



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

of the

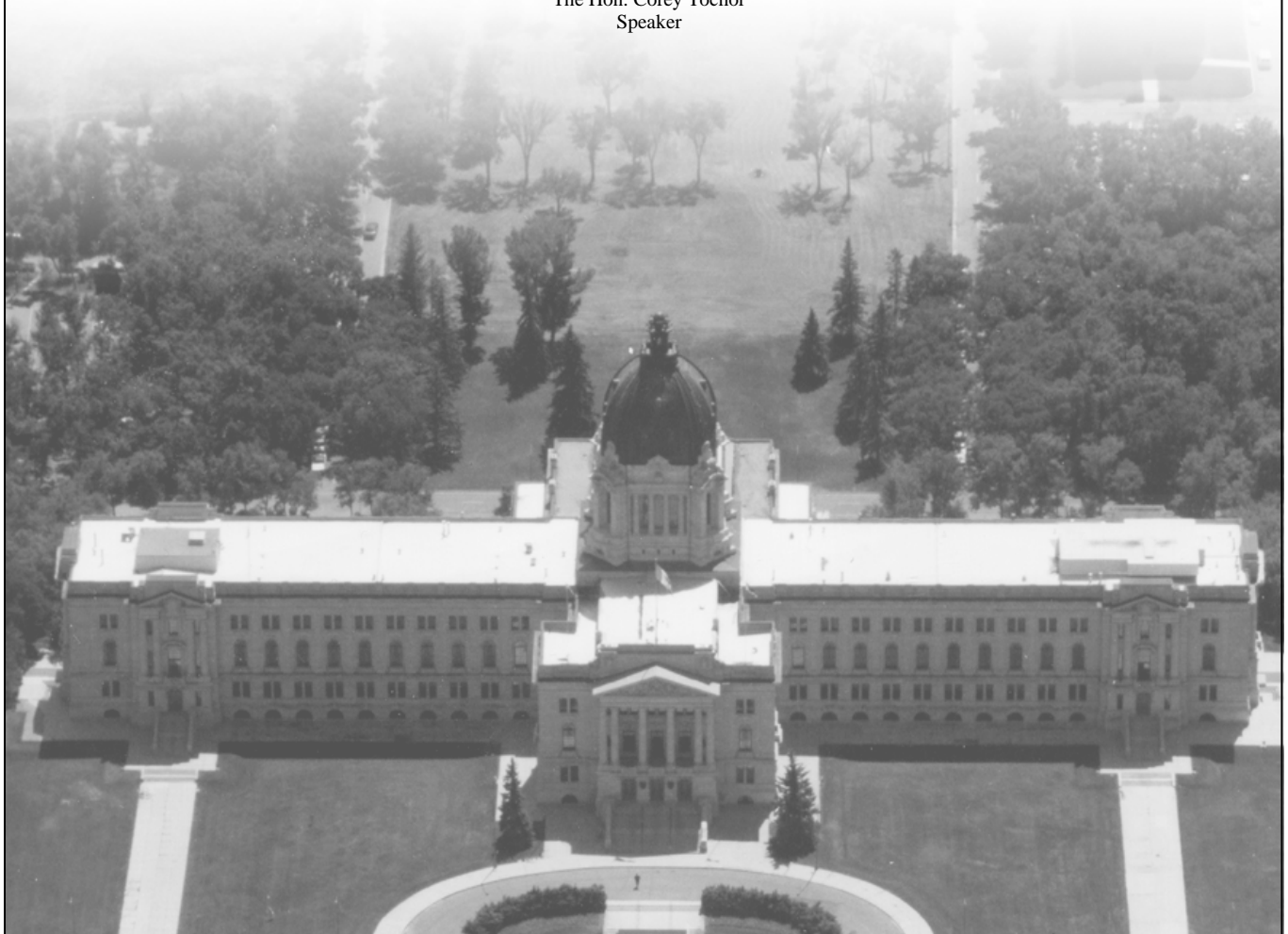
**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

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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)

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**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)

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**Dennis**, Terry — Canora-Pelly (SP)

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

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

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

**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 Burianyak

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to recognize some guests sitting up in our gallery today. They are students from the Saskatchewan collaborative bachelor of nursing program from the Sask Polytech, which is in my constituency. They're a fourth-year clinical group. They're participating in community health nursing rotation at Campbell Collegiate, which is also in my constituency.

In addition to their nursing courses, they're taking some courses on social, political, and economic aspects of nursing. The students are really interested in question period, Mr. Speaker, in the political process. And attending QP [question period] is actually not a program requirement for them. They're here completely on their own volition. So I would like all members to join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly. It's wonderful to have you here. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join in welcoming the students from the nursing program. Wonderful to see you here and see these students making the connection between politics and health outcomes. As you well know from your training, it's those social factors — income, education, housing, nutrition — that make a big difference in our health outcomes, and it's here that we get to make those decisions and hopefully influence health for the better. So thank you for your studies and your time.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure today to rise and to welcome three special guests to your gallery on this March 21st, the day for the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Fresh off a very successful 18th annual event on Sunday, I would like to welcome the board members and president of Spring Free from Racism: Barb Dedi, Tim Leier, and Frieda LeVasseur and congratulate them on a very successful event. And I would invite all members to join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Docherty:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the member opposite and welcome Barb Dedi and the board members from Spring Free from Racism. I've had the

opportunity to attend the event for a number of years now, and I must commend not only the organizers but the committee on an outstanding event and bringing attention to issues of racism and discrimination. And I'll follow that up with a member's statement a little later, Mr. Speaker, but I ask all members to again join me and the member opposite for a welcome, Spring Free from Racism, Barb Dedi, here to her Assembly. Thank you.

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Mr. Fiaz:** — 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 on imposing a carbon tax on the province of Saskatchewan. I do like to read the prayer:

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens of Regina. I do so present. Thanks.

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

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

The petitioners point out that this government has repeatedly indicated that the Lighthouse stabilization unit keeps individuals out of hospital emergency rooms and jail cells. We couldn't agree more on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker. The reality is when Social Services might save a small amount of money not paying per diems, but it sure inflicts a lot more cost down the line on health and justice and does not give people the dignity that they deserve. 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 revisits 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. In answering the call from the member from Prince Albert Northcote for someone to help her stand up in this Assembly to fight for a second bridge for Prince Albert, I stand in my place today to present that particular petition. And the need for a second bridge for Prince Albert has never been clearer than it is today. Prince Albert, communities north of Prince Albert, and the businesses that send people and products through Prince Albert require a solution. Therefore the prayer reads as follows:

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

And, Mr. Speaker, as we say day in, day out, many people from throughout Saskatchewan have signed this petition and on this particular page that we are presenting today the petitioners are primarily from La Ronge and Saskatoon. And I so present.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'm rising to present a petition opposed to Bill 40 and a potential 49 per cent Crown corporation sell-off. The people who have signed this are residents of Saskatchewan and they want to bring to our attention the following: that the Sask Party's Bill 40 creates a new definition for privatization that allows the government to wind down, dissolve, or sell up to 49 per cent of the shares of a Crown corporation without holding a referendum; that in 2015-16 alone, Saskatchewan's Crown corporations returned 297.2 million in dividends to pay for schools, roads, and hospitals. Mr. Speaker, over the last decade, it's over \$3 billion. Those dividends should go to the people of Saskatchewan, not private investors.

We know our Crown corporations employ thousands of Saskatchewan people across the province, and under section 149 in the *Income Tax Act* of Canada, Crown corporations are exempt from corporate income tax, provided not less than 90 per cent of the shares are held by a government or province.

The Sask Party's proposal would allow up to 49 per cent of a Crown to be sold without being considered privatized. This short-sighted legislation risks sending millions of dollars of Crown dividends to Ottawa rather than to the people of Saskatchewan. So 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.

The folks that have signed this today, Mr. Speaker, are from the city of Saskatoon. I so submit.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a position regarding pay equity here in Saskatchewan. And we know that there are many issues with this, and that the citizens of this province believe in an economy powered by transparency, accountability, security, and equity; and that all women should be paid equitably; and that women are powerful drivers of economic growth and their economic empowerment benefits us all.

We know that the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives found that in Saskatoon in 2016, women earned on the average 63 cents for every dollar that a man makes, and in Regina, women earned on average 73 cents for every dollar 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, provide a framework under which this can be done within the term of this Assembly, and that the Saskatchewan government call upon workplaces within Saskatchewan within the private sector to eliminate the wage gap between women and men.

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

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

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to present to you a petition to increase the funding to Prince Albert mobile crisis. Mr. Speaker, Prince Albert mobile crisis unit has had to close its doors during the daytime hours, resulting in a loss of resource to people in distress. Many people in Prince Albert do not realize that mobile crisis is no longer a 24-7 operation. And if you look online, it's still advertised as being a crisis intervention centre that's open 24 hours, seven days a week, which is misleading. And when people are in crisis, Mr. Speaker, they will be looking for those services.

And we need to make sure that we have these crisis services because Prince Albert is the third-largest city in this province. And when times are tough, like our economy is, we know that sometimes social issues may rise, and people will have these crisis situations. And it is this government's responsibility to ensure that services are available.

The daytime closure of Prince Albert mobile has put stress on the Prince Albert Police Service, Victoria Hospital, and other agencies who may not be trained and/or qualified to provide counselling and intervention services to clients. Although they do the best that they can to provide services, they're not the appropriate people to be providing these crisis services. So I'll

read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

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

Mr. Speaker, the individuals signing this particular petition are from Saskatoon and Holbein. I do so present.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of sexual abuse prevention curriculum in Saskatchewan. Those signing this petition wish to draw our attention to the following: to the fact that Saskatchewan has the second-highest rate of sexual child abuse in Canada. They want us to know that StatsCan data shows that 55 per cent of all victims of sexual offences were children under the age of 18.

Child sexual abuse has lasting impacts throughout the child's lifetime and these impacts and effects include depression, anxiety, decreased school attendance and achievement, as well as decreased productivity throughout the lifespan. Victims of childhood sexual abuse are four times more likely to commit suicide than their peers, and currently there is no comprehensive elementary or secondary curriculum regarding the prevention and reporting of sexual child abuse in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan Ministry of Education takes immediate and concrete action to help develop and implement Erin's law; that such legislation would ensure that a comprehensive health education program be developed and implemented which would require age-appropriate sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention education in grades K through 12, along with training for school staff on the prevention of sexual child abuse.

