creating more friendlier, greener energy needs.

So, Mr. Speaker, we certainly had a number of people at universities make presentations. And I could hear . . . I can remember the argument that people were making around cold fusion and hot fusion. Like these are some of the things that I spoke about and learned about over those number of weeks I sat on that committee.

And about all I seen on the Saskatchewan Party side when we were doing this joint effort to understand how the Crowns could become much more greener, Mr. Speaker — like I said, we had a discussion around hot fusion and cold fusion — and all I saw on the Saskatchewan Party side was confusion, Mr. Speaker, because they had no intent to look at anything beyond what they're capable of, and that is, quite frankly, trying to sell off the Crowns. And, Mr. Speaker, that is certainly prevalent to this day.

[16:00]

So no matter what is being said, no matter what is being said by the Saskatchewan Party, no matter what semantics are being indicated to some of their bills even as small as the Bill No. 40, *An Act to amend The Interpretation Act*, Mr. Speaker, we know that their plan is to not engage and embrace the future of Crown corporations of this province. They want to sell them. There's no question about that, and the reason why they want to sell, Mr. Speaker, is because they need the money. They're in pretty

bad shape, and we can see it from here, Mr. Speaker, and we're actually hoping to get some kind of indication from the Minister of Finance just how bad it is. And the earliest indication that we're going to get from the Minister of Finance is at the end of November, is when he suggested that there may be some time to give us a financial update.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to quote from a few stories that are really important that we quote. And I'm quoting here, Mr. Speaker: "Premier Brad Wall says the definition makes clear that selling a minority stake in a Crown corporation would not equate to privatizing it." So this is what I think is important that I want to follow up. So the opposition interim leader, Trent Wotherspoon, and I quote him:

"This would be a massive erosion of control. This is privatization and the Premier was not honest with Saskatchewan people on this front," [Trent] Wotherspoon said. "It's a major betrayal and we'll fight it every step of the way."

Mr. Speaker, that was a quote I've taken from the CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] news of October 27th, 2016.

And it goes on, Mr. Speaker, to another article in the "... minority interest in Sask. Crowns." And this goes back to my point. Even the media is simply not convinced that this play on words is something that's going to protect our Crown corporations. And I quote from this article of Wednesday, October 26th. It says here:

CTV News has learned that the new definition allows for corporate restructuring, which would make it easier to sell minority interests in protected Crowns. The government says that would provide some necessary flexibility while maintaining the government's commitment to the Crown Corporations Public Ownership Act.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to requote that. It says, "The government says that would provide some necessary flexibility while maintaining the government's commitment to the Crown Corporations Public Ownership Act." So, Mr. Speaker, their own language says exactly what we've been saying all along and that's something that's really important for the people of Saskatchewan to take into account.

So this is my message to the people of Saskatchewan around Crown corporations: we need your full engagement. We are asking the people, the universities, the technical institutes, the workers, the unions, the people that are out there watching what happens — these are your Crown corporations. They do not belong to the NDP. They do not belong to the Saskatchewan Party. We are suggesting as a party that we protect the interests of the Crown corporations to our own commitment. Now certainly we've protected them in the past, but more so in the future.

So if you want to allow the Saskatchewan Party to do what they want with our Crowns, then you do exactly what has been happening to them so far. They have not received the blunt message from people of Saskatchewan that know their Crown corporations are not for sale. We're asking groups and

organizations and communities to stand up to tell the Saskatchewan Party and the current leader, the Premier, that no, we don't want to sell our Crown corporations. Why would you sell a Crown corporation? What's your logic? Why are you doing this? This is something that the people of Saskatchewan need to ask.

So wherever you're from, if you're from Glaslyn, if you're from Kindersley, if you're from Beechy or you're from Beauval, these are your Crown corporations. These are what provide services to the North, to the South, to central Saskatchewan, to the East, to the West. These are Crown corporations that we've owned for centuries, Mr. Speaker, and why . . . Not for centuries, but for a number of years. Why would we begin to entertain the sale of this?

And what's really important, Mr. Speaker — this is the crux of my argument — this debate should have taken place 10 months ago, two or three months before the last election. And now they're bringing the agenda out. And that's why we say lack of courage and conviction because they never had that conviction nor courage prior to the last election. And now they're certainly starting to spell out their new-found power to do something they said they wouldn't do, and that's sell off the Crowns which are owned by the people of Saskatchewan.

