



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

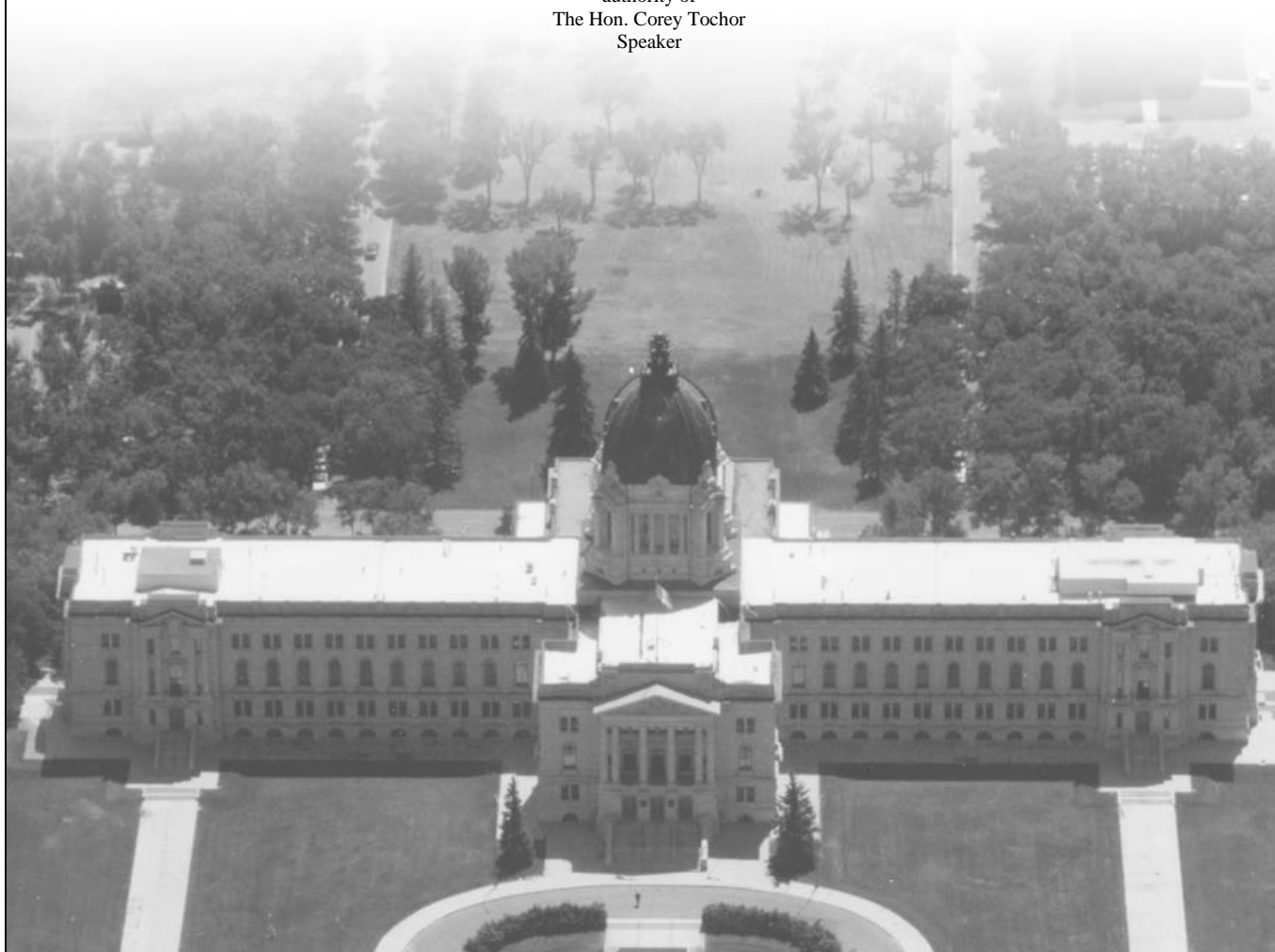
of the

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

Beaudry-Mellor, Hon. Tina — Regina University (SP)

Beck, Carla — Regina Lakeview (NDP)

Belanger, Buckley — Athabasca (NDP)

Bonk, Steven — Moosomin (SP)

Boyd, Bill — Kindersley (SP)

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Campeau, Jennifer — Saskatoon Fairview (SP)

Carr, Lori — Estevan (SP)

Chartier, Danielle — Saskatoon Riversdale (NDP)

Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken — Saskatoon Willowgrove (SP)

Cox, Herb — The Battlefords (SP)

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Dennis, Terry — Canora-Pelly (SP)

Docherty, Mark — Regina Coronation Park (SP)

Doherty, Hon. Kevin — Regina Northeast (SP)

Doke, Larry — Cut Knife-Turtleford (SP)

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Hart, Glen — Last Mountain-Touchwood (SP)

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Lambert, Lisa — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)

Lawrence, Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)

Makowsky, Gene — Regina Gardiner Park (SP)

Marit, Hon. David — Wood River (SP)

McCall, Warren — Regina Elphinstone-Centre (NDP)

McMorris, Don — Indian Head-Milestone (Ind.)

Merriman, Hon. Paul — Saskatoon Silverspring-Sutherland (SP)

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

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Ottenbreit, Hon. Greg — Yorkton (SP)

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Sarauer, Nicole — Regina Douglas Park (NDP)

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Vermette, Doyle — Cumberland (NDP)

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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 Minister of Environment.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of this Assembly, I'd like to welcome Ms. Bevra Fee, has come in today from the Shell Lake area, lives at Fur Lake just outside of Shell Lake.

She's in doing some work. She's a manager with the northern lakes economic development committee in the Spiritwood area and in the region up there, Mr. Speaker. She's done a whole lot of great work with a number of different communities all throughout our constituency, the constituency of Meadow Lake, Mr. Speaker. And I think she's in town today for some meetings with regards to the Main Street program. So all members please join me in welcoming Ms. Bevra Fee to her Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted.

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise first today to introduce guests seated in the east gallery. With us today are 60 students from the grade 10 social studies class at Sheldon Williams Collegiate here in Regina. With them today are teachers Ms. McKillop and Mr. Paskiman, as well as educational assistant Ms. Lorrielynn Austman-Olynik.

Mr. Speaker, I know that in the short time that I've been in this Assembly, I believe this is the third time that Ms. McKillop has brought a class here, and I want to just thank her today for doing that. I think it's very important that we have young people informed and engaged about our political process and about politics in general.

And I know, or I suspect, today that she and Mr. Paskiman and many teachers around classrooms in Canada for sure, and North America and perhaps around the world, are dealing with some difficult questions from students. And I know that parents are as well. So I just want to thank you sincerely for the work that you do in answering those questions, ensuring that our students have good information, know how to think critically, and answer some of those difficult questions.

So with that I would like to invite all members of this Assembly

to thank this group for being with us today and welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

While I'm on my feet, I'd also like to introduce two friends also seated in the east gallery. With us today are Matt Lensen and Russell Green. Matt works for the SFL, the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, and he teaches OH & S, occupational health and safety, in high schools. Russell is a recent graduate of U of S [University of Saskatchewan], and I understand he graduated at the top of his class and hopes to, or plans to be pursuing a law degree in the near future.

Mr. Speaker, these two young men are role models. They're activists. They're volunteers, and people that I am proud to know and to call friends, Mr. Speaker. And I want to let them know today that they and members of the LGBTQ+ [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or questioning plus] community have friends and allies in this Assembly, and we will continue to work with you and to fight for human rights. And I thank you for your work sincerely. I invite all members to join with me to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and to all members of this Legislative Assembly, I'd like to introduce two individuals seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, Leanne Chung and Bo Batbaatar, who are both here today. They're both students — I almost got that right; sorry, Bo — they are both students from the University of Regina. Leanne is studying politics, philosophy, and economics, and Bo is studying accounting.

They are both strong community leaders, young New Democrats. I know Bo was very active in my campaign as well as our candidate for Regina University, and Leanne was quite active in our campaign for Regina Coronation Park. So I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming them to their Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege again to present a petition to reverse the cuts to the Lighthouse program. Mr. Speaker, the petitioners point out that in April 2014 the Minister of Social Services said that the Lighthouse in Saskatoon would "... take pressure off of existing detox facilities, hospitals, and police cells, while keeping people safe, especially in our brutally cold winters." That same day, Mr. Speaker, the petitioners point out that the Minister of Health said, "We want to ensure that individuals with mental health and addictions issues have a safe place to stay," Mr. Speaker.

And as well, this government over this same time has repeatedly indicated that the Lighthouse stabilization unit keeps individuals out of hospitals, hospital emergency rooms, and jail cells. I think that that has borne itself out in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, where they've seen record over capacity in Saskatoon Health Region hospitals. Obviously the cuts to the Lighthouse

aren't the whole problem, but they certainly don't help the issue, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan immediately reverse their cuts to funding that allows extremely vulnerable people to access the services of the Lighthouse stabilization unit in Saskatoon, and revisit their imposition of a strict and narrow definition of homelessness in November of 2015 which forced the Lighthouse to cut back its hours of essential services in February of 2016, and take immediate steps to ensure that homeless people in Saskatchewan have emergency shelter, clothing, and food available to them before more lives are lost.

Mr. Speaker, this petition today is signed by citizens of Saskatoon and Regina. I so submit.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens from many centres: Spiritwood, Mildred, Meeting Lake, Chitek Lake, Hafford, Mayfair, Rabbit Lake, North Battleford, Shellbrook, Canwood, Holbein, Leoville, Shell Lake, Leask, Medstead, Glaslyn, Glenbush, and La Ronge. I do so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present a petition to stop the redirection of funding of the northern teacher education program, NORTEP. And, Mr. Speaker, the prayer reads as follows, that:

Respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Saskatchewan Party government to immediately restore their five-year agreement to fund the NORTEP program and to continue supporting and funding NORTEP and NORPAC programs in La Ronge and northern Saskatchewan.

And it is signed by people from all throughout the lands, Mr. Speaker. We have pages and pages of petition. And these four or five pages that I'm presenting today, the people are primarily from Regina, Loon Lake, and other communities. And, Mr. Speaker, I so present.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition regarding wetlands in Saskatchewan. Wetlands serve a

very vital function in our ecosystem. They take the form of marshes, bogs, fens, swamps, and open water. 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 playgrounds where families can explore and play.

An Hon. Member: — Duck hunting.

Ms. Sproule: — And go duck hunting. In the worst cases, such as some areas on the prairies, as much as 90 per cent of our wetlands have disappeared. As they continue to disappear, so too do the many benefits they provide. Sound wetland policy will allow Saskatchewan to provide sustainable development for all sectors of business in the province. I'll read the prayer:

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

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

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

Create a sound and transparent mitigation process that adequately addresses sustainable development. The sequence should first focus on avoiding 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.

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed today by individuals from Wadena, Nipawin, North Battleford, and Prince Albert. I so submit.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, 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 lost its statutory funding of \$127,000 from the Saskatchewan government in addition to its \$30,000 of annual supplemental funding. The loss of this annual funding negatively affected the ability of Wakamow to maintain its lands and repair its facilities and provide services to Moose Jaw and surrounding communities. This funding cut resulted in the layoff of one-third of the park staff which included two summer students and two regular employees.

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.

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.

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

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to present a petition today 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 people to pay for the Sask Party's mismanagement.

The Sask Party's latest cold-hearted cut will take money away from people who are unable to work due to a disability; that many of these people being hurt by the Sask Party cut live with serious illnesses such as multiple sclerosis, cancer, autism, and among other illnesses; and that contrary to the Minister of Social Services' 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 Saskatchewan Party government implement the recommendations of the advisory group on poverty reduction.

Mr. Speaker, the individuals signing this petition are from Prince Albert, Battleford, and North Battleford. 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 who signed this petition wish to draw our attention to the following: many of our licensed non-profit child care centres pay commercial property taxes, and this is not done in Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, BC [British Columbia], and New Brunswick.

[13:45]

Child care is essential to the economy, yet most centres struggle

to simply balance their budgets. This issue threatens both the number of child care spaces as well as the quality. Quality child care has an enormous positive impact on a child's future outcomes and yields economic benefit. Mr. Speaker, I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request 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 exempt all licensed non-profit child care centres in Saskatchewan from property tax through changes to the appropriate legislation.

Mr. Speaker, citizens signing this petition that I present today are from Lanigan, Drake, Guernsey, Jansen, and Assiniboia. I do so present.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm rising today to present a petition calling on the government to reverse the cuts to the Aboriginal court worker program. The Government of Saskatchewan cut the budget for the Aboriginal court worker program in the 2016-2017 provincial budget. Those on this side of the House know that Aboriginal court workers play an important role helping Aboriginal people in child apprehension and criminal cases. Aboriginal peoples are disproportionately represented in Saskatchewan's correctional centres, and Aboriginal court workers successfully help to make our communities safer through reduced recidivism rates. I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan reverse its short-sighted and counterproductive cuts to the Aboriginal court worker program.

I have pages and pages of this petition to submit today. And those signing the petition today are from Buffalo Narrows, Regina, and Rosetown. I do so submit.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Events Held by Community Associations Benefit Neighbourhoods

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize some of the events that the community associations in my constituency have held over the past few months.

The Heritage Community Association held its annual Harvest Moon Festival on September 24th. I was happy to volunteer with dozens of other community members, and although inclement weather forced the event to be moved inside, the event was a wonderful and successful display of song, dance, and family fun.

I was also happy to help both the Eastview and the Al Ritchie

Community associations with their annual community clean-ups this summer. With the Al Ritchie Community Association, I had a great time helping my neighbours clear the community's alleys. Amongst the litter, we also discovered a few treasures, and one group even managed to find an old *Corner Gas* prop.

Mr. Speaker, in Eastview, we shared a lot of laughs while helping our neighbours clean the community. We also were treated to some homemade cinnamon buns from a neighbour of the community centre.

Whether it is pulling together and getting our hands dirty to help neighbours or throwing a grand celebration for all members of the neighbourhood, these community associations do great work year-round. The board members, staff, and volunteers all value community spirit and sharing their skills and abilities with others.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join me in celebrating the Eastview, Al Ritchie, and Heritage Community associations and the hard and valuable work they perform to keep their communities connected.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

Grand Opening Ceremony for Day Program Facility

Mr. Cox: — Mr. Speaker, on November 3rd I, along with the Minister of Social Services and the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford, was pleased to attend the Battlefords Trade and Education Centre grand opening ceremony for their brand new day program facility.

BTEC [Battlefords Trade and Education Centre] does outstanding work providing programming and supports for 66 individuals experiencing disabilities in the North Battleford area. The facility is full of features that will enrich experiences of each and every person involved including an art room, a book store, a multi-purpose room, a personal-care area, a medical room, and more. Features like this will keep participants happy and healthy throughout the day and also demonstrate the true passion and care that BTEC and its staff have for the participants of their program.

Our government knows that all people can make the best of their abilities and lead fulfilling lives when the right supports are in place. That is why our government has provided over \$4.45 million to this new facility. And I, along with my colleague from Cut Knife-Turtleford, are proud to have been of assistance with securing some of the funding when costs escalated above the original estimates. We also provide BTEC with over \$1 million each year to cover operating expenses.

Our government is committed to making Saskatchewan a more welcoming, inclusive, and accessible province for all people. I thank BTEC for supporting this vision and congratulate them on their beautiful new day care program facility. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Community Named National Historic Site

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After making a strong case to the federal government, Montgomery Place Community Association president Barb Biddle learned this summer her community was named a national historic site. To be considered for this ministerial designation, a place, person, or event must have had a nationally significant impact on Canadian history or must illustrate a nationally important aspect of Canadian history. This is certainly Montgomery Place, Mr. Speaker.

The community was determined to be of historical significance for a number of reasons. First, it's an excellent and intact illustration of a *Veterans' Land Act* community established following the Second World War. It's also of significance because it retains many key elements of its original design, including layout, lot size, setbacks, street names, green space, and recognizable housing plans, which contribute to the sense of history required of a historic district.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, it is a tight-knit community which is very aware of its origins and still today makes every effort to honour and celebrate the original inhabitants and their wartime sacrifices. With its street and place names honouring the leaders, battles, and equipment of the Second World War, two memorials, and the annual outdoor Remembrance Day service attracting large crowds, it has emerged over time as a place of remembrance.

In September, it was my pleasure to be at a celebration marking the 70th anniversary of Montgomery Place as well as the new heritage designation. I want to congratulate the community on both this milestone and on this significant designation, and thank Barb Biddle and the many others — including folks like Leslie Newman, Jim Earle, and Don Leier, to name just a few — whom over the years have ensured the community continues to honour its past and give meaning to its present. Thank you for all that you do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Estevan.

United Way Telethon Surpasses Fundraising Goal

Ms. Carr: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to stand and inform the members of this Assembly that the Estevan United Way has hosted another successful telethon fundraiser. Being the 40th year of this fundraiser, there was great enthusiasm that this would be the year they broke the \$8 million lifetime fundraising goal, and they did. To accomplish this, they set a goal of \$325,000. Mr. Speaker, they exceeded that this year by raising a total of \$372,394.

I had the privilege of attending the opening ceremony of this year's telethon where I saw in person the countless number of volunteers that make this event possible. Mr. Speaker, this is yet another example of how the people of this province are quick to open their hearts and their wallets to help those in need.

This year's telethon success is going to have tremendous impact in the community of Estevan and surrounding areas by helping the 15 member agencies. And, Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all members of this Assembly join me in congratulating the

Estevan United Way on a hugely successful telethon and in thanking all the people, businesses, and organizations who donated and volunteered to make this event a success. Thank you.

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

Local Couple Celebrates 70th Wedding Anniversary

Ms. Lambert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to congratulate two constituents of Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood on reaching an impressive milestone. Mr. Speaker, today Gordon and Myrtle Weiss are celebrating their 70th wedding anniversary.