Mr. Speaker, those signing this petition today reside in Regina. I do so submit.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition calling for a reversal of the cuts to the Aboriginal court worker program. Mr. Speaker, the petitioners point out that the Government of Saskatchewan cut the budget for the Aboriginal court worker program in the 2016-17 provincial budget. They point out that Aboriginal court workers play an important role in helping Aboriginal people in criminal and child apprehension cases. They point out that Aboriginal peoples are disproportionately represented in Saskatchewan's correctional centres. They point out that Aboriginal court workers successfully help to make our community safer through reduced recidivism rates.

[13:45]

And, Mr. Speaker, the petitioners are well aware that this government has pointed to the Aboriginal court workers program as part of this government's response to the calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Mr. Speaker, while at the same time cutting the program, 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 petition is signed by individuals from Stanley Mission and Air Ronge. I so present.

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

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the House today to present a petition to ensure job security for victims of domestic violence. Saskatchewan has the highest rates of domestic violence by intimate partners amongst all Canadian provinces.

One in three Canadian workers have experienced domestic violence, and for many the violence will follow them to work. Financial stability and a supportive work environment are vital for any victim of domestic abuse, and victims of domestic abuse should not be further victimized at work.

Mr. Speaker, employers lose \$77.9 million annually due to the direct and indirect impacts of domestic violence. Manitoba has already enacted legislation, and Ontario is on its way to enacting legislation that ensures job security for victims of domestic violence. I'd like to read the prayer:

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

Mr. Speaker, last week the opposition tabled a private member's bill that called for exactly this thing plus two other supports that are desperately needed in Saskatchewan for survivors of domestic violence, and we hope to see that the government will also acknowledge that this, and recognize that this is a serious problem that needs to be addressed immediately and consent to our private member's bill.

Individuals who are signing this petition today come from Regina and Moose Jaw. I do so submit.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition to stop the redirection of funding to the Northern Teacher Education Program Council, Inc. NORTEP [northern teacher education program], Mr. Speaker, has been a very successful program for the last 40 years, with almost all of its graduates staying in the

North and staying in the teaching profession.

NORTEP has allowed for people of the North to access good jobs and also provided great role models for youth in the North. It's been locally controlled and well managed. But we're hearing, Mr. Speaker, of a plan to transfer control of this program to a different college and yet we haven't heard any convincing reason to change this excellent program.

There are many serious concerns about this change. Students in this program have received bursaries for tuition, bursaries for books. We've heard no confirmation that those bursaries will continue. This is a challenge for access to education. There is a risk of jobs being lost, and we're also very concerned about the sale of residences and other assets belonging to the NORTEP Council. It is not too late, Mr. Speaker, to honour the five-year agreement and maintain NORTEP as the excellent program it has been. I will read the prayer:

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

This petition is signed by people of La Ronge, Air Ronge, Sandy Bay, and Cumberland House. I do so present.

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Spring Free From Racism

**Mr. Docherty:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, March 21st, marks the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. This weekend I attended and brought greetings at the 18th annual Spring Free from Racism event here in Regina with some of my legislative colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that every person is entitled to human rights without discrimination. However, in some areas of the world this is not the case. Mr. Speaker, today the world commemorates past and present fights against racism and racial discrimination, how far we have come, and how far we need to go. This day is led by the UN [United Nations] Secretary General with a goal to see racial discrimination, xenophobia, and other related intolerances condemned. Diversity is what makes our society strong, bringing residents closer and strengthening our communities. We must commit ourselves and rise above intolerance, as racism and discrimination are not welcome here in our society or anywhere.

I congratulate the committee and volunteers of Spring Free from Racism on another successful event and thank them for reminding us that it is our individual and collective responsibility to celebrate diversity and protect those who have no voice.

Mr. Speaker, I challenge all members to lead by example so we can eliminate racism from our province, as racism has no place

in Saskatchewan, not now, not ever. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Along with the member opposite, I too had the opportunity to attend the 18th annual Spring Free from Racism event here in Regina. Also attending were my friends and colleagues, the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Douglas Park, along with former NDP [New Democratic Party] candidates Ted Jaleta and Tina Vukovic.

Spring Free from Racism celebrates and brings awareness to the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination by hosting a family day full of cultural entertainment, food, and displays. This year's event was held at the Italian Club and, Mr. Speaker, it was a packed house. In fact there was even more to see and do and eat than ever before, which is really quite an achievement if you've been to prior events.

Mr. Speaker, more than half of the population growth we have seen in our province in recent years comes from international immigration. People from around the world not only bring their skills and their talents to our province, they bring their languages, cultures, and unique identities. It is our diversity that makes this province strong. That's why events like this, that bring our community together to celebrate and learn from each other, are so important.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the president of Spring Free from Racism, Barb Dedi, as well the committee members here today and those not here today for putting on such a fantastic event and for working to draw attention to issues of discrimination and racism throughout the year. Thank you.

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

#### Saskatoon Region Economic Outlook Forum

**Mr. Olason:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the end of February I had the opportunity to attend the 2017 Saskatoon Region Economic Outlook Forum with the member from Moosomin and the member from Saskatoon Westview. This was an incredible event where guest speakers from across the country came together to share insights and ideas on how to strengthen and grow the local and provincial economy.

We heard stories about some entrepreneurs that are pioneering new ways of doing things seen nowhere else in the world. There were resource and mining executives who talked about the royalty and tax structure that has made Saskatchewan a world-class place to invest. We saw examples of out-of-the-box thinking which would allow Saskatoon and the whole province to grow as a leader in business development.

This event, the attendees, and the businesses represented are shining examples of why our provincial economy is moving in the right direction, and those innovators can count on our government to keep Saskatchewan a great place to invest. Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members to join me in thanking the organizers, volunteers, and sponsors who came together to put

on an amazing event. Thank you.

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

### **International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the House today to recognize International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. On this day in 1960, police opened fire and killed 69 people at the peaceful demonstration against apartheid in Sharpeville, South Africa. This tragedy provoked the United Nations to proclaim March 21st the official day for the elimination of racial discrimination and to call on the international community to redouble its efforts to fight against all forms of racism.

Mr. Speaker, although we've come a long way towards dismantling racism since then, in all regions too many individuals and communities suffer from the injustice that racism brings. Racial discrimination still occurs daily, and this hinders progress for millions of people around the world. The fight to create a more inclusive and fair world must continue, and that's why days like today are so important.

The theme for this year's International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is racial profiling and incitement to hatred, including in the context of migration. This theme is especially relevant to Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. As a province we are growing more and more diverse, and we must ensure we celebrate and nourish that diversity in order to keep our province strong.

Mr. Speaker, I would like all members to join me in recognizing the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and in doing all that is possible to ensure a diverse, inclusive, and racism-free Saskatchewan for our future generations. Thank you.

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

### **Quilts of Valour Presentation Ceremony**

**Mr. Steinley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I, along with the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow who is our military liaison, and the member from Regina Pasqua had the honour of attending and bringing greetings at a quilt presentation ceremony hosted in Regina by the Quilts of Valour — Canada Society. Also in attendance were Chief Warrant Officer Fleet and Commanding Officer Lieutenant-Colonel Wintrup of the Snowbirds 431 Air Demonstration Squadron.

Mr. Speaker, quilters from across Canada donate their time to design unique, one-of-a-kind quilts for injured Canadian Armed Forces members and our veterans.

Today 47 veterans were honoured at Wascana Rehabilitation Centre with a quilt to thank them and their families for their incredible sacrifices. Each quilt is accompanied with a card. I'd like to read that card:

It is a privilege to live in a country that allows all citizens the freedom we have here in Canada. Thank you for your service to our country and for your personal sacrifice in the line of duty. Please accept this quilt as our way of saying thank you.

These words truly represent what the Quilts of Valour program is all about. Mr. Speaker, for those of us who have never experienced war, we cannot fully understand the sacrifices these veterans have made.

I ask all members to join me in thanking Cheryl Dvernichuk, Laura Sheppard, and all the volunteers who have given their time and talents to the Quilts of Valour program, and also in thanking the quilt recipients for their service and sacrifice in the defence of our great country. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Lumsden Curlers Win Mixed Doubles Championship**

**Hon. Mr. Stewart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to congratulate constituents of mine, Mackenzie Schwartz and Sam Wills from the Lumsden Curling Club, who placed first in the Saskatchewan Mixed Doubles Curling Championship for 2017. The championship was held at the Saskatoon CN Curling Club in February.

Wills and Schwartz had a great start to the weekend. They finished first in their pool, giving them strong momentum heading into the semifinals and championship round.

They battled Tyler Travis and Crystal Fenwick from the Sutherland Curling Club for first with a tight match heading into the fourth end break and only a 4-2 lead. After the break, Wills and Schwartz had back-to-back steals in the fifth and sixth ends which would lead them to victory by a 6-3 margin.

Mr. Speaker, the champion pair will now represent Saskatchewan in the 2017 Canadian mixed championships this April in Saskatoon. With home ice advantage, I know they will do Saskatchewan curling proud.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating Mackenzie Schwartz and Sam Wills on their 2017 provincial title, and best of luck in the Canadian mixed championships next month.

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

### **Fiscal Plan Pays Off**

**Mr. Bradshaw:** — Mr. Speaker, our sound fiscal plan of repaying operating debt when resource revenues were high is paying off for the people of Saskatchewan. Today Saskatchewan is the lowest debt per capita in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, last Thursday the Alberta NDP government released a budget that relies on future generations to be burdened with almost double the debt per capita than here in Saskatchewan. But that shouldn't be surprising. Throughout the NDP's 16 years in office in this province, they never really

believed in Saskatchewan's potential. They did not believe we could be a have province, and they bragged about receiving 4.4 billion in equalization payments while having the worst economic growth rate in Canada. On this side, we reject that path.

Mr. Speaker, in a few months, new schools with new child care spaces will be opening in communities across Saskatchewan, part of our budget to keep Saskatchewan strong. I'm pleased to announce that the children attending these new schools and child care will have a lower debt burden than children did when we first came to office and in fact will have the lowest debt burden in the entire country. That's because tomorrow our government will be meeting the challenge so our children can have a prosperous future filled with opportunity, and Saskatchewan will continue to be the best place to live, work, and raise a family. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### QUESTION PERIOD

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

#### Auditor's Report and Public Accounts Committee Meeting

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, this morning we tried again to get some answers into the Sask Party's GTH [Global Transportation Hub] scandal. We asked for the former ministers who were responsible at the time to come and testify at the committee. Conveniently, we knew that one of them was available and should be at every PAC [Public Accounts Committee] meeting because not only was he welcomed back into caucus, but he was also added to that committee's membership.