So I don't think we have any other notion to tell the people of Saskatchewan that they do have a role, that they have a role that they should and could play in making sure that their voices are heard. So we would ask you to rally. We would ask you to fight. We would ask you to sign petitions, to write letters, to lobby your own Saskatchewan Party MLA and tell him one clear message: leave our Crown corporations alone. Why? For a number of reasons that we've indicated in this debate and this argument. And this argument's going to continue going on and on and on, Mr. Speaker.

And the final point I'd make to the people of Saskatchewan is that if they're convinced that they have the agenda and the mandate to sell these Crowns — the earliest the Premier can convene an election is within three years, Mr. Speaker — let's have an election on that. Let's have an election on this issue alone. Three years in the scheme of time is not a lot of time to worry about — three years. If he'd give the people of Saskatchewan 36 months and then you make the decision based on which party wins the next election, I can tell you today that the Saskatchewan Party will not be the victor because the people of Saskatchewan will tell him no, these are our Crown corporations. You leave them alone. We own them.

And the other question I would ask, Mr. Speaker, is who's been talking to the Saskatchewan Party about buying these Crowns? We have no idea. We have no idea who they've been talking to. And I can tell the people of Saskatchewan that if you'd much rather pay a power bill to some eastern-based or American-based company, then I don't think that's what people want. I really don't think that's what people want, Mr. Speaker. And then that we don't have any power nor control over the amount of employees they hire. So we know there's going to be a downturn on that front.

And, Mr. Speaker, what's really important, we don't understand how the privatization agenda for our Crowns will impact the

price of power for our homes and our farms and our businesses, the price of insurance for our businesses and our vehicles. We don't know how it's going to impact the price of our telephone service and our cellphone bills. These are all something that has to be incorporated when we start talking about the Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker. So we have a long ways to go in this discussion. So I would encourage people out there to continue fighting the fight because we are just beginning that process here.

And the final note I would say before I adjourn debate on this particular bill, Mr. Speaker, Bill No. 40, is that I want to challenge the Premier very, very simply: let's have an election over this if you have the courage. And if you don't, then we know very well that qualifies our argument that you never had the courage and conviction to do some of these things prior to the election. You can change that, and you can accept our challenge and our effort to protect the Crowns. If you don't, then the people of Saskatchewan know, as the opposition knows, that they refuse to have that fight. So on that note, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 40.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 40, *The Interpretation Amendment Act, 2016*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 31

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 31 — *The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Amendment Act, 2016*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to check the notes and get a reference to the bill that we missed, the bill number that the Clerk titled.

Principal Clerk: — Adjourned debates. Item no. 21. Resume debate on the second reading motion on Bill No. 31, *The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Amendment Act, 2016*. Mr. McCall.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak on Bill No. 31, the freedom of information protection Act. As has been noted, Mr. Speaker, in this legislature . . .

[Interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. I'm having difficulty hearing the member. I'd ask the government members to come to order. I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak on Bill No. 31, the freedom of information Act, 2016. Mr. Speaker, I know that several of my colleagues have already had opportunity to speak to this bill regarding some largely administrative changes to this legislation, and I know that there will . . . Just by way of recapping, the bill updates the local freedom of information protection Act, LAFOIP [*The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*].

There was a 2015 report, Mr. Speaker, called it's time for change. The Information and Privacy Commissioner at that time called for a number of changes to information and privacy protections in Saskatchewan. As has been noted, and I believe I've made these comments before, Mr. Speaker, that any time that we're dealing with people's private information, it is important that we take extra care. And I think that, certainly given the Privacy Commissioner's recommendations, that it is important that we give this legislation and the proposed updates some second viewing.

To recap, Mr. Speaker, some of the proposed changes in this bill include police forces under LAFOIP, drawing them under that legislation so that police forces, as are other areas, that they would be subject to freedom of information requests, Mr. Speaker. And that again was the recommendation of the Privacy Commissioner. So I think any time that we have officers such as the Privacy Commissioner putting their time and thought into their recommendations, we would do well to look closely at those recommendations.

It also creates new offences for snooping on personal information, Mr. Speaker. And as I noted previously, this is important so that anyone who is looking up information, we're certain that they have a need to know before they simply look at people's private information to satisfy curiosity. It should always be the case that anyone who's looking at private information should have a reason to do so, Mr. Speaker, and as noted, that that is again on recommendation of the Privacy Commissioner.

This bill, while addressing some of the concerns, doesn't include some of the other recommendations, Mr. Speaker, that had been proposed by the Privacy Commissioner. Those include changing the maximum time for a response from 30 days to 20 days, Mr. Speaker. I think that that is important. When people put in a freedom of information request they certainly do have an expectation to have those answers within a reasonable time period. So that is certainly lacking in this legislation.

