



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

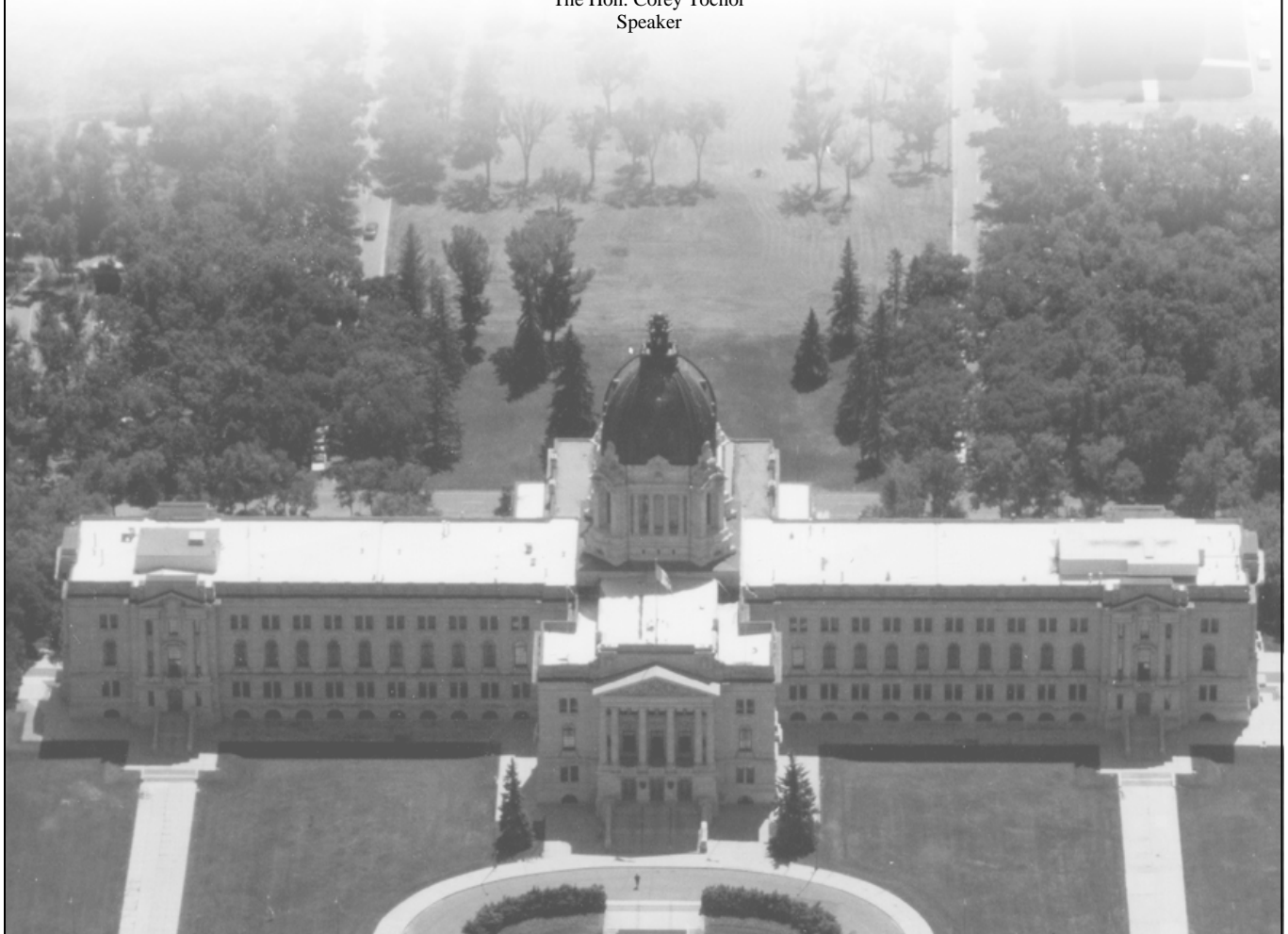
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Corey Tochor
Speaker



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

Speaker — Hon. Corey Tochor

Premier — Hon. Brad Wall

Leader of the Opposition — Trent Wotherspoon

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

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Wilson, Hon. Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (SP)

Wotherspoon, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)

Wyant, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)

Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

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

Clerks-at-the-Table

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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 Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. A pleasure to introduce a fine-looking group in the eastern gallery of the legislature here today that come to us from the Regina Open Door Society immediately, and Deana Pageot's class. Deana, of course, you know, a faithful subscriber to the affairs of the legislature, no stranger. But these individuals come to that class from Syria, China, Iran, Afghanistan, Burundi, and Somalia.

And indeed, Mr. Speaker, some of these individuals that are here today were with us not days ago when the Syrian delegation was welcomed and shown just how much we appreciate them coming to Saskatchewan to help us to realize the promise of the motto of the province of Saskatchewan, which is of course "from many peoples, strength." And these are people that are bringing strength to us here in Saskatchewan and we're grateful for it. And we had a great visit earlier and I hope to cross paths with them many times down the trail. So, Mr. Speaker, if you could join me in welcoming these very important individuals to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with my friend the Opposition House Leader in welcoming the group of newcomers from the Regina Open Door Society, a great partner of the Ministry of the Economy, who we very much appreciate working with and welcome very sincerely, as Minister of Immigration, the newcomers.

We have truly seen the face of this province change over the course of the last decade or so, a rate of immigration from outside of Canada the likes of which we haven't seen since the 1920s and '30s in this province. And it's something that we think is a very positive thing, bringing great strength to our province both economically, culturally as well. So I just want to join with the members opposite in welcoming this group of newcomers to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would ask leave for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the minister.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to

introduce in your gallery, Dr. Peter Stoicheff, president and vice-chancellor of the University of Saskatchewan. With him are — if you could each give a wave — Michael Atkinson, interim provost and vice-president, academic; Greg Fowler, vice-president, finance and resources; Debra Pozega Osburn, vice-president, university relations; and Jamie Miley, senior strategist, government and public relations.

I recall, Mr. Speaker, when I worked on *The Sheaf* student paper back in the early '90s, fellow writers coming in after class, very engagedly talking about the new American lit prof, Stoicheff the William Faulkner expert. He had a bit of a cachet. He was regarded as rather cool. Dr. Stoicheff, of course, would go on to become dean of arts and science, and last year, president of the University of Saskatchewan.

The University of Saskatchewan is a provincial treasure, Mr. Speaker, the people's university, and the beating heart, one of two, when it comes to research and innovation in this province. We are pleased to have Dr. Stoicheff and his team here today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with the member opposite in also welcoming these fine individuals from the University of Saskatchewan to their Legislative Assembly. It's my great honour to have three degrees from the University of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, so I go way back at the institution. And I too remember the member opposite's writing at *The Sheaf* back in the early '90s, Mr. Speaker.

Above all, I think we've seen the leadership from President Stoicheff that this province needs to be inspired by, particularly in relation to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the important work that Mr. Stoicheff is bringing to the university and the leadership that he's showing in that area. So for that I am very grateful, and on behalf of the official opposition would like to welcome President Stoicheff and all the officials to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to join members on both sides of the House in welcoming President Stoicheff to his Assembly, and the delegation from the university. I've come to consider the president a good friend, and so I'm glad to see him here today. I'd also like to welcome Greg Fowler, who I've come to know over the last little while. So welcome, Greg.

And I especially want to welcome my good friend Jamie Miley, who's here today, Mr. Speaker. We went to high school together, and I actually was his lawyer for a number of years. We won't tell any more stories about that on the floor of the House, but we've had a long relationship, Mr. Speaker. It's very, very good to see him here as well, with the rest of the delegation. So I too would like to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you two special guests in the east gallery, Diane Rogers and her partner. Seeing we're disclosing student activism activities, Diane and I go back to . . . She was the editor of *The Sheaf* and I was working in *The Carillon*. It wasn't in the '90s, and it wasn't in the '80s. It was a little earlier than that. But she went on to work at *The Western Producer* and other journalistic activities. She is active in Fairview and I want to thank her and her partner for being so strong in their quest for social justice in Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce through you today a group of 24 public service employees seated in the Speaker's gallery. The participants are employees from the following ministries: Agriculture, Environment, Health, Justice, the Public Service Commission, Social Services, as well as employees from the Provincial Auditor.

The program includes an in-depth history and tour of the Legislative Building. They are taking part in the parliamentary program for the public service. Today they will get briefings on the Legislative Library, the Legislative Assembly committees branch, Executive Council. Also an opportunity to sit in the public galleries and observe closely question period and other House business.

As well, they will be meeting with members of both sides of the House. I look forward to meeting with them later today. So, Mr. Speaker, through you, I would like to ask all my colleagues to thank these members for what they do in the public service on a daily basis and welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As Public Service Commission critic for the official opposition, I want to join with the minister in welcoming these very important individuals to their Legislative Assembly. It's often said that, you know, we've had talk about the people's university. Well we're certainly here today in the people's House, and all of us on this floor are entrusted with the work of the people. But the people that make that happen, Mr. Speaker, are of course our public service. And the work that they do is critical to how well things go or not in this province. And we're thankful for their efforts each and every day.

I look forward to meeting with them a little bit later, Mr. Speaker, and, you know, perhaps they can better equip me with an understanding of things like what transformational change really means, how the finances of the province really are going. I look forward to any advice they might be able to share with me in those regards, Mr. Speaker. And of course it's always great to have the encouragement from members opposite when we're making an introduction such as this.

But again, Mr. Speaker, if all members could join me in

welcoming these very important individuals to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I would like to take this opportunity to introduce some guests in our Assembly. Joining us today in the Speaker's gallery are guests from the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba. They are Clerk Patricia Chaychuk and Deputy Clerk Rick Yarish. Please join me in welcoming them to our Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Estevan.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by members from the city of Estevan, town of Carlyle, Midale, city of Weyburn, Bienfait, Torquay, Lampman, and Frobisher. I do so present.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise in this House again today to present a petition to reverse the cuts to the Lighthouse program, Mr. Speaker. The petitioners point out that in April 2014, the minister of Social Services said that the Lighthouse in Saskatoon would “. . . take pressure off existing detox facilities, hospitals, and police cells while keeping people safe, especially in our brutally cold winters.” The petitioners also point out, Mr. Speaker, that on that very same day, 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 point out that since that time, Mr. Speaker, this government has repeatedly indicated that the Lighthouse stabilization unit keeps individuals out of hospital emergency rooms and jail cells. And we need only look to the Saskatoon Health Region right now, Mr. Speaker, where they've experienced record over capacity in their hospitals as of late. And certainly the Lighthouse isn't the whole part of the problem, Mr. Speaker, but making these cuts certainly does not help. 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 2016, and

take immediate steps to ensure that homeless people in Saskatchewan have emergency shelter, clothing, and food available to them before more lives are lost.

Mr. Speaker, this petition today is signed by citizens of Saskatoon and North Battleford. 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 in our ecosystem. They take the form of marshes, bogs, fens, swamps, and open water. Wetlands are home to wildlife, including waterfowl. They clean the water running off of agricultural fields. They protect us from flooding and drought, and they are a playground where families can explore and play and go hunting.

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

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

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

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

Create a sound and transparent mitigation process that adequately addresses sustainable development. This 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 signing this petition today are from the city of Regina. I so submit.

[13:45]

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of Wakamow Valley Authority. We know that as a result of the passage of *The Wakamow Valley Authority Amendment Act, 2016* on June 30th, the Wakamow Valley Authority lost its statutory funding of \$127,000 from the Saskatchewan government in addition to its \$30,000 in supplemental funding. This loss of annual funding negatively

affected the ability of Wakamow to maintain its lands and repair its facilities and provide services to Moose Jaw and surrounding areas. So on June 21st, 2016, the provincial government voted in favour of this bill, resulting in the cuts to Wakamow and subsequent job losses. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read the prayer:

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

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

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

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

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to present a petition regarding child care centres in Saskatchewan. Those who signed this petition wish to draw our attention to the following: many of our licensed non-profit child care centres pay commercial property taxes, and this is not done in Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, BC [British Columbia], and New Brunswick.

Child care is essential to our economy, yet most centres struggle to balance their budget. This issue threatens both the number of child care spaces and the quality of care. Mr. Speaker, quality child care has an enormous positive impact on a child's future incomes and yields high rates of economic return. This is an issue that is important to women and families across our province. Mr. Speaker, I'll 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, the citizens signing this petition today reside in Lanigan, Ponteix, and Swift Current. 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 in the recent election campaign, the Sask Party promised that they would not privatize SaskTel. And now, Mr. Speaker, the petitioners point out that instead of looking at their own waste and scandal, the Sask Party is talking about breaking that promise and looking to sell off SaskTel to make a quick dollar. And they point out that

once SaskTel is gone, there's no getting it back and no telling what else the Sask Party will sell. Mr. Speaker, in the petition:

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

Mr. Speaker, this particular set of petitions is signed by individuals from Moose Jaw, Regina, Wadena, and Tisdale. I so present.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise yet 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.

And those individuals signing the pages of the petition today are from Saskatoon, White City, Canwood, and Moose Jaw. Mr. Speaker, I do so submit.

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 worked 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 the 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 of northern

Saskatchewan. I so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Remembering Janet Wright

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today in this Chamber to recognize the passing of Janet Wright. Janet and her sister, Susan, were co-founders of Saskatoon's Persephone Theatre in 1974. Janet was born in England. Her family relocated to Canada and eventually settled in Saskatoon.

"While Janet eventually moved away from Saskatoon to pursue other acting roles, she never forgot her theatre roots," said Del Surjik, Persephone Theatre's current artistic director. In 2014 she returned to direct its season opener, *Hedda Gabler*.

Janet Wright endured two horrific personal tragedies that gave her strong resolve through her career. Her sister, along with her parents, Jack and Ruth, died in a house fire in 1991 in Stratford, Ontario. And then 13 years later in 2004, Janet's daughter, Rachel Davis, 23 at the time, was tragically killed in Vancouver's Gastown area.

Del Surjik is quoted as saying, and I quote:

I know the nation is going to have a lot of reasons to see this as a loss but, you know, it's especially acute for the Persephone family. If not for her contribution and her imagination and her desire to have a professional theatre in Saskatoon, we would not be here.

Mr. Speaker, *A Christmas Carol*, Persephone's Christmas play, will be dedicated to Janet Wright. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in recognizing the passing of Janet Wright and thank her for her special gift in helping us appreciate our world, our lives, a little more. Thank you.

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

Bullying Awareness Week

Ms. Campeau: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. November 13th to 19th, 2016 has been proclaimed Bullying Awareness Week in Saskatchewan. Bullying Awareness Week has been recognized annually across Canada since 2003 in order to promote awareness and encourage youth to speak out against bullying. This year's theme is Stand Up! (to bullying).

Mr. Speaker, there is no place for bullying in our schools or our communities, and that is why our government is committed to ensuring that schools are safe and inclusive environments where everyone should feel included, protected, and respected. In 2013 we released *Saskatchewan's Action Plan to Address Bullying and Cyberbullying* after consulting with more than 1,000 students, teachers, parents, and community members. The action plan helped us put in place an anonymous, smartphone-friendly online reporting tool teaching safe and appropriate online behaviour; a policy for GSAs [gay-straight

alliance]; and a partnership with SaskTel to offer grants for youth-led initiatives to address bullying or cyberbullying.

Our message is that you are not alone. Talk to a trusted adult; report anonymously online at iamstronger.ca, or call the Kids Help Phone. Mr. Speaker, together we can stand up to bullying and let everyone know that bullying is not okay, and for anyone who needs it, help is available. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

La Ronge Resident Named Indigenous Female Entrepreneur of the Year

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, today I would like to congratulate an outstanding constituent of mine, Anne Calladine. This year Anne beat out nine other finalists from across Canada and was selected as the National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association inaugural Indigenous Female Entrepreneur of the Year. She accepted the award in Halifax, Nova Scotia on June 22, 2016.

Anne, along with her husband, Jason, has owned and operated La Ronge-based company Northwinds Bus Line since 2008. Since then they have doubled the staff and equipment and recently built a new building. Half of the employees are of Aboriginal ancestry.

Anne is motivated by her two daughters, husband, and extended family. Growing up, her mother and grandparents' proud history in the North inspired her to be all she could be. Prior to purchasing Northwinds, Anne was a graduate of NORTEP and was a bookkeeper and assistant manager in the company. Anne says that now, of all the hats that she wears in her operation, bus driver is her favourite. She states, "I love to drive the bus and interact with the school students. They are such great kids and never fail to make me smile, even when it's minus 40 outside."