Gordon was born in Regina and grew up on a farm near Girvin, and Myrtle was born and raised in Bladworth. The couple first met in 1943, Mr. Speaker, but Gordon left for France shortly after they met. In France he fought on the front lines of the Second World War with the 2nd Canadian Infantry Division 8th Reconnaissance Regiment.

After the war, Mr. Speaker, Gordon returned home to Saskatchewan in February of 1946. Once he was home, he looked up Myrtle, who was working in Saskatoon. The couple was reunited and quickly fell in love. By September of 1946, they were engaged, and on this day 70 years ago they were wed in Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, through seven decades of love, Gordon and Myrtle raised a son, Jim, a daughter, Rhonda, and they have seen their family grow to include five grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. I ask all members to join me in congratulating Gordon and Myrtle Weiss on 70 years of marriage and in wishing them many more loving years together. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Moosomin.

Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Awards

Mr. Bonk: — Mr. Speaker, on October 21st, I had the pleasure of attending the 16th annual Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Awards. More than 400 people, including technical training providers, employers, apprentices, and journeypersons attended the event held here in Regina. This year 34 journeypersons received the Outstanding New Journeyperson Award, which is presented to those who have achieved the highest mark in the interprovincial journeyperson's exam in their respective trades.

There are a range of awards given to some of the best tradespeople and apprentices in the world. Some of these awards are awards for the highest mark across all trades, the highest mark achieved by a female in a traditionally male trade, the highest mark achieved by a person of Aboriginal ancestry, and the gold medal winners from the Skills Canada Saskatchewan competition. Sponsors, industry partners, and trade leaders were there to help deliver awards, showcase trades, and promote careers.

Mr. Speaker, these award recipients are exceptional role models for the skilled trades. They are dedicated, hard-working individuals who deserve recognition.

The Apprenticeship Awards bring together people to celebrate those who have helped build one of the best apprenticeship and certification systems in the country. It is one of the most established apprenticeship awards events in Canada, and I ask all members to recognize the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission for organizing and hosting this event year after year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Reopening of Colonsay Potash Mine

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to stand in this Assembly today and inform members of this House that the Mosaic is planning on reopening the Colonsay potash mine on the 5th of December.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has been hit hard by the low commodity prices that have been dominating world markets over the last few years. But time and time again, we see that Saskatchewan people and businesses are resilient. We are pleased that those workers who were laid off in July when the mine went idle can return to their job soon, although some of the workers were able to find other employment in the meantime. But according to a report in the *Saskatoon StarPhoenix* today, almost all the workers employed at the mine previously will be returning to the mine.

Mr. Speaker, our government has worked hard to make sure that Saskatchewan is a great place to invest and grow businesses. Although we are not immune to global commodity prices, we have a strong and resilient economy. Mr. Speaker, it is great news that the Colonsay mine will be reopening. We wish all those workers the best as they prepare to return to work.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Public Accounts Committee and Auditor's Report

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the fight for answers here in this Assembly goes on day after day in the GTH [Global Transportation Hub] land scandal of the Sask Party. The Premier refuses day after day to provide answers to basic questions, so today we'll try the Deputy Premier.

At yesterday's Public Accounts meeting we saw a coordinated effort that came right out of the Premier's office. Mr. Speaker, the full cabinet is involved in this land scandal. Twice, twice they saw the deal, and twice yesterday they blocked calling witnesses that are key to this deal from testifying to that committee. So can the Deputy Premier stand in his place, the people's legislature, and explain why the Sask Party is doing all they can to block the committee from doing their work and from holding an open and transparent investigation into the GTH land scandal? It's indefensible.

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. What happened yesterday at Public Accounts was that the auditor confirmed the findings of her report emphatically. And in addition to that, she refuted directly the theories, the conspiracy theories of the opposition and others with regard to this matter directly. She concluded and reinforced her conclusion, Mr. Speaker, that there was no wrongdoing, there was no fraud, and there was no conflict of interest. That was the take-away from yesterday's meeting of the Public Accounts Committee. The auditor completely reinforced the findings of her report and refuted the conspiracy theories of the opposition.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, that's not the take-away from yesterday's meeting, and Saskatchewan people deserve answers in this deal that's wasted millions of dollars. Everyone knows that that wasn't a forensic audit. And even in the statement that's referenced, even the statement that's referenced by the minister here today it's very clear that that doesn't include the entire Sask Party cabinet or senior officials of government, Mr. Speaker. It exonerates no one. Plain and simple, blocking witnesses from the committee is indefensible and it's weak. And of course the question was to the Deputy Premier.

[14:00]

Last week I asked the Premier if he would get this legislature the former minister's phone records. The minister of course has been plagued by scandal, so I think that all the people in this Assembly and that all the people in Saskatchewan would like to see those records. The Premier said, quote, on the floor of this Assembly, "The phone records, all the documents were made available to the Provincial Auditor." But Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Provincial Auditor said she was not given those phone records, the very phone records that the Premier stood on the floor of this Assembly and said were made available.

So, Mr. Speaker, will the Deputy Premier put all of this to . . . And I don't want an answer from that minister who hasn't provided an answer day after day. This is a question to the Deputy Premier. Will the Deputy Premier commit today to put some of this to rest and to table those phone records to this Assembly? If he's got nothing to hide, this should be no problem.

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Mr. Speaker, we know that the Leader of the Opposition is getting desperate. We know that, Mr. Speaker. Let me just address directly a couple of the items that he raised — the issue of the forensic audit which he raised, and also the issue of the phone records — not in my words, Mr. Speaker, but those of the auditor, those of the auditor. They claim to respect the work that the auditor's done. In fact I think the member from Nutana reinforced that yesterday. But every day they're standing up and questioning the conclusion of the auditor.

So let me just address this with respect to the forensic audit. Quote, quote from the auditor yesterday: frankly, if we did a forensic audit, there would have been a lot of matters that we included in our report that would have not been provided to this committee. We may not have looked at governance structures of the organization, may not have looked at processes for reviewing appraisals. So the focus of our work would have been completely different.

So her conclusion is that she did more work in the audit that she selected to do, Mr. Speaker. With regard to the, with regard to the phone . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . The member for Nutana continuously interrupts from her seat, Mr. Speaker. These are the words of the Provincial Auditor to whom she was asking questions yesterday.

Here's the answer to the phone records: "... and we corroborated it with interview evidence, and through that we didn't see a need to pursue phone records." These are the words of the Provincial Auditor, Mr. Speaker. The members opposite claim to support the conclusion of the auditor and the work of the auditor. Just because they don't like the answer, Mr. Speaker, doesn't mean they shouldn't accept it.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Auditor's document exonerated no one and was very scathing. Day after day our leader asks questions of the Premier, day after day, serious questions about the scandal that cost the people of Saskatchewan millions and millions of dollars. And then day after day, the Sask Party members go through a three-step process of denial. Step one: the Premier refuses to answer those questions. Step two: he sloughs off the serious questions to someone else who's assigned to pop up and repeat the talking points. And step three, Mr. Speaker: everyone over there over-dutifully applauds. And everyone knows the routine, Mr. Speaker.

So to the current Minister of Government Relations or somebody speaking on her behalf . . . has been part of the scandal from the beginning. So whoever is speaking on her behalf, can you ask her why she's so proud of this scandal that cost our province so many millions of dollars?

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Mr. Speaker, what happened yesterday was every one of the fantasy conspiracy theories advanced by the members opposite, every one of them, was systematically refuted by the Provincial Auditor. The Provincial Auditor reinforced the conclusions of her audit: that there was no wrongdoing, that there was no fraud, and there was no conflict of interest.

The members opposite claim, claim to support the Provincial Auditor, yet they stand up day after day after day and advance fantasy conspiracy theories, fantasy conspiracy theories that are completely at contrary to the work that she did and to her report. I would say again, Mr. Speaker, just because you don't like the conclusion of the Provincial Auditor doesn't mean you shouldn't accept it.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, wash, rinse, and repeat. They're acting so proud of themselves, Mr. Speaker, but they know they have nothing to be proud of when it comes to this scandal.

The Minister of Government Relations was part of this process and has been behind this scandal since before it was first discussed at cabinet. So she's never stood up to explain why she is so proud of this scandal that has cost our province millions and millions of dollars. Will someone do that for her today?

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Day after day they come in and they smear drive-by smears of members of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, of honourable members who have served this province with distinction, Mr. Speaker, day after day. This matter was canvassed by the Provincial Auditor, frankly at their request. The Public Accounts Committee of which they chaired made the request of the Provincial Auditor to look into this matter on the behalf of the Public Accounts Committee and this legislature more generally.

The Provincial Auditor took that mandate very seriously. She addressed the matter. She said there were no roadblocks. There was very real and significant co-operation. She had access to all of the information that she needed in order to make a determination on the matter. She did so, Mr. Speaker. She made a number of recommendations which we take seriously and which we accept.

Her conclusion on all of the fantasy conspiracy theories advanced by the members opposite was that they were wrong, that they're wrong. She refuted every single one of them in detail and directly yesterday, Mr. Speaker. And again just because the members opposite do not like the conclusion that the auditor came to, doesn't mean that they should not accept it.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Well, Mr. Speaker, that minister and the rest of the Sask Party government better get used to this because this is going to go for a long time, Mr. Speaker. This is going to go on for a long time. Mr. Speaker, surely someone over there is starting to feel a bit guilty about listening to their staff in the backroom instead of listening to their constituents and paying attention to their own conscience. So anyone in cabinet or the backbench, except for the Minister of the Economy, stand up and explain to us why they voted for this scandal. Anyone.

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Day after day they bring fantasy conspiracy theories they make. They have invective-laced questions. They smear members of the Assembly. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, the auditor addressed every single one of these matters with the full co-operation of the government. With the full co-operation of those involved in the transaction at the direction of the Assembly though the Public Accounts Committee.

That's how the process works, Mr. Speaker. The auditor did a thorough job. She in fact went into detail yesterday at the provincial . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . It's a process audit. The Provincial Auditor addressed this directly yesterday and again, because the member from Nutana doesn't like the answer from the Provincial Auditor, which was in fact that she had a more thorough audit done because of the process that she chose. A more thorough process because . . . [inaudible interjections] . . . Her words. Her words.

She did a more thorough audit than what the members opposite are asking for. And her conclusion, Mr. Speaker? There was no wrongdoing, there was no fraud, and there was no conflict of interest.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, once again the people of Saskatchewan are millions of dollars out of money here. Millions of dollars wasted, Mr. Speaker. That's the bottom line here. So once again, I'm trying to give them a chance here. Every day they sit here. Every day they read the headlines. Mr. Speaker, again, this is a very important offer. Does anyone in cabinet or the backbench want to stand up today and admit that they don't support the scandal? The truth will set them free. Will one of you get up and speak the truth? Any one of you?

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — This is just surreal, Mr. Speaker. The Provincial Auditor was given a task by the Public Accounts Committee. The Provincial Auditor was given a mandate by the Public Accounts Committee, of which members opposite chair that committee. The Provincial Auditor did, in her own words, a very thorough job of looking into the matter. She had all of the resources she required to look into the matter. She chose, she chose the mechanism under which she proceeded, which was more thorough, by her own testimony, than that which the members opposite suggest.

She came to a conclusion, Mr. Speaker, after doing all of that work on our behalf collectively as legislators. Her conclusion was that there was no wrongdoing, that there was no fraud, and there was no conflict of interest. And the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite don't like that conclusion. They don't like that conclusion.

And they claim, they stand up and claim, the member from Nutana claims that the Provincial Auditor did a great job, she did an awesome job . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh, and she's heckling from her seat saying, yes, of course she did. Well then why won't you accept the conclusion? Why won't you accept the conclusion which said there was no wrongdoing, there was no fraud, and there was no conflict of interest?

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

Answers to Written Questions

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, he may be distracted by a change of heart on the GTH land scandal, but the Minister of

Justice has been struggling to answer straightforward questions about some of the bills he's brought forward to the House. He was wrong on the changes to *The Coroners Act* and he wasn't ready to explain why he was ready to force our Crowns to pay federal income tax with *The Interpretation Act*.

The minister is a respected lawyer but I had to wonder if he's too busy these days to do his research. So last week, I asked some straightforward written questions about the research that went into these bills. Imagine my surprise when, yesterday, I was told that they won't be answering these questions for months — months, Mr. Speaker, until we can get simple answers about the research behind these bills that remove oversight when people die in custody and remove protections from our Crowns. Why can't the minister answer these questions today?

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well, Mr. Speaker, certainly the members opposite are entitled to ask those questions, Mr. Speaker, and we are entitled to get the time required in order to answer those questions, Mr. Speaker. They will be answered in due course, Mr. Speaker, so that we can give a full and complete answer to the questions that have been asked. And those answers will be tabled in this House, Mr. Speaker. But we do deserve time to be able to provide full and complete answers to those questions, which we will, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, there's no excuse for delaying these answers and there's no excuse for that minister ducking responsibility for not doing his homework. Mr. Speaker, they had more than a week to simply answer how much they researched these bills. The minister has the entire machinery of the Ministry of Justice at his disposal. The people of Saskatchewan deserve answers. They deserve to know that these important bills were not drawn up on the back of a napkin in room 110.

I know this minister has been left with a lot to handle because the Premier is unwilling to spread responsibility to more than a few members of his caucus. But nonetheless, will the minister commit to getting answers to these simple questions today?

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well certainly, Mr. Speaker, we'll commit to get the answers, Mr. Speaker. But I think it's appropriate that the Ministry of Justice, given all the work that we're doing, given the very large number of questions that get asked by the opposition of all members of this House, Mr. Speaker, all members of cabinet, there's a significant number of questions to answer, Mr. Speaker. I think it's appropriate to give my officials the appropriate amount of time to give a full and complete answer to the questions that are tabled, Mr. Speaker, and we will table those answers with the House when those answers are complete.

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

Donations to Political Parties

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked the Attorney General to explain his government's pay-for-play operation with a Sask Party lobbyist. And what was his justification? Everything's fine. Nothing to see here. It's all posted to the lobbyist registry.

I think he missed the point. This Sask Party lobbyist's new employer has given his party nearly \$27,000 since he stopped working for them. The Sask Party members are feathering their nests with pay-to-play fees collected from big corporations and big law firms, and these funds help to pay the Premier's big partisan bonus.

Will our Attorney General agree with me that our province's electoral finance laws are well past their expiry date and it's time to get big money out of Saskatchewan politics?

The Speaker: — I cautioned the member yesterday and today on verbiage used in this Assembly. I would ask that he use extreme caution, and not the verbiage that he just used, in future questions.

I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I don't think I missed the point of the question at all. We have a lobbying legislation in this province, Mr. Speaker, and with the assistance of the opposition through an all-party report, we brought legislation forward to make the operation of executive government, Mr. Speaker, more transparent to the people of this province so that people in this province will know who are lobbying their elected officials, Mr. Speaker.

[14:15]

And I'll repeat the point that I made yesterday, Mr. Speaker. The corporations that are making donations, Mr. Speaker, have significant interests in this province by way of employees, employees who pay taxes, Mr. Speaker, and employees and companies that are making significant economic ... have significant economic activity, Mr. Speaker, all supporting our economy, Mr. Speaker. And the employees of those companies deserve to have voice through their corporations, Mr. Speaker.

So we make no apologies for this, Mr. Speaker. We'll continue to ensure that the lobbying legislation is fulsome, Mr. Speaker, so that the people of this province know exactly who's lobbying the people in this side of the House.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, every time politicians got caught with pay-to-play, they all try to explain it away by saying it's all fine; no laws were broken. But, Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party didn't break the laws because here in Saskatchewan the laws are broken.

It's simple. The jobs of the lobbyists are to ask the government to change the laws and to help out their clients. The problem starts when that lobbying comes with tens of thousands of dollars being handed to the Sask Party and tens of thousands of dollars going into a fund to top up the Premier's salary . . .

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

Delivery of Mental Health Services

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, with Sask Party cuts, the RQHR [Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region] was forced to cut 20 staff who worked to provide in-patient mental health services. This government says mental health is a priority. But first, we saw inaction as their own mental health report sat on a shelf, and now cuts.

To be clear, their own report says they needed to increase access to services, but instead they cut. The minister claims this won't impact service, but family members of people struggling to get mental health support disagree. They are saying they need better answers, family members need better answers, remote and rural communities need better answers, and everyone with a mental illness deserves better answers.

Mr. Speaker, does this minister have any better answers, or does he still want to tell families that cuts in health don't matter and that the care that they are getting is good enough?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We take the issue of mental health very seriously, as we do the entire spectrum of health care, Mr. Speaker. The quotes that the member opposite was referring to when I mentioned in the legislature in the past was actually, was not my quote. It was the quote of the CEO [chief executive officer] of the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region in regards to the recent staffing changes in the mental health unit.

Mr. Speaker, we take any layoff seriously. We know the health region, before they made these decisions, they took this very seriously. And the quote that the member's referring to is from Keith Dewar, the CEO of Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region, in a news release dated September the 16th. And it said: "During this process, the region will not be reducing services, closing beds or halting programs relating to this initiative."

Mr. Speaker, again we take this matter very seriously. This was an issue of some scheduling changes, and I'd be happy to follow up on that in a subsequent question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, is the minister seriously arguing that making cuts doesn't impact services? Twenty front-line workers, Mr. Speaker. We understand that the Sask Party is desperately cutting this year. But somehow, at the same time that 20 health care providers were laid off, money was found to hire another manager. There will be "additional management

support to focus on attendance management in addition to assist the management team in better understanding and managing sick time and overtime."

Mr. Speaker, they are hiring a manager to manage a problem that they are creating with poor management. This is absolutely backwards. They got rid of front-line staff and then added management to help deal with the overtime when they don't have enough front-line staff. Instead of hiring front-line workers to help front-line workers help patients, they're hiring another manager to help mismanage. How does this help people get the mental health services they need?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, what I was referring to in this matter is the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region tells us that what they were doing was making changes to shifts. They have staff working eight-hour shifts instead of 12-hour shifts, and they expect that that will reduce overtime. Mr. Speaker, they did a similar situation in home care, and they found that it resulted in substantial more efficiencies.