Also it doesn't include the requirement that this legislation be updated every five years, Mr. Speaker. And certainly with modern technology, as any of us here would know, it moves rapidly, perhaps more rapidly than any of us could anticipate, so having that type of recommendation and having that accommodated in legislation is very important. And I note that that isn't included. And that again was a recommendation that

isn't a recommendation in this proposed legislation. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to conclude my remarks and cede the floor to the member from Cumberland. Thank you.

[16:15]

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

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to join in on debate on Bill No. 31. *The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection Act* makes some changes to this Act and gives some changes and I think some authority to the police chief.

And we were having a chance to quickly go over it. And I know we wanted a little opportunity, and we're going to have some opportunity to ask some tough questions and go through this when it comes towards the committee to find out . . . And like everything, every bill that comes to the House, we wonder who's requested this and if it is done with consultation. And we . . . You know, government likes to use that they do that so much, and we see how little they actually do consult.

But we know that there is an opportunity if the government wants to reach out to leaders, to those that would be impacted by amendments, changes to legislation. There is an opportunity for the government to have an opportunity to reach out, to go and talk. And Bill 31, like when you get to the meat and potatoes of it exactly . . . And committee, we're going to have an opportunity to have, you know, a good discussion and hopefully get some answers. And at this point, we're not sure how this bill came forward but at the end of the day, we'll have an opportunity again, as I've said, in committee to ask some tough questions. I know my colleagues will have an opportunity to ask more questions about this.

But it's going to give some time to make sure, you know, we go over the information correctly, to make sure the proper people were consulted, and that this is the best legislation that's coming forward, whether it's changes, new, amended. We have lots of different, you know, work to do on bills, and the government's introducing them. So as we go through it, at the end of the day, we'll make sure that those tough questions are answered. And the people of this good province has a right, and I think they want to make sure our government's doing the right thing.

And I know my colleague before me was talking about a bill that they introduced, you know, and trying to get some definition of what it means. And we see when government doesn't consult and it doesn't go forward . . . Talking to the Saskatchewan people, and I've heard many referring to government trying to sell off our Crowns in any way. And my colleague had talked about that, the member from Athabasca, has talked very clear and articulated well what we're hearing from a lot of people.

But you know, it's interesting. Here's another, a bill coming forward that we have an opportunity to ask some tough questions, but I want to go back, and I think it's important to talk about bills that come forward.

The government has an opportunity . . . Who, during election

time, did this government go out and say, oh yes we're going to look at opening up and selling off the Crowns? What door did they knock on telling the good people of this province, who put their trust into these Sask Party members that are elected here today representing the government of the day . . . And I've had them heckle, oh, we got 51 seats. We got 51. And they, you know, with intent to say, well the good people have spoke.

But as my colleague has said, you're to come clean with the good people of the province about our finances, about your intents of selling. Oh no, we're not going to sell off the Crowns. The Crowns will be protected forever. We see the changes going on and now the flip-flop back and forth. At one time when they were door knocking and asking, they'll say no, we won't change legislation to . . . That's protected. Well now they're going to give us what the definition is of that. Well I think most people in this good province know the definition of privatizing and getting rid of our Crowns, any part of our Crowns. They're not up to it and they don't want that.

But having said that, there's going to be a lot of opportunity to talk more. And they don't like this stuff and that's okay, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They don't have to like it.

The reality is the good people of this province know the difference when somebody tells them they're not going to do something and they do it. And at the end of the day, at the end of the day, we'll just see exactly what the good people of this province have to say.

And you know, they did a lot of work with some of their candidates. I give them credit. They went out there. But I don't recall seeing any billboard, any piece of literature that said the first thing we get in, after six, seven months, we'll forget that we said we wouldn't touch the Crowns. We're going to open it up and we're . . . Because the good people don't know. We'll give you the definition of what that means. We'll pass legislation that says, it doesn't mean that; it's a small window. It's almost like going to the fair, and you had them saying you win a prize here, and they keep bringing it down. That's exactly what these guys are introducing. So it's almost impossible.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think at this point, I'm prepared to adjourn on Bill 131. And I know my colleagues will have a lot of comments and in committee we'll ask questions. So on that point, I'm adjourned. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Cumberland has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 1, the Crown corporation public . . . Oh, Bill 31, sorry, *The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Amendment Act, 2016*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Why is the member from Biggar-Sask Valley on his feet?