Anne and her husband are also marathon runners, and their vision for the future includes developing a running trail in the North for active runners.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating Anne Calladine for being named Indigenous Female Entrepreneur of the Year, and to join me in acknowledging her remarkable accomplishments as an entrepreneur and community leader in the North. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Habitat for Humanity Key Ceremony in Moose Jaw

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday morning I attended a Habitat for Humanity home dedication in Moose Jaw where Mandy, her son, and her nephew became first-time homeowners. This is the most inspiring part of the Habitat experience. When you see a smiling family receive the keys to their new home, it's an unforgettable moment.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that home ownership opportunities do not just happen. Many hands are involved in each Habitat build, and many hours of hard work and planning. Volunteers, community partners are at the heart of Habitat's work, and I'm

proud that our government has provided significant financial support for Habitat's goals since 2009.

We believe that home ownership opportunities can exist for hard-working families striving to reach their goal. Mr. Speaker, this is why we provided \$65,000 to the Habitat for the construction of this home. In fact since 2009 we have dedicated close to \$9 million in funding to Habitat affiliates and chapters across the province. Of those dollars, we've provided \$330,000 to build six Habitat homes for low- to moderate-income Moose Jaw families working towards their dream of home ownership. Most importantly, Mr. Speaker, it's about helping families to stay rooted in their communities and have a safe haven to come home and to enjoy.

I ask all members to join me in thanking the Habitat for Humanity for their leadership and to congratulate Mandy and her boys for their new home. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Marjorie Hartman Celebrates 102nd Birthday

Ms. Lambert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today a constituent in Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood is celebrating her 102nd birthday. Mr. Speaker, Marjorie Hartman, or Marge as her friends and family call her, was born on this day in 1914 on a family homestead near Revenue, Saskatchewan. Her parents, Kasper and Anna Mary Laternus, were immigrants originally from Germany. German was the first language Marjorie learned to speak at home, and she remains fluently bilingual.

Marjorie's parents were drawn to Saskatchewan by the promise of a free quarter section of land. Their free quarter remains in the family today, being farmed by a fourth-generation family member. Growing up, Marjorie lived with her parents, four siblings, and a grandmother in a two-bedroom house with no running water or electricity.

Mr. Speaker, Marjorie married Valentine Hartman on November 5th, 1935. They were happily married for 67 years until Val passed away in 2005. Marjorie enjoys the love of four children, four grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, Marjorie has lived all of her 102 years in our province and, while she has had many travels, she maintains that Saskatchewan is the best place in the world to live. I couldn't agree more.

I ask all members to join me in wishing Marjorie Hartman a happy 102nd birthday and many more to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ninth Annual Louis Riel Vigil

Mr. Parent: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand in this Assembly today to acknowledge a sombre anniversary. It was this day in 1885 that Louis Riel was hanged for treason. People across our country acknowledge the historical importance of

Louis Riel and the Métis people in our nation's history.

Mr. Speaker, this evening, my colleague from Moose Jaw Wakamow will be joining community members for the Regina Riel Métis Council's ninth annual Louis Riel vigil, held on the day of his execution each year. This event is meant to honour the life, legacy, and the significant contributions that he made to the Métis community. I am pleased that our government has provided funding to the main sponsor of the event, Gabriel Housing Inc. Mr. Speaker, this event is part of remembering that story and I would ask all members to join in acknowledging the important knowledge of our history.

[14:00]

Mr. Speaker, I would like to close by reading some of Louis Riel's words into the record:

We must cherish our inheritance. We must preserve our nationality for the youth of our future. The story should be written down to pass on.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Moosomin.

Manufacturing Sector Growing in Saskatchewan

Mr. Bonk: — Mr. Speaker, today Statistics Canada released more encouraging numbers about our increasingly diversified economy. Over the past year, Saskatchewan manufacturing sales have increased by 8.2 per cent to an impressive \$1.24 billion in September alone. That increase is the largest in the nation year over year.

Sectors that saw significant growth in the past year include food manufacturing, up 34.3 per cent; machinery manufacturing, up 16.8 per cent; and wood products, up 31 per cent. Over the past decade, manufacturing sales from our province have increased an incredible 46 per cent. Manufacturing now represents 7 per cent of our province's GDP [gross domestic product], employing over 26,000 Saskatchewan people.

Our talents for productivity and innovation, combined with our low-cost, effective, export-focused operating environment, have made the Saskatchewan brand well known around the world. The manufacturing sector, thanks in part to our government's efforts to grow new export markets and support trade agreements, has grown.

Our government supports trade agreements such as CETA [Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement] and TPP [Trans-Pacific Partnership] in order to further grow our export markets and develop export markets for our manufacturers. These are agreements that the NDP [New Democratic Party] does not support, putting our economy at risk.

When will the NDP stand up for our manufacturing sector and support those agreements that will grow our export markets? When will the NDP support the nearly 20 per cent of all jobs in this province that rely on international exports? Only time will tell, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Auditor's Report and Details of Land Transactions

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, each day with the GTH [Global Transportation Hub] scandal of that government they keep having their minister stand up, not answer — in place of the Premier who also won't answer — and say they have nothing to hide. But they keep doing nothing but hide, Mr. Speaker. They won't answer questions in this place. They won't answer questions from journalists or the nuns. And they've now even been chastised by the Privacy Commissioner for their refusal to release documents under freedom of information law.

Mr. Speaker, if they have nothing to hide, why are they hiding? Let's get back to an easy, straightforward question about the concealed identity: when did the Deputy Premier learn that the numbered company that first owned the land when the ministers brought this first to cabinet was owned by the Sask Party-supporting Alberta land baron who also rents land to the minister for the GTH, who of course was also plagued by scandal? When did he first learn that information?

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Day after day they come in. They throw mud. They smear hon. members. They impugn reputations of both members of this Assembly, hon. members of this Assembly, and people in the private sector, Mr. Speaker, every single day.

These questions were answered. These questions were addressed by none less than the Provincial Auditor, who had full access to all of the documents that she wished access to, including cabinet documents, had access to all of the individuals involved in the transaction being referenced by the Leader of the Opposition. She answered all of these questions, Mr. Speaker, again as recently as last week in front of the Public Accounts Committee, directly addressing these questions that are being put on the floor of the Assembly now. Her conclusion after all of that work, Mr. Speaker, a very thorough report — no wrongdoing, no fraud, no conflict of interest.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, that question was to the Deputy Premier. There was no answer in that question. The question was straightforward; it merits a very straightforward answer. It's that kind of arrogance, Mr. Speaker, that Saskatchewan people are getting sick of when hard-earned dollars of theirs, millions of dollars have been wasted, and it sort of speaks to the mismanagement we see under this government, Mr. Speaker.

I'll try again. The deal, of course, went to cabinet. It was discussed. The Minister of Justice told his colleagues that he had concern. One of the reasons was that they didn't know who owned the land, that there was a concealed identity. Now we know that it was the Sask Party-supporting land baron from Alberta who also rents land from the former minister for the

GTH, who of course was plagued by scandals.

My question to the Deputy Premier is a straightforward one. When did he find out the truth about who owned this land?

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Fear and smear, throwing of mud, impugning reputations of hon. members in this Assembly, of private citizens indiscriminately, of which they have a record, Mr. Speaker. This is a party that as recently as a few months ago was found in contempt of parliament, of this Assembly, was found in contempt. This was one of the first occasions of this ever happening in this Assembly in over 100 years. That member opposite, the Leader of the Opposition, himself personally was on the verge of being found in contempt of the legislature as well only a couple of years ago.

What we're seeing, Mr. Speaker, is a pattern of behaviour from the members opposite indiscriminately impugning members of this Assembly, members of the public, hiding behind the privilege of this Chamber, Mr. Speaker. The fact is the Provincial Auditor looked into every single one of these questions as recently as one week ago, addressing these questions directly put from the members opposite. Her conclusion, Mr. Speaker? No wrongdoing, no fraud, no conflict of interest.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, that utter nonsense doesn't even merit a response from the floor of this Assembly. But it's past time that the Deputy Premier or the Premier stand and answer to Saskatchewan people. They expect and they deserve nothing less.

You know, this is a government that says time and time again they have nothing to hide in this deal that wasted millions of dollars, but they refuse to answer questions here. They refuse to do it with the media. They refuse to do it with their constituents. They refuse to have key witnesses come before Public Accounts.

Mr. Speaker, the auditor did her job. It's past time that members of this government, members in this Assembly, do ours, Mr. Speaker, and serve Saskatchewan people, and serve Saskatchewan people and provide the kind of transparency and openness that we used to hear about. When will they come clean? And to the very straightforward question to the Deputy Premier, when did he learn the real identity of the concealed identity?

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Mr. Speaker, the government was so desperate to hide things that we called in the Provincial Auditor for a full investigation of everything she possibly wanted access to. That's her job, Mr. Speaker. We asked, we asked the Provincial Auditor to conduct this investigation on behalf of this Assembly. A committee of the Assembly, chaired by the members opposite, asked the independent officer within the

context of her, within the context of her role as Provincial Auditor to look into all of these matters. That's her job, Mr. Speaker. She did a very, very thorough job by her own, by her own testimony one week ago at the Public Accounts Committee.

Her conclusion, Mr. Speaker, at the end of that very thorough investigation with access to all of the individuals and documents to which she requested access, her conclusion? No wrongdoing, no fraud, and no conflict of interest.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, the now Minister of Government Relations is the only one whose name appears at the beginning of this scandal and who still sits in cabinet. The people of Humboldt-Watrous deserve to hear their representative clear the air. So will the current Minister of Government Relations and the member for Humboldt-Watrous please, please explain to this House, and more importantly to her constituents, when she was the Minister of CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan], why did she ignore the recommendations to have Highways buy the land, and instead she offered up valuable taxpayers' dollars and Crown dollars for this scandal?

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — This appears to be their new modus operandi, Mr. Speaker, impugning reputations of hon. members of this Assembly who have served the people of this province with significant distinction over decades. This is what they're doing, Mr. Speaker: they're throwing mud. They're throwing mud because they're desperate.

The fact of the matter is the Provincial Auditor looked into all of these matters. The Provincial Auditor had access to every document to which she requested access. She had access to all of the individuals to whom she asked for access. The government provided full co-operation in all of these matters.

She was asked to do this on behalf of all members of this Assembly through the Public Accounts Committee. She did that work, a very thorough job. Her conclusion at the end of that work, Mr. Speaker, was that there was no wrongdoing, there was no fraud, and there was no conflict of interest.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — What a weak display, Mr. Speaker, of trying to get to the bottom of these particular important questions. Mr. Speaker, the NDP are asking to lighten up this whole scandal behind the GTH. We're not trying to throw mud. We're trying to find out the truth behind the GTH scandal here.

So why won't that member or any members of the Sask Party government answer these questions? So I'm going to ask, the now Minister of Government Relations certainly gave money from CIC, and she refused to be open and transparent. The former minister endorsed this land scandal even before it made to the cabinet. So if she won't answer that question, will the current Minister of CIC answer the question? Has he reviewed

his ministry's involvement in the scandal? Has he spoken with officials about what the recommendations were to the former minister? And, Mr. Speaker, will he finally, or will someone over there finally enlighten this House?

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite says, who would get to the bottom of the matter? What's the truth of the matter? What's the truth of the matter?

Do you know who got to the bottom of the matter and exposed the truth of the matter? The Provincial Auditor, Mr. Speaker. The Provincial Auditor, an independent officer of this Assembly, and her team of experts went through all of the documents pertinent to the transaction, went through and interviewed and had access to all of the individuals who were involved in the transaction, Mr. Speaker. She got to the bottom of the matter. She revealed the truth of the matter. Just because the members opposite don't like what that truth is, because it doesn't fit their narrative, doesn't make it any less the truth, Mr. Speaker.

And what was her conclusion after all of that work? It was that there was no wrongdoing, there was no fraud, and there was no conflict of interest.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, there may be only one minister over there who is assigned to stand up and not answer our questions, but let's be clear. The entire Sask Party cabinet discussed this scandal, maybe even voted on it. They all know something about it. I suspect some of them are even getting tired of hearing the same non-answers over and over again. Maybe like me, they're even hearing from the people they were elected to represent, and those folks want to hear a real answer.

So I'd like to give the current Minister of Central Services the opportunity to clear the air. Will she tell us what she thought of the deal, and why it was dismissed the first time in cabinet but approved the second? Actually, Mr. Speaker, is there anything at all that she would like to tell her constituents about her thoughts on this scandal?

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Invective, insinuation, smearing of members — not backed by fact, Mr. Speaker, because the Provincial Auditor provided the facts. Because the Provincial Auditor got to the bottom of the matter. Because the Provincial Auditor revealed the truth of the matter, Mr. Speaker.

Just because they don't like what that truth is, just because that truth doesn't fit their narrative, what we see is the smearing, the smearing of members, the smearing of private citizens, invective, insinuation. The fact of the matter is this, Mr. Speaker. Again, the Provincial Auditor testified to this just last week and confirmed the findings of her report — the conclusion that there was no wrongdoing, that there was no fraud, and there

was no conflict of interest.

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

State of Provincial Finances

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government loves taking credit for everything, but it seems like none of them want to accept accountability. The Sask Party locked up and hid their budget before the election, and when they did release it, it was worse than the Sask Party ever said it was. Mr. Speaker, this summer they went back to the secrecy and refused to release the quarterly update. And now they're playing politics with leaks outside of this House and trying to soften the ground for more cuts.

[14:15]

Mr. Speaker, they are the ones who blew the rainy day fund, blew through the surplus, and refused to diversify the economy. And now it's the people of Saskatchewan who are paying the price with job losses, broken promises, and deep, deep cuts. Could the Minister of Finance please drop the excuses and the revisionist history? Could he acknowledge that the Sask Party has been the government for close to a decade, accept responsibility for their actions, and apologize to the people of Saskatchewan for their total mismanagement of Saskatchewan's finances?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've been waiting for a question with respect to the budget. Here we're in the middle of the fourth week of the session, and finally the Finance critic decides she wants to ask a question about the financial situation of the province, Mr. Speaker.

What I have indicated is that perhaps the members of the opposition haven't been aware of the downturn in the commodity sector over the last couple of years, Mr. Speaker. That continues to — well they're going to yell away from their seats, Mr. Speaker — that continues to plague our economy and certain sectors of our economy, Mr. Speaker. Therefore that has a lag effect. That has an effect with respect to personal income tax revenue, corporate income tax revenue, provincial sales tax revenue, and fuel tax revenue, Mr. Speaker. Those are revenue measures that impact the province's finances.

Now what I said on June 1st, that we were forecasting a \$434 million deficit, Mr. Speaker, as we get new information in with respect to those sources of revenue, notwithstanding a further drop in the non-renewable resource sector, Mr. Speaker, we continue to fund the priority areas of government. We continue to fund health care, education, social services, highways and infrastructure, our justice system, Mr. Speaker. We continue to fund those because they're the priorities of the people of this province.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, where the lag is, is between their

promises and the reality of this province. Mr. Speaker, this minister needs to stop with the shell games and the wordplay. They took credit when commodity prices were high. Now that they're low, they have to accept the responsibility. Mr. Speaker, that's why we created the rainy day fund. It was meant for times like this. They campaigned and told the people of Saskatchewan that everything was fine when they knew it wasn't. The Sask Party knew all along that things were bad, and it's their fault.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan deserve a government that's open and transparent. Mr. Speaker, instead of leaking out selected information to the media to suit the Sask Party's partisan political goals, won't the minister release the full fiscal update in this House today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — I would have loved to have talked about this in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, if the Finance critic would have asked a question the last four weeks about this. If any member over there would have asked a question about the economy in the last four weeks, we'd have been delighted to talk about that, Mr. Speaker.

Here's a party, here's a party, that Finance critic, Mr. Speaker, that during the campaign on April 4th, in the campaign leading up to the April 4th election, this was a party that campaigned on a point eight per cent increase in health care, Mr. Speaker, a 2.6 per cent increase in education. Mr. Speaker, that's less than what this government delivered in its budget on June 1st.

