



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

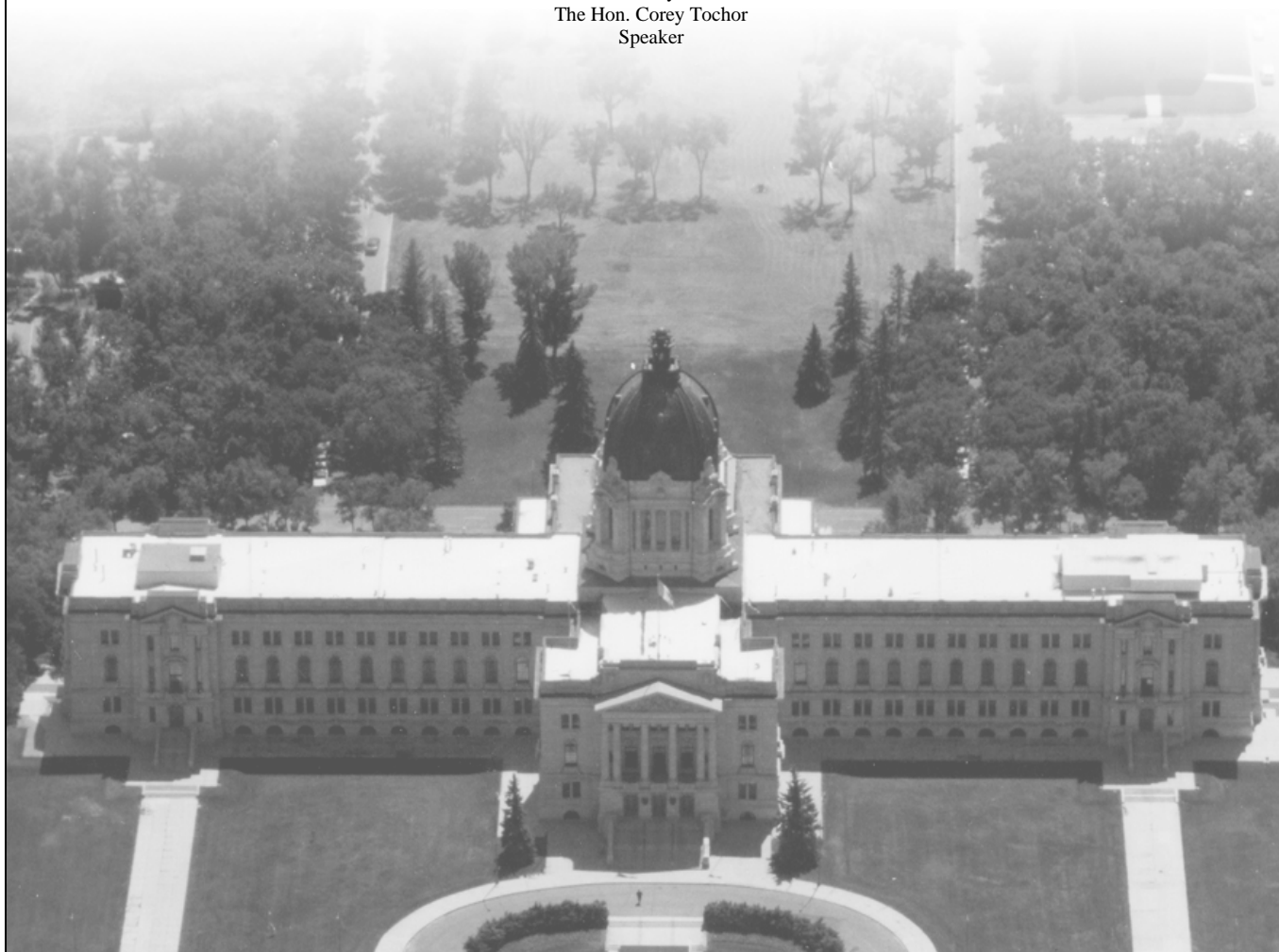
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)

Published under the  
authority of  
The Hon. Corey Tochor  
Speaker



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

**Speaker** — Hon. Corey Tochor

**Premier** — Hon. Brad Wall

**Leader of the Opposition** — Trent Wotherspoon

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

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

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

**Bonk**, Steven — Moosomin (SP)

**Boyd**, Bill — Kindersley (SP)

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

**Brkich**, Greg — Arm River (SP)

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

**Carr**, Lori — Estevan (SP)

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

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

**Cox**, Herb — The Battlefords (SP)

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**Dennis**, Terry — Canora-Pelly (SP)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Kirsch**, Delbert — Batoche (SP)

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

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

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

**Marit**, Hon. David — Wood River (SP)

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

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

**Meili**, Ryan — Saskatoon Meewasin (NDP)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Phillips**, Kevin — Melfort (SP)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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**Party Standings:** Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 50; New Democratic Party (NDP) — 11

**Clerks-at-the-Table**

**Clerk** — Gregory A. Putz

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

**Principal Clerk** — Iris Lang

**Clerk Assistant** — Kathy Burianyak

**Sergeant-at-Arms** — Terry Quinn

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

**MESSAGE FROM HER MAJESTY  
QUEEN ELIZABETH II**

**The Speaker:** — It being Commonwealth Day, I would ask members to please rise for a message from the Queen:

This Commonwealth Day, a baton will set out from Buckingham Palace and begin a long and extraordinary journey. Over the next twelve months, the Baton will visit people living in the nations and territories of our Commonwealth family in every continent and ocean.

Carried on its way by thousands of people of all ages and backgrounds, by the time it reaches its final destination, The Queen's Baton will have brought together, through its route and symbolism, almost 2.5 billion people who share the special connection of being Commonwealth citizens.

Contained within the Baton will be a written message that will be opened and read at the Commonwealth Games in Australia next year. However, there is an even more powerful message to be seen and experienced as the Baton passes from hand to hand, from seashore to mountaintop, through cities, towns, and villages. It is the message of a peace-building Commonwealth.

The cornerstones on which peace is founded are, quite simply, respect and understanding for one another. Working together, we build peace by defending the dignity of every individual and community.

By upholding justice and the rule of law, and by striving for societies that are fair and offer opportunities for all, we overcome division and find reconciliation, so that the benefits of progress and prosperity may be multiplied and shared.

As members of the Commonwealth family we can find much to be thankful for in the inheritances we have received from those who came before us. Through consensus and co-operation great things have been achieved.

We can find further reward and fulfilment by continuing to collaborate with others in a spirit of goodwill to build a peaceful and abundant future for all Commonwealth citizens.

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS**

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, I request leave for an extended introduction.

**The Speaker:** — Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is an honour today, a pleasure to be able to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, a very special guest, Mr. Speaker, and a representative of a fellow Commonwealth nation, Mr. Speaker. With us today is His Excellency Mizanur Rahman, the High Commissioner of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to Canada.

His Excellency is joined by his colleague, Mr. Dewan Mahmudul Haque. Mr. Speaker, he is the first secretary for commercial affairs at the High Commission, and accompanying our guests from protocol, Melinda Carter and Lisa Harder as well, Mr. Speaker. We want to welcome this group and these two gentlemen from the High Commission to the Legislative Assembly today.

Mr. Speaker, the High Commissioner is visiting Saskatchewan for the next three days, and he has a very, very busy schedule. He's already met with the Minister of the Economy as well as the Minister of Agriculture, and there will be other meetings with representatives from the government, the business community, and our academic institutions here in Regina and in Saskatoon. There will also be, in Saskatoon, tours of the Canadian Light Source synchrotron, and then a tour of the Lanigan potash mine I think, Mr. Speaker, is also planned.

This is fitting because not too many years ago, sales of potash from our province continued — were restarted, if you will, Mr. Speaker — between Bangladesh and the province of Saskatchewan. That was an issue that I had raised, that our delegation had raised on the first ever trade mission from the province of Saskatchewan to Bangladesh some years ago, and we're very grateful for the reanimation of that relationship.

Mr. Speaker, I can inform members of the House that Saskatchewan is Canada's leading exporter to Bangladesh. Of all of the provinces in Canada, in fact 56 per cent of all of Canada's exports to Bangladesh come from the province of Saskatchewan. And so it behooves us this day, and frankly beyond this day, to say thank you, to say thank you to the people of Bangladesh through the government, through the republic itself for the partnership that we have.

Mr. Speaker, during the last decade, shipments from Saskatchewan to Bangladesh have actually doubled to \$441 million. Principally the exports are pulses, lentils, and peas, but also wheat and, as I've just noted, potash as well. In 2014 is when I was happy and pleased to be able to go to Bangladesh and witness the signing of an agreement that marked the first exports of potash, as I've already noted.

Mr. Speaker, on the academic front, our researchers are working with their counterparts in Bangladesh on a number of innovative projects, and we're advised that there are 150 students from Bangladesh enrolled in post-secondary institutions in Saskatchewan.

We should also acknowledge the growing and vibrant

Bangladeshi community that exists here in the province. Since 2011 more than 1,700 citizens from that country have become permanent residents of the province of Saskatchewan, and they have made Saskatchewan a better place, a more diverse and better place. And we're grateful for that part of the partnership as well.

Mr. Speaker, you learn new things when you travel abroad. It's been a great honour for me to have been to Bangladesh, as I've mentioned, and to learn that this relationship is a mutually beneficial one. It needs to be two-way; in fact we probably need to double our efforts on this side to make sure there is a greater benefit to Bangladesh. And one of the ways I hope to do that are through investments in the global food security institute at the University of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, it's true that red lentils from our province are high in selenium, and that has a salutary effect on the fact that there's a high natural occurrence of arsenic in Bangladesh. We need to explore more synergy, more opportunity to improve the health in our partner nations, including obviously in Bangladesh.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I would just ask that all members would join with me today in welcoming His Excellency and the official from the High Commission here to the legislature in Regina.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, it's my honour to join with the Premier here today and welcome this delegation from Bangladesh to the Assembly, to thank them on behalf of a grateful opposition and thank them on behalf of a grateful province.

Certainly to His Excellency Mizanur Rahman, the High Commissioner of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to Canada, and to Mr. Dewan Mahmudul Haque, first secretary of the High Commission in Ottawa, welcome to Saskatchewan. Welcome to our Assembly.

As has been mentioned but wanting to share this, your presence here today is greatly valued, as is the relationship that Saskatchewan and Canada has with Bangladesh. Of course that relationship is not just valued but it's a growing relationship. As was mentioned by the Premier, Saskatchewan leads Canada by way of provinces with exports to Bangladesh, with over half a million dollars in exports to Bangladesh annually. And I know that agricultural producers all across Saskatchewan are so thankful for that relationship.

We also greatly value that relationship as it relates to potash, and not just our ability to sell potash to Bangladesh and support that important industry here in Saskatchewan but to support agriculture in Bangladesh as well.

Very, very importantly, it's important for all of us to note the contributions of the Bangladeshi-Canadian community to our province. To all of those that have chosen to build their lives in Saskatchewan, to study, to work, to build their families, and to build and better Saskatchewan within the Bangladeshi-Canadian community, I say thank you. It strengthens our province and it builds our future.

Mr. Speaker, this is an important relationship. It's valued to have this delegation here today. On behalf of the official opposition, as I say, I say thanks. Let's build this relationship. We wish you constructive meetings, and let's keep building for the future. Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Steinley:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and to you and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly, I'd like to introduce two constituents of ours in Regina Walsh Acres, Elizabeth and Ian Knibbs. Elizabeth is in grade 5 at St. Angela. She enjoys the classes of religion, math, and art. Her interests are politics and candy, and she is very good at artwork so she has some artwork hanging on her bedroom wall. And she is very excited because after these proceedings we're going to have opportunities to go and have a discussion with the member from Swift Current, which she is very much looking forward to meeting him.

With Elizabeth is her father, Ian. I've gotten to know Ian quite well over the last couple years as a constituent, and he's very involved with his community. Ian is the district manager for Coram Construction. He's a chairperson for Merit Contractors Association, the chairperson for the Carpentry Trade Board, director for the examination development curriculum board, director for Merit Canada, and he was a participant for Kiss the Canvas fundraiser which is a boxing fundraiser for palliative care in Regina for Greystone Bereavement. Coram participates with Caring Hearts Camp, bereavement for children.

So as I said, Ian is a very active member of his community, and our communities are all better off for involvement by people like him. So I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming Elizabeth and Ian to their Legislative Assembly.

And finally, they've already had one of the best parts of the tour because they were able to partake in the member from Carrot River Valley's brownies. He is famous for his cooking. And we had lunch, and he had a couple left over for dessert, so he was very excited to share those. So welcome, Ian and Elizabeth.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask your permission to have an extended introduction today.

**The Speaker:** — Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried. I recognize the member.

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very honoured today to present members of my family who are here, most of them for the first time, today.