Mr. Speaker, to the general premise of the question on how serious we take mental health issues, Mr. Speaker: very much so. In the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region, we've increased funding overall by 57 per cent. We've increased funding to mental health. Mr. Speaker, I think the recent tragedies in the North speak to how important mental health is. Mr. Speaker, we have a number of members of the Executive Council that are up there today as we speak. And, Mr. Speaker, again I see my time has elapsed, but I will follow up in a subsequent question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Funding for Hospitals

Ms. Rancourt: — Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House we have talked about mice in the Cancer Centre, cockroaches in RUH [Royal University Hospital], and now it's bedbugs in Victoria Hospital in Prince Albert. The Sask Party should stop tolerating its vermin. The Minister of Health may try to weasel his way out of the responsibility like his colleague in Education and blame it on the regions. But the buck stops with the minister, or should I say the mice, cockroaches, and bedbugs stop at the minister.

Victoria Hospital is bursting at the seams. ER [emergency room] waits are dangerously long and getting longer. And now on top of all of that, they have bedbugs to deal with. Mr. Speaker, when will the Minister of Health take his job seriously and ensure that the Prince Albert residents have the health care they deserve?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was advised yesterday of the incident of the bedbugs in Prince Albert that the member refers to. And I've been advised today that through good work and diligent work of the staff, while these situations arise from time to time, I believe the situation

has been cleared up.

Mr. Speaker, it just speaks to a bigger question though, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I guess the member could probably do a little bit of research before she asks a question in the House.

But, Mr. Speaker, we've made health care funding a priority: over 50 per cent increase in health care funding since we formed government. We've recruited medical professionals: 650 more doctors, over 3,000 more nurses, hundreds more long-term care workers, Mr. Speaker. You know, Mr. Speaker, the tone of the questions over there just defies logic. Far more funding, far more resources than when they were in government.

And, Mr. Speaker, possibly the member that asked that question could learn she's no longer a rookie in this House. She can actually ask her own questions. She doesn't have to read it just because it's been written. Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Rancourt: — I find it really interesting that the Sask Party is now interested in Prince Albert. For the longest time we've been saying we need to fix the Prince Albert hospital. We've highlighted time and again that our hospital services the North, and it makes sense that the province funds a hospital in Prince Albert. But the Sask Party has demanded that the city picks up some of the tab.

Yesterday we heard the Premier say the government is considering treating the hospital as a "... tertiary hospital like Regina or Saskatoon because it doesn't just serve Prince Albert and the immediate area; it serves the North."

Mr. Speaker, this is interesting. I swear the Premier took those words right out of my mouth. But with the Sask Party's track record, it's easy to question if this will actually happen. Is the Sask Party finally committing to fund a hospital in Prince Albert? And when will we see this money?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the question, Mr. Speaker, exactly where the status is, in 2014-15, \$2 million was provided for planning of a renewal or a rebuild. That work continues, Mr. Speaker.

But to the overall premise of the question, questioning where the Sask Party's at with capital projects and health care — really, Mr. Speaker? We look at our record versus the record of the members opposite. Mr. Speaker, new hospital, North Battleford. Mr. Speaker, a new hospital in Moose Jaw. Thirteen long-term care facilities around this province. Mr. Speaker, many, many capital projects. Mr. Speaker, their legacy? Fifty-two hospital closures. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

The Speaker: — We may hear your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Just in this Assembly not 48 hours ago, you reminded all the members in here to use decorum and to treat other members with respect and the privilege that is earned to us by being voted into this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. And I heard the Leader of the Opposition again say "scandal-plagued member" as well as "scandal-plagued minister," which was also specifically told by you, Mr. Speaker, to this House not to be referenced to.

And further to that, the member from Saskatoon Centre used "feather their nest," which I appreciate you warning them about, Mr. Speaker. But I'm wondering if I can get a ruling on them not using the term of "scandal-plagued member" again.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, with respect to the first . . . First of all, I think the Government House Leader just asked on two points of order combined into one, but I will try and break them down for you. With respect to "scandal-plagued minister" that the Government House Leader said was used, the Leader of the Opposition, I believe, used the words "minister who is plagued by scandal." That's a fact, Mr. Speaker. Your ruling asked us not to change the titles of ministers, which is not what we did in this instance. Therefore we did not breach your ruling, Mr. Speaker. So I would ask you find that that particular point was not well made.

With respect to "feather one's nest," I understand you've already made a censure on that. But I will state that if you look at the definition of "feather one's nest," you'll see that there's no criminal intent there whatsoever, which still falls within your ruling, Mr. Speaker. Therefore we didn't feel that that was an inappropriate language to use. However I do understand you've already made a censure, so I'll leave you with that.

The Speaker: — On the first point of order raised by the Government House Leader, I'll have to review *Hansard* and the video to see what the Leader of the Opposition said or didn't say.

With the second point of order, I caution, even past caution . . . The members, the opposition should know that questioning criminal behaviour of other hon. members will not be acceptable in my Assembly. So that member has been warned. And I did cut his question off early when that was raised again, and I would expect that behaviour to stop. I'll reserve judgment for the first point of order to a later date.

Why is the Leader of the Opposition on his feet?

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Requesting leave to introduce a guest.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Opposition.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I notice that seated in the west gallery, my dad Craik Wotherspoon walked into the Assembly to observe proceedings here today and is maybe keeping an eye on me here today and seeing how things are going. It's my pleasure to welcome him. He keeps track of provincial affairs very closely, and I know he's been keeping track of the debate in the last number of weeks, and for years. But it's my pleasure to welcome certainly my hunting partner, my good friend, my fishing partner to this Assembly. He spent his life as a teacher and a school principal all throughout Regina, I guess Raymore as well for a few years, and certainly taught us and displayed values to us that have served us well within our own lives.

He's a crooked shot, Mr. Speaker, as a hunter. I may see that on display here this weekend, on Saturday possibly. But he's a good guy, Mr. Speaker. And he's not a pretty man. He's a pretty good guy, but he's not a pretty man. And in part I think that's probably that Weyburn nose job that he got when he was rather young with Dave "Tiger" Williams, Mr. Speaker. So anyways, it's my pleasure to welcome my dad to his Assembly and certainly thank him for everything within my family's life, within my own life, and looking forward to hunting with him on Saturday, I hope. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 146 through 171.

The Speaker: — The Government Whip has tabled the responses to questions 146 to 171.

[14:30]

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 13

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Duncan that **Bill No. 13 — *The Cancer Agency Amendment Act, 2016*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to enter debate on Bill No. 13, *The Cancer Agency Amendment Act, 2016*. My remarks will be relatively short here on this particular bill. And as the members opposite, the House Leader knows, these will be the final remarks before this bill goes to

committee, Mr. Speaker.

It's a fairly straightforward and simple bill, Bill No. 13. I will give you a few examples. It basically throughout the bill amends the term "cancer care" to "cancer control." And the reason this is, is because:

Throughout the world the term cancer control is used to describe the broad range of services used to prevent cancer; improve the early detection, and reduce the incidence of cancer; improve cancer patients' treatment outcomes; and support cancer research.

[So in order] To be consistent with the standard definition used throughout the world, it is proposed that the definition used in the Act and regulations be changed from cancer care services to cancer control services.

Mr. Speaker, there are several references in the bill moving from "cancer care" to "cancer control."

Another change, Mr. Speaker, is adding the term "palliation" to the mandate of the agency. So I'll just ... That particular provision right now states that:

9(2) For the purposes of this Act and *The Regional Health Services Act*, the agency is responsible for providing:

(a) services respecting:

(ii) the provision and delivery of treatment or rehabilitation services to individuals;

(iv) the prevention and screening of individuals for cancers.

So it is proposed, Mr. Speaker, that palliation services be added to the Act to encompass the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency's role and work in ensuring and providing palliative care services for cancer patients.

There is one other piece that I want to go into a little bit more length. And just referring to the minister's second reading comments here, Mr. Speaker, what this bill will be doing is allowing the Ministry of Health to disclose a patient's cancer diagnosis to the agency, Mr. Speaker.

So he goes on to say, when he made his second reading speech on May 30th:

The Cancer Agency Amendment Act will provide statutory authority for the agency to request and collect information from other organizations, to report to various registries, and to enter into agreements. The proposed amendments also provide consistent definitions of cancer services and reflect the current government structure in naming conventions.

In cases where the administrative authority of the Cancer Agency is not already consistent with that of its sister organizations, the regional health authorities, this Act will allow for better alignment with provisions of *The Regional Health Services Act*.

And he goes on to say that:

... the proposed amendments will ensure the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency has the statutory authority it needs to request, collect, and disclose information in order to effectively meet its responsibility for providing cancer control services.

When this bill does make its way to committee, Mr. Speaker, I think that there will be some questions. So those are the minister's words describing what the bill is about.

He goes on in his second reading speech to say that he wants:

... to assure all members that the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner will be consulted about the agency's ability to collect information and disclose it for specific purposes, and to specific organizations that will be prescribed through the regulations.

So I just would like to flag that. It'll be an opportunity in committee to get a little bit further information on this, Mr. Speaker.

And I might suggest too that it would be good to speak with the Information and Privacy Commissioner before a bill comes forward to make a change, Mr. Speaker.

I know in my role, just briefly on the Human Services Committee, looking into organ donation rate increases, the Information and Privacy Commissioner presented to the committee and said, actually it would be helpful to be ... instead of catching things once they're already done, Mr. Speaker, to be proactive and to make those changes and catch any unintended consequences for the Information and Privacy Commissioner to see any red flags beforehand. So my suggestion would've been perhaps the government should have consulted with the Information and Privacy Commissioner beforehand, but I will look forward to that discussion when we have an opportunity to discuss this in the committee.

I do want to just draw your attention to the former minister's comments. He actually points out — and this is an unfortunate and true story, Mr. Speaker — that "... the number of new cancer cases diagnosed in Saskatchewan is projected to increase 54 per cent by 2036." And obviously the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency does very good work, and community organizations. There's many people who are working on not just treatment and support for cancer patients and families, Mr. Speaker, but the prevention piece.

But I want to draw your attention to the fact that there are ways that governments have an opportunity to take a lead when it comes to prevention services and ensuring that our citizenry is as healthy as can be, Mr. Speaker. And I remember a couple years ago in committee actually, in one of the policy field committees having an opportunity, a back and forth with the then Health minister about tanning bed legislation. And the minister was very ... well not just reluctant, refused to go there, wouldn't really answer questions, Mr. Speaker, around when I was pressing him on the need for a tanning bed ban for those under 18, and refused to go there for quite some time, Mr. Speaker. I was very glad last year when the government finally

moved on that.

Non-melanoma cancer, skin cancer, I believe, is the highest diagnosed type of cancer here. Melanoma is one issue for sure, Mr. Speaker, but non-melanoma cancers where the treatment actually ... It's not cancerous. But non-melanoma cancers are awful, and the treatment, Mohs treatment — it's called M-o-h-s, if you're wondering, Mr. Speaker — is not a pleasant treatment at all.

So preventing ... Early prevention, all the statistics, all the data points to needing to prevent exposure to things like tanning beds and ensuring people know how to prevent skin cancer in other ways like hats and sunscreen and long sleeves — those kinds of things. But the government was reluctant to move in that direction and could've moved quicker.

I'm also going to point you to a November 24th — almost a year ago, Mr. Speaker — a news release by the Canadian Cancer Society and the Heart and Stroke Foundation. Just would like to read you a quote here, Mr. Speaker:

"Saskatchewan has the highest youth smoking rate in Canada, which is nearly double the national average," says Donna Pasiechnik from the Canadian Cancer Society. "This is completely unacceptable. Unless we begin to seriously address this issue now, smoking-related illnesses will overwhelm our society and the health care system."

Mr. Speaker, these two organizations point to this government's refusal to ... They got an F on this report card, Mr. Speaker, for its refusal to ban flavoured tobacco for example, Mr. Speaker, and a D for inaction on outdoor smoking such as on restaurants and bar patios, Mr. Speaker.

Having been a server in a restaurant many, many years ago — a lifetime ago now actually, not far off from the age of my oldest daughter now, which is strange to me — but I was a server in the then smoke-filled bars. And I don't know why it's okay to say that we can't smoke in an enclosed area but if you're a ... So as a waitress or a server in any of these establishments, it was really unpleasant and awful to be in a smoke-filled environment. And I was no longer a server when the indoor smoking ban came into effect. But to not ban it on patios makes absolutely no sense.

I think the minister in some of his media had commented about those outside of the patio or are walking by the patio, there'll still be smoke around. But there could have been a good move, or and still can be a good move made by this government to seriously consider banning smoking in public spaces like patios at bars and restaurants where it's already banned indoors, Mr. Speaker. And that would be a good occupational health and safety opportunity as well, Mr. Speaker, in terms of preventing future illnesses including cancer, Mr. Speaker.

So with respect to Bill No. 13, *The Cancer Agency Amendment Act, 2016*, I look forward to have the opportunity to ask the new minister and his officials questions once we get to committee. So with that, I will conclude my remarks. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the member that Bill No. 13, *The Cancer Agency*

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 Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill 13 be sent to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

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

Bill No. 40

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 40 — *The Interpretation Amendment Act, 2016/Loi modificative de 2016 sur l'interprétation*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure . . . Well it is always an honour to enter the debate in bills on the floor of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, in our capacity as members of the Legislative Assembly. But I can't say it is, that I'm happy about this, to be embarking upon this debate at this particular time after we have a government who committed to not going down the path of privatization, or further down the path of privatization of our Crowns, Mr. Speaker.

So once again I'm going to ask you to bear with me. I don't have my laptop and my iPhone today as resources but I do have many, many pieces of paper that I'm going to draw on here, many different articles and sources here.

So I'd like to tell you, Mr. Speaker, first a little bit about what this bill does. 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.

So that's the big piece of the Act, Mr. Speaker. Just a little smaller piece, it also includes gender-neutral language for the monarch of Canada so that references to the Queen or King will be consistent in all pieces of legislation when the Prince of Wales becomes King Charles III, Mr. Speaker. So that latter point is interesting but of not much consequence, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to point out, I've said this in the Assembly before, I'm a social worker, not a lawyer, Mr. Speaker. But in conversations with my colleagues who are lawyers in this House . . . My colleague from Saskatoon Nutana, Mr. Speaker, we were discussing what an interpretation Act does. She had pointed out that across the Commonwealth, Mr. Speaker, in Canada and several other jurisdictions she examined, there's nowhere else where interpretation Acts have to have laid out the

term "privatization." She has looked — and the member from Nutana is quite a fine researcher, Mr. Speaker — and has not been able to find this.

Interpretation Acts are generally bills, are bills that define simple basic terms. And my conversations with my colleague from Nutana, she has a strong belief that this is a misuse and a very unusual use of *The Interpretation Act*, Mr. Speaker. Again, looking across Canada and other Commonwealth countries, this is highly unusual.

I just would like to point you to the minister's comments who introduced this bill, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'll quote here:

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].

He goes on to say, "Mr. Deputy Speaker, it will not include a winding up and dissolution of a Crown corporation or other restructuring of the Crown corporation." So, Mr. Speaker, he also says that this 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. Speaker, again, if the government doesn't have the intention to privatize, there was no need to bring this forward. This is unusual, as my colleague in her adjourned debate talked about the wild thing, creating something new and different and unknown, creating the potential for creating a . . . we don't know what. Say for example, a SaskTel that is 51 per cent owned by the people of Saskatchewan and 49 per cent owned by any number of other entities, what that will mean and what that'll mean for the people of Saskatchewan.

But I want to take you back to 2003, the election in 2003, Mr. Speaker, where the then leader of the Sask Party had made some remarks around privatization and said that he would have to entertain any offers around Crown corporations. So there was the strong feeling that this is a government who would be willing to put Crowns at risk, Mr. Speaker, Crowns that serve Saskatchewan people well.

So that's what Mr. Hermanson had said in 2003 and it did not bode well for the Sask Party at that time. I understand there was an election party, that they were quite confident that they were going to win, and the spectre of privatization of our Crowns was something that the people of Saskatchewan weren't interested in entertaining today, and I don't believe they're interested in entertaining it either . . . or they weren't interested in 2003 and I don't believe they're interested in 2016.

[14:45]

So I would like to take you to some of the Premier's remarks . . . Well let's talk about the Sask Party platform actually, Mr. Speaker. So in 2003 we had the then leader of the Sask Party talking about privatizing the Crowns, saying eerily similar things, that there's no plan to privatize but we'd have to

entertain an offer, which I think are comments we've heard from the Premier and others on that side of the House, Mr. Speaker, similar language anyway.

So in the Sask Party platform in 2007, they've I think learned their lesson . . . Well actually I'm going to take you to 2004, sorry, when the Sask Party actually cemented its support for the Crown protection Act, Mr. Speaker. So in 2004, in November 2004, here in this legislature, Mr. Speaker, with the support from all political parties, passed *The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Act* which would require a thorough study of any proposed privatization including an analysis of the costs and benefits. A full report would then be tabled in the legislature and a legislative committee would debate the proposed sale which could only come into effect after a general election.

The legislation applies to SaskPower, SaskEnergy, SaskTel, SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance], TransGas, STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company], SaskWater, Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority, and the Saskatchewan Gaming Corporation. So back in 2004, after the election campaign of 2003 where people were very concerned about privatization, this government, the then opposition in 2004, said they weren't interested in privatizing and signed on to the Crown protection Act.

So fast forward to 2007 and the Sask Party platform, Mr. Speaker. So they, in their 2007 platform, point out that . . . On page 29 of that platform:

The Saskatchewan Party will ensure Crown Corporations continue to provide Saskatchewan people with the highest quality utilities at the lowest cost, while directing Crown dividends towards priorities like health care, highways and education.

Mr. Speaker, it sounds like they get it, like those are the things that Crowns do for us here in Saskatchewan. They also go on in that same platform on page 29, saying that:

A Saskatchewan Party government will also strengthen Crown investment in our communities and post-secondary institutions to build an innovative economy, while helping Saskatchewan Go Green through initiatives by SaskPower, SaskEnergy and SGI to help Saskatchewan people make smart environmental choices in their homes and when they drive.

