



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

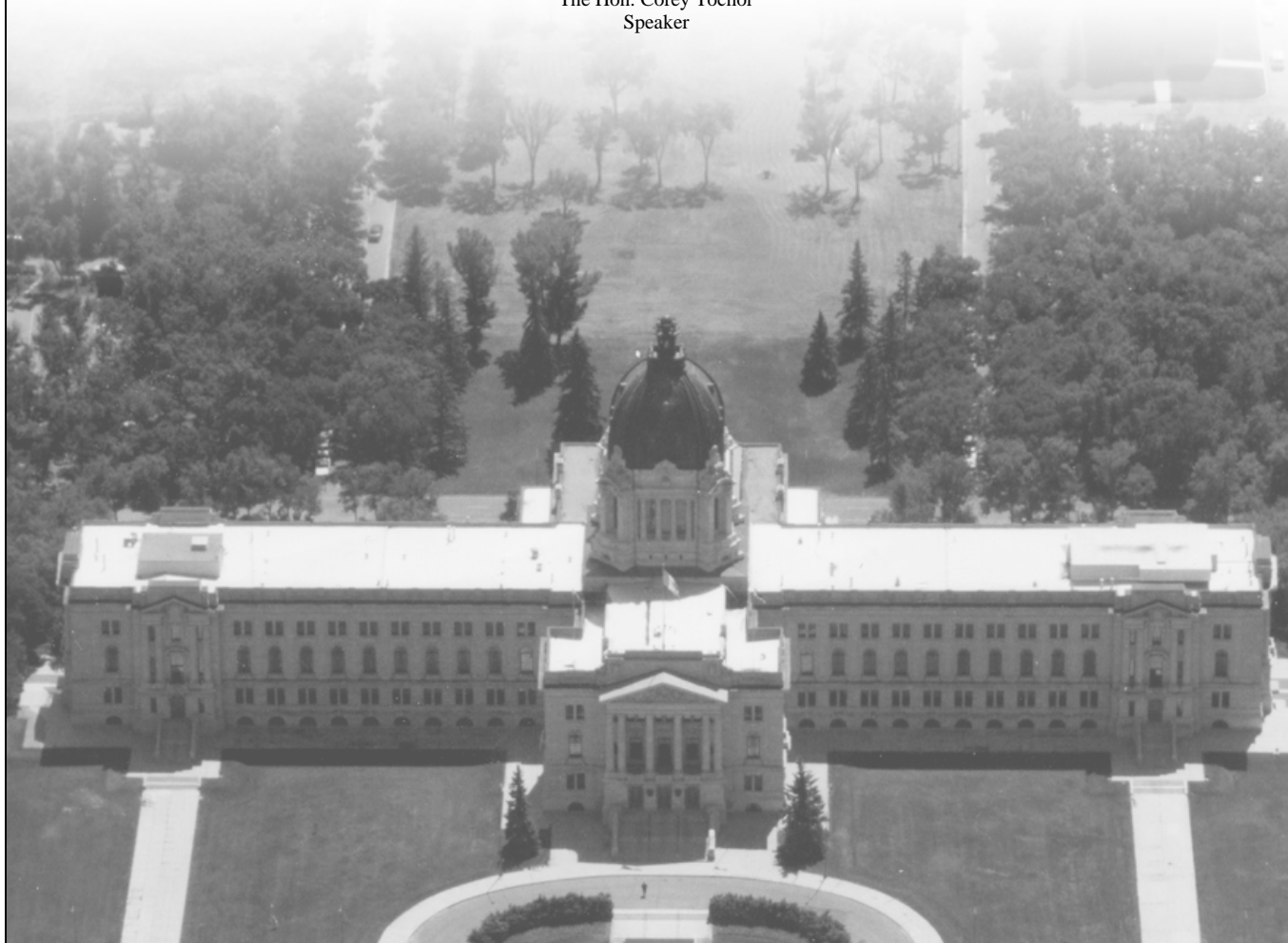
of the

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)

Bradshaw, Fred — Carrot River Valley (SP)

Brkich, Greg — Arm River (SP)

Buckingham, David — Saskatoon Westview (SP)

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)

D'Autremont, Dan — Cannington (SP)

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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Eyre, Hon. Bronwyn — Saskatoon Stonebridge-Dakota (SP)

Fiaz, Muhammad — Regina Pasqua (SP)

Forbes, David — Saskatoon Centre (NDP)

Hargrave, Hon. Joe — Prince Albert Carlton (SP)

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

Harrison, Hon. Jeremy — Meadow Lake (SP)

Hart, Glen — Last Mountain-Touchwood (SP)

Heppner, Nancy — Martensville-Warman (SP)

Kaeding, Warren — Melville-Saltcoats (SP)

Kirsch, Delbert — Batoche (SP)

Lambert, Lisa — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)

Lawrence, Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)

Makowsky, Gene — Regina Gardiner Park (SP)

Marit, Hon. David — Wood River (SP)

McCall, Warren — Regina Elphinstone-Centre (NDP)

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

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

Michelson, Warren — Moose Jaw North (SP)

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

Morgan, Hon. Don — Saskatoon Southeast (SP)

Nerlien, Hugh — Kelvington-Wadena (SP)

Olauson, Eric — Saskatoon University (SP)

Ottenbreit, Hon. Greg — Yorkton (SP)

Parent, Roger — Saskatoon Meewasin (SP)

Phillips, Kevin — Melfort (SP)

Rancourt, Nicole — Prince Albert Northcote (NDP)

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

Ross, Laura — Regina Rochdale (SP)

Sarauer, Nicole — Regina Douglas Park (NDP)

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Vermette, Doyle — Cumberland (NDP)

Wall, Hon. Brad — Swift Current (SP)

Weekes, Randy — Biggar-Sask Valley (SP)

Wilson, Hon. Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (SP)

Wotherspoon, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)

Wyant, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)

Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

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

Clerks-at-the-Table

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

Principal Clerk — Iris Lang

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today it gives me great pleasure to introduce Saskatchewan's Olympic delegation to the Legislative Assembly. Yes, let's give them a hand, sure.

[Applause]

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Earlier today the Deputy Premier, the Leader of the Opposition, and all MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] got to participate in a ceremony welcoming the Olympians and Paralympians as well as their coaches and supporters as well. So on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, we want you to know how important you are as athletes, coaches, and officials; how proud we are of you representing us. We want you to know that the role that you play as role models in Saskatchewan is very, very important.

Each Olympian and Paralympian and those that participated in Rio will be introduced by their respective member of the legislature, but at this time, on behalf of all MLAs through you, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask you to give all of our very, very special guests a warm welcome to their Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, it's my honour to join with the minister opposite, as it was this morning, to welcome this Olympic delegation to their Legislative Assembly. This delegation of Olympic athletes, Paralympic athletes, of coaches, of builders in sport is an impressive group that makes Saskatchewan so proud. It's an honour to have them on the floor of their Assembly here today.

And as we all watched them compete this summer, they need to know that they really made us proud. They showcased Saskatchewan. They inspired a generation across our province, of young people and of all of us, and they displayed of course incredible and remarkable perseverance and strength.

So to these athletes, to these sport builders, to these coaches, to these officials, I say on behalf of the official opposition and a grateful and proud province, thank you so very much, and as you step forward, thank you for your continued leadership in sport. And whatever you take on, take on that strength, take on that perseverance, and that great prairie spirit that makes us all proud, and I know you'll continue to succeed in all you take on. It's my honour to join with the minister opposite to welcome these Olympians to their Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you. I'd like to introduce Taryn Suttie who competed in shot put during the Rio 2016 Olympic Games. Taryn is from Hanley and has some impressive accomplishments as an athlete. She was a double gold medallist at the 2011 CIS [Canadian Interuniversity Sport] championships where she was victorious in the hammer throw and shotput. She was also named Outstanding Female Athlete at the meet and CIS Female Field Athlete of the Year.

Taryn also won bronze shot put at the 2012 NACAC U23 [North American, Central American and Caribbean Athletics Association under 23] meet. She captured the Canadian title in 2015 after placing second also in 2012 and 2014. She's been third in 2011 and 2013. Following a second-place finish at the 2016 Canadian championship, she made her Olympic debut in Rio. Please join me in welcoming Taryn to her Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, it is my pleasure today to welcome and introduce Carla Nicholls. Carla is the high-performance technical lead and team leader at the Rio 2016 Olympic games. She has 22 years of involvement with athletics that has ranged from small-club development, also is serving as head coach at the University of Regina. She is also a two-time Olympic team coach. And I'll read a list of other accomplishments and designations.

Carla is a graduate of the Coaching Association of Canada's Women in Coaching apprenticeship program and is an active chartered professional coach with Coaches of Canada. She was a writer of the new NCCP [National Coaching Certification Program] manual for athletics, a contributor to Athletics Canada's long-term athlete development program, and is a master learning facilitator for all levels of the NCCP. I know that Carla is also a busy mom to two great kids, Arden and Dawson, and I would invite all members to invite Carla and welcome her to her Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Parent: — I'd like to introduce Al Bodnarchuk. Al was a sport massage therapist for the Rio 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games. As a massage therapist, he has a hand in some of the biggest moments in Canadian sports. He worked with sprinter Donovan Bailey and the Canadian men's 4 x 100 relay team, both of them gold medallists at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics.

Al has been to the Olympics, Pan Am Games, and the Commonwealth Games. He has been a fixture of Canada's team at the World Athletics Championships since 1987. In 2013 Al was introduced into the Saskatoon Sports Hall of Fame. Please join me in welcoming Al to his Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cannington.

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you and through you to the Assembly,

Carter Morrison to the Legislative Assembly. He was one of only five Canadians selected by the Ronald McDonald House Charities to act as a tree-bearer during the Parade of Nations. Carter walked alongside Canada's flag-bearer, carrying a tree sapling which represented the environmentally conscious theme of the opening ceremonies.

Carter is certainly a role model and was selected for his perseverance and cheerful demeanour while staying at Ronald McDonald House. Please join me in welcoming Carter to his Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour for me to introduce Erica Gavel to the legislature. Erica was a standout basketball player for the Prince Albert Carlton Crusaders and was one of the premier female high school basketball players in the province.

Erica was courted by several post-secondary institutions, and she chose the University of Saskatchewan. Erica played a key role in helping the Huskies become one of the top college programs in the nation. A chronic knee injury prevented Erica from continuing with the Husky team, and Erica was concerned that her sports career was likely finished. But then she heard about wheelchair basketball, and she actively pursued that and earned an athletic scholarship to the University of Alabama. As a result of her hard work, Erica earned a full-time roster spot on the senior women's national team and earned a silver medal at the 2015 Parapan American games in Toronto while representing Team Canada.

Mr. Speaker, residents in Prince Albert are very proud of Erica and her hard work and dedication that led her to all of the successes, and I would like to ask all members to join with me in welcoming Erica to her Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Oluson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce Logan Campbell who earned a bronze medal in sailing keelboat three-person sonar during the 2016 Paralympics. Logan made his second appearance at a Paralympic Games after competing in London in 2012. He has had some very impressive international results, including first place in the 2016 Miami World Cup and third place in the 2015 ISAF [International Sailing Federation] Sailing World Cup. In 2011 he earned a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Saskatchewan. Please join me in welcoming Logan to his Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce Samantha Ryan who represented Canada in para-swimming during the 2016 Paralympic Games. At age 15, Ryan was the youngest member on Team Canada at the 2014 Pan Pacific Para-Swimming Championships in Pasadena. She collected bronze medals in the 10- to 100-metre butterfly and 200-metre individual medley in addition to reaching five other finals.

In 2015 she showed that she is one of Canada's fastest rising stars in para-swimming. At the Toronto 2015 Parapan Am Games, she swam in seven events, winning silver in the 100-metre butterfly. A few weeks earlier she took fifth place in the same event in the IPC [international paralympic committee] World Championships. Also very notably she won five medals for Team Saskatchewan at the 2013 Canada Games, including two gold. Please join me in welcoming Samantha to her Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce Shawna Ryan. Shawna competed in two para-cycling events and rode tandem in the 2016 Paralympics. She is a former member of Canada's national goalball team and competed at the 2008 Paralympic Games in Beijing.

Shawna started tandem cycling in 2013 when she attended an athlete identification camp organized by Cycling Canada, Saskatchewan Blind Sports, and the Saskatchewan Cycling Association. Shawna started on the international stage in 2014 with pilot Audrey Lemieux, and since 2015 she has teamed up with Joanie Caron. With Caron she won a bronze medal at the Parapan American Games in Toronto in the mixed road time trial and placed fourth at the track time trial. She enjoys the sport because it allows her to experience speed, tactics, and competition. Please join me in welcoming Shawna to her Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — I'm pleased to introduce Rick Reelie, athletics coach for the 2016 Paralympics. He's currently the Athletics Canada events coach and the Athletics Canada relay team coach. He was also the coach of 2016 Rio Paralympic Games bronze medallist Alex Dupont and 2016 Rio Paralympic Games bronze medal relay team.

Rick has quite an accomplished sporting career and has been recognized for his contribution to the sports community: 2012, Saskatchewan Athletics Coach of the Year; 2012, SWSA [Saskatchewan Wheelchair Sports Association] Coach of the Year; 2011, Saskatchewan Sports Hall of Fame inductee; 2011, Saskatoon Sports Hall of Fame inductee. He is a five-time Canadian Paralympic team member, a former world Paralympic, and national record holder. He has also won five gold, three silver, and one bronze Paralympic medals. Please join me in welcoming Rick to his Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Lambert: — I'd like to introduce Katie Miyazaki, wheelchair basketball assistant coach for the 2016 Paralympic Games. Katie has been the high-performance coach for Saskatchewan since August 2013 and began working with the Women's Wheelchair Basketball National Team in the summer of 2014. Through wheelchair basketball, she has had the opportunity to coach at world championships, the Parapan Am Games, Canada Winter Games, and the Paralympics.

Before her coaching career, she played at Simon Fraser University from 2007 until 2010 and the University of Saskatchewan from 2010 until 2012. During that time, she won two CIS championships, three Canada West championships, and was named CIS Defensive Player of the Year two times. Please join me in welcoming Katie to her Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Witherspoon: — I am pleased to introduce Simon Merkosky to his Legislative Assembly. Simon was a para-swimming international technical official in the 2016 Paralympics. He's been involved in swimming since 1998 as a competitive swimmer, coach, and official. Simon achieved his master official certification with Swim Canada in the fall of 2015. He was selected to be the national technical official for the Parapan Am Games in Toronto the following year. Please join me in welcoming Simon to his Legislative Assembly.

[13:45]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Estevan.

Ms. Carr: — Mr. Speaker, through you and to you, it is my pleasure to introduce Sheila Guenther to the Legislative Assembly. She is seated on the floor. Sheila was a para-swimming assistant technical delegate for the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games. Her responsibility was to assist the technical delegate to oversee all technical matters, to set up and conduct the competition, and to ensure IPC swimming rules were upheld.

Sheila is from Estevan and has been a swimming official for over 20 years. In 2007 she became an international technical official for IPC swimming. Last year she was certified as an IPC swimming technical official educator, one of nine in the world. Since becoming an international official, she has been to Brazil, Malaysia, Mexico, Scotland, the USA [United States of America], Venezuela, and Portugal.

And on more of a personal note, I would like to add that Sheila is quite the athlete herself. I've had the opportunity to golf with her on more than one occasion, and I've been blessed to have her on my team. So please join me in welcoming her to her Legislative Assembly.

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

Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce Louise Ashcroft to the Legislative Assembly today. Louise served as an international classifier for sitting volleyball during the 2016 Paralympics. She was one of only two international sitting volleyball classifiers in Canada who made the trip to Rio. Louise is a well-known physiotherapist in the city and a co-owner of synergy physio in Regina. She enjoys touring Saskatchewan by bike and playing the violin. Please join me in welcoming her to her Legislative Assembly.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce someone who really almost needs no introduction in this House. I'd like to introduce Wayne Hellquist to the Legislative

Assembly today. He's a community leader. Wayne was a member of the jury for the sitting volleyball event and responsible for overseeing the social media team for the sport during the 2016 Paralympics. He is currently the vice president of World ParaVolley, which is the international federation responsible for the sport of volleyball for athletes with physical impairment.

Wayne has attended four Paralympic games in an official capacity, including serving as the chef de mission for the Canadian Paralympic team in Sydney in 2000. He also attended the games in Athens in 2004 and in London in 2012 as a member of the world paravolley team. He served on the board of Volleyball Canada for 11 years and served two terms as the president of volleyball Saskatchewan. Please join me in welcoming Wayne to his Legislative Assembly.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet, to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, I have the honour of introducing a number of important guests who have joined us in the legislature today. The Adoption Support Centre is a vital partner in supporting families in our communities across Saskatchewan. Whether that person is pregnant and needing information about adoption, an adoptee searching for their birth family, a prospective adoptive parent, or a family who has come together through adoption, the Adoption Support Centre of Saskatchewan is here to help.

Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured to introduce the president of the Adoption Support Centre of Saskatchewan, Candy Hamre-Wyka, who is seated behind me; executive director Sylvia Cholidnuik; and resource director Leah Deans. They are here today during Adoption Awareness Month to celebrate adoptive families in our communities. This month is also a special way to recognize that as many as 6 out of 10 Saskatchewan people are connected by adoption in some way during their lifetime. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in welcoming these three representatives of the Saskatchewan Adoption Centre to their Legislative Assembly today.

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition, I also want to welcome the members here from the Adoption Support Centre. I actually just last night was looking on your website and looking at all the wonderful services that you provide to many people in our province, and I'm very grateful for everything that you do for people who are going through the adoption process. And so I want to also welcome you to this Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

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

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all the rest of the members of the Legislative Assembly, 24 grade 7 and 8 students from MacNeill School — give us a wave, excellent — seated in your west gallery. They're accompanied by their teacher, Ms. Charlene Enion, and their intern, Sarah Wishira.

Mr. Speaker, this is my third group of school groups to the

Legislative Assembly this fall. Now we have a little friendly competition going with the member of Regina Gardiner Park. Today we're tied, and I think later on this week I'm going to have one more school group. So there you go. So welcome to the Legislative Assembly. And I'll have an opportunity to meet with them later on to have probably a fairly robust conversation of what they see today. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Estevan.

Ms. Carr: — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, seated in your gallery, I'd like to introduce someone who actually needs no introduction at all — former MLA for Estevan, Doreen Eagles. And with her is her partner, Al Brigden. It is a pleasure to have them both in the gallery today. I know she's making her rounds visiting everybody, and I want to send a special thank you to her from me and our constituency. She left me in a good place. She was a mentor when I needed one, and thank you so much for being you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the member from Estevan in saying hello to Doreen Eagles. Welcome back to your legislature, Doreen. I don't think I'm giving away any secrets, but Doreen was a pretty fierce opponent in the political arena, but also a pretty lovely person. And it's good to see her here, and it's good to see her doing well. And, you know, if we can get a few more of her colleagues shifted up to the gallery from the floor, that'd make a good day's work, Mr. Speaker. But it's really great to see Doreen here at her Legislative Assembly.

And I also want to say, Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet, a word of welcome to a gentleman by the name of Dave Boan. We're here today to celebrate the Paralympians and the Olympians, and the great work that people like Dave Boan do out in amateur sport across the province is . . . this is one of the products of their labours. And I'm speaking about Dave because I know him through the Regina Water Polo Association, Mr. Speaker, and the home pool for Regina Water Polo of course is the Lawson Aquatic Centre, which is in the fair riding of Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

And Dave started playing water polo before I was born and was already accruing, like, Sask Sport water polo builder awards in 1983 when I was younger as well, Mr. Speaker. But anyway I just want to take this opportunity to pull Dave's leg, out of the pool, and certainly to say this: you know, we're here today because of the work of people like Dave as president of the Regina Water Polo Association, as heading up sport development with Water Polo Saskatchewan, as playing a lead role in the coaching around various of the championship teams that are coming out from the Regina Armada. And again, Mr. Speaker, it's really good to see Mr. Boan here wearing a business suit and not perhaps a swimsuit.

But please welcome these two individuals to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

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

Mr. Michelson: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker,

in the west gallery I've got a school group — Vanier Collegiate from Moose Jaw is here to watch proceedings. And I'd like to welcome the 21 students along with the teachers, Mr. Doug Panko and Mr. Kelvin Turberfield, that are accompanying with them. Mr. Speaker, also on the floor is the student, Makenzie Wood, is there at the far end along with Mrs. Tara Cathcart, part of the Vanier group.

I met with the group just before lunch, Mr. Speaker. They asked a lot of interesting questions. I was able to answer most of them, so that was gratifying. Also presented them with a flag, a Saskatchewan flag that was autographed by the designer, Anthony Drake, when he was here earlier in the summer. It's nice to see them here in the legislature.

Just an aside note about Vanier Collegiate, I along with the Minister of Social Services and the member from Wakamow were at a key presentation for a Habitat for Humanity home in Moose Jaw this morning, and during that presentation there was a special thanks to the students from Vanier from the entrepreneur class. They were involved with raising money and helping with the home as well. So that gives you an impression of how valuable they are and the good work that Vanier does to our communities. So I'll ask everyone to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I too would like to join with the member from Moose Jaw to welcome a guest in our gallery. Mr. Doug Panko, if you could stand and give us a wave. I would like to welcome him and his class from Moose Jaw.

Doug is a valuable member of our Saskatchewan Teachers' Institute steering committee. SSTI [Saskatchewan Social Sciences Teachers' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy] 2016 starts on Saturday, November 19th and goes until Wednesday the 23rd.

Doug was good enough to bring his students through my office earlier today after they had a meeting with their member from Moose Jaw. I was disappointed to hear that he never got ice cream for the students. But I promise the students now that after talking to the member from Moose Jaw, he will be visiting your school before the end of the year with ice cream sandwiches.

So would everyone please join with me in welcoming Doug and his students to his Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise again today to present a petition to reverse cuts to the Lighthouse program. Mr. Speaker, the petitioners point out that in April 2014, the minister of Social Services, the then minister of Social Services said that the Lighthouse in Saskatoon would “. . . take pressure off 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.”

The petitioners also point out that this government has repeatedly, since that time, indicated that the Lighthouse stabilization unit is a valuable tool for keeping individuals out of hospital or emergency rooms and jail cells. And with recent record over capacity in the Saskatoon Health Region in our emergency rooms, in our hospitals there, Mr. Speaker . . . Obviously the Lighthouse isn't the whole part of the problem there, but making these cuts to the Lighthouse stabilization unit certainly doesn't help, 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 recent 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 from Manitou and Saskatoon. I so submit.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition regarding wetlands. Wetlands serve a very vital function to 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 and they protect us from flooding and drought. They are a playground where families can explore and play.

In the worst cases, such as some areas on the prairies, as much as 90 per cent of our wetlands have disappeared. 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'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the petition 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 the environmental harm whenever possible, before a secondary focus on minimizing the harm with compensation being sought only

when the development is deemed essential and the first two stages cannot be met.

Mr. Speaker, the individuals who have signed this petition are from here in the city of Regina. I so submit.

[14:00]

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of Wakamow Valley Authority in Moose Jaw. 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 \$30,000 in supplemental funding. This loss of annual funding negatively affected the ability of Wakamow to maintain its lands and repair its parks, repair its buildings, and provide services to the community of Moose Jaw and surrounding areas. We know that 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 takes 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 in Moose Jaw.

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

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

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to present this petition in favour of child care amendments in Saskatchewan. Those signing 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], or New Brunswick.

Child care is essential to the economy, yet most centres struggle to balance their budget, and this impacts not only the quality but the number of spaces. Quality child care has an enormous positive impact on a child's future outcomes and yields high rates of economic return.

I will read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan recognize that licensed non-profit child care centres provide

programs that are foundational to a healthy society by including them in *The Education Act* and exempt all licensed non-profit child care centres in Saskatchewan from property tax through changes to the appropriate legislation.

Mr. Speaker, those residents signing the petition today reside in Fort Qu'Appelle, Regina, and Sedley. I do so submit.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition calling for a stop to the Sask Party sell-off of SaskTel. The petitioners point out that SaskTel is owned by all of us and it was built with Saskatchewan hard work and innovation and pride. And they point out that in the recent election campaign the Sask Party promised they would not privatize SaskTel. But you know, the petitioners are also calling for, instead of looking at their own waste and scandal, the Sask Party is now talking about breaking that promise and looking to sell off SaskTel to make a quick dollar.

They also point out that in the last five years alone, Mr. Speaker, SaskTel has returned \$497 million to support government programs and services like education and health care. They also point out, Mr. Speaker, that once SaskTel is gone, there's no getting it back and no telling what else the Sask Party will sell.

In the prayer that reads as follows [Mr. Speaker], the petitioners respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Saskatchewan Party government to keep their promise, stop their plan to sell off SaskTel, and keep our valued Crown corporation in the hands of the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this particular iteration of the petition, in addition to the many others, this one is signed by people from Regina. I so present.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again 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 criminal and child apprehension 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 several pages of this petition to submit today, Mr. Speaker, and those signing these pages come from Saskatoon,

Churchbridge, Esterhazy, Prince Albert, Weyburn, Raymore, and Montmartre. I do so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition to stop the redirection of funding of the Northern Teacher Education Program Council, Inc. A recent report shows that 94 per cent of NORTEP [northern teacher education program] grads found employment in the North. NORTEP has improved teacher retention rates in the North. NORTEP has a positive economic impact in northern Saskatchewan. NORTEP provides high-quality, face-to-face instruction and services to students. The province's financial deficit cannot be fixed by cutting indigenous education in the North and a program that has served the North for over 40 years. And the prayer reads:

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

It is signed by hundreds and hundreds of people in northern Saskatchewan. I so present.

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

Mr. Bradshaw: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to present a petition from citizens who are opposed to the federal government's decision to impose a carbon tax on the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, this will impose a regressive tax on all of our exports, be it agriculture, mining, or oil. Unfortunately we will then be uncompetitive on the world markets and when that happens, there will be unprecedented job losses. This tax was dreamt up by the Trudeau government with absolutely no thought to economic realities. And as if that isn't bad enough, the NDP [New Democratic Party] right here in Saskatchewan will not vote against this tax and stand up for the hard-working people of this province.

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

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

This petition is signed by the good people of Arborfield, Zenon Park, Tisdale, Nipawin, Aylsham, Ridgedale, and Carrot River. I so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cannington.

Recognizing Olympic and Paralympic Participants

Mr. D'Autremont: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are

honoured to celebrate the Saskatchewan athletes, officials, coaches, support staff, and volunteers that participated in the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Rio this summer. To compete and contribute as athletes at the most elite level known to sport is an honour to be proud of. Mr. Speaker, we all should be proud of these athletes in the way they have represented our country and our province on the international stage.

Their commitment to sport provides many positive benefits to our province. Not only do they contribute to the great quality of life sports brings to the people; sports brings the people of Saskatchewan together. Mr. Speaker, these athletes also serve as role models to an entire generation of our youth, showing them that their dreams have no limits and that gold is truly within reach.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join me in congratulating all the athletes, coaches, officials, and volunteers on their achievements, and we wish all of you the best of luck in your future endeavours. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Hear, hear. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Official Opposition, I'd like to stand and recognize those individuals who really embody true Canadian and Saskatchewan spirit and pride — our amazing Canadian Olympic and Paralympic athletes and coaches. These athletes and coaches proudly represented our country on the world stage this summer with dignity and grace, and reminded us that Canadians can compete with the very best from around the world.

In particular I'd like to recognize our very own Saskatchewan athletes for their impressive performances. This summer our athletes came from proud communities all across this great province and joined with teammates from across Canada to shine throughout the Olympic and Paralympic Games as a united team, Team Canada.

And what a diverse group of elite athletes we have from our province. They included a golfer from Weyburn — go figure there, Mr. Speaker; a shot putter from Hanley; a volleyball player, a wrestler, a para-cyclist, a swimmer, a wheelchair basketball player, a sailor, and a wheelchair racer, all from Saskatoon; along with a wheelchair basketball player from Edenwold; a swimmer and a wheelchair rugby player, both from Regina; a heptathlete from Humboldt who brought home the bronze; and of course the Ronald McDonald youth ambassador, Carter from Carlyle.

Along with our diverse array of athletes, it's also important to recognize Olympic and Paralympic coaches and support staff. Their knowledge, experience, and leadership are vital in guiding each of these athletes to success.

So, Mr. Speaker, I call on all members to join with me in congratulating Canadian Olympic and Paralympic athletes and coaches across Canada, and especially those who did us so proud right here in Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Adoption Awareness Month

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise in the House to note that November 2016 has been proclaimed Adoption Awareness Month. This month celebrates adoptive families across Saskatchewan. Almost 37,000 adoptions have occurred in Saskatchewan since 1922, and we want to thank those that have opened their hearts and their homes.

The Adoption Support Centre of Saskatchewan is a wonderful partner. They have planned a variety of exciting events across the province to celebrate Adoption Awareness Month. The Adoption Support Centre began in the '80s as a group of adoptive parents providing support to one another. Today, they have grown into a province-wide, confidential service that provides pre- and post-adoptive information and support for domestic, private, step-parent and adult adoptions.

This month we will also be reminding all adult adoptees and birth parents that access to birth registration information is changing on January 1st, 2017, as the new regulations come into effect. These changes are meant to improve access to information, and support Saskatchewan adult adoptees and birth parents in learning more about their own history and, if they choose, to strengthen their connection to their culture or birth family.

I ask that members join me as we celebrate our adoptive families across the province and important work being done at the Adoption Support Centre. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Girl Guides of Canada Make a Difference

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Every day in this province, people volunteer their time and skills to ensure that young people in our communities have opportunities to learn and grow. Recently I had the pleasure of meeting with the Girl Guides of Regina units No. 44 and No. 49 at St. Theresa elementary school. This group was attended by young women ages 5 to 14. I was invited by the leaders of these troops, women who volunteer their time and their energy.

Girl Guides of Canada is an organization of choice for women and girls that aims to empower young women and make positive differences in the lives of every girl and woman who experiences guiding, so that she can contribute responsibly to her community.

While with these young women, I sat on the floor in a circle in the gym and these young women asked me a number of questions regarding my job and my role as an MLA. Their questions were thoughtful. They were fun. They asked me what my job entails, what my favourite part of the job is, and they were very interested in what we eat in the cafeteria at lunch . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I'm getting comments from this side. This experience was educational and enriching and, as I told them, it sincerely was the highlight of my week. And I wished each of them happiness and success in their futures.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members of this Assembly to join me in celebrating these wonderful young women and all those such as their troop leaders who lend their time to mentor, encourage, and enable young people in our province to find their path. Thank you.

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

Stem Cell Donor Honoured

Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's with great pleasure that I rise today to recognize, to salute, and thank a young man who lives in my constituency. Julien Meier was recently honoured at the 17th annual Honouring our Lifeblood gala held at the Canadian Museum of Nature in Ottawa. Julien, who is a native of Hanover, Germany, registered with the German National Registry of Blood Stem Cell in 2005. When he was contacted in 2013 and told that he was a potential match for a patient in Canada, he thought that it was fate.

You see, Mr. Speaker, he had been planning to move to Canada. Once he was here, he joined the OneMatch Stem Cell and Marrow Network in 2014, and went to great lengths to expediate the process of obtaining Saskatchewan health insurance to make the donation possible. He then travelled from North Battleford to Winnipeg to donate.

On September 12th he was one of 30 regional and national award recipients. Mr. Speaker, Julien knows that when you donate life-giving blood or stem cells, you're not just giving to one person. And when he was asked why he donates, Julien replied, "When you donate, you're giving the patient's family and friends more time with that loved one. Why wouldn't you want to do that?"

[14:15]

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join with me in thanking and congratulating this new resident of Saskatchewan for his generosity in donating stem cells to a patient in need. We certainly welcome Julien to Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Inauguration of Regina Mosque

Mr. Fiaz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this month, the Khalifa of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at, His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad, spent a week in Saskatchewan. During his tour of our province, His Holiness inaugurated Mahmood Mosque in Regina by delivering the Friday sermon which was broadcast live in 200 countries and translated in 17 languages.

Mr. Speaker, this is Saskatchewan's first purpose-built mosque. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at built this mosque and are its custodians, but it really belongs to everyone. Mr. Speaker, any person of any faith or ethnicity is welcome to attend the mosque to pray in their own way. The mosque is open to all neighbours for community activities.

Mr. Speaker, the motto of Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at is, "Love for all, hatred for none." During the reception for the

opening of this mosque, His Holiness said, "The true teaching of Islam is peace, love, and harmony, right. That is what we have been preaching; this is what we have been practising everywhere."

I ask all the members to join me in congratulating Regina's Ahmadiyya Muslim community on the opening of the first purpose-built mosque in Regina. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

Fire Chief Presented With Protective Services Medal

Ms. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to recognize the outstanding volunteer contributions of a constituent of mine. Mr. Speaker, Chief John Bexson was recently presented with the Saskatchewan Protective Services Medal by the Lieutenant Governor in recognition of his 26 years of exemplary volunteer service with the Britannia Wilton Fire Department.

Chief Bexson joined the fire department in its first year of operations in 1990. Within three years he was promoted to captain, and in 1996 he was promoted to chief, a position he has now held for 20 years.

Mr. Speaker, the fire department has grown significantly during Chief Bexson's tenure, which has seen the design and construction of a new fire hall in 2009, the purchase of a new pumper truck in 2010, and the creation of a full-time paid position with the department. Chief Bexson was among the many firefighters who helped to fight the La Ronge wildfires of 2015.

Firefighting has been a proud Bexson family tradition since the 1950s, Mr. Speaker. John's son Riley, who has been a firefighter since he was 16 years old, represents the fourth generation of Bexson firefighters in the Lloydminster area.