Mr. Speaker, this will shock you, but they voted no. We're not going to give up, so maybe here today the Premier will finally start to be straight with Saskatchewan people and answer a simple, straightforward question. Can he tell us when he first learned that the transactions were more than just a little bit questionable, and when did he learn that the original seller was the landlord for the former minister of the GTH?

[14:00]

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

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Of course as members know, the auditor has looked into this matter. The auditor had access to all of the individuals, all of the documentation pertaining to this transaction. The auditor did a very thorough analysis of that information and a review of those individuals in terms of their testimony to her.

The auditor made a number of recommendations — 10 in fact, Mr. Speaker — eight pertaining to the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure, two to the GTH. We accept those recommendations. We've implemented or are implementing all of those recommendations, Mr. Speaker.

Further to that, the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] have said they're looking into the matter. We pledge our full

co-operation with that review. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Government's Fiscal Management

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, still no answer from the Premier. Eleven million dollars of Saskatchewan people's money ended up in the pockets of two Sask Party supporters. Eleven million dollars gone, but they don't want to talk about that, and they aren't going after that money. And, Mr. Speaker, they're refusing to go after the foreign conglomerate they handed the Regina bypass contract to as well. They don't even want us to talk about the billion-dollar overrun, but they're happily throwing some of the lowest paid public servants out of their jobs and firing people who support those who are struggling with addictions.

Mr. Speaker, from billions of dollars being wasted to desperate sell-off schemes to job and program and services cuts, all the way to jacking up the tax for taking our tackle out on the lake, how does this Premier think that he can keep denying, denying accountability from Saskatchewan people? How can he justify making Saskatchewan people pay for Sask Party mismanagement, scandal, and waste?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I reject the premise of the question. So much of the preamble is just fundamentally wrong. As we hear day after day in this House, the Leader of the Opposition takes to his feet, the interim Leader of the NDP takes to his feet and is not able to correctly present the facts as it relates to certain matters, including the bypass, Mr. Speaker, including the bypass, which is not over budget.

The bypass project's scope has changed, and we have covered this issue a number of times in the House. When it was originally proposed, it was much smaller — much, much smaller — in scope at about \$400 million. But then, Mr. Speaker, the government moved, in consultation with the city and communities around Regina, to make it truly a perimeter road, to expand it dramatically. The price is now the amount that's on the public record and, by the way, it's on time and on record.

And, Mr. Speaker, as it relates to fees or taxes, Mr. Speaker, at this side of the House we'll stand on our record of reducing taxes in this province since we were elected by a cumulative amount of \$6 billion. We have reduced taxes for farmers, taxes for families, taxes for small business. All of that has helped create the Saskatchewan advantage that just last week, even in the midst of commodity price downturn, this province, the province of Saskatchewan led the Dominion of Canada in job creation.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, they've clearly forgotten who they work for, Mr. Speaker. Before the election of course they hid the facts, hid the budget from Saskatchewan people. And they were anything but straight with Saskatchewan people



as to the true state of our finances. Only off of course, Mr. Speaker, by billions of dollars of deficits. They refused to put out a first quarter update this year, now a third quarter update. Make no mistake — a Facebook update is no replacement for a full financial update.

They blew through the dollars when times were good, and now they're making people pay for Sask Party mismanagement, scandal, and waste. They're attacking working people, Mr. Speaker, cutting jobs, cutting our schools, cutting our hospitals and our care centres.

We get a lot of bluster from the Premier about what he wants Saskatchewan people to believe his priorities are, but the Sask Party's actions speak much louder than his words, Mr. Speaker. To the Premier: with all the hiding and all the broken promises, the desperate sell-off schemes and the cuts, does the Premier really blame Saskatchewan people for wondering why he and his party have stopped working for them?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, I think I agree with the interim leader of the NDP, at least for part of his preamble when he said actions speak louder than words, Mr. Speaker. For 16 years when members opposite had the chance to be the government they would talk a lot, they would talk a lot about better health care. But there were shortages in nurses. There were shortages in doctors. We had, Mr. Speaker, long-term care facilities in terrible condition and a shortage of beds. Mr. Speaker, we had teachers that were fired, Mr. Speaker, by members opposite. We had schools that were closed, 176. They would talk about supporting education; they closed those schools. They talked about taxes for Saskatchewan families and they increased taxes umpteen times, over 20 times in their time in office.

Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, words do matter than action. We've reduced taxes by \$6 billion, Mr. Speaker, over the life of our government. Thirteen new long-term care facilities, finally a children's hospital in the province of Saskatchewan, a brand new psychiatric and corrections centre in North Battleford, Mr. Speaker, 40 brand new schools, Mr. Speaker — all part of the record. More nurses, more doctors. Mr. Speaker, more teachers, and we need more teachers. Why? Because there's now 1.15 million people that we, Mr. Speaker, we are very proud to serve and will continue to serve with a budget that is forward looking, with a budget that balances the priorities of Saskatchewan people and keeps this province in the leadership position it is in the country.

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

### Balanced Budget Legislation

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, these are not complicated questions, and we're talking about Saskatchewan people's money, not the Sask Party's. The only thing that belongs to the Sask Party here is their responsibility for the massive deficits and growing debts, and that's eight deficits in 12 years, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, last spring instead of facing the music for

their mistakes, they scrapped our balanced budget law. The minister promised that a new version was coming last fall. Then in the fall he promised it was coming soon, and yesterday he told us that the balanced budget laws are "paper tigers." Well, Mr. Speaker, it's only a paper tiger if the Finance minister refuses to give it teeth. Mr. Speaker, as a staffer he saw a government drive this province to the brink of bankruptcy, and over the last 10 years he and his colleagues have proven that they have not changed their stripes.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister finally commit to bringing back a balanced budget Act this spring?

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

**Hon. Mr. Doherty:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the exact same question was asked yesterday, Mr. Speaker. I think we're in day . . . What are we, in day nine of this session or whatever the . . . day 10, I think, of this session, and we're getting the exact same questions day after day. I gave you the answer yesterday.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, under the former balanced budget law was when we had a GRF [General Revenue Fund]. We're now under summary financial statements, Mr. Speaker. We are looking at what other provinces are doing with respect to summary financial statements and what a fiscal accountability framework would look like, given the fact that we can have wild valuations and mark-to-market valuations on such things as natural gas on March 31st, Mr. Speaker, the last day of the fiscal year, that could throw us into a deficit position through nobody's fault, Mr. Speaker, simply through a mark-to-market valuation. So we are taking a look at . . . Well is the member interested in an answer or just wanted to chirp from her seat?

So we are taking a look at, Mr. Speaker, what other provinces are doing with respect to balanced budget law. We are looking at a fiscal accountability framework to ensure that the Provincial Auditor agrees with it, that academics agree with it, that the accounting community agrees with it, Mr. Speaker. When it is ready to go, we'll bring it to the floor of the legislature.

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

### Government's Fiscal Management

**Mr. McCall:** — Mr. Speaker, we haven't heard so much about wildly gyrating revenues since Rod Gantfoer was the Finance minister over there.

The Sask Party refuses to be accountable when it comes to balanced budgets. They're shifting the blame and the pain, Mr. Speaker. In just the two first weeks of this spring session, the same two weeks where they're celebrating the first good jobs report they've seen in quite some time, Mr. Speaker, this government fired 250 workers. Those are people with families who pay taxes, who buy goods and services in their communities. Most of these people are among the lowest paid public servants in the province, but the government went after them to find \$5 million in supposed savings.

So if the government chose these 250 hard-working women and men to shoulder the load of \$5 million of their deficit, can the Minister of the Public Service Commission tell us who are the Sask Party's next targets to pay the price for the more than \$1 billion left in the deficit?

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

**Hon. Mr. Doherty:** — Mr. Speaker, last June I stood in my place in this Chamber, on June 1st, and I presented the '16-17 budget and said we were going to undertake transformational change in this province. Transformational change means change, Mr. Speaker. I indicated that this government was going to get back to the delivery of core services across the province.

Our core services as a provincial government, Mr. Speaker, is not cleaning government-owned buildings. Our core services, Mr. Speaker, is delivering health care. We've got some nursing students in the gallery here today, Mr. Speaker. Our core service is delivering health care across the province. Our core service is delivering education in the K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] sector, Mr. Speaker. Our core service is providing funding for our post-secondary education system, Mr. Speaker. Our core service is delivering to those most vulnerable in society through our social services budget, Mr. Speaker. Our core services is ensuring that we have a highways infrastructure situation in this province that allows the movement of goods and people across the province in a safe manner, Mr. Speaker. That's what we're focused on. They'll see more of that tomorrow in the budget, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That minister goes on about core services. I have to think about those three extra MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly]. You know, sometimes I wonder if they really expect us to take them seriously. That minister, all of those ministers are and have been government, and they have been and are in charge today. They've made the decisions that have got us to where we are today.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 47 is more of their games. But they're still refusing to engage in an adult conversation about acknowledging that they are at fault. We're already taking the pay cut, but they aren't cutting the cabinet offices and they aren't cutting the Premier's office.

So in the absence of balanced budget legislation, will this cabinet member, will these cabinet ministers take a 20 per cent cut to their ministerial bonuses? Will they show leadership and start the process to cut five MLAs? That would save over a million dollars every year, and that minister should know that.

Mr. Speaker, before punishing more Saskatchewan people, will the Sask Party ministers show this leadership?

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

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — This coming from a member who won't even show up to the Board of Internal Economy to take

his own minus 3.5 per cent cut, Mr. Speaker. We've scheduled four separate Board of Internal Economy meetings. They won't show up, Mr. Speaker. That's why we had to introduce a bill to legislatively mandate their reduction because they refuse to take it, Mr. Speaker.

And on top of that, speaking of reductions, I mean we just announced, Mr. Speaker, the shutting down of executive air, a savings that is significant for the government of the province. We have reduced travel in this government by \$700,000 per year from when they were the government of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We have significantly fewer political staff in the building than when they were the government of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We have 24 less staff in Executive Council than when they were the government of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

This side of the House is showing leadership and they won't show up.

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

#### Contract Details for Regina Bypass Project

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. After blowing through years of record revenue, the Saskatchewan Party expects everyone except cabinet, the ones that got us into this mess, to pay the price. It's ludicrous, Mr. Speaker.