Well we've actually seen some of those energy initiatives not really come to fruition, Mr. Speaker, but the point is around our Crown corporations. This is a party in 2007, and then a government . . . a party who became a government, who said they were not interested in privatizing our main Crowns.

And then we'll go to 2011, the platform in 2011, Mr. Speaker. On page 37 of that platform, the Sask Party says they will:

Continue to support the Crown Corporations Public Ownership Act.
Ensure Saskatchewan's Crown utility corporations remain publicly owned and focused on delivering high quality service to Saskatchewan people at the lowest cost.

So again, in 2011, Mr. Speaker, they got it. They got it. So then we fast-forward to 2016, an election in 2016 when the government took it to the people of Saskatchewan the desire to sell 40 public liquor stores. That was part of their agenda, Mr. Speaker. That was the only Crown they talked about selling. Even raising the spectre of privatization was branded as . . . Anybody who talked about the Sask Party's agenda of privatization was labelled a bogeyman, Mr. Speaker, or fearmongers, Mr. Speaker.

But we see this . . . We have another piece of legislation before us where the government again took to the people of Saskatchewan the privatization of 40 liquor stores — that was all — and now we see all the rest of Saskatchewan liquor stores being removed from protection as well, Mr. Speaker. So we have a government who in their platform was committed to not privatizing, with the exception of the 40 liquor stores, but have already moved on another agenda. And it wasn't long after that election campaign that the spectre of SaskTel potentially being on the chopping block came up as well.

I'm going to actually take you to an interesting article that *Planet S* wrote. That's a local newspaper in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker, and its companion paper in Regina, the *Prairie Dog*. And they have an article that they wrote, reporter Evan Radford wrote it: "In Brad's . . . Words: A recap of our premier's statements on SaskTel privatization." So in this article, it's basically an accounting of all the things that Premier Wall . . . pardon me, the Premier has said on this account, so on the record, and all the things that the Premier has committed to around not privatizing.

So in May 2010 in an article in *The Globe and Mail* with journalist Gordon Pitts, the Premier does a one-on-one interview and Pitts asks Wall why he is resisting privatizing Crowns. And Wall references the 2003 gaffe which I've just briefly talked about by then party leader Hermanson. And this is what the Premier said in that 2010 May article:

It's a practical lesson from the election of 2003 (which his party narrowly lost) when we sacrificed the chance to implement the rest of this growth agenda. I was the Crown corporation critic and I helped write the policy, so mea culpa. We sacrificed the chance to make some long-term changes in the psyche and environment in the province for this one issue.

Some on the right say SaskTel doesn't have a future as a standalone indie. Well, it just had its biggest year. Part of it is a growing economy and part of it is an attachment people have to their Crowns. In the case of SaskTel, it is competing with other telcos, and this (attachment) has stood them in good stead. I'm not saying Saskatchewan is an island with respect to government-owned enterprise, but there are unique elements that say to me: 'We still have other things to do, we made a commitment and we plan to keep it.'

So that's what the Premier said in May of 2010 in a *Globe and Mail* article. I'll continue to cite the *Planet S* article by Evan Radford where he talks about seven months later to the *Leader-Post* reporter Angela Hall, who used to be here, Mr. Speaker, the legislative reporter here at the Saskatchewan

legislature, did a year-end interview with the Premier and she asked him about hidden privatization agenda. And the article goes:

“The fact is we have put significant investment into the Crown sector. We put significant general revenue dollars into SaskTel over the three years to help them expand connectivity in the province, to help them expand the mobility network,” Wall said.

So again I think that sounds like a Premier who understands that getting services into other parts of the province are important, expanding connectivity and expanding the mobility network. So as this article points out, there’s little else that comes from the Premier until the 2016 election cycle, which started on March 8th when, as you’ll remember, that’s when we all hit the hustings, Mr. Speaker.

On March 15th, the former leader of the NDP [New Democratic Party] raised the prospect of Wall’s hidden privatization agenda for the province’s Crowns, and that was reported in the CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation]. And so the Premier was pressed on the issue, and he says:

“There’s something we signed on to called the Crown Corporation Protection Act, or to that effect. Basically, it protects Crowns from being privatized,” he said. “If elected, we will make one change to that: that’s to the liquor retailing in the province. And we’ve already announced that.”

“With respect to the major Crowns, we will not be changing it if we’re re-elected again.”

So that’s what the Premier said just a few short months ago prior to election, Mr. Speaker. He said, yes we are going to make one change and that will be removing 40 liquor stores from the Crowns, 40 publicly owned liquor stores from . . . that’s what we will be privatizing. He didn’t talk about removing them all from . . . He didn’t talk about removing SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority] from the Crown protection Act, Mr. Speaker. And he certainly didn’t talk about any other Crown being removed from that Act.

So before the Throne Speech in the spring, Mr. Speaker . . . I’ll go on again. I just want to remind folks at home that I’m citing a *Planet S* article. So before the end of the legislature, before entering the legislature for the government’s Throne Speech, the Premier had “. . . told reporters that ‘competition has gotten tough’ for SaskTel, due to a May 2nd deal that saw Bell Canada buy Manitoba Telecom Services, according to *Leader-Post* reporter David Fraser.”

And Wall — pardon me — the Premier says:

Maybe that’s a discussion Saskatchewan people want to have . . . We wouldn’t be able to be in a position of welcoming private investment into SaskTel even if that was thought to be the right thing, because we didn’t campaign on it.

If it was something Saskatchewan people, we thought, really wanted to at least talk about, there is the idea of a

provincial referendum [the Premier said].

So, Mr. Speaker, again the Premier understands, this government understands they did not campaign on privatizing anything other than those 40 liquor stores, Mr. Speaker. Yet we have a bill before us that opens up the door to that very thing.

So the Minister of Health, who was then the minister responsible for SaskTel . . . Just a little point of fact, Mr. Speaker, it’s interesting. The current Minister of Health was the former minister for SaskTel, and now the new Minister for SaskTel is the former minister of Health. Just a little tidbit for you, Mr. Speaker. So the minister then responsible for SaskTel called for a risk assessment on May 4th to gauge SaskTel’s vulnerability in light of the MTS [Manitoba Telecom Services] sale, and the Premier then said of that assessment: “It’s worth asking the question, and we ought not to ask it secretly; we ought to have a public discussion.”

And then on June 20th when SaskTel released that risk assessment, the Premier said any plan to sell the telecom will involve everyone in the province. And this is from David Fraser, the *Leader-Post* reporter, again quoting the Premier:

“If there’s going to be any privatization of SaskTel, the shareholders should have a say” . . . noting such a matter could only be decided in an election campaign or a provincial referendum.

Mr. Speaker, but via this Act, Mr. Speaker, this interpretation Act, the government is doing an end run around those statements, Mr. Speaker. He’s doesn’t think that . . . He just had an election campaign, didn’t mention it in an election campaign. Perhaps he’s discovered that on a provincial referendum — is it two-thirds that’s necessary? — it’s not a simple majority, Mr. Speaker. It is not a simple majority that’s required on a referendum on privatizing a Crown, Mr. Speaker.

So perhaps the Premier realized after he spoke about the possibility of a referendum that getting a simple majority, or getting to the two-thirds required number would be too difficult to do. So this is a government who has decided to do an end run around an election and a referendum, Mr. Speaker, with semantics and language and doing something that no other government in the Commonwealth has done by adding the term “privatization” to their interpretation Act, Mr. Speaker.

So back to the *Planet S* article here, Mr. Speaker. On August 23rd, the day of the cabinet shuffle, the Premier assigned the former Health minister the SaskTel portfolio, and he teased out the idea of a bid for SaskTel.

The Premier said:

We may get an offer . . . If we get an offer and we think it’s one that generates a significant amount of money for the province, maybe enough to eliminate our operating debt, if it takes care of the jobs question in Regina, if it provides the opportunity for better coverage, we’re at least going to take it to the people.

Well, Mr. Speaker, again I think with this Act before us, the Premier has realized that he would be hard pressed to get to his

two-thirds majority, Mr. Speaker. The people of Saskatchewan know the benefits of the Crowns to our province, Mr. Speaker. They know about the jobs, well-paying, family-supporting, taxpaying jobs. They know about services extended to rural and remote communities. They know about the dividends that our Crowns pay to the General Revenue Fund to ensure that we have health and education and highways and all those wonderful things we need here in this province.

So I think the Premier probably realized, in consultation with his Justice officials, that getting to the referendum with the need for two-thirds majority, not a simple majority of 50 plus one, would be difficult.

[15:00]

So following on the Premier's comments when he talked about the potential for a bid for SaskTel, the Premier posted this statement on his Facebook page on August 26, Mr. Speaker:

Regarding any potential sale of SaskTel, there first has to be an offer, and one of significance — there is none currently, [Mr. Speaker].

Second, as I've said, only a very significant offer that would include things like protecting jobs in Saskatchewan, keeping rates low, improving rural coverage and allowing us to do something lasting, like eliminating debt should receive any further consideration, [Mr. Speaker.]

By eliminating the debt, Saskatchewan would save roughly twice the amount in interest payments each year as what SaskTel currently averages in an annual dividend to government/shareholders.

Were SaskTel to receive such an offer, we do not have a mandate to accept it . . . to sell. That is not what we campaigned on. But neither would we have the right to say no without checking with the shareholders of SaskTel — the people of Saskatchewan.

That's why I have said that a province-wide referendum would be the only way to deal with such an offer. The people would have to decide, not the government. That is consistent with election commitments we have made.

SaskTel's future became a focus with the proposed sale of MTS to Bell, as the sale would make SaskTel the only regional telecom left in Canada.

The government commissioned a third-party report on SaskTel's competitiveness, which found "there is a risk that SaskTel's net income will be unable to support the level of dividends that have been returned to the province in recent years."

He goes on to say:

It is simply difficult for a small regional telecom to keep up with the necessary infrastructure investments and pressures from large carriers in a highly competitive market.

SaskTel is a well-run company, a good employer, and part of our history as a province. For now, there is no offer and nothing would take place without your say [the Premier said].

So that's what the Premier had to say about privatization, Mr. Speaker, up until just this fall. I think that there's some interesting things in those comments that he does note, that in fact SaskTel is a well-run company, a good employer, and a big part of our history of our province, Mr. Speaker.

But I think many of his comments there are telegraphing that privatization is in fact something that this government is interested in. This has been a Premier who — in the time that I've been in this House; over seven years now, Mr. Speaker — he's awfully fond of those trial balloons, or putting things out and dialing them back a little bit. And that is what I'm arguing is happening here, with doing an end run around a referendum and an election campaign, Mr. Speaker, and by just adding the word "privatization" to *The Interpretation Act*, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to talk a little bit about a former premier actually as well, Mr. Blakeney, who served well in this House, Mr. Speaker. A civil servant, a lawyer, a Rhodes Scholar — I think someone for whom I had a great deal of respect, Mr. Speaker.

But . . . If you'll just bear with me, Mr. Speaker. Actually, you know what, I just want to correct my comments here. A referendum, the requirement for a referendum, Mr. Speaker, is in fact 60 per cent. So I have a feeling that the Premier realized he couldn't reach the 60 per cent required and has decided again to do an end run on a referendum and an election.

So I'm going to draw your attention to "The History of Saskatchewan Crown Corporations," written by Allan Blakeney. I'm going to read a rather long passage into the record, Mr. Speaker, and I think it's well worth reading, Mr. Speaker.

So page 31 of "The History of Saskatchewan Crown Corporations":

In talking about Saskatchewan Crown corporations, I do not propose to talk about the ideology of Crown corporations, either the ideology that says Crown corporations are good and therefore we should keep the existing Crowns and have more, or alternatively, the ideology that says Crown corporations are bad, therefore we should sell SaskEnergy or SGI or whatever.

I believe that human affairs are complex. I believe that they are best dealt with by applying one's mind to the circumstances at hand, and arriving at what is the best course of action for the people whose interests we seek to represent. Thus, I think that, when deciding whether Saskatchewan needs more Crown corporations or fewer, one should ask for whose benefit the Crown corporations were organized; who they benefit now and in the future; and who would benefit if they were dismantled; and assess the situation case by case.

I do not favour the thinking which starts from an ideological straightjacket, one which says that government

enterprise is bad, therefore Crown corporations should be disposed of or, conversely, government enterprise is inherently good, therefore the existing Crown corporations should be retained and others should be established. I do not believe the Crown corporations are inherently good or inherently bad. They are a tool. They are a tool whereby people acting through their government seek to achieve social objectives or economic objectives or both.

I believe that this is how the great bulk of Saskatchewan Crown corporations came into being. Many Crown corporations were brought into being by Conservative governments, Liberal governments, and NDP governments. Many of them have been disposed of by Conservative governments, Liberal governments, and NDP governments. In most cases, this was done because it was thought to make sense if one was acting for the benefit of the people of Saskatchewan.

In the past, governments of all political hues have, to use a facetious phrase, “laid aside their principles and done what was right,” and I hope we can continue to do this. Accordingly, I reject out of hand the ideological, broad-brush approach to Crown corporations, past, present, or future.

I want to say that I also reject the false argument that some people use when they are talking about Crown corporations. They say that Crown corporations have served the people of Saskatchewan well in the past; but things have now changed; and, therefore, Crown corporations should be disposed of. They say this without in any way attempting to establish just why the changes, which undoubtedly have come about, in this decade as they have in every other decade, dictate the sale of Crown corporations now, when changes in past times did not. The mere fact of change is an argument for nothing. If I may use a paradoxical statement, change is a constant. It is only if a particular change dictates a particular course of action that we should take note of change.

I am in some ways one of the many Saskatchewan citizens who’ve received services from many public enterprises throughout our lifetimes.

I have worked in this city as a public servant and as a lawyer engaged in the private practice of law. [The first time I ever owned a house] The first house I ever owned was one that I built, along with others, on the 31 Block Montague Street. When I woke up in the morning, I noted that the house was nice and warm. I liked the natural gas provided by the then Saskatchewan Power Corporation. I got out of bed and struggled to the bathroom and used the plumbing facilities provided by the City of Regina and the water facilities provided by the City of Regina and the hot water provided by SaskPower’s natural gas.

I was conscious of the fact that my house had been paid for largely by a mortgage provided through the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, and the property and fire insurance on the house was provided by Saskatchewan Government Insurance and I drove a car that was insured by Saskatchewan Government Insurance. I drove out of my

driveway onto a street which was provided by the City of Regina and maintained and snowplowed by the City of Regina. I was a member of Sherwood Co-op and usually bought my gasoline at the Sherwood Co-op Association, obtained from Consumer’s Co-op Refinery Limited. My children went off to the nearby school provided by the Regina Public School Board, and I went for some time to a job with the Government of Saskatchewan, and for some time with a private law firm in downtown Regina. My children were born, or three of them were, in hospitals owned by the City of Regina and the Government of Saskatchewan. One of the children was born at our home because of circumstances created when people, following ideology almost blindly, opposed a particular government enterprise — the introduction of medical-care insurance, what they called state medicine and what we now call medicare. They were wrong. On the basis of what was the best for the people, this was a proper extension of state activity, a proper use of a new Crown corporation.

I am unlikely to be convinced that only the public sector, or only the private sector, can provide goods and services. I believe that there is a role for the private sector. After all, I was engaged in the private practice of law. I believe that there is a role for the public sector. I believe that there is a role for the cooperative sector. What we are talking about is the appropriate role for each of these sectors, as well as a private non-profit sector. The appropriate role will change with time and circumstances. The appropriate role will not be ascertained by large dollops of ideology. It will be ascertained by finding out what goods and services we need as individuals and as a community and how we can best provide them for ourselves.

So that was written by Mr. Blakeney, former Premier Blakeney, “The History of Saskatchewan Crown Corporations.”

And again, I don’t think ideology should trump doing what works and what is right for people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

So we can talk about the good things that our Crowns provide for the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We can talk about the jobs: 4,000 jobs across the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. I’m just going to pull those numbers. Mr. Speaker, across the province of Saskatchewan, 4,000 full-time jobs . . . or, pardon me, full-time employees and 624 part-time employees, Mr. Speaker.

It’s interesting. SaskTel, I don’t know if members opposite know this; I actually hadn’t realized it. SaskTel was established in 1908. It is a grand old lady, Mr. Speaker. That is 108 years of serving the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Four thousand jobs in cities like Regina, Saskatoon, Moose Jaw, Swift Current, Yorkton, Weyburn, Estevan, Prince Albert, and North Battleford, Mr. Speaker. So jobs across this province, again jobs that pay families’ bills, Mr. Speaker, allowing families to contribute via taxes but also to purchase goods and services in communities and raise their children, support their parents — good-paying jobs that help support families in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Jobs is just one part of it though, Mr. Speaker. We can look at SaskTel rates, Mr. Speaker. Just looking at some rates, the one thing SaskTel does with the major telcos and . . . So we do have obviously competition here in Saskatchewan, but SaskTel was established for the people of Saskatchewan to service the people of Saskatchewan. It's different than other kinds of businesses. Crowns are not like your average business, Mr. Speaker. They're created by the people and they are to serve the people of the province, Mr. Speaker.

So looking at costs, when we look at cellphone costs comparing, in Saskatchewan, to Rogers, Telus, SaskTel, and Bell, so cellphone costs with unlimited text and nationwide calling, two ten gigabytes of data and voicemail, Rogers is 90, Telus is 80, SaskTel . . . Sorry, Rogers is 90, Bell is 90, Telus is 80, and SaskTel is 75. And I would argue that SaskTel at that price helps keep the others down as well.

With home Internet, Rogers is 74.99, Shaw is \$93, Access is 69.95, and SaskTel is 79.95. So SaskTel is close to the bottom but not the lowest. But again by virtue of a Crown being there not just to maximize profits but to help support the people of Saskatchewan, they help keep, they can help keep rates low, Mr. Speaker.