Then that member, the Finance critic, stood in her place on June 1st, on budget day, and said this, just two months after the election, Mr. Speaker, said this: "It doesn't end there. We heard the minister today talk about investments in health care and education, but perhaps the minister needs a lesson in inflation and population growth." Two months after the campaign, Mr. Speaker, she said, the member from Nutana: "A minimum of 6 per cent annual increase is needed just to maintain the status quo programs like health care and education. Anything below that is effectively a cut."

Mr. Speaker, that would've added \$550 million on to the deficit of this province, and she didn't campaign on it.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. That minister, that minister is responsible for the province's finances. He is not responsible for making excuses. The people of Saskatchewan know what happened: 11,000 more people are looking for work than a year ago; 4,200 jobs were lost last month alone, Mr. Speaker.

The Sask Party has broke their promise to reduce the provincial debt. They have actually grown it. The Education minister himself said the deficit this year will be \$1 billion. And there's no rainy day fund to back it up. Instead the Sask Party recently authorized themselves to borrow an unprecedented additional \$6 billion. When will the minister stop making excuses and start doing his job?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's interesting, Mr. Speaker. I went back and did a little bit of research as to when the NDP were in office in the last 16 years. Mr. Speaker, do you know that they received . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . They don't want to hear this. They hate when we go back and visit their record, Mr. Speaker.

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — I find it comical that members are having difficulty hearing the response from the Finance minister so they listen to their earpiece while chirping from their seats. Please, let's improve the decorum in here. I recognize the Finance minister.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Mr. Speaker, we went back and did some research. They received, in 16 years in office, \$4.4 billion in equalization payments. Mr. Speaker, this government has not received a dime in equalization payments since we came to office in 2007. Why? Because we're a have province.

So during the 16 years they were in government, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you they had some challenging times, and I can appreciate that. We've got some challenging times in our economy now.

But here's what we're not going to do, Mr. Speaker. We're not going to take \$4.4 billion in equalization payments that we don't even have, and close 52 hospitals, including the Plains Health Centre here in the city of Regina. We're not going to close 176 schools, Mr. Speaker, one a month while they were in office. And we're not going to watch as our children and grandchildren leave by the thousands to Alberta and Ontario and other places in the country, Mr. Speaker. We put in place programs to keep our young people here. That's what we're going to continue to do.

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

Ms. Sproule: — That's very rich, Mr. Speaker, coming from the minister who worked for the Grant Devine government.

Instead of managing the people's money, the Sask Party is playing with definitions. They have had five deficits. You can't do that and have the debt go down.

Mr. Speaker, they love to brag about taking down the GRF [General Revenue Fund] debt. First, their talking points and their numbers are off on that. But more importantly, all they've done is created a new category of debt. They have taken what should have been added to the GRF operating debt and put it in another category called other debt for government service organizations. Mr. Speaker, debt is debt is debt, and this other debt went up by almost \$1 billion just last year. They've already projected another \$1 billion for this year, and that doesn't count the debt that the Sask Party has piled onto our Crown corporations.

Will the Minister of Finance quit the semantic games, put down the thesaurus, and pick up the spreadsheet? Will he admit they

have mismanaged the economy so badly they've already added \$7 billion in debt in the last seven years?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Here's what I would say to the hon. member: 1.15 million people living in the province of Saskatchewan today, the most ever in the history of this province, Mr. Speaker. Thousands upon thousands of our young people taking advantage of the graduate retention program to stay here in the province of Saskatchewan after they graduate from post-secondary education. New hospitals being built across the province, Mr. Speaker, including a new hospital in Moose Jaw, a new children's hospital in Saskatoon, a new mental health facility in North Battleford. Dozens of schools being built in this province, Mr. Speaker, dozens of schools being built in this province.

What did we have when the NDP faced some economic challenges, Mr. Speaker? They raised taxes 22 times. They closed hospitals. They closed schools. They told the people of rural Saskatchewan to go pave your own roads, Mr. Speaker.

We're not going to do those kinds of things to the citizens of this province when faced with economic challenges. We're going to manage it, Mr. Speaker.

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

Consultant Review of Education System

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, the fact is the Sask Party has mismanaged the economy and they're making the people of Saskatchewan pay. It's offensive, Mr. Speaker.

The Education minister won't tell us what changes he is going to make to our children's classrooms or how his recently announced quick review of school boards will take place. Mr. Speaker, there's a lot that this minister isn't telling the people of Saskatchewan, but what he is telling them is alarming. He is saying that school board amalgamations are on the table. He won't rule out booting out newly elected school board trustees and replacing them with Sask Party approved appointees.

Mr. Speaker, the minister claims that he is consulting with school divisions before making any changes to the education system, but he's given his consultant just four weeks to travel the province and speak with school divisions and other key stakeholders. We're talking about major changes, Mr. Speaker, to our children's classrooms. So why is this minister in such a rush? Why won't he take more time and hold proper consultations with teachers, school board members, and parents?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I can advise the members opposite that we've asked former deputy minister to the premier, Dan Perrins, to do some work for us. He has been tasked with presenting options on governance in the education sector.

Now the members opposite, some of them I appreciate haven't

been here that long, but those that have been here for a while will remember who the premier was when Dan Perrins was the deputy minister to the premier: Lorne Calvert.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Perrins has extensive experience. He spent the last 18 months consulting with the education sector on the funding model. Mr. Speaker, the options are going to be presented in December, at which point we will take them to the sector for feedback. Mr. Speaker, we want to hear from the sector. We need to hear from the sector. Our focus is and will continue to be that we want to ensure student success. We want to strengthen accountability. We want to create efficient operational structures, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, if that minister truly wants to hear from people around the province, it's going to take more than four weeks. But it's clear that the only goal of this consultation is to find more ways to make cuts to our children's classrooms. If it were anything other than that, then it would take longer and he would actually consult with school board trustees and parents, and actually listen to what it is that they're telling him. Instead, he's hoping to rush the process before anyone can figure out what is going on.

Mr. Speaker, even the SSBA [Saskatchewan School Boards Association] was not informed about this consultation. The outgoing president said that the announcement took her by surprise and that she hasn't even been told how the consultation will take place, saying, "We're not exactly sure how this process is going to unfold." Can the minister expect to do proper consultations in a matter of weeks if school boards don't even know what the process is?

Mr. Speaker, our classrooms are already overcrowded and under-resourced. Teachers and parents are worried about how this consultation process will affect our children's classrooms. So why is the minister leaving school boards in the dark, and will he commit to allowing more time to consult with teachers, school boards, and parents before going ahead and making major changes and deeper and deeper cuts to our children's classrooms?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the length of the member's question. I would like to give a very short answer. I will simply quote from Pat Maze: "We do not believe that education is an arena for political battles. In Saskatchewan, children and youth come first." And Mr. Speaker, that's what's going to happen from this side of the House.

The Speaker: — Why is the member from Saskatoon Centre on his feet?

Mr. Forbes: — Request leave to move a motion under rule 61.

The Speaker: — The member has requested leave. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

MOTION UNDER RULE 61

Support for Wanuskewin Heritage Park Application for World Heritage Site Status

Mr. Forbes: — In light of a request that we've received from Wanuskewin Heritage Park, I would move the following motion:

That this Assembly supports Wanuskewin Heritage Park's efforts to seek United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization World Heritage Site status.

The Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Centre has moved the following motion:

That this Assembly supports Wanuskewin Heritage Park's efforts to seek United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizational World Heritage Site status.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport. I recognize the minister.

[14:30]

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and colleagues. It's a great pleasure to speak to the motion before the Assembly today. Wanuskewin is one of the top-ranked tourist destinations in Saskatchewan, and the Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport has been a long-term partner. Mr. Speaker, Wanuskewin's renewal vision is closely aligned with and supports the government's strategy for culture and recreation. In particular it promotes and protects our province's treasured heritage. Our province has a remarkable history and cultural landscape, and it is important to be shared with current and future generations. Saskatchewan's story has been shaped by many people, places, and events.

This government was proud to support Wanuskewin at the February announcement earlier this year of the exciting vision for renewal, where they are going to apply for Saskatchewan's first United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO, world heritage designated site. We are pleased to support Wanuskewin's application efforts to bring global recognition to this remarkable heritage resource. Wanuskewin has been telling its story for nearly 25 years, and the renewal plans will ensure these stories continue to be shared for generations to come.

The renewal will elevate Wanuskewin on the world stage and will highlight the cultural and historic importance of the Wanuskewin Heritage Park. We know from other Canadian sites that there are potentially significant social, economic, and conservation benefits becoming of a World Heritage Site. We applaud Wanuskewin for taking such a bold step and officially announcing today its intent to seek UNESCO world heritage designation. We look forward to participating in the renewal journey as it unfolds. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon

Nutana.

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the minister opposite for those fine comments, and also to my colleague from Saskatoon Centre for introducing this motion. Last night many of us were fortunate to attend Wanuskewin's reception and hear Wanuskewin's vision to become the first United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, or UNESCO, World Heritage Site in Saskatchewan.

Wanuskewin has been a gathering place for indigenous people for 6,000 years, and in our way this Chamber is stepping up to support this initiative. We must do all that we can to protect Wanuskewin. Wanuskewin's Thundering Ahead campaign calls for renovation and expansion of their current facility to attract international exhibits and expand the art gallery.

Mr. Speaker, if the park is granted the designation, it will join the ranks of the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone National Park, and Vatican City, among many other iconic sites throughout the world. It will be the first in Saskatchewan. It will be our Tyrrell Museum. Wanuskewin board Chair Candace Wasacase-Lafferty said, "Our journey is just beginning, but we are excited to embark on the process of applying to UNESCO for recognition as a World Heritage Site."

Returning a small herd of plains bison to the area in its native prairie habitat is also part of the project. Here's another quote:

"The bison are what drew Indigenous peoples to Wanuskewin for thousands of years," Tribal Chief Felix Thomas from the Saskatoon Tribal Council said. [He went on to say] "By understanding their story of near extinction, we are better able to understand the stories of Canada's indigenous peoples. Bringing back the bison will be symbolic of the recognition of Indigenous cultures in Canada."

We wish to thank the board, the staff under the leadership of Wanuskewin's CEO [chief executive officer] Dana Soonias, and especially Dr. Ernie Walker for their outstanding leadership. It's important for them and this province to know that we in this Chamber are fully committed to this project. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The motion in front of the Assembly is:

That this Assembly supports the Wanuskewin Heritage Park effort to seek United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization World Heritage Site status.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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 for questions 177 through 183.

The Speaker: — The Government Whip has tabled responses to questions 177 to 183. I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answers to questions 184 and 185.

The Speaker: — The Government Whip has ordered the responses to questions 184 to 185.

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 Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to stand in my place and offer a few more comments on Bill 34. I realize that I spoke on Bill 34 a number of times. But, Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity before the Bill does move to the committee stage to talk about a few of the issues I think are really important as it relates to Bill No. 34. And of course this is the lands Act, Mr. Speaker.

What's really important is that . . . I listened with great interest yesterday to my colleague from Saskatoon Nutana where she spoke about the importance of the indigenous people of this land and the role that the treaties played in settling all of Canada. And, Mr. Speaker, the most important, compelling point that she made, when it comes to provincial lands: that there must be consultation. There must be heavy involvement by the indigenous peoples of this land, because it's all part of what the province really touts as their armour in terms of meeting the world challenge together, and that is "from many peoples, strength." And, Mr. Speaker. I would highly recommend that these consultations be heavily involving the First Nations, the Métis people, and other Aboriginal groups and indigenous groups throughout the province of Saskatchewan.

Now the minister said there was 161 million acres of land, and of this . . . and they called it the province of Saskatchewan. And of that, 100 million of these acres are under the administration of the province. So if those figures are correct, Mr. Speaker, 1 million acres of administrative control of the province is really an opportunity for the province to reach out to the indigenous people of the province of Saskatchewan and heavily engage them.

We saw no evidence of that, Mr. Speaker. And what's really important is, in the bill it's really . . . the devil's in the details, as people would like to say. As you look in the bill there's one small mention under section 25 that talks about the Aboriginal

people, the indigenous people of the province of Saskatchewan, in a very fleeting statement, Mr. Speaker. That cannot be accepted. The bottom line is the people of Saskatchewan should be heavily involved, and all people should be involved, including the indigenous people of this great province.

One of things that I think is really important, Mr. Speaker, is you've had the discussion in northern Saskatchewan. I've made the statement time and time again that in northern Saskatchewan alone, for every man, woman, and child, we're so rich in land that for every man, woman, and child, you're looking at 7 to 8 square acres of opportunity. And one would, I would certainly try and understand, why is it we have such a vast piece of land with a lot of resources, and yet the indigenous people of northern Saskatchewan continue to struggle, Mr. Speaker? It is because we have not asserted ourselves strong enough on the issue around land. It is because the government has totally disrespected key players like the FSIN [Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations], the First Nations leaders, and the Métis community in consultation on bills of this sort.

Now, Mr. Speaker, one of the individuals that I want to pay tribute in this very brief presentation that I'm making is the former MP [Member of Parliament] for our area, Rick Laliberte. Mr. Laliberte has always championed the fact that the northern people should assert themselves with greater strength and greater opportunity when it comes to the land itself. And in our conversations with Mr. Laliberte, some of the initial comments he's made around the lands Act is that, first and the foremost . . . the foremost question that he's asking is who is lobbying for some of the changes in this particular bill.

Now some of the changes in the bill talks about modernizing the whole bill itself, Mr. Speaker, but there are some omissions that are very glaring. And the omissions are the fact that the consultations with indigenous people did not occur to the level and certainly did not occur with the whole definition of respect, Mr. Speaker. So this is one of the points that Mr. Laliberte wishes to raise.

He wants to point out that the consultations on this bill didn't happen in many places, in many corners of this province, including northern Saskatchewan. A lot of the northern municipalities were not consulted, Mr. Speaker, on this particular bill that gives it a very important thing called land, Mr. Speaker. Why weren't the northern municipalities involved in some of these consultations and discussions? Because, Mr. Speaker, many of the communities in the North are made up of 70, 80, or 90 per cent of indigenous people, but they didn't have the opportunity to express their concern around this particular bill. And, Mr. Speaker, they didn't have the opportunity to express in detail what their view is, what their aspirations are on lands in northern Saskatchewan and throughout the province, Mr. Speaker.

Public lands are managed by the province of Saskatchewan. The indigenous people had every right, had every right to be part of those consultations. And, Mr. Speaker, this is exactly the problem that occurs in this day and age is that, why are we forgetting? And why are we not engaging the indigenous people of the province of Saskatchewan when it comes to the issue around land, especially in the North where 60, 70, 80 per cent, 90 per cent of the communities are people of Aboriginal

ancestry?

Now, Mr. Speaker, we also want to talk about the traditional land users, which are a really important component in northern Saskatchewan. Mr. Laliberte has expressed that time and time again, in which he said everyone from the trappers have rights, Mr. Speaker; from the people that gather, whether it's berries or medicine, Mr. Speaker; from those that harvest wood in any piece of land, Mr. Speaker; from those that even harvest opportunity such as forestry, Mr. Speaker. They have a right to be able to participate, an economic right to be able to participate in some of that activity in their backyard, and this bill did not take into consideration some of those solid points, Mr. Speaker. And we need to start to assert the rights of the indigenous people in northern Saskatchewan when it comes to land discussion, rules around land, and allocation of land, Mr. Speaker. And this bill barely mentions the indigenous people of the province of Saskatchewan.

The other thing that's really important, Mr. Speaker, that Mr. Laliberte wanted to point out, is this is another example of how administrative decisions are being made in southern Saskatchewan with no respect for the northern community. And this is where . . . his final point, Mr. Speaker, that he knows and he asserts that northerners have to move to a model where we have more control over our political and economic destinies.

And, Mr. Speaker, that is a statement that Mr. Laliberte has made time and time again certainly over his political career, but that battle, he continues from the community of Beauval. And he certainly speaks with great authority and great respect from many people throughout the North, including myself, when he simply tells the northerners that any rules and regulations around land, that we have a right to be engaged and we should assert ourselves on some of the decisions made around land, Mr. Speaker.

Now what's really important is that if you ignore the indigenous peoples' rights to be part of any discussion around land, you're simply showing a great desire to create disparity amongst the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community, Mr. Speaker.

One of the things that we talked about in this Assembly, we talked about at great lengths, Mr. Speaker, is the whole notion of reconciliation. We spoke about the challenge that many of the indigenous people have suffered throughout time, as many other generations of people from different backgrounds have suffered. We recognize that, Mr. Speaker. We're not trying to diminish their suffering. We're just trying to highlight ours so people know that we all have had difficulties in many of our generations and many peoples' lives.

