



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

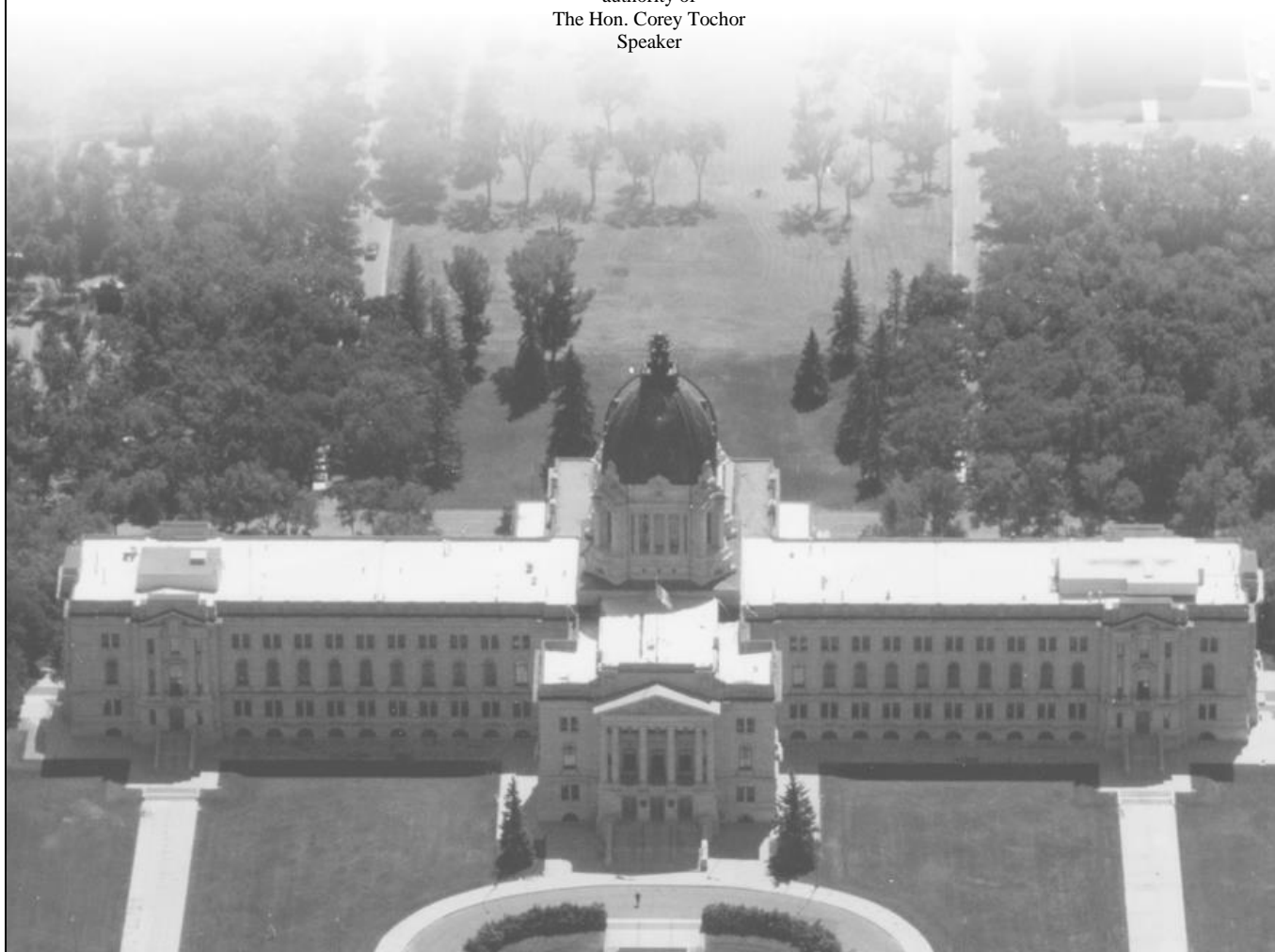
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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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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)

**Buckingham**, David — Saskatoon Westview (SP)

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

**Carr**, Lori — Estevan (SP)

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

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

**Cox**, Herb — The Battlefords (SP)

**D'Autremont**, Dan — Cannington (SP)

**Dennis**, Terry — Canora-Pelly (SP)

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

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

**Doke**, Larry — Cut Knife-Turtleford (SP)

**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)

**Heppner**, Nancy — Martensville-Warman (SP)

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

**Kirsch**, Delbert — Batoche (SP)

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Ross**, Laura — Regina Rochdale (SP)

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

**Sproule**, Cathy — Saskatoon Nutana (NDP)

**Steele**, Doug — Cypress Hills (SP)

**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 Buriandyk

**Sergeant-at-Arms** — Terry Quinn

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**The Speaker:** — Before introduction of guests, I have a special introduction. Today at 12:14 a.m., Ephram Henry Duncan was born today. The father is the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy. Would everyone please welcome Ephram into the world.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd request leave for an extended introduction.

**The Speaker:** — Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is an annual event for me as the minister. I'm pleased to introduce several visitors seated in your gallery this afternoon, Mr. Speaker. These are articling students who have been working with the Ministry of Justice or the courts in this province since last summer. I had a chance to speak to them in my office just before session, Mr. Speaker, and I must say that the crop of this current crop of legal minds entering the profession is truly encouraging.

By the way, Mr. Speaker, I just want to point out that all of the articling students are graduates from the University of Saskatchewan College of Law. And, Mr. Speaker, Mallory Maloof, Lisa Smart, and Danielle Schindelka have been articling with the Ministry of Justice. You can give us a wave. There you are.

Mallory has a broad range of legal experience, including time with prosecutions and the Canada Revenue Agency. Mallory has a strong connection to the First Nations community in our province and has also volunteered with Read Saskatoon as a literacy and math tutor.

Lisa Smart also has a varied background in justice, even having worked as a dispatcher for the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police]. She volunteers her time with the Pro Bono Students Canada and has also served as a provincial debate judge.

On top of her legal background, Mr. Speaker, Danielle Schindelka comes to us after extensive work in science and agriculture. Along with her academic accomplishments, Danielle's community involvement includes volunteering with Green Legal, Soup Sisters and Broth Brothers, and the Alzheimer Society of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like now to introduce Janelle Souter, Julia Kindrachuk, and Jeremie Roussel, and Jon Ponath, who have been articling at the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal.

Janelle was awarded the College of Law's Thomas Dorwick Brown Prize for the most distinguished graduate. Janelle holds a degree in pharmacy and has served as the editor and co-managing editor of the *Saskatchewan Law Review* and has volunteered at CLASSIC [Community Legal Assistance Services for Saskatoon Inner City Inc.] in Saskatoon, offering legal services to the residents of the inner city.

Julia Kindrachuk was awarded the Law Society of Saskatchewan's silver medal for the second-highest average in her class. And she certainly has some interesting work ahead, Mr. Speaker. In June she will begin as a foreign law clerk at the Supreme Court of Israel, followed by a similar posting with the Supreme Court of Canada. And we certainly wish her luck in those endeavours.

Upon graduating from the College of Law, Jeremie Roussel was awarded the F.C. Cronkite Prize in Jurisprudence. Throughout law school, he remained dedicated to his growing family, commuting from North Battleford to attend school in Saskatoon. He is currently celebrating the birth of his second child this past week, and for that we congratulate him.

Along with the pursuits related to his legal career, Jon Ponath has a degree in commerce from the Edwards School of Business where he received an award for academics and community service. While at the College of Law, he served as the vice-president of athletics for the Law Students' Association.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, Alanna Carlson has been articling with us as a law clerk at the Court of Queen's Bench. While in law school, she received the Volunteer Recognition Award and continues to work as a child activity volunteer with the Regina Transition House. She has also served as the editor of the college student newspaper.

Mr. Speaker, I must say I'm very proud of this group of articling students, and I'm confident we'll see great things from them in the years to come. So, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask my colleagues in the legislature to join me in welcoming this fine group of individuals to their legislature.

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

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And to you and through you, I'd like to join with the Minister of Justice in welcoming these articling students to the legislature today. Based on the resumes I've heard, it sounds like they're all a very, very impressive crop of people.

In particular I want to give shouts out to the students that have worked with Pro Bono Students Canada and CLASSIC and Green Legal. All of the work that you've done in terms of volunteering to your communities, on top of the studies that you're doing, is absolutely commendable. And I know that the province and the people that you serve greatly appreciate it.

I also want to welcome you to the profession. It's a little pre-emptive; I know you have about a month left in your CPLED [Canadian Centre for Professional Legal Education] course. It's just one step away from finally being able to be called to the bar.

The Minister of Justice spent his practising days in Saskatoon. I spent my practising days in Regina, but I did have the opportunity to visit quite a few of the local bars throughout the province, and I do know that you will be welcomed whole-heartedly . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Bar associations. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, not everybody knows the legal term "bar" in the way that I know it. I apologize for that.

But I do want the students that are here today to know that they'll be welcome no matter where they choose to practise in the province. And I do hope sincerely that you do at some point either come back to Saskatchewan to practise or continue on in your careers in this great province. So again, I'd like to have all members join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Ms. Ross:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce to you and through you to the rest of the members of the Legislative Assembly, 25 grade 4 students from MacNeill School. Give us a wave, guys and gals. That's wonderful.

Now accompanying these students is their teacher, Ms. Tia Coffin. And they also have some chaperones, some parents and chaperones that are also accompanying them today. We have Lori Crone, Chad McCormick, and Kelly Fuessel.

So I have the opportunity to meet with them this afternoon. They get to answer a little Q & A [question and answer] with them, to be able to find out their questions and their concerns about the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly. So I look forward to spending time with these bright, young students, and then we'll have a picture taken. We'll have some juice . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Blizzards?

**Ms. Ross:** — No, it's too cold for Blizzards. But it's going to be a good opportunity for them to tour the facility and find out what we do here. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I would like to take this opportunity to single out one of the articling students who I've known since she was a young girl, particularly because I worked with her parents, but that's Julia Kindrachuk.

Julia's parents had very distinguished careers with the Department of Justice Canada. Her mother, Christine Haynes, was a significant prosecutor and did a lot of the narcotics prosecutions work here in Saskatchewan. And her dad, Mark Kindrachuk, has been to the Supreme Court several times on

behalf of the citizens of Canada and appearing before the Supreme Court of Canada. Very distinguished law careers, and they both recently retired. So I'm sure they're thrilled that Julia's now done her studies and will be actually working hard to make a living as a lawyer.

But Julia has come from very strong stock as lawyers, and I think she will serve, Canada and abroad, serve us very well as a lawyer. So I just want to say hi, Julia, and welcome to the Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, it's a pleasure to welcome a friend that's seated in the west gallery. He's already been introduced, but Chad McCormick. A pleasure to have you here today, Chad. Chad's a heck of a good guy. His wife, Jolene, is a exceptional schoolteacher here in Regina. I know that he's here with one of their children here today.

Chad knows his way around this building. He also knows his way around a hockey rink, Mr. Speaker. And a notable piece for me is that he was my first campaign manager back in 2007. And he's a tremendous guy who cares deeply about his community and our province. So I ask all to welcome my friend, Chad McCormick.

## PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the citizens of Martensville, Borden, Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatoon, Biggar, Warman, and Shellbrook. I do so present.

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

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

It's important to note that this government has repeatedly indicated that the Lighthouse stabilization unit keeps individuals out of hospital emergency rooms and jail cells. And these same ministers are now trying to place the responsibility for repairing their budget deficits on those experiencing addictions, unemployment, and poverty, and who are living from day to day without proper services, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to read the prayer:

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition today is signed by citizens of Saskatoon. 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 Northcote that she needed some help for this Prince Albert petition, and obviously we want to support her in this effort to bring this petition forward. And the need for a second bridge for Prince Albert has never been clearer than it is today. And 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. They:

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 to begin immediately to plan and then quickly commence the construction of a second bridge for Prince Albert using federal and provincial dollars [Mr. Speaker].

And the people that have signed this petition that we presented day after day after day, signed from community after community after community, Mr. Speaker, and we are once again proud to present more pages on this petition. There's two here and the people that have signed these petitions for this day are from Regina, they're from North Battleford, and they're from all throughout the land, Mr. Speaker. And I so present.