Mahli Brindamour, my wife, is here for the first time. The other day the Premier referenced 650 new docs in the province and then said, oh wait, 649, and pointed at me. And I thought that was a pretty good joke. But Mahli came out here for residency,

the other year from Montreal, and she'd planned to go right away back to Montreal as soon as she could, but she decided she liked me and decided she liked Saskatchewan and has stuck around. So in recruitment and retention, I think it evens out. In terms of quality of physician, we're much ahead. She's an excellent pediatrician, working with refugee populations, First Nations and Métis children, and children in foster care, and has been a great advocate for the health of children in our province.

I'm also very pleased to welcome Abraham, who is five. He goes to the École canadienne-française in Saskatoon. He's an excellent swimmer, and I was able to convince him to join us today by telling him that this place was a lot like the Hogwarts school of magic . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Thank you. Mr. Speaker, no comments to Mr. Malfoy at this time.

I would also like to present . . .

Je dois présenter . . . Je suis très content de présenter ma belle-mère, Françoise Tchou, qui est avec nous pour la première fois dans cette législature. Elle est ici de Québec pour nous rendre visite, et je suis très remerciant pour l'appui et l'amour qu'elle et sa famille m'ont montré dans les dernières années.

Et je dois aussi tristement mentionner quelqu'un qui n'est pas avec nous. Ça c'est Michel Brindamour, mon beau-père, qui est décédé la veille de Noël cette année. Et je suis vraiment triste qu'il n'est pas là parce qu'il aimait tellement la politique. Il aimait tellement la fransaskoisie et la francophonie d'ici. Il aura été vraiment content de me voir dans cette place.

[Translation: I have to present . . . I am very happy to present my mother-in-law, Françoise Tchou, who is with us for the first time in this legislature. She is here from Quebec to visit, and I am very thankful for the support and the love she and her family have shown me over the last few years.

And I must also sadly mention someone who isn't here with us. That is Michel Brindamour, my father-in-law, who passed away Christmas Eve this year. And I am very sad that he is not here because he so loved politics. He loved the Fransaskois and the francophone community here. He would have been very happy to see me in this place.]

I'll translate for the members, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to welcome my mother-in-law, Françoise Tchou. I'm very grateful for the support and love that she and her family have shown me. And I'm sorry not to be able to welcome Michel Brindamour, who is my father-in-law, who passed away just before Christmas this year and was a political fanatic with a particular and perhaps peculiar love of by-elections, who would have been very, very happy to see me in this role. And in particular I'm sad not to be able to share my work as critic pour la francophonie [Translation: for the francophonie] with him.

[13:45]

Finally I'd like to welcome again my parents, Wally and Lea Meili. Wally is a retired farmer, but not particularly retired because he works just as hard as ever now doing real estate. And Lea is retired from work as an RN [registered nurse], and later as administrator for Extendicare in Moose Jaw. And I'm very grateful for their support and presence here today. I ask the

members to join me in welcoming them.

## PRESENTING PETITIONS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

**Mr. Vermette:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present the petition to stop the redirection of funding for the Northern Teacher Education Program Council, Inc. NORTEP-NORPAC [northern teacher education program-Northern Professional Access College] is a program of higher learning, and has changed the classroom landscape in the North for over 40 years. A recent report shows that 94 per cent of NORTEP grads found employment in the North. NORTEP has improved teacher retention rates in the North. During this time of truth and reconciliation, the NORTEP program supports its fundamental recommendations, maintaining culture and language goals.

NORTEP [northern teacher education program] 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 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 funding NORTEP-NORPAC programs in the North.

It is signed by many good people of the communities of La Ronge, Air Ronge, Beauval, Pinehouse, Stony Rapids. I so present.

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

**Ms. Carr:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am 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.

And, Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the citizens of Estevan, Carlyle, Benson, and Broadview. I do so present.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased again to rise today and present a petition that has been spearheaded by the Saskatchewan Seniors Association. It points out the government's decision in last budget to increase the

per-prescription fee by \$5 under the seniors' drug plan, and they have some huge concerns about what's going to be in this budget next week, Mr. Speaker.

They point out that this decision to increase this per-prescription fee by \$5 affects about 120,000 seniors alone by an average of about \$80 per year, Mr. Speaker. They also point out that there are many seniors who, because of this increase to drug costs, are actively making decisions to pay their rent instead of take medication or pay their power bills, Mr. Speaker, instead of take their medication, or they take their medication in a smaller quantity than was prescribed, Mr. Speaker. So it's a huge issue for many citizens across our province.

This petition today, I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan take the necessary steps and the immediate action to end this discrimination of all people afflicted with illnesses, especially seniors.

Mr. Speaker, this petition that I've been presenting has signatures from across Saskatchewan. The pages today, some of the signatures are from folks at Horseshoe Bay, Livelong, Mervin, Turtle Lake, Maidstone, Imperial — many from Imperial, Mr. Speaker — again Livelong. All across Saskatchewan, I've had the opportunity to present. I so submit.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again under the direction of my colleague from Prince Albert, I'm proud to stand in my place to present a petition around the second bridge for Prince Albert. And the need for the second bridge for Prince Albert has never been clear than it is today. Prince Albert and communities north of Prince Albert and all the businesses that send people and products through Prince Albert require a solution. And the prayer reads as follows:

Respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan ask that the Sask Party government stop stalling, hiding behind rhetoric and refusing to listen to the people calling for action, and begin immediately to plan and then quickly commence the construction of a second bridge for Prince Albert using federal and provincial dollars.

And as I stand in my place every day presenting this petition, Mr. Speaker, we have pages signed from all throughout the province of Saskatchewan, in particular Prince Albert and area, but this particular page has been signed from people from Saskatoon, from Regina, and Canora. And I so present.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise in my place today to present a petition opposed to Bill 40 and a potential 49 per cent Crown corporation sell-off.

The individuals who have signed this petition wish to bring to our attention the following: that the Sask Party's Bill 40 creates

a new definition for privatization that allows the government to wind down, dissolve, or sell up to 49 per cent of the shares of a Crown corporation without holding a referendum; that in 2015-16 alone, Saskatchewan Crown corporations returned \$297.2 million in dividends to pay for schools, roads, and hospitals. These dividends should go to the people of Saskatchewan, not private investors.

Our Crown corporations employ thousands of Saskatchewan people across the province. And that under section 149 of the *Income Tax Act* of Canada, Crown corporations are exempt from corporate income tax provided not less than 90 per cent of the shares are held by a government or a province. The Sask Party's proposal would allow up to 49 per cent of a Crown to be sold without being considered privatized, and that this short-sighted legislation risks sending millions of Crown dividends to Ottawa rather than the people of Saskatchewan. I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan to immediately stop the passage of Bill 40, *The Interpretation Amendment Act*, and start protecting our jobs and Crown corporations instead of selling them off to pay for Sask Party mismanagement.

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by citizens of Prince Albert. I so submit.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to raise a petition concerning the issue of pay equity, and the people signing this petition want to bring to your attention the following: that the citizens of this province believe in an economy powered by transparency, accountability, security, and equity, and that all women should be paid equitably, and that women are powerful drivers of economic growth, and their economic empowerment benefits us all.

We know that the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives saw that in Saskatoon in 2016, women earned on the average 63 cents for every dollar a man makes; and in Regina, women earned on the average of 73 cents for every dollar a man makes. According to the most recent StatsCan data, the national gender gap for full-time workers is 72 cents for every dollar a man makes.

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 eliminate the wage gap between women and men across all sectors where the Government of Saskatchewan has jurisdiction, provide a framework under which this can be done within this term of the Assembly, and that the Saskatchewan government call upon workplaces within Saskatchewan within the private sector to eliminate the wage gap between women and men.

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

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

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to present to you a petition to increase funding to Prince Albert mobile crisis. Mr. Speaker, we know in Prince Albert we have high rates of suicide, and our Parkland Health Region implemented that they would train all health care professionals in providing the suicide risk assessment tools. And in incorporating their plans, they included the Prince Albert mobile crisis and trained all their workers to implement the suicide risk assessment. And so with the closing of mobile crisis during the daytime hours, we don't have these crisis workers available to provide the suicide risk assessment that is very needed in our community.

So when someone contacts mental health in Prince Albert and they're suicidal and it's during the daytime hours, they have to refer that call to the Prince Albert Police Service. And our Prince Albert Police Service, they do the best they can with working with crisis issues, but they're not trained to provide that service. And it oftentimes takes them off the streets for hours in our ER [emergency room] rooms, waiting with the client so that they could get their services, which this service was provided by Prince Albert mobile crisis and again with trained workers that were sitting with clients. Also they were providing the suicide risk assessment at Victoria Hospital because we know our staff at the ER are very busy and so this has been putting a lot of pressure on staff of Victoria Hospital when we had workers available to do that. So, Mr. Speaker, I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Saskatchewan Party government to increase funding to Prince Albert Mobile Crisis Unit so they may once again offer 24-hour emergency crisis service.

Mr. Speaker, this particular petition was signed by people in Prince Albert. I do so present.

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

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

Child care centres are essential to our economy, yet most centres struggle just to keep the lights on. This issue threatens both the number of child care spaces as well as the quality of care. Quality child care has an enormous positive impact on a child's future outcomes and yields high rates of economic return for everyone in the province.

Child care centres are institutions of early learning and childhood development, and it is appropriate that they have the same tax treatment as schools. I will read the prayer:

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

that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan recognize that licensed non-profit child care centres provide programs that are foundational to a healthy society by including them in *The 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 Regina. 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 on the Government of Saskatchewan to keep custodial work public and to stop the contracting out of cleaning services. Mr. Speaker, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan wish to bring to your attention the following:

The Saskatchewan government has taken steps to contract out cleaning services in government buildings which will result in loss of 251 jobs in 17 communities. The decision will impact workers and taxpayers. It will affect health and safety. It will affect the quality of work. And certainly, Mr. Speaker, all this certainly has proven in other jurisdictions to be more expensive. Mr. Speaker, they also are well aware that this government does not have a mandate to proceed with this. They didn't have the guts to talk to the people of Saskatchewan about this at election time.

In the prayer that reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

The petitioners respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan stop the contracting-out process and keep custodial work public.

Mr. Speaker, these petitions are signed by 1,140 citizens from across the province from the communities of Moose Jaw, Swift Current, Pennant, Abbey, Yorkton, Regina, Vibank, White City, Sheho, Canora, Springside, Insinger, Fort Qu'Appelle, Qu'Appelle, Melfort, Dundurn, Martensville, Vanscoy, Delisle, Allan, Prince Albert, Christopher Lake, Melville, Wynyard, Moosomin, Grenfell, Ituna, Preeceville, Hudson Bay, Porcupine Plain, La Ronge, Lamp Lake, Stanley Mission, Air Ronge, Marshall, North Battleford, Richard, Lloydminster, Albertville, Meath Park, Birch Hills, Shellbrook, Leask, Muskoday First Nation, St. Louis, Spruce Home, Tisdale, Nipawin, Rosthern, Debden, Warman, Saskatoon, Asquith, Outlook, Langham, Buffalo Narrows, La Loche, Indian Head, White City, Milestone, Bengough, Weyburn, Kronau, Kindersley, Balgonie, Rush Lake, Osage, Craven, Regina Beach, Weldon, Battleford, Cut Knife, Shell Lake, Dorintosh, Makwa, Meadow Lake, Goodsoil, Aberdeen, White Fox, Carrot River, Rhein, Avonlea, Greenwater, Creighton, Bjorkdale, St. Benedict, Lac Vert, Archerwill, Crystal Springs, Gull Lake, Waldeck, Watrous, Consul, Shaunavon, McLean, Wilkie, Cando, and Colonsay, Mr. Speaker. I so present.

[14:00]

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

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition to ensure job security for victims of domestic violence. Saskatchewan has the highest rate of domestic violence by intimate partners amongst all Canadian provinces. One in three Canadian workers have experienced domestic violence, and for many the violence follows them to work. Victims of domestic abuse should not be further victimized at work. Employers lose \$77.9 million approximately annually due to the direct and indirect impacts of domestic violence.

Mr. Speaker, Manitoba has already enacted such legislation, and Ontario is on its way to enacting legislation that ensures job security for victims of domestic violence. I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan enact legislation that requires all employers to provide a minimum of five paid workdays and a minimum of 17 weeks unpaid work leave with the assurance of job security upon return for all victims of domestic abuse in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the individuals who are signing the petition today come from Moose Jaw and Regina. I do so submit.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and present a petition 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.

Aboriginal court workers, Mr. Speaker, play an important role helping First Nations and Métis people in criminal and child apprehension cases. Aboriginal peoples are disproportionately represented in Saskatchewan's correctional system, and this program helped people to be safer, help our communities to be safer through reducing recidivism rates, making life better for those who have to go through the justice system, making all of our communities safer, and reducing costs. Mr. Speaker, I'll read the prayer:

We respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan reverse its short-sighted and counterproductive cuts to the Aboriginal court worker program.

The petition is signed by citizens from Wynyard, Foam Lake, and Saskatoon. I do so present.