Home Internet comparison: SaskTel comes in at 59.95; Access is a little lower at 44.95; Shaw is at 73; and Rogers is at 64. So in the scheme of things, SaskTel is either below or the second-lowest fee, Mr. Speaker, for those particular services. So having a Crown that isn't just there to maximize profits can help . . . A tool of public policy is something like the lowest cost utility bundle, Mr. Speaker, the ability to find ways of supporting your citizenry by, through public policy, addressing things like cost of living, which is a big reality for people. I hear that actually frequently in my constituency of Saskatoon Riversdale, that people do struggle to pay bills.

I'd like to tell you about some of the awards that SaskTel has won. As the Premier had noted, it is a great employer and does some very good things in the province. So in 2016 alone, SaskTel is ranked first by J.D. Power and Associates for wireline customer satisfaction studies for TV and Internet in the west region for the fourth consecutive year. SaskTel is tied for the first-place ranking by J.D. Power and Associates for overall network quality for the West for the second consecutive year. SaskTel is ranked first by J.D. Power and Associates for Canadian wireless purchase experience satisfaction. SaskTel is ranked third by J.D. Power and Associates for Canadian wireless customer care. SaskTel was named by Mediacorp Canada Inc. as one of Canada's greenest employers for the eighth consecutive year. SaskTel in 2016 again, Mr. Speaker, was named by Mediacorp Canada as one of Canada's best diversity employers for the sixth consecutive year. Again this year SaskTel was named by Mediacorp Canada as one of Saskatchewan's top employers for the 10th consecutive year. SaskTel was named by Mediacorp again as one of Canada's top employers for young people for the fourth consecutive year.

So this is a company that does good work for the people of Saskatchewan but also treats its employees in obviously a very fair and, well a good manner, Mr. Speaker.

I come from the area of work-family balance. Before I was

elected to this House, I used to work in a little unit of government called the work and family unit. And one of the things we talked about as that organization was work-family balance and how to support work-family balance and issues of recruitment and retention and absenteeism rates and employee loyalty — all those kinds of things. Better supporting your employees means you have better results for your company, Mr. Speaker, and it's clear that SaskTel is doing that.

[15:15]

So we've talked about the jobs, the 4,000 jobs, full-time jobs. We've talked about the various communities, the services across the province as well, Mr. Speaker. Or we've talked about the lower rates and services across the province in places where they might be. The Premier acknowledged expanding connectivity and wireless services. Those are two really important things, Mr. Speaker.

Another thing that Crowns do that is very different than private corporations, Mr. Speaker, is paying dividends to the General Revenue Fund. Like private companies pay dividends to their shareholders, the people of Saskatchewan are the shareholders of Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker. And just looking at all Crown corporations in the last decade here in Saskatchewan, total Crown dividends in the last decade paid to the people of Saskatchewan via the General Revenue Fund were \$3.117 billion, Mr. Speaker. Just for SaskTel alone, \$800 million in dividends in the last decade from SaskTel, Mr. Speaker. So our Crowns are . . . So Mr. Blakeney's point about not just looking at ideology, looking at whether or not a Crown's purpose in the evolution of things is wound up or not, I think it's important to realize that this is not the case at all, Mr. Speaker, that our Crowns continue to serve the people of Saskatchewan well.

My colleague from Saskatoon Nutana is a very good researcher, Mr. Speaker, and she found some good articles that I'd like to . . . a good paper I'd like to point you regarding minority shareholder rights. So one of the things in this particular Act, *The Interpretation Act*, again as I had said, this government is adding the term "privatization," defining the term "privatization" for the people of Saskatchewan. This is something, Mr. Speaker, that no other jurisdiction in Canada or the Commonwealth has ever done, Mr. Speaker, and, according to my colleague from Saskatoon Nutana, is a gross misuse of *The Interpretation Act*, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to me that the Minister of Justice is injecting himself into this conversation. He is saying that perhaps we should have defined that when we had the chance. But his definition of "privatization" in fact I think will be harmful and hurtful to the people of Saskatchewan. And I will go on with my debate here, Mr. Speaker, explaining why this could be a problem for us.

Crown corporations have a very different purpose, Mr. Speaker, than do private enterprises, whether it is . . . So this government is proposing that you can sell up to 49 per cent of a company to outside interests and it can still remain a Crown corporation. Well that's semantics, Mr. Speaker. But a Crown corporation has a very different purpose than a private enterprise. A private enterprise's goal is to maximize profits, full stop, Mr. Speaker. A Crown corporation obviously wants to do well on the

business side of things and do well and succeed. They want to succeed, but they have other tools available to them to help keep prices low for their consumers, to help ensure services are spread to places in a geographically large province like Saskatchewan, with actually fairly sparse in places, Mr. Speaker. I would argue that there are many corporations, whose bottom line or whose goal is to maximize profits, will not see the goal of providing Internet service in the North or in rural communities as efficient for maximizing profits.

So a Crown corporation has the ability, Mr. Speaker, as a tool of the people, to ensure that rates stay low, that people across the province have equity of services, Mr. Speaker, that those dividends go back to the people of Saskatchewan and not to individual shareholders.

So an article that the member from Saskatoon Nutana found, I think again that point that . . . So I actually would . . . I'll read some of this particular article into the record. So minority shareholders, which this government is proposing to define privatization and opening up the ability for all kinds of individuals or entities to own half of our Crowns, Mr. Speaker, or less than half actually, minority shareholders still have an impact, Mr. Speaker. It might be less than 50 per cent but there are rules in place to ensure that those minority shareholders' interests are protected, Mr. Speaker. And I would argue those shareholders, I would argue those shareholders' interests, Mr. Speaker, are very different than the whole collective shareholder of the province of Saskatchewan, the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

So "Minority Shareholder Rights." This was published on August 16th, 2011:

Corporations operate on a system of majority rule and this necessitates the codification of minority shareholder rights to ensure that the interests of the minority are protected and not overlooked by the majority. A shareholder holding a substantial amount of shares within a corporation has tremendous power to orchestrate corporate activity, potentially at the expense of minority shareholders.

Pursuant to the *Canada Business Corporations Act* and the *Ontario Business Corporations Act* minority shareholders have certain rights that protect them from the actions and decisions of majority shareholders [which in the case of this would be the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker] within the corporation. This means that if you control . . .

The Minister of Justice is not very fond of my line of discussion here, and I look forward to perhaps talking with him after, outside of the House, about this. Mr. Speaker, he can explain to me, the people . . . He can explain to the people of Saskatchewan how those people, how those 49 per cent shareholders are going to not have an impact on the decisions of the larger body, Mr. Speaker.

So I'm going to read back to that place, Mr. Speaker:

Pursuant to the *Canada Business Corporations Act* and the *Ontario Business Corporations Act* minority shareholders have certain rights that protect them from the actions and decisions of majority shareholders within the corporation.

This means that if you control a majority of shares in a corporation you will be required to consider the interests of not only the corporation, but the interests of minority shareholders before making certain fundamental corporate decisions. This article will identify some of the rights from which minority shareholders benefit.

Votes by Special Resolution

A special resolution is defined under the *CBCA* as a resolution passed by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the votes cast by the shareholders who voted in respect of that resolution or signed by all the shareholders entitled to vote. It is an effective way for minority shareholders to have a profound impact on corporate decision-making.

Moving down here:

The rights of minority shareholders are also protected under the *CBCA* and *OBCA* in cases where a corporation intends to sell, lease or exchange all or substantially all of its property outside of the ordinary course of business. In this type of a situation a special resolution must be obtained in order to carry out such a sale, lease or exchange. Furthermore, each [of the] shareholder of the corporation has the right to cast a vote in respect of the proposed transaction regardless of whether the shares of each shareholder normally carry the right to vote.

Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is, even if you're not a majority shareholder, your job as a minority shareholder — the entity or whomever it is who would own 49 per cent of one of our Crowns — does not have the same goal, does not have the same end goal as that of a Crown that is there to serve the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. A very different, a very, very different approach, Mr. Speaker.

I think the Minister of Justice is feeling a little sensitive about bringing forward this, being forced to do an end run on a referendum, Mr. Speaker, in an election. I think he is perhaps overworked. The number of things that he has on his file today dictates that perhaps he is feeling a little bit sensitive about decisions that he is being, or bills that he's forced to push forward, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice is wondering what I'm reading: Nelligan O'Brien Payne, "Minority Shareholder Rights," published August 16th, 2011, Mr. Speaker.

So I think one of the things that this government is not very good at doing is seeing the unintended consequences of its actions, Mr. Speaker. And I think we've seen that on full display here in this Assembly.

I will point to the fact that 49 per cent, Mr. Speaker, is an interesting choice to choose to define privatization. And there are all kinds of definitions of privatization one can find when they search it, Mr. Speaker, but 49 per cent is an interesting choice.

So with respect, the income tax of Canada, section 149, anything greater than 10 per cent, greater than 10 percent . . . So that *Income Tax Act* 149 says, a Crown corporation is exempt from corporate income tax provided not less than 90 per cent of

the shares is held by a government or province. If more than 10 per cent is sold, federal and provincial income tax becomes payable, in essence suggesting that a significant portion of the Crown corporation is now held by outside, non-government interests, i.e. that the Crown has been privatized. Mr. Speaker, that is what that says in essence.

So what would this result in, Mr. Speaker? This would result in 15 per cent of SaskTel's profits or taxable income being paid to the federal government. That would be a windfall for Ottawa at the expense of residents of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. So even if only 11 per cent of the entity was sold, we don't even have to get up to the 49 per cent mark for it to be a problem for the people of Saskatchewan to have those profits heading out the door, Mr. Speaker. Eleven per cent.

And it's interesting. It's interesting, Mr. Speaker, that the Finance minister is heckling now, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to me that the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker, who is . . . Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance, it's interesting. Well he's heckling the Minister of Justice, which is interesting. It would be interesting to be around their cabinet table, Mr. Speaker, if they're heckling at each other in the House.

The Minister of Finance has said that he doesn't want to go down the rabbit hole. He used that term, the rabbit hole, when that was raised in the House, Mr. Speaker, the rabbit hole of privatization. Well the interesting thing, Mr. Speaker, when you think about making changes to any piece of legislation, you should be considering the consequences that you know and then talking to people about the unintended consequences, and clearly . . .

So the Minister of Finance says, oh there's no offer. We're not even looking at that. Well this particular bill, *The Interpretation Act*, opens that up as a possibility, Mr. Speaker. So of course you should be looking at what happens if an offer comes, Mr. Speaker. If an offer . . . Well you should be anticipating those unintended consequences. And I'll actually in a few moments talk a little bit about some unintended consequences of privatization that this government has embarked upon, Mr. Speaker.

I think these guys haven't been this interested in one of my speeches in a little while, Mr. Speaker. These members opposite, these hon. members have not been so interested in anything I've had to say for a little while, so I'm glad that I've got their attention, Mr. Speaker.

So again with respect to unintended consequences, when you introduce a piece of legislation you should be anticipating what could come of it. Not like, oh if an offer happens, well we'll address that when that happens. Well you know very well, you know very well that under the *Income Tax Act* that that could be a very real problem for you, Mr. Speaker. So I would like to talk a little bit about what happens, Mr. Speaker, when a government privatizes a Crown entity and doesn't think about the consequences of what could happen, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to take them, cast their mind back actually to just a few years ago. And this is I think a good example of the government selling a Crown, undervaluing it, undervaluing it and having a huge impact on the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

So I will take you back to, it was, I was actually a new MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly]. Mr. Speaker, in 2010, this government decided to privatize SCN [Saskatchewan Communications Network]. So 2010, Mr. Speaker, this government decides in the budget that they're going to privatize the Saskatchewan Communications Network. So Saskatchewan Communications Network was a public broadcaster, and the only remaining public broadcaster at the time who actually was one of the key pillars of the film industry here in Saskatchewan. The public broadcaster did a number of things. It was about creating local content.

And actually the former minister of Culture asked the other night in heckling what our favourite SCN show was. Actually *Wapos Bay* was my favourite, Mr. Deputy Speaker, *Wapos Bay*, Anand Ramayya, and some other folks. So SCN provided good local content, good local content, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . That would be *Wapos Bay* there to the member from whomever over there is heckling, Mr. Speaker, if you didn't, if you didn't hear that clearly.

[15:30]

But SCN was not just about public broadcasting and ensuring educational and good quality local content. It was also a tool for the film industry, Mr. Speaker. It was a local broadcaster that 70 per cent in 2000 . . . I just want to make sure I have these numbers right. In 2009, in 2009 they ensured 70 per cent of their broadcast budget would go to local productions, Mr. Speaker. So aside from the local content, that pride of place, that pride of place, Mr. Speaker, seeing your own community and your own people on TV, it was a trigger for other broadcast licences, the first in. SCN was often the first in for local production companies. So SCN would get a licence and that would trigger other broadcasters getting in on the action too. That's how you build, that's how you build funding sometimes for projects, Mr. Speaker.

They didn't anticipate the impact that would have for privatizing SCN on the Canada Media Fund, Mr. Speaker. That's a fund that funds development of content here in Canada, Mr. Speaker. The government hadn't thought any of those things through. I believe, so casting our mind back here, so I'm going cite from Patricia Elliott's article called "Selling the Saskatchewan Communications Network." And she points out that in March 2010 in the provincial budget, with no public prior consultation or forewarning . . . So here's the piece around consultation and knowing what the heck you're doing, Mr. Speaker. Talking to people, Mr. Speaker, it's a really good thing to do. So with no prior public consultation or forewarning, the government unexpectedly announced its intention to sell SCN's broadcast arm to the private sector. They stated, Mr. Speaker, "SCN's viewership is quite low and we feel there is no longer a role for government in the broadcast business," Mr. Speaker.

I'll point to some, actually interesting . . . That same year a survey in 2009 revealed in fact that:

. . . a steadily growing viewership and a healthy level of public support: 53 per cent of respondents felt their tax contribution toward educational broadcasting was satisfactory, while 28 per cent said it was too little, for a

combined 81 per cent in favour of tax-supported educational broadcasting.

Mr. Speaker, and still this government went ahead with their plan, Mr. Speaker. And what did this plan mean? And I'll talk a little bit more about the broader effects on the film industry in a moment. But this is a government who was looking for some quick savings, which again, it had been hard. This was shortly after the economic collapse, Mr. Speaker, and the government had some financial issues at that time, much like we're facing right now, Mr. Speaker.

So in 2010, very quickly actually, from time to budget to, I believe it was the end of June, Mr. Speaker — I was the Culture critic at the time, and I might have that timeline slightly wrong — but it was just within a matter of months, Mr. Speaker, they sold SCN for \$350,000, which interestingly enough just in the previous annual report for SCN, its assets were valued at \$4 million, Mr. Speaker. So they sold SCN for \$350,000 to a company from Ontario, a treasury board Crown that had \$4 million in assets, Mr. Speaker.

I think Bluepoint got itself a pretty fine deal. And the people of Saskatchewan all the while lost a tool in the film industry that helped contribute to growing film production, and also lost the opportunity for public broadcasting, Mr. Speaker. Some good quality local content, Mr. Speaker.

So I would like to tell you a little bit more about what that sale meant and what transpired a little bit further. So in June, Bluepoint purchased SCN, a private company owned by Bruce G. Claasen, again for \$350,000. "A condition of that sale was Bluepoint's commitment to spend \$1.75 million per year on local program production, and that the period between 6 a.m. and 3 p.m. remain dedicated to commercial-free children's and educational programming." So those were stipulations of the sale, Mr. Speaker.

"In December, the CRTC approved the sale and authorized on-air advertising, previously prohibited during non-educational programs." This is the interesting part of this, Mr. Speaker: "Just two years later, citing financial [circumstances or] duress . . ." And again I just want to give Patricia Elliott credit for this article, Mr. Speaker. Two years following that sale of our public broadcaster to an Ontario corporate company for far less than it was valued, \$4 million in assets for \$350,000, Mr. Speaker, so two years after that, Claasen sold SCN to Rogers Broadcasting for \$3 million. Mr. Speaker, it kind of sounds like the GTH land deal. Yes, like they're not dissimilar, does it? Sold to:

. . . Rogers Broadcasting for \$3 million, a price more than 8.5 times higher than what he had paid for the channel.

In its application to the CRTC, Rogers asked to be relieved of the \$1.75 million commitment to local programming, and to use the SCN signal to broadcast its Toronto-based CityTV station. In June, 2012, the CRTC approved the sale; instead of \$1.75 million annually, Rogers was ordered to spend 23 per cent of gross revenues purchasing from local TV producers, and to commit to an additional \$1 million toward local productions by 2018.

And I haven't followed up on that. I haven't been the Culture

critic for some time, Mr. Speaker, but I'd be interested in knowing a little bit more about where that's at, Mr. Speaker.

As well, the station was ordered to retain commercial-free educational broadcasting between 6 a.m. and 3 p.m. With these commitments, the company received permission to transform SCN into CityTV.

In two years, Mr. Speaker, for a company that was serving the people of Saskatchewan, a treasury Crown that was serving the people of Saskatchewan, sold for a fire sale price and without a minister or without a government who'd given it thought what it meant, Mr. Speaker, and what it meant in particular to the film industry.

So SCN was one of the key pillars in the film industry. As with all public policy, Mr. Speaker, there's never a single silver bullet. There's never one thing that makes anything work really well. I firmly believe that with public policy it's always a multi-pronged approach. There is not one thing. There are things that can improve things. There are the odd actions that can improve things more than others. But usually it's a combination of factors and a combination of things working together that make for the best public policy, Mr. Speaker. And SCN was just one of the tools in terms of building a film industry here in Saskatchewan. It was also the film tax credits as well as the sound stage, a cutting-edge, purpose-built sound stage here in Regina, actually just a stone's throw away from here, Mr. Speaker.

So cutting SCN, Mr. Speaker, was a huge blow to the film industry at a time when the film industry, who had seen huge increases over the course of several years, Mr. Speaker, who had seen its peak year, and then the financial collapse happened, Mr. Speaker. The Canadian dollar went up, which was a challenge for all film industries across the country, Mr. Speaker. So the film industry was struggling, but there were people, we had created several . . . There were hundreds of people working in the film industry and many, many more touched by the film industry.