[13:45]

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I once again rise today to present a petition with opposition to Bill 40 and the potential 49 per cent Crown corporation sell-off. The individuals who signed the petition today are wanting to bring to the attention of the Assembly the following: that 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, Sask Crown corporations returned \$297.2 million in dividends to pay for schools, hospitals, and roads. Those dividends should go to the people of Saskatchewan, not private investors.

That our Crown corporations employ thousands of Saskatchewan people across the province and, under the 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 government or province. The Sask Party's proposal would allow up to 49 per cent of the Crown to be sold without being considered privatized, and that this short-sighted legislation risks sending millions of Crown dividends to Ottawa rather than to 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 immediately stop the passage of Bill 40, *The Interpretation Amendment Act*, and start protecting jobs and our Crown corporations instead of selling them off to pay for Sask Party mismanagement.

And, Mr. Speaker, the folks who have signed the petitions today are from Moose Jaw, Swift Current, Regina, Caron, and Indian Head. I so submit.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition regarding pay equity here in Saskatchewan. And the undersigned residents of the province would like to bring to your attention to 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.

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

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

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan eliminate the wage gap between women and men across all sectors where the Government of Saskatchewan has jurisdiction, that we provide a framework under which this can be done within this term of this Assembly, and that the Saskatchewan government call upon the workplaces within Saskatchewan within the private sector to eliminate the wage gap between women and men.

Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition today come from

Saskatoon, Colonsay, and Wakaw. I do so present. Thank you.

**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 in the province. And those signing this petition wish to draw our attention to the following: to the fact that many of our licensed non-profit child care centres pay commercial property tax, and the fact that this is not something that is done in Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, BC [British Columbia], or New Brunswick.

That child care is essential to the economy, yet most centres struggle to simply balance their budget. 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, something that benefits the whole economy.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, those signing this petition today 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 for a reversal to the cuts in the Aboriginal court worker program. Mr. Speaker, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan wish to bring to your attention the following: that the Government of Saskatchewan cut the budget for the Aboriginal court worker program in the 2016-17 provincial budget. They point out that the Aboriginal court workers play an important role in helping Aboriginal people in criminal and child apprehension cases, Mr. Speaker. They point out that Aboriginal peoples are disproportionately represented in Saskatchewan's correctional centres and they point out that Aboriginal court workers successfully help to make our communities safer through reduced recidivism rates.

Mr. Speaker, in the prayer that reads as follows, the petitioners respectfully request:

That the Government of Saskatchewan reverse its short-sighted and counterproductive cuts to the Aboriginal court worker program.

Mr. Speaker, this particular set of petitions is signed by individuals from Saskatoon, Wymark, Hudson Bay, and Debden. I so present.

**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. Citizens of Saskatchewan are very concerned at the lack of support for victims of domestic violence. Financial stability and a supportive work environment are vital for any victim of domestic abuse, and victims of domestic abuse, Mr. Speaker, should not be further victimized at work. Employers lose \$77.9 million annually due to the direct and indirect impact 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 work days and a minimum of 17 weeks unpaid work leave with the assurance of job security upon return for all victims of domestic violence in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the individuals signing this petition today come from Regina and Weyburn. I do so submit.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today and present a petition to stop the redirection of funding of the Northern Teacher Education Program Council, Inc. For the last 40 years, Mr. Speaker, NORTEP-NORPAC [northern teacher education program-Northern Professional Access College] has provided good quality instruction, has been a well-organized, well-administered program allowing the students who graduate from there as teachers to teach anywhere in the province. But the majority of those teachers, Mr. Speaker, choose to stay in the North and provide that important service to the North.

NORTEP has had a set of residences, Mr. Speaker, that have been available for students of that program in order to stay there without additional cost. It's been extremely important for the members of the North to be able to access that education.

Mr. Speaker, I'll read the prayer:

We respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Saskatchewan Party government to immediately restore their five-year agreement to fund the Northern Teacher Education Program and continue to fund these programs in La Ronge.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by people of Cumberland House, Air Ronge, Jans Bay, and Canoe Narrows. I do so present.

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

**Increase in Number of Physicians**

**Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to inform the House that there are over 750 more physicians working in the Saskatchewan health care system today than there was 10 years ago. This is a 44 per cent increase, and it represents a great improvement in residents' access to physician services in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, attracting and keeping physicians has always been a priority for our government. This stands in stark contrast to the dismal record of the NDP [New Democratic Party]. It wasn't long ago that Saskatchewan had the worst physician retention rates in the country, as hundreds of doctors joined with thousands of other Saskatchewan people who fled the province in search of a reprieve from the disastrous policies of the NDP.

Thankfully, Mr. Speaker, it's been a different story under the leadership of our government. Together with health regions, we've demonstrated our commitment to retaining and recruiting physicians by offering competitive compensation packages, hugely increasing the number of medical training seats, developing a made-in-Saskatchewan assessment program for internationally trained physicians, and training more family medicine residents in communities outside Regina and Saskatoon.

I ask all members to join me in welcoming these 750 new physicians and in thanking them for their leadership and commitment to providing high-quality, patient-centred care. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Wanuskewin Heritage Park's Thundering Ahead Campaign**

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, on February 9th I, along with my colleague from Saskatoon Centre, had the pleasure of attending the launch of the Thundering Ahead campaign by Wanuskewin Heritage Park. Wanuskewin Heritage Park is embarking upon one of the most significant initiatives to celebrate indigenous people in our nation today. The park is a living reminder of pre-contact indigenous life on the great plains and serves to honour that distinction.

Mr. Speaker, Wanuskewin is a link to our past and a bridge to reconciliation unlike any other historical site in the country, which is why they are launching the Thundering Ahead campaign, a bold \$40 million plan to help Wanuskewin reach its full potential as one of Canada's top natural and cultural destinations.

The initiative consists of four pillars including moving their status from an archeological dig site to a centre of excellence, from a national historic site to a global UNESCO [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization]

destination, returning the bison to Wanuskewin's plains, and preserving the ecological landscape of the area.

Although both the bison and 6,000 years of indigenous history may have faded from view in our province, they are not lost. And it is through the hard work of Canada's Wanuskewin Heritage Park that we can begin to see them return. Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join me in supporting the valuable work of Wanuskewin Heritage Park and the Thundering Ahead campaign in working hard to preserve and restore the natural and indigenous history of our province. Thank you.

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

**Number of Indigenous Students Rises at University of Saskatchewan**

**Ms. Lambert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to share some exciting news about the rising numbers of indigenous students at the University of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, the *StarPhoenix* recently reported that 31 First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students are currently enrolled at the University of Saskatchewan's College of Medicine. Since 1972, 71 indigenous doctors have graduated from the college.

Through planning and a commitment to the TRC's [Truth and Reconciliation Commission] calls to action, the University of Saskatchewan has strived to support all indigenous students who attend their school. The College of Medicine designates 10 seats for First Nation, Métis, and Inuit learners, as well as offering supports for indigenous students throughout their studies.

Mr. Speaker, it has also been reported that over 2,400 First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students are currently enrolled at the U of S [University of Saskatchewan]. Our government is pleased that since 2007 there has been a 43 per cent increase in First Nation and Métis enrolment at the U of S alone.

Mr. Speaker, this is just one example of the advancements our post-secondary institutions have made on the path towards reconciliation. I ask all members to join me in congratulating the University of Saskatchewan on their continued success in promoting educational opportunities for indigenous people throughout the province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Fundraising for École Connaught Playground**

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And it's my pleasure today to rise and to recognize the accomplishments of the Connaught SCC [school community council] playground committee. After École Connaught Community School was demolished a few years ago, a new playground committee was formed. And over the past two years, members have included hard-working parents such as Sarah Truszkowski, Kaiti Webb, Crystal Cozma-Wood, Jennifer Draper, Kevin Perrey, Jennifer Richards, Michelle Dakiniewicz, Amy Roherand, and Bobbi Gans, as well as dedicated teachers like the fantastic Tara

Dryburgh.

Mr. Speaker, in less than two years, this committee has raised nearly \$55,000 to pay for several new playground pieces, and this committee is about \$15,000 away from their \$70,000 goal.

Mr. Speaker, the Cathedral and Lakeview and surrounding communities have rallied in a truly beautiful way to help support this rebuild of the Connaught playground so that children at the school and in the community will have a fun and safe place to play. The committee has received grants from community organizations, support from a wide variety of community businesses, and have raised over \$12,000 from school fundraisers supported by parents and community members. And I probably have a tub of cookie dough to sell, Mr. Speaker, if anyone is interested.

I would ask all members to join me today in recognizing the contributions that the Connaught playground committee are making for children in their community and extend a thank you to all of the families, staff, and community businesses that have so generously supported this important community project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[14:00]

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

#### Daughters of the Vote Celebration

**Ms. Ross:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure as both the Vice-Chair of the Canadian Region of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians, as the CWP representative of the Government of Saskatchewan, to be in Ottawa last week on International Women's Day to celebrate Daughters of the Vote.

Mr. Speaker, it was an amazing event. Young women between the ages 18 to 23 from every constituency across the country took their place in all of the 338 seats in the House of Commons in Ottawa. This was an incredible event, and women leaders past and present spoke to the young women, and the young women also had the opportunity to ask the Prime Minister some pretty tough questions in the Q & A. Further, there were workshops and events for these young women that really prepared them so they can consider seeking public office, equipping them to run for public office.

Mr. Speaker, Equal Voice did an incredible job of organizing this worthwhile event. Mr. Speaker, it was a great privilege to represent our government and our province. It is truly inspiring to see future politicians, future business executives, and leaders from all across the fields together with a vision to see the world in a better place. Although there is still plenty of work to do, this event marks a century of women's suffrage in Canada. It was a momentous milestone.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all members of this Assembly and join me in acknowledging a successful Daughters of the Vote in Ottawa. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Thanks to General Manager of Lloydminster Agricultural Exhibition

**Ms. Young:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had the pleasure of attending an appreciation event for volunteer staff and sponsors of the Lloydminster Agricultural Exhibition Association. Mr. Speaker, it is important that we recognize agriculture in our province as a strong, stable industry and an economic driver.

The key moment of the night was when long-serving general manager Mike Sidoryk was given special honours for his 35 years of service. This association is so important to Lloydminster and, with the great leadership and commitment from members like Mike Sidoryk, has brought success to our agricultural industry.

Mike has been an institution with the agriculture exhibition for longer than most people can remember. He began working at the exhibition when he was 12 years old doing odd jobs, and was hired full-time in 1981. He has held various positions within the organization through the years and was named general manager in 1989.

Since that time, he has provided leadership in the organization and ensured that each year the exhibition hosts amazing events for all ages. Mr. Speaker, not only has Mike been instrumental in his leadership at the events in Lloyd, but he has also helped champion exhibitions across the prairies. I suspect that all of us have a memory of attending an agricultural fair to see the livestock, enjoy the entertainment, participate in fair events or, of course, eat the food.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members of this House to join me in thanking Mike Sidoryk for his 35 years of service and dedication to both the Lloydminster Agricultural Exhibition Association and exhibitions across western Canada. Thank you.

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

#### Remembering Courtney Milne

**Hon. Ms. Eyre:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before Stonebridge in Saskatoon was Stonebridge the suburb, it was open prairie and spotted with acreages. That's not very long ago. And just about where the Tim Hortons on Preston Avenue is now, internationally renowned photographer Courtney Milne lived on one of those acreages. One telling insight into his career passion is the fact he took 40,000 photographs alone of reflections in a small pond behind his home.

Sadly, Milne died in 2010, but I was reminded of his career and his remarkable talent in the Sask 150 series that's currently running in the *StarPhoenix*.

Milne's photographs took the prairie photograph to a whole new level, full of light and life. He published 12 books; his best known and best selling, *Sacred Earth* included a forward by none other than the Dalai Lama.

In 2005, he and his wife Sherrill Miller, who unfortunately couldn't be here today, launched the Centennial Project in partnership with SaskTel. They created Coolscales, a



5,000-image website for Saskatchewan students and residences to use in educational projects, a website now run by the U of S as part of Courtney's archive.

Milne Crescent in Stonebridge is named after the Milne family, and Milne also received the Sask Order of Merit posthumously in 2011. A great Saskatchewanian, Mr. Speaker, one I like to call an honorary constituent. Thank you.

### QUESTION PERIOD

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

#### Auditor's Report and Details of Land Transactions

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, day after day we can't get an answer from the Premier on their GTH [Global Transportation Hub] scandal. But the Deputy Premier has also spent a long time around that cabinet table. He was there every time this GTH scandal was discussed at cabinet. So I'll ask a question about his personal knowledge about this scandal and hopefully he'll find his feet and his voice, unlike our Premier.