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Women of the North

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As you know, last Wednesday, March 8th, was International Women's Day. And while that was a day to celebrate all women of the world, I'd like to take today to stand and recognize a specific

group of women, the women of Saskatchewan's northern communities.

In light of the many tragic events in the North, the loss of young lives due to this government's lack of mental health and addiction services, it is important for us to acknowledge the essential role that women in the North play as teachers, caregivers, and role models in their communities.

Mr. Speaker, the grandmothers, mothers, and sisters of the North are the backbones of their families. Their strength and compassion keep our young people safe and cared for. And their wisdom instills in our young people with the traditional knowledge and values that keep the northern people's strength going.

Right now, Mr. Speaker, the women of the North are struggling over the recent rash of suicides that are plaguing our communities. These are their children, grandchildren, sisters, and brothers that are suffering. It's their families who aren't receiving the mental health and addiction services that they so desperately need.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me today in recognizing the women of our northern communities, to acknowledge their strength and the effort it takes for them to hold their communities together during this time of despair, and to stand with them in solidarity as they continue to work and care for the North and her children. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Golfer from Moose Jaw Enjoys Winning Season

**Mr. Michelson:** — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to acknowledge Canadian golfer Adam Hadwin on his first PGA [Professional Golfers' Association] Tour win. Yesterday Adam came away with a 71 even-par on the final round at Valspar which was enough to win the tournament and to guarantee a spot in the coveted Masters at Augusta in April.

Mr. Speaker, Adam, who currently lives in Abbotsford, BC, was born in Moose Jaw and actually took his first golf lessons at a Moose Jaw golf course. He has not only had an incredible season of golf and is ranked fourth overall in the FedExCup standings, but he also is only weeks away from getting married. That's right, a winning season is a great way to pay for a honeymoon he and his bride-to-be have planned.

Mr. Speaker, there was only one problem. He needed to postpone the honeymoon as the Masters is scheduled for the same week they were planning to travel to French Polynesia. Thankfully Adam says his fiancée is understanding, and they've been able to get a refund on the tickets to reschedule to another time.

Mr. Speaker, I ask members to join me congratulating Adam Hadwin on his big win at Valspar and on his upcoming wedding. Also we wish him the best as he represents Canada at the Masters in Augusta. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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



Park.

### Red Cross Pink Day

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Mr. Speaker, February 22nd marked the Red Cross's annual Pink Day, which aims to raise awareness on the impact of bullying and teach our young people to take action towards creating safe and respectful communities for others.

Pink Day began in 2007 when two grade 12 boys from Cambridge, Nova Scotia named Travis Price and David Shepherd noticed a younger boy being bullied for wearing a pink T-shirt. The senior boys rallied their friends to send a message to these bullies, and the next day the school hallways were filled with students wearing pink T-shirts as well.

The Red Cross was inspired by these young people's brave decision to take action and used the idea to create a worldwide movement where students and adults alike can rally together and wear Red Cross pink T-shirts in solidarity against bullying.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to say that on February 22nd I, along with many Saskatchewan people, wore a Red Cross Pink Day T-shirt. The celebration of this event in our province supports the year-round bullying prevention program run by the Saskatchewan Red Cross. Considering that three out of four people say they have been affected by bullying, this is an invaluable cause that not only helps individuals but makes our schools and communities stronger.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask all members to join me in recognizing the valuable work that the Red Cross accomplishes on Pink Day and throughout the year in preventing bullying and creating a safe and healthy environment for future generations. Thank you.

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

### The Battlefords Citizen and Junior Citizen of the Year

**Mr. Cox:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to stand today to recognize and thank two very special citizens of The Battlefords. On February 3rd of this year, Natalya Shevchuk and Pat Gotto were recognized as Junior Citizen and Citizen of the Year, respectively.

Mr. Speaker, Natalya is a grade 12 student at North Battleford Comprehensive High School and she is indeed a very busy one, being involved in many activities such as the Interact club, cake decorating club, the student representative council, the debate club, and she competed in baking at Skills Canada. I think it's safe to say that she has time management down to a science.

In recent years she started a great fundraiser called Dancers Who Care to raise money for our new BTEC [Battlefords Trade and Education Centre] building. Their annual event grows every year and continues to raise money for this very worthy cause.

Mr. Speaker, Pat Gotto is our 2016 Citizen of the Year. Since Pat retired as director of nursing at Battlefords Union Hospital, she has been a tireless volunteer for numerous organizations in The Battlefords. Her resumé is long and illustrious with such things as board member and volunteer for Battlefords Union

Hospital Foundation, board member for the Third Avenue United Church and the Edwards Society. She volunteers for the pastoral care committee, the Dekker Centre, Meals on Wheels, and the Western Development Museum. She is a tireless worker whenever she volunteers, and certainly her efforts are greatly appreciated by everyone she touches.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in thanking and congratulating Natalya and Pat for all that they do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### 100th Anniversary of Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association

**Mr. Buckingham:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. March 10th marked the 100th anniversary of the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association. Last week the Minister of Rural and Remote Health, the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Highways and Infrastructure, and the member from Saskatoon University and myself had the distinct pleasure of welcoming a number of the members and representatives for a flag raising in front of the Legislative Building to mark this great milestone.

Mr. Speaker, the ministers of Health, and Rural and Remote Health also met with representatives of the SRNA [Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association] later in the day, and I am told that they heard some great ideas on how to move forward with nursing in our province. Mr. Speaker, our health system depends on nurses and their leadership. Without them, efforts to improve it would not be possible.

Mr. Speaker, my mother was a nurse, so I understand how important it is to have nurses and the large contribution that they make to our province. Thankfully, Mr. Speaker, because of this government's commitment to health care, there are over 3,000 more nurses in our province than there were a decade ago.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members of this Assembly to join me in thanking the SRNA and all nurses for their hard work and dedication to caring for the people of this province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Provincial Secretary.

### Prince Albert Council of Women Hall of Fame Inductee

**Hon. Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was very happy to join with the Prince Albert Council of Women to celebrate the induction of new members into the Prince Albert Council of Women's Hall of Fame. This event is held each year in correlation with International Women's Day. Over the years, Prince Albert has seen amazing women who have led to achievements resulting in outstanding contributions to our province and country. The Council of Women encourage and support local women who act as role models for future generations of women and girls.

This event yesterday celebrated the induction of a constituent of mine, Lynda Monahan, into the hall of fame. She is a celebrated

local author and writing instructor who has become well known in Prince Albert and area for her contributions as a volunteer, community leader, and fellow sister to many of us women.

It is not uncommon for Lynda to lend her creative writing expertise through writing workshops in our community and use her talents to help those in need through the Prince Albert youth outreach program and also the Pine Grove correctional institute.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members of this Assembly to please join me in congratulating, thanking, and acknowledging Lynda Monahan for her passion and dedication to women's issues in her community. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Canora-Pelly.

### Provincial Job Numbers for February

**Mr. Dennis:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. New job numbers were released on Friday for all the provinces. They showed that in February Saskatchewan had the best job creation in Canada. In fact there was 15,300 new jobs created in all of Canada in February; 8,000 of those new jobs were in Saskatchewan.

Over the past year, there were 7,800 more people working in trade in Saskatchewan, 4,800 more people in scientific and technical services, and 4,500 more people in education, and 3,000 more in manufacturing. There are 5,000 more women working in Saskatchewan than a year ago and 3,500 more men. Aboriginal employment is up 4,400, or 10 per cent. That's eight consecutive months of growth. Aboriginal youth employment is up 1,000, 12 per cent. That's 10 consecutive months of growth.

Mr. Speaker, it was a great jobs report for our province. But we realize that employment reports fluctuate from month to month, so it's important to look long term. In a decade since the government was elected in 2007, Saskatchewan has the second best job creation in all of Canada. And where did Saskatchewan rank the decade before under the NDP [New Democratic Party]? Dead last.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has changed. Even during challenging times, Saskatchewan's diversified economy is now built to remain strong. And we are never going back to the way under the NDP.

### QUESTION PERIOD

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

### Details of Land Transactions

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party and that Premier want to talk about just about anything other than the scandal that filled the pockets of well-connected businessmen associated with that government, their well-connected friends. So I hope that finally we'll get some answers that'll help us get to the bottom of this so we can move along.

I'll ask a very simple, straightforward question to the Premier once again here today. There's absolutely no excuse for him not to answer. When did this Premier find out that the original seller of the land in the GTH [Global Transportation Hub]

scandal was the landlord for the then minister of the GTH?

[14:15]

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

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course the Provincial Auditor has looked into this matter. The Provincial Auditor had full authority to examine all of the records related to this matter. The Provincial Auditor had access to all of the individuals to whom she wished to have access to. She availed herself of those opportunities to interview parties involved. She availed herself of the opportunity to review all of the documents involved, and she came to a conclusion, Mr. Speaker. And I would just quote the auditor, the words of the auditor on a provincial open-line radio show, and I quote:

In any audit, as auditors we're always looking for red flags, and because this is a land transaction, we did look for conflicts of interest. And we didn't find evidence of conflict of interest or indications of fraud or wrongdoing in the course of our work, so there were no red flags there.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — No answer. The question was for the Premier, and this question is for the Premier. When did that Premier find out that the original seller of land with the GTH scandal was the original . . . was the landlord for the minister of the GTH?

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

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Well of course, Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Auditor has looked into the matter. The Provincial Auditor made 10 recommendations in her report on this matter: eight recommendations pertaining to the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure, two recommendations pertaining to the Global Transportation Hub. We've accepted those recommendations, Mr. Speaker. Those recommendations have been implemented or are in the process of being implemented.

We also know that the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] have indicated they're looking into the matter. We pledged full co-operation with work that they're undertaking, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Regina Bypass Project

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, the question was for the Premier. No answer again here today. It's weak and pathetic that the Premier of Saskatchewan can't take to his feet and answer that very simple, basic question. It's a deal that wasted millions of dollars. It filled the pockets of well-connected friends of the Sask Party, and the Premier can't even answer a question about his own personal knowledge in this scandal. Maybe I'll move along from this scandal and more into the waste and even more mismanagement, Mr. Speaker.

The Regina bypass of course was studied to death, as this government said, and it was \$400 million at that time. Then it doubled to \$800 million. And then it just kept going, and now it's \$2 billion and counting. And that Premier has signed taxpayers on to an overrun of more than a billion dollars. Even with so much at stake, that Premier and the Sask Party refused to release any of the details. If there's really nothing to see here, then open the books.

Mr. Speaker, he's attacking workers. He's attacking democracy. He's attacking our Crowns, and he's attacking the jobs of Saskatchewan people, the contracts with Saskatchewan people. Will he open up the contract with Vinci? Will he fight to get back the more than a billion dollars that have been wasted in this overrun back from this conglomerate from France and beyond?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite repeats over and over again this nonsense with his numbers with respect to 400 and the updated amount that we're currently investing in the bypass. The \$400 million estimate is years old, and it contemplated a much smaller project that frankly wouldn't have been much of a bypass, as it turns out.

What we're talking about here is a complete bypass operation, Mr. Speaker, one that is employing Saskatchewan people, principally . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well, do members opposite want to hear the answer to the question? It's employing Saskatchewan people. It's utilizing the services of a great Saskatchewan company called Broda Construction.

Will that member please take to his feet and finally indicate that he understands it was never a \$400 million project at the scale it is now, Mr. Speaker? It's a \$1.8 billion project putting Saskatchewan people to work.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think a lot of people are surprised that the Leader of the Opposition doesn't want to talk about the jobs report that came out last week, Mr. Speaker: 8,000 new jobs in this province, year over year. Eight thousand new jobs, Mr. Speaker, from month to month, from January to February. Aboriginal employment up, Mr. Speaker; the third-lowest unemployment rate in the country even as we face headwinds in terms of commodity prices, Mr. Speaker. Part of the reason for the success are projects like the Regina bypass.

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

#### Resource Revenues and State of Provincial Finances

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, no answer again there. We can't get a straight answer from the Premier on front after front. Just a couple of years ago, they said this was \$400 million. Now it's over \$2 billion and counting, and going to a conglomerate from France and beyond. It's beyond defence, Mr. Speaker.

But of course they're also hiding other facts. They're hiding their third-quarter financial report, keeping those facts locked up as well. They've said of course through this year, that the deficit was originally \$400 million. Then it doubled, I guess like the bypass, to \$800 million, and then well beyond that to

well over a billion-dollar deficit again, Mr. Speaker. And now this week we're starting to hear comments, or last Friday from the Finance minister pretending that the budget . . . or claiming that it's going to be balanced next year, from well over a billion dollars of deficit to balanced.

Mr. Speaker, we know that they're not taking back dollars from this French conglomerate with the overrun of over a billion dollars. So they must be hiding even deeper cuts and more desperate selloffs and more tax on Saskatchewan people. So today — not tomorrow, not next week, but today — will the Premier of Saskatchewan finally come clean with the true state of our finances and the Sask Party plans to deal with it? Or are they so arrogant, so arrogant that they think that the people of Saskatchewan don't deserve to know the facts or Sask Party schemes?