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'd like to ask leave to introduce a guest.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has asked for leave. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you. Thank you very much. To you and through you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to introduce a friend of mine from Biggar, Ray Sadler. Give us a wave, please. Ray was just recently re-elected for his fourth term as mayor of Biggar, and we're very happy for him. And he's here for the reception that's going to be held later on. So please join me in welcoming Ray Sadler to his legislature.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 1

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. McMorris that **Bill No. 1 — *The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Amendment Act, 2016*** 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. I too want to take a minute and just recognize the mayor for Biggar. It's always great to see elected officials in the House and we wish him well in the future years. People who are elected in these positions offer so much for our communities, and it's an important thing.

So with this, Mr. Speaker, this is a relatively simple, straightforward piece of legislation. Very, very short but we're seeing the true intention of this government, post election, and how they haven't really set that out in the election, didn't come clean as we're seeing the bills that are coming forward. My good friend and colleague from Athabasca so well enunciated our concerns for what's really seeming to be the way of this government and how it's lost its way.

You know, I'm reminded of a saying that if you throw a stone in the garden and you hear a yelp, you know there's a dog there. And I've got to say, this really seems to be the situation that's playing out in front of us now.

Well, well, well. Here we are again, and we're debating something now. I know that this really, this really specifically . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I hear the pup. I hear the pup yelping, and so it seems I've caught their attention over there. It seems to have caught their attention. They're yelping from that side and we have thrown the stone, and it is what it is. You know, their plans are coming forward and it's rolling out as we thought it would . . .

An Hon. Member: — After the election.

Mr. Forbes: — After the election. Not before the election, you know. We had the Finance minister keep all that information quite secret, quite secret. No budget, no budget, and here we see

him continue, continue the process of . . . Where is that first quarter report, the first quarter report? It's not around.

And then they put this bill out, Bill No. 1 which effectively takes the 40 stores or, well the Liquor and Gaming Authority out of the way from *The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Act*. But really it's much more than that. It's really much more than that.

And we see that playing out just last week when we got the next Bill No. 40, the Act to amend *The Interpretation Act*, and really what they meant. And of course, there you'd say, oh it's not what we mean. It's not what we mean. It's not privatization. But it's sure . . . You know that old saying: if it walks like a duck, quacks like a duck, and swims like a duck, then it's got to be a duck. And this is like . . . This is privatization. And this is all part of the grand scheme.

And they are clearly becoming more evident to the people of Saskatchewan every day, what their intention is. And it is because of their mismanagement of the boom years, those boom years when we were doing so well in this province and where they could have really set the stage for us as a province to do really well through lean years.

And here we are. We're seeing the cuts, seeing the mean, mean-spirited cuts of this government, and whether it's really upsetting the people on SAID who were really concerned this summer about what the minister meant. And of course, there was a change in ministers. And we hear that it's only on pause, only on pause. And we worry that what's going to happen is they're going to find out the bad news in February, what's going to be happening in terms of if you're on SAID, if you're somebody unfortunately living with a disability that makes life a little more challenging for you, and you have to have those supports to make sure that they can live with dignity. And we saw this government do a test run, try it out this summer. And there was such an outcry that people said, you can't do that. You can't do that.

And then of course we saw this government do the same thing with the homeless folks who are looking for shelter in our cities, and particularly in Saskatoon in my riding with the Lighthouse in Saskatoon, and also in North Battleford. And we have people really concerned about, what does this really mean? What does this really, really mean?

And so, Mr. Speaker, when you have a government that has mismanaged, mismanaged the resources of this province and we're facing some really difficult choices that we really shouldn't had to have had because, you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government had the great privilege of serving when we were experiencing such resources, incredible wealth in this province up to the budgets, provincial budgets about \$14 billion, \$14 billion.

But yet they are so mean-spirited. I mean I can't believe it when it comes to cutting back on NORTEP-NORPAC. They were fine to sign the contract, the five-year contract before the election, and then shortly after the election they informed the folks, no, they're taking another look at what it really means. I don't know what really happened between in the month or two intervening between the signing of the contract and then the

notice that they were going to abandon the whole thing. I don't know what that really means.

But, Mr. Speaker, when we have such a short bill before us like this, it is really worrisome. And it's Bill No. 1. It's Bill No. 1, and this is the kind of vision this government sets forward. This is what they're doing in the first year after the election. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we recognize on this side they have a mandate. They clearly do have a mandate.

But is this the kind of province that we want to have where they balance the budget on the backs of those who are more vulnerable, who are going to be facing some tough times this winter? And we are . . . particularly when we ask questions and particularly around the mental health issues that we see that. And very unfortunately, it's a tragic situation in the North. We really need to be focusing on that. But here we have a government that's trying to balance their budgets on the back of working men and women and those who are out in tough situations.