But the point is, is as we reconcile, as we reconcile between each other, we cannot be put at odds with each other from a government that is totally ignoring one particular sector and a very important sector, the indigenous sector of Saskatchewan, when they talk about land allocation and decisions around lands and resources, Mr. Speaker.

So there's no question that from the perspective of the indigenous people of Saskatchewan, reconciliation involves First Nations, Mr. Speaker. Reconciliations involve the Métis people of Saskatchewan. Reconciliation involves the people of

northern Saskatchewan. Reconciliation involves the non-aboriginal community as well, Mr. Speaker. All the reconciliation has got to happen. It has to occur, Mr. Speaker, because that's how we begin to build "from many peoples, strength," is that we start respecting one another and engaging one another and certainly involving one another around decisions that affect our lives.

And most certainly, Mr. Speaker, some of the deep-rooted connection that northerners have to lands in and around their community — lands that their forefathers have harvested, either hunting or trapping, Mr. Speaker, and to the more recent economy of forestry, Mr. Speaker, or tourism — a lot of the Aboriginal people, the indigenous people have embraced the new economy and they're part of that, Mr. Speaker. So they shouldn't be excluded, and the consultations on this particular bill did not happen.

And I want to say to the Assembly that there are champions out there watching very closely as to how this bill is being implemented and the consultation and the intent of this bill. They're watching this to the committee process, to the legislative process. And I wanted to recognize one particular champion, Mr. Speaker, and that of course is Mr. Rick Laliberte who has really staked a lot of his time and his life on the notion that northerners must assert themselves on their own lands. And, Mr. Speaker, this provincial lands Act, Bill 34 does not mention the indigenous people or the northern people when it comes to allocation of land. And that is a crying shame, from my perspective.

The consultations didn't happen to the level it should have. FSIN was quite bluntly and very direct when it came to their involvement, Mr. Speaker. The First Nations leaders throughout the individual bands, Mr. Speaker, the Métis leaders, the northern municipalities, the traditional resource users, all of the people that make a living off that land, either harvesting or gathering or enjoying the land itself — northern people will not be pushed aside, nor will they take a second . . . or play second fiddle to the allocation of lands and the importance of lands that the lands represent to the people of the North.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's really important that the people of northern Saskatchewan pay very close attention to what the Sask Party does around bills of this sort. Pay very close attention to what the Sask Party does, Mr. Speaker, because if you're not consulting to the level you should with the indigenous people of northern Saskatchewan, and even northerners in general, Mr. Speaker, then you're doing a great disservice to governing for all. And more so, Mr. Speaker, you're showing total disrespect to the people that have occupied that land for generations. And I can tell you, like many people, Rick Laliberte and our communities, there are many Ricks out there that are going to rally together and begin to form their own version of what they think land should be, how land should be allocated, Mr. Speaker. And they certainly want to be part and parcel of the decision making, and they will not accept anything less.

So I want to point out to the Minister of Agriculture and the minister of SERM [Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management] that the northern people, all northern people — indigenous and non-Aboriginal people, whether they're Métis,

First Nations, or northerners — they have a right to be fully engaged in any bill that involves land. And I say shame on the Saskatchewan Party government for trying to have these consultations done in a disrespectful, very time-constrained manner, Mr. Speaker. They're going to show a lot of attention to this bill. They're going to express what they think their concerns are.

And, Mr. Speaker, we can tell the people of Saskatchewan that the land is important to the northern people overall, whether they're indigenous people or non-Aboriginal people. The North is their home, and they have a right and they have a duty to make sure that their interests are maintained. And northerners will stand together to make sure they have full involvement and full engagement around Bill 34 because if you don't, Mr. Speaker, what they would consider that is a slap in the face. And, Mr. Speaker, no government should do that to any part of the province in any way, shape, or form because quite frankly that is not leadership, and that's certainly not something that the people of Saskatchewan would want to see their government do.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of issues and a lot of points that we're going to raise on this on this particular bill over time. But I can tell the minister one thing: that the consultations were not done at the level that they should have been done and that the northerners are paying very close attention to Bill 34.

And if you think that I'm one person speaking up on this bill to represent the northern and indigenous peoples of the land on this particular bill, then think again because there are many champions out there within the First Nations community, within our Aboriginal organizations, our indigenous organizations, many people in our northern communities, many very knowledgeable people that are paying attention to this. And if you begin to make decisions around land without involving northerners and indigenous peoples of this province, then you quite frankly are treading where no government should tread because that's not proper leadership, Mr. Speaker. That is simply a very disrespectful position to take when it comes to allocation of land.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are watching. We are being very, very straightforward with our comments, very candid about the disrespect that has been shown thus far. And I can tell all the people out there that if there are other champions like Mr. Laliberte that want to come forward and join the effort to try and assert ourselves on our lands then, Mr. Speaker, I would invite them to do so. I would invite them to do so because land is not being developed, is not being built every day, Mr. Speaker. We only have a finite amount of land throughout this world.

The northern people and all indigenous people of the province of Saskatchewan should have the right, should have the right to be fully engaged — not consulted — fully engaged and fully supportive of any rule or regulation when it comes to allocation of land in any way, shape, or form. And if any government tries to do it without their support, then shame on them, because they're not going to accept it, Mr. Speaker. And they're going to continue working very hard to get a government that is respectful of them and engaging of them when it comes to the one important critical issue of land, Mr. Speaker. We are not

going to back down, and we're going to get organized.

So I'd highly recommend to the ministry that they start engaging northern people to the extent that they should, and that's indigenous people and non-Aboriginal people as well. Mr. Speaker, it's important that they hear this message. And I can assure the Government of Saskatchewan, if the Sask Party tries to do this, then they won't be Government of Saskatchewan very much longer, Mr. Speaker. So on that note, I make my comments around Bill 34.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the member that Bill No. 34, *The Provincial Lands 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 34, *The Provincial Lands Act* be sent to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

The Speaker: — This bill stands committed to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

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 Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Riversdale.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As always, it's a pleasure and a privilege to be able to enter debate here in this House on bills before us. And today I will be speaking to Bill No. 26, *The Patient Choice Medical Imaging Act*, Mr. Speaker. I'll talk a little bit about what this bill does and then express some of the concerns that have been flagged for me by other people and from evidence from other jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker, and some of the Premier's own comments as well, Mr. Speaker.

So Bill No. 26, it repeals the government's MRI facilities licensing Act that this government had introduced last session that saw the ability for the government to move away from a single-payer system when it came to MRIs [magnetic resonance imaging], Mr. Speaker, so people could then pay out-of-pocket for MRIs. So this is repealing that bill, Mr. Speaker, but it's not good news. They haven't changed their minds on that, Mr. Speaker; in fact they're replacing it with a new law that includes MRIs as well as CT [computerized tomography] scans. And it also opens up the door . . . I'll tell you about that in a moment, Mr. Speaker.

So under this bill, patients will be able to pay for an MRI or CT

scan out of pocket and the clinic will need to provide a second scan to the public waiting list at no cost to the taxpayer. So that's the model that this government has been using as they moved away from single-payer for MRIs and now are expanding it to CTs.

And a new feature of this bill, which is different from *The MRI Facilities Licensing Act* of last year, is that it defines medical imaging services as including MRIs, CT scans, and any other prescribed services, Mr. Speaker. So this gives the Premier and cabinet a back door to add any other medical imaging services like scope procedures or X-rays to its two-for-one pay system, Mr. Speaker.

I think it's important to point out that I think a value that we all share here in Canada and the principle of medicare, Mr. Speaker, our whole system rests on that principle that an individual's financial resources should not determine access to services, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Romanow, the former premier here in Saskatchewan, when he did his cross-Canada health report, his commission in 2002, Mr. Speaker, that was some of the language that he used. But I think that that's a commonly accepted thread, Mr. Speaker, in our values here in Saskatchewan and Canada, that our system rests on the principle that our finances, Mr. Speaker, should not determine our access to health services. That's why many people were in support of medicare, Mr. Speaker.

I know actually even talking to someone who had a father who was, at the time of the strike in the '60s, Mr. Speaker, his father was a physician, and at the time was very much opposed to medicare. But when it came time or, when push came to shove and he was no longer being paid in chickens, Mr. Speaker, he really appreciated the fact that we had a public medicare, single-payer medicare system, Mr. Speaker.

It's not just Mr. Romanow who is articulating that vision of access to services shouldn't be based on your wallet. Dr. Brown, the former SMA, Saskatchewan Medical Association president, when this first bill was introduced, was quoted as saying:

We believe in a publicly-funded health care system. We really believe that access to MRIs should be determined by whether a patient needs it or not, not by their ability to pay.

And just in recent conversations with the SMA a few weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to have a discussion with them and hear again if that is a position that still stands for their organization that represents doctors from across this province. The SMA still supports that principle, that belief in a publicly funded health care system, that access to medical . . . to MRIs should be, and other services should be determined by whether a patient needs it or not, not by their ability to pay, Mr. Speaker.

I find it interesting too as the Health critic. There are many challenges in health care right now. We continue to have a crisis in seniors' care, Mr. Speaker. We're short-staffing. Actually short-staffing is across the piece. Whether you're in a hospital, Mr. Speaker, or in a seniors' care facility, short-staffing is a very real issue that is impacting our loved ones, our parents, our grandparents. Those in long-term care are really struggling, Mr.

Speaker, in terms of getting a bath on a regular basis or being woken up early, very early, 5 in the morning, Mr. Speaker, to start their day because that's when the staff has to . . . because they have limited staff, they have to start getting people up to get the daytime routines under way, Mr. Speaker.

So long-term care and issues around long-term care are very real, Mr. Speaker. I would've liked to have seen a bill around minimum quality of care standards. So I think about priorities of this government and the challenges in health care. So we talk about long-term care, but there's emergency waits. In Saskatoon in recent weeks, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatoon Health Region has experienced record over capacity at our health care facilities, Mr. Speaker. More people waiting in emergency rooms and in pods and in makeshift tents or forts, Mr. Speaker, that staff try to create for patients in hallways, Mr. Speaker. There are no shortage of issues in health care, Mr. Speaker.

Waits for specialists. There was a story yesterday on CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] talking about the challenge in recruiting pediatricians. And we have a hospital opening in 2019 if the government . . . That date kept getting pushed back, Mr. Speaker, and I don't think that that probably bodes well for your ability to recruit and retain staff when your facility gets pushed back, Mr. Speaker. But in 2019 we have a facility that will be opening up, a beautiful brand new facility, and many people, both families with young children, and experts, are questioning whether or not we'll be able to staff that facility, Mr. Speaker. So there are no shortage of issues in health care.

The growing wait times for surgeries, Mr. Speaker. This is one area where the government had made some really good progress, and I've commended them for that. But as of last year, starting in March when there were budget issues and money started to get pulled back, those wait-lists went up and up and up, Mr. Speaker.

[15:00]

So we have some serious issues in health care, Mr. Speaker, and I would challenge whether or not this should have been the priority for this government's Legislative Assembly. It was one of three health bills brought forward and I really would have liked to have seen, for example, a minimum quality of care standards bill, Mr. Speaker. So again this speaks to priorities.

As well, Mr. Speaker, this is a government where we've had a Premier talk about something in the not-too-distant past and change his mind, Mr. Speaker, do a complete about-face. We've talked a little about that around privatization, and this is privatization again. Make no mistake about that, Mr. Speaker.

But we had a Premier and a government bring forward a bill despite the fact they've said they will not privatize, without going to the people, any of the Crowns under the Crown protection Act. We've had them, Mr. Speaker, do an end run around referendum and going to the people of Saskatchewan by introducing a bill, an amendment to *The Interpretation Act*, Mr. Speaker, which will define privatization, Mr. Speaker, as anything less than . . . you can sell a business, a Crown, up to 49 per cent, Mr. Speaker, and it will not be considered private under this government's language or this government's

definition, Mr. Speaker.

This is the same thing. So the Premier had committed many times over, since 2003 basically, when the then Sask Party opposition had flagged that they would be interested in selling Crowns and they realized they had to pull that narrative back. And our current Premier has said many times that he wouldn't be interested in privatizing. So we've seen that now, him do a change, an about-face on that issue, Mr. Speaker. And we've seen the same thing in health where we have a Premier, in 2009 he said in the media that offering medical services such as MRIs for a fee seems to be outside the *Canada Health Act* and is in an area where the government doesn't want to tread, Mr. Speaker.

This is a Premier who recognizes the importance of the *Canada Health Act*, and realizes that this particular bill, there's some potential for having introduced something beyond single payer, and private MRIs creates a problem, Mr. Speaker. This current Premier also has used the language, which I couldn't agree more with, that people shouldn't use a bulging wallet to jump the queue. No kidding, Mr. Speaker. I couldn't agree with that statement more. That is not how we should access medicare or any kind of services here around health, Mr. Speaker.

I want to point to a 2013 . . . Actually in Alberta in 2013, under a Conservative government, actually the Progressive Conservatives, Mr. Speaker, so this isn't a recent report, Mr. Speaker. This was under the former Conservative government, the health services. There was a report done called the health services . . . I really need to start wearing reading glasses, Mr. Speaker. The Health Services Preferential Access Inquiry of Alberta. So I'd like to just read this into the record here, Mr. Speaker, and this was from their executive summary of this particular report:

Private diagnostic imaging: A person who pays for diagnostic imaging at a private facility, instead of waiting for the same service through publicly funded channels, can receive a prompter diagnosis. If the diagnosis indicates a need for treatment, that person can immediately step into line for treatment. The person waiting for a diagnosis through the publicly funded system cannot step into that line for treatment, since he or she has not received a diagnosis. By circumventing the long wait for diagnosis, a patient who steps outside the public system for diagnosis obtains preferential access to treatment when he or she rejoins the public system.

The proliferation of private diagnostic services poses a true ethical dilemma in the context of access to health care. It undermines the principles of fairness and equity in access to health care and provides an advantage to those who can pay for this service. On the other hand, the practice is not illegal. It is accepted by governments and by physicians' regulating bodies.

Mr. Speaker, so that was from Alberta's own report on Health Services Preferential Access Inquiry, Mr. Speaker. So they're saying the very same thing: that if you can buy services, Mr. Speaker, that means you can jump the queue and get services before others who cannot afford those services. And that is contrary to the *Canada Health Act*.

I'd be curious, I'd be curious . . . I know when I'd asked in committee — and I'll follow up here again when this bill gets to committee next week, Mr. Speaker — but I'd asked in committee last year if there was any legal opinion. And the ministry hadn't actually reached out, hadn't done any work around a formal legal opinion on whether or not this contravened the *Canada Health Act* and whether or not it would put any of our transfers at risk, Mr. Speaker, some of our federal health transfers. This government hadn't done any of that due diligence to find out if that was in the realm of possibilities, Mr. Speaker.

And I understand, I've been told and I will look forward to an answer from the minister but I believe that there's been some correspondence with the current minister on this particular issue, and I'd like to delve into that a little bit, Mr. Speaker. Because I would hate to think that our government is making decisions that can put us at risk of losing some of the federal dollars that we're entitled to receive, Mr. Speaker. That's a very real concern.

I think something else to keep in mind is, and I just want to point us back to that Alberta report, Mr. Speaker. So there are already disparities, even without people having the ability to purchase some of these diagnostic services. There are already disparities in how many different people access health services. And this particular report in Alberta, one of the presenters, the Consumers' Association of Alberta, made a proposal or a brief to the Health Services Preferential Access Inquiry. And this is one of things they pointed out, is that the disparities of access already exist. So if you live in a rural area, if you're an individual without a family doctor — particularly an individual with complex medical issues, the poor people, elderly people, individuals whose first language is not English, those with hearing or vision or mobility issues, and First Nations communities already have a lack or less access to health services than the rest of us, Mr. Speaker.

But this particular decision around privatizing or creating the opportunity for people to purchase diagnostic services certainly is not going to improve that access, Mr. Speaker. I would have suggested to the minister, and I know that I did last year, that perhaps we could have worked on improving equity of access to health services instead of just allowing the opportunity for those who have money to purchase services, Mr. Speaker.