We have restaurants . . . I was out for supper last year, Mr. Speaker, at a restaurant in Regina with someone, and the owner of the business didn't know that I was a MLA. And they were having a conversation about the film industry and the restaurant owner had said that since the collapse of the film industry because of this government's decisions, his business had dropped substantially, Mr. Speaker.

So it's restaurants. It's clothing stores. It's lumberyards. It's hotels. So it employed hundreds of people in the creative sector, allowed them the opportunity to pursue their love here in the province, Mr. Speaker. I have one of my dearest friends, her daughter's at Ryerson right now taking film studies, and is quite devastated that there is nothing for her daughter to come back to, and to know that her daughter will always have to work away from Saskatchewan if she wants to work in her chosen profession, Mr. Speaker.

So this is about short-sightedness around privatizing a Crown. We've seen this from the government before. So with respect to SCN, that was the first blow was privatizing a Crown for very little money, Mr. Speaker. They took the money. And I would

ask, with a government who's run — how many deficits now? — four deficits in record financial times, Mr. Speaker . . . So they've sold SCN . . . [inaudible interjections] . . . They're all groaning over there, Mr. Speaker, but they only need to look at their own budget documents to see in 2009-10 they ran a deficit of \$409,000; in 2010-11 a deficit of 13; and '11-12, 105; and in '15-16, a \$1.5 billion deficit.

So this is a government who has run . . . And we don't have a first quarter report, Mr. Speaker, from this government and we don't know where this government is at. So this is a government who likes to take . . . Well right now I think they are figuratively looking through the couch cushions for money right now, and I think possibly literally looking through the couch cushions for money at this point as well, Mr. Speaker, trying to fill their mismanagement and scandal through getting money as quickly as possible. And in SCN I wondered what happened, where that investment, where that whole \$350,000 that they got for SCN went, Mr. Speaker. I would like to know that.

So the film industry, Mr. Speaker, privatizing a treasury board Crown and then cutting the film employment tax credit completely knocked the legs out from a film industry that created jobs for people in Saskatchewan and spinoff jobs outside of the film industry as well. It created a pride of place. People loved seeing, not only the extras or people from the province appearing in films, but local landscapes serving as other landscapes, Mr. Speaker. Hey, I know that town or that city. That's my city, even though it's supposed to look like this other community. People like that pride of place, Mr. Speaker.

And ironically at a time where we've had the greatest job losses in this province in over a decade, Mr. Speaker, a film industry, especially with the Canadian dollar where it's at, we could have been doing really wonderful things. Those jobs and that income and those taxes paid and those people contributing to our community could have benefited our economy a great deal, Mr. Speaker. And instead because this government likes to . . . is short-sighted, it doesn't think about the long-term consequences, doesn't think about unintended consequences, makes decisions that are harmful to the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

One of the saddest days I've had in this House, Mr. Speaker, was as the Culture critic, taking my 90-second member statement and reading into . . . All I did, Mr. Speaker, was read the names of people who were leaving or had left Saskatchewan because of the cuts to the film tax credit, Mr. Speaker, award-winning . . . There were gaffers. There were production companies. There were no shortage of people, award-winning people, Mr. Speaker, people who had deep roots in the community. . . thinking of one, Mr. Speaker, 90 seconds, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance is heckling.

Mr. Speaker, it's fascinating to me that this is a government who could have record revenue, Mr. Speaker. They inherited a windfall, Mr. Speaker, and now that they have mismanaged, they . . . Record revenue, yet they've run four deficits, Mr. Speaker, in times of prosperity — four deficits. They haven't saved a single dime, Mr. Speaker, for future citizens, Mr. Speaker. I think about my kids and their cohort and their kids to

come, Mr. Speaker, and I worry for them. This is a government who took record revenues and blew it, Mr. Speaker.

And the other thing, Mr. Speaker, short-sighted, making decisions that hurt people without thinking about the unintended consequences. So this interpretation Act, Mr. Speaker, although the Minister of Justice would have us believe that it's an innocuous bill, Mr. Speaker, it's for the benefit of people of Saskatchewan, we've got to define privatization.

Well, Mr. Speaker, he's opening up the door to, I would argue, something very similar to SCN where it'll be quick bucks, Mr. Speaker, quick bucks turned around and people in Saskatchewan will not be well served. We will lose jobs, Mr. Speaker. There will be . . . people in rural and remote communities will not have the services that they need. Rates will go up, Mr. Speaker.

So this government has done an end run around all the commitments they've made, Mr. Speaker. They have totally done an end run thinking that semantics will win the day, Mr. Speaker. Well I can tell you, on this side of the House, we will fight with the people of Saskatchewan, alongside people of Saskatchewan to ensure that this government does not privatize the Crowns that serve the people of Saskatchewan so well.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I know I have colleagues who will also enter the debate around *The Interpretation Act* and I look forward to their speeches as well. And with that, I move to adjourn debate.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — The member from Saskatoon Riversdale has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 40, *The Interpretation Amendment Act, 2016*. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — Carried.

[15:45]

Bill No. 37

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. McMorris that **Bill No. 37 — *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2016*** be now read a second time.]

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise today to speak to Bill No. 37, *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act*. Mr. Speaker, this piece of legislation was introduced back in June, one of a few pieces of legislation, a few bills that were introduced around traffic safety. And although it doesn't say explicitly, nor did the minister in his remarks that day on second reading, I suspect that some of this legislation, some of these recommendations that are finding their way into this bill, came at least in part out of the 2013 Special Committee on Traffic Safety, Mr. Speaker.

That committee of course was struck in March of 2013,

appointed by order of the Assembly, and they were tasked with a number of duties. And I know that my colleagues on this side of the House, my colleague from Riversdale and my colleague from Cumberland, both spend a great deal of time on that committee and had some important — as well as members opposite — had some important conversations and input from people around the province.

For those who aren't aware or maybe have forgotten, the committee was tasked with matters related to improving traffic safety and reducing fatalities by examining the dominant factors that cause traffic collisions in the province, Mr. Speaker, factors such as impaired and distracted driving, excessive speed, intersection safety, wildlife collisions, as well as education and public awareness programs related to traffic safety, Mr. Speaker.

So this was an interesting committee, I know. Again I've heard from my colleagues that they really felt it was important, the work that was done by this committee, and the conversations that were held with people around the province. They did quite an extensive tour in fact, Mr. Speaker. They were in Regina. They held public hearings in Regina, in Estevan, in Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Pelican Narrows, and La Ronge, Mr. Speaker.

And I would suggest that this is, in a complimentary way, this is a pretty good way to go about introducing legislation — to do the consultation piece, to hear from people, to have a mandate. They also, in addition to the public hearings, had 35 written submissions. So doing that research ahead of prescribing bills to come before the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, I think is a pretty solid way to go about.

And certainly they did hear from a lot of members in the community about a number of issues. Of course many kept their comments specific to the areas of causing fatalities as were listed. But also I'm sure as when you're in conversation with people in the community, other areas that maybe you didn't anticipate are brought up. Other issues are brought to the table. And I think that at least in one of the instances that we see here around . . . And I'll get to that later, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we talk about motorcycle, and, I would also guess, the provisions around the use of three-wheeled vehicles, motorized vehicles, I suspect that those also came out of these discussions in that report.

So as I mentioned previously, there are a couple of pieces of legislation, a couple of bills that were brought forward in the spring around traffic safety by the then minister, and an additional bill that was brought before the Assembly this fall, Mr. Speaker, which I'm going to spend a little bit of time reminding people and talking about. And that was the bill around improving — and I think we can say that — improving legislation and penalties around impaired and distracted driving, Mr. Speaker. And that certainly was a powerful day in this Assembly when we had parents and family members and loved ones of those who had lost their lives to the senseless, very senseless crime of drinking and driving, Mr. Speaker.

And I bring that up because there were some recommendations back in . . . out of the special committee in 2013 that . . . Some of the measures previously passed in this Legislative Assembly

came out of that task force. But there was also a minority opinion put forth by my colleague from Riversdale and from Cumberland that suggested, with evidence, having heard the evidence, to go further. And in fact we saw some of those measures in that legislation pass this fall, specifically around stiffer penalties and short-term impoundments for people who were in what was described as the danger zone, that blood alcohol level of over .04 and up to .08.

And I know that that was the recommendation in 2013. Having heard all of the evidence, they listened, they noted that in Alberta and BC when these measures were implemented, this legislation was passed, they saw a 46 and a 50 per cent reduction in fatalities related to impairment. So while they were very pleased to see those measures finally brought in in 2016, I'm sure that they and many others wish that those recommendations would have been followed three years ago when they were first noted in that minority opinion, Mr. Speaker.

So it is important, the consultation piece, before engaging in that public consultation. I would like to see more of it, but I'm afraid we're seeing less and less of it from this government, Mr. Speaker, and we're seeing bills brought forth in front of this Assembly that they're requesting time to do the research on when it's already been presented. I would suggest that this is a much better way to go about bringing bills forward in this Assembly, to have the confidence of people, certainly in this Assembly, but outside this Assembly.

So with that I'll maybe move a little bit into some of the then minister's remarks when he spoke to second reading on this bill, Mr. Speaker.

One of the first changes — I've got a number of notes going on my desk here — that is proposed in this legislation is to allow SGI to cancel the licence or registration renewal, vehicle renewal, if someone who has large amounts of debt to SGI so that they have not . . . when they haven't created a plan to pay it off. I know that SGI does engage in that practice, where if someone has a debt to them, they will try to make arrangements with that person in order that they might have some ability to pay that debt off, Mr. Speaker.

And I know that this is a practice . . . In my former life in the community as a social worker, I know that Crown corporations, for example, would work out payment plans. This was particularly important when women perhaps — in my case, I worked with women in a women's shelter — they would leave their partner, and perhaps the debts had gone unpaid for a number of months. And they would be trying to set up a new residence on their own, away from the violence, and they would really be encumbered by large amounts of debt payable to Crown corporations, particularly often SGI and SaskPower, sometimes SaskTel as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So the ability to enter into those arrangements with a Crown corporation and be able to whittle that debt down in manageable payments while still being able to feed their children and pay their rent and pay tuition and all of those things was valuable. It was actually invaluable to their ability to get on with their lives. And so that is an additional reason that I am thankful for our Crown corporations and for that flexibility within their mandate

to be able to engage, not only in the business side, but in the social side of their mandate, Mr. Speaker.

What this proposes is when the person who is indebted to SGI is not able to pay their bill, that they would have . . . And it does note that they would have some . . . I'll just read the legislation here: "is indebted to the administrator in the amount of any fees . . ." which is a bit of a concern, Mr. Speaker — "of any fees." It doesn't note a large amount of fees, but "... any fees, administrative charges or interest fees payable pursuant to this Act."

So I would like, when we do move this bill to committee, to get some additional information about that. Exactly how much are we talking about before it trips this clause where someone might have their licence or their registration taken away? Certainly as my colleague from Douglas Park noted earlier, the right to drive is not a right; it's a privilege. It also is true that someone's ability to drive a vehicle and to get to work, for example, might reasonably impact their ability not only to get to work but ultimately to be able to pay that fine, which this measure is meant to address. So that would be a question that I will certainly be asking in committee.

And the other question that I had in thinking about this and looking at this is how that notice would be made to that person who's indebted to SGI. If you're cancelling registration, particularly registration of the vehicle and someone doesn't know that, potentially, you know, they are driving around in an unlicensed and therefore uninsured vehicle, which creates a few more problems. So I would have some questions about how exactly people will be notified of those changes or in this case when their licence or their registration has been revoked due to non-compliance with a debt payment plan, Mr. Speaker.

There are also some changes proposed here around impoundment and exactly who's responsible for paying those impoundment fees. I would be curious if this also flowed out of the special committee, the traffic safety special committee, when we're talking impounded vehicles perhaps due to drinking and driving charges or other criminal charges. It seems that there is some confusion currently about who is able, who is responsible for paying those impoundment fees. So my understanding is that this legislation seeks to clarify that, that it makes clear that SGI may collect money for impoundment fees from the owner of an impounded vehicle where that's clear. But I guess where it's less clear, Mr. Speaker, is when the owner cannot be determined. So in that case they would be able to go after the last known driver of that vehicle. So you know, the circumstances under which the owner can't be identified I guess would be something, doesn't come quickly to mind the circumstances that might be at play there. But I think that that will be a question again for committee.

Going back to the Traffic Safety Committee and some of those proposals, or some of the ideas and recommendations that didn't flow directly from the mandate but came out of submissions, both public and written submissions, I suspect is what is at play with the next proposed change in this bill. And that is making new rules for passengers on motorcycles, stating that they must wear a helmet and eye protection, Mr. Speaker. And as my colleague from Douglas Park noted, I did think that it would already be the case that there were expectations that

motorcycle drivers wear helmets, but eye protection, for sure. They must have their own footrests, Mr. Speaker, and they cannot sit in front of the driver.

So certainly some of these recommendations are identifiable in a submission to that previously mentioned committee by Luc Fournier who was then representing the Motorcycle & Moped Industry Council. And some of those recommendations that he made back in 2013 are directly evident here in this bill.

And that will be something again that . . . The reasons why, you know, those particular provisions and perhaps not others that were made found their way into this bill, I think that will be a question that I will have again when this bill moves to committee.

[16:00]

The next or the final substantive piece of this bill is prohibiting the driving of three-wheeled vehicles with small passengers. And we had a fairly long discussion the other evening about what exactly the three-wheeled vehicle is called. I think my colleague opposite was right. A Spyder is at least one of those three-wheeled vehicles — two wheels in the front, one wheel in the back. Not the reverse, as I remember from my childhood.

But it sets out, prohibits driving that type of vehicle with small passengers under seven. So I think it's a reasonable question to ask. As I mentioned, I've driven the older version of that vehicle but not the flipped-around Spyder version. But why exactly that ATV [all-terrain vehicle] and not others, like four-wheelers or side-by-sides or those type of things . . . So that would be a question that I would I think like to pose when this bill does go to committee.

Also the age of seven, why seven was picked. You know, of course any age is going to seem arbitrary but what the balance of evidence was there in terms of why seven was better than eight or six or five.

And again although I couldn't explicitly find it in the report of the committee, I suspect that some of the discussion that happened in that committee might have brought up the issue of ATV safety for young people, particularly in this province. And I know probably everyone from every area of this province has a story of tragedy with young people getting seriously injured or losing their lives due to misuse or sometimes just routine use of ATVs and, in this case particularly, three-wheeled vehicles. So I'd be interested in delving a little further into how that particular decision to make those recommendations in this bill came about, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But as you might note from my comments, I will have some more that I want to ask when this bill does move to committee, and I look forward to that experience. I look forward to talking to my colleagues and members opposite about what they heard from members of the community when they were in the consultation phase around traffic safety. And with that I will conclude my remarks.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister Responsible for Crown Investments that Bill No. 37, *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 Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Principal Clerk: — Second reading of this bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I designate that Bill No. 37 be committed to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

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

Bill No. 17

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Boyd that **Bill No. 17 — *The Power Corporation Amendment Act, 2016*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And as always, it's my great honour to be able to rise in the Legislative Assembly here in Saskatchewan and enter into the debates on the bills that are being brought forward by this government.

This particular bill, although short in nature, I think really exemplifies some of the very serious issues that this government is having in terms of money management and their ability to keep our Crowns in good shape, Mr. Speaker. And there's not a lot of substantive change in this bill, but it's the amount of money we're talking about that is really of concern.

The main change . . . There's a number of household changes that are being brought up, adding the word "her," so gender neutralizing it, and some very minor housekeeping changes. But in particular today I think it's important to enter into debate the changes to clause 8 of *The Power Corporation Act*, and particularly the changes to clause 43, which is the borrowing limit for SaskPower Corporation.

So just a few comments right off the hop on clause 8(1). Now that's being amended, Mr. Speaker, to add a phrase, a very interesting phrase that is somewhat reminiscent of the way the cabinet is involved in the GTH. And what that section currently reads . . . I'm just going to pull up the original bill, or the current bill.

Section 8(1)(j) currently reads . . . This is "The purposes and

powers of the corporation shall be," and it says, "to exercise any other powers that may be designated and prescribed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, having regard to the efficient operation of the corporation's business for the public good."

So right now the existing clause . . . And I think the member from Arm River is really listening intently because I know he wants to know more about SaskPower and how it's being operated. So I really appreciate his attention as we go into this debate.

So right now the corporation has powers that are designated by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. That's what clause 8(1)(j) says, "... having regard to the efficient operation of the corporation's business for the public good." Okay. That makes sense.

What this clause is now going to say is as follows: "to exercise any other powers that may be designated and prescribed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council," which is exactly what it says right now, but it goes on it say, "and that the Lieutenant Governor in Council considers are necessary or desirable . . ." Those are the new words, Mr. Speaker.

Now when we say Lieutenant Governor in Council, we're talking about cabinet. So right now the change that's being inserted here is that cabinet is putting itself in the place of the management of SaskPower, and it is allowing itself to make and give the . . . exercise powers that are designated and prescribed and telling the corporation what it thinks is necessary or desirable.

I want to share with you what the minister has to say about that clause and see what . . . That was the former minister of the Economy, who is now no longer in cabinet. But he said here . . . His comments were fairly brief, and he talked a lot about the borrowing of the corporation. But he really didn't talk at all about why this change to the powers of cabinet are being inserted into the SaskPower Corporation's ability to . . . the purposes and powers of the corporation. So all he says about them is that they're primarily housekeeping and clarifying language.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that this clause goes a little bit further than that. And certainly I know that when we enter into committee, this is something that we'll have to ask the current minister now, the Minister of Justice, about why this particular power for cabinet to insert itself into the purpose and powers of the corporation is being added. So there's some very specific questions around that.