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

**Hon. Mr. Doherty:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think we made it very clear in this Chamber and in the province of Saskatchewan over the course of the last year, the resource revenues are down about 1.2, \$1.3 billion over the course of the last couple of years and each and every successive year, Mr. Speaker.

We also know that 74 cents of every dollar that this government collects, seventy . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Listen to him chirp over there, Mr. Speaker, just chirping away over there, Mr. Speaker, like he usually does, because he's just not interested in the truth, Mr. Speaker. Seventy-four cents of every tax dollar that we collect in this province, Mr. Speaker, 74 cents, goes to education, health care, and social services. That leaves every other area of government to compete for the other 26 cents of every tax dollar across government, Mr. Speaker. What do we know? Well we know . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Order. The members come to order. I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Mr. Doherty:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Premier indicated in a speech to the SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] convention several weeks ago that the deficit for this current fiscal year is in the neighbourhood of \$1.2 billion, duly released in that factual information come March 22nd when we bring down the budget and the third quarter update, Mr. Speaker.

What we also know from a report from CUPE [Canadian Union of Public Employees] that was just brought out, Mr. Speaker. CUPE, I'm sure that they're familiar with this organization, CUPE came out and it said this, Mr. Speaker. I quote:

Saskatchewan's revenues from non-renewable resources are expected to have dropped off in half in two years, from \$2.6 billion in 2014-15 to a projected 1.3 billion, a decline of 1.3 billion. If these non-renewable resource revenues from oil, potash, natural gas, minerals, and Crown land sales hadn't declined, then the province would run a surplus this year as it would have last year.

Mr. Speaker, that's what CUPE said.

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

### Drainage Issues and Water Management Strategy

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, I hope that the Finance minister understands that there are real people, real families who feel the pain and the consequences of the Sask Party's cuts and attacks — people in this building, Mr. Speaker. He can't just wave a magic wand and make the deficit disappear. And they also can't make the backlog of drainage issues facing farmers and rural municipalities disappear overnight either.

For years neighbours have been pitted against neighbours in costly court battles while this government has refused to properly enforce and address the backlog in claims across large swathes of the province. This year's runoff is projected to be worse than average. So instead of just hoping it will all be magically different this year, when will this government do its job and properly enforce the existing laws instead of pitting farmer against farmer?

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thanks to the member opposite for asking a question that's very, very pertinent to the province of Saskatchewan, and in particular to the rural areas and agriculture in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And I need to correct a few things with respect to not doing anything. It's this government, Mr. Speaker that started consulting back prior to 2012 with ag groups, with municipal groups, with conservation groups, with respect to the ag water management strategy here in the province of Saskatchewan. We followed that up with regulations and now introduced legislation; contrary, Mr. Speaker, to 16 years prior to this administration being here, Mr. Speaker, where there was absolutely nothing done with respect to ag water management in the province of Saskatchewan. There was nothing done with respect to emissions in the province of Saskatchewan as they rose 70 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

We now have members across that want to . . . that support the federally imposed carbon tax, Mr. Speaker. They did nothing when it came to supporting agriculture and water management and strategy in the province, and they did nothing when it came to supporting industry in the province of Saskatchewan as well, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Incidence of Crop Insurance and AgriStability Claims

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, that's coming from a minister who's representing a government that's failed to meet any of its promises regarding climate change at all, so I think it's very rich.

Mr. Speaker, without a more concrete plan of action than that,

the flood of water rising this spring is going to be followed by a flood of crop insurance and AgriStability claims that this government needs to be prepared for. But last month's special warrant shows how unprepared they are. They grossly underestimated the payouts due for AgriStability by \$22 million, and thirteen and a half million dollars for crop insurance. With more flooding and unseeded acres projected for this year, there are bound to be even more claims.

So can the Agriculture minister assure Saskatchewan farmers that they won't be hung out to dry by the Sask Party, or are farmers once again going to have to pay the price for the Sask Party's mismanagement, waste, and scandal?

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

**Hon. Mr. Stewart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the member for her question, but I have to seriously question the premise of it.

What we are doing with special warrants is what's required under summary finances. There's no surprises here. AgriStability claims are going to be up this year \$21.6 million, and crop insurance claims are expected to be up about 13.5 million because of the crop that's left out over winter. And that's not because of yield and quality losses; those anticipated losses are from wildlife damage. And now, under summaries, this is the way it's handled. It's handled with special warrants.

Now I remind the member that it was her party that insisted that we go to summaries. Evidently they didn't understand how they worked.

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

### Government Support for Education

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, every day we see more evidence of the Sask Party desperately scraping for cash wherever they can find it, and shamefully that includes our children's classrooms. They've underfunded and undervalued teachers and the people who work with our kids. They've threatened to cut school boards and eliminate local voice. And they're telling schools that they can't use their own reserve funds to relieve the financial burden that the Sask Party is forcing upon them.

Mr. Speaker, let me repeat that: they're telling our schools that they can't touch their own savings to ensure that our children get the education that they deserve. Mr. Speaker, I can't help but wonder: was this the Sask Party's plan all along to raid these rainy day funds to fill the hole left by their mismanagement?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I've got an issue that I want to take with the member opposite. On February 8th, the NDP issued a news release saying the Minister of Education skipped a session at SUMA. Mr. Speaker, I want to say this: SUMA did not have a dialogue session for the Ministry of Education. You can't go to what isn't there.

SUMA was forced to clarify that there was no session planned for education. To be fair and clear, SUMA had not planned a session for that. He went on to say all invited ministers responded positively and attended, as most have done for many years.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to give the member opposite the opportunity to stand and rise in this place and apologize to SUMA. Because this week, Mr. Speaker, is SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities], another situation where I don't want to see this repeated so she confuses other members of the public like she did to the SUMA reps.

[14:30]

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

#### **Support for the Northern Teacher Education Program**

**Mr. Meili:** — Mr. Speaker, taking money that was set aside for our kids' education and using it to fill the deficit, not even acknowledging it, it's not smart. And now it looks like they're doing the same with NORTEP. We asked the minister to shed some light on their plans for NORTEP. Instead she chose to throw shame on the staff of that fine institution. Now it appears the Sask Party may be using NORTEP to get some more fast cash.

NORTEP owns residence buildings, buildings that are essential to allowing people with lower incomes to access higher education. Can the minister assure us that housing costs will not become an obstacle for young northerners training to teach the next generation?

Mr. Speaker, these residences are worth millions of dollars, but they're worth a whole lot more to the future for the North. Are they and NORTEP's other assets part of the next Sask Party sell-off?

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

**Hon. Ms. Eyre:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again, Mr. Speaker, I will say that this is an important decision for the students in the North to ensure they have access to solid, rigorous teaching education programs for years to come. NORTEP council received and reviewed submissions from six organizations. They made a recommendation for an alternate provider which we are taking into consideration and into account, Mr. Speaker.

In the meantime though, let's not lose sight of the fact that as a government we've provided \$25 million for income supports and post-secondary education and training programs in the North this year. Ninety million invested in First Nations and Métis initiatives and institutions this year. That's a 48 per cent increase in funding since '07-08. Sixty-five million dollars for First Nations and Métis unemployment, education, and training, Mr. Speaker, this budget year.

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

#### **Provision of Emergency Services in the North**

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the Saskatchewan Party, their personal interest comes first and the North comes last. It's no secret that there's a shameful shortage of mental health services in northern Saskatchewan. I know people from La Loche who are dealing with so much trauma and they still have to travel for hours and hours to Saskatoon and other areas to get mental health care supports that they desperately need.

When I asked the Minister of Rural and Remote Health about this last week, he said recruitment and retention issues are a significant part of the problem. Can the Minister of Rural Health tell me how cutting the wages and benefits of nurses, doctors, counsellors, and mental health therapists by three and a half per cent is going to make recruitment and retention better for the North and improve services?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Rural and Remote Health.

**Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member for the question so I can get on record some of the points I wasn't able to get on record last week, Mr. Speaker.

As I mentioned last week, I think at the end of my remarks, that there has been a community health nurse and a community wellness worker that have been hired for suicide prevention so that 24-7 mental health services can be offered at the La Loche facility, as well as the amount of physicians that are on the ground for emergency services that can be accessed there, Mr. Speaker.

Also through Keewatin Yatthé there's seven mental health counsellors that are available, seven addictions counsellors, three regional trauma-informed counsellors, Mr. Speaker, a visiting psychiatrist, two more psychiatrists providing services via Telehealth, Mr. Speaker, which we've heard is very important when we have clients up there and patients up there that need quick response to a psychiatrist and the visiting one may not be in there, Mr. Speaker.

We've increased funding to northern medical services, which provides a lot of these services that visit the community, by 62 per cent since 2007, Mr. Speaker. We've increased the number of clinics scheduled in the area from 30 to up to 58, Mr. Speaker, almost doubled. Hired additional health care workers throughout the region. In fact, Mr. Speaker, when we look at the funding to the northern health regions, they've increased by an average of well over 56 per cent to almost 70 per cent, depending on the region, whereas the provincial average is at 50.

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

#### **Recruitment of Social Workers in the North**

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Mr. Speaker, they're announcing cuts and pretending that no one will feel any pain. It's just not believable. Everyone knows that the cuts to wages and benefits are going to make it harder to fill vacancies. That goes for

social workers in the North too. Everyone except for the Minister of Social Services, apparently. When asked by a reporter if cutting salaries for social workers would make things worse, she said:

You know, I'm not sure. I don't think that is going to have a significant effect on my recruitment efforts. We do obviously have a struggle there. Let me rephrase that. I think it may impact on our recruitment efforts.

I'm not sure? No? Yes? One question and three answers. Which one is it, Mr. Speaker? Does the minister think cuts to social workers will make things worse in the North? If not, how?

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

**Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said last week, vulnerable children and their families are a priority, both for me and for the people that work in my ministry.

We're pleased to note that a number of the positions have been filled in the North. And we've had more interviews, both last week and there will be more this week, and additional staffing actions that we'll be bringing forward. And as I indicated last week, we're also working on recruitment efforts in both the Bachelor of Social Work program and the Bachelor of Indigenous Social Work program.

Mr. Speaker, like many employers, our ministry has difficulty with recruiting qualified individuals for our northern communities. We need qualified applicants for those. But I'm very pleased with the work of my ministry, Mr. Speaker, to temporarily make sure that people are provided with services. We are seconding from other places in the ministry to make sure that vulnerable children and families continue to be served, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Provision of Cleaning Services in Government Buildings

**Mr. McCall:** — Mr. Speaker, we've seen this government brag about the job statistics released on Friday. In reality there are almost 40,000 people looking for work, twice as many as there were when they came to power.

And today the Sask Party added another 230 custodial workers in 17 communities to that list. They were told they'll lose their jobs at the end of June. And several of those individuals, Mr. Speaker, they clean the offices of everyone in this place. We all know them. Like their colleagues across the province, they work hard to earn an honest day's pay to put a roof over their heads and food on the table, and now they don't know where their next paycheque will come from. And for what, Mr. Speaker? How has contracting worked out for them in the past? It ended up costing more.

To the Minister for Central Services: can she please tell us what is the point of these callous cuts to workers in the public service?

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

**Hon. Ms. Tell:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a result of a request for services, 12 Saskatchewan-based companies will be awarded contracts or are set to be awarded contracts for janitorial services for 95 government-owned buildings.

Mr. Speaker, we all listened to what the Finance minister has had to say over the last couple of weeks. These are very, very tough decisions. We understand that. These are real people, the people who work for government, with real lives.

Of these 12 Saskatchewan-based companies, Mr. Speaker, six are employee-owned companies. And I must also say that the weighting for the contracts were in favour of employee-based applications and for companies who are prepared to hire the current government workers.

The move to contract out janitorial services will save the government \$3.5 million annually. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Supports for Health Care Workers

**Ms. Chartier:** — Mr. Speaker, this government has no regard for the workers of this province. Across the public sector, we see the Sask Party making workers and Saskatchewan people pay. This includes health care workers, Mr. Speaker. In the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region, a lack of staffing means that more workers are subject to violence in the workplace. In the last year, incidents of violence for health care workers are up 74 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, these are hard jobs that of course come with their challenges. But to see a jump of 74 per cent, that is significant, and that is unacceptable. It is directly related to understaffing. It is a clear consequence of cuts. With staff overworked and fewer people to help out, things are getting more dangerous for health care workers and care is suffering. How does the minister think that more cuts are the answer?

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

**Hon. Mr. Reiter:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, our government takes safety in the workplace very seriously, and I would urge any workers that feel threatened in the workplace to report this to the appropriate authorities.

But, Mr. Speaker, the premise of the question, that this is somehow because of understaffing, frankly is just wrong. Mr. Speaker, since we've been given the privilege of forming government, we've increased numbers of health care workers right across the piece, Mr. Speaker. We have more workers in long-term care, over 800, Mr. Speaker, far more doctors than we did before, over 3,000 more nurses. Mr. Speaker, we made health care funding a priority: over a 50 per cent increase since we've formed government.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite take great pleasure in heckling, Mr. Speaker, to the point that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition at times heckling, for instance today, using some potential inappropriate language, Mr. Speaker. And the Leader of the Opposition, sitting right beside him, did nothing. Mr.