Along with cabinet, you knew who else is coming out ahead? The corporations who have been handed sweetheart P3 [public-private partnership] contracts. On the bypass alone, the Saskatchewan Party has not only signed us on to a contract that has ballooned to \$2 billion without any explanation, they also refuse to provide information on how much we are paying, Mr. Speaker. We have asked for the average cost a kilometre of highway, the average cost for the overpass, and they have steadfastly refused. This is basic information, Mr. Speaker. It's information that the Saskatchewan people have the right to know, Mr. Speaker.

Again to the Minister of Highways: how much are we paying per kilometre of highway? What is the average cost per kilometre of twinning on Highway No. 6? And what is the average cost per bypass?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, we hear the same questions day after day, Mr. Speaker, and the answers are the same, Mr. Speaker. The contract documents, the value-for-money report, Mr. Speaker, and the fairness opinion are all online. And that member knows, as the former minister of Highways, Mr. Speaker, that those contracts have commercially sensitive information removed, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday I gave a quote from the Information and Privacy Commissioner, Mr. Speaker, verifying his position with respect to those matters, Mr. Speaker.

[14:15]

Now, Mr. Speaker, when they talk about who's going to benefit from this bypass, I'll tell you who's going to benefit, Mr. Speaker: the people that use that bypass, Mr. Speaker; the

communities that are having the overpasses built, Mr. Speaker, those that use it; the safety and the economic development opportunities for this, Mr. Speaker. Now I can go on and on, Mr. Speaker: a list of 95 Saskatchewan companies that are benefiting from the bypass, employees that work for these companies, Mr. Speaker, all paying taxes, many of them living in the constituencies that are represented by members opposite, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps they should go and talk to those employees. Perhaps they should go and talk to the Saskatchewan companies that are doing this work on the bypass, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps they should go and talk to the Saskatchewan Construction Association and the Saskatchewan Trucking Association, Mr. Speaker.

This project is good for the people of Saskatchewan. It's good for the residents that live and use that bypass, Mr. Speaker, and it's certainly good for everyone else in this province.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Mr. Speaker, it's utter nonsense that the Minister of Justice gets up to answer a question directed at the Highways minister, Mr. Speaker. And there's reasons for that. The people of Saskatchewan have to know. We're asking for basic information. That basic information should be provided here in the Legislative Building so we can scrutinize these.

The Ministry of Highways' own documents show that the average cost to twin, grade, and pave Highway 16, another project with high land cost, was no more than \$1.3 million per kilometre. The minister's own document showed the average cost per kilometre for the Estevan bypass, an expensive greenfield project with a high land cost, was \$1.2 million per kilometre. And even with the most generous assumptions, including service road, the bypass project is costing Saskatchewan taxpayers 10 times those amounts.

For every kilometre, Saskatchewan taxpayers have a right to know the details and the cost that we are on the hook for. It's not their fault that the Sask Party signed on to this public-private secrecy pact with a foreign conglomerate. And why, Mr. Speaker?

So once again, will the Minister of Highways — not the Minister of Justice, but the Minister of Highways — provide those answers today, Mr. Speaker?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I've repeated over and over again to the member — who's the former minister of Highways; he will know this, Mr. Speaker — that commercially sensitive information is redacted from the contracts, Mr. Speaker. The Information and Privacy Commissioner said, and I quote:

The severed information, if disclosed, could disadvantage SaskBuilds and the Government of Saskatchewan in its future negotiations for highway construction projects.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that that's the last thing that we want to do, that we want to disadvantage the government or SaskBuilds or the Minister of Highways or any other, Mr.

Speaker, any other ministry within government by disclosing commercially sensitive information, Mr. Speaker. We stand by the comments that the Information and Privacy Commissioner has said.

And I'll tell you this, Mr. Speaker, if the member doesn't like what the Information and Privacy Commissioner has to say, he could certainly go back to that office, an independent officer of the legislature, and ask these very questions again. He'll get the same answer.

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

### Provision of Teacher Education Programming in the North

**Mr. Meili:** — Mr. Speaker, they're refusing to answer questions about billions disappearing down the road, but they're happy to justify their cuts to education in the North. Like everything else with the Sask Party, the process for cutting NORTEP was anything but transparent or clear.

The minister has said, and I quote, "In making a determination, I must take into account a broad spectrum of priorities for Saskatchewan's post-secondary sector." Mr. Speaker, a broad spectrum of priorities. Shouldn't her top priority be ensuring accessible, affordable, post-secondary education that provides hope and opportunity for people in the North? But it would seem that this minister has other things on her mind; maybe how to make students and teachers pay for the \$1.2 billion deficit caused by this government.

This minister is tasked with ensuring that people across Saskatchewan have access to higher education. How does this decision to cut this successful program help us achieve that task?

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

**Hon. Ms. Eyre:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I assume the member opposite isn't criticizing the good work of Northlands, which seems to be the implication of his question. And I would encourage him, Mr. Speaker, to read some of the things that his colleague, the member for Cumberland, has said about Northlands College, and I quote: "Northlands does a really good job out there, and we know in partnerships they do a good job." That was in 2012. In 2014 he said, "Northlands does a great job. They do an excellent job trying to train individuals." That's a pretty ringing endorsement, Mr. Speaker. After all, a solid board made up exclusively of northerners; university programming already up and running in La Ronge, Creighton, Buffalo Narrows, and Ile-a-la-Crosse; and plans to expand university programming across the North — I think the member for Cumberland was on to something, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Mr. Speaker, no one here is criticizing Northlands College. That's spin and it's just not cutting it, which is funny because this is all about cuts. It's all about cuts.

This is no mere transfer. This has been presented as a transfer, but there's been no guarantee of maintaining the current programs or the current services.

For 40 years, Mr. Speaker, NORTEP has provided affordable, accessible education to the people of northern Saskatchewan. NORTEP removed barriers for students in the North. There have been bursaries for tuition, bursaries for books, but no guarantee from this minister that those supports will continue. Where are those supports? When students and communities in the North lose access to education, access to those supports, that's not a transfer. That's a cut.

When the only reason for a change is so the Sask Party can put a few more bucks back in the budget deficit that they caused, that's a cut, Mr. Speaker. This is a cut that will have huge impacts on northern communities. Does this minister not understand that this is a cut, or does she just not care?

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

**Hon. Ms. Eyre:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, we talk about needing inspiring stories, particularly in the North perhaps. And Northlands College has a lot of them, Mr. Speaker, some of which were featured in a recent *Maclean's* article.

And I know Northlands and its partners will provide an excellent teaching education program to do the best by students and expand their post-secondary education, Mr. Speaker. They said so in their press release last week. Let's not forget what they said, Mr. Speaker, that:

We all want to see northern students . . . receive a top-rate, culturally affirming education so that they can enjoy a good quality of life and continue to be proud of who they are and where they are from. We have an opportunity before us [they said], and by all working together . . . we can develop a post-secondary system that is broad in scope, rich in culture, high in quality and a model for the rest of the country.

Hear, hear, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I'm having increased difficulty hearing that response and the questions asked today. I would ask members please to improve the decorum.

I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

#### **Funding for Education**

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister denied yet again that he is making cuts to our kids' classrooms to pay for his government's mismanagement, scandal, and waste. He actually asked me to prove that cuts to education were a part of how that government is paying for the deficit that they have created.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I'll read out just some of their record on this. They refuse to fully fund a teachers' contract that they committed to. They clawed back WCB [Workers'

Compensation Board] rebates to school divisions. They forced school divisions to dip into their reserves just to pay for day-to-day operations. And now they want to take away those funds as well, leaving school divisions, even the ones that saved up for tough times, with nothing to fall back on in case of emergency. And, Mr. Speaker, that minister wants to open up local teachers' agreements, putting our kids' sports and extracurricular activities at risk. Mr. Speaker, I'm afraid the list goes on and on.

What will it take for this minister to admit that his government's plans to cut their way out of their deficit runs right through our kids' classrooms?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Minister, the member opposite talks about a list that goes on and on. Our commitment to the children of this province goes on and on.

I'm going to read a list of the new 21 schools that are opening in our province this year: in Martensville, Lake Vista and Holy Mary; in Warman, Traditions and Holy Trinity; in Saskatoon, Sylvia Fedoruk, Ernest Lindner, Colette Bourgonje, Chief Whitecap, St. Nicholas, St. Thérèse of Lisieux, St. Kateri Tekakwitha, St. Lorenzo Ruiz; and in Regina, École Harbour Landing, Plainsview, École Wascana Plains, Scott Collegiate, St. Kateri, St. Nicholas, St. Elizabeth, Sacred Heart. And, Mr. Speaker, she even opposed the new school for Connaught.

Mr. Speaker, that's 21 new schools. Actions speak louder than words. We support the children of our schools and our province 21 ways.

#### **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

#### **WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

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

**Mr. Lawrence:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to question 279.

**The Speaker:** — The Whip has tabled responses to the question 279.

#### **GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

#### **SECOND READINGS**

**Bill No. 47 — *An Act to Reduce Salaries of Members of the Legislative Assembly, 2017/Loi de 2017 réduisant les traitements à verser aux membres de l'Assemblée législative***

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

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today on second reading of Bill 47. What I have to say is . . . some degree of sadness. I was hopeful in the context of the discussion around the reduction of MLA salaries that the members opposite would do their job and show up at the Board of Internal Economy. And if they disagreed with the position of the government, they could vote

against that position. But they refused even to do that, Mr. Speaker. They refused to show up at the Board of Internal Economy, which means that government now has to introduce a statute to reduce the salaries of the members of the Legislative Assembly by 3.5 per cent. And the statute is very . . .

**The Speaker:** — Order. I'm having difficulties hearing the minister. The opposition will have a chance to reply on second reading. I would ask that they would please give the respect to the members of the government as well. I recognize the minister.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know the Deputy Leader of the NDP has serious concerns, I assume from his heckling, about taking the 3.5 per cent reduction to his salary. I can tell you though, Mr. Speaker, on this side we are united. We believe that it's important to show this leadership. We as a caucus are united. We've had obviously a discussion and a consensus to move forward in this fashion. Clearly, members opposite have a different view. They've refused to show up at the board to do this. We therefore have to move forward with this statute.

And it's a very straightforward statute, Mr. Speaker. And I would cite the title, *An Act to Reduce Salaries of Members of the Legislative Assembly, 2017*. Pretty self-explanatory what this bill's intention is. I would just . . . It's one section, Mr. Speaker, with three subsections and the coming into force provision. What it does very straightforwardly is reduce MLA salaries by 3.5 per cent and reduces the grant to the political offices of government, political offices of both the NDP and the Sask Party caucuses, by 10 per cent as well which we feel is reasonable and appropriate.