When did the Deputy Premier first learn that the original seller of the GTH land was the landlord of the former minister of the GTH?

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

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course the auditor has looked into this matter. The auditor had access to all of the documents to which she requested access. The auditor had access to all the individuals involved in this transaction, Mr. Speaker. The auditor availed herself of the opportunity to review those documents, to interview those individuals and, Mr. Speaker, the auditor came to a conclusion. And I would quote the auditor which she said on an open-line radio show:

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. 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.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Regina Bypass Project

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — You know, Mr. Speaker, it's totally unacceptable for the Deputy Premier not to be able to take his feet and answer that question. That same sort of unacceptable approach we see from this Premier day after day with this very simple, straightforward question about simply their personal knowledge of this GTH scandal that ripped off taxpayers.

Let me ask another question from another one of their growing scandals, Mr. Speaker. They signed on with Vinci, the multinational conglomerate from France and beyond, with the Regina bypass. Of course it was supposed to be \$400 million but now it's \$2 billion and counting, Mr. Speaker. They'll say that the project scope has expanded — well sure, an extra

interchange or two, a few extra kilometres of highway — but how did it get to \$2 billion?

Mr. Speaker, this contract would have gone through cabinet. Has the Deputy Premier opened up that contract to see what's going on? How can he honestly stand by this contract and this billion-dollar-plus overrun with Vinci as he disgracefully breaks contract after contract with Saskatchewan people?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I find that question to be absolutely remarkable. That member knows, the interim leader of the New Democrats know that the contract, Mr. Speaker, the value-for-money report, and the fairness opinions are all online for anyone in Saskatchewan to go and have a look at them.

Mr. Speaker, we've given him a technical briefing of the project, Mr. Speaker. He knows, he knows the scope of this project has expanded greatly since the beginning when it was first proposed, Mr. Speaker. \$1.2 billion, Mr. Speaker, was the original estimate and that's what it's costing to build this bypass, Mr. Speaker, with the additional 30 years of maintenance on top of it. He knows the facts, Mr. Speaker, and he should be straight with the people of Saskatchewan when he stands on his feet.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, it's pathetic and it's weak that the Deputy Premier of Saskatchewan can't take to his feet. It's beyond incompetent that the Government of Saskatchewan can't manage its contracts, one that went from \$400 million to an overrun of over a billion dollars.

And this is the Deputy Premier that's bringing cuts on his many, many ministries. He's doing it for workers; he's doing it in kids' classrooms, but he won't answer on this very important project.

You know, day after day he actually likes to ask questions of this side of the House. I think he has to remember that he sits in that cabinet on that side of the House, and he has to do some answering, Mr. Speaker. You know, and it's also that he sits on that side of the House and gets that extra pay as minister for which he's unwilling to give up just a 20 per cent reduction on that extra pay, Mr. Speaker, to show just a little bit of responsibility for the mismanagement, scandal, and waste of this Sask Party.

You know, the Premier has also failed to answer a very simple and straightforward question on another front, and I'll ask it here today to the Deputy Premier. How much of the \$2 billion contract will stay in Saskatchewan? How much of the money is going to France and beyond?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Mr. Speaker, as I've mentioned before, all these contracts are all online. All the material, the fairness

opinion, and value-for-money report is all on there. Mr. Speaker, I've also reported to this House and through the media, Mr. Speaker, that fully 73 per cent of the work that's being done on that bypass is being done by Saskatchewan companies, Mr. Speaker — companies like Broda Construction, companies like Graham Construction, Mr. Speaker, who are primarily responsible for the construction of this facility, Mr. Speaker. Forty kilometres of dual-lane highway, Mr. Speaker, 12 overpasses, most of which is being done through the work of people from Saskatchewan and companies from Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. That's the fact, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, just like the finances, it seems that they're making it up as they go. Here the Justice minister says that the contract is online. That is not the case. Will the Justice minister or the Deputy Premier commit to making sure that \$2 billion contract is available to all Saskatchewan people today?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Mr. Speaker, since the financial close of this transaction which happened last year, Mr. Speaker, the contract is online. The fairness opinion is online, and the value-for-money report is online, Mr. Speaker. We made that clear to the interim Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker. We've given him technical reports, Mr. Speaker. We've given him a technical briefing on the whole project, Mr. Speaker. He only has to go online to look at the documents.

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

### Government's Fiscal Management

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, every time we ask that Finance minister about the finances, he climbs onto his high horse, looks down his nose, wags his finger, and says, it's a revenue problem. Well, Mr. Speaker, from their \$1.5 billion carbon capture tax to their GTH scandal, all the way to the billion-dollar overrun on the Regina bypass, it's pretty clear it's a mismanagement, scandal, and waste problem too.

But let's get back to the revenue. The minister acts as if he's surprised that commodity prices are volatile. No kidding, Mr. Speaker. It's almost like you should maybe save during the good times so you would have extra during the bad times. You could call it, oh I don't know, maybe a rainy day fund.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister explain to us why they spent billions that should have been saved for the rainy days while the sun was still shining on our economy?

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

**Hon. Mr. Doherty:** — Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question. I think if the member looks back on November 16th of last year, Mr. Speaker, just about a week before we delivered the mid-year report in this Chamber and delivered to the people of the province, that very member said that we have a revenue

problem, Mr. Speaker. Matter of fact, she was quoted as saying it's no wonder why they have a revenue problem given where commodities are at. That's what that member said on November 16th last year, Mr. Speaker.

We've also had . . . Since then we've had FCL [Federated Co-operatives Ltd.], Federated Co-op, come out and say, look, "The company's declining revenue and profit are largely attributable to a \$774 million decline in energy sales . . ." in this province. Mr. Speaker, that translates into revenue for the province.

We've also had CUPE [Canadian Union of Public Employees] come out, an organization I'm sure that the members opposite are familiar with. CUPE not only said, "Saskatchewan's revenues from non-renewable resources are expected to have dropped in half in two years . . ." Mr. Speaker. It goes on to say, if these revenues hadn't declined — from potash, oil, minerals, and Crown land sales — then the province would run a surplus this year as it would have last year. The report goes on to say, Mr. Speaker . . . This is in the same CUPE report, on page 7: "Clearly Saskatchewan's deficit hasn't been caused by excessive overall spending, but by a shortfall of revenues." Mr. Speaker, that's what CUPE said.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, same old act, same old lines from that minister. From the beginning they were dipping into that fund every year. They had the rainy day fund and a huge surplus left to them by the former government. They had it all and they blew it all.

And now they're attacking and shaking down Saskatchewan people, saying everyone has to do their part. Well, Mr. Speaker, what about them? Why won't that cabinet show a little leadership and take a cut of 20 per cent from their pay? That's the kind of measure we might find to expect in a fiscal stability Act which the minister promised. It would hold the cabinet to account when they mismanage and waste money.

Mr. Speaker, where is the fiscal stability Act that that minister promised? And from where does that minister get the arrogance to condescend, when he's so ashamed of this work that he won't even hold himself accountable for his failure to manage Saskatchewan's budget?

[14:15]

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

**Hon. Mr. Doherty:** — Thank you. This is an interesting debate, Mr. Speaker. Now they're complaining about spending in the province, that we blew it all. Mr. Speaker, here's where we blew it all. We took 112,000 low-income people off the tax rolls altogether, Mr. Speaker. That's where we blew the money. We took the seniors' income plan in this province, Mr. Speaker, a program for the most vulnerable senior citizens in this province, that they didn't have the heart, the heart, to increase by so much as a dime in 16 years in office. We tripled the seniors' income plan, Mr. Speaker. That's where we blew the money.

We are building a new children's hospital, a new mental health care correctional facility in North Battleford, 13 long-term care facilities, Mr. Speaker, doubled capital in this province, 40 new or rebuilt schools in this province, Mr. Speaker. That's where we blew the money. And now they're complaining about overspending in this province, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Funding for Education

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, the very purpose of rainy day funds are to provide relief when times are tough, and it was this government's job to ensure that their rainy day funds were available when Saskatchewan people needed them most. Instead they blew through their own savings when times were good, and now they're taking money from our schools to pay for their financial mess.

Like I said yesterday, the Sask Party is stopping our schools from using their own reserve funds. And if this government won't let schools use their savings to ensure that our children get the education that they deserve, I can't help but wonder what the Sask Party is planning to use them for.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Education refused to answer. So I'll ask the question again: was this the Sask Party's plan all along, to raid our schools' rainy day funds to make up for their recklessly wasting their own?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite raises the issue of reserves. Mr. Speaker, spending reserves is spending money out of the GRF [General Revenue Fund]. It's exactly the same thing. On what? On summary financial accounting. Who asked for summary financial accounting? The members opposite did.

So, Mr. Speaker, we're not saying to the schools, you can't use reserves. We're saying it runs a deficit when you run them. We'll work with you. We will do everything we can. But, Mr. Speaker, that is the nature of summary financial accounting, Mr. Speaker. They asked for it; they have it. We will continue to work with it.

We support our school system. We value our teachers. We value the trustees and, most of all, Mr. Speaker, we value the students and want to do what's right for them.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, that's laughable that they're valuing our schools when you look at what's going on around this province. And never one to take responsibility for their own actions, this government has underfunded, undervalued, and disrespected teachers and the people who worked in our kids' classrooms. They've threatened to cut school boards, to eliminate local voices, and now they're telling schools that they can't use their own reserves to relieve the financial burden that this government is forcing on them.

Mr. Speaker, the minister cannot honestly believe that the money that they're desperately scraping away from our education system won't affect our children's classrooms. So will he tell us the truth? Does he know exactly how much that they're going to take away from our kids' education? And what does the Sask Party plan to do with our schools' savings?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, if the member opposite doubts our commitment to education and doubts our commitment to the children in this province, I would ask her to do this. I would ask her to take a drive down Elphinstone in Regina. I would ask her to take a drive through her own constituency, and this is what she's going to see when she drives down Elphinstone in her own constituency. She's going to see the new Scott Collegiate under construction. She's going to see the new Sacred Heart school under construction. And do you know what else she's going to see, Mr. Speaker? The new Connaught school which she opposed. And when you look at her website even today, she touts on there how proudly, how she was opposed to the new Connaught school. Mr. Speaker, I say this to that member: she ought to have a look and see what happened to Cam Broten when he opposed a new school in his constituency.

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

### Northern Teacher Education Program Student Residences

**Mr. Meili:** — Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Advanced Education failed a simple test. She failed to answer a straightforward question about NORTEP's assets, and that's troubling for people in the North. They're concerned about control of their program, run by and for northerners for four decades, Mr. Speaker. And they're concerned about what that means for their communities and their neighbours for whom NORTEP has been an opportunity to create opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, NORTEP's residence buildings have been key to opening up access to education for people from across the North. Can the Minister of Education try again? Can she tell us what her plan is for NORTEP's residence buildings? Are they just another part of the Sask Party's plan to sell off what belongs to the people of Saskatchewan?

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

**Hon. Ms. Eyre:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with respect to the apartments that the member opposite is referencing, it will be a matter of negotiation, and I hope collaboration, following any final decision that's forthcoming. NORTEP council is responsible for those units. And it's regrettable that there are millions of dollars in repairs needed to maintain those residences.

We have health and safety concerns, particularly with mechanical and electrical work that is needed. We take the health and safety of our students very seriously, Mr. Speaker. We're evaluating all options related to post-secondary education providers in the North. A decision will be

forthcoming very soon, but above all must be made for the best interests of those students, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Support for Northern Workers

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday with my colleague from Prince Albert, I asked how recruitment and retention efforts in the North would be helped by cutting the wages by three and a half per cent. Neither the Minister of Social Services or the Minister for Rural Health could give an answer. Cutting supports for the North and from the North will hurt northern people and northern communities. They both said that retention and recruitment is the biggest problem.

So I'll ask them once again: can either the Minister of Health or the Minister of Social Services stand tall today and give a full, straight answer, a full, straight answer to a very clear question of how cutting the salaries of nurses, doctors, and counsellors in the North is supposed to help us recruit and retain more of these health professionals?

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

**Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to stand in the House again today and talk about some of the supports that have been added to our northern communities in the province.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to talk about northern medical services and how that's been expanded by well over 60 per cent in funding, how the northern health regions have gotten well over the average of the province when it comes to regional spending — in fact, 70 per cent average in the northern health regions as opposed to approximately 50 throughout the rest of the province.