I know in Romanow's health commission too, I want to point out something that the government could have tackled or could have used as its barometer, as its guiding statement around tackling some of the wait times. Because I would not deny, Mr. Speaker, that there are challenges for many people in obtaining necessary medical imaging, Mr. Speaker. I have people who come to my office, as the Health critic, who tell me about the wait times they're experiencing. And I can't even imagine having a loved one, a child who has been told that they need a diagnostic service and then find out that that wait is quite lengthy, Mr. Speaker, someone who maybe doesn't have a critical issue but has a health issue that is really impacting their quality of life, impacting their ability to work, impacting their ability to live a full and meaningful life, Mr. Speaker, because they're in pain. Definitely we need to improve things here, but this should be about improving access for all people.

So I just want to draw your attention to the Romanow commission here again, Mr. Speaker, and read into the record this. He writes:

Taken together, the recommended actions to manage wait [times or] lists should achieve three broad goals — fairness, appropriateness, and certainty. Fairness means that wait times are set on objective criteria based on patients' needs rather than by individual providers or hospitals. Appropriateness means that the time people wait is appropriate for their condition. And certainty means that people have a clear understanding of how long they can expect to wait and why. In future, it should be possible to set benchmarks and track progress in meeting those benchmarks on an ongoing basis.

I would have liked to have seen the minister then, when the MRI bill first came forward last year, Mr. Speaker, focus on this instead. And I would like to have seen the now current minister really keeping this in mind, Mr. Speaker.

We can talk about increasing access, and I know this is something of which the government is very proud. There's a new hospital in Moose Jaw and an MRI in Moose Jaw. And I know we've advocated on this side of the House for improving capacity throughout the public system, Mr. Speaker. And one of the challenges that I've heard from people in Moose Jaw, Mr. Speaker, one of the frustrations is the limited hours that MRI is operating. And I would argue that that goes, I believe it's five days a week, Mr. Speaker, sort of business hours. But I know health regions are facing enormous pressures, Mr. Speaker.

The government didn't announce many cuts in the budget in June, but they left . . . They have foisted all those very difficult decisions onto the health regions, Mr. Speaker, by not properly funding them. And then they've also done things like taking, when there was an opportunity to have a little bit of money for example, workers' compensation in health and education. So employers, of which the health region and education sector all have many, when employers got rebates from workers' compensation, Mr. Speaker, and I know from comments that the then deputy minister made in committee that they actually were very proud of the work that they'd done around workers' compensation. And getting some of that money back would have been useful, Mr. Speaker.

As well, in committee right after the budget, we learned that this government has placed on health regions a \$40 million efficiency target. So really, dollars that were budgeted weren't really dollars that were budgeted, Mr. Speaker.

So you think about those limited hours of MRIs in Moose Jaw. Is that the health region having to manage a very tight budget and saying that they can't do those? I don't know, Mr. Speaker, but we'll have the opportunity to ask many questions in committee on that.

I think one of the challenges too with telling people . . . So when someone can pay for an MRI, that does allow them to access, as per the Alberta report, it does mean that they can access services more quickly than everybody else, Mr. Speaker. And again, no denying that the system needs improving, but I think this was the wrong fix and this government is moving

even further in the wrong direction around MRIs, CT scans, and other diagnostics, Mr. Speaker.

So there are many people . . . And one of the members from Moose Jaw is heckling, Mr. Speaker, and he should talk to some of his constituents about their concerns around this issue too, as well, Mr. Speaker. I was in Moose Jaw a couple of weeks ago and had an opportunity to hear from people in Saskatchewan. I had an opportunity to hear from people in Moose Jaw, Mr. Speaker, who . . . and Walsh Acres, Walsh Acres is heckling that there were eight people there. I can let him know that there were a heck of a lot more than eight people there. But perhaps it's way more than he has consulted on this issue or that this government is doing, particularly around education, Mr. Speaker. Four weeks, Mr. Speaker.

So the member from Moose Jaw who is heckling, he should sit down and talk to some of his constituents about their concerns around not only the hospital, but access to diagnostics, Mr. Speaker, and the fact that they have huge concerns that people with large paycheques and big wallets, Mr. Speaker, can get ahead of the queue. This should be about fixing the system for everybody, Mr. Speaker.

I do have concerns about people. I think about . . . They're awfully, very encouraging today, Mr. Speaker, the members on the other side of the House, very encouraging, which I always appreciate, Mr. Speaker.

The one demographic, Mr. Speaker, that I have a huge concern with . . . so sometimes people when faced with tough decisions, so if you have a child who has an illness, that you need, you feel like you need to get that treatment right away, that your child has been ordered to have an MRI and you have to wait. I can totally understand the desire to get it as soon as possible, Mr. Speaker. But I can tell you that people take on debt, Mr. Speaker, for all kinds of reasons. And I have concern that people who can't afford it would feel like this is their only access or entry point into speeding up the process, Mr. Speaker, is by purchasing, by spending money and taking on more than they can, Mr. Speaker. They're borrowing money from friends or family or putting it on a credit card, Mr. Speaker.

We know that health care debt . . . We've had many stories in this Assembly about ambulance fees, Mr. Speaker, putting people thousands of dollars in debt. People who cannot afford to pay it, Mr. Speaker. So I worry about two big pieces that there are people . . . Instead of improving the system for everybody, Mr. Speaker, we are going against the principles of medicare and, as pointed out by the SMA, that this should be about access to service because you need it, not because you can pay for it, Mr. Speaker.

So I have some concerns around that, but I'm also very concerned that people who can least afford it will try to find whatever way possible they can to pay for diagnostics, Mr. Speaker. And those are very real concerns and those are concerns that have been shared with me, Mr. Speaker.

[15:15]

One last point, Mr. Speaker, is that private diagnostics have not actually proved effective in other jurisdictions. I will take you,

Mr. Speaker, to a report, and I'm sure the folks opposite will love this, Mr. Speaker. But it's from an article, *Eroding Public Medicare: Lessons and Consequences of For-Profit Healthcare Across Canada*. This is from October 6th, 2008 report, page 34:

Eroding Public Capacity: Poaching Staff from Local Hospitals

The experience of for-profit MRI/CT clinics in Canada yields very clear evidence of damage to the public non-profit hospital system as a consequence of privatization. For-profit clinics in Manitoba and Ontario have demonstrably caused reduction in MRI hours in nearby public non-profit hospitals as a result of recruiting radiologists and technologists out of the public facilities. In Ontario's experiment with eight for-profit MRI/CT clinics in the early 2000s, three clinics were publicly reported to have lured technologists away from non-profit hospitals, forcing the hospitals to reduce their MRI hours. In Manitoba, the poaching of radiologists caused a shortage at the nearby public hospital, forcing it to reduce its MRI hours.

Mr. Speaker, so the reality is there are only so many, there are only so many radiologists and so many technologists, Mr. Speaker, and so that is a very real concern. And I asked the minister in committee last year if he'd asked Ontario why they had moved away from this and he hadn't, Mr. Speaker. So I wonder why we wouldn't have looked at other jurisdictions to say, hey, you were doing this; why have you stopped doing this? Hey, other jurisdictions, or hey, federal minister, is this going to impact our . . . And, Mr. Speaker, they're mocking me. I'm really glad that they're engaged because this is an important discussion, Mr. Speaker.

You think you would have sought a legal opinion, Mr. Speaker, on an issue.

But I look forward to the opportunity to ask the new minister some questions in committee on this particular bill, both around results thus far, but I also will reiterate some of the questions that I didn't feel were answered fulsomely enough last time we were before the committee having this very discussion on this very similar bill, Mr. Speaker. So thank you, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to committee.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 26, *The Patient Choice Medical Imaging Act* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — Carried.

Principal Clerk: — Second reading of this bill.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — To which committee shall this bill be committed?

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I designate that Bill No. 26, *The Patient Choice Medical Imaging*

Act be committed to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — This bill stands committed to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

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 Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to enter into the debate on *The Extension of Compassionate Care Act*, even though the real title is *An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Employment Act*. And I think it's been a bit of a misnomer because a lot of people are focusing on the compassionate care part of it, and I will speak to that because it is an important part. It is something that the government promised to do in the campaign. But there was a couple of pieces that they didn't talk about in the campaign that has raised a lot of flags.

And so I just want to take a minute to review what the minister had said when he moved this, back on June 14th. This is a result of changes to the federal legislation that allows employees to collect up to 26 weeks of benefits after observing a two-week cooling-off. And that's a good thing going from 8 weeks to 28 weeks. Fair enough. And then he goes on and talks about this was a campaign promise and that fulfills the promise.

And then he talks about, one of the first jurisdictions to increase its leave. But I do want, because we have a lot of work today to do, to flag some of the concerns that people have had. And this is something that I hope the folks on the opposite side recognize.

There has been a real concern raised about the changes in the legislation because it says now that you can take, not entitled . . . And this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is section 2-56(3), and it says, "In a period of 52 weeks, an employee is not entitled to take more than one compassionate care leave pursuant to subsection (2)." That is a complete change from the old Act where it says ". . . not entitled to take more than two . . ." So we went from having to take two, to one. And it's very clear in the legislation. This is the bill. This is what we're voting on. This is not what they went campaigning on. They did not say that they were going to reduce the benefits from two to one. That is not what they said. They didn't say anything about that. And it cannot be fixed in regulations.

This is something that people have raised, and in fact, Mr. Speaker, this has been raised by the folks from the Cancer Society who have some real concerns about this and that they were not consulted. In fact this is what they say, and I quote from Donna Ziegler:

Unfortunately with cancer, the leading cause of death, people can be palliative for a while and can improve for a

while even though they are terminal. With children, they can rebound from treatment after a short amount of time and parents can return to work for a while. The limiting of flexibility in how many times you can access these benefits negatively affects the caregiver.

And so why are we even changing it? I would suggest we should drop it. We should . . . Oh, this is interesting. They are chirping that . . . This will be something we'll have a lot of discussion about in committee because clearly we're hearing two different messages. And the minister said nothing in his remarks on June 14th.

We agree that it should go from 8 to 28 because that's the changes in EI [employment insurance]. That's the federal thing. But nothing in the federal regulations or laws . . . In fact today my colleague did some good research work on EI and there's examples of people being able to take the leave in two different periods. For example, here's one where your father becomes gravely ill. You receive an existing claim for benefits. You take 10 weeks from January 10th to March 19th and then 16 weeks from May 1 to August 20th. So you can break it up. You can break it up. So why is this being changed from two to one?

And this is really something that we've flagged. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I did write a letter to the minister on Monday, and I identified four areas that we have concerns here because the minister . . . And I appreciate that he asked for input. And this was one, and it really . . . We are obviously supportive in increasing the compassionate care leave for so many reasons — obviously it's a very good idea — but removing the flexibility makes no sense and the minister will have to make a very powerful argument about why is he changing it from two to one in the legislation.

And I know there's some talk that maybe we can fix it in regulations but you can't because it's so specific in the bill. This will be some kind of Houdini act if they can say you can do one thing in the bill or the legislation and something in regulations. That make no sense.

The other three things are changes that we've been proposing to him, and of course one is very important. And I think that we should recognize . . . And this minister very often, and the whole government, will side . . . They do a great job of consultation. We know the minister has an active minister's advisory committee when it comes to labour issues, a very active one, and one that is . . . that he takes a lot of pride in because he talks to them about all sorts of issues.

This is the bill he didn't talk to them about. Being released in June, he failed to mention all summer, even going to the SFL [Saskatchewan Federation of Labour] convention, that the employment Act is now open. It was only last week when I mentioned to the president of the SFL, did you know that we are looking at the employment Act. And he said, I didn't know anything about it. I didn't know anything about it. And the minister who's got an advisory committee did not even check it out.

They have two major concerns. One is with the firefighters, have raised a whole issue about arbitration, continue to raise that issue that it's unfair. A system that worked for decades in

the province of Saskatchewan and is very, used extensively throughout Canada, all of a sudden was upended with the employment Act. And the government and the ministers refused to listen about going back to the way that it was before.

And the other one that I want to raise, and this one is . . . You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have seen this movie over and over and over again with this government. And this is where the government digs its heels in and says it's absolutely right and it will not admit to anything. And I'm glad that we have many members of the cabinet in here because this is going to be a bill that they have to pay. Because this is about the designation of supervisors in bargaining units, and I know it's before the Labour Relations Board right now.

But we know, we know, and the unions have said, and they've said very clearly, they're going to fight this right all the way up the legal channels. And we know this government does not have a good track record when it comes to fighting in court. In fact they have a pretty lousy record. And here you have an opportunity, here is an opportunity to meet and talk with the labour leaders, use your advisory committee, use your advisory committee and say, what's not working? What's not working?

And you know, this government here has made exceptions in the health regions with the nurses. So they've recognized in some places it doesn't make any sense. Well it doesn't make any sense at all what they've done in section 6-11. It should repealed. Now they know it's before the Labour Relations Board, and they know the unions are right on this, and they're going to take it right up to the top. And this government, again as I said with their track record in the Supreme Court, and we saw it when they lost the issue about right to strike. And we see that enshrined. We saw that when they intervened on behalf of the Government of BC and they lost to the teachers in BC. And here's another one that they're going to have a problem with.

Why don't they, Mr. Deputy Speaker, simply meet and say, let's work this out? This may be something we can work out. Let's save everybody a lot of time, a lot of money, a lot of pain. But do you see, here already they're preparing the case, but I know . . . And it is interesting because I understand that with the couple of times they've gone to the Supreme Court, it didn't cost them any money. We still have an argument about that because I think it did probably cost them a lot of money, a lot of money.

And here they're willing again to dig their heels in on that section. Why not meet, why not meet, why not meet with the minister's advisory committee? This is why he set it up. This is exactly why he set it up, so we can talk about the issues. And here we have a simple one, 6-11. Talk about it; resolve it, because it's going to be a hodgepodge. Some unions get an exemption; some don't. Why is that? Well we don't know. It all depends. Simply get rid of 6-11.

Mr. Speaker, the other one that I really do want to spend a few minutes on, and it is really, really quite important. I think that it's one that I want to get on the record today, and I think this makes a lot of sense. And this was raised with me at the SFL convention, and someone pointed out the inequity in section 2-54, and all of us here can appreciate this section. This section is "Nomination, candidate and public office leave." And I have

talked to the minister and he is somewhat interested in it, so I appreciate if people may have some interest in it.

It talks about, it talks about an employee is entitled to a leave, “(a) to seek nomination as a candidate for a municipal, provincial or federal election or an election for a board of education or the Conseil scolaire fransaskois, for a reasonable period.” And it goes on and it talks about to be a candidate and if you’re elected.

Interestingly a woman of First Nations approached me at the SFL convention from the Gordon First Nations and said, you know what’s missing in this piece of legislation is protection if you’re running for a First Nations office or a Métis office. And I think that’s an oversight, and I think today . . . And I appreciate the members going to Louis Riel Day and I wish them well there, but I think this is something we can take up and I hope in the spirit of bipartisanship, we can fix this. This is an oversight. And I know the minister is checking it out with the Justice folks to see if there’s something in other legislation. I don’t think there is.

[15:30]

But to be clear, we should be respectful of and provide that same protection. If you’re working off a First Nations reserve, you’re working for SaskTel or a Crown or a private employer, you should have that protection to run if you’re seeking office in your First Nations band elections or of a Métis Nation election. That should be the case. Here we have now, you have protection if you are running for a municipal, provincial, or federal election, or election for a board of education or the Conseil scolaire fransaskois.

So myself and the member from Athabasca have been checking this out informally. We have not engaged in a period of consultation, but we think this is reasonable. And I know and I realize time is ticking here, and we want to have this out. So I would put this out there, and I would hope that we would get support from the other side in looking at this fully and making sure that it is equitable. So what we want to do, to be clear, is to amend those so there’s parallel for First Nations elections and for Métis elections so there’s job protection for those folks.

And so with that, Mr. Speaker, I want to say again my four concerns so they’re on the record, and I know we’re wrapping things up here quickly. And when I conclude my remarks . . . And the minister has seen this letter so he’s quite concerned. We’re talking about flexibility in using compassionate care. We want to see that limitation to one period taken out and have it just left as it was. There is no good reason for that amendment.

We want to see section 2-54 amended so it’s including indigenous elections. We think that’s important that we have . . . And we want to make sure it’s done right, that there’s appropriate consultations.

I would urge, I would urge, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the minister go back and speak to his advisory committee about section 6-11 and save us all a lot of time and save me from having to say I told you so; I told you so. Because I don’t want to be here two years from now when they have come back from the Supreme Court with their tails between their legs having

lost yet again, having lost yet again when they could have resolved it. They could resolve it next Monday. They could resolve it by Monday, adjourn their . . . You know, get their advisory committee together. Resolve that.