You know, I would cite . . . Because I know members opposite are going to stand up, like they did in question period, and rant and rave about the reduction to this and that and the other thing. I want to put on the record, Mr. Speaker, the very real leadership shown on this side of the House with respect to the reduction of the political costs of government.

Well I mean members opposite, again, they don't want to take their 3.5 per cent reduction. We know that, Mr. Speaker. They have said publicly otherwise, but why would they be fighting this to this degree if they were willing to accept that? We know they don't accept that, Mr. Speaker.

So what I would point to, Mr. Speaker, the overall salary costs in the political part of this government are \$333,000 less per month than they were under the NDP when they were in government — 27 per cent less, the political costs are. In Executive Council, Mr. Speaker, which is the Premier's office, there are 24 fewer staff than there were under the NDP. Salaries are \$165,000 per year less than under the NDP, \$2 million per year less than under the NDP.

[14:30]

In ministers' offices on this side of the House versus when those members were in government, 26 fewer staff in ministers' offices, Mr. Speaker, \$169,000 per month less salary than when the members opposite were in government.

With respect to travel, Mr. Speaker, when they were in government, they used executive air to the tune of about a million dollars, a million dollars plus, per year. Last year we spent \$300,000 on travel as an executive council — 70 per cent, 70 per cent less than members opposite.

And we know particularly the deputy leader of the NDP, I think he personally spent more than \$300,000, Mr. Speaker. I'm actually fairly certain he did. The deputy leader of the NDP, who was minister of Highways at the time — which is slightly ironic that he wouldn't actually travel on the highways — he took the plane, Mr. Speaker. So there it is. But that's the record of the deputy leader particularly, over there. So 70 per cent reduction in travel costs last year over the NDP time, Mr. Speaker. And on top of that we announced just last week that we would be shutting down that service, Mr. Speaker, to save an additional 700,000 to a million dollars per year, in addition to the reduction in overall government travel costs.

We have been showing genuine leadership on this side of the House. With regard to their comment, I'm sure they'll talk about fewer MLAs. We know, Mr. Speaker, and you know, Mr. Speaker, very well that we reduced the overall budget of the LAS [Legislative Assembly Service]. This year it's going to be a reduction by 5 per cent. Last year there was a reduction as well. There was no additional cost to the treasury of the new MLAs. There were savings recognized within the Legislative Assembly Service to ensure that those MLAs did not cost any additional money.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have shown real leadership. Their arguments are political. They're posturing on these matters, Mr. Speaker, and the reality is they refused to show up for the Board of Internal Economy. They refused to vote on a reduction to their own salary. That's what's motivating this, Mr. Speaker. So, Mr. Speaker, I would move second reading of Bill 47.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is an honour to rise and enter into this debate, because whenever we talk about the proceedings and how we operate this very important institution called the legislature, it's important that we take this in a very serious, serious way. And while I think the member talked about his sadness, all I can think about is crocodile tears.

You know, here's a guy that was right out there talking about how he had a bigger hit than anybody else — some 49 per cent more. People should appreciate how hard the cabinet ministers over there are suffering because they had 49 per cent more of a hit than anybody else . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, I don't know what calculators they're working on, but that might have been the problem that got us into this.

But this is a serious issue. This is a serious issue, and those members know. And that member over there, when he says that he's unsure about this side of the House, we've been very clear, very clear right from the beginning that we accept that we will have to have a 3.5 per cent wage cut. We understand that, and we are going to work to make that happen. But we have some

really serious problems with the heavy-handed operation of that side of the House. And I think many members of the opposite side have a long history of working with heavy hands when it comes to how we make sure we operate this House in a way that respects democracy.

Now that may be a foreign term for some of those folks over there, but for us that is very, very important. We understand and we accept the role of cabinet to make decisions, financial decisions. We understand that. But they must also understand and appreciate the role of opposition. Many of them have been in opposition. And when they were there, they did a good job and we hope that they get back there soon. But it's very, very important that in democracy we have a strongly supported opposition. And this government would like to see, and they've . . . [inaudible].

It was interesting the minister did not talk about the one aspect of this budget, the 10 per cent cut. He would actually like to see the cut to 100 per cent. Mr. Speaker, he talks about the savings by the MLAs. And I don't know what planet he is from, Mr. Speaker, but you've got to know, you've got to know that when we do the accounting, we all know MLAs have a salary. We all know they have offices. Those are real costs, and there's no way of doing funny business in the math to make sure, like the 49 per cent, to make it go away. Those are real numbers. Those are real numbers.

And I know the member often has said that they campaigned on this, but I don't think they actually did. In 2011 when they actually came up with this idea of adding three more MLAs, there was never any talk about doing that. And all of a sudden when they got back, all of a sudden we had hoisted upon us three more MLAs, and then we were into it.

But I know when we look across Western Canada, where do we rank? We represent about 16,000 people. Manitoba, each MLA represents twenty-some . . . 22,000, 25,000. Alberta is 46,000. British Columbia is 65,000. Ontario is 125,000. So clearly if they're looking for sustainable, long-term cuts . . . And the Minister of Finance today talked about transformational change. If he's serious about that, then he really seriously has to look at how we are governed in Saskatchewan and particularly in our own backyard, the legislature here.

So, Mr. Speaker, we do have a lot of questions about this. As I have said, we are accepting the 3.5 per cent cut. That has never been a point of debate. It's these other things that have come heavy-handed that really show what this government feels about the Board of Internal Economy, and we have seen it slide more and more in the last little while. We used to talk about these things and work things out beforehand, and then we would come to the meetings and we'd be all on the same page. But that whole tradition is disappearing, and I'm sad to see that as parliamentarians we're not working together more and more and talking about, how can we make this legislature work? I think that's critically important.

And you know, we have a former minister . . . You know, I find it interesting he'd chirp from his seat because . . .

**An Hon. Member:** — Well you're refusing to show up.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Refusing to show up? In fact actually, Mr. Speaker, if you recall the day we did come and told you we weren't going to be able to come to fulfill our duties, these guys wouldn't show up. But you know, it really, it shows a lack of respect, a lack of respect for the opposition when we're not included in any of the discussions, any of the discussions about what we might do as a legislature.

Now they could come and say, we want to do the 3.5 per cent wage cut because everybody in the public service is going to get that. We get that. We're not immune from that. And I think every time they've asked for a wage freeze, we've honoured that. There's been no, no fighting back. We've always done that kind of thing. But when they start adding all these things and then starting to rush things, then it creates a bit of a mockery of the Board of Internal Economy. It really does. And I think those folks over there really have to think about how much they really respect the institution of the Board of Internal Economy. They're the ones who are really creating the problems here.

We could meet. We could talk. We could meet and talk and, you know, the member, the minister speaking, you know, he really needs to think long and hard about this, about what kind of legacy does he want to have for the board.

So we have a problem with this, Mr. Speaker. So we will have lots of questions and we . . .

**The Speaker:** — There's a lot of emotion. I would ask that people please give respect to the speaker that's on his feet. I recognize the member for Saskatoon Centre.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I listened with interest as the minister went on and on about the cuts they'd done, as if they were supposed to be congratulated on that. And some of them have been . . . We need to go through them, and we will in the course of the budget.

But they still, a level of . . . They refuse to take any kind of responsibility for where we are as a province with the kind of situation where we're going to have to have deep cuts. And we'll see what kind of tax implications we have tomorrow. And this government here, he will talk about the things that they've done better. And of course we have a lot of questions about the accounting of that, because we know you can make . . . especially that minister who demonstrated the 49 per cent. He can make anything sound 49 per cent better than what it really is, just to give him a minute with a calculator. But we have some real questions about this. But they still will not take responsibility for what they've done to create the situation we find ourselves in.

Now they can add up all the small things that they've done, but it still doesn't make things right. We are in a tough situation, and tomorrow when we see the budget we're going to have . . . There's going to be a lot of people in this province who are going to feel particularly hard done by, punished by the lack of good judgment of the folks over there. And yet they will take no responsibility for that, and we're talking about the cabinet ministers.

We think it's only reasonable that they consider taking a 20 per cent cut on their allowances. We know that's done in other

provinces when they have failed to deliver on a balanced budget. And we have a Finance minister who's really discounting . . . And yesterday he called it a paper tiger, and I agree with my colleague who says it's only a paper tiger if you don't put teeth on the tiger. So there's some real questions here, Mr. Speaker, about cabinet ministers taking their real responsibility for the financial mess that we find ourselves in.

Mr. Speaker, as I've said, we've talked a lot about the five MLAs and we should really work towards that. That would be a sustainable change, a transformational change that would save us at least a million dollars a year, and would give a signal that we are all in this together. But we are overrepresented and we could do that cut for sure. And, Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier the minister didn't really talk about the 10 per cent cuts, the caucuses, and the implications they have for the quality of work that we do in here, and we have a real question about that.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that, as we have said and I will say again, and of course I think everybody except for that one minister refuses to acknowledge that we have agreed right from the beginning about the 3.5 per cent. And so with that, Mr. Speaker, we are willing to see this bill move to committee. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the minister that Bill No. 47, *An Act to Reduce Salaries of Members of the Legislative Assembly, 2017* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Clerk:** — Second reading of this bill.

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

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 47, *An Act to Reduce Salaries of Members of the Legislative Assembly* be committed to the Committee of Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

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

## 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 Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, thank you, Mr. Speaker. It troubles me that we're entering into the debate that we are here

today with the bill before us, a bill that should never be before this Assembly, a bill that is a deceitful bill to Saskatchewan people and a betrayal, a betrayal of so much of what has been said and promised to Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker.

As we look at the growing mismanagement and the broken promises and a government that hasn't been straight with Saskatchewan people on front after front, from the finances and their issues there through to our Crown corporations, I'm reminded of a Tommy Douglas quote back some time ago, Mr. Speaker. And it's, I think, pretty apt in this current circumstance where we clearly have a government that has a wishbone in place of where they need a backbone, Mr. Speaker, where they should have a backbone. And we have a doctor in the House and we could make a diagnosis on this front as well.

[14:45]

This Sask Party government spent time and money looking Saskatchewan people in the whites of their eyes, holding hand over heart, promising that they wouldn't privatize our Crown corporations. And now we see a bill like this before Saskatchewan at this point in time, a privatization of our Crown corporations putting at risk all that's been built by generations. This is nothing short of a slap in the face to good, hard-working Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, our Crown corporations have been built with pride and hard work by generations of Saskatchewan people, in four generations of Saskatchewan people. They arose to meet needs of our diverse and large province, delivering services to all Saskatchewan people, providing stability economically, and providing revenues to provide services that we all count on, like health care and education. They're money-makers. They're service providers. They're job creators, Mr. Speaker. And the bill that we see before us puts all of this at risk, from a government that wasn't straight with Saskatchewan people and a government that's looking for a quick buck to fill the budget hole and budget mess that they've created.