I ask all members to join me in thanking Chief John Bexson and the Bexson family for their many years of firefighting service in Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Auditor's Report and Statements During Question Period

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions got one price from Highways: 11,000 an acre. And two well-connected businessmen got another price from the Sask Party through the GTH [Global Transportation Hub]: 103,000 an acre. And those two gentlemen walked away with \$11 million of profit from Saskatchewan people's hard-earned dollars. Mr. Speaker, this is a question to the Deputy Premier, not the minister of tired talking points and non-answers in this Assembly . . .

The Speaker: — I caution the Leader of the Opposition to refer to the minister by his proper title.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — This is a clear and simple question for

the Deputy Premier of Saskatchewan: how can he possibly justify giving the nuns one price, and well-connected businessmen millions more?

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The fact of the matter is the auditor had full authority to look into all of the matters, the transactions in question. The auditor testified as recently as last week in front of the Public Accounts Committee. She underlined and confirmed the findings of her report. She refuted every single one of the allegations put forward by the members opposite. She did identify challenges in that report, Mr. Speaker. We accept the recommendations that she made in that report, and we're working on implementing those recommendations.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the question of course was to the Deputy Premier. No answer again from that minister here today. I guess that surprises no one.

Everyone in Saskatchewan knows it wasn't a forensic audit from the auditor. And the question here is potential criminal breach of trust, and this is something that is a very serious matter, Mr. Speaker. The Ministry of Highways bought land from the nuns under the threat of expropriation, far, far less than they paid the Sask Party-supporting businessman.

Mr. Speaker, to the Deputy Premier: why did that businessman get the royal treatment and a sweetheart deal from that government, and why were the nuns treated so differently?

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Day after day, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition comes in here with smear, with allegations. Today he made a very serious allegation in that question, a very serious allegation. I challenge the Leader of the Opposition to make that same allegation outside of the House, outside of the House, not protected by the absolute privilege of this Chamber. I challenge him to make that exact same allegation outside of the House. Will he have the courage of his convictions to do it? Yes or no?

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, that minister will not intimidate this opposition . . . [inaudible] . . . on the floor of this Assembly or outside in the rotunda any day of the week, which is why we wrote the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] a long time ago. I think the minister needs to keep up with this file.

The members opposite can characterize the simple questions we're asking on behalf of Saskatchewan people any way they like. They can heckle, laugh, guffaw, try to brush things off as no big deal. But when asked by a journalist about this scandal, Sister Veronica Dunne of the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions said it was something quite different going through

her mind. Mr. Speaker, if not for me or for the people of Saskatchewan, will the Deputy Premier explain to Sister Veronica Dunne why the well-connected land speculator from Alberta seemed happy to go ahead with buying land from the nuns even though they were facing potential expropriation? Why were they treated so differently?

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Smear. Allegations. The Leader of the Opposition made a very serious allegation of criminal wrongdoing just two questions ago, Mr. Speaker. He did. He stood in his place . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And the Deputy Leader can . . . The Deputy Leader can heckle and guffaw all that he wants, Mr. Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition . . . I would venture to speculate, Mr. Speaker, that the Leader of the Opposition will not have the courage of his convictions to make that same allegation outside of the House. Why is that? Why is that, Mr. Speaker? He can come in here, protected by privilege, and smear members of the government, smear members of the public. He can do that all he wants in here where he's protected. Why won't he do it outside?

We know that he's done that in the past. He has a record of this, Mr. Speaker. He's actually been . . . This is coming from the Leader of the Opposition in charge of a party that was found in contempt, was found in contempt of parliament just a few months ago, Mr. Speaker. He himself was on the verge of being found in contempt of parliament, just last year, two years ago for a similar allegation. Will he have the courage of his convictions? Will he do that and make that same allegation outside of the House? Yes or no?

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people are getting pretty sick and tired with that kind of nonsense. Millions have been wasted of hard-earned dollars. And as for potential criminal breach of trust, that's exactly what we asked for to be investigated by the RCMP, something we said outside of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, and something we wrote a long period of time ago, Mr. Speaker.

The question again, and it's not to the minister who's going to not answer a question. It's to the Premier, in this case the Deputy Premier: why were those businessmen treated so differently than the nuns who got far, far less than they ever should have, Mr. Speaker?

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Here are the facts, Mr. Speaker. The Provincial Auditor had full authority to look into these matters in whatever way she saw fit. She did, by her own account, a very thorough job examining thousands of documents, conducting interviews with all of those involved in the transaction in question. What was her conclusion, Mr. Speaker? Her conclusion was very clear, reiterated again last week — no wrongdoing, no fraud, no conflict of interest.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Utter nonsense, Mr. Speaker. That answer undermines the respect that this House deserves. It's an honour for all of us to represent in this Assembly. And debate in this House takes all sorts of different forms — sometimes tragic, sometimes serious, sometimes funny. But at all times, we're working for the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

Yesterday that GTH minister who's been assigned to answer these questions — or not answer them — on behalf of a Premier who's ducking and hiding from doing so, was asked by journalists about his refusal to answer questions. And he quipped that there's hyperbole in the House. He even said, "Look, question period is question period." What does that even mean? This is the place where Saskatchewan people expect their government to be held accountable.

So this is . . . I'm not looking for any sort of response from that minister. This is to the Deputy Premier: will he finally stand up today, lead by example, endeavour today to cut the spin and to cut the nonsense that we see and provide some answers to Saskatchewan people who deserve nothing less?

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Nonsense and hyperbole. Pretty rich coming from the Leader of the Opposition who day after day comes in here and makes very serious allegations, smears members of this Assembly, smears members of the public. Won't do it outside of the House though, Mr. Speaker, he won't do it outside of the House. Doesn't have the courage of his convictions to do the same thing outside of the House. He's protected by privilege inside of the House.

You know, Mr. Speaker, who's worked very hard on behalf of the public of Saskatchewan? The Provincial Auditor. The Provincial Auditor who was tasked by the Public Accounts Committee to look into the matter, to get to the bottom of the matter, which she did — which she did, Mr. Speaker — examining thousands of documents, talking to all of those involved in the transaction. And what was her conclusion, Mr. Speaker? That there was no fraud, that there was no wrongdoing, and there was no conflict of interest. That was her conclusion whether the Leader of the Opposition likes it or not.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, that minister's petulance and arrogance day after day is outrageous in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. I know this is . . . You know, this is coming from the very minister who was out in the rotunda yesterday and couldn't answer a question in front of the media who were pressing him on why he wouldn't provide answers in the Assembly.

That minister was asked about, you know, the matter of the hyperbole in the House that the minister was referencing and he was backing up his claim that supposedly we're pushing some sort of theories. Well no, not so. We're pushing for basic answers to some pretty simple questions about millions of dollars that have been wasted. And he was asked, he was asked to provide a single example and he even failed to do that.

Mr. Speaker, far from spreading any theories, we're asking simple questions and trying to get finally some straightforward answers on this scandal. So does the Deputy Premier support the minister's latest talking point, and will he answer in here what his minister refused to answer out there — just one example, Mr. Speaker?

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Of course, Mr. Speaker, we've responded to every question put to us by the opposition. As importantly, perhaps more importantly, do you know who else responded to every question put to her by the opposition? The Provincial Auditor, Mr. Speaker. Last week at Public Accounts for a hour and . . . Well we know that they don't respect the work that the auditor did, or they definitely . . . And they think it's funny. They're laughing about it. The fact is the auditor answered every question that was put to her just last week by the opposition. Her testimony refuted the allegations that are being made by the Leader of the Opposition and by members of his party very directly, Mr. Speaker. She addressed all of these questions as she was asked to do by the Public Accounts Committee.

Her conclusion after having went through that entire process, having done a very thorough job by her own account, was that there was no fraud, there was no conflict of interest, and there was no wrongdoing.

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

Support for School Boards

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, today the minister spoke with the SSBA [Saskatchewan School Boards Association], and while school boards have many questions, the minister is short on answers. This government has underfunded the teachers' contract and left school boards to pick up the tab. They refused to provide mid-year funding adjustments and again left school boards to pick up the tab. And just last month they threw school boards under the school bus when the Sask Party had the gall to somehow imply that school boards are to blame for underfunding in classrooms.

Mr. Speaker, to top it all off, when asked again today whether the Sask Party was considering throwing out recently elected school board trustees, the minister refused to say that that was off the table.

Will the Sask Party get rid of school board trustees? Will they amalgamate? How many school boards do they envision? Who have they consulted? What is their consultation plan with teachers, with parents, with students across the province? You can see there are many questions, but, Mr. Speaker, does this minister have any answers?

[14:30]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I'm glad of the question

the member opposite asked. Mr. Speaker, June of earlier this year, and I quote, the member opposite said:

The Education minister says that it's the teachers who need to start looking for more savings. He said that school divisions should "sit down with a blank piece of paper" and then listed off . . . the things they [can do] . . .

Mr. Speaker, I want to correct what was actually said. In a June 2nd scrum I said, and I quote:

The challenge that I would say to all school divisions is sit down with a blank sheet of paper and say, 'How many things can we share with another school division? Can we do a common set of payroll? Can we do things where we have common buying? How many superintendents do we really need? Can we have the principals do more of the management, more of the . . .

Nowhere did I say the teachers need to look for savings, Mr. Speaker. We have over 10,000 teachers in our system. They work hard. We give them credit. And we're not saying to them, look for savings, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Beck: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the minister rattles on and on and on about the past and other things that I'm not sure what was being answered there, Mr. Speaker. But after a decade, nearly a decade of reign, it's past time that he accept some responsibility.

Understandably, school boards are frustrated. Teachers are frustrated. The Sask Party has underfunded school boards, forced them to cut, and then blames them for underfunding. Even when there was a glimmer of hope with this WCB [Workers' Compensation Board] kickback to employers and it looked like maybe a little extra money was going to find its way back into our schools, the Sask Party clawed back every penny. This is just one piece of the underfunding puzzle, but it is that minister who happily handed over to businesses with one hand and took back from school boards with the other.

Mr. Speaker, the WCB committee of review has stated that more transparency and more communication is needed surrounding the surplus paybacks. The minister's actions spoke volumes. Will the minister admit his mistake in two of his portfolios and pay back the WCB refund to school boards?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, we've talked about Workers' Compensation Board payments in the past. If it had been the other way and we'd been short, the school divisions would have come back to government and said, make up the shortfall. And we likely would have, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this was unexpected revenue back to the school divisions. I don't deny for an instant that they would have put the money back to good use. But, Mr. Speaker, let me say this, we have a billion dollar shortfall on this side of the House. We are going to work hard to remedy that issue. And, Mr.

Speaker, we look at all places, all the way across the province. We look for efficiencies. We look for best places to spend our money. And, Mr. Speaker, one of those places is in the classroom. We are going to continue to do that.

In 2007-2008 when we formed government, there was \$1.41 billion spent on education. 2016-17, that has gone up to \$1.88 billion, Mr. Speaker — a huge increase, 33 per cent, Mr. Speaker, in that time. Mr. Speaker, enrolment has gone up 9 per cent; our spending has gone up 33 per cent.

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

Workers' Compensation Board Review

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, private employers got big fat rebate cheques, and school boards and health regions, well they got theirs clawed back. And what are the workers of our province getting? Well according to the workers' compensation committee of review, WCB is simply not working for the workers. Mr. Speaker, the WCB is spending an outrageous 90 per cent of its time on backlogged appeals, and as a result the good connections with workers have now been replaced by those in need being made to feel that they are on trial.

Mr. Speaker, workers pay into WCB. It's theirs, but backlogs mean that workers and their families are simply waiting too long. In fact the turnaround times now for initial payments to Saskatchewan workers are among the longest in the country. Families are left to struggle while they wait, and some have even lost their homes.

Will the minister take responsibility for this absolute failure and total mismanagement? Will he commit to showing some basic empathy and human decency to address these failures?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite raises several points, and I'm pleased to speak about workers' compensation in our province. Mr. Speaker, when Workers' Compensation Board is in an overfunded position, as they occasionally are, we try and refund that money back to the workers, to the employers. That is where the money came from.

Mr. Speaker, our goal is to make sure that the fund stays stable and is able to service all of the claims that the workers submit. And, Mr. Speaker, it has never happened where that situation has existed where we were not able to fund all of the claims of the workers. In 1998, \$23 million was returned; 1999, \$36 million was returned; year 2000, another \$36 million.

Mr. Speaker, the committee of review recently has filed its recommendations, and some of the recommendations are that they do a better job of communicating with both the workers and the employers. The Workers' Compensation Board officials have indicated they accept those recommendations and are working to implement them.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, these criticisms of the management of WCB are not new. We've heard this before from workers and employers from past reviews but it doesn't seem to get any better.

This review highlighted that these issues come from the top, and I quote: "There is a particular skill set that members of the board should have. These skill sets should be kept in mind when appointing members."

Mr. Speaker, the report goes further and blatantly states that proper governance is not being achieved at the WCB. I know they love to use their total failure to manage responsibly as an excuse for the GTH, but are they proud of their mismanagement here too?

Mr. Speaker, it's the Sask Party that appoints these board members. When the Minister Responsible for the GTH went looking to address management problems on the GTH board, the first person he ticked off was himself. Well fair enough, Mr. Speaker. Now if the Minister Responsible for the WCB isn't too busy picking fights with teachers and making cuts with our kids' classrooms, can he tell us how he will ensure the consensus recommendations from this report will be addressed?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I don't know where the member opposite thinks that I sit on the Workers' Compensation Board. The member opposite also was at one time in his past the Minister Responsible for Workers' Compensation Board.

Mr. Speaker, we go through a review process called committee of review every four years. They make recommendations every four years. Mr. Speaker, four years ago they recommended over 50 things. All but one or two of those things were accepted and in fact implemented. They have made recommendations now, Mr. Speaker. Likely all or most of those things will be accepted and recommended.

One of those was that they speed up their appeal time. The appeal time was almost a year long. Mr. Speaker, I'm told that the appeal time now is measured in a few weeks, two, three months at most. They had a rapid turnaround on how the appeals are working.

They recommended as well that we look at the governance process for WCB and, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to consultation and discussion with the members opposite about how that might roll out.

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

Support for Vulnerable Citizens

Ms. Rancourt: — Mr. Speaker, every year we get another report about food bank use in Canada, and every year it's on the rise again here in Saskatchewan. In just the last year alone, food bank usage in Saskatchewan is up a whopping seventeen and a half per cent. Mr. Speaker, what's most alarming about these numbers is that nearly half of those who rely on the food banks

in this province are children. Kids, Mr. Speaker. They need nutritious and healthy meals in order to grow and thrive, and more and more they are having to rely on the food banks.

I think that everyone in this House would agree that these high numbers are unacceptable, that we must do a better job. The Sask Party blew through the surplus and the rainy day fund, and here's where we are now. So what is this government's plan to lower the number of Saskatchewan people who are forced to rely on the food banks?

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

Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would agree that these are not figures that we like to hear. The Social Services budget in my ministry, Mr. Speaker, has gone up by almost 70 per cent since we formed government. This is a government that cares about vulnerable people.

Mr. Speaker, we also have the Saskatchewan poverty reduction strategy, Mr. Speaker, which is committed to reducing the number of Saskatchewan people who experience poverty for two years or more by 50 per cent by 2025, Mr. Speaker. Part of that includes, Mr. Speaker, our income assistance redesign which is focused on making income assistance more people-centred, more simple, more transparent, and more sustainable.

These were also things that were talked about in the hunger report that was released today, Mr. Speaker. We will continue to work on this issue. Thank you very much.

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

Ms. Rancourt: — The fact is our province's food banks are being used by a growing number of people. Mr. Speaker, 10,000 more people looking for work than a year ago. And the Sask Party is punishing Saskatchewan's most vulnerable and making them pay the price for the Sask Party's mismanagement, scandals, and waste.

Yesterday the minister brought back the Sask Party cuts to the social assistance. It's just a phase-in of the same cuts we saw in July that they were forced to back down on. Shockingly, Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party still has no idea who and exactly how badly these cuts will hurt. They still don't even know how much they will save with this cold and callous attack on Saskatchewan's most vulnerable.

Mr. Speaker, supports like these that help the most vulnerable are most needed when times are tough. So why is the minister suggesting she's concerned while her cuts are actually making things worse?

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

Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor: — Mr. Speaker, what cuts? This government has invested \$3 billion over its entire ministry for people with disabilities. Yesterday we rolled back issues on the 2,700 people that the member opposite has talked about day after day. We've taken 112 people off the income tax rolls, Mr. Speaker. We've increased our child care spaces. We've

increased the shelter allowance nine times. We've increased our disability programs by 134 per cent since taking office, Mr. Speaker.

I would say that this government is very committed to people who are vulnerable in this province, and we'll continue to demonstrate that we are so.

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

Funding for Health Care Facilities

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, as of yesterday, City Hospital in Saskatoon is under a boil-water advisory. Thirty-nine surgeries have been postponed and other procedures have been cancelled. These delays and backlogs will only get worse.

Mr. Speaker, this is not the first time something like this has happened. Saskatchewan hospitals are struggling with huge infrastructure needs and this government is refusing to address them. RQHR [Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region] needs \$23.8 million a year for capital renewal, and that, Mr. Speaker, is just to keep the facilities functioning.