Mr. Speaker, through northern medical services we have full-time primary health care clinics in four communities; visiting clinics in 15 communities; almost 200 specialty clinics including obstetrics, ophthalmology, orthopedics, surgical assessments, infection disease, and other services, Mr. Speaker.

We talked yesterday about some of the recruitment and retention and training efforts. Mr. Speaker, in fact we have 26 LPNs [licensed practical nurse] who are First Nations or Métis that have graduated, and living and working in the North through programs that are delivered in the North, Mr. Speaker; mental health and addictions workers; 11 First Nations health directors; 10 RNs [registered nurse] specifically targeted in those areas, Mr. Speaker; psychiatry numbers that I referred to yesterday. And I'd be happy to answer more questions on this subject.

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

### Provision of Court Services

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Mr. Speaker, last week I asked the Minister of

Justice about the impact Sask Party cuts will have on our justice system. Asking for a three and a half per cent rollback will mean less access to judges, Crown prosecutors, court workers, and legal aid lawyers to work through cases before the courts.

And with the Supreme Court's recent Jordan decision, any defendant who doesn't have their case heard in a timely manner will have their charges thrown out. That doesn't do anything to make our communities safer or to bring justice and closure to families and victims.

Last week the minister said he is "very comfortable with respect to where we are with the justice system." He said that there was no problem even though three cases were recently thrown out because of delays. What analysis has the minister done to know how many more cases will be thrown out because of the Sask Party's cuts to court workers and Crown prosecutors?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have an ongoing dialogue with the chief judge at the Provincial Court with respect to time-to-trial delays, Mr. Speaker, and we're quite comfortable in the position we are in Saskatchewan. Certainly we see from across the country some significant issues with regard to time to trial. And I did report last week that there were three cases that had been lost because of trial delay, Mr. Speaker, simply because of the fact that witnesses couldn't be located to give testimony at those trials, Mr. Speaker.

So from a systemic perspective within the justice system, Mr. Speaker, we're in very good shape in terms of meeting the timelines. We're not even close to the timelines that have been set out in the Jordan decision, Mr. Speaker. But we will continue to monitor those time-to-trial issues, Mr. Speaker, in consultation with the judiciary, to make sure that the ends of justice are served with respect to the delivery of those services, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Health Care Services in Craik Area

**Ms. Chartier:** — Mr. Speaker, the cuts keep coming to our health care system. Now their plans for amalgamation and cuts to public sector workers will further reduce quality of care for Saskatchewan people.

Sadly this government's mismanagement of our health care is nothing new. This time last year the people of Craik expressed their frustration with the lack of accessible health care in their community and begged this government to take down a misleading and potentially dangerous sign on Highway 11 that points to Craik's 24-hour care facility, a facility that the Sask Party had shut down years before. Shamefully, today that sign is still up. This adds insult to injury, Mr. Speaker.

Can this minister prove his government is capable of better and commit to stopping their callous cuts to our health care system? And if he can't do that, can he at least commit to taking down

that sign after all these years?

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

**Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm happy again to stand in this House and talk about some of the things that we have been able to accomplish with the help of the people in the area as well as their region when it comes to health services in rural Saskatchewan.

In fact we know that Craik had an issue recruiting and retaining a doctor. Through the work of the region — two regions actually, Mr. Speaker, in conjunction with Davidson — we now have a number of doctors serving both Davidson and Craik and fulfilling the obligations of this government there.

When it comes to issues of highway signage, we agree that there is an issue with some of the signage in the province that doesn't reflect properly the services available in those communities, and we will be working with the regions and throughout the different ministries to make sure that those signs do reflect the services available in those communities very soon.

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

#### Staffing Levels in Health Care Facilities

**Ms. Chartier:** — Mr. Speaker, how long does it take to take a sign down, Mr. Speaker? I'm happy to take a screwdriver on my way home on Thursday and take that sign down for that minister.

Yesterday I asked the minister about a 74 per cent surge in violent incidents in RQHR [Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region]. Instead of answering the question he flat out denied the relationship between staffing and violent incidents.

Mr. Speaker, the CEO [chief executive officer] says most of these incidents take place in long-term care. There, understaffing is an everyday reality. But of course the minister does know this. It was plain as day in his very own CEO tour reports that were filled with complaints of understaffing. The staff are run off their feet, but residents' needs still are not being met. There is just too much for too few staff to do. It is a recipe for disaster, one that's become real in RQHR, and one only worsened by the Sask Party's endless cuts.

Will the minister stop denying reality and do something to fix the mess their cuts have created in seniors' care?

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

**Hon. Mr. Reiter:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that was a wide-ranging preamble to that question, so I'll try to touch on as many of those comments the critic made as possible. Mr. Speaker, first of all to the point about, as she refers to it as cuts in long-term care, is simply not the case. The issue that she raised yesterday about Regina Qu'Appelle, Mr. Speaker, is simply wrong. There's 21 per cent more staff in those positions than there were when we were given the

privilege of forming government. Mr. Speaker, it's not just in long-term care. It's right across the entire health spectrum.

[14:30]

Mr. Speaker, we have over 3,000 more nurses of every designation than were in place when we formed government. We have over 800 more long-term care workers than were in place when we were given the privilege of forming government. Mr. Speaker, you heard today in member's statements, we have 750 more doctors than we did then.

And, Mr. Speaker, the member talks about taking down signs. She would be good at it. The NDP would be good at taking signs down. They took down 52 hospital signs when they closed those hospitals when they were in government.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — I request leave to move a motion, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

## MOTIONS

### Committee Membership

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to move the following motion:

That the names of Paul Merriman and Don McMorris be substituted for the names of Glen Hart and Randy Weekes on the Standing Committee for Public Accounts, and the name of Glen Hart be substituted in the name of Hugh Nerlien on the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

That the name of Hugh Nerlien be added to the Standing Committee on Human Services and the name of Paul Merriman be added to the Standing Committee on Private Bills, and

That the name of Ryan Meili be substituted for the name of Carla Beck on the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

I so move.

**The Speaker:** — Is the Assembly ready for the question? We'll take the motion as read. All those in favour say yea.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Motion passes.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

## WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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

**Mr. Lawrence:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answers to questions 247 through 250.

**The Speaker:** — The Government Whip has ordered responses to 247 to 250. I recognize the Government Whip.

**Mr. Lawrence:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 251 through 258.

**The Speaker:** — The Government Whip has tabled the responses to questions 251 to 258. I recognize the Government Whip.

**Mr. Lawrence:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answer to question 259.

**The Speaker:** — The Government Whip has ordered the answers to question 259. I recognize the Government Whip.

**Mr. Lawrence:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 260 through 267.

**The Speaker:** — The Government Whip has tabled the answers to questions 260 to 267.

## 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 Cumberland.

**Mr. Vermette:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to join in on Bill No. 40, *The Interpretation Amendment Act, 2016*. You know, Mr. Speaker, I want to get into some of the comments, the bill that's being introduced and the amendments. And before I do that, I want to give a little bit of I guess a story about back on the farm.

My grandfather had a farm, a small homestead. Grandma and grandpa had 13 kids, and on that homestead, you know, they wanted to have, you know, opportunities. They wanted opportunities for their children, you know. And when you look at a phone . . . And I was thinking about this, remembering on the farm, we used to go out there on the weekends. We spent a lot of time on the farm with our, you know, our cousins and different family members. You'd come together, and you'd spend that good quality time. But I do remember, I do remember getting, I think, the first phone that grandma and

grandpa ever got, and it was a party line. It was nice to see, finally, a phone.

But why I relate that little story, Mr. Speaker, because I think it's important, you know, being that grandma and grandpa worked hard on the farm. Grandpa was a war vet, you know. He did his best to serve his country, and he's a very proud Aboriginal Métis man. Very proud for his family. And you know, when I think about having access . . . And I think that's why he was so strong in his belief of a government that's supposed to take care of all people, not just selected individuals, or to make sure that they take care of everyone.

So when you think about this, I did a little bit of thinking about the bill and what impacts it might have today and have on people. And when I think about . . . Phone was the best one to, like as a little boy, looking at that, having that phone come in. And I'm sure with power, and as SaskPower, SaskTel, as those Crown corporations, you know, were brought forward by many good people of this province, the good work that was done by many, I think about my uncle who worked for SaskTel who actually put up the lines. And he was a crew boss, and he did it for many years out of a family that was involved in that Crown corporation. And you know, they did a great job. They did the work that they needed to do. And at the end of the day, they got a paycheque, you know, provided for their families.

When you look at the work that's being done by our Crown corporations, and by those individuals who are very proud, they're proud of the job they do . . . And there's so many whether, you know, it's SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance], whether it's, you know, SaskTel, any of our Crown corps, SaskEnergy, SaskPower — the list goes on of Crown corporations. But I think some of the Crown corporations that, you know, some of the ministers have been responsible for . . . And I'm going to get into some of those, the ones that probably, you know, shed some light on, and I think has got a lot of press, a lot of people watching one of the Crown corps, the GTH. People are really paying attention to that one right now. And I think it's going to be good, and I'll get into a little bit of that first.

But I guess I look at some of the comments and the minister's comments and some of my colleagues talked . . . [inaudible] . . . why do we need this interpretation. And you know, the interpretation of what the Crowns are, like that's interesting, an interpretation of what the Crown is. And they go back into talking about, okay, what's this, you know, what's this about? And people are asking, like why do all of a sudden do we need an interpretation of our Crowns? I think it's very simple. The people of this province have said it very loud and clear many times to the government.

And I think about it. And I was doing some, just some going down memory lane. And I'm going to go back to 2003. And in 2003 there was a provincial election. And at the time the leader was, I think, would have been . . . Who was that leader in 2003? I'm thinking of his name. Hermanson, I think could have been the leader of the Sask Party. And you know, he went through an election. And at the end of the day, you know, it was interesting where he allowed the public to be aware that he was going to sell the Crown corporations or that he was looking at, he could sell the Crown corporations. He may sell the Crown

corporations. Well lo and behold, the people of this province sent a very good message to the Sask Party, a very good message. They sat in opposition.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Asking leave to raise a point of order?

**Mr. McCall:** — Yes, please.

**The Speaker:** — Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Thanks. Mr. Speaker, I wonder if you could call to attention for the members opposite the fact that they're not supposed to be interfering with a member of this Assembly when he's on his feet making a speech in this Chamber. If you could please do that.

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

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to weigh in on this point of order. I think it's been a long tradition — outside of maiden speeches, which the new member that is sitting in this Assembly, that we gave him the respect to do that — of a good banter back and forth across the floor, Mr. Speaker. I really don't understand what the significance of this versus any other bantering that has gone on in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, so I don't think the point of order should be . . . [inaudible].

**The Speaker:** — I've been listening closely to the debate on the floor and the little bit of banter back and forth, and I am able to rule on this point of order that I will not take it as well taken, the point of order from the Opposition House Leader. I believe there is a role for some of the banter that goes back and forth as long as it isn't disruptive of the person speaking, and that if it gets to a level that I think it is, I will ask order, and hopefully members will come to order at that time.

I recognize the member from Cumberland.

**Mr. Vermette:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To get in where I was saying and the message that was sent in 2003 was, don't mess with the Crown corporations. The people of this province are very proud to own the Crown corporations. And you know, we talk about the assets, and my colleague earlier in question or in the member's petition talked about the profits and where those profits go. They go to cover our roads, our health care, our education.

But unfortunately we have a government . . . In 2003 that was the Sask Party. Now they have a different Premier, a different leader, and obviously they had to . . . I guess they sent him on his way in 2003 after the election. And he lost because he was going to sell the Crowns, something that was very crucial, vital.

So the Sask Party does have a record. The Sask Party government has a record. They like to mess around with the Crowns. They've got a message, a new leader, a Premier, and then that Premier wins in 2007. You know, 2007 comes along and we have a new Premier of the province, which is fine — Sask Party, leader of the Sask Party.

The interesting thing is, you know, he said we will not touch the Crowns; the Crowns will be protected. They played that game very well. You know, very well they played that game with the people. Lo and behold, and I'll get into a little bit about, you know, what got sold off and some of the stuff that they've got rid of, you know, and some of the legislation that might have been changed, proposed, brought in.