Trading their budgetary mismanagement with their corporation from France and beyond with their billion-dollar bypass overrun, trading in and cashing in the chips on our Crown corporations like SaskTel, like SaskEnergy, like SaskPower, like SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance], Mr. Speaker, you know, it's no wonder that Saskatchewan people are feeling deceived on front after front. It's no wonder that people are feeling betrayed. It's no wonder that people are feeling let down all across Saskatchewan, right in the heart of Swift Current and down into the corners of the far reaches of the Southwest to the Southeast, up both sides of the province, up the middle and straight into the North, Mr. Speaker.

This bill defies common sense. It sells Saskatchewan people out of our Crowns, which we all value, our Crowns which of course provide us hundreds of millions of dollars a year into our budget to fund health care and classrooms — something that you would think this government would look a little bit more long term at this point in time, a government that hasn't been able to balance the budget during the best years, now selling Saskatchewan people out, looking for a quick buck to sort of make up some sort of charade in this fiscal year.

An attack on the Crowns means an attack directly on the thousands upon thousands and thousands of jobs directly connected to our Crown corporations, the proud workers of Crown corporations, the families who depend on these jobs, Mr. Speaker, in communities all across Saskatchewan. And the thousands of direct jobs are important jobs, jobs that we need at a time where we need jobs in our province, Mr. Speaker.

But it goes beyond that. The economic hit is much bigger. There's a supply chain that connects to hundreds of businesses all across Saskatchewan, proud businesses in rural communities and smaller communities, in our urban centres, that have proudly supplied services and goods to our Crown corporations for many, many years, hundreds of businesses that support thousands of jobs there as well, thousands of direct jobs, thousands of indirect jobs, hundreds of businesses — a direct hit, Mr. Speaker. This bill is a direct hit, and the actions of this government, on the economy of Saskatchewan and the economy of our future, the economy for our kids, the economy for the next generation, Mr. Speaker.

And of course we also know our Crowns provide incredible service to our province, a large and diverse province with communities far . . . you know, at times in remote portions of our province, and provide those rates at the lowest rates possible. And when you look at the bills of Saskatchewan people when it comes to things like their cellular or their mobile phone, mobile device charges, or if you look at auto insurance, something that every family needs, Mr. Speaker, these rates matter in the lives of hard-working Saskatchewan people. And this bill itself and the privatization of our Crowns is a direct hit on affordability and will definitely hike the costs for Saskatchewan people and families all across our province.

So we're talking about hundreds of millions of revenues in fact in the last decade, \$3 billion. Over \$3 billion, Mr. Speaker, being put at risk. And if we forecast out, we're talking about billions upon billions of dollars that we're ripping away from future generations for services and programs we need, for the classrooms of tomorrow, for patients and for health care, Mr. Speaker, just because we have a government that's bankrupt of ideas and bankrupt of decency when you see a government ram forward a bill that's completely contradictory to what they had promised time and time again.

Thousands and thousands and thousands of jobs, Mr. Speaker. Proud workers that have worked for generations in our Crown corporations being put at risk. An economic hit at a time where our economy definitely needs stability. Our Crowns have always provided some diversity and some stability within our province — all being put at risk, Mr. Speaker. And of course, as I've said, a direct hit on the costs that Saskatchewan people pay. More hikes, more hikes to the cost of living from this mismanaging government, Mr. Speaker, more hikes to the things that families need at a time where many families are struggling with jobs, and in many cases this government's taking away their jobs. Mr. Speaker, this government's forcing increases to Saskatchewan people.

The Sask Party and this Premier have no mandate to privatize our Crowns. They have no mandate to ram forward Bill No. 40 as they are here, Mr. Speaker. And this bill as well, of course it completely contradicts what that Premier pledged to

Saskatchewan people time and time again, lacking any level of decency and common sense. But it also, as I say, we have a circumstance where we have a Premier and a Sask Party that lack a backbone. They have no mandate, Mr. Speaker.

Shortly after this last election where, hand over heart, they promised that they wouldn't privatize our Crown corporations, they started looking at options to sell off SaskTel as but one example, Mr. Speaker, as but one example. And then of course we know this government spends all sorts of money on polling, Mr. Speaker. And I think they quickly learned what they should have known, had they been in touch with Saskatchewan people and the realities that Saskatchewan people face, and the hopes and dreams of Saskatchewan people is that they would not win a referendum to privatize our Crown corporations.

So now we see this deceitful bill, Mr. Speaker, that of course breaks the promise that that Premier and the Sask Party made in the election, Mr. Speaker, and time and time again before that. But it does indirectly what that government knows they can't do directly if they had the backbone to go to Saskatchewan people and ask for the permission, Mr. Speaker.

As Saskatchewan New Democrats, we're going to continue to work and rally with, frankly, people across political stripes that are offended, that are angry, that are feeling betrayed by the Sask Party, many, many, many people, thousands of people that actually voted for the current government that are feeling deceived and betrayed because this government is . . . Its actions just don't meet their words in that election, Mr. Speaker. And front and centre on that are our Crown corporations.

We will not, we will not let our Crown corporations be privatized without one heck of a fight, Mr. Speaker. We'll work every step of the way to continue to fight for those jobs, those Crowns, and all people of the province that benefit economically and benefit from the affordability provided from our Crown corporations. And we won't, we won't let the Sask Party get away with this, Mr. Speaker.

But when I say this, this is a call to action to Saskatchewan people because I get calls and I get emails and I get letters from people in every corner of the province on this issue, many expressing that they had voted for this government but never again over the betrayal on the privatization of our Crown corporations. We need those people and those communities and every one of the constituencies across Saskatchewan to stand up and to say, enough is enough.

You know, we heard that message recently when we had a by-election up in Meewasin where clearly the people of that constituency said enough is enough, and sent a message to the Sask Party to hold them to account for the broken promises, for the betrayal, Mr. Speaker. And front and centre in that were the Crown corporations and the privatization schemes that we see from this government.

We saw it just a couple of weeks ago again with a massive rally in front of the Saskatchewan legislature with people from every corner of the province coming to their Assembly, the people's Assembly to fight for their Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker. They know and we know that when they're gone, they're gone. Sadly I think that Premier and the Sask Party know this also, so



this is an important battle.

This bill is damaging. It's deceitful, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't reflect any of the words or promises of the Sask Party opposite, and Saskatchewan people will hold them to account on this front. We have a government that wasn't straight with Saskatchewan people about the finances, wasn't straight about the historic mismanagement that we see, weren't straight about the fact that they couldn't get the job done during the best years, Mr. Speaker. They couldn't balance the budget during the best years — not saving a dime, draining the rainy day fund, Mr. Speaker, and leaving Saskatchewan vulnerable.

And now you've got a government that certainly has a deficit when it comes to dollars, but also a deficit when it comes to basic decency to Saskatchewan people with a bill like this, a government that's old and tired, a government that wasn't straight with Saskatchewan people, and a government that's looking for a quick buck to fill the budgetary mess that they've created.

We're going to do all that we can, Mr. Speaker, on this front, but we need Saskatchewan people to continue to rally and to continue to phone. And you know, members opposite are heckling, but they need to listen to their constituents on this one, Mr. Speaker. They need to think about the legacy and the service that's been built by the Crown corporations, the hard work that's gone into establishing what we have, and a government that's sitting around and letting this . . . you know, putting this all at risk.

This is a time where the backbench needs to have a backbone, Mr. Speaker, as well, at a time where . . . You know, there's few other historic battles in this province that would be more worthy of a backbencher saying, you know what? Enough is enough. I'm not taking it. We didn't run on this. We weren't straight with people on this. This isn't in the interests of my kids' future or our community's future, and it's not in the best interests of the next generation, Mr. Speaker. It sells out Saskatchewan people.

So this is a time where, you know, we don't hear much. And there's some good people on those back benches, Mr. Speaker — people that I think, frankly, if they were in the front benches, Mr. Speaker, we'd see a lot more forthrightness on a whole bunch of fronts, Mr. Speaker. But you know, it's going to be time where . . . It's not a time for them to sit on their hands. It's not a time for them to sit quiet at a caucus. It's a time for them to speak up for our province, to stand up for people, and to fight for the future of our province. Time's a-wasting.

This is a government that'll use its big majority any way they want these days. It's pretty clear that this Sask Party is all about themselves now, all about their self-interest, all about their political interest — a Premier who's pocketed over, you know, it would appear about half a million dollars from large, big money over the last decade, Mr. Speaker. There was all sorts of serious questions about influence and who he's serving on that front, to then have this historic betrayal, Mr. Speaker. No wonder Saskatchewan people are questioning who he's serving.

This is a time for the Sask Party to have a little contrition. It's a time for members opposite, who I suspect that there's some of

them that are less than comfortable . . . I hope that it's more serious than that with this broken promise to Saskatchewan people, what's being placed at risk to the future of the province.

And I implore members opposite to realize that, you know, we go down in history as footnotes, and we'll be all forgotten and, you know, in many ways. But we'll be remembered for days like this. We'll be remembered for bills like this. We'll be remembered by schemes like this. We'll be remembered for how we acted in the historic sellout of Saskatchewan people and sell-off of our Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker.

The people who value our Crown corporations are of all political stripes, Mr. Speaker, from the political left through to the political right, Mr. Speaker. New Democrats through Liberals through those that have voted Sask Party through to Conservative, Mr. Speaker, they know the value of our Crown corporations. They know how wrong it is to have a Premier taking away something that has provided us strength for decades, Mr. Speaker, and putting that at risk into the future.

So I ask members of the backbench because we can't do it alone. There's, you know . . . We'll fight as hard as we can but, you know, we don't have the numbers. We're outnumbered by that massive government, a government that you will . . . a massive majority that certainly weren't straight with people in the last election. But we need some of those members opposite to do the right thing, to stand up for their ridings, to stand up for their communities, and to stand up for people and our province.

[15:00]

You know, all of this is, it's another example as well of a government that just, you know, doesn't do any due diligence, doesn't think about other unintended consequences. In this case, they're just racing to fill their budgetary hole, the budgetary hole and mess that they hid from Saskatchewan people, but they didn't even do the basic due diligence to understand that what they're looking at doing . . . If they sell even just 10 per cent, over 10 per cent of any one of these Crown corporations, that that Crown and the people's money of Saskatchewan is then subject to taxation federally, sending millions and millions and millions of dollars to Ottawa, Mr. Speaker — Saskatchewan people's money, money that we need here in Saskatchewan to build Saskatchewan, to provide jobs, to keep rates low. All of this is being put at risk. All of this is being compromised by this deceitful bill from a government that wasn't straight with Saskatchewan people.