But that Sask Party gives them zero. Zero planned dollars, Mr. Speaker. We have hospitals that are literally crumbling with serious maintenance needs and the Sask Party is simply letting them fall apart, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, forget that minister's usual rant about the past. What is he going to do to bring an end to these dangerous failures?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to the boil-water advisory, I was informed that as of last night the boil-water advisory was put in place. Tests are being conducted today and results are expected very quickly. Officials are taking all the appropriate precautions, Mr. Speaker.

To the member's comments about inadequate funding, Mr. Speaker, that's just simply not the case. Mr. Speaker, we've made health care funding a priority. A 50 per cent increase in funding since we were given the privilege of forming government in 2007 . . . Mr. Speaker, the member asks a question but apparently doesn't want to listen as she continues to heckle from her seat.

But, Mr. Speaker, for the rest of the members, they'll be interested to know that in health care, again a priority, we've recruited close to 650 more doctors in the province, thousands more nurses, Mr. Speaker. We've built new facilities. We've built a hospital in Moose Jaw. We're building a hospital in North Battleford. Thirteen long-term care facilities around the province. Hundreds more long-term care workers.

[14:45]

Mr. Speaker, health care is a priority for this government and that'll continue. 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 174 through 176.

The Speaker: — The Government Whip has tabled the responses to questions 174 to 176.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 34

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Stewart that **Bill No. 34** — *The Provincial Lands Act, 2016* be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and as always it is my absolute honour to be able to rise in the Assembly today and enter into the adjourned debates as we have been for the last few days, Mr. Speaker. And certainly this is an important part of the procedures in this House, as you know.

Bill No. 34 is described by the minister as an entire revamp of *The Provincial Lands Act*. And as he points out in his original comments, this is an Act that has been around for a long, long time, Mr. Speaker. . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . It's been an Act that's been around for a long, long time. And maybe I'll be able to make some comments now without a lot of back and forth. We'll see what happens.

I think one of the starting places whenever we talk about land here in Saskatchewan, and certainly in any country, is the importance of the land to the people. And as the minister pointed out, there's 161 million acres of land in Saskatchewan, 100 million acres of which is owned and controlled by the people, by the government for the people.

And when we look at our relationship here in Saskatchewan with the first peoples that were here, I think it's very important, as always. And, Mr. Speaker, we have evidence of that here on the table, where we have an acknowledgement of the rights of the First Nations people and also the rights of the Métis people. We have the sash representing the rights of the Métis people and their homelands, and also we have the banner with the sun shining and the rivers flowing.

And we know that our obligations to the treaty people stem from those promises that were made over 120 years ago now, Mr. Speaker, coming up on . . . You know, in the 1870s most of this territory, which was then described as the Northwest Territories under the Dominion government, was actually the land, the sovereign land of the First Nations that occupied this

land at the time. And as you know, Mr. Speaker, the land we're currently sitting on, standing here today is in Treaty 4. Treaty 4 was signed in 1874 and in Saskatoon, where I am from, Treaty 6. So Treaty 4 and 6 are two of the larger territories that belong . . . that are part of what is now the province of Saskatchewan under the Dominion law.

And I think one of the things we need to look to, when we're looking at legislation from this government in relation to the use of land, is how the relationship with First Nations fits in. And sadly, Mr. Speaker, it just doesn't exist in this bill. We've seen governments put in all kinds of preambles to bills. We've seen governments insert all kinds of political actions such as *The Interpretation Act* that we're debating as well at this time, Mr. Speaker. But what do we see in this bill? There's one small, tiny reference in section 25 of this bill to the obligations that the province has under the Treaty Land Entitlement Agreement. But there's nothing, there's nothing in here that acknowledges the relationship of our First Nations to the land, their ongoing treaty rights to those lands. And I think it's a sad indication, Mr. Speaker, of the value that this government puts on those relationships.

I took a quick peek at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and some of the recommendations that were made there. And just through the simple process of doing a search for the word "land," I came up with some of the calls to action that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission made regarding land and our approach to our relationship with the land here in Saskatchewan. And there's a few recommendations that I want to get into the record because we certainly don't see any reference at all in this Act to those calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This government has access to that commission. This government has access to those calls to action, and we do not see any reference whatsoever to those important calls to action. And there was plenty of opportunity, Mr. Speaker, and I'll get into that a little bit later.

But the first call to action that I want to share today and get on the record is no. 45, and it reads as follows:

We call upon the Government of Canada, on behalf of all Canadians, to jointly develop with Aboriginal peoples a Royal Proclamation of Reconciliation to be issued by the Crown. The proclamation would build on the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and the Treaty of Niagara of 1764, and reaffirm the nation-to-nation relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the Crown. The proclamation would include, but not be limited to, the following commitments:

- i. Repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous lands and peoples such as the Doctrine of Discovery and *terra nullius*.
- ii. Adopt and implement the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* as the framework for reconciliation.
- iii. Renew or establish Treaty relationships based on principles of mutual recognition, mutual respect, and shared responsibility for maintaining those relationships into the future.

iv. Reconcile Aboriginal and Crown constitutional and legal orders to ensure that Aboriginal peoples are full partners in Confederation, including the recognition and integration of Indigenous laws and legal traditions in negotiation and implementation processes involving Treaties, land claims, and other constructive agreements.

Mr. Speaker, the next call to action also references these types of ideas within the context of the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement.

This morning we had the opportunity to meet with the United Church of Canada's representatives, and they made the very specific point, Mr. Speaker — and I hope government members had an opportunity to listen to them as well — that we need to place our relationship with First Nations and Métis people at a much higher priority. This is the call that we got from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and this is the government who has that opportunity and has chosen to not prioritize it.

And I think that's a sad indictment, Mr. Speaker, in these days when we know we see murdered and missing Aboriginal women on, you know, in the news on a regular basis. We see the terrible suicides that are taking place in the North. We have our colleagues here on this side who continue to bring forward the plight of the northern people here to this government and often falling on deaf ears, Mr. Speaker. The NORTEP program, the Aboriginal court worker program — all of these things are opportunities for this government, and yet we see them failing time and time again. And *The Provincial Lands Act*, Mr. Speaker, is no exception. And I think it's just really a sad indictment on this government who are totally ignoring exactly what the courts have been saying about our relationship with the land and our relationship with Aboriginal peoples.

Now, for example, we know that the *Constitution Act* talks about Aboriginal rights and I'm going to put that in the record. This is in 1982, the *Constitution Act, 1982*, was enacted. Part II, Rights of the Aboriginal People, section 35 reads, "The existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed."

This is in our Constitution, Mr. Speaker, but we see nothing when it comes to an Act that deals with all of the Crown lands that currently exist in Saskatchewan. What a missed opportunity, what a missed opportunity for this government to show it's serious about treating with First Nations and Métis people in a fair manner in a way that recognizes their rights.

There's another really important court case that came out in 2014, Mr. Speaker, and this is the Roger William case. And the Supreme Court gives us more of an explanation of what section 35 of our *Constitution Act* really means. And here's what they say:

Section 35 . . . protects Aboriginal rights against provincial and federal legislative power and provides a framework to facilitate negotiations and reconciliation of Aboriginal interests with those of the broader public, [paragraph 118].

While rights that are recognized and affirmed are not absolute, s. 35 requires the Crown to reconcile its power with its duty, [and that's paragraph 119].

And they go on to say:

As discussed, s. 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, imposes limits on how both the federal and provincial governments can deal with land under Aboriginal title. Neither level of government is permitted to legislate in a way that results in a meaningful diminution of an Aboriginal or treaty right, unless such an infringement is justified in the broader public interest and is consistent with the Crown's fiduciary duty owed to the Aboriginal group. The result is to protect Aboriginal and treaty rights while also allowing the reconciliation of Aboriginal interests with those of the broader society.

Mr. Speaker, and that's paragraph 139.

So what we see here is an indication of the highest court of the land — when interpreting our constitution, which is the highest law of this land — and we're seeing that there's, we need to look for opportunities for reconciliation. Same message that comes from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Mr. Speaker.

And when it comes to land, there's nothing more fundamental than land to our relationships with the First Nations, with the Métis people. And again we see that right on the table in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, is the importance of the land and the water as it relates to our relationships with First Nations.

So just to begin, that's sort of my big disappointment with the opportunity that was presented when we have two ministers — in this case, Agriculture and Environment — who are undertaking important work. And I believe that Bill No. 34 is very important work because it's modernizing our land legislation. And as the minister pointed out in his second reading comments, this is very important. We need to continually reflect what's happening. But his whole take on this, Mr. Speaker, is all about improved investment climate, which is an important thing, but I think it needs to be balanced with our relationship with the land and our relationship with First Nations.

When the bill was first introduced, it was introduced in 1913 . . . or sorry, no, a century later — 2013, Mr. Speaker. And I know that at that time, the ministers engaged in what they called meaningful consultation with First Nations.

Unfortunately they, when . . . I think it was Perry Bellegarde was the chief. And he wrote a letter to the ministers at the time, in June of 2013, and indicated why what the province was proposing was nowhere near consultation as it is described within the legal framework of this land. And as the ministers knew, they rely on the Government of Saskatchewan's First Nation and Métis Consultation Policy Framework. The ministers know that has been rejected outright by the First Nations of this province and the Métis peoples as an unacceptable framework that does not meaningfully engage in what the courts were describing when it comes to duty to consult.

So right off the hop, these ministers insulted these First Nations leaders by referring to that framework. So that's right off, strike number one.

Secondly, they only set aside three consultation meetings to engage 74 Saskatchewan First Nations. And as the FSIN [Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations] has pointed out, that contravenes the Supreme Court's declaration that standard public notices and open houses are not sufficient and the First Nations are entitled to a distinct consultation process. So strike number two, Mr. Speaker.

Also they made reference, Chief Bellegarde made reference to the TLE [treaty land entitlement] First Nations and specific claim First Nations who are actively acquiring land. Now this one actually was incorporated into *The Provincial Lands Act*, but I'm going to speak to that a little bit later. It's deficient, but it actually did make its way into the Act. And then there was a couple more problems that the chief identified. The new Act must also ensure First Nations are granted continued access to hunt, fish, and trap, and gather on provincial lands. Not a word of that is mentioned, Mr. Speaker, in the bill itself that's on the floor today.

So that's strike number three, and guess what? There's actually a strike four as well. So it's different rules for this government. The review, as the chief pointed out, does not provide for any long-term engagement for the review of the proposed legislative amendments to ensure the First Nations constitutional and treaty rights are not impacted or abrogated. And, Mr. Speaker, there's nothing, nothing in the bill that deals with the abrogation and the non-derogation of First Nations rights.

So it's four strikes that this government got from the First Nation leadership. And a month later the Minister of Agriculture replied and gave some examples in their view that this was a low trigger for the duty to consult and therefore there's no problem. Basically they just shrugged off the concerns of the leadership of First Nations. That's not what reconciliation is about, Mr. Speaker. That's not what the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is about, Mr. Speaker. That's not what the Supreme Court is talking about when we talk about the honour of the Crown, Mr. Speaker.

[15:00]

And unfortunately that's what we have in front of us today. And I think it's disturbing and it's unsettling that this government has missed a wonderful opportunity to begin the process of reconciliation, to begin the process of the nation-to-nation, sovereign-to-sovereign conversations that need to happen before we start affecting 100 million acres of Crown land over which First Nations have extensive treaty rights, Mr. Speaker.

So the ball is dropped. Four strikes against this government. And what did they do back in May of this year? They had another opportunity because they decided they're going to reintroduce this bill. What did they do? They just said, okay you guys — FSIN, you get less than a month to comment. Ignoring completely all the concerns that the FSIN had already raised.

So I think, Mr. Speaker, on that level alone there's, well definitely a lost opportunity but I think some serious disregard of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, serious disregard of the principles enunciated in our *Constitution Act*, and certainly serious disregard of the Supreme Court of Canada's enunciation of what the honour of

the Crown is about when it comes to our relationship with the land and our relationship with First Nations and Métis people, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of the Treaty Land Entitlement Agreement itself, Mr. Speaker, I had the honour of working in that program for 17 years, back from 1994 till I left that job to come and be a member of the Legislative Assembly. We moved over 700,000 acres of land to reserve. And I can tell you the most difficult part of that whole process, the most difficult part of the whole process was dealing with third party interests that the provincial Crown had issued on provincial Crown lands. And there has always been an opportunity for this government to make that right and they choose not to, Mr. Speaker. It's a real problem because what they're doing is they're issuing third party interests but they're allowing those interests to actually overrule in many cases the need and the rights and obligations of the treaty land entitlement First Nations to fulfill the obligations under the promises of the treaties that were made back in this province in the 1870s.

And one of the problems is that when you have the provincial lands regime as it now exists, individuals are given leases, let's say a grazing lease or something, even hunting and trapping leases for non-First Nations people under trappers' . . . What are they called? Lines, traplines, Mr. Speaker. There's no ability for this government to shut down that lease if that individual starts holding out for a lot of unreasonable requests when it comes to replacing their interests under the *Indian Act*. And I spent a lot of time doing those replacement agreements.

I've seen situations where bands were held ransom by lessees to pay inordinate amounts of money just to get that lessee to accept the lease that would put them in an equal position after the land was created, after the reserve was created. In one case I know, a farmer got \$800,000 just to sign over a lease that he would be in the same position that he was before. There's every opportunity for this government to fix that as they brought this bill forward and they have failed to do that, Mr. Speaker. They have absolutely failed, and I think that's a huge failure on the part of the government to recognize the issues in relation to third party interests for treaty land entitlement. And I think it's a big problem for our ongoing relations with First Nations.

And I know that the FSIN is following this, and one of the biggest issues they had was that they weren't able to even see the bill before it was tabled so they had no idea what they were dealing with, Mr. Speaker. And it just seems that it's an unfortunate approach that is very disappointing that this government is bringing forward.

Some of the things that the minister has indicated and in terms of the positive attributes of this Act . . . There are positive attributes, I think, despite my disappointment in terms of the opportunities that were presented for First Nations relations and Métis relations, Mr. Speaker, and improving our relationships on those levels. There are some important changes that are being made in this Act. And as the minister indicated, in this case it will make the lands . . . It'll be easier for the lands to be used in a proper way, and it will also be easier for making sure the lands are not being misused. So there's a number of changes that are being made.

It's a complete wholesale rewrite of the previous Act, which has been amended a number of times. It was generally introduced in 1978 although it has been amended, you know, in 2015, 2014, 2013, and 2010 and many times before that.

But it's a complete reshift, and as we go through this, Mr. Speaker, the government is also introducing new regulations because much of what's being placed in the regulations now is things that were codified within the legislation itself. So what we're going to see is an ability for longer term leases, and I think this is a really important aspect as long as the treaty land entitlement obligations are taken into account. Unfortunately they're not.

I'm part of a company that actually has a lease for recreational land up at Nesslin Lake, Mr. Speaker. And a few years ago, we wanted to do some significant improvements to this site, including running water and some power sites in the campground, and we were able to get a longer term lease so that we could actually finance the improvements that we wanted to do. So in that sense, from a development perspective, that makes a lot of sense as long as treaty rights are not being trumped. And I think that's what's missed in this bill, is an acknowledgement of that.

They're also looking for increased access under some of the clauses. Unfortunately the minister didn't identify which clauses those were. But I think if you look at division 1 of the new bill, basically sections 2-1 to 2-7, you'll see a lot of the minister's responsibilities in how the lands are going to be administered. I think that's pretty much the key section I guess of this new bill, is division 1.

There's some unusual numbering. I haven't seen this kind of numbering before in new bills, so I don't know if this is a new format. But we see section 1-1, 1-2, 1-3. And then they jump into part II which is all numbered section "2-." And then there's part III and part IV. And so there's this kind of weird numbering system, but it's maybe the latest and greatest in legislative drafting. I'm not sure.

At any rate, the sections 2-1 to 2-7 really talk about what the minister's approach is going to be with relationship to these lands.

Another thing that I understand is in here, and I'm not exactly sure where it shows up because I wasn't able to find it, but the minister indicates that individuals will now be able to use their Crown land lease as collateral for financing. I think at common law that's already something that's available to individuals, and certainly we use that in our campground lease where we use the long-term nature of the lease as collateral to get financing. So there may be some other issues here but I think many, many people who have the opportunity to lease Crown lands can use that, the long-term lease as collateral to secure improvements on the lands, or I would think for ranchers, you know, improvements in the water system or the fencing and the maintenance of that land for the use that they're given it for.

Some other things the minister's talked about is abilities for the Crown to act much more nimbly when it comes to — I'm losing my words today — infractions of the lease. So in this case . . . Currently you had to either go to court or actually cancel the

lease in order to stop people from doing bad things on their lease land, basically. And now there's going to be a stop-work order that can be issued if the lessee is doing something inappropriate. When you think of all the surface leases that are out there, Mr. Speaker, there's spills or people aren't managing their surface leases properly, this way the government can actually move in and issue a stop-work order, although I think with the oil and gas leases, they already have the right to do that within the lease itself. But this is actually codifying it in the law.