I'm just going to share what the explanatory notes say here. It's saying in the explanatory notes that were provided that it's recommended "... that SaskPower's authorized powers and purposes include those that are connected with or incidental to the purposes and powers set out in any other statute . . ." And it clarifies "... Cabinet's existing power to designate additional powers that it considers SaskPower requires . . ."

So what's being said in the explanatory notes is that cabinet needs to be able to designate additional powers. And certainly I want to understand why the minister thinks it's appropriate in this case, whether this is something that is the common practice

for all Crown corporations or whether cabinet is seeking additional powers to direct the company. Because we know what happens when cabinet gets involved in Crown corporation activities: it's sometimes not a very pretty sight, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The other piece, and I think the very most significant piece that we're talking about here today in this bill, is the additional borrowing capacity that SaskPower is being given. Now I think we've got to go back a little bit. This is another example of this government coming back to the drawing board when it . . . When this bill was already before us in 2013, and here again we have legislation that's brought back because they didn't get it right in 2013 or not sure. Again we're going to have to ask the minister specific questions about that when we have the opportunity in committee.

But in this case prior to 2013, the limit was 5 billion, and as far as I can tell, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that limit hadn't been changed since the '80s. So SaskPower had borrowing capacity up to \$5 billion since the '80s. And in 2013 we all went through this then. The borrowing capacity was increased. And what was it increased to? It was increased to \$8 billion — from \$5 billion to \$8 billion in 2013. 2016 here we are again doing it again, but in this case it's being increased from \$8 billion to \$10 billion. That's concerning on a number of levels, I think, and people would agree. You know, we've seen a number of rate increases being requested by SaskPower. So who's going to pay for this debt? Well obviously it's the ratepayers and the taxpayers of Saskatchewan. These guys have been racking up a lot of debt recently, and I think it's something that we need to really be concerned about.

If you look, for example, at the debt ratio for SaskPower, we've been told by the company for years that their goal is to keep the debt ratio between 65 per cent and 75 per cent, and that's considered to be a generally accepted debt ratio for corporations, Mr. Speaker. Well let's just take a little look at the history of the debt ratio. So that's how much debt you're in compared to what your assets are basically.

How much has the debt ratio changed in the last 10 years? Well in 2007 the debt ratio was 59.7 per cent. In 2008 the debt ratio was 60.7 per cent. In 2009 the debt ratio went up to 61.4 per cent. In 2010 it went down a little bit to 59.7 per cent. 2011 a big jump to 63 per cent, so up over 3 per cent. In 2012 debt ratio jumped up 4.4 per cent, a big jump and one in the likes we hadn't seen for quite some time. So now we're looking at 67.4 per cent. So we think that's a lot. Well look what happened in 2014. Debt ratio leaped up to 73.1 per cent, perilously close to the upper limit of 75. And so what are we talking about here? That's like 5.6 per cent increase, a very significant interest in 2014. Now did that go down at all in the last two years? Guess what, Mr. Deputy Speaker? It did not. In 2015, the debt ratio increased yet again to 74.5 per cent, and that is again another increase of 1.7 per cent. And in the 2015-16 annual report for SaskPower on page 75, SaskPower is now over the safe limit on its debt ratio. It's at 75.7 per cent, and here we are, increasing their borrowing power up to \$10 billion. This is not a good time for this corporation.

It used to be we would get significant dividends from this particular Crown, and given the increase in debt, this

government has indicated that there will be no, no more dividends from this Crown, that it just, it has too many debt obligations.

And what else has happened? Well for the taxpayers and the ratepayers, we have seen four rate increases in the last four years: 2014 a 5.5 per cent rate increase; in 2015 a 5 per cent rate increase; in 2016, this year in July we saw yet another 5 per cent rate increase; and in 2017 January, SaskPower actually applied for a 5, another 5 per cent rate increase but were recently denied by the rate review panel who said that's too much and only allowed a 3.5 per cent increase.

[16:15]

And that's as yesterday you will recall in the House, Mr. Speaker, I asked questions about the industrial customers of SaskPower saying, we can't do this. You just can't keep adding on these rate increases. It is causing serious problems for Meadow Lake pulp mill. We had the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce expressing concern at the rate review panel. We had a number of other . . . I believe the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers. So these rate increases aren't just hurting people on low incomes. They aren't just hurting the people who have lost their jobs, the 11,000 people who have lost their jobs here in Saskatchewan in the last year. This is hurting industrial consumers as well.

And I think, Mr. Speaker, one of the things you have to ask yourself is why is this going up so much. And this is really, really hard to tease out of SaskPower, but I believe, you know, all fingers are pointing right now to their carbon capture tax that they've imposed on all the ratepayers which was an extremely expensive experiment worth \$1.5 billion of taxpayers' money. And that's a lot of money when you look at these rate increases, you know, 20, or sorry, 18.5 per cent increase. But that's not the cumulative increase, of course, because those are built upon each other. So we are looking at well over 18 per cent in rate increases since the carbon capture sequestration carbon capture tax was imposed on Saskatchewan people, and I think this is something we need to be very, very concerned about.

We've put SaskPower in a very difficult spot and now, as they identify on page 29 of their annual report from '15-16, they've indicated this. And this is a very important piece, and I'll quote:

As well, challenges associated with climate change are heightening. Federal carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions regulations are in place that will eliminate one of our primary baseload electricity sources — conventional coal-fired generation. In addition, CO₂ regulations governing natural gas generation emissions are expected in the future.

Mr. Speaker, if you go through this annual report, you don't see any projections or specific line items that deal with the federal carbon dioxide emission regulations. And again I think SaskPower is not being upfront with the ratepayers in its annual report if it isn't directly addressing the costs associated with the federal carbon dioxide emissions regulations, the costs to transfer the primary baseload electricity sources, conventional coal-fired generation, either to the acceptable ICCS [integrated carbon capture and storage] technology or other types of

generation like natural gas. So where is this in their financial statements? Where is this in their annual report?

And I think there has to be a much better explaining of the impact of these federal carbon dioxide emissions regulations. And one of the things that particularly concerns me, Mr. Speaker, is that these regulations have been in place for a number of years. They've been in place for . . . I forget which year they came in but it's definitely several years now. The government knew in advance that these were coming, and yet there's been no actual attention being paid to it other than this attempt to reduce emissions through the carbon capture and sequestration process. Now we know right there that that's an extremely expensive way to move forward. It has been probably one of the direct causes of all these rate hikes in the last four years.

And I'm just going to share with you . . . There is a little bit of a more of an explanation here in terms of these regulations on page 83. And what it says here is:

Canada has developed regulatory requirements regarding greenhouse gas emissions for coal-fired generation. The new coal-fired electricity generation regulations implemented by Environment and Climate Change Canada require a reduction in net emissions to 420 tonnes of carbon dioxide per GWh of electricity to be met for new coal-fired electricity plants, as well as units that have reached the end of their useful life. The regulations state that units commissioned before 1975 will reach the end of their useful life on the earlier of December 31, 2019, or on December 31 of the 50th year after their commissioning date. Prior to this point being reached, the decision to retire the unit or retrofit it with carbon capture and storage equipment must be made.

So we know that SaskPower has to make this decision before December 31st, 2019. The CEO of SaskPower has told us it will be made in 2017, but we are looking in the forecasting in this financial statement for the company, and we don't see any indication in there in terms of what that spending will look like. What we do know is that SaskPower is now looking for an additional \$2 billion in borrowing capacity since they came back to the government for additional capacity in 2013.

So three years later, an additional \$2 billion is being asked for in this bill over and above the additional 3 billion that, or 2 billion that they got . . . Sorry, 3 billion that they got in 2013. So doubling their borrowing power in five years, well three years actually, Mr. Speaker, and yet no indication what that extra \$10 billion is going to be used for specifically in relation to the coal-fired electricity generation regulations.

Now they call them new. On page 83, they say these are "new coal-fired electricity generation regulations." They're not new, Mr. Speaker. They've been around for two or three years already. So this is not something that's new to SaskPower, and I would suspect that SaskPower knew they were coming long before they actually were printed on the order paper, Mr. Speaker. So we have a company that's not providing ratepayers, in my opinion, enough information regarding the seriousness of these regulations and what they intend to do about them.

Now they go on to say in their annual report:

By 2030, SaskPower will be required to retire or meet the regulations at Boundary Dam Power Station Units #4, #5 and #6 and Poplar River Power Station Units #1 and #2. The ICCS facility at Boundary Dam Power Station Unit #3 meets these regulations.

And, Mr. Speaker, you will see carbon capture now being described as ICCS which is . . . People are using the word integrated in front of the usual acronym. They go on to say here:

An equivalency agreement between the Province of Saskatchewan and Government of Canada would provide some flexibility in how SaskPower's remaining coal-firing units could be managed to meet expected emissions outcomes.

Mr. Speaker, my question is, where are these equivalency agreements? We have been waiting for them and waiting for them and waiting for them. And what I'm told is that SaskPower has a problem because they cannot implement the equivalency agreements unless *The Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases Act* is finally implemented.

Now we know this government passed that bill in 2010. Six years later it still sits there. It hasn't been put in force, and yet our obligations under these federal regulations require this government to pass that bill. I believe that what's going on in the ministry right now is probably bedlam and chaos because no one in the Ministry of the Environment can decide what to do.

I'm told the original bill was poorly drafted. The drafters want to throw it out and start all over, but SaskPower has a real problem because they have to get these equivalency agreements in place. I have spoken to several Environment ministers, including the current recycled Environment minister, saying when are these regulations going to be in place? When is these equivalency agreements coming up? And I keep getting pushed back. All we hear is soon, soon, or we're back at the drawing board.

And if I understand correctly, Mr. Speaker, what's happening at the ministry is that they are hamstrung by a government that isn't willing to implement its own law. SaskPower is now hamstrung by the same unwillingness to put that law into place. This is putting SaskPower in a very, very awkward position, and it's also putting, I think, the regulators and the legislators in a very awkward position.

So either it's a great bill and it should be implemented, or if it is that much of a mess, it should be scrapped and then a new bill should be put in place. But either way, this limbo is putting SaskPower in a very, very awkward position, and I believe it's putting the Ministry of the Environment in a very, very awkward position.

So these are some huge concerns when we see this kind of borrowing limit being increased, when we see rates going up like crazy, when we see one-and-a-half-billion-dollar experiments being hoisted on the people of Saskatchewan without any sort of ability or thought as to how these

equivalency agreements are going to go forward in the future.

I believe that SaskPower has been put in a very irreconcilable situation right now, and this government doesn't have an answer. They don't have an answer, Mr. Speaker. They are just not wanting to deal with it. It's kind of like a three-year-old in that, you know, you want to go to the grocery store and get groceries for supper and go home, and the three-year-old starts stomping his feet saying, I don't want to go home. I don't want to go home. And that's the kind of behaviour we see right now from the Ministry of the Environment, and this has been going on for six years and longer, Mr. Speaker.

There's no surprise that these kinds of regulations are going to be enforced and implemented across the world. Although with the results of the election yesterday in the south of our border and promises by the president-elect to rip up all the agreements, including the Paris agreement, I think there's certainly a number of questions that arise out of that and serious concerns, Mr. Speaker.

Another piece that I think we really, really need to take a look at, and I actually did this the other day, Mr. Speaker, is take a look at the 140 acres that SaskPower was suddenly felt the need to buy in November of 2013. And as you'll recall, Mr. Speaker, this is at the same time that the GTH was desperately looking for a cash infusion so that they could pay Mr. Marquart \$23 million for lands that were appraised at \$11 million.

So where were they going to find the money? Well it was just really handy, Mr. Speaker, it was extremely handy that SaskPower all of a sudden decided they needed a logistics centre that would cost \$24 million. They paid \$170 million per acre at the GTH for a logistics centre, Mr. Speaker. And so all of a sudden, land that was bought by Highways in 2011 . . . Highways paid just over \$10,000 an acre in 2011, and we have SaskPower rushing in on their white horse to save the day with the GTH, and they purchased 140 acres for \$170,000 per acre, Mr. Speaker.

Now I'm told it's serviced, so if you go from \$11,000 to \$178,000 for serviced land, that's rather interesting. So the question is, what exactly is it servicing? So I thought I would take a drive out there, Mr. Speaker, and I actually went out down Dewdney Avenue. And I had a nice look at the GTH the other night. I think it was Monday or Tuesday night. It was getting dark and, you know, it was not quite . . . I couldn't see a whole lot. But when I drove where the SaskPower property was, you know what you can see, Mr. Speaker? Nothing. Crickets. There's one power box and a road, and that's all I could see in relation to the two parcels of land. One's 20 acres on the right side of the road, and then there's 120 acres on the south side of the road.

So what do you think SaskPower is doing with this land? I mean they bought it in a hurry in 2013. I think if you look at their annual reports leading up to that, there wasn't a long-term plan for a logistics centre of that sort. But what we have here on page 47 of SaskPower's annual report from '15-16 is the following . . . There's this talking about properties and some of the work that's being done. "Upgrading our portfolio" is what this paragraph is called.

During the year, construction was completed on the Moose Jaw Maintenance Hub and started on the new Lloydminster Maintenance Centre. The Saskatoon Logistics Warehouse and Swift Current Maintenance Centre were officially opened for use, while renovations began on the Prince Albert Maintenance Centre and planning continued for SaskPower's head office refurbishment. [But here we go, Mr. Speaker] The planning activities for the proposed logistics warehouse project were put on hold in early 2015 pending further direction."

So, Mr. Speaker, what the heck is going on? They were in a rush to buy this land in 2013, spent \$170,000 an acre for 140 acres out at the Global Transportation Hub because all of a sudden SaskPower had to relocate its logistics centre. We see them doing work in Moose Jaw, Lloydminster, Saskatoon, Swift Current, Prince Albert, but what's happening at the GTH west of Regina? I'll say it again, "The planning activities for the proposed logistics warehouse project were put on hold in early 2015 pending further . . . [discussion]."

Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to know what that discussion is. And I would also like to know what the discussion was in 2013 when all of a sudden, when the Minister Responsible for SaskPower had a conversation with himself because he was also the Minister for the GTH. And he said, excuse me, Minister for SaskPower. Where do you think I could find \$24 million? I need it for paying off Mr. Marquart who's paid off Mr. Tappauf. And then the Minister for SaskPower said, you know what, Minister for GTH? I think I need a logistics centre. Hadn't thought about it a whole lot before. But I've got all kinds of money to burn now that my spending limit's been increased to \$8 billion, so I think that would be a wise use of money and we really do need a logistics centre. And the Minister for GTH said to the Minister for SaskPower, well, self, thank you very much. That will come in very handy.

[16:30]

Mr. Speaker, it's beyond belief. It is beyond belief. It is unusual, to say the very least, and certainly I'm hoping to have some good conversation around that with the minister when this bill is brought into committee very, very soon.

Now where is all this money being spent? As I said, since 2013 we've increased the spending from 5 billion to 8 billion. Here we are again, back in 2016 increasing it another \$2 billion. Where is this money going?

Well I think, rightfully so, there's a lot of money being put into transmission and distribution infrastructure system-sustainment programs. For example, the wood pole remediation program is happening. There's a lot of wood power poles in this province, Mr. Speaker, as you know. When rural Saskatchewan was electrified under the Tommy Douglas government, there was a lot of work that went into making sure that every farm had power. And I remember . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I love bringing up Tommy and I'm sure the member from Rochdale enjoys it as well, because the fact that SaskPower even exists was because of the vision of that particular premier for this province.

So we have all these wood poles. The remediation program has

to happen and that's a good use, I would say, of maintaining our power system. How much did they spend on that? In 2015-16 they spent just over 100 million on transmission and distribution infrastructure sustainment programs, and then another 59 million. Now if you look at that 100 million, what did this CCS [carbon capture and storage] project cost us? 1.5 billion. So we could have done that 15 times over. We could look after those transmission lines and poles 15 times over if we hadn't been forced to spend \$1.5 billion on their carbon capture tax, Mr. Speaker.

Another thing that I think is really concerning in this annual report is on page 55. There's a description of the growth and the increased demands on the power system. We understand as industries continue their demands and as additional residential hookups are installed that there will be a need for more power. But, Mr. Speaker, I was speaking to a former minister for SaskPower who had indicated that part of 2007, SaskPower was on side, under its demand-side management program, to actually reduce people's unnecessary use of power or power wastage. So demand-side management or whatever you want to call it, it's not recycling. There's another word for it that's not coming to me. But conservation, energy conservation, you'd think that would be a goal of a Crown who is having trouble meeting the needs and the demands for growth.

Do we see demand-side management mentioned at all anymore in their annual reports? On page 55 they talk about all the extra demands on our power system, on our grid. We have additional needs. We know there's a new gas-fired power plant being created. Sadly we don't see any additional wind despite the fact that they've announced that they're going to try and reach 50 per cent renewables in 2030. The only wind project that was even viable in the last couple years just got shut down because it was located in the wrong place, Mr. Speaker.

So it's a bit frustrating when we don't see additional sustainable power sources, when we don't see any indication about the need for demand-side management. And it's frustrating, Mr. Speaker. I think SaskPower's directions are hamstringing them, and we don't see an ability for them to move forward on some of these initiatives. And that is concerning.

I also want to turn to page 74. When we talk about expenditures, this is their investing activities, Mr. Speaker. And in this case, we look at what's happening in 2016 on the Boundary dam ICCS demonstration project. They're putting in another \$32 million into that project. We have to ask why. I thought it was just finished and completed. It's up and running; everything's great, according to the government. But when we're putting another 32 million — that's \$32 million, Mr. Speaker — into the Boundary dam ICCS demonstration project, where is that money going? What's it being used for, and what return is there for the people in Saskatchewan . . .

An Hon. Member: — How many work orders is that?

Ms. Sproule: — Yes, my colleague from Saskatoon Centre is wondering how many work orders is that, because we remember the phenomenal number of work orders that we've seen already on this Boundary dam ICCS, or the ICCS project itself. So this demonstration project, we want to know: why is there another \$32 million being spent there when we don't see a

lot of revenue coming back in?