And then also pay attention to firefighters. They do such good work in our province. They’re going to be coming and I know they would appreciate some serious consideration to their concerns. And I think this is very important.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a critically important bill. People across the province are watching the changes that are happening and also opportunities to fix some of the issues in the employment Act that we know. I mean this isn’t all of them, but we moved a few things forward and that would be . . . If we move forward together, I think that it would be excellent. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I conclude my remarks.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the Minister of Labour that Bill No. 28, *The Extension of Compassionate Care Act, 2016* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — Carried.

Principal Clerk: — Second reading of this bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I designate that Bill No. 28 be committed to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — The bill stands committed to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

Bill No. 1

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

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It’s my pleasure to rise today and enter into debate on Bill No. 1, *An Act to amend The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Act*. Mr. Speaker, this is a bill that has certainly garnered a lot of attention and some time in committee, and it’s a very, very tiny piece of legislation, a very small bill, in fact just a few lines. But there are a number of very significant impacts here.

What is proposed is amending, removing subclause 2(b)(ii) of *The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Act* and repealing it, essentially removing it from that legislation, Mr. Speaker. A small piece of legislation, but very big impacts. And I think

when we're talking about what the impacts might be, I'll go back to the minister's comments from June the 14th of this year. The then minister noted that "By doing this, we will simplify and expedite the process for expanding the private retail system of alcohol in this province," Mr. Speaker.

So certainly we are finding those words quite frequently here: clarifying, expediting. And when we're talking about that, I think it's important that we know exactly what it is that we're expediting. You know, removing processes that are important for oversight and governance may be expedient, Mr. Speaker, but they don't necessarily allow for the type of scrutiny that people in this province want and frankly deserve.

So I'll read a little bit of the preamble to *The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Act*. This was a bill that was passed back in 2004. And for those that were here or perhaps following at home, this was a bill that was passed unanimously by members of this Assembly at that time, Mr. Speaker, by both sides of the House. And I'll go into a little more history first, but I want to just read what exactly it is that this bill, this Act does.

In the preamble it's noted that:

WHEREAS Saskatchewan Crown corporations are an investment in the future of Saskatchewan to provide necessary public services, [and] to assure the quality of life of residents and to promote economic development;

AND WHEREAS the public investment in Saskatchewan Crown corporations reflects an historic decision to maintain control of necessary public services within Saskatchewan to assure that those services are operated in the best interests of the people of Saskatchewan;

AND . . . in order to respect the reasons for establishing and maintaining Crown corporations, and the public interest and rights over their disposition, an Act of the Legislature is required to assure that a decision to privatize a Crown corporation reflects the will and the rights of the people of Saskatchewan;

AND WHEREAS the public ought to be fully [fully] informed as to the terms, costs and benefits of any privatization of a Crown corporation.

Mr. Speaker, that's some of the preamble. Again, this was an Act that was agreed to unanimously by both sides of this House, and it existed in a larger context. Those who were here, again, or those who follow the history, the political history of this province, will know that prior to 2004, there was a lot of concern about privatization. And perhaps members opposite knew in voting for this legislation that our Crown corporations are beloved and valued by people of Saskatchewan.

Further, clause 3 in this Act notes that no Crown corporation shall be privatized unless that privatization is authorized by an Act enacted after this Act is coming into force. And also it notes that:

. . . every Act authorizing the privatization of a Crown corporation must contain a provision stating that the Act

must not come into force until a date that is at least 90 days after the date fixed for the return to the writ for the next general election . . . [in] . . . *The Election Act* . . .

So, Mr. Speaker, it allows protection so that our Crown corporations, those listed under the protection of the Act, which currently includes SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority], cannot be arbitrarily privatized without a process, Mr. Speaker. And certainly the members opposite know that and know that the people of this province value their Crown corporations.

One further piece that I'd like to note: a bill to amend, repeal, or override or suspend the operation or any of this Act triggers a policy field committee. And certainly we had opportunity, because of the proposed privatization of 40 liquor stores in this province, Mr. Speaker, we had the opportunity to sit as a committee and hear submissions from those who are concerned about the privatization of liquor stores.

So that was a process. Certainly I will give members opposite that they did campaign on the privatization of the 40 liquor stores, Mr. Speaker, but they didn't talk so much about fully pulling SLGA out of the protection of this Act, which is a big, important piece that they failed to talk about, Mr. Speaker.

So because of the protection of this Act, the committee was triggered and we had the opportunity to hear from a number of people across the province about their concerns, Mr. Speaker. And it was a very varied, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was a very varied group. We heard from business owners. We heard from liquor retailers. We heard from the Gravelbourg Chamber of Commerce. We heard from public sector employees, all of their thoughts and ideas and concerns about the privatization of liquor stores in the province, Mr. Speaker. And that's an important part of our democracy, the ability to listen to people, to run . . . when legislation is proposed, to be able to get that type of input, to have a more fulsome discussion.

And that's what protection under this Act allowed. If this bill is passed, that will no longer be afforded to SLGA, and I think, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of concern about that. Again as I've noted, there was a mandate to privatize the liquor stores. I would suggest that there was not a mandate nor really a well-stated reason to fully pull the SLGA out of the protection of the Act entirely. So were the government to want to privatize a number of liquor stores in the future, there would be no requirement that they form committee, that they give notice, Mr. Speaker. It would not have the scrutiny that we did see in that committee.

I think it's important when we're talking about pulling out that protection that we look at some of the comments that were made and some of the submissions that were made because, you know, even with all 61 elected members, Mr. Speaker, there are pieces that maybe we would miss. And that's why it's important that the public has the opportunity to come and speak to us and provide their input.

One of the submissions we had was from Laurie Leigh who was the rocking horse cook out . . . who owns The Rockin' Horse Cookhouse & Bar in Maple Creek, Mr. Speaker, a small town of course in the southwest of the province. And she had some

significant concerns that I'm not sure anyone on the committee had — I'll speak for myself, I guess — had thought of prior to going into that committee. And that's really the value of having this level of public scrutiny. And I'll quote from her presentation:

As a restaurant bar owner, I am now being asked to negotiate a discount with my competition. We are all competing for the same food and drink sales . . . [as] the off-sale vendors also own restaurants and bars. They will now have a 25 per cent discount to work with while I have lost my 10 per cent [discount].

Mr. Speaker, so that was one of those impacts that we certainly didn't hear about in the campaign, we didn't hear about in the minister's preamble to the introduction of this bill, but is a very real impact. And again that type of input will be lost with pulling SLGA completely out of the protection of the Act.

Another thing that she noted is that now she'll have to go to her competitors and ask them for a discount as well. And she has over 6,500 a year in purchases, and they have . . . She noted that they have a 25 per cent discount. I asked, and she asked, in any way how does this level the playing field, Mr. Speaker? So that's the type of comment and scrutiny that's allowed by protection under this Act.

I'm going to go to some more comments by SGEU [Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union], and they noted the number of claims that were made by the minister. That this will create a level playing field was one of the claims made by the minister. And certainly we've heard from a business owner that there is some question to that.

[15:45]

Another claim was that they had campaigned on the privatization of liquor stores, Mr. Speaker. As I've stated, I think twice now, certainly I concur with that, but not with pulling SLGA completely out of the protection of the Act, Mr. Speaker. I don't think that that was widely known during the campaign.

That this will only impact 190 employees, Mr. Speaker. Well certainly it has very dire impact for those 190 employees. But again this really does pave the way for easy privatization of the remaining stores once SLGA is pulled out of the protection of this Act. So I think there is reason for concern there.

Talking about the competition, competitive pricing, SLGA prices have been compared and shown to be lower than prices offered in private liquor stores since their door opened in 2014 and 2015. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this committee, this protection under the Crown protection Act allowed that type of scrutiny. It allowed members of the public to respond directly to claims being made by the government about the impact of this legislation. And I think it's a very, very important body of oversight, Mr. Speaker, that will be lost. We will lose those voices. And again what we will see with this is increased ease of privatization of SLGA under, if this bill is passed, Mr. Speaker.

Now the context again of the Crown protection Act and the

unanimous approval on both sides, this government knows, as they have known for some time, that people in this province value their Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker. I think they learned that lesson prior to 2007 certainly, and they even campaigned in 2007 on . . . And I'm reading from their campaign material, Mr. Speaker, "The Saskatchewan Party will ensure Crown corporations continue to provide Saskatchewan people with the highest quality at the lowest cost."

They also noted that they did vote in favour of this legislation. It featured prominently in their campaign literature, Mr. Speaker. So I think that this government knows that people in this province value their Crown corporations and those that are listed in the Crown protection Act. They've been less than forthcoming about their already stealthy privatization of a number of portions of public services in this province, and we're continuing to see this government go down that road, certainly with Bill 40. I look forward to having further comments and highlighting my concerns and add to my comments that I made at the end of the committee proceedings, Mr. Speaker. But with that I will conclude my comments.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the Minister of Crown Investments that Bill No. 1, *The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Amendment Act, 2016* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — Carried.

Principal Clerk: — Second reading of this bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I designate that Bill No. 1 on the docket, and number one in my heart, will be designated to the Crown and Central Agencies.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — This bill stands committed to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Now it's sort of in reverse of the previous bill. What I am speaking to today is a very long piece of legislation, in fact quite a detailed bill, Mr. Speaker, 35 pages, and proposes more than 30 changes to the automobile insurance Act. I'm just going to summarize some of the changes. And certainly this type of legislation, I think, lends

itself well to further discussion in committee with officials. There's a fair amount of detail and there is . . . I think that level of detail and scrutiny is better suited frankly to being asked at committee, but I'll just summarize what exactly it is that is found or proposed with this legislation.

The bill proposes to increase the amount of weekly benefits for employed injured persons, equivalent to 40 hours at minimum wage for fully employed or for homemakers, Mr. Speaker, and 20 hours for partially disabled persons or those confined to a hospital bed and wheelchair.

Mr. Speaker, I think that it's important, certainly when you're looking at prescribed benefits such as are prescribed in this Act, that you review them frequently to make sure that you are up to date in terms of the minimum wage, which is anticipated with these changes and other inflationary measures, Mr. Speaker. So that part is pretty straightforward.

There are some other provisions, however, that again will require that higher level of scrutiny that will be provided in committee. One of them is, prohibits SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] from paying benefits to a person who is in prison, Mr. Speaker. And certainly some of my colleagues have had some questions about that, and I think that lends itself very well to further scrutiny and input from some of those who have an interest and stated some of their opinions on this.

It also prohibits SGI from paying benefits to a driver who is more than 50 per cent responsible for a collision, who is convicted or charged of causing death or bodily harm by street racing, being negligent, or fleeing a police officer, Mr. Speaker, or someone who has been found guilty in the last five years of causing death or bodily harm by street racing, being negligent, or fleeing from a peace officer.

Mr. Speaker, again as I note, this is a very lengthy piece of legislation, more than 30 changes. And today while I'll conclude my comments today, I will have a number of additional comments and stakeholders to consult prior to committee.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the minister of Crown Investments that Bill No. 32, *The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2016* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — Carried.

Principal Clerk: — Second reading of this bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I move that Bill No. 32 be committed to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — This bill stands

committed to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

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 Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to stand up today and discuss Bill No. 33, *The Child and Family Services Amendment Act*. This was brought forward by the former minister of Social Services in the spring sitting. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's a lot of information within this Act and I have a lot of questions I plan on bringing forward to the committee, but due to time restrictions today, I'm just going to go over a few things with regards to this Act.

First of all, one thing that the previous minister indicated when she was bringing forward the amendment of this legislation, she indicated that the renewal of our province's child welfare legislation is a key priority for the Ministry of Social Services and its child welfare transformation strategy. So to me, this is really important if this is part of any of the transformational change that we've been hearing with regards to some of the plans that the government has, and what exactly with regards to the changes to this legislation is, maybe possibly those plans.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, some of the changes that are going to be implemented within this legislation is the fact that there's some changes to . . . And I don't like the language and I'm glad they're changing it within this Act, but it indicates there's changes to the Indian child welfare agreements. And so obviously there's going to be language change with regards to some of that, and rightfully so in this day and age. That's not kind of the way, the language that we use when we're talking in this Assembly. So there'll be a new section. So this will be changes for section 61, and there'll be a new section and it'll be 62.1.

There's some concerns that I have with regards to what's being implemented with the changes to the First Nations . . . with the agreements with First Nations Child and Family Services agencies. I have some questions with regards to the language that's being presented within this new legislation.

And definitely some of the suggestions I'm going to be having is what consultation has been made with the stakeholders. I've been spending some time making some contacts and speaking to people who would be directly affected by some of these changes. And I do certainly hope that the ministry also has been making those contacts. And I plan that we'll have some good discussion with regards to that within committee because, you know, Mr. Speaker, the fact is is that the Ministry of Social Services doesn't have a shining example with regards to child welfare.

And I don't understand why they feel that they should have control and be in charge of First Nations family services. And

actually when you review the truth and reconciliation calls of action, it's more about working with First Nations family services so that they become independent. And I want to see that some of the wording that's in this legislation works towards the cause of actions with the Truth and Reconciliation. And I also hope that, with the changes with this legislation, that some of the information was reflective to the Jordan's principle also. As a government, we need to stop determining who is paying for what. Make sure there's services available for kids in our community. Then we worry about which government is responsible for that. And so again I know we'll have a lot of discussion with regards to that in committee, and I look forward to having that discussion with the minister and her colleagues.

So also some of the changes that are happening with regards to this piece of legislation is disclosure of information. And again I'm definitely a big believer that confidentiality is very important, and services that we provide as a government, we have to really take that into account when we're working with clients, especially when we're working with some of the most vulnerable people in our province. And we want to make sure that . . . A lot of people, they have some tricky situations, and they have some situations in their life that they want to ensure that when they're disclosing this information to workers that this information is kept confidential.

So I do realize, and I know it's really important to work with other agencies in our community. But we also have to make sure that we're not violating any privacy rights here when we're making this legislation because that's first and foremost. People have the right to having their information kept confidential. And I hope there was some discussion with the Privacy Commissioner, you know, with regards to what some of the changes in here would look like, and does that fall accurately with other legislation that we might have with regards to people's information. And especially, like I think it's really important to protect a child's autonomy and that child's confidentiality.

So we're dealing with really sensitive situations, and with children that, they don't have a choice of whether they're involved with the system or not. And I think it's our responsibility to make sure that all their rights are being respected.

And so with that, Mr. Speaker, like I said, I've got a real list of questions that I plan on bringing forward to committee. And I know we'll have a great discussion and I'm looking forward to that. But at this point in time, due to time constrictions, I'm going to leave the rest of my discussion for committee. Thank you.

[16:00]

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the member that Bill No. 33, *The Child and Family Services 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 designate that Bill No. 33 be committed to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

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

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 Regina Douglas Park.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise and speak to Bill No. 35, which is a bill that essentially completely overhauls the old small claims Act and replaces it with a new small claims Act, Mr. Speaker.

I've had the opportunity to read the minister's remarks when he had tabled this legislation and reviewed it. There's quite a few changes to *The Small Claims Act* that I'm not going to go into particular detail at this moment, Mr. Speaker, as I know I will have time during committee to speak to it with the minister and ask further questions.

I understand there's been some consultation that's gone on with respect to this bill. I actually have some personal knowledge of that consultation because I was still practising at the time that the consultation was taking place, Mr. Speaker.

However there was one change or a couple of changes to this bill that I know were not a part of the consultation and were not actually mentioned in the minister's remarks when he was discussing this bill. And it's some pretty significant changes with respect to essentially the authority that has been used traditionally in small claims court to allow court clerks and those within the court services to assist self-represented individuals in terms of helping draft their documents. So specifically the provisions that I'm talking about, it removes . . . So the new small claims Act removes the provision that allows a clerk to help an individual draft a statement of claim and also removes the ability for a clerk to assist a third party.

I was quite alarmed to see that, Mr. Speaker. It's a pretty huge step back in terms of access to justice, Mr. Speaker. And I was extra alarmed to see that after reading the minister's remarks where he mentioned access to justice several times when he was talking about this bill. And I'm just going to quote a few things that the minister had said at the time. He said:

The Ministry of Justice developed the justice innovation agenda in 2014 with a vision to create understandable, timely, and affordable justice for Saskatchewan citizens. As part of that agenda, the ministry is reviewing the way

justice services are delivered and what improvements can be made to ensure Saskatchewan citizens have access to these important services.