And there's other things like these special management zones. Now the minister talked about them, but I couldn't actually find it, and certainly once we're in committee I'll have an opportunity to ask that question. But he talked about these special management zones. And I'm wondering how this is going to work in relation to *The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*. So I will have some definite questions about that, Mr. Speaker, as we move into the committee phase of this bill.

But he's talking about these zones, and he said they could be very small areas where . . . They're called special management zones, but when I searched for those words in the new bill, I couldn't find them. Maybe it's going to be in the regulatory side of it. But they will be able to . . . [inaudible] . . . very small portions of land — I'm thinking maybe again a large grazing lease on sensitive land near the Great Sand Hills — and they would be a small area which they would call a special management zone wherein the operator or the lessee could maybe construct some sort of granaries or feed stations. But certainly I'm going to have some questions about that once this bill is moved into committee.

He says that it also will “. . . create more opportunities for the industrial and recreational use of Crown land.” So quite often there are competing interests who, as you know — snowmobilers, cross-country skiers, quadders, camping — they would all like to have access as well to these Crown lands. So there's going to be more ability for the Crown to be nimble in those areas as well and assure that access would be provided.

Unfortunately, as I mentioned earlier, there's no sort of clear understanding in this bill in terms of First Nation treaty rights and the exercise of those on these lands.

One other I think big improvement in terms of administration will be the ability for the ministers to exchange lands between themselves in order to move them into different uses or . . . He says:

Changes to the PLA would also remove some of the administration burden for small land transfers between ministries. These small parcels of land could include decommissioned roadside campgrounds or rest sites, for example. The owner of that quarter section of land adjacent may be interested in purchasing the small parcel, but [now] before that can happen the land must be transferred to the Ministry of Agriculture and the ministry can then sell it to the owner directly.

This is a huge administrative burden for the officials, Mr. Speaker, because they have to require an order in council to do that now. So this would be something that would now just go

between ministries and then Agriculture would be able to sell it.

Again some concerns have been raised about, what if these lands are wildlife habitat protected Act lands? What's the role of the Ministry of the Environment in that context, and how will those protected lands be replaced? And that's something, when I was talking to individuals who were concerned about this Act, is what's the impact on the current inventory we have?

We have international obligations in terms of our representative area networks. We have international obligations in terms of migratory birds, caribou migration. There are all sorts of overarching uses of our Crown lands that have to be taken into account when we're dealing with privatizing them. And we know the minister is quite keen on privatizing a whole lot of Crown land, and certainly offered an incentive program last year that was so popular that it was oversubscribed very quickly.

So we have to keep in mind the balance, and I think that's the role of government, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is to ensure that all things, all factors relating to the people's land, is taken into account when we are privatizing it in the fashion that this particular government is going forward with.

The other thing I found was the “General Matters re Ecological Reserves.” One of the things this bill is also doing is repealing *The Ecological Reserves Act*, and that is a separate Act. Currently it's a very short bill, but it's being subsumed into this particular bill. And I think more than anything, I'm not too sure how many people know that these ecological reserves actually exist. I know that we have the Great Sand Hills. That was under . . . My colleague from Saskatoon Centre was instrumental in ensuring, when we were in government, that that land, those lands were protected. And they continue to be protected under this bill, which is encouraging, Mr. Speaker.

And *The Ecological Reserves Act* is a unique piece of legislation, and part of what it does is it protects something called the Ecological Reserves Development Fund, and this is all found in part III division 1. So I'm just going to pull that up, Mr. Speaker. And what that does is it continues the fund. I was unable to find any information in relation to that fund when I used my Google, so I'm going to be asking some specific questions about that particular fund as well when we go into committee. I'm just curious to know how much money has been appropriated by the legislature for the purposes of the fund, what sort of uses it's being used for. So that will be an interesting conversation and I look forward to that, Mr. Speaker.

[15:15]

And also there's a division 2, which is a new division, and it didn't exist in the old Act. And it creates the Great Sand Hills representative area. So section 3-11 says, “The Great Sand Hills Representative Area described in the Appendix is designated as an ecological reserve.” This is the only one that's created in, that's actually codified in this legislation, Mr. Speaker. And certainly I think we have some clauses here that talk about the restrictions on the activities that are allowed. For example, you can't go hunting, trapping, angling, mushroom picking, or berry picking in that area unless you have authorization. There's other

things — walking, hiking, backpacking, snowmobiling, backcountry camping, horseback riding. So I can see the one thing that's not listed there is cross-country skiing, Mr. Speaker. So I'm not sure why that was left out, but that's another question we can ask the committee and the officials once we get into committee.

So I think in terms of including the Great Sand Hills representative area, Mr. Speaker, it's a great inclusion in this bill, and I certainly hope that there will be other representative areas that will be added eventually in time. I'm not sure that only having one meets our requirements under our obligations internationally when it comes to representative area networks, but at least we have one that's now being codified in the bill. And I look forward to further amendments in the future as we include other representative areas as we go.

So at this point, Mr. Speaker, I know other of my colleagues are hoping to have an opportunity to speak to this bill. And I certainly look forward to be able to raise some of these specific questions around why they failed to include the recommendations of the truth and reconciliation committee as it comes to our relationships with First Nations people and Métis people.

I think that's a big failure on the part of the government, and it's a signal, as far as I'm concerned, to First Nations and Métis people that the recommendations from the TRC [Truth and Reconciliation Commission] are irrelevant, and I think that's wrong. That is wrong, Mr. Speaker. But it's simply incorrect for this government to treat the TRC in that fashion and just completely overlook it when it comes to an opportunity like revamping of our provincial lands Act, Mr. Speaker. And so I think that's really shameful, and certainly I think First Nations are going to take a message from that, Mr. Speaker, and Métis people, and I think it's not one that will be received well.

Other than that, modernizing the bill makes a lot of sense, and I think the approach that the minister is using in terms of more ease for administration of provincial lands makes total sense. But I think they missed the mark right off the hop when they didn't even acknowledge any of those recommendations from the TRC, but also the acknowledgement of the relationship with First Nations and Métis people and the land. This is a perfect opportunity for governments to show some leadership here, and I think this government has failed miserably.

So at this point, I'll move to adjourn the debate on Bill No. 34, *An Act respecting Provincial Lands, repealing certain Acts and making consequential amendments to certain Acts*.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — The member from Saskatoon Nutana has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 34, *The Provincial Lands Act, 2016*. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — Carried.

Bill No. 26

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Duncan that **Bill No. 26 — *The Patient***

Choice Medical Imaging Act be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Chair of Committees. Good to join debate this afternoon on Bill No. 26, *The Patient Choice Medical Imaging Act*, or as others might refer to it as the queue-jumping enabling Act, or the let's privatize some more of our health care system Act. There are different ways where, you know, the sort of lingo that this government likes to use to cover their tracks rubs up against what is the true intent.

And again, Mr. Speaker, as I've put on the record in different regards in this Assembly over the years, Mr. Speaker, as regards diagnostics in our system in general, this is a hugely important aspect of the system. And if you haven't got proper access to diagnostics, then you're going to have a hard time getting a diagnosis. You're going to have a hard time getting a course of treatment prescribed by your medical practitioner, and you're going to have a hard time getting healthy. You're going to have a hard time getting better.

And it terms of the extreme frustration and worry and concern that comes with people who languish on long wait-lists for various of the diagnostic services that are out there, Mr. Speaker, from MRIs [magnetic resonance imaging] to CAT [computerized axial tomography] scans to on down the list, it's a hugely concerning development. It's something that is wrenching for those families to go through that are confronted with being on that wait-list, that are confronted with being in that bind where they can't get the diagnostics to get on with doing what they need to do as an individual to try and get some control over their health.

And like I say, Mr. Speaker, this is something that . . . This is a bind with which my family is far too familiar in terms of what it's like to be confronted with a long wait for a particularly key diagnostic and then the impact that can have on the subsequent decisions that you make for a course of treatment, say — be it for a cancer patient, and what may be required in terms of chemotherapy or radiation therapy — that all those decisions awaiting a bottleneck that can arise around diagnostics. And I guess one thing, Mr. Speaker, that, you know . . .

So I guess I'm always interested in approaches that can improve the situation where those critical diagnostics are available in timely and appropriate supply to health professionals, to individuals that are confronted with a situation where they need those diagnostics. And I guess, Mr. Speaker, I'm interested in things that make actual progress for that. I have less patience, Mr. Speaker, for something where it, you know, it proclaims the virtues or the values of patient choice but instead favours those that can . . . As the Premier in an earlier iteration, I think back in 2008, was talking about how they wouldn't be proceeding with any sort of private approach around diagnostics and specifically around MRIs, I believe the Premier back then talked about how they wouldn't be advantaging people with a bulging wallet to pay their way to the head of the line.

And, Mr. Speaker, again I think I'm well on record saying that as part of when we had the privilege in the New Democratic

Party of Saskatchewan to serve on the government benches, ours was not a perfect record certainly. I think I was part of a government that tried to do its best each and every day for the people of Saskatchewan to improve the quality of life, to work hard on behalf of those that sent us here and all of the people of Saskatchewan. But we certainly weren't perfect, Mr. Speaker, and certainly when mistakes were made, there's . . . You know, it's always best to own up and then try to correct the mistake going forward and not, you know, God willing, do it again.

And I guess the two-for-one aspect that the government seized upon around, you know, you can buy your way ahead in the queue with a public MRI and now this legislation, of course, expanding that dynamic to a CAT scan, but also, Mr. Speaker, and I'll get into this a bit more in my remarks, to other services as prescribed, so other sort of diagnostics or scan services that are required. It's most interesting, Mr. Speaker, that they've left that door open to make moves that they can accomplish through regulation instead of coming to change the legislation and going through a debate like the one that we're having right now, or going through a debate like the one that we had in 2015 around the move that they'd made around MRIs in particular.

But again, Mr. Speaker, they've gotten, I think, a taste of privatization, and they quite like it. And they've also found that they've got an argument that at least serves as a pretty decent cover to privatize one more public sort of service. And again, Mr. Speaker, it's not a surprise because this is who this government is. They like to privatize things. They'd privatize the lots, the entirety of public services if they could get away with it. But you know, they've learned some lessons that the sideways, the incremental approach is better than being sort of straight up and straight ahead with the people of Saskatchewan in terms of what they're looking to privatize.

That they've written into the legislation the other services as prescribed is an interesting power for them to reserve for themselves. And of course, Mr. Speaker, if past is indeed prologue or, you know, to coin a phrase that the Premier certainly likes to use and that certainly the former premier of Manitoba, Gary Doer, liked to use, the best indicator of future behaviour is past behaviour. And you know, a government that likes to privatize will only go for more and more in that regard.

But it leaves aside the question, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the information that is available in the public realm from bodies such as the Canadian Institute for Health Information, does this private option within a public system improve the situation in terms of access to the services for patients, for people that are, and again I say this from experience, Mr. Speaker, that are on waiting lists that are desperate to get those diagnostics so that they can get on with confronting the illness that has come crashing into their lives? And we know that, you know, people were, you know . . .

One of things that should be a response is that you should be improving the supply of those services. You should be improving the availability and the accessibility of those critical diagnostics so that our public system is consistent and serves people in a timely and appropriate manner, again referencing the critical nature, the critical role that diagnostics play in terms of getting on to that course of care.

But instead of seeing that, Mr. Speaker, we see what this government, you know, despite near a decade ago having forsworn any sort of approach that would involve people with a bulging wallet — again to use the Premier's words — a bulging wallet to buy their way to the head of the line. And they've changed their mind on that, Mr. Speaker, obviously. They've gone back on what was once a promise. And you know, you can add that to the ever growing list of broken promises on the part of this government.

But in terms of . . . I think about the analysis that was done by respected health care policy analyst, Dr. Steven Lewis, who'd said that in terms of expanding on this approach, on the two for one, it was like arranging your entire system around a mistake.

And if there was a mistake made, Mr. Speaker, certainly . . . and in terms of recognizing that and then trying to build out the system so that you've got supply adequate to the demand, Mr. Speaker, that's one thing. But what we've seen this government do is moving from MRIs now into CAT scans and then who knows into what other services as prescribed in the regulation and decided by that cabinet. What other services will be susceptible to this approach and what other services will be effectively privatized? And what services will then, in terms of who has access, will be determined by indeed what they can afford?

And you know, there's a lot of talk over the years in terms of . . . one of the great benefits of public health care is that it's about checking the condition before you're checking the wallet. And one of my other colleagues was up on this debate and had a lot of static from the side opposite, and you know, it's against a backdrop where we need look no further than to the south of us in the United States, where there still is too much of a two-tiered system, where there's one for the rich — a rich system for the rich — and a poorer system for people that can't afford it, and far too many people falling through the cracks. And we'll look to see what happens in the days ahead, Mr. Speaker, as regards the repeal of what is commonly referred to as ObamaCare.

[15:30]

But in terms of who can afford health care, of course one of the leading, the leading cause of personal bankruptcy in the United States of America is still personal health emergency and the bills that attend to that. And that is a dynamic that we were happily able to put paid to with the introduction and the implementation of medicare. First, you know, in the number one health district of Swift Current in 1947, and then certainly as it moved across in the early '60s with the great medicare debate. And of course, Mr. Speaker, I guess this is not surprising because people that now like to talk about their support for medicare, well, we know what side they were on historically. They were out with Ross Thatcher and the folks kicking the door of the legislature, kicking and screaming against the implementation of medicare.

And, Mr. Speaker, in terms of what people should be able to expect when the . . . Again as I pointed to the Premier's remarks in the latter part of the last decade where he talked about they wouldn't be enabling anything that saw people buying their way to the front of the line, where bulging wallets weren't the main

consideration in treating patients, I think the people of Saskatchewan had a reason to expect that he'd be as good as his word on that, and that's of course not what is happened. So that they've, you know, established a bridgehead with the MRIs and have moved now into CAT scans and then into who knows what other scan services, Mr. Speaker. In terms of, as Dr. Steven Lewis termed it, building out the system on a mistake, you know, we'll see how this works.

But in terms of that private component and the way that this has worked in other jurisdictions, we've seen this approach of the government brought into question by bodies such as the Saskatchewan Medical Association, by the doctors in the system. We've seen the stats draw this approach into question, coming from bodies like the Canadian Institute of Health Information, CIHI. And, Mr. Speaker, we see the questions that remain as, you know . . .

It's one thing to go on the propaganda offensive, but there are far too many people still languishing on wait-lists, and the answer to that is supply the services to increase the capacity of the public system instead of starving the public system, instead of, you know, again pursuing this slavish devotion to a privatizing, right-wing ideology. And again, Mr. Speaker, that doesn't serve the people, the people that are the public, in the public health care system very well at all. It works out pretty good for the folks that have the cash, but for those that are in those desperate straits, it poses some very wretched decisions to be made.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I know that other of my colleagues will have more to say on this yet, but for the time being, I would bring my remarks to a close. But again pointing out that the title, even the title of the bill, this government can't help themselves from politicking in the worst kind of way in trying to proclaim themselves as some kind of boosters of choice. But in fact, Mr. Speaker, this opens up the array for the folks that can afford it and in, you know, both in terms of the withdrawal of resources in terms of staff, in terms of the health care professionals from the public system where it's more advantageous to go over into the private system. It worsens the situation overall in a number of ways.

So, Mr. Speaker, for those and other reasons certainly, we've got some significant questions about the wisdom of this bill. But we have no question about why the government's doing this because, as I pointed out earlier, the government loves to privatize things. They're a right wing government and this shouldn't come as a surprise.

But I guess, you know, I guess the main sort of fault lays in taking the Premier at his word in times like 2008 when he says that people with a bulging wallet aren't going to be buying their way to the head of the queue. So again, Mr. Speaker, you'd like to take people at their word in these things, but they're a long way from those kind of commitments now.

But with that, Mr. Speaker, I would move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 26, *The Patient Choice Medical Imaging Act*.

The Speaker: — The Opposition House Leader adjourned debate on Bill No. 26, *The Patient Choice Medical Imaging Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 28

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 28 — *The Extension of Compassionate Care Act, 2016*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to enter the debate today on Bill No. 28 which the minister has referred to as the compassionate care Act, but it is actually in fact *An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Employment Act*, Mr. Speaker.

I've got multiple tools for information here. I've got my laptop going and some other articles I'd like to read into the record, Mr. Speaker, but I will be using many, many resources here to help inform my comments here today.

So this particular bill, Mr. Speaker, does a few things. So one of the priorities of this bill is providing job protection for those individuals who take time off work to take compassionate leave to care for a loved one who is at imminent risk of dying, Mr. Speaker.

And what this bill actually is simply doing, it's not providing extra benefits. This is about job protection, Mr. Speaker. The job protection piece happens at the provincial level and the benefits, Mr. Speaker, happen under employment insurance. That's how the system currently works. So the benefits part of this fall under the federal law, and it comes out of a change that the federal government has made to extend benefits. Sort of the wage replacement rate, Mr. Speaker, that people would receive under employment insurance if they take a leave.