Speaker, that's not leadership; that's not even interim leadership. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Mr. Speaker, to ask for leave to make a statement.

**The Speaker:** — Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

#### STATEMENT BY A MEMBER

##### Withdrawal of Statement and Apology

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just want to apologize and withdraw the statement I made during question period.

**The Speaker:** — Ministerial statements. Introduction of bills. Oh, why is the Minister of the Economy on his feet?

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Ministerial statement, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I apologize to the minister for missing him standing during ministerial statements. I'll recognize the minister at this time.

#### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

##### Zika Virus Research at the University of Saskatchewan

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In 2016 the World Health Organization declared the Zika virus a public health threat and emergency. Last Friday I was at an announcement at VIDO-InterVac [Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization-international vaccine centre] at the University of Saskatchewan joined by the members from Saskatoon University and Saskatoon Westview to announce that VIDO-InterVac has developed the swine model for the Zika virus, a world first.

This significant advancement will further profile the research organization and imprint our province as a leading jurisdiction for research and development. This development could not come at a better time. Pharmaceutical companies are working hard on vaccines for this disease; however, before they can receive regulatory approval to conduct clinical testing on humans, they have to clear certain hurdles. They must first show testing results from animal trials.

Animal testing is controlled, and there are only a few categories of animals that may be used for medical research. Of the animals used for medical research, swine is most preferable because it provides high-quality data at a reasonably lower cost. There is still more work to be done on the model to understand the different stages of the virus development and the Government of Saskatchewan, through Innovation Saskatchewan, will be providing \$150,000 in funding towards

this research.

This is good news for Saskatchewan particularly as VIDO-InterVac has the only infrastructure in Canada that can complete vaccine research and development studies for the Zika virus. Private companies are seeking animal testing facilities for the virus. In fact, there are currently about eight pharmaceutical companies that have candidate vaccines prepared. Some of these companies have already signed letters of intent to use VIDO-InterVac's swine model for testing and more are expected to do so soon.

Saskatchewan has always been a leader in biomedical and health sciences and, as a government, we strongly believe it is important to invest in research. I want to thank the research institutions and funding partners of VIDO-InterVac for the work that they do and the contributions that they make, not only here in Saskatchewan but around the world. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the minister opposite for providing his remarks a little bit earlier on. We always appreciate that. I want to start by saying that VIDO-InterVac, Vaccine And Infectious Disease Organization-international vaccine centre is a remarkable place, Mr. Speaker. I had an opportunity, with many of my colleagues here, not long after I was first elected to tour this state of the art, world-class facility, Mr. Speaker.

VIDO-InterVac is a leader in infectious diseases research and vaccine development in the world and home to some of the world's most advanced containment level 2 and 3 vaccine research facilities. And VIDO-InterVac's experience in animal health makes them a leader in the study of zoonotic pathogens.

[14:45]

Mr. Speaker, this work with VIDO-InterVac securing the \$700,000, 150,000 from the Government of Saskatchewan and some from other partners, for research using the new animal model to investigate how the virus causes diseases and to test new drugs and vaccines for prevention is good news, Mr. Speaker. Obviously it's good for people around the world, Mr. Speaker. You can look to citizens in South and Central America and as the virus has spread further north, Mr. Speaker, the southern US [United States]. And it will continue to unless this research is done, Mr. Speaker.

Living in a province like Saskatchewan where the mosquito could be considered our official insect, Mr. Speaker, this work is very important. We think about things like West Nile virus. I remember a time not long ago where West Nile virus seemed to be an illness that wouldn't come our direction, Mr. Speaker. And I know it certainly has. I had an opportunity while knocking on doors in Riversdale to meet a constituent whose husband had the misfortune of being one of the individuals affected by West Nile virus in a very dramatic way with long-term health implications, Mr. Speaker.

And with climate change, Mr. Speaker, and as these vectors, the

mosquitoes who carry these pathogens, change their area, make them more broad, Mr. Speaker, this research is really very important.

So I want to join with the minister in congratulating InterVac VIDO on their securing of the \$700,000 and wish them well for the three-year project and look forward to hearing about their progress. Thank you.

## STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

### Ruling on a Question of Privilege

**The Speaker:** — At this point I have a statement to be read.

Today, March 13th, 2017 at 11:40 a.m., the Opposition House Leader gave notice that he proposed to raise a question of privilege in accordance with rule 12. I thank the member for providing notice.

In his case he argued that the Minister of the Economy released the content of Bill 47, *An Act to Reduce Salaries of Members of the Legislative Assembly, 2017* to the media on March 9th, 2017, the same day he gave notice of the first reading in this Assembly. The Opposition House Leader went further that the untimely release of confidential information by the Minister of the Economy consequence a prima facie case of contempt of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan.

The Opposition House Leader points out that the media and the public were made aware of the content of the bill prior to the members of the House, and as such limited their ability as legislators.

I'd like to draw to the attention of the Assembly that the Opposition House Leader provided notice at 11:40 a.m. today. This notice was late as the rules state that at least two hours notice is required prior to the regular daily sitting.

In the case presented by the Opposition House Leader, the Speaker is asked to deal with the early release of content of a bill and rule on this matter.

The bill has not been introduced at this point, so the Speaker has no way of knowing or ascertaining the contents of the bill.

In making his case, the Opposition House Leader acknowledged uncertainty as to the content of the bill. Consequently I find that a prima facie case on privilege, or a question of privilege has not been established.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

### ADJOURNED DEBATES

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 40

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 40** — *The*

*Interpretation Amendment Act, 2016/Loi modificative de 2016 sur l'interprétation* be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to stand today and speak to Bill 40. I have been speaking for the last . . . quite a while about the need for made-in-Saskatchewan solutions to problems in health and education, to reducing our carbon emissions, and to providing essential services via our Crown corporations. So this today, Mr. Speaker, is my made-in-Saskatchewan maiden speech.

I am the new guy here, Mr. Speaker. And I want to thank you, and I want to thank all of the members of this Assembly on both sides, as well as the staff, for having been so welcoming. As the lone person taking a seat this sitting, it's been very important to have that kind of support.

It is a pleasure to be in this Assembly, although I must admit this actually isn't my first time to be sitting on the floor. That might be a surprise to some of the members here, but I was a member of the debate club in high school, the Vanier Collegiate debate club, and I was here to participate in the model legislature, Mr. Speaker. And that was quite a lively debate. I think we even orchestrated a crossing of the floor and a non-confidence motion.

But what really stuck out in my mind was the after-effects. I was a curious 14-year-old, and we had these old analog microphones. I took one apart to have a look at how it worked, and I put it back together. I didn't think much of it. And then later it turns out it didn't work anymore. And so my debate coach got in trouble. I got in trouble. It was a lot of drama. And I learned years later, I was speaking to a debate coach here in the city, Deron Staffen, who many of the members here would know, and he said that story was a cautionary tale for decades as the model legislature took place. Well, Mr. Speaker, I remain curious about the way things work here. I'll try not to take anything apart and try not to become a cautionary tale once again.

Mr. Speaker, of course that wasn't the only time I've had the chance to be in this legislature. I've had a chance to be in the gallery on a number of occasions. The most memorable of those for me was the 2014 Speech from the Throne. In that speech, Mr. Speaker, the Premier promised to establish a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy for our province. This promise was the result of work — and this was acknowledged in that Throne Speech — it was the result of work of Upstream, an organization that I worked with that works on developing healthy public policy, alongside the Saskatoon Food Bank, Saskatoon Health Region, and Saskatoon Anti-Poverty Coalition, among other organizations.

And that group had recognized that it's only Saskatchewan and British Columbia that don't have poverty reduction strategies. So we worked together on a campaign called Poverty Costs. And we told stories of the real lived experience of people in poverty today in Saskatchewan and the impact on their health and well-being.



We also shared the information about the cost of poverty for our province: \$3.8 billion a year, Mr. Speaker, 5 per cent of our GDP [gross domestic product], is lost as a result of poverty. So we were very pleased, of course, when the Premier announced, referencing the work of Poverty Costs, that there would be a poverty reduction strategy. And the minister of the day, Social Services minister at that time, invited community advisers including myself to join with deputy ministers, assistant deputy ministers, and the ministries of Health, the Economy, Justice, Education, and of course Social Services to meet over many months and come to a set of consensus recommendations on what the best steps would be to reduce poverty along the current rate of decline, which is what the minister at the time informed us what she wanted to see. And it was an excellent experience, Mr. Speaker, to work across party lines, to work between community and government.

Unfortunately that's where the excellent part of the experience ended because, while we produced a set of recommendations that everyone agreed on within and outside government, the minister chose not to follow those recommendations. Instead, kind of last minute before the last provincial election, she released a document that was far less serious, far less ambitious, and really didn't qualify as a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy, which means it's still British Columbia and Saskatchewan that doesn't have one. And even in that document, they deferred most of the measures that they wanted to put in place to better times, times when we were doing better financially.

It's actually when you have a financial downturn, Mr. Speaker, that it's most important that we invest in the people of this province. The alternative, through the lag of skills as people are out of the workforce, the lost opportunities in early childhood development, and even population as people leave the province seeking other opportunities, the alternative of not investing in tough times is far too costly.

So I suppose this could be another cautionary tale, Mr. Speaker, but I won't take it that way. I will remain committed to collaboration, in fact a greater commitment because of how important poverty is, how important reducing poverty is to all of us. Whether for humanitarian or economic reasons, it matters to everyone and it matters to me in particular.

It's directly linked to the experience that I've had working as a physician at the Westside Community Clinic where I think primarily of the patients that I see there and the way that they have suffered from diabetes, heart disease, mental health challenges, addictions, and, in recent years, growing rates of hepatitis C and HIV [human immunodeficiency virus], all conditions directly related to poverty.

The other day, Mr. Speaker, I was cleaning out my office at the Westside Community Clinic and I took home a keepsake. Not the funnest keepsake, not the kind of souvenir that you want, but important to me to remember. It was the funeral announcement of a 25-year-old woman that I got to know very well over the last few years, and she died last spring.

Over the years that I knew her, we worked as a team to support her — the outreach team, the community-based organizations, and the clinic — to help with her problems with HIV and other

medical problems, to help her through the court system as she'd been a victim of violence, to try to help her to find more stable housing.

And while great efforts were made, these efforts were not successful, Mr. Speaker, because the reality is she wasn't sick with HIV; she was sick with poverty. She was sick with the marginalization of being First Nations in this province, of having a family affected by residential schools, by never having had the money she needed, never having had safe and stable housing, not being able to continue in her education, never being able to afford the food you need to stay healthy. We gave everything we could within the limits of the system but it was too late, Mr. Speaker. The damage was already done.

In order to have healthy people, we need to create the conditions for good health and that means addressing poverty, addressing affordable housing, addressing education. And it's for that reason, Mr. Speaker, that I chose to move away from the active practice of medicine and seek the nomination for Saskatoon Meewasin. I'm so honoured to have been chosen by the members in that area and the people of Saskatoon Meewasin to represent this constituency.

I'd like to tell you a little bit about that constituency, Mr. Speaker. It's located on Treaty 6 territory along the western bank of the South Saskatchewan River. And it includes the historic neighbourhoods of City Park and North Park, the newer suburban neighbourhoods of River Heights, and the businesses and residences of the downtown area and Kelsey-Woodlawn.

Now the word "meewasin" comes from Cree and it means beautiful and that's very apt. It's a very beautiful area along the river valley. And I was also informed by an indigenous studies professor that that word also means good. And that made me very happy to think about this idea of having been elected in service of the good, which is, I think, what we're all here to do and what I hope that we're all here to do, for the good of Meewasin, for the good of the entire province. Of course the Meewasin Valley is also a watershed, and we're certainly hoping that this by-election will have proven to be a watershed moment.

On the doorstep the last couple of months, we heard a similar desire. I had a chance with my team to knock nearly every door in the constituency, to walk down every street. And most of those were pretty typical conversations. Some of them got a little bit unusual. At least two turned into house calls where people's medical needs were more pressing than their political questions. And on at least a couple of occasions, I nearly needed medical attention myself, whether that was a slip on an icy sidewalk or the pit bull that got away from its owner and wanted to express its opinion with a little more bite.

But more typically, Mr. Speaker, we heard on the doorstep, we heard concern and we heard worry. We heard concern about the direction of this government with the talk of deep cuts to health care and education, with the growing deficit, and worry about the type of response that this government will have to that deficit. And we heard about the privatization of SaskTel whether in whole or part. I must tell you, Mr. Speaker, I did not hear from a single person on the doorstep that they thought that that was a good idea. No one said to me that what we need to do

is privatize any part of SaskTel or any other of our Crowns.