Sadly, we cannot tease out of these financial statements what the actual cost of the CCS project are on an ongoing basis, Mr. Speaker. We are concerned. We understand that the amine solution — which is the important part of the successful washing of the exhaust from the power plant and removing the carbon from the exhaust — the amine solution I'm told is failing on a far more frequent basis than was originally anticipated.

We know that the CCS project is still in litigation with a number of different companies that were sued for failure to perform in the work performances and that SaskPower is also being sued by some of these companies because the companies are saying they did perform. So there's counter-lawsuits; we're embroiled in that. God knows what the costs are for that. So again we have to really wonder what's going on there and what sort of costs are related to that.

I know there's another quote in here about CCS, and I'm going to see if I can find it as I go along, so I haven't quite left that topic just yet. But on page 74, we're looking at the capital expenditures for SaskPower in the last five years. So you can see in 2011 capex [capital expense] was \$625 million. In 2012 it jumped up to 981. We know that's when CCS started in earnest. 2013, all of a sudden we're at \$1.3 billion for capital expenditures. Again, CCS was in its full construction phase. 2014, another \$1.2 billion.

So that was the glory days of the CCS construction. And in 2015-16 we see capital expenditures have gone down, certainly back to 2012 levels. So, Mr. Speaker, you can't help but assume that most of these capital expenditures are as a result of the CCS project. I know I want to come back to that once I find the page. I think it's tagged here, but I'm just going to carry on in order of my tags, Mr. Speaker.

On page 77, we have a reference to contractual obligations and the long-term debt. In one year, SaskPower plans to retire \$357 million in debt. So that's in the next fiscal year, which is now March to March. In one to five years, they're intending to retire \$1.2 billion in debt. Or that's just the principal and interest . . . sorry, that's just maintaining; that's not retiring it at all. That's the debt they're going to have.

In more than five years, SaskPower intends to have, in terms of long-term debt, \$8.3 billion. So we know that in the next five years there's going to be \$1.2 billion in debt. This Crown corporation is going to be beyond that up to \$8.3 billion in debt.

Mr. Speaker, our total debt right now as a province, as a government is \$13 billion and change. We know that's the total debt of our government, and this \$8.3 billion is going to be more than half of the debt of this government. So you have to wonder how this money's going to be spent, what the plan is, how it's going to be used for meeting their obligations under the federal coal-fired generation laws, how they're going to possibly get a legislative scheme in place that is sufficient to meet those regulations. It's a mess.

And then here we have other expenses that SaskPower's incurring. The Regina bypass project. We've been talking about

that a lot, Mr. Speaker, in the last few days. On page 79, we're told that SaskPower has to spend \$57 million just to accommodate the Regina bypass project. So I have no idea if this amount is included in the total cost of the bypass that the Ministry of Highways has talked about. But certainly, here we are, you know, another expense, through no fault of SaskPower's, but it's a huge expense that ratepayers are going to be responsible for.

On page 89, we have a quote by SaskPower about their financial flexibility and capability. And I think this is something because of the way the debt ratio is now perilously high and over the comfort zone that SaskPower has been in for decades. Mr. Speaker, we have this quote:

SaskPower's financial flexibility and capability is challenged by growing capital requirements, increasing debt, and unpredictable rate increases. Key financial drivers include revenues which are impacted by load growth, customer mix and approved rate increases. The cost of fuel is driven by load growth, fuel mix, market conditions and fuel costs. Depreciation and finance charges are impacted by capital expenditures, supply arrangements, and the cost of borrowing.

And then they list four risks that are currently facing:

- [1] Increasing capital requirements and the availability of capital;
- [2] Rising debt levels;
- [3] Changing economics in the utility model, including carbon pricing and low natural gas prices; and
- [4] Impact of slow economic growth in the province resulting from low commodity prices impacting major customers.

Mr. Speaker, these are serious, serious issues that this Crown corporation is dealing with. And we have to be clear with the ratepayers. We have to let the ratepayers know what are the plans for the future with all these significant challenges.

On page 90 of the annual report SaskPower is talking, this is the risk management section of the report, and SaskPower talks about the environment. And I'm just going to share this with the Assembly right now: "Ongoing SaskPower operations and future supply options are impacted by new and emerging environmental regulations . . ."

I'll just stop there. The regulations aren't new, Mr. Speaker. They're a number of years old now, but they're still calling them new. I'll carry on with the quote:

. . . sustainability initiatives and uncertainties. Issues including carbon pricing, climate change mitigation, carbon reduction measures, and clean technology development contribute to the uncertainty. These uncertainties may impact the achievement of SaskPower's business strategies, priorities and operational targets. In addition, adaptation to climate change will be a significant factor for SaskPower to consider in planning future facilities.

And again, we have nothing in the forecast for this company in

terms of how much money we're talking about. There's no disclosure of that at all. They list four steps that they're taking, and I'll just share the first two of them at this point. First of all:

SaskPower is in discussions regarding provincial GHG regulations and a federal-provincial equivalency agreement.

They are, Mr. Speaker? I think we know that that discussion is going nowhere right now because of this province's inability to implement a law like *The Management and Reduction of Greenhouse Gases Act* which has been sitting . . . had third reading in 2010. Six years later that bill is still a bill; it's not law. And there's no way that SaskPower can meet its commitments to these federal regulations without this bill being passed or else some other form of the bill.

Now I'm told the bill is in considerable disarray within the Environment ministry. People don't want to pass it because they say it's poorly written and some of the clauses that were added — because it was introduced and then amended and then passed — and the amendment clauses are of particular concern, and that nobody in the ministry seems to have their act together when it comes to the climate change modelling for the Ministry of the Environment and for the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We know where that's led to. What it's led to is the imposition by the federal government of a new level of carbon tax which . . . this could've been totally avoided if these people had got their act together in 2010, if they had actually started the technology fund.

We know from The Conference Board of Canada that it would have generated \$1.3 billion in our economy and we would have had an additional 8,300 jobs. But I guess they weren't interested in those jobs, Mr. Speaker. Instead, they are saying, well no, we're just going to be happy with the loss of 11,000 jobs because what can we do? What can we do? There's nothing we can do. Well I'm starting to sound like the member from Saskatoon Centre. What can we do, Mr. Speaker?

What they could have done is acted and been bold and made some decisions. But instead, that bill sits there. SaskPower's caught in limbo because they have no legislative framework in order to implement the coal fire, coal emission regulations. And it's just a mess. It's a complete and total mess, Mr. Speaker.

Now in here we have also . . . SaskPower has indicated another step they're taking, and this is something that was announced with great fanfare by the Premier. SaskPower has announced a future supply plan target of up to 50 per cent renewables in the supply mix by 2030 and is developing an integrated resource plan to deliver. Well, Mr. Speaker, we're holding our breath. It might not be a good idea, but we are holding our breath. And we're not sure where that's going to end up, but we know so far that the next power or wind power project has been shelved because of environmental concerns.

[16:45]

And we don't know where the RFPs [request for proposal] are at. We do know that this . . . SaskPower refuses to deal on RFPs for small power providers and is only looking at large power providers. Unfortunately, we don't have that industry here in

the province because they didn't implement the technology fund in the Climate Change Foundation.

So when this circle, this loop of failure on the part of this government to act in a way that promotes the development and the diversity of a power supply mix here in Saskatchewan, we've lost . . . Hitachi has moved out of Saskatoon. They were building large turbines, Mr. Speaker. They're gone. Those jobs are gone. But instead we have the Ministry of the Environment spinning on its wheels, trying to figure out how they're going to deal with these federal regs, putting SaskPower in an impossible position, and also pushing up the cost it's going to take to actually comply with those regulations.

And before I finish, Mr. Speaker, I do have to harken back to another huge expense that SaskPower subjected the ratepayers to, and that was the smart meter fiasco. And again, by a minister that we're familiar with these days in terms of how often his name comes up with certain files that are very problematic, Mr. Speaker. But here's yet another example of the then minister of SaskPower saying, oh well, I guess we'll just have to spend a bunch more money and give that company a real deal because we're scared they're not going to be able to provide us with smart meters. I don't know what he was thinking, Mr. Speaker, but it certainly is problematic.

And this is one of the reasons why rate increases have gone up over 18 per cent, and probably close to 20 per cent if you factor in the cumulative effect of that. And we also have that same minister talking to the Minister of GTH, who happens to be himself, and saying, heck, I think I've got \$24 million, and I heard you're looking for some cash because Mr. Marquart had to pay off Mr. Tappauf who had to sell off the land because his name couldn't be associated with that land deal.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is annoying and frustrating to no end that SaskPower ratepayers are being subjected to all of these insults, added to insults, added to injury. And now here we are with a bill that looks to increase their borrowing power from 8 billion to \$10 billion.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I think, you know, there's a number of questions that we're going to have for the minister once this gets to committee. But at this point in time I think other of my colleagues are looking forward to speaking to this bill and express more of the frustration that we see from ratepayers, that we see from taxpayers. And so at this point I will move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 17, *The Power Corporation Amendment Act, 2016*.

The Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Nutana has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 17, *The Power Corporation Amendment Act, 2016*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 19

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 19 — *The Film***

and Video Classification Act, 2016 be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure and honour to rise this afternoon to speak to Bill No. 19 regarding *The Film and Video Classification Act*. It's my pleasure to be able to join in on this very important debate. I was very pleased to hear comments from the members opposite — not the members opposite, but the members on this side — and there's been some very good discussion happening with respect to this bill. I'm very happy to be joining in.

I've had the opportunity to, in addition to hear those comments, to read the minister's comments with respect to this bill. And they've been able to help me in terms of understanding it. Now from what I understand, this bill is actually repealing the original Act in its entirety and completely replacing it, which always presents a bit of a challenge when you're trying to compare the two bills because you're not provided with explanatory notes. At least, you know, this is the first time that I've gotten a stack of bills to review and so I don't know if that's always the practice, that they're not provided with explanatory notes, Mr. Speaker.

But all I do know is that when there's been, in the instances of this session, a repeal of a bill in its entirety with a replacement with a new bill, there are never any explanatory notes, which is fine. It just means that I have the extreme pleasure of going through both the old Act and the new bill, clause by clause and line by line, just to ensure that we're not missing anything and that we're trying to figure out exactly what's going on and what the purpose is of this bill. Of course, like I said, we have the opportunity to see what the minister, any information that the minister is providing. But we just want to make sure that there isn't anything that's missed out.

Now from what I understand with respect to this bill, Mr. Speaker, is that it's creating . . . First of all, there's a few things that are being changed. I may not be able to hit them all but I will hit a few of them, and I know that the critic for this bill and other members will want to join in on this and will be speaking to it as well. And then we'll also have the opportunity at committee to ask questions at which point, hopefully, we'll just make sure that we aren't missing anything with respect to this bill. As I said, I did read about the old Act and this bill and I think I caught everything, but you never really know, Mr. Speaker.

So one of the things that I did notice that had changed was that it's creating a director of film classification and then also providing this director with a certain amount of legislative powers, Mr. Speaker. So from what I understand, first of all, the director of film classification is going to be a position that will be appointed by the minister, Mr. Speaker. So I guess we'll wait and see what that whole process is going to look like.

And that the director, amongst its powers, will have the ability to approve or disapprove films in Saskatchewan as well as requiring the exhibitor, retail distributor, or wholesale distributor who intends to exhibit or distribute a film approved by the director to remove any portion of the film that has been

disapproved by the director.

So this is going to have an impact on the film industry in Saskatchewan and those who are wanting to distribute film in Saskatchewan. And I'm sure the members opposite are waiting for me to talk about the film tax credit and some of the poor moves that they've made with respect to decisions in this area, but I'll save that for later. I know we have a lot of time to talk about that, so I would just encourage the members opposite to stay tuned because there will be a great conversation about that.

And that's part of the reason why I wanted to make sure that I really got a handle on this new bill, Mr. Speaker. Because we know that when it comes to consultation in this area, in this film industry area, oh man, it's certainly not their thing. They haven't quite done that in the past so I'm sure hoping that they did that with respect to this new bill, Mr. Speaker.

And I'm hoping at committee we'll have the opportunity to find out who was consulted on this and whether or not the film industry in Saskatchewan — what little of it exists now, unfortunately, after the film tax credit was cut — feel about these changes and whether or not they're satisfied with it. I believe that these, and you know, the critic for this area might correct me if I'm wrong, but I believe that these were originally powers that were given to a board, but now it's a director.

So it's moving from a group of individuals to one individual that's going to be appointed by the minister. So there's always a concern about a level of oversight and level of independence from government. So I'm hoping that there is going to be some thought put into that with respect to who this appointment is and how these appointments are made, ideally. The legislation is clear that it's going to be directed or appointed by the minister so, you know, there is some concerns about any type of independence in that respect.

It also includes . . . Some of the changes include adding the Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority of Saskatchewan to the Act, or to the bill, which will be the new Act. And then the FCAA [Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority], Mr. Speaker, will be in charge of appealing the director's decisions.

So what I am happy to hear about, even though I have some concerns about the appointment of this director and the independence of this director, is that there is going to be an appeal process. So if individuals or organizations aren't happy with the decisions that this director makes, I'm happy to see that it's going to be that the appeal process will take it to an independent administrative tribunal, a tribunal that already has powers and mandates in terms of making decisions and is obviously well-versed in doing so in a judicious way. So I am happy to see that that portion is added.

However, as I said before, it'll be interesting to see what the thoughts are from those within this industry. Like I said, those good folks who are still within this industry in Saskatchewan, even though I believe there was . . . It's quite alarming how many have left. And often, sometimes parties opposite accuse us of fearmongering, but there's nothing but truth here when we're talking about the film industry, Mr. Speaker, when I say that it's declined significantly since the Sask Party decided to cut the film tax credit.

And I'm looking right now actually at a *Globe and Mail* headline from June 27th, 2012, and it's titled "Producers abandoning Saskatchewan as tax credit ends," Mr. Speaker. So yes, of course there's going to be some concerns from parties on this side of the House as well as from those within the industry when the Sask Party decides to meddle around with the film industry, even if it's in legislation. I'm not too sure what sort of, like I said, what sort of consultation has gone on with this.

I'm also going to quote another headline. This one's from the *StarPhoenix*, and it's from March 16th, 2016. So this is a common sentiment that's gone on not just around the time when the film tax credit was cut in 2012, I believe, but it's even as recent as 2016. And this is the title. I don't even need to go into the article because the title, Mr. Speaker, is scathing enough. It's "The Sask Party's elimination of the provincial film credit damaged more than just the movie industry, writes Murray Mandryk," which is true. It affected not just those who were directly employed by the film industry, but it was a lot of runoff industries that were hurt by this too.

And it's unfortunate now that the economy is slower in Saskatchewan that the Sask Party has decided they were going to do the opposite of diversifying our economy when times were good. And now, boy it would have been nice if we had a more diversified economy and we were able to utilize things like a growing film industry to help those businesses that prospered from that, not only directly from that film tax credit, Mr. Speaker, but from those who had offshoot gains from the business that was generated.

I know, I think back a lot to when the movie *Just Friends* was being filmed in Regina, Mr. Speaker. And that's one I enjoyed quite a bit because Ryan Reynolds was in town, and we thought that was a lot of fun. And I think I was in about first year university at that time, Mr. Speaker, and we would go around and try and find him and watch the filming as it took place. But not only were we around, but the crew that was there when we . . . And we did get to actually meet some of them, not Ryan, but . . . The amount of crew that came here, that was here, not just from Saskatchewan but around the world . . . Hotels, Mr. Speaker, boomed as a result. Restaurants, Mr. Speaker, boomed as a result. And these are all the things that the Sask Party didn't think about when they made a foolish decision like cutting the film tax credit. And boy, it would have been sure nice for our local businesses if we would've kept that around, Mr. Speaker. So that's quite unfortunate.

I had other things. There are other things that this one does. I know that it creates a larger regulatory powers to this, but I know that there'll be other people, including the critic, who's going to want to speak to this bill. I'll give them that opportunity, much more versed than me in this area to speak to those issues, Mr. Speaker. So with that, I think that concludes my remarks at this time with respect to Bill No. 19. So I will adjourn debate on Bill No. 19.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. It now being 5 p.m., this Assembly stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Moe	1231
Beck	1231
Sarauer	1231
Wotherspoon	1241

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Chartier	1231
Cox	1232
Belanger	1232
Sproule	1232
Forbes	1232
Rancourt	1233
Beck	1233
Sarauer	1233

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Events Held by Community Associations Benefit Neighbourhoods	
Sarauer	1233
Grand Opening Ceremony for Day Program Facility	
Cox	1234
Community Named National Historic Site	
Chartier	1234
United Way Telethon Surpasses Fundraising Goal	
Carr	1234
Local Couple Celebrates 70th Wedding Anniversary	
Lambert	1235
Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Awards	
Bonk	1235
Reopening of Colonsay Potash Mine	
Brkich	1235

QUESTION PERIOD

Public Accounts Committee and Auditor's Report	
Wotherspoon	1235
Harrison	1236
Belanger	1236
Answers to Written Questions	
Sarauer	1237
Wyant	1238
Donations to Political Parties	
Forbes	1238
Wyant	1238
Delivery of Mental Health Services	
Chartier	1239
Reiter	1239
Funding for Hospitals	
Rancourt	1239
Reiter	1239

POINT OF ORDER

Merriman	1240
Sarauer	1240
The Speaker	1240

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Lawrence	1241
----------------	------

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 13 — <i>The Cancer Agency Amendment Act, 2016</i>	
Chartier	1241
Merriman (referral to Human Services Committee)	1243
Bill No. 40 — <i>The Interpretation Amendment Act, 2016/Loi modificative de 2016 sur l'interprétation</i>	
Chartier	1243

Bill No. 37 — <i>The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2016</i>	
Beck.....	1252
Merriman (referral to Crown and Central Agencies Committee).....	1255
Bill No. 17 — <i>The Power Corporation Amendment Act, 2016</i>	
Sproule.....	1255
Bill No. 19 — <i>The Film and Video Classification Act, 2016</i>	
Sarauer	1261

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