We're going to be continuing to fight. We've been holding meetings and listening to people all across this province, in many of the communities that members opposite represent, Mr. Speaker, and Saskatchewan people will not tolerate this sort of betrayal. There's ramifications for these sorts of actions. But I guess it's not too late.

And that's why I reach out to members opposite to finally speak up at that caucus table, finally stand up to the cabinet control over there, Mr. Speaker. And if there's going to be one thing that they're going to do in this session or as their term as an MLA, stand up for our Crown corporations. Do what's right.

We're going to certainly be pushing forward as we go through

different processes in here as the bill may go into committee. There's a very critical place for witnesses from across Saskatchewan to come forward to speak to the value and the consequences of the reckless actions we see from the Sask Party. And we'll be calling upon and urging co-operation and a constructive approach by the governing party opposite to make sure that happens. And we'll be reaching out every step of the way to call on this government to abandon this track, to step away and repeal this bill and this attack on our Crown corporations.

At this point I'm going to support obviously the reasoned amendment brought forward yesterday, Mr. Speaker. I'll cede the floor to the member from Elphinstone, but I'll support the motion here:

That all the words after "That" be deleted and the following substituted:

this House declines to give second reading to Bill No. 40, *The Interpretation Amendment Act, 2016* because:

the bill 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; and further

that the bill risks sending millions of dollars of Crown dividends to Ottawa rather than to the people of Saskatchewan because under section 149 of the *Income Tax Act* of Canada, Crown corporations are exempt from corporate income tax provided not less than 90 per cent of the shares are held by a government or a province.

I support the reasoned amendment. We're going to fight for the Crown corporations that have been built by and for Saskatchewan people. We're going to fight for these money-making, service-providing, job-creating innovators across our province. We're going to fight for the thousands and thousands and thousands of jobs, hundreds of businesses that will take a hit with the privatization of our Crowns, Mr. Speaker. We're going to take a stand to keep rates affordable for Saskatchewan people, something being put at risk at a time where affordability and the cost of living are high for Saskatchewan people and jobs far too often are a challenging reality for many in the province, Mr. Speaker.

And we're going to fight for the hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars annually that Saskatchewan people need and deserve, their dollars to fund things like education and health care. We've got a government that right now is looking for a quick buck, a quick sale, one-time sell-off, Mr. Speaker, that shortchanges the people of Saskatchewan time and time again into the future; a government that's putting at risk billions of revenues that will help fund the future in this province; a government that, with their quick sell-off, Mr. Speaker, for which they have no mandate, ends up forcing Saskatchewan people to pick up even more of a tab, a greater hike in their costs, Mr. Speaker, and greater economic consequences for the mismanagement, scandal, and waste of this government.

As I started, Mr. Speaker, this Premier and the Sask Party have no mandate to sell off our Crown corporations. We will fight

this desperate sell-off every step of the way. We will fight a government that's selling out Saskatchewan people every step of the way. And we'll stand and rally with Saskatchewan people in communities across this province — rural and urban and northern and otherwise, Mr. Speaker — rallying across political divides, Mr. Speaker, to protect our Crown corporations and importantly, Mr. Speaker, to build those Crowns and put them to work to build the future that every Saskatchewan person deserves.

I stand vehemently opposed to this deceitful bill, Mr. Speaker. I stand in full support of the reasoned amendment, and I stand with Saskatchewan people in this historic sell-off of their best interests. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's always an honour to take your place in this Assembly, to say your piece, to speak on behalf of the people that sent you here, and certainly in my case, Mr. Speaker, the people of Regina Elphinstone-Centre and to be here today on this bill, Bill 40.

This is quite the interesting piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, and it's certainly . . . And for those that follow Saskatchewan politics, in a lot of ways this is a bill as old as the province itself, Mr. Speaker, in terms of some of the debates it gets into.

And I guess, Mr. Speaker, the ebbs and flows that we've had around public enterprise versus private ownership and, you know, what is rightly in the place of Crown activity, what should be rightly left to the private sector, there have been ebbs and flows in that debate over the years as well, Mr. Speaker. And certainly I've talked about it many times, the fact that in the McCall family, Mr. Speaker, my dad was a big, strong, farm boy. Him and my grandma come in from the farm in '56 after getting flooded out, out Montmartre way in the home quarter. And, Mr. Speaker, it wasn't too long after that, that my father came to work for SaskPower. And for many years worked as a gas serviceman in the gas division, SaskPower, and then of course, in the late '80s, was one of those hardworking people that had their lives thrown into no small amount of chaos by the government of the day when they split off SaskEnergy from SaskPower creating a stand-alone Crown corporation and then proceeded to try and sell off SaskEnergy.

And, Mr. Speaker, you know, in some ways it's the more things change, the more they stay the same because the moves that were made by the then Devine government on SaskEnergy and various other public assets in the main came after the 1986 election where they had sworn up and down that there was no such plan in the works. And you know, they narrowly won that election by the seat count, but lost it on the popular vote. But you know, as with Donald Trump, Mr. Speaker, they won the seats and got to form government, and then proceeded to do a bunch of things that they didn't talk about in the election.

And one of those was to take a big, old run at SaskEnergy and trying to sell that off. And those were different rules in the Assembly at the time, Mr. Speaker, but of course the bells rung and the people rallied and the Devine Progressive Conservative efforts to sell off SaskEnergy were defeated. And then of course it led the way to the 1991 election, and we know what happened

then.

And I guess, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that's interesting in terms of my perspective on the bill is that I was a high school student through the late '80s, and we had these conversations around our kitchen table. And you know, there were others I'm sure that had different . . . I know certainly my seatmate was a bit younger at the time, a little bit, and others in this Assembly had unique perspectives on that debate as well. And one of those individuals, Mr. Speaker, was of course the Premier of the province, who at the time was a young ministerial aid working in the office of the then minister of Public Participation which is what they called the ministry to privatize whatever they could. It was sort of an early rendition on apparently on how they're pursuing transformational change, Mr. Speaker.

And you know, the Premier's a smart guy. He's a highly intelligent person and that's borne out again and again and again. And those who underestimate the intelligence of that individual do so at their peril. And you know, when you're sifting through the different sort of games that have gone on with SaskTel over the past year, Mr. Speaker, it's something that we don't forget, is the intelligence and the memory of that individual.

And we don't forget the fact that this is an individual that sought and lost a nomination in 1991 to go out and run under the Progressive Conservative banner. We don't forget, Mr. Speaker, that not long after taking office himself after the '99 election, if not immediately after, soon thereafter, was appointed the Crown Corporations critic for the Saskatchewan Party official opposition. And we don't forget, Mr. Speaker, that he was very much integrally involved in the 2003 campaign and involved in the position of the Sask Party at the time which was to have a referendum before proceeding with any sales.

And, Mr. Speaker, you know it had a certain utility in the straightforward quality of that position because of course then you could see it coming. And it wasn't this business of, you know, will there be a referendum or won't there. Are we able as a province to have a referendum that is a worthwhile democratic exercise which has been weighed in on in other quarters? That was roughly their position and a turning point in that election.

And you know, certainly members over there well remember this, Mr. Speaker, is when in the leaders' debate the then leader of the Saskatchewan Party, Elwin Hermanson, said that he would be crazy not to entertain offers on SaskTel. And you know, I think we've all knocked on a lot of doors in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, and that was a . . . You know you could feel the change out there across the hustings.

And in terms of what then came after with the ascension of the member from Swift Current to the leadership of the Saskatchewan Party, again as a highly intelligent individual, Mr. Speaker, he said well we can't let that happen again. And there are different things that he's used, the device of talking about, you know, being able to finish the sentence. But one of the, if I'm remembering correctly, Mr. Speaker, and I'm sure I'll be corrected if this isn't the case, but one of the things was to not let the NDP finish the sentence for them in terms of their approach to the Crown corporations.

[15:15]

So in 2004, Mr. Speaker, when the Crown protection Act came before the legislature, we all know what happened then. And again this is available on November 22nd, 2004 in *Hansard* where yes, the yeas did indeed have it on Bill No. 75, *The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Act* wherein all 57 members in the Assembly voted for that bill, and it was unanimous, Mr. Speaker. There wasn't any of this business of, you know, well how's this going to impact *The Interpretation Act* or what will the World Bank say, Mr. Speaker. It was a pretty straightforward proposition.

And again this is an individual that is intelligent and demonstrated intelligent leadership to his team. But of course, Mr. Speaker, in 2007 sometimes you had to work to get the team back all on the same page. And in 2007, when the member from Cannington . . . And again, I'm always interested in what the member from Cannington has to say because sometimes it gets pretty colourful, Mr. Speaker. But in September of 2007, the Premier again getting out there with the dustpan looking to clean up some of the remarks from the member from Cannington, what he had to say was, the Premier said this, "Crowns are not going to be privatized and (subsidiaries) are not going to be wound down."

That was the member from Swift Current, of course, when he was the leader of the opposition, making his proposition to the people of Saskatchewan as to why they should vote for the Saskatchewan Party. And again, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite and that leader were certainly astute enough to realize that they had a trust problem when it came to their approach to the Crown corporations.

And you know, last night in the debate, oh, the Minister of Justice who's been . . . I don't know how the process went into . . . I know we'll get the Minister of Justice to bring this forward, you know, interpretation Act being one part of that decision. I don't know if it's some kind of penalty that he's serving, Mr. Speaker, or that he's wanting to lend his good name to fronting Bill 40, but it's interesting that he has been tagged with carrying this bill forward. And certainly, Mr. Speaker, last night I think he was on about the shoe factory which of course dates back to the '40s and was one of the earlier foibles of the Tommy Douglas CCF [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation] government. And again, Mr. Speaker, it was great to get the reminder on the record because these kind of decisions, these kind of arguments are as old as the province itself.

And, Mr. Speaker, when it came to addressing this deficit that this government has, or this political party has in terms of the trust that people had in them or not when it came to the question of, you know, well where are they at on the Crowns, can we trust them on the Crowns? They took the pledge in 2004, Mr. Speaker, and then of course we'd seen the member, the leader from the then opposition, the member from Swift Current, come out and clean up the remarks for his member from Cannington.