But along with that worry and concern, Mr. Speaker, I heard hope. I heard people saying that they believed that Saskatchewan is strong but that we can do better. I had people wanting to send a message that this government is on the wrong track. They wanted to send a message from Meewasin that we can do better, and that's why they chose to strengthen the NDP opposition.

[15:00]

Mr. Speaker, in order for us to be able to relay that message, well that was very much a group effort. It was the work of Nancy Morrison and that main staff team that did the lion's share of organizing a ground game that was very much the pride of the Saskatchewan New Democrats during this campaign period. And we had dozens, no, hundreds of volunteers doing all kind of tasks, Mr. Speaker: knocking doors, putting up signs, bringing in meals, making calls, crunching numbers, helping people to the polls, making sure that every voice could be heard.

In Meewasin we're also very lucky to have a strong and active executive who supported this campaign and supported the campaign in the 2016 provincial election where we had the excellent candidacy of Nicole White. Her hard work and the work of that Meewasin executive laid the groundwork for this success.

But speaking of laying groundwork and doing the work on the ground, I must recognize the Leader of the Opposition and the members of the opposition caucus for the work that they did. This is an exceptional group who made exceptional efforts as a loyal opposition in the last year that made it possible to send this message, that made it clear that there is an appetite and a need for change. And then they brought those tireless efforts to canvassing in Meewasin. And I'm so pleased to have joined as a loyal member of this strong and united NDP team.

I'm excited to learn from each other. This group, as a group of 10, had been sending a message loud and clear, and I'm happy to say, in the immortal words of Spinal Tap, that we've turned it up to 11.

**An Hon. Member:** — It's one more.

**Mr. Meili:** — It's 10 per cent. Mr. Speaker, of course we were not the only party to field candidates in this election, and I want to recognize the campaigns run by Brent Penner of the Saskatchewan Party, Darrin Lamoureux of the Saskatchewan Liberals, Shawn Setyo of the Green Party, and David Prokopchuk of the Progressive Conservatives. Every one ran a campaign with decency and respect. These are good people in it for the right reasons, the sort of campaign that restored your faith in democracy.

I also want to mention someone else, Mr. Speaker. The circumstances of this campaign of course were not happy circumstances, and no one would want to find themselves in a campaign for this reason — the passing, of course I'm referring to, of Roger Parent, the former MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for Saskatoon Meewasin. I never had the

honour to meet Mr. Parent, but I ran into him every day on the doorstep. People spoke to me of the conversations they had with him, of the ways that he helped them. It was clear that he was a real servant to his constituents, and I hope to maintain the same level of relationship that he has set the bar to do in Saskatoon Meewasin.

Mr. Speaker, of course none of this work for any of us, whether in an election or doing the work here in the legislature, could be done without the support and love of our families. I'm very happy to have been able to recognize and present my family here today. They've been very patient and supportive throughout this process.

I'm sure that I will be hearing later from my son that we are vraitment pas polis, [Translation: not very polite] that we're nowhere near as polite as we should be in here, but fortunately he got to meet a few of you outside the Chamber as well and saw how civil you can be in a different setting.

Mr. Speaker, I also have, as I mentioned, my parents here today. And I grew up with my brothers and my parents at the farm near Courval, south of Old Wives Lake, and learned a lot through that experience of course. And like any farm kid, I learned the value of hard work and that the job is done when the job is done.

And, Mr. Speaker, I also learned some more valuable lessons as well from my mother who's an RN. She would tell me about the ways in which, if she found in her work at Extencicare, that she didn't agree with someone or really had a hard time liking that person, that she would try and think about, why do the people that love that person love them? And try and see them through the eyes of the people who love them. I think that's so valuable as a lesson as we look for the ways that others would value those who we might be opposed to and try to find, through that value, some common ground to work towards.

And from my dad who taught me to drive a tractor . . . I'm sure he might have regretted at times letting me behind the wheel of the tractor. I recall being Abraham's age and leaving a track like a drunken sailor behind the open cab tractor. But he would tell me, when you're trying to keep those rows straight in the field, you make your corrections small. If you find yourself drifting one way, you don't drastically move the other way.

And when we see and hear talk of deep cuts or rash sales of large chunks of Crown corporations, those are the kind of corrections that aren't small corrections. They're drastic corrections that will hurt people and that will delay the recovery from the downturn of this economy.

Of course I also learned from watching my dad and my brother, Jim, who farms that land, how much you need to know to be a farmer: crop science, engineering, market analysis, mechanics, business management. I realized very soon that there was no way I was smart enough to be a farmer so I went into medicine instead.

And I think that was probably a good choice. I'm sure my dad would say that was a better choice than going into farming. And I've had a chance through that work to work in many places in the world, including all over Saskatchewan — from Arcadia to

Esterhazy to Turtleford to Ile-a-la-Crosse, and most recently at the Westside Community Clinic, working as a family physician there and teaching medical students at the College of Medicine.

And one lesson sticks out from all of those previous roles in medicine and the work around medicine, and that comes from my work with Canadian Doctors for Medicare. For the last decade, I've been on the board of that national advocacy organization that works to preserve and improve our public health care system. I learned from such luminaries as Danielle Martin and Monika Dutt the importance of sticking up for that publicly funded system.

But there's a tag line for that organization that I really think is worth us keeping in mind in this Assembly. They say that they are evidence based, but values driven. It means they need to know their numbers. They need to know their facts, know the studies, know what's been done elsewhere and right here, and what works and what doesn't, but that those facts don't exist in a vacuum. We need to use those facts to achieve the best for Saskatchewan people. And the best indication of our success in this legislature is the health of the people of Saskatchewan. It means the most to them in their own lives, and as well, it's something we can measure. It's something we know whether we are succeeding or not.

And we know that while we tend to focus our attention and our funds on health care, on responding to ill health, what actually makes the biggest difference in our health is how much money people make, how far they go in school, whether they've got a decent job, whether they have a safe place to live. Those social determinants of health are where we need to invest, where we need to act if we're going to achieve the best outcomes for the people of this province.

We've seen many jurisdictions around the world start to use a model called Health in All Policies, where decisions made in finance and in education, made in justice or the environment go through a process of using a health lens to decide: are the choices in front of us going to improve or worsen health outcomes? And we gravitate towards those that will improve them the most.

Mr. Speaker, that's the type of model that I think we need to be bringing forth. I personally, and I believe many within this caucus, are agnostic about the exact methods that we use. What matters the most are the outcomes that we achieve. It's not about ideology, but it's about practically achieving the best for Saskatchewan people. And at the heart of that approach is attention to an investment in the root cause of it.

And in public health we use the story, Mr. Speaker, that we call the upstream story. Imagine for a moment, Mr. Speaker, that you're standing at the edge of a river and you see a child drowning there. You're a brave soul, Mr. Speaker. Of course you're going to dive in. I've seen you out swimming with your kids; you're going to dive in and save those kids. You'll save that life, and that's wonderful.

But then along comes another kid. Another kid is drowning. You're not even dry yet. You've got to dive in and save that kid's life as well. It's wonderful; you're a hero. You're going to be in the newspaper. But then along comes kid number three,

and kid number four, and five. You're calling the member from Carrot River and the member from Saskatoon University. Everybody's getting called over to dive in and save these kids in the river.

Eventually, hopefully, one of you — maybe a bunch of us — will come up with the question: wait a minute, who keeps chucking these kids in the river? Move upstream to try and find out.

And that's a sensible approach, Mr. Speaker. It's an approach that is evidence based and values driven, where we go to the root causes to make the best outcomes for the people of this province.

It's not about whether government is big or small. It's not even about left or right. It's about the right size, the right place, the right time to meet our needs. It's about not seeing the bright children of today become the patients of tomorrow, in desperate need, where it's too late to help. And our work in debate and argument when necessary, and co-operation where possible, is to achieve the best for the people of this province.

Which brings me more specifically, and you might say finally, Mr. Speaker, to Bill 40, the bill in front of us today. By changing, as this bill describes, the definition of privatization to a counterintuitive and unlikely definition of selling most, or a large portion I should say, of a Crown corporation to a company or to shareholders, to allow for the sale of 49 per cent, we have to ask ourself the question as we explore this bill: are we taking steps that will meet the needs and improve the lives of Saskatchewan people?

We know, Mr. Speaker, the Crown corporations contribute to the health of the people of this province. Crowns like SaskTel, like SaskPower, when well managed they keep rates low, which is important for affordability of those services, but also of housing, of good quality food, of other essentials. And they also provide needed services: the shelter and comfort associated with having access to heat and electricity, the social connection that comes with telecommunications. And they create good jobs, Mr. Speaker, and that employment is a key determinant of health. And of course they're profitable companies. They produce dividends that allow us to do that social investment that we need to achieve the best outcomes.

The evidence for the contribution to health is clear. But the evidence is also very clear against the sale of public institutions. Austerity approaches of which this kind of a sale is a part, accompanied often with deep cuts to public services like health and education and sell-off of other public assets, that kind of an austerity approach has been shown, Mr. Speaker, around the world and right here in Saskatchewan to worsen health outcomes in the short term and to slow economic recovery in the long term, to have long-term ramifications to our quality of life and to the costs of our public coffers.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 40 and the control that the sale of up to 49 per cent of a Crown would give away jeopardizes our ability to implement those made-in-Saskatchewan solutions, jeopardizes our ability to create the infrastructure we need for social needs. I remember growing up on the farm, or not long before I came around, we were communicating with neighbours

on CB [citizens' band] radio. Later it was party lines provided by SaskTel. Today you can get Internet and cell service.

What big corporation cares enough about grid-road country or remote reserves to do that kind of investment? What corporation in their boardroom, influencing our decisions, is going to allow us to make that kind of investment, to give back to the community the way that our Crowns have done?

What corporation will lend money to the government when we need it? And obviously we would like to see this government do that a little bit less, draw a little bit less off of the Crown corporations, loaning to other parts of government, but it's an important thing to be able to do when we need it.

We need to be able to employ people with good-quality, secure jobs. And this jeopardizes that ability, and it jeopardizes the ability to keep our rates low for the services we need. It does so in order to maximize profit at the expense of people.

You know, selling off a particular branch of a Crown, that's happened in the past and it may happen again. You know, it might be appropriate to manage the business model at the given time. But the sale of any portion of ownership, of ownership of a Crown, that fundamentally undermines the local control that is key to success. One can no more be a little bit privatized, Mr. Speaker, than one can be a little bit pregnant. It's an all-or-nothing proposition. This redefining just does not stand up to the scrutiny of sensible reflection. Once any influence is ceded, the whole operation fails to play the intended role, a role the Crowns have played so successfully.

Bill 40, Mr. Speaker, and the door it opens to the failure of our Crowns, doesn't pass the business test. It doesn't pass the health test. It's neither the right thing to do nor the smart thing to do. It takes a made-in-Saskatchewan solution and unmakes it, to the detriment of the people of this province. That's why I and my colleagues will certainly be voting against Bill 40. And now I'd like to adjourn debate on this bill.

[15:15]

**The Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon Meewasin has adjourned debate on Bill No. 40. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

### Bill No. 43

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Duncan that **Bill No. 43 — *The Pipelines Amendment Act, 2016*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure today to stand in my place and enter into debate on Bill No. 43, *The Pipelines Amendment Act, 2016*. Mr. Speaker, this is of course an important piece of legislation, this Act. I think any time that

we're talking about a proposed Act in front of this Assembly, it's important that we look at the full context in which the bill was introduced, and the circumstances that we find ourselves in today.

I think if you talked to anyone in the province about pipelines right now, one thing that will come up will be the 2016 oil spill that occurred near Prince Albert and the over 200 000 litres that spilled into the North Saskatchewan, and really the subsequent hardship that was caused directly to over 70,000 residents of northern central Saskatchewan and their drinking water, and that sort of disruption.

I had the chance at that point to head north with a number of my colleagues, and one of the first things that we noticed on the way up was stopping in Melfort, the water advisories there when we stopped. It was a very sudden and tangible notice of the impact that the people in Melfort were experiencing. And then of course as we got closer to Prince Albert and drove through some of the local First Nations up there, Mr. Speaker, the impacts became more and more evident. At that point they were in the process of rolling out a temporary pipeline, over-ground pipeline, in order to alleviate the immediate drinking water needs of people in Prince Albert.

Of course there are a lot of things that we can, you know, cinch our belts up about and do without, but water is not one of them, Mr. Speaker. It is essential to all of us that we have access to drinking water. And I think that this bill really, really highlighted the need to update some of our oversight and legislation around the inspection and how we deal with pipelines in the province, Mr. Speaker.

One of the other things that I would note, when we went up to Prince Albert, we spoke of course with people in Prince Albert and also the Prince Albert Grand Council who indicated a number of concerns about how this oil spill was going to be remediated, the concerns about the impacts on wildlife. And of course in speaking with mayor and council, we got to sit in on an update and hear just how impactful that spill was to people.