But you know, truly at the end of the day when I start thinking about the challenges that are coming in to this province, and we look at the cost of living, you know, I'm going to think about Sask Power. You know, I think about those individuals right now who pay their power bill. But unfortunately in January of this year, they've seen another increase in their power rates. And we wonder why. Why are they seeing increases of the power rates?

Well I guess when we have a talk with individuals and we share this, people are wondering about our Crown corporations, how proud they are. And I've said that, how proud they are of the Crown corporations. SaskPower is one of them, a good work, a great job. But you know what? We see some increases.

And when the Sask Party wants to take money and take the assets and utilize the assets for whatever they want to do, well I guess it's because of their mismanagement, their waste, their scandals. That's where we see some of our good earned dollars and our retained earnings as a Crown corporation. We all own those. Those are ours. They belong to us as a province — very proud.

I myself, when you think about SaskTel, you think about a Crown corporation. With our house, you think about our house phone. For years we've had a service that provides a great service — very proud. I have talked highly of SaskTel, the service we get. Like anything, are there some challenges? Sure there is, but SaskTel's always willing to work out, make sure that you're comfortable, you're happy with the service. They do a great job and they do this province a good service, and we know that.

[14:45]

But unfortunately, you know, when you see a government that's playing around with our finances . . . And I say that because they are. They are playing around with the finances because at the end of the day, if and when . . . And I think in 2015-16 there was something like \$292 million that was given back to the province to help pay for like our schools, our roads. And if you look at some of the information that's come out about, now that it is a Crown corporation, SaskTel, and are we paying mobility prices that are way out there? No, I think we're getting a pretty good service. And I mean the people I've talked to are very proud. They're saying, you know, it's affordable. You can get on certain plans. SaskTel does a great job. They do a great job of advertising, of promoting what the service is. It's owned by

the people.

And when I think about all the different Crowns that are owned by the people and those assets that are shared in this province . . . So to give an example, you know, the \$292 million that was shared with the government that the government didn't have access to. So the government's thinking, well okay, we've got this money coming in. We'll do a little more work. Well maybe we don't have to tax the people as hard because the good people of this province have paid for those services. It's a Crown corporation. They've paid to have that service. We'll let those profits stay within our province.

And my colleagues have expressed that very well and some of them articulated excellent. I agree with that, but the facts are the facts. At the end of the day, you have \$292 million that goes into the General Revenue Fund, or the government uses the way it needs to use it.

But the good people of this province want the government to use those profits well. They want them to manage them well, not have scandals, waste, and mismanagement of their funds. Those are taxpayers' dollars, and at the end of the day they will hold this government to account. They will.

Like you know, the backbenchers, I send this message to those individuals back there. Sit on your hands, say nothing, but you watch the debt going up. You see what they're trying to sell off. Mr. Speaker, you see what's going on. And at the end of the day, the people will hold those members to account, those members.

It's a long time, yes. I've said this in this House before: brag about your 50-some members. That's good. You mock. You laugh. The good people of this province who have paid the price will send you a message. So keep mocking them. Keep laughing and doing what you're doing. Waste their money. But the taxpayer will hold you to account. We know that.

So as I was getting into that where we say about profits, and SaskTel was one of them and a number of the Crowns who bring in all of those profits, and they share amongst the province. And if it lessens having income tax or the PST [provincial sales tax], there's different ways. But this government wants to sell off our Crowns. Oh they say, no, no, no. We've heard the Premier say, no, we're not going to do that. No, we're not going to do that, no. You know, they go ahead and they do this and they pass. Whether they knew this or not, whether they do this or not . . .

You talk about income tax. Right now, our Crown corporations, they're owned 100 per cent by Saskatchewan people, all of us. We pay no income tax, nothing. We don't pay. We could take those assets and we can use them the way we want. Well unfortunately the government of the day has got to use them. But they have wasted so much — mismanagement, scandals. And that happens. So that's interesting.

Now if they get rid of 10 per cent as some of my colleagues and share with them . . . And I think about the critic for, you know, the Finance one. I think about the member from Nutana, how she has expressed it very well. Did the government know? Did they not know? Did they not care that if you sell off 10 per cent

or more of our Crowns, you will have to pay income tax on those that are no longer? So less than 90 per cent from my understanding, then you will pay income tax.

Well lo and behold, they're trying to get a definition, and maybe you're hearing, well we might sell off 49 per cent of the Crowns. Let me be very clear. I think the Saskatchewan people . . .

And you know, I want to welcome the member from Meewasin. He was on the doorstep. I was on the doorstep door knocking. And it's interesting hearing those individuals in that constituency who made it very clear, very clear: do not touch our Crowns.

I had conversations with people saying, you know what? I supported the Sask Party government. I voted for them. I did. I voted two terms. For two terms, three times I voted for them. But I am not voting for them this time because they're going after our Crowns. They're trying to sell off SaskTel. They're trying to sell off something that we're so proud of that's such an asset.

So those members, those constituents in Meewasin sent a message. They elected an NDP member to this House. And let me tell you, we have ourselves a member who is very passionate, caring. And I think, you know, when you look at his roles that he will play in this House, it will be grateful and we will be grateful and I know the constituents will be. So I welcome him to his Legislative Assembly and as part of official opposition.

But having said that, and I want to go back to our Crowns again. And it's important any time you have members who want to mess around with our Crown corporations. And you know, it's funny because on the weekend I was talking to . . . I don't want to age them but a couple of constituents that, you know, they're celebrating their 70th birthday and stuff like that, and it's amazing, you know, as you talk to them and you talk to individuals. And I met up with some . . . I was in Saskatoon and I met up with another family and a couple of individuals, and they said, why is this government even mentioning or trying to . . . What's going on with our Crown corporations? We're all so proud.

Like you guys, you spend so much money on polling. Like you love doing polling. So what would you . . . You love spending money. The Sask Party, you love spending money. They do so much polling. Well maybe somebody volunteers to do a polling for you. But anyway at the end of the day, you know, they get them polling. I'm sure, I'm sure at the end of the day the government must be getting messages. And I wonder what messages they're getting when they're checking out. Oh, maybe you're not doing polling to see, well is it a good idea to sell our Crowns or not. But I think you're probably doing a little bit. And maybe it's another . . . Maybe you don't hire anybody. Maybe it's somebody is doing it out there out of the goodness of Saskatchewan people, and they might be doing it, a research group or something. And that's great if they are. I thank them. And I hope they share the results with the Sask Party because I think you're going to get the answer loud and clear: don't mess with the Crowns.



But having said that, I referred to some of the backbenchers, Mr. Speaker. I was talking about some of the challenges that are out there. And I think some of the backbenchers are not going to be here next election. You're messing around with our Crown corporations, and you can laugh and think it's funny, you know, and that's all right. That's all right. You can heckle and you can do what you want and you can have your argument and your day and your challenge. But at the end of the day, the good people of Saskatchewan do not want their Crowns touched in any way.

They don't want you to sell 5 per cent. They don't want you to sell off this small piece. And we've seen how the government has sold off different parts of our Crowns. And the people are paying attention and they're watching and they're sending you a message. And you got sent a message. But having said that, we look at the great work, the service that is provided to Saskatchewan residents, you know, whether it's SaskEnergy, and I've talked about whether it's SaskTel, whether it's SaskPower.

And I think about SGI. People are glad they've got a service of SGI. It's a Crown corporation, and there are many Crown corporations, you know, that provide a good service to Saskatchewan people. Some of them maybe make a profit. Maybe some of them have challenges or hard years, but a government's supposed to support them and the people.

And I think of STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company] as a Crown corporation, and yes, the government does give STC a subsidy, and at the end of the day . . . But there's a service that is provided to many Saskatchewan residents, and I think about the rural area, the North. They use STC and that service to bring in goods and services for our farmers. When I think about the passengers, when I think about our seniors who may not have a vehicle, may not have a driver's, they use STC to travel to medical appointments, and that's a good thing. So we know that there are good assets. They do a good service, and the people are proud of that service.

But having said that, when we see a government so willing to have the interpretation they call it, *The Interpretation Act*, they want an interpretation. I wonder. Make a few phone calls. Go visit with some of your constituency and find out what they think about your guys' proposed Bill 40. Let's talk about those men and women who work for the Crown corporations. What do they have to say? I think we've seen about 1,500 of them that were here on last Wednesday. Might have been even more of them. And they were expressing their frustration with this government.

You see the cuts, but you know what? It's okay. Oh well, maybe there was 2,000 of them here. But you know what? It was amazing to watch. We had probably some of the worst weather and they showed up here. I think the Sask Party didn't realize what they've done. You've woken up many people in this province, even your own supporters.

You know, I may as well share this. I get around back home, and I like visiting and I visit with so many different people back home. It doesn't matter if they're Sask Party, if they're a Liberal. I don't care. I just visit, socialize, and you treat people with respect and dignity. And I think about these individuals,

and actually they're individuals that support your party. They voted for your candidates and they think . . . You know, that's great. That's what they believe and that's fine. I understand that. I still respect them and we can still have a coffee, you know, and have a talk.

But I want to make it very clear. This individual said, he said, I don't care. Tell the Premier. You could tell every one of the ministers in the Sask Party I'm a true supporter but I do not appreciate them even looking at selling off the Crowns. What do they think they're doing? I cannot believe they would even go there. And I said, you know what? They don't care; they're going there. Well I'm not going to tell you what else he had to say in the words because I can't use that language here in the House. So I'll just say it wasn't, the words that he used wasn't very nice when I would say that. As my grandkids would say, that's not nice language.

So having said that, if you must be getting from your own members, that your own constituents must be approaching you, telling you, what are you guys doing? Well maybe you don't even go visit your constituents because you don't want to hear what they have to say. Because you should be paying attention to them because I know they're not happy. They're not happy with what you guys are doing. And coming up with legislation and to amend an Act, you know, we see through that; everyone's seeing through that. And they're trying to send you a message.

You know, if something isn't broken, why would you want to amend it and fix it? And then you blame it on, oh, well if the government back then, the NDP government when you introduced this Act, the protection Act, why didn't you fix this and have this interpretation and fix this? You know, that side of the House, you had an opportunity to bring in amendments. You could have amended that legislation when it was introduced, but you didn't do that. You didn't think about that. But now, now you want to do it. Well I think at the end of the day the good people of this province can see through what you're trying to do and the good people will send you a message. I know that.

But having said that, you know, I want to go into a little bit more about . . . And I want to correct myself here because I did say 292 million and it's 297.2 million that was shared with the rest of the province in 2015-16. So I want to be clear: it was even more, more money that they shared, the good people of this province shared with the government of the day to say, please take care of our dollars. Take care of our tax dollars. Don't mismanage it, you know, the scandals. Don't get into that. Don't use our dollars to do that.

And I think as things unfold, the public will get a better look at everything. As the finances unfold on the 22nd, we get the third quarter and all those things, and the people will see. And at the end of the day we'll say, you know what? These Crown corporations that have paid back dividends, dividends after dividends after dividends, year after year after year, to help lessen the taxes, to help pay, to help pay for this province's health care, education, for the services that are needed.

I think about some of, you know, the challenges that are faced in northern Saskatchewan, and I think my colleagues have

shared that. We have shared that. The leaders from First Nations, Métis leaders, the mayors, those individuals back home, health . . . you know, the front-line health workers have shared about the challenges that they're facing when it comes to suicides, when it comes to addictions, when it comes to mental health. There are so many areas that you could take these dollars and do some good thing. Can you just quit please with the scandals, mismanaging the money? Can you actually do what's needed to be done for northern people, for people across this province?

Share with them. We're willing to share. We want to share, but we need help. We're asking the government for help. Many of the leaders are asking the government to please do more. Do more. Yes, I know you think it's funny. You don't care about the North; I understand that. You don't care about the people in the North, and that's clear. You can heckle; you can say what you want. But I want to make it very clear. I want to make it very clear. The good people of northern Saskatchewan, the people that I represent in the Cumberland constituency, are tired, tired of a government not . . . And they're starting to use their voice.

[15:00]

And I think about the different organizations that are coming in and they're saying, we want you to take the resources. And there's many resources that come out. But I know the money that I talked about, the 297.2 million as I corrected it, could do so much to help so many in our province. Whether it's North, rural, First Nations, Métis communities, whether it's the urban, there is so much that could be done, and those dollars could be used. Every time a government wastes money, you overspend on land . . . And I mean that stuff's all going to come out. And you do different scandals. You do waste. You have a billion-dollar, you know, over cost, whatever it is.