And so when we see this bill . . . And I just want to take a minute to reflect on the member from Regina Lakeview who served on the committee that looked at the impact of what this would mean when we privatize these 40 liquor stores. And I'd be curious to know what has been the progress of this. And really, you know, we had meetings with some of the folks who were going to be losing their jobs because they were workers in one of those 40 stores that were throughout the province, many of which were in rural Saskatchewan. And of course the deal was that store had to be completely closed down. That had to be a brand new facility that the store was going to be in. What was going to be the impact of that?

[16:30]

Those were good, good jobs in our communities right throughout the province, with some decent pay and decent hours, and now they're going to be losing that. And I don't know . . . The short-term gain for maybe the selling of the licences and what all . . . But it really, this is what this government is seeming to be looking for, short-term gain, short-term ways of balancing a budget that is of their own making, of not setting aside money, not preparing for the tough times.

And here we are. We're looking at this interpretation Act that now puts out that you can sell up to 49 per cent of any Crown corporation. And what that means is the hollowing out of some of these Crowns and their first steps to major privatization. But you know, these Crowns have delivered significant resources to our General Revenue Fund. And if we start saying, you know, we're okay with losing up to half the revenue, losing up to half the revenue, that's several hundred millions of dollars. And that's a huge impact. That's a huge impact.

Over the years these Crowns have contributed in significant ways to our provincial budget that pays for our highways, that pays for our health care, that pays for our education. And we see all of those areas under stress. We see Social Services under stress. They're doing a major review.

As we're heading into the winter months, and I think this is a

time . . . And you know, I still think . . . And it's interesting because we've talked about changes to the coroner's report, and we've had a call for an inquest into the fellow that died in my riding. He was sleeping in an abandoned semi cab. And we haven't yet heard what's happening with that. Nothing. It's been two or three years. The Minister of Social Services said, we'll just let it play out. But that homeless man died out in the cold and nothing was ever really done about that, as far as we're aware of. And these are the kinds of questions that we have.

And we see the kind of legislation that's coming forward that has no vision, no sort of responsibility to the social good of our communities, and really avoiding responsibility. Here we have a minister who, one of the first things he didn't do after the election was no first quarter report. So how does this add to the credibility of this government?

And so here we have a situation before us, as I said, a short bill. All it does is it repeals subclause 2(b)(ii) of *The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Act*, and all that is, is . . . 2(b)(ii) is the Liquor and Gaming Authority. So it's eliminating that.

So it's not just about the 40 stores; it's about all the other stores. It's about all the other stores and the ability now for them to just cherry-pick . . . You know, it's so ironic. They're going to be cherry-picking, pulling out individual Crown corporations that they want to get rid of completely. And now they've got a new idea: well maybe we don't want to do that. We'll just get rid of or sell off 49 per cent. But that leads to so many, so many other issues. And we really do see this as a first step or one of the second or third or fourth steps of this government towards privatization. And some might call privatization by stealth. Some might call privatization by wordplay, but it is privatization and it's along that road. So when it's 49 per cent, you're losing 49 per cent of the income, 49 per cent of the control.

And you know, we can start to see that, you know, how deals can be made in boardrooms where they say, we want this to happen; we want to see more work taken out of the province because our revenues will grow if we do more out of . . . work out of the province. And we saw that on the P3s. We see where the P3s are contracting out of province, even multinational corporations not even in North America. And yet this government goes out of its way to portray those folks as being local people when we all know, we all know that in fact many of these P3s are large multinational corporations based elsewhere in Canada, if not in the United States, and one or two I think is from France. And so we have a real issue.

So, Mr. Speaker, I do have a real concern with this bill. And I know my colleague from Lakeview . . . I just want to go on and consider that what she had talked about, what she had talked about because she was there in the committee. Unfortunately I wasn't there, so I do want to reflect for the folks at home about what's happening. And she said that it would be easier for further privatization to occur without the oversight and opportunity for input that this committee has provided. And she was talking about the committee that she is sitting on, and I would believe that that is the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies. And she's talking back on June 13th when we had presented the draft first report of the Standing

Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

And she talked about another main point of the election with regard to privatization of the liquor stores — and we heard it in the Throne Speech as well — was the assertion that this move would be revenue neutral. And there have been repeated assertions from the minister that this will not come at a net loss of the General Revenue Fund, so I'm going to find this very interesting. We go forward in the months and years ahead to find out that this was revenue neutral, that somehow this had no impact.