I think of the immediate concerns getting water to people who were in custody there as well as people who were in nursing homes. I think of the businesses that were impacted. I know that, for example, car washes and the restaurant industry were all very impacted. So, Mr. Speaker, all of that to say that it is important that we get this right, that we get pipeline inspection and oversight right. And we need no further evidence of that than the experience of July 2016.

Mr. Speaker, and I was talking earlier about context. I think another important piece of context around this bill is the 2012 auditor's report. Of course it is 2017 now. Away back in 2012, the auditor put out a report raising some very significant concerns around regulating pipelines in the province and made some recommendations. I'm just going to read from page 59 of that report from 2012, Provincial Auditor of Saskatchewan volume 1:

Our audit concluded that for the year . . . October 31, 2011, the Ministry did not have effective processes to ensure [that] full compliance with *The Pipelines Act* . . . There are requirements under this legislation that are not being acted

upon. Failure to regulate pipelines effectively could harm people or the environment.

And of course that is exactly what we saw happen last summer.

So the recommendations that were made at that time were to:

Develop written policies and procedures to guide staff when assessing pipeline design, monitoring pipeline construction, and evaluating pipeline operations

[The need to] Consistently document its assessments of pipeline license applications for compliance with the law prior to issuing pipeline licenses

[In addition] Implement a risk-based assessment approach to monitor pipeline construction and verify pressure tests

Monitor pipeline operator compliance with integrity management and safety processes for existing pipelines

[And to] Assess the resources [that] it requires to fulfill its legislative mandate and responsibilities under *The Pipelines Act, 1998*.

In 2014, again prior to the spill last summer, it was found that only two of those seven recommendations had been dealt with. And of course you know hindsight is 20/20, but it is very unfortunate that there was the situation that we found last summer. And I think it does highlight the need for addressing how pipelines are dealt with in the province, Mr. Speaker. So this bill proposes a number of measures, and I'm just going to . . . I believe it's seven direct measures that the minister mentioned on November 29th when introducing second reading, and I'm just going to go over some of his comments.

First of all, that the minister noted that this Act establishes the authority of the Oil and Gas Conservation Board, and that there are currently three types of pipelines exempt from the provision of the Act, including the interprovincial pipelines regulated by the NEB or the National Energy Board, natural gas distribution pipelines operated by SaskEnergy, as well as pipelines that are situated within refineries.

So there were a number of objectives as stated by the minister on that day, November 29th, 2016, the first of which was creating a legal framework for the fees and licensing of over 80,000 flow lines that are currently exempt from licensing under the Act. So that's a huge undertaking, Mr. Deputy Speaker, phasing in the 80 flow lines, and I'm not sure how that'll be prioritized, or how the resources will be allocated. But it is very important of course to ensure that when we have regulations, that is a partial measure.

But ensuring that there are the resources available and put forward to be able to enforce those measures is also an important part, and I think will be something that members of this side of the Assembly will have questions about, perhaps in further comments or in committee.

A second objective of this bill, according to the minister, was to provide legal framework for the building, for building an online pipeline licensing system. Mr. Speaker, that seems like a

reasonable measure, that there would be some ability to have a listing — that it would be accessible online — of all of the licensed pipelines in the province. I seem to remember after the Husky oil spill that there was some confusion or some question about when the last inspection had happened. And I think that that's, particularly when we're talking about pipelines that are near water sources, something that we really need to have a good handle on and good information about.

Certainly Saskatchewan is not alone in this but nationwide and perhaps worldwide, as I've spoken about before, we have a real issue with aging infrastructure. We see that certainly across Canada. We've seen a lack of investment in infrastructure over a number of years, and certainly pipelines are not exempt from that. We see a number of these pipelines are aging and that presents some reasonable concern for people, Mr. Speaker, when we have oil being carried, in some instances, very near sensitive environmental locations — across people's land, where they live, where they work. And of course this is especially the case when we see pipelines near water. So the need for increased inspection and increased monitoring near water sources is certainly something that is very important.

One of the things that I noted in looking at the Husky oil spill from 2016, there were a number of sources that cited that this was a one time sort of a catastrophic shift in the ground, and that was provided as the reason for this pipeline break. Mr. Speaker, of course when I hear that, I have some concerns. We have seen a number of once-in-a-hundred-year, weather-type events happening with increasing frequency, certainly here in Saskatchewan and elsewhere — increased thawing and freezing events, increased flooding, and sometimes followed by prolonged period of drought. So as we get further down the line with climate change and those big shifts in environmental weather patterns, long-term weather patterns, I think that that's something also that we need to be very aware of.

When it's cited as a one-time event, a once-in-a-hundred-year event, I think we have to watch that those events aren't happening more and more frequently and putting more stress on infrastructure like pipelines, Mr. Speaker. But I digress for a minute.

Going back to the objectives as outlined by the minister on November the 29th, the third objective of this bill was to “establish new inspection, investigation, and compliance audit powers for ministry staff.” Again that sounds like a very important development, and again it is very important that we not only have that in place, but we ensure that there is proper staffing so that those people can do their jobs.

As we said, there are 80,000 flow lines that are currently exempt alone, let alone all of the existing pipelines. So that's something that I think is very important. Again a good first start, but the need to ensure proper staffing and proper resourcing so those inspections can happen.

The fourth objective of this legislation was to “update and modernize the penalty provisions of the Act . . .” And certainly that's something we saw as well with the drainage Act. As we move forward, the need for increasing and modernizing the penalty provisions is important. The minister also noted that the bill would “provide the legal basis for creating technical

directives for pipeline licensing, construction, operation, and abandonment.”

So that’s an interesting piece of this Act as well: the licensing not only for the construction and operation, which is important, but also the abandonment. What happens to these pipelines when they’re abandoned? How do we account for that? How do we ensure that there is enough money set aside so that they can be properly decommissioned? And I think that is something very important to pay attention to here.

[15:30]

The sixth stated objective here was providing “. . . new regulatory authorities to require financial assurance from operators for pipelines located in high-risk locations such as water crossings.” And of course this was something that came up again last summer. When companies are looking to run pipelines near high-risk areas such as water crossings, again, there isn’t anything really more important than ensuring that we have an adequate water supply for people and for animals, for the environment. We have to make sure that there is money set aside so that we don’t have to go about chasing that money down, that there is some money held there so you can immediately start addressing the concerns. Like I noted, in P.A. [Prince Albert], I don’t think it was very long after the spill that we were up there, but already they were rolling out overland pipelines to ensure that people had drinking water. People can’t go very long without it, so it’s important to have those funds set aside for that.

Lastly, as stated by the minister, the objective here was to “. . . establish ongoing obligations related to addressing any environmental issues that might be discovered after a pipeline is abandoned.” So I’m not sure the number of abandoned pipelines that we have in the province. I’m sure someone over here or perhaps in committee would have a better number on that. But as they degrade maybe it’s not initially a problem, but after time you start to see more and more issues there. And it’s important that we have some way to address those issues that might be found there, Mr. Speaker.

Just going to pull back to some of the other summary notes here about this bill. I guess on the whole we’re pleased to see that the recommendations of the auditor were addressed here with this bill. Express some concern that her initial report came out in 2012, an update in 2014, where we only saw two of the seven of those recommendations addressed, and then of course a very major incident last summer in this province that really brought this issue to the fore.

You know, again looking in the rear-view mirror it’s easy to have 20/20 vision. But it is important; I think it speaks to the need for long-term planning and not waiting for a crisis to address issues that really we ought to be addressing, that are part of good governance or that are part of good long-term planning in a province such as ours . . . well in any jurisdiction actually, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we are taking measures to provide a balance — a balance of course between industry, like we see here with pipelines, and balancing that with the interests of people who need to drink water, which I think is all of us. Coffee has water in it, so that certainly applies to all of us. Taking into account the needs, not only of the people in this

room, not only in the people who are in this province today, not only the children who are born and live in this province today, but into the future, Mr. Speaker.

And I hope that we all perhaps have learned a bit of a lesson, a very hard lesson of course, with that oil spill that happened last summer, and that we really endeavour to do better in the future here. So I am glad — you know, credit where it’s due — to see some of those very significant concerns addressed with this bill here.

Just to hit some more highlights with regard to Bill No. 43, it allows pipelines to move fluids other than hydrocarbon steam and CO<sub>2</sub> to be considered under the definition of pipelines. So that’s an expansion of the term “pipelines,” Mr. Speaker.

It also gives new powers to the pipeline inspectors to collect information and enter property. So of course that is important, that if they have the right, that they also have the right to enter the property to do those inspections. Again all of that being contingent on actually having enough inspectors to do the work, which we will be following closely, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

This bill also grants immunity to government from litigation based on the actions of pipeline inspectors, as long as they were carried out in good faith. I guess that’s some protection there, that those pipeline inspectors, or in turn the government, won’t be slapped with a lawsuit, assuming that their actions were done in good faith.

It allows the minister, with the approval of cabinet, to create directives related to areas where he or she has regulatory authority, Mr. Speaker. It allows for pipelines previously exempted from regulation and licensing to be eventually covered by the Act at a time to be set out in the regulations. So that’ll be something to follow in the regulations. As I’ve noted, that I think that accounts for about 80,000 pipelines and just how those will be pulled into the Act, how that will be resourced and what type of oversight is yet to be determined, and as we see here is something that will be determined in the regulations.

I mentioned previously the modernization of the penalties that would increase those penalties from 50,000 to 500,000. Certainly significant. Not as high a penalty, just by note, as the drainage which goes up to \$1 million, but that is a significant increase of course, Mr. Speaker.

Another important point, I think, is that prosecutions under *The Pipelines Act* can now only be commenced less than three years after the government learns of the infraction. That is something that’s significant.

And it also anticipates and sets out some criteria and rules for transferring pipeline licences from one person to another, including a clause stating that the transfer must be in the public interest. So that’s something to watch. That’s interesting how that will be defined — the public interest — with regards to transferring the licence from one person to the other. And that’s something I suppose I would be curious — I’m sure my colleagues as well — just how that is determined, the public interest. It certainly applies to this bill, but would it apply to a number of other things? How do we determine the public

interest? How do we create that balance? That's something that I will watch with rapt attention, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Some other notes about this Bill No. 43. It adds new regulations making authority so the ministry can require operators to put up the financial assurance, as I've noted, for high-risk projects such as those projects near waterways and drinking water, and requires operators to file emergency response plans. I think that's something that's really, really important.

Of course, as has been noted by myself here today but others previously, the Husky oil spill was seen to be the cause of a one-time sort of an anomalous event, but those events do happen, so it is important that we are prepared in the event of a rupture.

What happens if there's a rupture in the middle of the night, near waterways, in a sensitive area? What is the response there? And I think it is important to not wait until after the fact to scramble and to get people in place, to actually have a plan ahead of time. It is something that is very important and it cuts down on those precious hours between detecting a spill or a leak and the cleanup, the cutting off at the supply, and all of those measures, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think that that is really important to have those emergency response plans. And as has been noted before, there are some provisions within this legislation that the companies that are licensing would also have put some resources aside to deal with some of those emergency plans. So I think that that is something very interesting and something worth looking at.

A couple of other notes that I'll make. This bill doesn't include flow line operators in the appropriation provisions for pipelines, and flow line operators will continue to expropriate land under *The Surface Rights Acquisition and Compensation Act*. So that's something to look at, Mr. Speaker. That's something that wasn't undertaken with this bill, and it is certainly worth noting.

So on the balance, increasing licensing and regulation to flow lines is something that is important. It's, I would suggest, long overdue and has been . . . Really, the need for it has been highlighted by what we saw last summer. Certainly there have been other smaller spills in the province that have also highlighted that need, but I think everyone in the province will agree that the jeopardy of the drinking water of 70,000 people tends to put things to the fore in terms of getting interest of certainly this Assembly, but the people of Saskatchewan. So on balance, I'm happy to see those increased regulations.

Something else that I will note, and I think has been noted by my colleagues as well, that last year, inspectors did 78 inspections of pipelines in this province. As I've noted before, just in terms of scope of scale here, there are 80,000 pipelines alone that aren't under regulation currently that would be brought in. And by comparison, certainly more people but similar land base in Alberta, that number was more than 2,000 inspections. So there's certainly room for improvement there, and that's why we'll be paying attention very closely to how this is resourced and how many people, how many inspectors are given the task of inspecting these very large number of kilometres of pipeline that we have in the province, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So I think there have been a number of very interesting comments made by my colleagues and certainly the minister in the introduction of this bill as well as the observations and the concerns of the auditor that have been noted and, to a degree, addressed in this Bill No. 43. But I will watch with interest the continued comments of my colleagues as well as some of the answers, and that we receive the questions that are put to the minister and his staff in committee. But I think I have come to the end of my remarks here today and with that would move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 43.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Regina Lakeview has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 43, *The Pipelines Amendment Act, 2016*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

#### Bill No. 44

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Moe that **Bill No. 44** — *The Water Security Agency Amendment Act, 2016* be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today to enter into this debate on Bill No. 44, *An Act to amend The Water Security Agency Act*. And it seems just me reading the title gets them worked up. I don't know what's up over there.