You know, when you look at some of the challenges that you're asking people to face, the good people of our province have to endure tough times. And then you come out with legislation when they tell you, do not sell off our Crowns. They're used for many of us and should be used for our generation. And I think about this and, you know, I was kind of thinking about, Mr. Speaker, I was thinking about some of the members, the backbenchers, and I think about the members. Like one day you will leave here. Maybe you'll retire. That's fine. Maybe the good people send you a retirement. But at the end of the day, what you leave and what we leave for the next generation, I hope you're proud, that you can stand and say, look, we did the right things.

Like I hope you . . . Honestly I hope you can, and I wish you well on that. Because right now what I see, that's not happening. And I think there's going to be troubled times coming. But having said that, you could, and you have an opportunity as backbenchers, stand up to the government, stand up to the ministers, voice your concern, voice your concern. You need to stand up and fight for the constituency. But that's okay. I understand that you laugh and you think it's funny. You're just going to roll around and do what you want to do. You do that.

Now let's get back to of course talking about Bill 40. As the

Speaker will say, you know, Doyle, make sure you stay on topic. But I just want to show some examples of what now, when you look at the Crown corps, and I talked a little bit about all the different employees. You know, how many employees do we have that work for our Crowns? Well we know yesterday we have, you know, some that are losing their jobs as yesterday they got the notices. And so we don't know who else will get the notice that they're going to lose jobs. The government says that they're going to do some cutting.

Well when we see the budget on the 22nd, it's going to be interesting to see what exactly will be in that budget, the third quarter finances. We've been hearing government . . . You put out these balloons and you say all these different things that might happen, could happen, and then you come back in the House after and you say, well it wasn't as bad as it really was. I'm worried, and I'm worried if you have access to selling off 49 per cent of our Crowns, and you say we still own it because we own 51 per cent. Every time you . . . [inaudible] . . . you deal with that, and you put that out in the public. It's very simple. I don't think the public wants you to sell off 1 per cent of any of the Crowns. It's clear. Don't sell off SaskTel. Don't sell off our Crowns. But you have done that. You know, little parts of it you have sold off and out of the good people of Saskatchewan. You know, they're going to send you a message, and I know that message is going to come.

And at the end of the day, we think about how our Crowns, you know, have started and as they came forward and they were developed of the good people of this province. You know, it took time to have the assets that we have and the quality of life that we have. You know, we think on this side of the House that you will get a message soon. I'm hoping you do some polling, and if you don't do some polling, you know, do some polling or even do some phone calls and do a little bit of checking out on what's going on and how the people of this good province do they think . . . You guys will come up to another election and maybe you guys are going to be having a leadership race. You never know. You never know what happens with your side of the House and you never know . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Who? Oh well, we never know what that's going to be like. And I'm sure, you know, they won't want to hear that you want to sell off their Crowns.

But having said that, you know, when you look at the Crown corporations and the jobs across the province, Mr. Speaker . . . I talked about the good-paying jobs. Let's just say an individual works for our Crown corporation, and we know that some of those are . . . They're good-paying jobs. They're good-paying jobs for Saskatchewan residents.

So if you have somebody who works for a Crown corporation, it's good for their local community as far as the economy. They buy a house in their community. And we know that there's government employees throughout the province in northern Saskatchewan, southern Saskatchewan, the rural, the urban. We know there's lots of them all over. They do a great job, but they provide for their families and that's all they want. Some of them, they buy a house. It's good for the economy. They pay their taxes, they buy services and goods in their community. These are good-paying jobs.

So if you sell those off, will they have the same benefits? And

we see some of the benefits that some of the Crown corporations get. We have individuals who get good health benefits. We know that they have health benefits. So if they have health benefits and good services and they can provide for their family, isn't that what we want? We want society to have good-paying jobs. We want them to be able to provide for their families, have health coverage, and be involved in the local community.

You know, when I think about some of the work that the Crown corporations do, and I heard some of my colleagues talking about the different organizations that our Crown corporations . . . They do fundraising and they help community, they volunteer. The hours that are put in by our Crown corporation employees, whether it's SaskTel, SaskEnergy, you name it, SGI, they all do certain things and they get involved in the local community. And they're coaches. They're volunteers. They do some great stuff out there. And they fundraise for different causes. And I give them credit that they do a lot of great work and they put in.

But I think we're seeing more and more of . . . those employees that work for those Crowns are starting to see something, and they're starting to see through. I think a lot of them voted for you last election. As I remember, the Minister of Education and Labour, I remember him saying, heck, we had 55 per cent of them vote for us, like you know, stuff like that.

When you have that, I think, you know what? You've woke them up. You've got their attention; trust me, you have. You have got the unions. You've got the working men and women of these Crown corporations. You've woken them up; they're paying attention. You're now starting to bring stuff forward, and you're waking them up. And they should be woke up. Unfortunately, you know, you did the spin to them — oh no, no, we'll never touch our Crowns in the election. We didn't hear that on the doorstep from any of your candidates. Oh we're going to sell the Crowns. We're looking at this. We're looking at . . . Oh no, no, no, we won't do that. We wouldn't even consider that. So it's interesting how that plays out.

But now you have them awake, and you've got some of them paying attention, and I hope more and more of them pay attention. And I hope they send letters — those that are in your constituency — I hope they send you letters. I hope you get phone calls. Coffee . . . They visit you at your constituency office to tell you how important our Crowns are protected and left alone. I hope you're getting that.

I hope you understand they want you to scrap Bill 40. It's so important. They want you to scrap Bill 40. None? The Finance minister has no calls, nobody bothers you. Okay, well that's good. Maybe I'll encourage people out there if you're paying attention, please contact the Finance minister. He would love to hear from you because he's saying nobody cares about Bill 40. Nobody cares about selling off our Crowns. Get a hold of the Finance minister, the guy that's in charge of the dollars who's actually . . . We'll see what happens on his budget, you know. He says no calls, nobody's worried about it. Well we'll see about that. So that's good when I see that.

Mr. Speaker, there are so many, so many people out there that are truly worried about this. If at the end of the day we have our

Crowns sold and we lose the assets, and I've talked about the 297.2 million that was paid back, I think it's in 2016, '15 from the Crowns to help. If those profits are made by another company, a private investor, a private company, do we think that they're going to give us back that money? That they're going to give it to Saskatchewan people to pay for our education? That they're going to give that to pay for our roads, our health care? Do we actually think that that money's going to come back to the province? Some of it may in taxes. Some of those, you know, may be in taxes. But having said that, once you sell off our Crowns, they're gone. They're gone for good, and we don't get them back, you know.

But you know what, unfortunately, that's the other thing, you know, and I had talked about that. You know, if you sell off more than 10 per cent of a Crown you're going to have those tax dollars. They're going to go to Ottawa, to Justin Trudeau and the federal government to utilize. And I'm sure he'd thank you because he could use the dollars. So when I think about that, and you know, we refer to some of those comments in here. It goes back to this. Is the profits . . . We've seen exactly what this government did. We seen our privatization of our liquor stores. We've seen the government do that to those profits. And we've seen how some companies were not happy. Saskatchewan companies were not happy with that process and what happened with that. Are those profits going to stay in Saskatchewan? Are those profits going to leave? Well I would assume and I would think . . . You know, we want nothing sold. We don't want it sold, but if you're going to and you did that, you answer to those companies. You answer to those Saskatchewan companies. And you're the government of the day, you make those choices.

So I leave it at that. And I think at the end of the day, you know, my colleagues have expressed, we have heard from people all over: do not mess with the Crown corporations. You have lost a leader because of that. You lost an election in 2003 because of that. Now you guys are messing with that. I think, you know, you may lose. So having said that, you just keep going steady course doing what you're doing. Just keep doing what you're doing. Take the people of this good province for granted. I've told you, you know, the people trust you. They gave you a mandate; here it is.

You did not share this. Mr. Speaker, that government did not share with the people of this good province in 2016, in April, that they were going to sell off the Crowns, they were going to do anything of this, what was coming. They did not share that with anyone. You see the billboards, the advertising, everything. No, you didn't share a word with people, not a word. Now you've got the mandate. You're there now.

And I've had people that . . . Well I'll share this. I've had people who didn't support me, who came to me and said, you know what Doyle, for this . . . And I've had people say that: I didn't support the NDP; I voted Sask Party. But I'm not going to be voting for them next time, trust me. That's fine. I mean, that's their choice. That's the message the people . . . I hope you guys are hearing that because if you're not, sit up and pay attention. Scrap Bill 40, you know the interpretation, Mr. Speaker. Scrap Bill 40.

Mr. Speaker, the good people of this province are asking the

minister, the cabinet, the Premier, those members to scrap Bill 40. Many people are asking. We don't need this interpretation Act to define what it is. What the good people of this province want is you to manage their finances, their tax dollars well. They don't want you not to mismanage. They don't want you to waste. They don't want any scandals.

They want you to take care of those assets and use them for the goodness of all of us, for our next generation, our grandkids, our kids. That's what the good people of this province want, and they entrusted you with that. And you have turned your back on them. I hope you can reverse your decision and scrap Bill 40. I hope you will. You'll hear the concerns, and you will scrap Bill 40.

So having said that, Mr. Speaker, I'm hoping that after a few days the government will say, you know, we've reconsidered this and we're actually going to scrap this bill. We've thought about it and we're going to scrap it. Let's just hope they do.

But having said that, you know, to join in. And like I said, my colleagues have expressed many great points. And I admire them, the way they articulate well their skills, and how they shared with Saskatchewan residents and the public, with the members about the challenges that many Saskatchewan people will face. Because if you lose those profits and they're not going into government coffers, somebody's going to have to pay. And unfortunately it's going to be the most vulnerable, those people back home who will have to pay. They will have to pay whether you raise taxes, PST . . . because, you know, the good tooth fairy isn't going to show up and give you guys the 297.2 that you got to spend and those . . . [inaudible] . . . when you think about that, there's nobody going to show up and just give you a donation. You've got it . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well, 2015-16.

So having said all that, again I want to express my thanks to my colleagues for those members out there in the public who are fighting to say, this is the wrong way to go. This is very dangerous. It's the wrong place to go. This is the wrong legislation to change the interpretation.

[15:15]

They say, oh it doesn't mean anything. People are paying attention, and they're worried. And I think they should be worried. We have a government, I think at the end of the day they've always had their agenda and their idea. They were just smooth how they did it. And now we're here today, and I think the good people of this province I hope will send a message to them.

So at this point, Mr. Speaker, I'm really, I'm not sure, you know, how much more a person can share and what we want to share, but I'm hoping that they've heard our citizens. We've heard our unions, our colleagues, and I think different organizations will weigh in on this.

You know, when I was thinking about the . . . and I had asked about some of the costs of . . . and I'm just going to see, and I was thinking about this, you know, some of the costs and when we had . . . if you look at what it costs right now for cell service, Mobility, you look at different companies and the

service that SaskTel provides. I think about my own phone, you know, and the rates. You can call in once in a while and you can say, you know, I'd like to look and see how much is my phone bill. Is there a better plan I can go on? And it's amazing to watch. SaskTel's willing to work with that . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, and I pay a portion too, just like you do, I hope.

And I say that, you know, at the end of the day I see SaskTel and, you know, you have a Mobility bill that comes in. And like I said, I check on it and see, is there a better plan I can go on? But lo and behold, I've seen some reports and I think I've seen even on some comments on Facebook, and people were talking about how the costs compare to owning our own Crown corporation, so SaskTel with Mobility, and the cost and the savings that come back to Saskatchewan residents. Even though we have cheap rates, we have a great service. Money goes back into government coffers for all of us to share, and that's the process.

If you sell that off . . . And the government has said, well we'll look at all offers; if we get an offer we'll look at it. Well no, it's not for sale, but if we get an offer, well we'll have a minister that will be responsible in case we get an offer. You know, wink-wink, nudge-nudge. Okay, really? That's how it's going to be? Well you know what? The good people of this province will see through that, and I think they're sending a message.

So having said that, we have a good service. It's cheap rates, and we still make profits that go back in to help pay for health care, for all the different things. So, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, again I go back. I'm hoping the government will, will, will make the right decision and withdraw Bill 40 and make sure that our Crown corporations . . .