So as the minister points out that on January 3rd, 2016, the federal government amended the *Employment Insurance Act*, allowing employees to collect up to 26 weeks of benefits after observing a two-week cooling-off period. Well that two-week cooling-off period is, under EI [employment insurance], it's like a deductible, Mr. Speaker. When you apply for EI, you have to wait two weeks. So that two weeks is considered to be a deductible. And there's an argument whether or not that's a good thing to do, Mr. Speaker.

But they have the two-week deductible period and then the 26 weeks of compassionate care benefits that are provided by the *Employment Insurance Act* now, Mr. Speaker. So for a half a year you can take a job, or you can take . . . you can get those benefits. But at the provincial level, there was the risk that if you didn't have job protection . . . so you might have been able to have the benefits but it didn't provide you the job protection. So this is a move the government has made to have the job protection aligned with the benefits, Mr. Speaker, moving from what it used to be. You could only take six weeks in the past, I believe, Mr. Speaker, plus the two-week period where you would wait before your benefits would kick in, which would be

the deductible, as I've said.

So this is a substantial increase in job protection, as it should be, to align with benefits that Canadians who pay into employment insurance are entitled to, Mr. Speaker. That is the right thing to do. And I know the government had heard from organizations like the Canadian Cancer Society, the Saskatchewan Palliative Care Association, Mr. Speaker, all kinds of organizations had brought this forward. And I know that the government, in their election, had committed to making sure that this was something that they were going to do, Mr. Speaker. And it's an easy change, but it is the right change and the right thing to do, Mr. Speaker.

It's interesting to me as . . . The federal EI program interests me as a parent. In the time that . . . Both on the compassionate care side of things, but also as someone who's taken maternity and parental leave, Mr. Speaker. I think there's some good discussion that could happen.

Actually Quebec, several years ago, went it alone and actually won a court decision to be able to opt out of employment insurance and to be able to take their chunk of money, to be able to offer enhanced benefits to their . . . to parents actually, Mr. Speaker. They actually created an entrenched paternity leave under their own wage replacement benefit program. So under the notion that . . . So you've got a maternity leave or maternity benefits for moms to be able to recover from the physical part of childbirth, Mr. Speaker. There's that component. And then there's parental leave that either parent can tap into. And then the entrenched paternity leave was really important to encourage fathers to have an opportunity to stay home too, Mr. Speaker, because parental leave is still by and large used by women, Mr. Speaker.

So that entrenched paternity leave that Quebec now has, it's a use—it or lose—it approach, Mr. Speaker. If dad doesn't take those benefits, they're lost. So that's a good opportunity to help fathers be involved with their new babies in those early days, Mr. Speaker, that key bonding. And to send the message . . . It really is a cultural thing, sending the message that mothers and fathers play a huge role in their children's lives.

So that was something Quebec did more than a decade ago, I believe, Mr. Speaker, was opt . . . They won a court case to opt out of employment insurance and go with their own. If the federal government wasn't going to improve employment benefits, Quebec had decided they were going to do that.

One of the things Quebec has also done was made parental and maternity and paternity benefits more flexible, Mr. Speaker. Recognizing that what you get from employment insurance benefits, Mr. Speaker, is 55 per cent of your salary, so 55 per cent . . . And up to a cap, and I'm not sure what the cap is right now. But for many employees taking 55 per cent of your income will not allow you to stay home. And that's the whole goal is to be able to provide parental care and bond with your child in those early months, Mr. Speaker, in that first year of life.

So it's interesting that what Quebec did was create an opportunity. What you could do is you could take an increased benefit rate and fewer weeks, Mr. Speaker, or you could take

the longer leave and have slightly lower rates than what those who are taking a shorter leave. So there was some flexibility in it and some opportunity to think about your own family and what you need, but recognizing that 55 per cent of many, many employees' wages or salaries is not sufficient to be able to stay home.

Can remember reading some statistics around that time, Mr. Speaker. And about three months postpartum, lower waged employees are back in the workplace en masse, Mr. Speaker. So at a time where me as a privileged individual would be able to manage with a husband or a partner, be able to manage taking a full year off . . . And sometimes, I know, many families, it can be tricky for some families getting that whole year, but they're able to balance their finances. But for many, many lower-waged employees the average return to work was three months postpartum, which I think is not a fair way of supporting all employees. It's a program, if you put a socio-economic lens on it, you see that there are some people disadvantaged by that program, Mr. Speaker.

And as a breastfeeding advocate, Mr. Speaker, it always troubled me that lower-waged mothers would be forced into the workplace. And you can totally breastfeed and work, although it is more challenging, especially with a new baby who nurses quite often, on demand. New babies like milk a lot, Mr. Speaker, and need milk a lot. So having a new mom back at work three months postpartum often would put an end to the breastfeeding relationship, which I think has long-term health impacts for both mothers and babies. But it also I think isn't fair, Mr. Speaker. So those are things that I think need to change or could change with our benefits, Mr. Speaker.

[15:45]

And I've heard over the years people have said we need two years of maternity and parental and an entrenched paternity leave, and I wouldn't disagree. And there are jurisdictions around the world who do that, Mr. Speaker. There are really amazing jurisdictions around the world — Finland, Sweden, many of the Scandinavian countries — who provide the opportunity for longer leaves. But they also have really good child care and they also have systems in place to support if a family decides they want to parent at home. They provide those systems to ensure that parents can parent the way they want, Mr. Speaker. So I have heard over the years people call for two years of those benefit wage replacements, and I think that that's not a bad idea. But I would like to ensure first, Mr. Speaker, that all parents who have a child have an opportunity to have equal access or the support that they need to be able to stay home with a child, particularly in the first year.

So I think, to my mind, rather than expanding a program to two years it would be much better to make sure initially that everybody has the opportunity to access that leave. So that's one piece of employment insurance, and we've had job protection in Saskatchewan under the labour code protecting for many years that part of employment insurance.

And I know in the time that I've been a mom, which is 18 years, Mr. Speaker, almost 19 years this March, but when I first became a mom there was only six months of maternity leave and there was no parental leave at that time. It was just

maternity leave. And I opted actually to leave my employment as a reporter and become a stay-at-home mom for the next almost seven years, Mr. Speaker. But I know that six months, I've spoken to many women who . . . There was a day where there was no such thing as maternity leave. So we've seen an evolution over time where there was no leave, and then we had . . . or no benefits.

And so there's the two parts here. I just want to point out that the two important pieces are the benefits — so income replacement so you can afford to stay home — and then the second piece that we deal with here with Saskatchewan legislation is job protection.

So here in Saskatchewan under the previous administration, when there were only six months of maternity leave and then the federal government expanded it to a year of maternity and parental leave, at that time the provincial legislation that governed it was then amended to make sure that people had job protection so you could be protected to take the benefits that you were entitled to, Mr. Speaker. And we see the same thing happening here with this piece of legislation, where this is around compassionate care.

And I just actually am going to tell you a little bit about the federal government's approach to compassionate care benefits and what they're designed to do. And I'd like to tell you a personal story here, Mr. Speaker.

So from the federal government's own website on employment insurance compassionate care benefits, so I'd just like to read into the record what it is we're talking about here Mr. Speaker. So these are:

. . . care benefits are Employment Insurance benefits paid to people who have to be away from work temporarily to provide care or support to a family member who is gravely ill and who has a significant risk of death within 26 weeks (six months). A maximum of 26 weeks of compassionate care benefits may be paid to eligible people.

And so what is care? How do they classify or determine what care or support is, Mr. Speaker? Care or support in this context of these benefits are “. . . providing psychological or emotional support; or arranging for care by a third party; or directly providing or participating in the care.”

And who is eligible, Mr. Speaker?

You can receive compassionate care benefits for up to a maximum of 26 weeks if you have to be absent from work to provide care or support to a gravely ill family member at risk of dying within 26 weeks. If you are unemployed and already receiving EI benefits, you can also apply for compassionate care benefits.

To be eligible for . . . [these] benefits, you must be able to show that:

your regular weekly earnings from work have decreased by more than 40 per cent; and you have accumulated 600 insured hours of work in the last 52 weeks, or since the start of your last claim . . .

So the term language is really important here, Mr. Speaker, and who we include in family is also very important. And I think that definition has broadened over the years, Mr. Speaker. And I know in many indigenous communities, family is much broader than we sometimes think of it in our settler communities, Mr. Speaker. So those terms have broadened.

And so in terms of employment insurance and who is considered a family member, I'll talk a little bit about the bill and who's classified as well here. So your own family members, it can be your children; your wife, husband, common-law partner; your father, your mother; your father's wife, your mother's husband; common-law partner of the father or the mother; brothers, sisters, stepbrothers, stepsisters; grandparents, stepgrandparents; grandchildren, their spouses or common-law partners; sons-in-law, daughters-in-law — married or common-law; father-in-law, mother-in-law — married or common-law; brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law; uncles, aunts, their spouses or common-law partners; nephews, nieces, their spouses or common-law partners; current or former foster parents; current or former foster children, their spouses or common-law partners; current or former wards; current or former guardians, their spouses or common-law partners.

You can see by that list that it's a good thing, Mr. Speaker, that the definition of family . . . There is not one cut-and-dried definition of family anymore, Mr. Speaker.

But in terms of family members of your spouse or common-law partner, are also considered to a somewhat lesser degree in employment insurance benefits, the benefits side of this, Mr. Speaker. And that includes if it's your spouse or common-law partner. It can be their children; their father; mother, married or common-law; father's wife, mother's husband; common-law partner of the father or the mother of your spouse or common-law partner; brother, sister, stepbrother, stepsisters; grandparents; grandchildren; sons-in-law, daughters-in-law — married or common law; uncles, aunts; nephews, nieces; current or former foster parents; or current or former wards, Mr. Speaker.

So I think it's a good thing that, again, definition of family has broadened over time and legislation has broadened over time to recognize the many different kinds of families that we have here.

Mr. Speaker, I had a . . . As many people in this Assembly know, this spring my father broke his hip four days into the election campaign, and suffers from dementia, Mr. Speaker. He had been probably experiencing a little bit of it prior to breaking his hip. Actually in hindsight, just having the Alzheimer Society here and learning more about dementia in the last . . . well in my time as the Health critic but also as a child of someone who has dementia, you sure learn that there are probably signs that you miss all along. And that's why awareness of those warning signs is really important.

But my father had been probably ill before breaking his hip. And then after he broke his hip, Mr. Speaker, it was like falling off a cliff. As he would attest to, he probably wasn't the best patient at Royal University Hospital. My normally sort of . . . My dad didn't curse a day in my life, Mr. Speaker, and his personality was very different post-surgery. I think there was

some surgical delirium.

But we brought him home post-surgery, probably before he . . . while he was still post-operative and should have been in the hospital, but the hospital was proving not to be the best place for him in light of some of the difficulties that he was having with his delirium, and he wasn't doing well. In fact, that whole time that he was in the hospital, which was the duration of the election campaign, we had to have a family member stay with him overnight. Or I suppose we didn't have to, but the one night that they physically restrained him and as well then used chemical restraints, my dad, who is not a . . . My dad is not a wallflower, and said he would not be hogtied. So he doesn't have very fond memories of that, Mr. Speaker.

But we brought him home before he probably was ready to come home. But it was quite an interesting several months, Mr. Speaker. The first month and a half, my sister . . . There are seven kids in my family. I'm the youngest of seven, and there are five of us in Saskatoon. I live two blocks from my parents and everybody else is fairly close. But my parents up until this year have always provided more care for me than the other direction, Mr. Speaker. But managing my dad and trying to support my mom . . . My one sister doesn't have any children herself, but has a very busy and demanding job. But she, my sister Michelle, who I've often referred to in here as one of the people who enables me to be able to do this job, tried to manage work and supporting my parents. And that was too tough and my dad was not doing well.

And my sister was able to get compassionate care leave, Mr. Speaker, and ended up spending much of May, June, July, August — well actually, not much of — all of May, June, July, and August trying to ensure that my mom had the supports to care for my dad, my dad assessed as needing long-term care, which was a bit of a shock for all of us because my parents . . . My dad has always said he's not going anywhere; the place that he's going to die will be at home, Mr. Speaker. So long-term care didn't seem like much of an option. And as the Health critic, I know there's really wonderful people who work in long-term care, but that's a system that's under huge strain, and staffing is a huge issue. And so despite the many wonderful people I've met who work in long-term care, we as a family knew that that's not where we wanted my dad.

So my sister was able to and willing to take compassionate care leave for the course of the summer for my dad. And it's an interesting thing when you decide to take that and a doctor signs off on it, because it means your loved one is gravely ill or at risk of dying, Mr. Speaker. And I guess that's a reality for all of us, but it was really wonderful to have my sister at home.

And my parents . . . She returned to work in September, which was a bit of a strain trying to figure out how we were going to manage my parents. My dad doesn't want anybody else in the house other than . . . So there is the capacity to bring in caregivers, Mr. Speaker, but my dad is not a fan of that at all and . . . Why would you need strangers in the house when you've had seven kids, Mr. Speaker? So he was not a fan of having anybody else in the house aside from his kids or grandkids.

So day by day, it's an interesting time trying to manage and

support him, and I have to confess I am probably the weak link in the chain as a single mom with my own kids and this job here that pulls me away from home quite often. But I know my sister was grateful to have that opportunity to spend that time with my dad and my mother, and I'm happy to report that my dad's still chugging along, Mr. Speaker. And we never know how much time we have left on this earth, but every day is a new adventure for my parents.

But we're very grateful that my sister was able to take those four months and spend that time trying to get my parents sort of stable and ensuring that things were okay. So it's interesting because my sister, obviously, because this piece of legislation hasn't passed yet, Mr. Speaker, my sister didn't have job protection, as do all the other people who take compassionate care benefits at this point in time. But fortunately she works for a progressive employer, the city of Saskatoon, and was able to go back to her job without any difficulty, Mr. Speaker.

So this change is really important around ensuring job protection for those who are able to take benefits. I would argue again that 55 per cent of your salary or wages does not mean that you're going to be able to take that leave; for many lower waged employees, much like maternity and parental leave, that that will leave them at a disadvantage. And people can't afford to do that. And recognizing as a government, whether it's the federal government or the provincial government here, there are huge, huge benefits accrued to a society when caregivers are properly supported, Mr. Speaker.

There's many unpaid workers, or many people who put their own employment at risk, not because they've taken a leave, Mr. Speaker, but on a daily basis, that's what they manage. They go to work, a full-time job, Mr. Speaker, and spend some time stopping in the morning to see a loved one at night, Mr. Speaker. And by and large, not that there aren't male caregivers, but by and large, this is something that's still, if you look at the statistics, it is women by and large who are bearing the brunt of caregiving, Mr. Speaker.

So I think it's incumbent upon us as legislators and as society to think about how we can better support that caregiving function. And we, I think, as a society sometimes diminish the role of caregiving, whether it's . . . If you look at many professions that are . . . Well the social work profession, which is considered the caregiving profession, and how we pay people in those professions, Mr. Speaker, I don't . . . or at-home moms.

And I talked a little bit about the bill before us yesterday, Mr. Speaker, and I can't recall . . . There are many bills that come before us, but there was one particular bill making an amendment — oh, the SGI bill, Mr. Speaker — recognizing that there needed to be an increase, if you were a homemaker, in the benefits that would be paid to you in the case of an accident, Mr. Speaker. But I think we don't do a great job as a society valuing the work of caregiving. And I think that that's something we can do a much better job at, Mr. Speaker.

[16:00]

We have an aging population here in Saskatchewan. And I think this piece, I know in my conversations with organizations like the Palliative Care Association, the Canadian Cancer Society,

that we need a palliative care strategy here in Saskatchewan, which this ties into. This ability to get benefits from the federal government and job protection from the province all tie into the need for a broad palliative care strategy, Mr. Speaker. We need to ensure that palliative care, that in rural Saskatchewan those flexible beds . . . There are many people in rural Saskatchewan providing wonderful, the best possible palliative care services that they can provide, but they would tell you that it is a unique specialty, Mr. Speaker, and people need to have support and training.

We have a limited number of beds. St. Paul's Hospital in Saskatoon, I've spoken to staff there who've had to send people home, Mr. Speaker, because they didn't pass away quickly enough, Mr. Speaker. Palliative care is about making sure you can manage pain and live your life comfortably for as long as you've got left. And often death can be imminent when you end up at a place like St. Paul's Hospital, in the palliative care ward, but because of the lack of beds, they've had to send people home.

And there are some wonderful palliative care home care workers, but there just are not enough, Mr. Speaker. And it's not that there aren't some positives, but we don't need an ad hoc approach to this, Mr. Speaker. This bill and this job protection is part of an ad hoc approach. We need a long-term, permanent strategy around . . . a long-term, beyond-election-cycle approach to palliative care, Mr. Speaker.

I remember hearing about a really great proposal or a piece of work in Ontario where there's a 1-800 line where you have a couple of specialist doctors who do palliative care work and ensure that family doctors who are struggling in their own community with providing the right medications or aren't sure or are nervous about some of the medications that they have at hand or don't have full knowledge, you can call this number and have assistance from palliative care specialists, Mr. Speaker.