How can you possibly sell off 40 stores, and not see a loss of income? That's a hard one to believe. Now there may be a bump up because there's revenue created from the actual sale. There might be revenue created from the licenses involved, and of course there's the purchasing of the liquor. But to say that it's going to be not a net loss to the General Revenue Fund, this will be interesting.

Now of course this is a Finance minister who, as I've said before, has failed his homework and has not delivered his first quarter report so he might be able to prove that there was no net lost revenue. He would be the one to prove that, and he might be able to work that to show that there's been no net loss. But if we sell off this 49 per cent of the Crowns and then that's not privatization, it's just business as usual for the folks over there. And they're going to show us — I can hear it now — that there won't be any net loss, just like the liquor stores, no net loss, no net loss. Well you know there's two parts to that. We really hope there's no net loss, but there won't be any of the revenue that we usually count on. We'll be losing up to half the revenue.

So this is the problem. It's not just about not losing money. It's about where did the money go that we were really counting on, that, as I said before, paid for the health care, the hospitals, the specialists. And we had a question today about specialists and how it's some, up to 80 weeks, the waiting list — it's 80 weeks. And this government says that their goal is three months; that's 12 weeks. So here you have a situation where it's like seven times worse than what they're promising. And yet this little girl is in a tough, tough strait.

So we see these concerns that we have because people . . . When we're in such a blessed province because we have this tradition, this strong history of Crown corporations stepping up to provide basic services, basic services and providing those services that we feel it's in the social interest, the social good. Like liquor stores, that they should be able to continue on and be competitive, be competitive with the private stores.

And it's quite, you know . . . It's been our position that we should modernize the liquor stores and make them as attractive as possible. And of course, this government in its ways of doing that makes them less competitive, less successful, and really causing situations where we know that if you do that, that's another way, by stealth, to create a situation where people go, well maybe we should be selling off some of our Crowns. And we see this with the SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority] stores.

One of the other issues that my colleague talked about, and I'll quote here:

Another issue is ensuring that there's benefit for all Saskatchewan people. With the passage of this bill there will soon be 40 valuable, profitable liquor stores on the market and 12 new licences, and I think it's important to get this right for the people of Saskatchewan and to provide opportunities to Saskatchewan people. With the inclusion of appropriate procurement policies, we could ensure that Saskatchewan businesses are prioritized for the private ownership of these stores.

So we can do it. We can do it in the correct way but it's important that we have public participation and we make sure that it's laid out clearly. Now we know we're well on our way. It's October 31st; this was back in June. But we need to make sure that again that it's not hindering or stopping or making it difficult for SLGA to carry out its mandate. It's very important that they can be competitive in the marketplace, that they do have a role; they do have a role. And the people who are the owners, the real shareholders of our Crown corporations, want to see them flourish to be as competitive, be as modern as possible.

Now it's interesting. She talks about in communities that . . . The member from Regina Lakeview talks about, in communities of less than 2,000 people, as was noted with some of the submissions, new private retailers will be allowed to sell liquor from existing businesses, and this can be done with the staff they've already got. So there's some concern about the potential for job growth or losses. We also heard about potential impacts to employment for those under 19 who are currently working in establishments that may sell liquor in the future.

So there's all these considerations that you have to have, and it was relatively, it was relatively straightforward. And we knew what the playing fields were, especially in our smaller communities where you might be using a smaller venue because, you know, if you're in a community of 3 or 400, it would be the local grocery store, the local gas station.

And so . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well I'm glad that in spite of the heckling that we . . . people are interested in this topic because it is one that we're going to be speaking an awful lot, an awful lot about. And I'll just . . . It is important, and I'm glad that people are listening. And I know the people at home are listening too, and they're wondering, now where did this all start from? Where is this drive to privatize?

And you know, we saw this back in the '80s. And we saw that that was just a . . . well, you know, the ethos of the right to believe that somehow public ownership cannot get it right. But yet in Saskatchewan, we've seen a situation where actually it does work and it does work really, really well. And it meets the social mandate that people are expecting from the Crowns. And whether it be SaskPower to deliver electricity, SaskEnergy to deliver the gas to heat our homes, or SaskTel that really in so many ways — and we can be so proud of it as a Crown corporation — that meets our communications needs and actually has been a leader, I think in Canada and around the world in terms of the innovation.

And I often talk about the innovation that's here in Saskatchewan, that if you look at SaskTel who's keeping on top of such a fast- and quick-moving world of telecommunications.

And whether it's with cellphones, whether it's with security, or whether it's with the Internet, it's right on top of what's happening.