And you know, if you want to make amendments and changes that protect them, we'd probably work with you and I'm sure Saskatchewan people would work with you . . . [inaudible] . . . But to have, you know, a definition, a definition, you know, a definition, a definition, you know, if you want to . . . and strengthen our Crown corporations, as the minister says he would like to do that, you know, that's good. I hope he does. If it'd strengthen our Crown corporations so that they can't be sold off, then that's a great thing. And you know, fine. We can talk about that and we can have a discussion if you want and maybe debate it, whatever.

But having said that, Mr. Speaker, I think I've expressed my thanks to my colleagues, to those out there, to some of the challenge that facing . . . and you think some of the . . . You know, the last thing I want to share is, I think in 1908 is when SaskTel was founded, you know, in 1908. Here you go. You think about SaskPower, you know. You think about it, a Crown corporation in 1929. SaskEnergy in 1952. I mean these have been with us for so long, and the people are proud of them. Don't mess with them. They're asking the government of the day, do not mess with our Crown corporations. They pay back so much to Saskatchewan people. So having said that, Mr. Speaker, I'm prepared to adjourn on Bill 40.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Cumberland 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 Saskatoon Riversdale.

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to wade into the debate on Bill No. 43, *The Pipelines Amendment Act, 2016*. It's always a privilege to represent the people of Saskatoon Riversdale and the people of Saskatchewan in this debate from my chair here in the opposition, Mr. Speaker.

There's a few things that I'd like to talk about today with respect to Bill 43. I think context is incredibly important, the context of some recent oil spills, Mr. Speaker. A recent audit . . . well actually not recent auditor's reports. Auditor's reports dating back to 2012, Mr. Speaker, and to 2014, the fact that we're still waiting for the government's investigation of Husky Energy, Mr. Speaker, which is overdue. That is a little bit of the context under which this . . . or in which this bill has been presented here to the people of Saskatchewan.

So let's just cast our minds back to the summer, last summer, summer 2016, where there was a spill of 225 000 litres of a leak of heavy crude oil and dilutant from a Husky Energy pipeline into the North Saskatchewan River, Mr. Speaker. It impacted everybody along the North Saskatchewan. Communities particularly hard hit: North Battleford, P.A. [Prince Albert], Melfort were three cities who were impacted, Mr. Speaker.

It impacted the drinking water of more than 66,000 residents here in the province. And in fact it forced communities to shut off their intakes from the river and find other water sources for nearly two months. In fact actually the city of North Battleford even in November was still piping in their drinking water from a neighbouring town, Mr. Speaker.

It impacted people in a big way. It impacted the economy. It impacted businesses in these communities. It impacted wildlife, access to clean water. And water that we can drink and we can cook with and we can bathe with is important to life, Mr. Speaker.

I think it's important to note that actually there's another bill before us, which I know my colleague will be speaking to, that's tied into the importance of water here in Saskatchewan as well, Mr. Speaker. But this particular oil spill had a huge impact on many people for a very long time. I know that colleagues of mine . . . The member from Prince Albert Northcote actually was on the ground there, and many of my colleagues actually made their way north to talk to people and find out what the real impacts were. I know when you think about restaurants and the inability to provide the services to customers, Mr. Speaker, not being able to turn on your tap — we all take that for granted — and have clean water coming out of that tap, it's a huge concern, Mr. Speaker.

I talked a little bit about context of the auditor's reports. I'm going to take us back to 2012 when the Provincial Auditor first did a chapter on regulating pipelines, Mr. Speaker. And it's important to remember that to ensure success and sustainability of Saskatchewan, the people in Saskatchewan deserve a government that will support our resource sector while also ensuring the protection of the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the land on which we grow our food, Mr. Speaker. So strong regulations around pipelines are critical. Companies need to know what the regulations are and how they will impact their business, Mr. Speaker, but also that those regulations will be in fact enforced.

While I'm still on the topic of oil spills, Mr. Speaker, in January of 2017 there was a spill on the Ocean Man First Nation where a pipeline leaked 200 000 litres of crude oil on First Nations farm land, and it's important to point out that the Sask Party government failed to inform the public and have not said when that pipeline was last inspected.

Going back to the Provincial Auditor's report of 2012, that's the 2012 report volume 1, chapter 5, I'd like to read those recommendations into the record, Mr. Speaker. There were important recommendations in 2012, and I will . . . So in 2012 the Provincial Auditor recommended seven recommendations, I believe, but I will get to them here.

So her first recommendation was that "We recommend that the Ministry of Energy and Resources develop written policies and procedures to guide staff when assessing pipeline design, monitoring pipeline construction, and evaluating pipeline operations."

The second recommendation the auditor recommended, "... that the Ministry of Energy and Resources consider seeking responsibility in law to verify that pipeline operators clean up contaminated sites to an acceptable condition."

She recommended "... that the Ministry of Energy and Resources consistently document its assessments of pipeline license applications for compliance with the law prior to issuing pipeline licenses."

She recommended "... that the Ministry of Energy and Resources assess the resources it requires to fulfill its responsibilities under *The Pipelines Act, 1998*."

And her fifth recommendation was "... that the Ministry of Energy and Resources implement a risk-based assessment approach to monitor pipeline construction and verify pressure tests."

Her sixth recommendation in 2012, Mr. Speaker, so five years ago, Mr. Speaker, "We recommend that the Ministry of Energy and Resources monitor pipeline operator compliance with integrity management and safety processes for existing pipelines."

And her seventh was that, "We recommend that the Ministry of Energy and Resources consider seeking responsibility in law to license flowlines," Mr. Speaker. So that was in 2012.

And a couple years later, the auditor did a follow-up audit. And

I just want to point out how much work had been done — or how little work had been done — between those two years in ensuring our pipelines were safe, Mr. Speaker, and well regulated.

So the first recommendation on developing “. . . written policies and procedures to guide staff when assessing pipeline design, monitoring pipeline construction, and evaluating pipeline operations.” That was partially implemented, Mr. Speaker.

Her second recommendation that the Ministry of Economy, which was formerly the Ministry of Energy and Resources, “. . . monitor pipeline operator compliance with integrity management and safety processes for existing pipelines.” They didn’t get that done in those two years. That one was not implemented at that time in 2014, Mr. Speaker.

The third recommendation, “We recommend that [the Ministry of Economy, formerly] the Ministry of Energy and Resources consider seeking responsibility in law to verify that pipeline operators clean up contaminated sites to an acceptable condition.” That one was not implemented in 2014, Mr. Speaker.

Here’s some positive news, Mr. Speaker. In 2014, the next two were fully implemented where the Ministry of Economy, which was formerly the Ministry of Energy and Resources, “. . . consistently document its assessments of pipeline license applications for compliance with the law prior to issuing pipeline licenses.” That one was implemented, as was the recommendation that the Ministry of Economy “. . . assess the resources it requires to fulfill its responsibilities under *The Pipelines Act, 1998*.”

And then we move to partially implemented. On the recommendation that Ministry of Economy “. . . implement a risk-based assessment approach to monitor pipeline construction and verify pressure tests.” That one was partially implemented.

And the final recommendation, that the Ministry of Economy “. . . consider seeking responsibility in law to license flowlines” was not implemented, Mr. Speaker. And I believe at that time, I was new to Public Accounts where all the auditor’s reports land, Mr. Speaker, for review by the Public Accounts Committee. And it was surprising to me . . . Obviously, we all have areas where we have the strongest interest or expertise, Mr. Speaker. And it was the first time I had heard that flowlines in Saskatchewan, up to about 70,000 flowlines in Saskatchewan, were not regulated. That came as a surprise to me sitting at that table, Mr. Speaker.

But just an interesting aside that in 2014 when the auditor’s report came to the Public Accounts Committee, it was interesting. I just want to point out who one of those witnesses was. It was actually the deputy minister of the Economy, Mr. Laurie Pushor, who did in fact appear before Public Accounts. It was more than possible for him to appear, but it’s been this government who will not allow Mr. Pushor to appear for a body, the GTH, for which he’s responsible, Mr. Speaker. So that’s an interesting thing to note, Mr. Speaker, despite many people’s best efforts to try to get him there. There’s been many motions that this government has defeated, so that’s just a little

interesting aside. I think it’s important, Mr. Speaker.

I’d like to talk a little bit, obviously, about the bill itself and what this bill does particularly. I’ve given you a little bit of a context. So in a nutshell, it establishes new inspection, investigation, and compliance audit powers for government staff, and it updates penalties, and it also licenses flow lines. So those 70,000 lines that were not licensed before are now going to be licensed, which is a good thing, Mr. Speaker.

But in general what this bill does, it expands the regulation and licensing of pipelines to include the, well 80,000, existing flow lines, allows pipelines moving fluids other than hydrocarbon steam and CO<sub>2</sub> to be considered under the definition of pipelines, gives new powers to pipeline inspectors to collect information and enter property. It grants immunity to government from litigation based on the actions of pipeline inspectors as long as they were carried out in good faith.

It allows the minister with the approval of cabinet to create directives related to areas where he has regulatory authority. It allows for pipelines previously exempted from regulation and licensing to eventually be covered by the Act, at a time to be set out in the regulations. So we don’t know what that is yet, Mr. Speaker.

It increases the penalties for breaking the law, regulations, or directives from 50,000 to \$500,000, Mr. Speaker. Prosecutions under *The Pipelines Act* can now only be commenced less than three years after the government learns of the infraction. The bill sets out new criteria and rules for the transferring of pipeline licences from one person to another, including a clause stating that the transfer must be in the public interest.

[15:30]

It adds new regulation-making authority so the ministry can require operators to put up financial assurance for high-risk projects and require operators to file emergency response plans. And the bill does not include flow line operators in the expropriation provisions for pipelines. Flow line operators will continue to expropriate land under the outdated — we’ve been waiting for a while — surface rights acquisition and compensation Act, which has not been updated, Mr. Speaker.

So all of this, Mr. Speaker . . . I know my colleagues and I support this bill in principle and have been calling for this, Mr. Speaker. We’ve been calling on the government to implement this kind of regulation for a long time. But I think it’s important to point out that regulations are critically important, but if you don’t have the staff to regulate, to enforce those regulations, it’s a huge problem.

We see this as a potential issue with respect to Bill 43, but we see it with respect to another bill that’s before us, the water bill, Mr. Speaker, which my colleague will be speaking to. And I’m sorry, it slipped my mind what the number of that bill is, but that’s . . . 44. That’s Bill No. 44, Mr. Speaker, but that is also an issue where you need to ensure that the resources for regulation are there.

I think about it in my own critic portfolio when we have health inspectors and the scope of their job has grown, Mr. Speaker,

but their numbers have not. So you dump more and more work on a limited number of people, and the best regulations are not going to get enforced because you don't have the people to do them. Whether it's on health inspections, Mr. Speaker, water, pipelines, you need to ensure the resources are there to do the proper inspection. So all the regulations in the world, if you don't have people inspecting, are not going to do much, Mr. Speaker.

I think that one thing that's important to point out, that we're still waiting for this government's report on the Husky Energy spill, Mr. Speaker. I understand that we're still waiting for it. It's overdue, and one has to wonder . . . I know the minister has referenced it coming out soon, but we also have a budget coming out, a very difficult budget for the people of Saskatchewan, that will be here in just over a week's time, Mr. Speaker. So this very important Husky Energy report, the Government of Saskatchewan's report, which will talk about penalties that Husky might have to pay — hopefully talk about penalties anyway — assessing really what happened in that situation so it can be prevented in the future, thoughts for the future, Mr. Speaker. We are still waiting for that report.

And I think that there's a concern on this side of the House that that report will be released at the time where we have a provincial budget that isn't very good for the people of Saskatchewan. And this really important report that is about protecting the air we breathe and the water we drink and the land on which we grow our food will be lost in the shuffle somehow. And that might be the goal of this government, Mr. Speaker.

I think it's also important to point out that this is a government who has been more than reluctant to be open and transparent around other oil spills, Mr. Speaker, or any challenges in recent years. My caucus has put forward several FOIs [freedom of information] and the government has refused to release information, saying that that information about spills in the past will jeopardize this current investigation, Mr. Speaker, which quite honestly does not make any sense, Mr. Speaker.

People in Saskatchewan deserve to know what has transpired around this government's lack of regulation in this area in recent years. So this is . . . It's important. I want to just talk a little bit more about inspection, just quantifying that.