I was going to mention that the tables have turned a bit here. I remember when the Deputy Speaker was the critic of Environment and I was the minister responsible for the Watershed Authority Act and how you're amending this and some of the changes. And I'll allude to them and how it's interesting how time changes people's opinions, I guess. I don't know. But anyways it's an interesting piece of legislation before us and a very important one, a hugely important one, and one that I know governments have worked hard at over the time of this province, right from the beginning. We are an agriculture-based economy in so many ways.

And of course it's how do we manage our water has been a big, big issue, both in a positive way — you know, we have an amazing system actually when we look at how we store water and distribute it here in this province — but also sometimes, and we know this is often the case, we have sometimes water in places where we don't really want it to be.

[15:45]

And we have to first of all understand that, you know, the land was designed in a certain way and we have to live with it. And when you buy or acquire a piece of land, certain things come along with that.

But this is a very important one, and it's not an easy one. And I

appreciate the hard work, particularly of the people over in government land, who've worked hard to strive a balance between the ecological impacts and the agricultural impacts. It's one of those situations where it takes, you know . . . And this is what nature is. It's a terrific balance of what are our needs and what can we do, how we can make it fair. And of course this tries to do that.

And while it's a small bill, it's been taking, I know, this particular government, and I look at different members over there who have been the ministers responsible, it's taken several years to get to this point. I mean they have been in power almost 10 years — nine and a half years. And it's one that has started, and it started many, many decades ago but it has been escalating, escalating as the size of farms grow bigger, as technology, you know, gets much more refined in terms of GPS [global positioning system], the size of farm machinery, that type of thing.

And yet our understanding how important it is to have that kind of environment, that landscape that we have that can escape the major rainstorms, that can hold and control that potential flooding . . . And we see this as a potential answer.

And so we have some concerns. It was interesting the other day. The minister actually gave one of the longest second reading speeches on this, so he really went to outline the details and I will actually reflect on some of those parts because again . . . You know, it is worthwhile, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we have those kind of speeches because we can understand where they're coming from and then our questions can be that much more focused, that much more pointed.

But it's one that I know, since we've come over to this side, the number of concerns that have been raised by people from rural Saskatchewan about farm land being flooded and nothing being done about it. And as my colleague talked about pipelines earlier, you know, you can have all the fancy regulations in the world that you want, but if you're not going to have the supports to actually enforce them, then what's the point? We see already that this government's talking about a 3.5 cut either in salaries or in people, and that's probably on top of if the positions haven't been filled, will they be filled? And I think that's really important that we have people in the right departments working because it's hugely important to do that.

So I just want to review some of the key points that stick out to me, and of course that's the new section 70.1(2):

Notwithstanding any other Act or law or any other provision of this Act, the corporation may make any order that it considers appropriate requiring the alteration or closure of all or any part of a pre-1981 drainage works without compensation to the owner of the drainage works or of the land on which the drainage works are situated for any losses or expenses sustained as a result of the alteration or closure.

So we're going back into the '70s and the '60s. And again, you know, it would be interesting to know — and this is one question for committee — you know, to see the intersection of the size of farm lands, farms, and how, you know, it hasn't been a gradual increase over the course of time. There has been

spikes over the course of the past century when farms, for a variety of reasons, whether it's, as I said, better farm equipment, people leaving, economic pressures, that type of thing.

But we know that in the late '70s or early '80s, farms grew. We know and we've seen that in the 2000s, in the economic boom that was happening in the mid-2000s, '06 and '07, and of course the technology at the time, farms grew, and the impact it had on the environment and particularly on water drainage.

And if I remember correctly, in rural Saskatchewan I went to many of their meetings around the drainage and development folks, and they were all set up throughout rural Saskatchewan. I don't know if they're as active as they once were. I knew they used to have annual meetings and I was invited to hear their plans and what the kind of things were. Very interesting stuff.

Of course one of the other big things that have happened, particularly during our era, was the whole issue around the watersheds and understanding the impact of watershed planning. And I'm not sure where that is, you know, in the role of all of this as well. I think that's hugely, hugely important even on small watersheds and how they build into bigger ones, and this is all very, very important. And of course our knowledge is very much increased in this area, and it's one that we need to take seriously, and it can be a win-win situation, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Some people think that if you are considering all the information, that somehow somebody's going to lose out. Actually we can all be winners and have more profitable farms, stronger farms, farms that aren't at risk or vulnerable to the whims of nature.

And I'm speaking about floods. I think of the one that happened down in southwest Saskatchewan back in, I think it would be 2005 or '04. But I'm trying to think of the name of the small village. It had so much rain overnight; it was just incredible. But that can happen. And . . . [inaudible] . . . going up also on another tour up in the northwest area of the province where a lot of forest had been cleared and the impact it had.

The rains had come and just really then, just washed out from that whole area, washed roads out, washed culverts out. It was a huge, huge issue. And actually ironically that same area was hit I think about four or five years later, just because of the change, the impact on the changing landscape. And so this is a very, very important area that we take some time to get it right, but we have to move quickly. And I know for example this government has been raising and talking about this since 2012. But even before 2012, issues were being raised. We were very much aware that people were bringing concerns forward about the illegal drainage and what was going to happen because of that.

And so this is a very, very, very critical issue. So they talked about going back pre-1981. Now the other interesting thing it says, section 70.1(4) is, "No action or proceeding lies or shall be instituted or continued against the Government of Saskatchewan," and so on and so forth, including employees or former employees. It's an immunity clause, but it just seems to be one that sort of sticks in people's craw and it is an issue for sure.



Now the other one that . . . And you know, it is interesting in this whole thing that the short title . . . well no, it doesn't really talk about . . . The whole thing is about drainage works. But you'd think in this bill you would define what drainage works would be, but they've punted that off down the road. They're going to put that into . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes. Yes, we'll get it later, into regulations. And I just think if there's one phrase that should have been defined here, is what is drainage works. That's what we're talking about. And if we're not going to talk about that, then it leaves a big gap into what is it that we're really talking about if they're unwilling to define drainage works. And so I know that that could be then left to debate in this House, and that's why you put things into regulations. And that's a problem.

The other one that I do want to say, and this is one that, you know, when you debate legislation, it's often interesting what is said very subtly without a lot of fanfare or fireworks, and nobody really knows what is gone. So here is this new section 84 and section 6. Section 84 is repealed and the following substituted . . . So what was section 84? Well section 84 was the Water Appeal Board. So we are now losing the Water Appeal Board. And I'll go back into that a bit when I talk about the minister's comments, but I know . . . And I'm interested in hearing — and maybe we'll have questions in committee about this — who was it that really brought up that they wanted to get rid of the Water Appeal Board?

Now I understand the minister talks about creating two more boards. One's an advisory board and one's a technical board. Now this is all very kind of interesting from a government that wants to do away with red tape and bureaucracy and stuff. They get rid of one board but then create two more. And so I'm not sure how that makes sense and whether people think that's a great idea. But I'd like to know, where did that come from?

And then it just basically goes to . . . so, landowner, if you're out of luck and you want to appeal, in the old days you could appeal to the Water Appeal Board which were made up of some people who had, like, who had experience or technical knowledge, but also people of essentially your peers who were dealing with the same issue. But now if you want to appeal you're going to go the Court of Queen's Bench. And I just find it so interesting. Now, not only do we get rid of one board, we've replaced them with two, but now we're getting lawyers involved. And not that I have a problem with lawyers. My seatmate is a lawyer and a fine, fine person. But I do have to say that I find it very interesting that now we're getting the law involved. And even though this is the law, it used to be that you could go to the Water Appeal Board and that would resolve a lot of the issues.

So I do have . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . There you go. So I just have to say that I am interested to hear more about the disappearance of the Water Appeal Board. Because this is what the minister had to say of this. And I'll be speaking to the folks at home about this because many of us may not know what the Water Appeal Board was. And this is one of the things that we fought hard for in 2005 because we thought this was an appropriate method for dealing with appeals, and it had been going on for many, many years.

I don't know who really came up with the idea originally, but

the Water Appeal Board . . . And I'll just quote here, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This is what the minister had to say the other day on March 6th:

The Water Appeal Board, Mr. Speaker, is made up of six members from different constituencies across Saskatchewan, appointed by the Minister of Environment. Since 2003 there have been 138 complaints to the Water Security Agency, 31 of which were appealed to the Water Appeal Board. Only two cases out of 138 . . . [were] overturned, and five have been altered in some minor manner.

So that sounds like not a bad record. It sounds like people had their voices heard, and it sounded like things were kind of worked out. And I'll go on:

This means about 1.45 per cent of the cases that went to the board for an appeal were overturned and the rest were either affirmed or dismissed. This data shows that since 2003, 98.55 per cent of the Water Security's decisions were upheld or altered in some minor way by the Water Appeal Board. With the removal of the formal complaint process, the ability to appeal to the Water Appeal Board will not be necessary and it will be removed.

Appeals to the Water Appeal Board dealt with the Water Security Agency's assessment of damage and follow-up orders during the formal appeal process. The proposed new request for assistance process does not assess damages. The assessment is whether disputed works are present and whether they have approvals. It's quite black and white. Once Bill 44 is passed, the Water Appeal Board will complete the appeals before it but no new appeals will come . . . [with] it.

Now I think that's interesting. They couldn't really change that to fit the new bill. They say it's black and white because . . . Well this will be the question we have before us for sure, is what's the value in getting rid of this and then instead replacing it with the two advisory boards?

[16:00]

And I'll just continue down:

In place of an appeal board, we will develop two advisory boards to support this strategy. One will be comprised of stakeholders representing the various interest groups, [of] which will be consulted on policy and development and refinement of the strategy as we move forward. The first advisory board will focus on . . . advice to the Water Security Agency on policy development to further our water management . . .

Now we used to have a provincial watershed board that would do that. I wonder if it's still around, or whether it's been gone.

The other board will be a technical review body to act as an independent appeal of some of the decisions relating to approvals. For example, if a landowner disagrees with adequacy of an outlet, they would have the ability to bring the technical work to a review body and the technical

review body would use this information to determine if the outlet is adequate or not.

So it's a new forum. So I'm not sure whether . . . You know, it's very interesting how this is going to work out, and I'm not sure whether it's going to be as productive as the minister is hoping. I mean I hope that it does resolve a lot of the issues. It sounds like a bit of bureaucracy in terms of trying to get this done.

The question that many people had is, the government really had tools all along and just weren't using them and weren't using the staff, and somehow didn't quite have the courage really to deal with the issues that they knew were out there in rural Saskatchewan.

So I'm not sure by passing this bill . . . And we've seen this before. I mean the one that comes to mind is the whole issue around climate change and the fact that they passed their bill many years ago about greenhouse gas emissions and then failed, or just sat on it for many, many years.

And this could be another one of those situations where you pass a bill . . . And while this government has talked about moving quickly, we know that when they started the formal part of their process in 2012, it was many years before that they were being pressured. And it took what? Here we are, five years later, not moving all that quickly. And so we do have some real concerns about what this will really mean for rural Saskatchewan and what this will mean for farmers, both upstream and downstream, and the fact that land is being flooded, but also just the whole issue of proper watershed management here in Saskatchewan.

So we have a lot of questions about this. I know that there'll be members who want to speak to this in the House.

Again you know, we've been calling for a comprehensive drainage strategy that has to be clearly based on the provincial watersheds that we have here in the province. The question about, you know, increasing the fines from \$1,000 a day to an amount not exceeding \$1 million a day, that's an interesting one. Of course, as we've said, the question is resources, resources, resources. Will this government properly fund and backstop this so that people can bring forward concerns and they will get that work addressed and we could move on?

And as I said, we'll hear more about why this government is relying more on the Court of Queen's Bench than simply through the Water Appeal Board. I mean it didn't seem like it was the Water Appeal Board that was stopping things from happening here.

You know, it's funny. When you bring forward legislation, what you really want to do is fix problems and fix them so that they work well. You know the old saying: if it's not broke, then don't fix it, you know. So this is what I'm wondering: was it the Water Appeal Board that was the problem? What was the real problem with the drainage issues that we were seeing in rural Saskatchewan? From what we were hearing, it was . . . [inaudible] . . . (a) the insufficient resources to actually determine the issues that were happening out there, what was happening really in rural Saskatchewan, and (2) to really have

the courage to act on the information that was present.

And so will those two things change with this legislation, or is it just another go-round in the dance that many people are becoming very, very frustrated with in rural Saskatchewan? We don't know. The interesting thing in that dance though, the government has created a bit of immunity so, you know, if you're getting frustrated with who's playing the music, you can't sue them in this piece of legislation.

And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would ask that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 44, *The Water Security Agency Amendment Act*. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon Centre has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 44, *The Water Security Agency Amendment Act, 2016*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried. I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move that this House do now adjourn.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Government House Leader has moved that this House does now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried. This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:06.]



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