And I think we are . . . I just have to say that it would be such a loss if we went the route of . . . You know, I mean, they're really putting out two ways of privatizing. It's Bill No. 1, the way of just simply eliminating, taking off the list the ones that they do want to sell. And I wonder now if they're sitting back and saying well, we should've taken route number two, which is outlined in Bill No. 40 where it gets into the definition. And my colleague today spoke so well, and so eloquently about the impact of, you know, up to 49 per cent and really what do you mean when you say that?

[16:45]

And you know, the people over there would criticize us when we put this bill forward. In fact, they stood up alongside us, if I remember that day, and voted in favour of that bill, voted in favour of that bill. They didn't have a problem with the language we were using that day. They said it was fine. Everybody knew what we meant; everybody knew what we meant. It meant that we should keep our Crowns and not privatize them, do not sell them. And they were very happy to stand up and say, yes, we're with you. We're for the Crowns and we don't want to privatize them.

And now we're seeing, yes there's a little something different. Well we want to be able to sell 49 per cent of that. That's a big, big deal and to say, oh it's just clarifying. It's not clarifying. It's changing the game, changing the game completely.

So, you know, when we get into committee, this small Bill No. 1, it may seem like there's not going to be very many questions about it. But of course, it's going to be something we're going to ask a lot of questions about because in many ways it's like the Trojan Horse and we're starting to see what's coming out of the belly of the Trojan Horse. It's Bill No. 40 and many others that I probably see over the course of the weeks ahead about the tool kit these folks are starting to create with their tools to dismantle the Crowns of Saskatchewan. And they're very clear about it. That's their goal; that's their aim.

They want to have as many different tools as they can to create a cash flow, a quick cash flow for the Minister of Finance so he can balance the budget that they're working on as we speak, as we speak. And we know that all of them are very much engaged in this, and they need cash. They really, truly need a lot of cash and instead of ways of looking at how they can control the scandals over there . . . They need to control the scandals over there and not put it on the backs of the homeless and those people who are living with disabilities.

And we can talk about the scandals and the bad choices they've made, whether it's lean or GTH, you can just go down the list. You go down the list, go down the list of the issues, the bad management that they've had over there, that can really add up. That can add up.

You know, the out-of-province, in fact I think they were out-of-country consultants that they were paying . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh well, now they're chirping. I must have

thrown a stone, I must have thrown a stone and hit a . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . You're yelping over there for sure. Something really . . . They've got a sore spot somewhere, I tell you. We're starting to hear the yelping, you know, especially about lean. That lean stone hit a couple of them, and they don't want to talk about lean because they know, and they know that was a pretty bad mistake that they made that is not helping anyone, not helping anyone, and lean is not.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have to tell you, they're trying to figure out a way to get out of their mess. And here we have a couple of tools in the tool kit of how they're going to fix their problem. But it's going to be at the expense of the people of Saskatchewan in the long run if we see Crown corporations like SaskTel sold for up to 49 per cent for a quick buck. And what that will mean for the working women and men at SaskTel, what that will mean for our communities, whether they be large or whether they be small, the impact of losing that.

Because, you know, when we get other people on the boards, when we get other people on the boards, they'll soon lose their social mandate. They'll soon lose their social mandate that they should be acting for the people of Saskatchewan, and they'll be acting for other interests because it will be all about making as much money as possible.

And what the impact that will be on small businesses in Saskatchewan who might count or take into . . . As part of their businesses, we know many, many small businesses throughout Saskatchewan think of the Crowns as a valued customer because they shop locally as much as possible, or they should be. Now we know this government actually in many ways changed that mandate in their early years because they wanted to create this level playing field. So they created a situation where Crowns don't necessarily shop as locally as they might.

And I remember that day, I remember that day when we brought that bill forward about shop local, and how those folks over there got very, very upset about that bill because what that meant, what that meant to their free-market thinking. It really rocked the boat when it came to free-market thinking. And we're thinking, no let's shop locally at least one day, one day a year. And that was something that got them so upset that, well again, it was one of those things where it really exposed the underbelly of the Sask Party, what they're really all about.

And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a bill like No. 1, well as they say, is relatively straightforward. In many ways it's more than straightforward because it is so clear, it is so clear what their intentions are. And it's a bit of a Trojan Horse, as I said, because there's much more to come, I suspect. And I worry about that. We hear about that because, as I said, they are looking for some real quick ways to fix their problems that are of their own making, their own making. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that should not be on the backs of people in Saskatchewan.