So I understand in Saskatchewan we did . . . inspectors did 78 inspections of pipelines last year, and in Alberta they did more than 2,000, Mr. Speaker. So again is that a staffing issue, the lack of willingness to put in place those resources to do those inspections? And this legislation on these regulations will only ensure that we need more inspectors and more work done in that regard. So again without more inspectors, new powers, and broader ability to inspect will not make a difference and will put our environment — and people's lives and livelihood — at risk, Mr. Speaker, which is exactly what happened during the oil spill last summer, Mr. Speaker.

So I do know that my colleagues will have much more to say about this bill, and eventually when this bill gets to committee, there will be many good questions by our critic responsible, Mr. Speaker. But with that, I would like to move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 43.

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

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure and honour to rise to join in the debate with respect to Bill No. 44, *The Water Security Agency Amendment Act*, Mr. Speaker. I know a lot of my colleagues have already had the opportunity to comment on this bill, and I welcome the opportunity for myself to add what I can to the debate, Mr. Speaker.

Now this bill will streamline the process for resolving drainage disputes between landowners and, Mr. Speaker, that's something that we've been calling for on this side for quite a while, so it's a welcome change. Essentially, Mr. Speaker, we've been hearing from many, many people in rural Saskatchewan that there's a need for a more comprehensive drainage strategy to help resolve drainage issues.

So in particular, we are happy to see that this bill has come forward. However we'll be ensuring that we're monitoring — once this bill comes into force and turns into an Act — we'll be monitoring how its processes are going, and whether or not it's achieving the function that it's desiring to. Similarly, Mr. Speaker, it's . . . And I'll get into this in a little bit more detail when I speak further. It's all fine and good to create legislation that is supposed to improve processes, but if you're not putting the requisite resources into that process — which is what actually something that my colleague had just spoken about on the previous bill that had been debated — if you don't put the appropriate resources into monitoring or following up on the requirements underneath this legislation, Mr. Speaker, it really renders any attempts to rectify the situation and improve on the processes moot, Mr. Speaker. So that's another thing we'll be watching very closely, Mr. Speaker.

So this bill will give the Water Security Agency the authority to order the closure or alteration of any drainage works constructed before 1981. Furthermore, it replaces the old two-step process for complaints of illegal drainage by a neighbour with a one-step process that the government says will be resolved now in 90 days or less. And that's something we've been hearing concerns about a lot, Mr. Speaker. The illegal drainage situation or the drainage situation as it stands now in the province results in a lot of animosity, to say the least, between neighbours.

And in fact it's timely that I have the opportunity to speak about

this bill as there was a *Leader-Post* article that came out this Saturday about this specific issue. And that was dated . . . I'm looking at an article by Murray Mandryk dated March 12th, 2017 titled "Saskatchewan farmland drainage hasn't been neighbourly," writes Murray Mandryk. And it's talking about that exact issue, the hostilities that have occurred between neighbours when they're trying to deal with drainage situations. Sometimes neighbours will . . . Sometimes one individual will do something to their land that will effectively create a drainage situation that flows into their neighbour's adjacent land causing, naturally, quite a large amount of tension, Mr. Speaker.

And it seemed as if the processes that existed prior to this bill were not able to rectify this situation. And you only have to drive down Highway 5, Mr. Speaker, and rub up against the Quill Lakes as you do — which I have done many times, Mr. Speaker; I have quite a few family in that area — to see some of the problems that are associated with illegal drainage and how that can impact not only neighbours' farm lands, but also the lakes, also wildlife, and highways, Mr. Speaker. So it ends up being quite a costly situation, quite a costly problem.

So the hope is that this legislation will help to alleviate this problem. Like I said, it's definitely been a concern. When I've spoken with people in the Quill Lakes area, Mr. Speaker, this is one of the number one concerns that I hear about is illegal drainage and how this needs to be rectified and how can this be rectified. And frankly when you talk to . . . If you reach out and you speak to a lot of different people, you sometimes get a lot of different solutions to a problem.

But I was happy to see that the minister, when he tabled this legislation, talked about the consultation that occurred with respect to this legislation. He said that there was an online consultation that took place from October 2013 to April 2014 and attracted nearly 500 participants who discussed various options for managing drainage in the province. And when you get a survey that has 500 participants take part, Mr. Speaker, that's a sign of an issue that's hitting home to quite a few people. That's actually quite a good uptake in terms of consultation, especially an online consultation, Mr. Speaker. And this was before my time, before I was elected so I wasn't aware of it, but I'm happy to see that it had occurred.

He also mentions that in 2015 the ministry, because it wouldn't have been this particular minister because I don't think he was a minister for this, the minister of Environment at this particular time, but his ministry would've met in 2015 with 15 agricultural and environmental and municipal groups. And then he goes on to list them and they're in *Hansard*, Mr. Speaker. I don't necessarily need to repeat them, but it is extensive.

And then further in his discussion when he's tabling this legislation, he talks about the key messages that he heard from the participants. And they included things like:

broad agreement that drainage provides many benefits to agricultural producers but, if the negative impacts of drainage cannot be mitigated, drainage activities should not be allowed; broad support for implementing regulations that are risk based where drainage activities of a larger scale or those that pose a greater risk require more stringent oversight; general agreement for those who

benefit from drainage projects should bear the costs for building and maintaining such projects; and general agreement from all that existing, non-approved projects need to be brought into the regulatory system; consistent support for increased compliance and enforcement including the use of increased fines and closure of drainage works in cases where the project has not received prior approval.

And when they did this consultation, they received mixed support for requiring the maintenance of some wetlands. And I'm assuming it looks like Ducks Unlimited was one of the groups that was consulted with respect to this legislation. I'm guessing that's probably one of the groups that expressed the desire to require the maintenance of wetlands. And as we all know, or we should know, Mr. Speaker, that it's really important that we're preserving, that we're balancing preserving our wetlands with our agricultural sector, which is an extremely important sector of our economy in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

So in a nutshell, Mr. Speaker, there was good consultation that was done here, and I do credit the government for doing that good consultation, Mr. Speaker, and that there was some very key messages that came out of their consultations. And like I said, when you're doing a consultation, you will receive many different solutions to many different problems. And as you can tell from the article and from what we've heard is different neighbours will have different positions because different neighbours will be on either the receiving or essentially the giving end of a drainage situation, Mr. Speaker, so then would have a different angle on how to go about this. So we are happy with the consultation that was done. The legislation seems to be good, but like I said, we're going to continue monitoring it to make sure that it is meeting its goal, Mr. Speaker.

[15:45]

Further, this bill also will allow appeals of decisions by the Water Security Agency to be heard by the Court of Queen's Bench rather than the Water Appeal Board. That's interesting to me. I'm not too sure why they're removing that administrative function and bringing it to the Queen's Bench. Typically if you're allowing for any type of decision to go through an administrative tribunal, that's generally seen as an easier process, Mr. Speaker, than going through Queen's Bench which has a much more formalized process. There are certain rules that you have to follow, Mr. Speaker. There's certain provisions with respect to how documents need to be drafted — timing, filing service provisions, Mr. Speaker — in addition to who can actually appear on your behalf, whether yourself or a lawyer, Mr. Speaker.

So it actually can be a bit of a lengthier process, a bit of a more expensive process, and a bit of a more difficult process, Mr. Speaker, especially if you don't have a legal background or you were unable to hire a lawyer. So the administrative body would provide, theoretically, and should and does provide a more informal method for resolving disputes, Mr. Speaker. So I suppose when our critic has the opportunity to ask questions at committee, that might be some of the questions that the critic will be asking is, what's the reason for removing this function away from the tribunal? Why is the administrative tribunal no longer seen as the appropriate place to hear an appeal? I'm not



too sure if this means that the Water Appeal Board is being folded up entirely or if there are other functions that the Water Appeal Board has.

And actually it's interesting. When more things are sent to Queen's Bench rather than a Water Appeal Board rurally, and we have a government that now seeks it appropriate to close Queen's Bench courthouses like they did in Weyburn, Mr. Speaker, it makes access to justice an issue. Sometimes we don't think about access to justice when we're thinking about water security, but when I look at the legislation, I see some concerns there.

Furthermore the legislation will expand the Water Security Agency's authority to enter lands with machinery and carry out work required to enforce an order by the Water Security Agency when a landowner fails to comply. And I think that's one of the concerns that residents had previously, that there wasn't a lot of bite to the legislation, that there wasn't an ability to actually enforce the legislation.

But that goes to one of the concerns that I initially talked about, Mr. Speaker. You can have all of these provisions; you can have enforcement measures in the legislature. But if you're not providing the requisite amount of funding to be able to have, for example, compliance officers or ministry staff to go in and actually enforce this, there won't be any purpose to this legislation and we won't be any better off than we were before, Mr. Speaker. So that's why it's so important to make sure that when you're creating these sorts of extra compliance measures or extra enforcement provisions, that you're also providing that with corresponding funding. And I know, and the critic would be better versed in this than me, but we haven't seen exactly a wealth of funds flowing towards the Ministry of Environment, Mr. Speaker, since the Sask Party came to power.

So I'm not too sure if the plan is to have these extra enforcement measures be done by existing staff, who are already quite busy — quite, dare I say, overburdened — and might be subject to a 3.5 per cent wage cut in the near future. I'm not too sure how that's going to go over when they're tasked with extra work, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Furthermore, the new legislation will expand the Water Security Agency's ability to recover costs for work carried out to enforce an order by the Water Security Agency when a landowner fails to comply in this. It also ties into the fine that's been increased.

And that was, if you look again at the minister's remarks when he tabled the legislation, or when he gave his second reading speech of the legislation, that one of the concerns was that the original fine, which was \$1,000 a day, was not sufficient. So now it's been increased. The maximum fine has been increased, Mr. Deputy Speaker, from \$1,000 per day to an amount not exceeding \$1 million per day, which is quite an extensive, quite a massive jump, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's not an amount of money to shake a stick at. Frankly for me, \$1,000 per day wasn't really an amount for me to shake a stick at either, but \$1 million per day is quite substantial. And I think the hope is that some of the larger farms are some of the larger, I suppose, culprits in this situation, will be more encouraged to comply with the legislation than they have been in the past.

But again it all goes to enforcement, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So if we're imposing a fine, but we're never actually charging anybody with anything, we're never actually forcing anyone to pay a fine because we don't have the supports, we don't have the staff there to actually go into these communities and investigate and place any fines on anybody, then there's really no point.

And word travels very quickly as you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, around this province that if something like this bill comes into force but there is really no ability for anybody to come in and actually investigate and actually fulfill what's required under this Act, then people aren't going to change their habits, and people are just going to continue doing what they're continuing to do.

So that's the main concern that I have with respect to this bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Like I said, it's one of the main concerns I hear rurally, especially in the Quill Lakes area, which is the place I frequent the most in terms of rural Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So I am happy to see that there is at least some attempts being made to rectify this problem that's going on. But again we're going to continue monitoring it to make sure that it's working to its full extent and that there isn't any concerns. But we do welcome any feedback, if there is feedback from the community and they have concerns about this bill. By all means, please get in touch with us, be it our Environment critic or any number of us. Our doors are always open, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I do want to speak, like I said, I've spoken a little bit about the importance of this legislation and the timeliness of this legislation. I do want to speak again a little bit more about this article that I found, that actually my dad alerted me to. So I should probably give him credit for sending this to me and telling me to read it. He didn't even know I was speaking on this bill, but he thought it was really important because he's also from the Humboldt area, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so he understands the actual dilemma around illegal drainage. And we have a . . . or he has a cabin in an area where the lake is often, there's often quite a bit of algae in that lake. The thought is that there is some drainage that's occurring that is not supposed to be occurring, Mr. Deputy Speaker, into that lake, and that's what creating this bloom of algae that did not exist before, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I encourage all members to read this article if they haven't read it. And like I said, it's a *Leader-Post* article dated March 12th, and it talks a little bit about some of the concerns that people have had with respect to this and how it's creating a real situation of conflict between neighbours, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So it's really important that this bill when it comes into force actually has the resources it needs to be enforceable and to be utilized to its full potential, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so we can do what we can to alleviate these, what's turning into essentially battles between neighbours, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So not only is there that concern, there's the agricultural impact. And then there's the environmental impact as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So this is a very important bill, I think.

I know that I'll have other colleagues who will be wanting to

join in on this debate, especially the critic. I look forward to hearing her comments on this bill as she's much more versed in this area than I am, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But with that, I think I will conclude my remarks for now and adjourn debate on Bill 44.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Regina Douglas Park 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:** — Thank you, 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:** — This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 15:56.]



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