And then, Mr. Speaker, he goes on to talk about all the changes that are included in this new Act but fails to mention that he's actually removed provisions that helped improve access to justice in the province. And then concluded his remarks by saying, and I quote, Mr. Deputy Speaker, "... access to justice remains an important issue in the legal community as well as the public at large." This bill will make important changes that will "enhance access to justice for Saskatchewan residents . . . [by providing] timely, cost-effective, and citizen-centred dispute resolution through the small claims process," Mr. Speaker.

So he talked about access to justice twice at length when tabling this legislation but failed to mention that there's some pretty significant provisions in here or that were in the old Act that are not being included in the new Act, Mr. Speaker.

Now the small claims court is a very important court in our system. It's one of the more accessible courts that we have. It's typically one where you'll more frequently see unrepresented litigants. You do see more and more lawyers present, but there are quite a few people who need it and who access it to try and resolve issues that they have, be it contract disputes or things like that. It's really important that individuals who are using that service have the ability to at least have some resources to be able to understand the process and create documents that make sense.

I'm not too sure what the logic is behind this change, Mr. Speaker. What it's going to do is it's going to slow down the process because these individuals aren't going to be able to have the resource available to help them make sure that their statement of claims makes sense and that it actually follows the requirements within the small claims court. And not only is this important, clear documents important for individuals who are writing the statement of claim, it's better for defendants, and it's better for the judiciary, Mr. Speaker.

If we want to improve access to justice in this province, Mr. Speaker, we need everyone to come to the table. We need the Ministry of Justice. We need court services. We need the judiciary. We need non-profits who are already doing this front-line work, Mr. Speaker. This is a serious step back. We should be expanding these services not retracting from them, Mr. Speaker. It's going to create some significant delays. And I'm not sure if the minister's expecting that non-profits or the legal community's going to pick up the slack, but I think he'll be disappointed to see that it's going to create some serious, serious issues.

The organization that I used to work for provides free legal services for individuals who qualify financially in terms of getting legal advice on areas like this. But their ability to do that work is limited, and it's subject to income screening which creates quite a gap in terms of people who are using this service who aren't going to be able to get anything in the future.

So if the minister and his staff frankly want to continue going around the province talking about how access to justice is

important to this government, I'd strongly encourage the minister to really rethink this provision and the direction that we're going in terms of access to legal information and access to legal services in this province, Mr. Speaker.

So I'm looking forward to having an opportunity to have a deeper discussion about these issues as well as some questions that I have with respect to some of the changes, Mr. Speaker. But I think for now that concludes my remarks.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the member that Bill No. 35, *The Small Claims 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 35, *The Small Claims Act, 2016* be committed to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

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

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 Regina Douglas Park.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now this bill is an accompanying bill to the bill I just spoke about, No. 35. It makes some essentially consequential amendments to some other legislation in reference to the changes that were made in Bill 35, Mr. Speaker.

I think if anyone's interested in my thoughts on Bill 36, I encourage them to look at my remarks with respect to Bill 35 and the concerns that I have with respect to the severe impediments to access to justice that are contained therein, and that members opposite, when they're thinking about whether or not they should be voting in favour of this bill, if we're not able to be successful in making appropriate amendments at committee, to remember this moment when they have constituents coming to their office expressing concern about the justice system and its inaccessibility and how it's difficult and they can't get the help that they require from the small claims office, for example — that they remember that they voted in favour of this.

And I hope we're able to . . . I hope that doesn't happen, Mr. Speaker. I hope we're able to make some changes at committee.

But I suppose we'll wait and see. So with that, I will conclude my remarks on Bill 36.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the member that Bill No. 36, *The Small Claims Consequential Amendments Act, 2016* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Principal Clerk: — Second reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — What committee shall this bill be committed? I recognize the Government House Leader?

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 36 be committed to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

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

Bill No. 12

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Duncan that **Bill No. 12 — *The Public Health (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act, 2016*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to enter the debate on Bill No. 12, *The Public Health Amendment Act, 2016*. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to walk you through some of the things that this bill will do. I won't make my remarks too long here. I know we have a few other items that we have to attend to before 5 o'clock. And I will look forward to the opportunity to ask some questions in committee, Mr. Speaker.

So with respect to this bill, Mr. Speaker, there's some basic things, some housekeeping changes which isn't the focal point of the bill, but moving the term "department" to "ministry," Mr. Speaker, those kinds of items. The term "nurse practitioner" where this bill is updating the definition of "clinic nurse" to be in line with the bylaws of the SRNA [Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association], Mr. Speaker.

So, and they're keeping it quite . . . I'd just like to tell you from the explanatory notes that accompany this bill:

[A] new definition for nurse practitioner is needed as this type of nurse is added to sections relating to physicians and clinic nurses.

[But] there . . . [was a] need to modify the definition for "clinic nurse" to include nurses that have been granted appropriate rights and privileges to carry out testing, screening, counseling, and treatment for category II communicable diseases. Understanding that there is currently work being undertaken to create clinical

protocols and medical directives to address this . . . [In this bill, the attempt was] to keep the wording rather general [Mr. Speaker] . . . to be inclusive of RNs with additional authorized practice and may include specialty practices.

So, Mr. Speaker, they've chosen to keep that quite general for now.

It also adds new reporting duties for nurse practitioners when treating patients with category II communicable diseases. And it allows the government to create a new public health registry system similar to the one in place for restaurants. And I think that's where I'll focus most of my comments on today, Mr. Speaker.

So I'll just recite some of the explanatory notes on this particular piece, Mr. Speaker. So this amendment around the new public health registry system:

[This] amendment broadens the ability for public access to health inspection reports and enforcement information. Currently this is limited to public eating establishments. The Ministry in the future will look to developing or amending regulations to specify the types of inspection reports . . . (Examples of inspections reports that could be made available to the public include those that are related to public swimming pools and public water supplies regulated by Health).

So I'd like to talk a little bit about . . . So in June 2009 . . . So we talk about the restaurant registry or the public reporting system that's in place right now. So since 2009 there's been online information from public health inspection reports about restaurant-type facilities, Mr. Speaker. So you can go on that registry right now and check out . . . There's more than 5,000 facilities actually currently listed, Mr. Speaker. It's quite interesting to go and take a look at your favourite restaurant and see how they're stacking up, if there's been any complaints or if there's anything that's arisen from an annual or a regular inspection, Mr. Speaker. So that's what currently happens around eating establishments.

So this bill is proposing moving that a little bit broader to actually, I think, match the scope of what our regional public health inspectors do right now. So the regional public health inspectors, they conduct inspections and monitor activity to safeguard the environment and the health of the public. So our regional public health inspectors who work out of every health region, Mr. Speaker, they do it through education, through consultation, through inspection, through monitoring, and through enforcement of health legislation, regulation, and standards. So through such things as *The Public Health Act*, Mr. Speaker. So that's what our regional public health inspectors do.

So inspections of restaurants and other type of food facilities, that's a piece of the work that they do. So inspectors go out to the restaurants and to other food establishments and do regular, or they should be doing regular inspections but are also complaint driven as well, Mr. Speaker, I believe. But they also do communicable disease investigations, Mr. Speaker, and inspect monitoring of public recreational facilities like water supply, public swimming pools, and sewage disposable

systems, Mr. Speaker.

So this Act moving to a public registry just beyond an online public registry, beyond restaurants, is a very good idea, Mr. Speaker. So public health officers inspect restaurant-type facilities to determine compliance with the food safety regulations and standards, so that's what they do right now as well as these other pieces of work.

[16:15]

But this is around the public reporting to find out if there's been issues at your favourite swimming pool, Mr. Speaker, for example. One thing that has come up though, that I've heard from people who work in this area, Mr. Speaker, is the shortage of staff. They are understaffed, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to . . . And this will be some questions that we ask in committee, Mr. Speaker, around the number of inspectors and what has happened with their workload.

So this hopefully shouldn't increase their workload. It's simply making the work that they're doing more visible, Mr. Speaker. But I do know, from conversations with health inspectors, that they feel under an enormous amount of pressure and feel like they are not able to do the work that they should and could be doing, Mr. Speaker, on inspection and follow-up, those kinds of things, Mr. Speaker.

So I look forward to the opportunity in committee to try to get a better picture of the resources that health regions have in this regard to be able to conduct these inspections, not only of food facilities and restaurants, but their communicable disease investigations and inspection of those other public facilities, Mr. Speaker. So that'll be an opportunity to do that.

So again as I've said, Bill No. 12, *The Public Health Amendment Act*, updates the definition of clinic nurse to be in line with the bylaws of the SRNA. And it's a very general term because . . . So hopefully the bill won't be back before us and so hopefully this . . . By keeping the term general, the ongoing discussions right now that I'd mentioned, hopefully that will, this general term will cover off what is decided here around that definition that folks come up with, Mr. Speaker.

And again it adds new reporting duties for nurse practitioners who we know are increasing in numbers, Mr. Speaker, and are being utilized more fully in many parts of our province, Mr. Speaker. I actually had an opportunity a few weeks ago to attend a dementia summit and was in part of a group with a nurse practitioner in rural Saskatchewan who really is on the front lines of ensuring . . . Some of her work around supporting her patients around dementia was interesting to hear, Mr. Speaker, and she had some very, very valuable information to add to the discussion, Mr. Speaker. The nurse practitioners are doing wonderful work around our province.

And again this bill also allows the government to create new public health registry systems similar to the one in place for restaurants, which I've spoken about a little bit. And that's a positive change, but there's some concern. I've heard concern from people who work in this area that there is a shortage of public health inspectors, especially when you compare it jurisdictionally as well. And not just comparing it

jurisdictionally. You can look at numbers, Mr. Speaker, but you can look at workload and what they're able to do in that time, and there are some concerns that have been expressed. And again I had mentioned the housekeeping change, changing the word "department" to "ministry."

So with that, Mr. Speaker, on Bill No. 12, *The Public Health Amendment Act*, 2016, I will look forward to the opportunity to discuss this a little bit further in committee. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the member that Bill No. 12, *The Public Health 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 12 be designated to the Committee on Human Services.

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

Bill No. 15

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 15** — *The Provincial Court Amendment Act, 2016* be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure and honour to rise today and speak with respect to Bill 15, *The Provincial Court Amendment Act*. This bill makes a few changes. More specifically, it takes the power to create a list of temporary judges from the cabinet and gives it to the Minister of Justice. Another change that it will make is it allows the Judicial Council to dismiss frivolous or vexatious complaints against judges, which is a similar . . . What I would say is that these changes in this bill are sort of the accompanying legislation to Bill No. 4, *The Queen's Bench Amendment Act*, Mr. Speaker.

Another one of the changes, it allows the Judicial Council to have one member respond to a complaint rather than the whole council. And then a final change, which is one that I spoke about at length when I had the opportunity to talk about Bill 4, Mr. Speaker, was some changes for the rules, changing some rules around court-appointed lawyers. It's more in detail in *The Queen's Bench Amendment Act*, but it's also included in *The Provincial Court Amendment Act*, Mr. Speaker, because court-appointed counsel, of course, are counsel that are appointed both at the Provincial Court as well as the Queen's Bench level, Mr. Speaker.

So I would encourage anyone who is wanting to know more about my thoughts on Bill 15 to also look at my thoughts on Bill 4, because the two are very related pieces of legislation, Mr. Speaker. But as I said when I was speaking about Bill 4, there's some very serious concerns about this change to the court-appointed counsel process, Mr. Speaker. It essentially flies in the face of over 30 years of tradition in this province in terms of the court-appointed counsel process, where typically, the way it works now, individuals who are applying for a court-appointed counsel have the opportunity to choose who their counsel are going to be. These provisions essentially take that right away from them, Mr. Speaker, which is very alarming. We're not too sure how that's going to work out.

I'm also concerned about what this is going to do in terms of the court-appointed counsel list, Mr. Speaker. I'm not too sure. I hope it doesn't detract people from, or lawyers from putting their names on the list. I know that, depending on the area of the province, Mr. Speaker, that that list can be quite sparse, and I hope that this doesn't result in a situation that creates a list that's even more sparse than exists now, Mr. Speaker. But I do worry that that could be one of the hopefully unintended consequences, but one of the unintended consequences of this legislative change, Mr. Speaker. So there are a few kind of alarming things.

Another one of the alarming concerns that I have with respect to the changes to the court-appointed counsel process is the onerous burden on individuals who are unrepresented in terms of making the application for court-appointed counsel, Mr. Speaker. The legislation requires that the individual will have to serve several different bodies to be able to meet their service requirements before they're able to get a court-appointed counsel, Mr. Speaker. And that's going to be quite difficult, frankly, for the unrepresented individual to go through that process. I know it's a difficult process even when you have one individual you have to serve, to kind of understand as a layperson who's essentially . . . usually if they're looking for court-appointed counsel, are dealing with quite a number of crises in their lives, Mr. Speaker, to, in addition to dealing with all the crises in their lives, have to figure out how the rules of court work, Mr. Speaker. There are some pretty stringent requirements in terms of what service looks like, who is allowed to serve documents, what sort of form gets filled out, ensuring that that form gets filled out appropriately, and then also gets filed in the right amount of time.

And the different bodies that are required under the legislation to be served, Mr. Speaker, can be kind of confusing to people who don't know the court process, aren't used to normally serving people. For example if you're told you have to serve the Attorney General of Canada and the Attorney General of Saskatchewan, you don't know, am I supposed to go to that person's house? Am I supposed to go to that person's office? I don't know where that person's office is. It's serious concerns that we often got when I was working to assist self-represented individuals, Mr. Speaker, and it's very, very onerous and it's very, very time-consuming on people who are going through already significant, significant crises in their lives, Mr. Speaker.

It's very much a farce to think that individuals are going to be able to fulfill this in a timely way, and all that's going to result in, Mr. Speaker, are delays in the court process. Because

individuals do have a right to counsel. And what's going to happen is that, and I can tell you right now what's going to happen is there's going to be difficulties with filling out these forms. They're going to be delayed because they're going to have to fill them out again or serve them again because there were issues with that. It's going to slow down the court process, Mr. Speaker, which is the opposite of what you're trying to do when you're trying to improve access to justice, Mr. Speaker.

And it's also expensive. When we're talking about tight times and all of these cuts we keep seeing in the Ministry of Justice, here's one thing that we could in the long term make sure we that we don't have to deal with. We have issues with respect to . . . issues in the justice system already in Saskatchewan. I don't know why we would, why the government would be trying to create more hurdles, Mr. Speaker, or create more issues in the justice system, Mr. Speaker, when they don't really have to.

One solution, one very easy solution, Mr. Speaker, with respect to this, is if we're going to have this process run through an administrator, how about we have the individual who's applying for court-appointed counsel, instead of them being obligated to serve all these individuals, how about that individual simply fill out the form, give it to the administrator who's then obligated to serve it on the appropriate parties. The administrator will have resources, I'm assuming, that would allow them to do that kind of work, and they'd be used to the process because they'll be doing it multiple amounts of time, Mr. Speaker. This would exponentially speed up the process, make it easier on unrepresented litigants, which is what we're supposed to be doing when we're talking about access to justice, Mr. Speaker.

I don't even understand why I have to explain this to anybody who is connected to the justice system, Mr. Speaker, because this is sort of . . . This is quite obvious, and we've been talking about access to justice and sitting through committee after committee after committee for at least five years. It's sort of been the topic du jour lately, Mr. Speaker, but we still seem to have these minor impediments that keep coming up.

Justice Cromwell, or former Justice Cromwell of the Supreme Court of Canada has spoken often on improving access to civil and family justice, Mr. Speaker. And a lot of his suggestions come and talk about easing the process for unrepresented litigants, Mr. Speaker. And one of the ways we can avoid having an unnecessarily large amount of unrepresented litigants is making sure that the court-appointed counsel process is easy to access, Mr. Speaker.

Everything essentially . . . And everybody knows who works in the justice system, who's ever even been inside a courtroom frankly, Mr. Speaker — although I don't think there's a whole lot of members here who have — know that unrepresented litigants can really slow down the court process, which creates delays for everybody and frustrations for many, Mr. Speaker. So we should be doing everything we can, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that court-appointed counsel are easily accessible for anybody who qualifies and who should be getting it, Mr. Speaker.