We think about the Crown corporations and their social mandate which has served us so well, served us so well through the decades. And we think that they've been innovators. They have really stepped up, whether it's being able to provide those much needed dividends in the General Revenue Fund and budgets that do provide for our health care, that do provide for

our schools, do provide for those who are in need.

And if we're willing to start with Bill No. 1, how much further down the list do we go? Do we take out the Crown Investments Corporation? Do we take out the Sask Gaming Corporation? Do we take out SGI? Do we take out SaskPower Corporation? Do we take out SaskTel Communications? Do we take out STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company]? Now we know that one has been under attack a lot. Do we take out Sask Water? These are on the list: SaskEnergy and Trans Gas, SG holdings company.

You know. I find it interesting. You know what I find very interesting? What I find very interesting is this government has not done anything in terms of actually adding any . . . If they were to add one to this, then all of a sudden I would say maybe this is a government that's interested in governing for the people of Saskatchewan. But they're not going to add any, that's for sure. . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes. Yes, we know what they've added.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is so clear what their intention is. And maybe I've been unfair to them. Maybe I've been unfair, you know, because I've said they've had no vision. I've said they've had no vision. Their vision is very clear. Bill No. 1 is to repeal the Crowns. This is their vision. This is their vision. This is straightforward. This is what it's all about. So it's only fitting that it was Bill No. 1.

And they can laugh about it, but maybe . . . You know, other governments would say, we want to have — and with meaning — the first bill should have some sort of value or some sort of way of saying look at what . . . This is what we're all about. This is what we're all about. Bill No. 1, this is what we're all about.

Is this what you're all about? I have to say, is this what the Sask Party government is all about? Dismantling the Crowns, you know. And clearly we see what they're doing. They're building a tool kit, different ways of tearing apart, tearing down our Crowns. They're not doing anything to strengthen the Crowns.

And really, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do think that, you know, we can all think of personal stories about when we were very glad . . . You know, I think about SaskTel and the fact of what they provide in terms of services, and whether it's the ability to have a cellphone that works so well, covering most of the province if not, you know . . . And you can count on it. It's reliable.

The Internet is just a fantastic thing that they've got going. And the technical skills to make that happen, I could go on a bit about the Internet and seeing how it's evolved over the course of time from its early days, and how SaskTel has been right there from the very beginning with Sympatico and moving it all the way up.

And I don't know how many people would remember the Archie and Gopher days, and Veronica, of Internet. Do any of you remember? That goes back, back days. Archie and Veronica and Gopher . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . and Bruce? Bruce? Bruce was . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Okay. No, there was no Jughead. It was just those ones, you know, and so I don't think there was a Jughead involved. But at any

rate, Mr. Speaker, I do digress. I'm moving off the topic. I'm moving off the topic.

I want to get back on this important one, *The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Act* and the amendment and how this is clearly, clearly an important bill. And I see how it, I was going to use the word "bookends," but it's like we're going to have a whole bookshelf of different ways these folks . . . Now they're going to focus on how they're going to gut, dismantle our Crown corporations of what we are so very, very, very proud of, you know. And while this bill is very short and really only speaks to one Crown corporation and only part of it, and only one part of it. Forty stores, they're after. They're selling off these 40 stores, but yet they felt the need to pull that out of the Act entirely. This doesn't seem to make a lot of sense. But many of their bills, many of their bills don't make a lot of sense.

And you know, it will be interesting. And I would hope, I would hope in many ways, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they would see the error of their ways and want to repeal or amend this bill because it just is unfortunate that we're going down this track. SLGA can be competitive, can do its job, you know. And I think that if in a modern climate we can see this be so much stronger, that it is unfortunate that we're going down this path. And I think it's not just for the big markets, not the big markets in Saskatoon but also the smaller markets in the small communities.

And I will want to talk more about this. I'm very happy to talk longer about this because I've just had a bit of an introduction to this topic because I do think that we could talk further about this. I know that as we're getting ready for the supper hour, and many people are turning to what they're going to be having for supper, they should be thinking about the good work that the Crown corporations have provided, whether it's heat in their homes through SaskEnergy, electricity through SaskPower.

But I think we should be concerned, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I would say to the folks at home and across the way, be concerned. Be concerned; it's a bit of a Trojan Horse here. And we're sorry to see this government looking for ways, looking for ways that they can shore up their budget that they know that they're in trouble for. And I wouldn't be surprised if Bill 40 was part of that because of the treasury board meetings that have come about, and they now know that they are short of cash. And so . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — I am pleased to inform members that we have now . . . The clock is now 5 o'clock, and this House stands recessed until 7 p.m.

[The Assembly recessed from 17:00 until 19:00.]

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