So there are many things that we can be doing here better in Saskatchewan around palliative care, Mr. Speaker. So I'd just like to point out, so this is the big piece to this bill, is the change around job protection for those taking employment insurance compassionate care benefits.

But as I started out my comments, this is *An Act to amend the Saskatchewan Employment Act*, Mr. Speaker. This is a bill that has been . . . It was passed in May of 2013, Mr. Speaker. It was introduced in the dying days of 2012. So actually to take you on the path of this Saskatchewan employment Act, in spring of 2012 — again I think, I believe it was in the dying days of session; it was in May of 2012 — the government announced that they were going to roll together 12 pieces of labour legislation, Mr. Speaker.

They were doing a comprehensive review of labour legislation, which I'm not opposed to a comprehensive review of labour legislation. But you sure as heck better do some really thorough consultations, and I know that is not what the community at large felt had been done.

So this bill, the government signalled in May of 2012 that they wanted to do this, and then in that December, right before

session ended, they introduced *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*. They passed it in May of 2013, and we've had it before us on several occasions, Mr. Speaker. There are big holes in this Act.

This government hasn't been great at labour legislation. Bill 5, as you know, ended up in the Supreme Court, and actually that was the essential services law. And it is now . . . The government got a judgment against them and the right to strike is now entrenched in law across Saskatchewan. But my point, Mr. Speaker, is that when you bring in legislation, you should consult and make sure you've done a thorough job.

When the Canadian Labour Code was reviewed in 2005, it actually was a very lengthy process, years actually, Mr. Speaker, where in-person consultations with a committee, all kinds of things, Mr. Speaker. And this government, because of their rushing this Act has left . . . continues to have to bring it forward because they've made errors and left pieces out or have realized that there were unintended consequences.

I know the firefighters will be before us here in a couple of weeks talking about their concern around the employment Act. I know the government hasn't made it broadly known that this Act is before us. They've called it the compassionate care leave Act, Mr. Speaker. But it is very important when a government brings legislation before us that they do full and meaningful consultation and take that into consideration, Mr. Speaker. And this is something this government hasn't done piece after piece of legislation, and the employment Act is just one of those pieces, Mr. Speaker.

But I believe that I've had my piece. I could go on actually on this Act, but I know that I have colleagues who also want to enter the debate on this. So with that I will move to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Riversdale has adjourned debate on Bill No. 28, *The Extension of Compassionate Care Act, 2016*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 1

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. McMorris that **Bill No. 1** — *The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Amendment Act, 2016* be now read a second time.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to join in on Bill No. 1, *The Crown Corporation Public Ownership Amendment Act*. Just I guess to make some comments, and I know the public and those individuals are paying attention to this. It's interesting when the government's amending the Crown protection Act, and there's 40 stores that they're selling off, privatizing. And I guess at the end of the day, we've been thinking about this and those families that will lose their jobs.

Some of these are good-paying jobs that provide for, you know, families.

Not only is it a wage that, you know, gives these individuals an opportunity at — whether it's part time, full time — but there's benefits that help individuals with running, I guess, medical services and prescription drugs. There's different plans that when you're an employee that there's benefits that you get. And not all employees get the benefits; not all employers have that kind of coverage. But I believe most of these and, you know, I don't have any facts on it, but I'm sure most of them would've been covered under some type of health plan to cover, you know, the medical costs that can . . . But having said that, here we have a government, you know, that's going out and selling off. And we wonder why, when Crowns and any type of dollars that come into this province to help offset the taxes, you know . . . They'll scream about being the best one to look after not raising taxes.

Well you cannot continue to mismanage the province budgets and the resources that we have in our government coffers. You cannot continue to have the kind of situations we see with taxpayers' dollars being spent to buy land, paying over \$11 million. And we've been hounding and asking questions — hounding, hounding. And you know, I give credit to the members on this side to try to hold this government to account and all those that are asking the questions back home. You know, those individuals back home are very concerned about their tax dollars.

And those backbenchers and those ministers are going to pay a price. And I know they heckle and they laugh and they say, well the last election we got 51; what did you get? They're constantly doing that. And they're taking the good people of this province for granted. And let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, the good people of this province have done the hard work to earn the dollars that are in the government coffers. And you were entrusted, all of you.

You know, at the end of the day, we look at the costs and the costs have . . . and the dollars that are being spent by this government, showing different ways, you know, whether it's 3 million for SkipTheDishes, special land deals, all kinds of things going on. Why? And we've been asking about that. Why? Why do some benefit so much and some don't? And people want the answers. And they're going to ask for the answers, and we're going to continue to do that.

But I just want to show you, at the end of the day, showing a comparison to this bill. So now we're selling off 40 liquor stores. But did they, in this legislation, did they say, well we'll only amend or, you know, amend the legislation for the 40 stores? No, no, no. They've taken all of them out of the protection under the Crown Act, to protect our Crowns. They've taken all. And now you could sit there and say, well why would you do that? Why not just make the amendment for the 40?

And there's a lot of questions people are wondering. And I have some questions. I think, at the end of the day, the people of this province are going to be asking some tough questions and want some answers. Not the type of answers we've been getting in this House, you know, from some of the members and ministers

on that side. It's just, it's sad the way they're carrying on. But the public will.

And the public's waking up. I can tell you that, Mr. Speaker. Going out and talking to individuals back home and in the rest of the province, people are not happy. People are not happy. They're not happy with the way government is handling. You know, you had a boom. We had year after year, record revenue. And this government did not manage well, and the people are starting to see that.

And I've heard some of them referring them to the previous Devine government. They say they operate the same way. I think they're worse than them. So that's what I'm hearing from people making those comments. And you'll see posts all over. So people are getting tired of it. You know, maybe if they would have come forward before the campaign and the election about our finances exactly, maybe they wouldn't have had 51 seats over there. But did they come forward? No, no, they waited until after. Now we're seeing all the bad news coming out and, you know, it's terrible.

But at the end of the day, you know what's more appalling? It's going to be our kids and our grandkids that are going to pay for the mismanagement of this government. That's what's going to happen. It's going to be our grandkids, our great-grand. They will be paying a long time for this debt.

So we wonder why; they're looking for money? So they're selling off 40 stores. Well are they going to sell off all the stores because now there's no protection? Why would you bring that in even, you know, to even dare to bring that in here and say, oh well, no, no, no, no, we're doing this. We're amending the legislation. We're amending the legislation so we can sell off 40. No, that's not what they're doing. They're amending it to actually sell off all the stores. You're taking all the liquor stores, our Crown corporations, and you're taking them out of protection.

Now they can say what they want at the end of the day. They can heckle all they want and say . . . And like I said, sometimes at the end of the day, you know, those members over there, they're kind of arrogant, think they have an entitlement to everything that they're doing. The good people of this province have worked hard. And I've said that before: our grandparents, our parents, the next generation, our grandkids will pay for the mismanagement, and that's sad. That's sad. So I will see why they're trying to sell them off. And you know, we see the government looking at other Crown corporations. And I know the public out there are signing petition after petition to say, stop selling off our Crowns. They need to protect . . . They belong to the people. They don't belong . . .

And if you look at the polling, and they do polling. They love doing polling. The government, they can do . . . The Sask Party, they do their polling. It's very clear that the people out there are telling a message: do not sell off our Crowns. And it's clear. And if they haven't heard it, and they just eat away, you know.

And you look at a government that has made the most vulnerable pay — our seniors, kids. When they look at the cost of medication, they put that on the back of our seniors and our kids: \$5 more here, \$5 you've taken away. It's cost of going up,

cost for Saskatchewan residents who are struggling. You know, you look at poverty. You look at the food bank. You're talking about everything.

This government doesn't get it. They laugh. They mock it. You know, it's sad that we have a government that's not taking it serious what's going on in this province: many people unemployed, many people struggling losing their homes, losing their business, losing everything. And you have some of them, they think it's funny over there. I don't find it funny at all. I do not find this funny at all. But go ahead. Heckle and think it's funny.

But at the end of the day, like I've said, this legislation here takes the protection of our liquor stores. And it's sad. It's sad.

You know, you look at all the areas where we need to be doing a better job of governing, and I say it's a trusting. The good people of Saskatchewan have trust in the government, granted, but I've also said in this House when we looked at the budget and, you know, you look at different comments that people are making, you know, the Sask Party's got an opportunity here. They govern. It's good to govern when all, you know, the coffers are full. You have a rainy day fund. You have lots of money in the bank left from the previous government, but you spent it, and at the end of the day it's gone. You had an opportunity to save and do some good things for many people of this province. And here we have a government, all they'll do is brag and say, we paid off the debt. We paid off the debt.

Get down to the facts. And the backbenchers, do a little bit of research. Do a little bit of research and see how you've paid off the budget. Have a look at it. See how you've paid off the debt. It's pretty sad when you see the government backbenchers. Ask some tough questions. I've been saying that. Get after the ministers. Ask them to explain it to you. You were elected to represent the people. Fight for the people. Fight for the grandkids. Fight for the family members. Don't just accept this, that they do whatever they want. You will pay a price for this. You will pay a price at the end of the day, and you know, Mr. Speaker, it's pretty sad at the end of the day, pretty sad at the end of the day. You're going to take off some protection of all the liquor stores and . . . [inaudible].

[16:15]

Now I know I could go on and talking about the different areas and the debt, but you know what? The sad reality is, the sad reality is again I'm going to . . . My final comments on this before I adjourn is this. It's going to be our grandkids and our kids who will be judging what this government did. You had such an opportunity. The backbenchers, when you're telling your grandkids, well why didn't you fight for us? Why didn't you . . . Your constituents come to you and say, why didn't you fight? Why didn't you say something? You seen this was happening and what did you do? Oh, we couldn't say nothing. We couldn't say nothing.

You're elected. Have a voice. Don't just have to sit there. You can actually say some things. You can question some things. Don't just be there as a figure and not actually do anything to fight for the constituents and the people that we act for in this province. And that's what we don't see.

Well my colleagues will say certain things, but you know, at the end of the day, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think I've said what I need to say on this bill and I'm prepared to adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 32

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. McMorris that **Bill No. 32 — *The Automobile Accident Insurance (Benefits) Amendment Act, 2016*** be now read a second time.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to join in on Bill No. 32, *The Automobile Accident Insurance (Benefits) Amendment Act*.

If you look at this bill and what they're doing and changing, Mr. Speaker, there's about 30 changes, I believe. And there might be more of them, but I just happened to notice there's about 30 of them that they're proposing. They're different ways, and I know that in committee we're going to have to flesh these out. What exactly are they going to mean? I mean we could sit here and talk about individual ones, but I know there's going to be a process that has to go through, and I know we're going to do the good work in committee to deal with these bills and ask these tough questions like who . . . And I guess the one thing I'd say is, who did they consult and who did they ask on some of these?

And I'll give you an example. I just want to focus on one I was noticing, and it really came out to me. Like I realize government wants to control certain things and benefits, and the less benefits they pay out, the less benefits that the government pays out, SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] pays out, I guess that's good. But if you look at this, they want to prohibit, SGI's going to prohibit from paying benefits to a person who's in prison. Now I don't know what the previous provisions were. If you were disabled, if something happened to you and you were getting SGI to cover you and you were getting a benefit, you were getting a benefit, how is it that all of a sudden now you're incarcerated, something happens and for some reason you get incarcerated . . . Like who knows what happened? But let's just say you do get incarcerated, and now the benefits that SGI was giving you . . . Because you might have a disability. I don't know, for all . . . You could be in a wheelchair. You could be some type of disability where you can't work. We don't know what's going on. Like I mean there's many different types of benefits that people get in a car accident and SGI covers. But having said that, if you, like I said, one of the areas I was looking at, you go into a correctional facility, the benefit ceases to exist.

I know we've got to work out these questions in committee, and

there's a lot of them. They're talking about the different benefits going from 40 hours to 20 hours. There's different things. And I know my colleagues will want to go through line by line, change by change, and ask some tough questions. And I know we'll be consulting with individuals, talking to people and asking for advice. And I know the critic will do a great job in committee of asking some of these questions, and finding out, who did you consult? Who brought this forward? Was it SGI? Was it individuals? Were there clients? Were there people that were denied benefits? Like why the changes? And there are so many of them. I mean in here there's quite a bit. Like I said, I think there could be 30, maybe more of them. But at this point, Mr. Speaker, I'm prepared to adjourn debate on this bill.

The Speaker: — The member from Cumberland has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 32, *The Automobile Accident Insurance (Benefits) Amendment Act, 2016*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 33

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Harpauer that **Bill No. 33 — *The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 2016*** be now read a second time.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's always good to have you in the Chair for one of my interventions. Not to involve you in debate or anything, but I always like the rolling into it with the "r-r-recognize the member."

Anyway, good to be part of the debate on this particular piece of legislation, Bill No. 33, *The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 2016*. And in this particular case, Mr. Speaker, in a relatively small piece of legislation, we see something that doesn't get to the heart of what is one of the biggest issues that we have in front of us as a province, Mr. Speaker, one of the most important. And I would submit that that's the very future of our province, Mr. Speaker.

And it goes to the way that this government, after a lot of talk over the past near decade, Mr. Speaker, in terms of things like Jordan's principle where the . . . You know, I can remember the then minister, now private citizen, Bill Hutchinson, then minister for First Nations and Métis Relations stating, about 2008-2009, the support of that government for Jordan's principle. And Jordan's principle of course, Mr. Speaker, is the idea that you should fix the problem first. You should address the needs of the child first, and figure out the jurisdictional wrangling after.

And it's a fairly common sense principle that arises from an uncommonly horrible circumstance that saw a young man by the name of Jordan die in a Manitoba hospital, where this kind of jurisdictional wrangling went on back and forth between the federal government and the provincial government and, you

know, who held the responsibility in the case of Jordan?

And like I say, Mr. Speaker, there were folks that came forward and said, you know, surely to goodness we've had enough of this. Surely we can all recognize that the most important thing here is the well-being of the child and that everything should be secondary to that, including the assignment of who's got the jurisdictional authority or the responsibility to pay. So that was one important step along the way that, you know, this government at the time, and again it was the then minister of First Nations and Métis Relations who got to be the spokesperson for, Mr. Speaker, saying that that government would respect Jordan's principle.

And you know what, Mr. Speaker? We agreed with that on our side of the House and I think we agree with that in a lot of different ways. But you think about the kind of consensus that there was around Jordan's principle, and then moving forward from that, the kind of work that this government and the kind of consultation that this government had done under the then member from Kelvington-Wadena and then minister of Social Services, June Draude, and the work that was done particularly with First Nations and Métis people in terms of the work around improving the situation in child and family services, in terms of improving the floor and the basic conditions that are attached to the Indian Child and Family Services agreements that are available throughout the province. That as well was a good piece of work, Mr. Speaker.

And I know there were . . . I certainly have friends and colleagues out in the field that appreciated the commitment that the then minister brought to that work. They may not have agreed on everything, Mr. Speaker, but they didn't doubt the commitment of the then minister to the advancement of the file and the recognition that the best interest of the child should be first and foremost. And again that was a moment where, you know, you'd like to think that as a province, surely to goodness we can come together and agree that the best interest of the child should be the most important thing, and that you can arrange . . . You can certainly work on the relationships. You can arrange the protocols to ensure that that is supported, not just in proclamation but indeed in the way that the system works.

And there was some good progress that was observable on that front. And I guess, Mr. Speaker, my concern is that that was indeed years ago now, that the progress that had been made on that front I think has stalled. And I think folks are moving back into the different corners of jurisdiction in terms of fighting and the way that this government likes to use a big stick when it comes to enforcing co-operation from First Nations.

I think that there are some things about this legislation that are relatively straightforward, but there are some things that indicate I think a lack of progress on that file that again we should all be able to agree on in terms of the well-being of First Nations, indigenous children in this province so that we learn from the experiences and the horror stories of the residential school system, of the Sixties Scoop, that we not be repeating, that we learn from history rather than repeat those mistakes.

And again, Mr. Speaker, you know, we'd seen these moments of co-operation and moments of agreement. Another notable

milestone along the way was the work, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal challenge that was brought by Cindy Blackstock and the folks with the Caring Society, in terms of saying that the funding that the federal government provides on the one hand is significantly less than the funding that the provinces are providing on the other.

And how is this in any way fair? How does this meet the basic demand of fairness that we should have in terms of how a Canadian is treated regardless of jurisdiction? How did that square with, again, the near universal support expressed for Jordan's principle? And how did that square with the work that had been done in terms of the child and family services review that had been done in conjunction with First Nations, again near half a decade ago now?

Mr. Speaker, that tribunal ruling came in and they said, this is unfair. First Nations kids should be treated just as well as anyone else in the country. And the alarming part of that question, Mr. Speaker, is that we still have a federal government that is a laggard in responding to that ruling, that still hasn't put the money, the resources forward to ensure that you've got that basic equitable level of service to kids.