Alternatively we could be adequately funding legal aid, Mr. Speaker. Legal aid is severely underfunded, which results in

more people actually needing court-appointed counsel. So here's another suggestion to the Minister of Justice: more adequately fund legal aid and work with also his federal counterparts to ensure that they're also covering what they should be doing as well.

Legal aid in Saskatchewan, it covers significantly less areas of law than other provinces, Mr. Speaker. Ontario, BC, Alberta are ones that I can think of off the top of my head, Mr. Speaker, who provide a much more robust service than we do. We have very, very good, hard-working lawyers in legal aid, Mr. Speaker, who are constantly working — I speak to them often — are handling hundreds and hundreds of files, very, very high-profile, important files. We should be respecting the hard work that they do and ensure that they are adequately funded, Mr. Speaker.

But to cover the gap in terms of legal aid and private practice counsel, that's why we have court-appointed counsel, Mr. Speaker. And it's a pretty large gap, so it's pretty important that this system be respected and maintained. Although it should probably be clarified, Mr. Speaker, how the process goes, we need to make sure that it's accessible. And these changes will make it less accessible, Mr. Speaker, than it is now, and that's a huge concern that I have, Mr. Speaker.

I know I'll have the opportunity to speak about this more at committee. I'm looking forward to having that opportunity with the Minister of Justice, so with that I'll conclude my remarks for now.

[16:30]

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the member that Bill No. 15, *The Provincial Court 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 15 be committed to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

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

Bill No. 16

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Harpauer that **Bill No. 16 — *The Adoption Amendment Act, 2016/Loi modificative de 2016 sur l'adoption*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured to stand here today and talk about Bill No. 16, *The Adoption Amendment Act, 2016*. This was brought forward by the previous minister of Social Services in the spring session. And November is Adoption Awareness Month, so it's a great time to sit and talk about adoption in our province and legislation with regards to it. So I look forward to having a good discussion in committee with the minister and her colleagues about adoption within Saskatchewan because I do have a lot of questions.

But getting to the bill in front of us here, some of the changes with regards to what the minister was proposing with amendments to this legislation, the first change was changing the revocation period from 14 days to 21 days. I guess previously in the province it used to be 30 days, but that was changed in the late '80s to 14 days. And now the minister is asking for that to be changed from 14 days to 21 days.

I do have some questions with regards to those changes. I understand that there's some provinces within the country that have the 21 days, but it seems like the provinces . . . it varies from 10 to 30 days. And I'm just wondering if this was based on some best-practice material that indicates that this might be the best time frame, and why was the extension deemed as being important.

A lot of mothers that I talked to that have placed their children up for adoption, they've put in a lot of consideration with regards to their decision over the course of time. And they have the nine months to make up their decision, and that's if they're giving up the baby right from birth. But with some mothers it might be later on, but they put a lot of consideration into it. And I do believe that we need to have a time frame to allow them, if they change their mind. But sometimes that just puts another burden on them as well, and what will an extra week do? Why would an extra week provide them that much more time to make that decision? Has there been some people who came back within that time frame, and was there an issue before with regards to the 14-day time frame? What was the reasoning for the change? I have a lot of questions with regards to that.

We also have to consider that right after, especially right after birth, mothers, like some mothers will have postpartum depression. And if you give your child up for adoption, they call it post-adoption depression. Will that play a factor? And would that make you think clearly at that time frame of what you should do?

And I also have a lot of questions with regards to what's the province's role and responsibility with providing these parents support prior to the adoption and post-adoption. And I appreciate that there was some people here yesterday from the adoption support group that's in the province, and my understanding is they're volunteers that operate this group and help provide support for families who are newly adopting a child and for mothers who are giving up their child for adoption.

But also is there . . . I know in other life circumstances — big, life-changing circumstances — that people may, oftentimes they're provided services such as services with a psychologist or someone who could evaluate if they're in the proper mental health to make that decision. And I don't know exactly what

kind of services are being provided to parents, and so again I have a lot of questions with the ministry with regards to that. They have a lot more experience with this than I do.

And so that'll be some of the questions I will be bringing forward. Because I know when the minister brought this forward she said, like the change is a shift from the focus to the needs of the child to remain connected to its birth family and to allow birth parents more time to consider the extent of their decision. And I'm a firm believer of trying to keep families together. And so if that is the focus of the shift from . . . the change is a shift from focus to the needs of the child to remain connected with their birth family, what is the ministry doing to try to support that? And so I have those questions that I plan on asking and look forward to hearing what the ministry's plans are with regards to that.

The second point of changes with regards to this legislation is the interview of the child, interviewing children when they're going through the process of an adoption by a judge. And the suggestion in this legislation is to change . . . Right now, there currently isn't an age. So the suggestion is to change it to seven years old. And I have some questions with regards to why seven years old was decided on. Was it based on developmental theory? Or is it best practice? Like what was the evidence basis to determine that that was a good age?

I know there are some courts, and they provide some extra supports for families when they're making these decisions and for kids in the court. So I'm going to quote what my colleague said with regards to some of the services courts provide for children to ensure that they have a voice. So she said:

. . . there is the opportunity for children to have their interests reflected, maybe not their voices exactly heard directly, but there are children's counsel, for example, in child and family services proceedings. And where if a child is fairly young and perhaps they're not able to articulate their specific position on where they want to be placed, the children's counsel has the ability to essentially act as an amicus in terms of making sure that the best interests of the child are reflected in the court proceedings and that nothing is essentially left out. So it's important that even though a child is very young, that there are still avenues for making sure that their voice is heard in some way.

And so I think that was a really good suggestion on her part. She has a lot more experience in the courts than I do, and so that's good to know that those services are available.

And I also, like, was wondering how much connection to stakeholders was done with regards to making these changes. Was this discussed with the courts, with judges who make these decisions? Because what if the judge says they want to still interview the child and the child's under seven and it's against our legislation? What would happen in a case like that? Or what if a child is seven but just isn't developmentally able to provide that service? So there's a lot of things to consider with regards to changing this piece of legislation because it kind of takes the onus away from the courts to make that decision of whether they want to interview the child or not, or have a third party interview the child. And the child's voice, I wouldn't want to see the child's voice lost in this process. So I'm looking

forward to having that discussion with the officials.

The other point that's being changed with regards to this bill is the Hague Convention. Some of the requirements that are being changed in the legislation is so that they fall properly under the Hague Convention, which is an important piece of legislation that helps to identify what is needed to do intercountry adoptions.

And so it seems like this is a good guide to good practice, but there's also a lot of discussion within this legislation about what to do when you're working with countries that haven't signed on to this convention and what kind of requirements are going to be needed to ensure that the adoption is the best practice for the child. We've got to look at child safety and rights as well as the parents' rights because there are a lot of countries that aren't as well off as we are in Canada. And people are put in positions where they might use children to make some money, and unfortunately that is the situation. We need to really consider that and we need to ensure that children are not in those situations and our province, the people that are living in this province, aren't supporting that kind of behaviour in other countries.

I also have a lot of questions with regards to how many children are adopted internationally within our province. I understand to adopt a Saskatchewan child, you have to be a Saskatchewan resident. I'm wondering what's the policy to adopt other children within the country. What's the policy of adopting internationally? What are some of the wait times or wait-lists for people who are waiting to adopt? How long do they generally need to wait to adopt? How many children are sitting on a list waiting to be adopted? Those are a lot of questions I have with regards to the adoption program within our province that really pertain to this bill because some of the changes in this legislation will really impact some of those policies that we have already in place.

And so another aspect of this, the changes to this legislation, is with regards to deceased adoptive parents. So there's some changes with regards to this legislation so that if a child is adopted and unfortunately something happens to the parents, that the benefit payments that they receive will transfer to their legal guardians.

I think this is, in my opinion, a very important aspect. We want to ensure that the child's best interest is at heart, that their needs are being met, and if they have another set of guardians that they're able to be with, that they have the supports they need to provide the best environment for them.

Also the other is the support, the educational and vocational plans for youth so when they're between the ages of 18 and 21 that they will receive some funding within our province for post-secondary education, which I think is a wonderful aspect and opportunity, so that we can get kids a good head start in life and be more successful.

But I had some other questions with regards to that as well, like what happens after the age of 21. I know there was some talk before with the department looking at needing . . . I know the Children's Advocate said that we need to look at a better plan for young adults that come from the system. Because they're

oftentimes, as soon as they hit that age, then they lose the supports, and then they get lost in the system. So if a child is in post-secondary education and they hit the age of 21, does that mean that's the end of their funding and their supports? Or what is the long-term plan, and has there been some discussion with regards to that? So there's some information with regards to that.

There's also some changes, housekeeping changes with regards to this bill, changes in language, but there's also a part where they're going to be taking out simple adoption. And I have some questions with regards to that because the minister, when she presented this bill, said that they haven't . . . "There is little to no documented history of simple adoption in Saskatchewan." And so I'm wondering why this was part of the legislation. And she said "little to no," so is there some documentation or not? To me, that's kind of conflicting, so I would like to get some more information with regards to that because it removes a whole section within the legislation. And so that's really important to have that discussion.

[16:45]

There's also some changes with regards to release of information between adoptees and adopters. I guess previously there was situations where people would access information from, either the child that was adopted is accessing for the birth parents, or the birth parents were accessing for the child that's adopted. And they had a hard time getting that information. And so it looks like the ministry is looking at ways to make that a little bit more easier.

But I do have some concerns with regards to rights to confidentiality. What if a person doesn't want to be contacted? I've heard on both sides: a child that was adopted that didn't want to have contact with their birth parents, and birth parents that didn't want to be contacted by the child. And I think we need to look at respecting people's rights with regards to that.

And I'm wondering if there was some consultation with the Privacy Commissioner with regards to releasing some confidential information without the consent of the individual. I'm looking forward to hearing more about that conversation, if that conversation has been had, what the rationale for this is now, if there has been a lot of issues that have been . . . with regards to this.

And also there's also going to be a removal of family service boards out of this legislation because they say that they were never established. And so they're going to be wanting to remove that term out of this legislation and another one within the ministry. And I don't understand, like, what was the purpose of the family service boards to begin with? Why were they never established? Like maybe if that's something we need to look at at this point or not, it'll be a good discussion to have in committee for sure.

One area that I was really concerned about, and I noticed that they're removing . . . removal of the child's psychological needs when considering the best interests of the child. And I don't know if this was just simply an error when they were establishing the new bill. But in the old bill it says, when determining the child's best interests: "(a) the child's physical,

cultural, mental, emotional, psychological, and spiritual needs" will be addressed. But in the new legislation, it omits "psychological." It says ". . . the child's mental, emotional, physical, and educational needs, and the care or treatment to meet those needs." So I definitely want to have some discussion with regards to why "psychological" was taken out. I think we really need to consider that.

I know some children that have been adopted come with some extreme mental health issues and needs, and so we need to ensure that that's going to be addressed properly and the parents that they'll be placed with are able to address that, and also if the placement is going to be in the best interest of the child and their mental health condition.

So I have a lot of questions. I'm looking forward to having this discussion in committee with the new minister and her colleagues. And due to time restraints for today, I think I'll leave my discussion at this, and I look forward to discussing this in committee. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the member that Bill No. 16, *The Adoption 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 No. 16 be committed to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

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

Bill No. 17

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

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased this evening to rise and speak to Bill No. 17, *An Act to amend The Power Corporation Act*.

Mr. Speaker, this bill has a substantial number of small changes to this Act, largely housekeeping, a number of items that pertain to using gender-neutral language, moving from singular to plural language. So all of that of course, Mr. Speaker, is under the heading of housekeeping and I don't think warrants a whole lot of discussion or scrutiny necessarily from this side.

However there are a couple of items that I do want to speak to with regard to Bill No. 17, and the first is in section 8. Section 8, what is proposed here is amending this section to add the following which allows:

to exercise any other powers that may be designated and prescribed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council and that the Lieutenant Governor in Council considers are necessary or desirable for the efficient operation of the corporation's business for the public good.

So what essentially that is doing is allowing cabinet increased powers to direct this Crown. And I think that's something that we should look at very, very clearly, what exactly the reasons are for that change. And given the current context in this province with regard to management and Crown corporations and specifically perhaps, Mr. Speaker, SaskPower, I think that we should have our eyes wide open when we're looking at what exactly is meant by that proposed change.

I note that in the minister's comments back on June the 14th, there was very little mention of the reasons why that change might be proposed. And I think that my colleague will have some questions and hopefully some answers in committee about exactly why that change was proposed in this legislation.

However, the point that I think is most important and that I'll spend most of my time and my comments on in this Bill No. 17 is the proposal to again increase the borrowing limit of SaskPower. Mr. Speaker, this is the second time that the borrowing limit, if this bill were to pass, would have been increased since 2013. In 2013 that borrowing limit was increased by \$3 billion from 5 up to 8 where we currently sit today. If this goes through, Mr. Speaker, what we would be looking at would be a \$10 billion borrowing limit. For the simple math there, that's a doubling of the borrowing limit since 2013.

Now the minister did have some comments about the reasons, his stated reasons for seeking this increased limit. Back again, the former minister, back in June, he noted that "SaskPower continues to make substantial capital expenditures to replace aging infrastructure and to meet the province's energy requirements . . ."

And of course, Mr. Speaker, we should always be investing in preventative maintenance in dealing with aging infrastructure. I think that it's an efficient way to deal with capital. Instead of waiting until things are obsolete or broken, you invest a certain amount, and that certainly is reasonable. A doubling in three years, I'm not sure if all of that can be attributable to that sort of investment in preventative maintenance and basic infrastructure, however. And there is another reason given, Mr. Speaker, and that is the 2030 targets of 50 per cent renewable — certainly a noble target, Mr. Speaker. I think the minister noted wind farms and increasing some renewable capacity that way, in his comments. And certainly that would be exciting and important to see some of those plans, but of course we haven't really seen those plans or much of the discussion about how exactly we're going to meet those goals, Mr. Speaker. I know having goals is lovely, it's important, but you also have to operationalize those goals and figure out exactly how you're going to do that, and I don't see a plan here.

And I suspect that my colleague will have a number of questions as to what exactly is intended to be invested in and purchased, given this again doubling of the borrowing limits since 2013. And I think those are very significant questions for members of the public, certainly for my colleagues.

But you know, just a concern about the level of debt that we are experiencing in this province. Of course we heard brief mention yesterday and some scant details today about the fact that we are . . . Provincially this government is now \$1 billion in deficit, Mr. Speaker. And of course we also are seeing increasing debt loads on our Crowns, Mr. Speaker, and that has very serious implications and concerns. And I think we have the attention of the province here, wondering exactly what is going on.

But the minister did not mention, in terms of some of the cause of the debt that we see and the reasons for this increased spending . . . or borrowing limit rather, with SaskPower in Bill 17, there's no mention, but certainly there has been mention in the media and discussion with constituents, discussion, questions posed to both the government and members of the opposition. It's a ways back, Mr. Speaker, but the \$47 million wasted on smart meters and that whole mismanagement, that wasn't noted in the preamble when the minister was speaking to this bill at second reading.

Also not noted but certainly has to account for a significant portion, is the Boundary dam 3 project, over one and a half billion dollars, Mr. Speaker. And we all know that there were a number of cost overruns, underperformance issues, glitches that caused that investment to inflate greatly and quickly, Mr. Speaker.

Also related to that were the penalties paid to Cenovus. Those penalties were \$20 million in 2014 and 2015 — not a small amount, Mr. Speaker — paid because we failed to make our contractual obligations in terms of delivering CO₂ because of undercapacity or underperformance of that BD3 [Boundary dam 3], Mr. Speaker. So that certainly is part of the picture here, and why we see the minister coming back to this Assembly seeking again an increase to that borrowing limit. And I think that's extremely concerning, Mr. Speaker.

And I know that the people of Saskatchewan have a lot of questions about that, a lot of concerns. Are we going to allow SaskPower to do the very important work that it needs to do in this province in providing power at a reasonable rate to all residents of Saskatchewan, be they urban or remote? How are they going to meet their targets, their 2030 targets, Mr. Speaker, in investment in renewables?

So I know my colleagues have had a number of comments on this, and they will have continued comments and raise their concerns and meet with stakeholders ahead of committee. But with that I would like to conclude my comments.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the member that Bill No. 17, *The Power Corporation 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 recognize you too. I designate Bill No. 17 to be committed to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

The Speaker: — This bill stands committed to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies. 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 do now adjourn. And is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. This Assembly now stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 10 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:59.]

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