And I guess, Mr. Speaker, it's compounded by what we see as a general state of disarray in the Ministry of Social Services. And a lot of people that work for that ministry, both on the ministry side and on the front lines of the service delivery, the way that . . . The continual disarray that is on display in terms of how services aren't being provided in a timely and adequate way for people on the grassroots level, Mr. Speaker, on the service level.

You know, that's bad enough, but where that kind of dysfunction finds . . . A terrible consequence is in the situation that we see where the ministry and the Saskatoon Tribal Council are going to court. And you think about how far we've come from when there was that review being done to how the ministry is going at it hammer and tong in court with Saskatoon Tribal Council. And, Mr. Speaker, that kind of conflict is an alarming sign in terms of what have been some genuine steps of progress made along the way.

And to be sure, Mr. Speaker, you think about the different reports that have come from the Children's Advocate over the years and the way that too many times, again and again, we come together as a province to examine the death of a child. And everybody lines up to take the pledge that, you know, one child is too many and never again. But the systemic, the structural aspect of things keeps moving in the opposite direction from those commitments. And, Mr. Speaker, I'm worried that instead of the concrete action and the commitments to co-operation and the spirit of co-operation that has been demonstrated on all these other aspects of the history that I've talked about, that that is being taken away from in this particular piece of legislation. So that gives me cause for concern, Mr. Speaker.

I know that other of my colleagues have, I'm sure, much better informed and wiser remarks than I to add to this debate, so in aid of that I would move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 33, *The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 2016*.

The Speaker: — Opposition House Leader has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 33, *The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 2016*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 35

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 35 — *The Small Claims Act, 2016/Loi de 2016 sur les petites créances*** 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 the discussion today about Bill No. 35, *The Small Claims Act, 2016*. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to just put on the record here, I'm going to look at the minister's second reading comments to tell you a little bit about this bill. This bill does a few things here, Mr. Speaker. "The first recommendation that was implemented as a result of a review, occurred this past February when regulatory amendments increased the small claims monetary limit from . . . [20,000] to \$30,000," Mr. Speaker.

[16:30]

And I just . . . I will tell you a little bit about what the bill is about, but I know that when this bill gets to committee, Mr. Speaker, that our critic will have much to say and many questions to ask, to dig a little bit deeper, Mr. Speaker.

The minister points out that:

This bill will implement additional legislative changes that were identified during the consultation and that review process . . . the bill will expand the court's authority to award costs to be paid from one party to another. [And the minister points out] In particular, the changes will grant the court authority to award costs where a party fails to attend or purposely delays any step in the proceedings.

Third thing this bill does, Mr. Speaker:

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

And again, these are things in committee that the critic will have an opportunity to delve a little bit more deeply into, to understand where these exactly . . . unintended consequences, all those kinds of things, Mr. Speaker.

The minister points out that:

This bill will also require all defendants to file a reply to a claim. Under the current rules, a defendant is not required to file a defence unless they are ordered to do so by the court. In practice this means that a claimant may receive no notice of a defendant's defence until the day of the trial [Mr. Speaker].

You can see how that could make things difficult for a claimant. So:

Requiring all defendants to file a copy of a reply to the claim will ensure that claimants have early notice of the defence that will be made. [And he points out that] This change is intended to encourage parties to actively engage in an early stage in the proceedings and promote a timely resolution . . . [Mr. Speaker].

This bill, the minister also points out:

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

And the minister also points out, aside from those other changes, this bill also grants:

. . . the court authority to cite individuals for contempt in appropriate circumstances. It will provide judges express authority to question parties in order to obtain all necessary facts and details of a case, and it will implement additional housekeeping and administrative changes to modernize the Act.

Mr. Speaker, I know . . . And the minister talks about this in his second reading speech. He talks about the justice innovation agenda in 2014 that the Ministry of Justice developed ". . . with a vision to create understandable, timely, and affordable justice for Saskatchewan citizens. [He points out that] as part of that agenda, the ministry is reviewing the way justice services are delivered and what improvements can be made to ensure Saskatchewan citizens have access to these important services."

Mr. Speaker, that justice innovation agenda that he speaks of, and in light of decisions that have fallen under his purview, gives me pause for consideration. We can think about *The Coroners Act*, Mr. Speaker, that just was taken off the table here yesterday — rightfully so, Mr. Speaker. This was a bill that was brought forward by the Minister of Justice without proper consultation. And had he only spoken to families who had lost a loved one in custody, in a death in custody, he would have known that there were some challenges with this bill, *The Coroners Act*, which would have seen in-custody deaths no longer automatically receive a coroner's review, Mr. Speaker.

Anyway, I think about his justice innovation, and I think about

the closure of the Buffalo Narrows minimum security facility, Mr. Speaker, in this last budget, and how that impacts justice. Mr. Speaker, the privatizing of 14 armed deputy sheriffs, Mr. Speaker, who although the minister had gotten up in the House and said they weren't armed, that wasn't the case at all. So laying off trained people who carry firearms, Mr. Speaker, may be problematic. So when the minister talks about his justice innovation agenda, as I said, it gives me pause for concern.

I just want to point out an interesting little tidbit here, Mr. Speaker. The small claims court actually was the first in North America. Actually, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan small claims court was the first small claims court in North America, brought in in the 1940s by a CCF [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation] government.

There's been many things, actually, that Saskatchewan has been a first in, particularly in that administration. Yesterday I spoke about air ambulance, Saskatchewan Air Ambulance, celebrating 70 years, Mr. Speaker. That was the first service of its kind, again in North America. That CCF government also introduced the first arts board in North America, Mr. Speaker. There are many interesting firsts and things that we still cherish here today in Saskatchewan. And other jurisdictions have followed suit, Mr. Speaker. But just an interesting little tidbit that the small claims court here that we have in Saskatchewan, was the first of its kind in North America in the 1940s.

But with respect to Bill No. 35, *The Small Claims Act*, I've mentioned a little bit about what's in the Act, Mr. Speaker. But again, our critic responsible for this bill, when it gets to committee, will have many questions to follow up around why these changes were made, and who was consulted, and many questions, Mr. Speaker.

But with that, I would like to move to adjourn debate.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 36

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 36 — *The Small Claims Consequential Amendments Act, 2016*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure again to enter the discussion about Bill No. 36, *The Small Claims Consequential Amendments Act, 2016*, Mr. Speaker. This is a companion bill to Bill No. 35, the bill to which I just spoke, Mr. Speaker, and you can just look at the minister's second reading comments. It's a brief bill:

The purpose of this bill is to make consequential

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

So the Minister of Justice pointed out, Mr. Speaker.

So again this will accompany Bill 35. Bill No. 36, the companion Act, will accompany Bill 35 in committee, and any necessary questions will be asked at that time. But with that I would like to move to adjourn debate.

The Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Riversdale has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 36, *The Small Claims Consequential Amendments Act, 2016*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 4

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 4 — *The Queen's Bench Amendment Act, 2016/Loi modificative de 2016 sur la Cour du Banc de la Reine*** 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 and speak to Bill 4 as critic for this bill. I've had the opportunity to review the comments from my colleagues as well as the minister's remarks. And I actually consulted with quite a few lawyers with respect to the changes on this because after perusing through the changes, Mr. Speaker, I had some pretty significant concerns with respect to some of the changes and I wanted to see if they mirrored some of the concerns that I thought other lawyers would also have concerns about.

And I was proven right in terms of some of those concerns, so I want to make that sure I get some of them on the record. I know I'll have the opportunity to speak about this bill at committee with the minister, and I do hope that we'll have the opportunity to create some changes or at least implement some sort of changes or amendments on this bill that can help to alleviate some of the real substantive concerns that I have with Bill 4 and how it might serve to actually delay the court process and impede access to justice, Mr. Speaker. The bill really changes two main things, and I'm going to speak about the first one and then I'll speak about the second one, Mr. Speaker.

So the first one, the bill is expanding enforcement of awards, orders for costs, or monetary penalties issued via trade agreements. It essentially expands what the bill already provides for, to include, I believe, the northwest partnership agreement, Mr. Speaker, as the minister indicated in his remarks. However, from what I understand, the definition of trade agreements is going to be actually defined in the regulations. Therefore, we don't actually know yet what trade

agreements this is going to be pertinent to, Mr. Speaker.

As I've said time and time again, it's a little bit hard for us to critique a bill when we don't have a full understanding of what the scope of it is going to be because a lot of it's laid out in the regulations. So that would be one of my first main concerns is that we don't actually know how large the scope is actually being increased, Mr. Speaker. So as I said, it's quite unclear.

In a word, under one of these trade agreements through this provision will then be able to be filed in the court and then enforced as if it was a regular Queen's Bench judgment, Mr. Speaker, which allows for an enforcement mechanism that's a bit more stringent, a bit tougher than just a judgment that isn't actually recognized through Queen's Bench, Mr. Speaker.

It also creates an expansion, not just against the definition of trade agreement, but also the definition of who these judgments can be enforced against. It used to be just against the Crown, Mr. Speaker, but it's going to be changed to a definition of any person. I'm assuming that's going to mean potentially not just the Crown, but also Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker, also private businesses, Mr. Speaker. And I do hope members opposite are listening to this bill because there are actually a lot of concerns about this bill. And not only is it going to delay the court process, but it's also going to create . . . It's actually going to cost money when the court process is delayed, Mr. Speaker.

As I said, for this specific part we're not totally sure what trade agreements are going to fall under this, and we also have some concerns about how this new provision will affect private businesses as well as the public sector. So I'll be interested to know what sort of consultation the minister's done with respect to this part of the bill, whether or not he's spoken with different business groups, those who perhaps would be getting trade enforcement issues with respect to the trade agreements that Saskatchewan is privy to, Mr. Speaker.

The second provision is actually another one that's quite alarming to me, and that's the one that I had to . . . I consulted with several lawyers in the province, Mr. Speaker. It's some changes that have been made to the court-appointed counsel process, Mr. Speaker, and it's essentially taking it away from the way it's working right now, where a judge can appoint or has discretion to appoint counsel from the bench when an individual comes to them who's unrepresented, typically in criminal or child apprehension cases, and doesn't qualify for legal aid, typically because either they're working — they could be working 30 hours a week at Tim Hortons, Mr. Speaker — and not qualify for legal aid.

The provisions . . . The financial screening provisions are actually incredibly low for legal aid. Or alternatively, they could have been fired from legal aid for whatever reason — issues with, disagreements with their lawyers, for example. Typically, I've heard if you miss one meeting with your lawyer, your legal aid lawyer, you'll get fired from legal aid.

All I'm trying to say, Mr. Speaker, is that's a . . . It's a pretty large group of people who don't qualify for legal aid, and can't afford private counsel. Therefore, they try to get or they hopefully successfully get counsel through the court-appointed counsel process, as is their right according to our Charter, Mr.

Speaker.

[16:45]

So essentially what this will do is it will create an administrative process, Mr. Speaker. And then it has certain provisions in terms of how this process is going to work and what this means for the unrepresented litigant, Mr. Speaker. Now I have a lot of concerns with respect to this. I know little, if any, consultation has been done with respect to this provision. I know for certain that the minister hasn't consulted with the non-profit organizations in the province who work with unrepresented litigants, Mr. Speaker, because I was working for that non-profit, or one of the few non-profits that do that work for the last five years. And we sure as heck didn't get consulted with respect to this provision, Mr. Speaker. So it's a little alarming.

And what I've also heard is that lawyers who are doing this court-appointed counsel work — good, hard-working lawyers who are doing this court-appointed counsel work — were also not consulted with respect to this change, Mr. Speaker. And it's really going to create some very concerning issues.

First of all, I have a concern about removing discretion away from the judiciary. So, Mr. Speaker, the judiciary has the ability, like I said, the discretion to appoint from the bench. This is sort of removing that discretion away from them and moving it to a more administrative process, which is always very concerning when the judiciary has to be able to make rulings from the bench and make appointments as they feel necessary for the expediency and for the proper functioning of their court, Mr. Speaker.

The Queen's Bench Act changes will also create a requirement for a Charter notice. So the way the system works, for the most part, and there's some variance in the province . . . And what I will concede is that because, not only have I heard from other lawyers, but we used to do work in terms of providing unrepresented litigants with information about how they can apply for court-appointed counsel, that it is a confusing process, Mr. Speaker, and there's definitely some need for clarification, Mr. Speaker.

But the way it typically works now is there's a list that's run by court services of who in the community is willing to take on court-appointed counsel positions, and then individuals are incumbent on themselves to contact those lawyers. And if that lawyer is interested in taking on that individual's case, they will help that, typically they'll help that unrepresented litigant go through the court process in terms of filing the appropriate document or making the appropriate request to the judge to get that court-appointed counsel status.

Now the way that the provision works in this bill is that it's going to require the unrepresented litigant to do all of the work themselves. So the administrator will be managing the list. And after the self-represented litigant goes through the process and is successful in getting a court appointment, the administrator will then choose from the list the lawyer that will represent that individual. This is essentially removing the litigant's right to be able to choose who their counsel is, which is flying in the face of over 30 years of precedents of how this has been working in

Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, with no consultation to those who are on the court-appointed list currently.

And depending on what area of the province you're practising in, Mr. Speaker, the court-appointed lists vary in terms of how many lawyers are practising on them or how many lawyers are on the list. I know from when I used to practise that, for example, the court-appointed counsel list for child apprehension cases in Regina is extremely, extremely thin. So there's a bit of a recruitment problem in terms of getting lawyers who are willing to do this work. It's very important work, Mr. Speaker. However it's usually a lot of work for not as much pay as you could get through private clients, Mr. Speaker.

So I'm not sure. And I'm quite concerned as to this process, if it's going to discourage lawyers from joining the court-appointed counsel list when we already have I think, in some areas of the province, an issue with respect to making sure that we have a healthy roster of lawyers who are willing to take on this really, really important work, Mr. Speaker.

Another thing that I found extremely alarming, Mr. Speaker — and this is how I know that there wasn't any consultation with any, either organizations that work with unrepresented litigants or unrepresented litigants themselves — is that this Act will require if an individual wants to apply for court-appointed counsel, not just to fill out a form and file it with this administrator, but there's also several other people that the unrepresented litigant is supposed to have to go through the process of serving, themselves.

And I know from the work I used to do . . . I used to help unrepresented litigants, for example, file statements of claim and go through the service process for that, or file a judicial review application with Federal Court and go through the service process with respect to that. It's a fairly onerous process, especially if you're an unrepresented litigant who's never gone through the court process before, who has no idea what's going on, is confused, and who is scared. Sometimes there is literacy issues. Sometimes there's access to computers, for example. Sometimes there is many other crises that this individual is facing as well.

For example, if you think about child apprehension cases, for example. We often think about the criminal law clients, who are very important, but there's also child apprehension cases that get court-appointed counsel as well. They're going through a crisis in their family. Their children have been taken away. They're dealing with Ministry of Social Services. They're dealing with child and family services. They're trying to go through all the steps that are being required through their section 9 agreement, Mr. Speaker, and now they're also required to go through this process.

If they're, for example, working at Tim Hortons part-time, don't qualify for legal aid, still have to maintain their employment so they can pay their rent, but then also have to go through the process of serving all these people before even being approved for a court-appointed counsel, it's crazy to me that the minister would think that this is an appropriate process for an unrepresented litigant to have to go through.

This is an access to legal services issue, Mr. Speaker. This is an

access to justice issue, Mr. Speaker. The minister has an entire branch devoted to innovation in the justice system whose sole mandate is to improve access to legal services and access to justice in Saskatchewan. This provision is going to not only prevent individuals, make it more difficult for individuals to access legal services; it's also going to delay the court process. Anyone who's been in a courtroom in the last 10 years knows that unrepresented litigants delay a court process simply because they don't know how the system works.

So I don't understand how this provision is supposed to improve access to legal services. I fear that it's going to do the opposite, Mr. Speaker. So I hope at committee, Mr. Speaker, there'll be the opportunity to propose some alternatives. Like I said, I think there's a need for clarification, but we shouldn't be doing it in a way that's going to make it more difficult for unrepresented litigants.

There's also some concerns as to how the payment process is going to work for court-appointed counsel. As I said, it's important for us to be able to recruit lawyers to do court-appointed counsel work. It's really important work, Mr. Speaker, and we need to ensure that payment is adequate and in such a way that encourages lawyers to do this type of work.

I'm also concerned about how this is going to apply to certain individuals, what the financial screening is going to be, and how that's going to look in terms of individuals who qualify for court-appointed counsel, as well as the legal aid list, Mr. Speaker. These are very, very concerning things.

I have several questions for the minister, Mr. Speaker, but I'm hoping that at committee I'll have the opportunity to clarify some of these issues and hopefully work with him to change this process to hopefully make it a little bit more accessible. If I were to paraphrase my two main issues with respect to this specific area, it's very important that the application process for court-appointed counsel is accessible and easy for unrepresented litigants to be able to follow. And I have strong concerns about removing the ability for an individual to choose their counsel.

So in light of time, Mr. Speaker, and knowing that I'll be able to speak to this at committee as well, I am prepared to conclude my remarks and allow this bill to be moved to committee.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the member that Bill No. 4, *The Queen's Bench 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 4 be designated to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

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

I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that this House be now adjourned.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:56.]

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