And we've seen different sort of variations on that theme since, Mr. Speaker. We've seen where they came out and said, you know, we're going to privatize all the new liquor stores because, you know, that keeps our promise whole. That keeps

our promise whole. We didn't say anything about new liquor stores so, you know, obviously that's keeping our promise. It brings to mind the old sort of debate over commission and omission, and I defer to my Catholic friends in this matter. But you know, that wasn't promised so they said, well you know, that wasn't in the black letter of the promise so away they went; all the new liquor stores, private stores. And they had some misadventures there as well, Mr. Speaker. Then we had ISC [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan] which had not been covered by the Crown protection Act, and of course they were happy to sell off part of that institution and then of course all of it, Mr. Speaker.

And then in the last election because they'd done a lot of preparing the ground, they said, well let's take a look at selling off 40 liquor stores. And you know, that was the headline, Mr. Speaker. In the article that followed below of course in their platform was the fact that they wanted to take SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority] right out of the Crown protection Act. And again, Mr. Speaker, you know, I disagreed with their position, but I would compliment them on being straightforward about it, on at least having gone to the people and said, here's something we want to do. It's a fundamental promise on which we've gained your trust, on which we've gained the support to govern this great province.

And they went to the people, and again we can have a different discussion about the election, Mr. Speaker, but they certainly, on that ground that was the promise that they had made. The only sort of prevarication from their three elections in support for the Crown protection Act was to remove SLGA and then proceed to sell off 40 stores. And of course this was all going to balance out and be revenue neutral. But you know, I'm here to talk about Bill 40 and not other magic acts on the part of this government.

So that brings us pretty much to today, Mr. Speaker. And immediately after the election, the government started making moves on SaskTel in response to what had happened to MTS [Manitoba Telephone System]. And you know, you can leave aside the questions around the dividends that MTS has paid into the Manitoba coffers or the paucity of those dividends compared to the hundreds of millions of dollars that SaskTel has returned to the people of Saskatchewan. You can leave aside the sort of, is there going to be a referendum or we're not putting a for sale sign on the front of SaskTel, but, you know, here's what a great offer would look like. And again I'm always sort of reminded of there was one commentator at the time said, do they think we're stupid, Mr. Speaker? Anyway these are some of the games that got played with SaskTel.

But then of course we come to Bill 40. And Bill 40, Mr. Speaker, it's kind of hard to talk about in plainly parliamentary terms because in terms of the promise that was made to respect the Crown corporation protection Act, there wasn't a promise about, you know, we've got our fingers crossed behind our back. And you know, times are going to change and then we're going to open up this loophole using *The Interpretation Act* which, you know, it's certainly got imaginative qualities to it, Mr. Speaker.

But in terms of the government keeping all of their promises around support for the Crown protection Act, which again has

been stated 2007, '11, and '16, they had a chance to stand by their word. And now with a straight face of course, they say, well you know, we're just great stewards. We just want to open up the possibilities for partnerships, should they exist. And they will say, you know, the Grant Devine government and the way that they wanted to sell off everything, Mr. Speaker, that's, you know, another time.

Or in the mid-'90s, when there was a broader consultation took place in terms of the role of Crown enterprise in the Saskatchewan economy, the then member, the then leader of the Progressive Conservatives, the member from Kindersley, and his doughty band of PC [Progressive Conservative] MLAs, Mr. Speaker, they were of course, like, sell off that SaskTel as fast as you can. And then of course, you know, history has unfolded and the highly intelligent person that's the Premier of this province learned some lessons from that.

Which brings us to, you know, well what's changed, Mr. Speaker? Because certainly I've done some consultation. I had the privilege of being up in Regina Northeast on a lovely day in January and knocking on doors along north Broad, along Upland Drive, along Fairview Road, along Elmview Road, and I couldn't find a darn person that was supportive of this government's approach to open the door to sell off 49 per cent of any of the Crowns that they previously pledged to protect. Not a single person, Mr. Speaker.

And then I guess the other thing that is interesting along, you know, not long thereafter, we had a by-election in Saskatoon Meewasin. And it was most interesting, Mr. Speaker, talking to people that identified as previous supporters of this government, people that said, you know, I voted for them and never again. I remember in particular one small business, retired small businessperson up on Nahanni, up on Nahanni in the riding. And I know they don't like this, Mr. Speaker. I know they don't like this, but one of their former supporters said, you know, I don't feel . . . You know I don't . . . I'm not quite there to voting NDP. I know that Romanow come in and cleaned up the mess from the last bunch and, you know, we'll see where that winds up. But when it comes to this bunch, you know, how can we go through this again, Mr. Speaker?

And I guess the overriding principle, of course, has been that, you know, you've gone through the boom, and I can remember the member from Silverspring talking about how the NDP was blowing the boom a few years back, Mr. Speaker. And you know, here we are today.

And in terms of decisions that this government has made and the way that they've presided over some of the best times in this province's history and not saved a dime but in fact, Mr. Speaker, blown through all the cash that was on hand, blown through the rainy day fund, went to the people last spring and said, you know, we were going to keep Saskatchewan strong. And then of course the deficit starts to creep up and we can't have a first quarter report. And then they, you know, okay well, you know, mid term. And then we can't have a third quarter report. But in dribs and drabs, Mr. Speaker, the news comes out where the deficit is at \$1.2 billion and climbing.

And I guess, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the kind of decisions that then confronts a government with . . . And we've seen in too

bold a relief the kind of priorities that these decisions relate, Mr. Speaker, with the firing of 230 cleaners last week. You know, there's a deficit fight on and the first ones they want to enlist is, you know, the 230 cleaners with their jobs.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, that's not what they campaigned on and that's not what they promised. But I guess the thing is, I don't know if it was the, like, hold your breath and hope that resource prices go back up, or what the MO [modus operandi] was on that side of the House, Mr. Speaker, but they've made a bunch of decisions and that bill has come due. And, Mr. Speaker, you know, we'd seen 1,200 people on the lawn of the legislature last week and again, you know, they can keep it up with the eyes wide shut business all they like, Mr. Speaker.

After the results in Meewasin, the Premier very properly said, you know, congratulations to the new member from Meewasin. And he was asked, you know, did they send you a message in that election? And then the Premier said, well I get sent lots of messages every day.

And you know, would but they had ears to hear, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the way that they should take account of their own actions, where they should take some responsibility for the decisions that they have made. And you know, then maybe the rest of it could be taken seriously, Mr. Speaker. But there's been no acknowledgment, no contrition shown on the part of this government in terms of the role they played in the 1.2 and Lord knows how much billion in deficit that this province faces.

[15:30]

Mr. Speaker, there was an excellent, reasoned amendment put forward by my colleague from Regina Douglas Park last night. I think that says a lot about the approach that should be taken when it comes to Bill 40.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I hope to have the chance to vote for that, not just with my colleagues on this side, but hopefully with colleagues across the Assembly that are looking for a way to make sure that promises are kept whole and that, you know, damage that will last decades is not done under the guise of this bill. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I conclude my remarks.

**The Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is the proposed amendment moved by the member from Regina Douglas Park. We'll take the motion as read.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**Some Hon. Members:** — No.

**The Speaker:** — The amendment motion is not carried. Debate continues on the main motion . . . Call in the members.

[The division bells rang from 15:31 until 15:47.]

**The Speaker:** — All those in favour of the amended motion please stand.

[Yeas — 11]

Wotherspoon	Vermette	Chartier
Belanger	Sproule	Forbes
Rancourt	Beck	McCall
Sarauer	Meili	

**The Speaker:** — All those opposed to the motion please stand.

[Nays — 48]

Wall	Moe	Stewart
Wyant	Reiter	Morgan
Harpauer	Doherty	Duncan
Beaudry-Mellor	Hargrave	D'Autremont
Heppner	Cheveldayoff	Marit
Tell	Eyre	Merriman
Harrison	Ottenbreit	Ross
Weekes	Brkich	Hart
Kirsch	Bradshaw	Steinley
Makowsky	Phillips	Lawrence
Wilson	Campeau	Docherty
Michelson	Doke	Cox
Olauson	Steele	Young
Fiaz	Dennis	McMorris
Bonk	Carr	Nerlien
Lambert	Buckingham	Kaeding

**Clerk:** — Mr. Speaker, those in favour of the amendment, 11; those opposed, 48.

**The Speaker:** — I declare the motion lost. The question before the Assembly is a motion by the minister that Bill No. 40 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**Some Hon. Members:** — No.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Clerk:** — Second reading of this bill.

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

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that this bill be committed to Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

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

**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 Meewasin.

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to speak to *The*

*Pipelines Act*, the amendment to *The Pipelines Act*, 2016. Mr. Speaker, this is an important piece of legislation for us to be discussing. Obviously the safety of what we transport — whether that be hydrocarbons or other materials through pipelines, whether that's through land, over and under water and other sensitive areas of our environment — obviously an extremely important thing for us to get right, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this has been an issue of significant concern in this province over the years, and in particular in the last 12 months. For example, in early 2017 we saw 200 000 litres of crude oil spilled in the Ocean Man First Nation from an older pipeline, and more dramatically, given its relationship to a water source, the 225 000 litres of crude oil that were spilled in July 2016 from a Husky oil pipeline.

That was a particularly drastic event, Mr. Speaker, causing significant hardship for those near the spill and downstream from the spill, with the cities of North Battleford and Prince Albert having struggles accessing clean drinking water. Those larger cities were able to find ways around, able to access drinking water through other sources. However, smaller communities — First Nations, smaller towns — were not able to do so so easily and faced significant hardship.

Of course we also saw challenges beyond drinking water, where you have livestock or wildlife that are drinking the water from those rivers that could be contaminating well water nearby as well, and also, Mr. Speaker, the aquatic life of course, as we see the fish and waterfowls that are affected by the oil that spilled into the water.

Mr. Speaker, so this is, as I say, an extremely important thing for us to get right, to know what we're doing on maintaining the safety of the pipelines that transmit materials such as pipelines, and when we look at . . . such as hydrocarbons.

So when we look at what's been going on in this province in the last while, we've seen something interesting which is a pretty drastic reduction in the number of spills that are reported, which is interesting given that we've had such large spills. There was a report on OurSask.ca, a blog here in the province, that talked about a decrease from 459 spills in 2014 to 146 in 2016.

That's interesting and that could look like really good news, but on further investigation by that reporter, really that investigation turned out some pretty serious concerns about the methods through which these pipeline spills have been reported. So it seems that it's not so much a drastic reduction in spills, Mr. Speaker, so much as it is a drastic reduction in the number of spills being reported. Increase by multiple-fold the amount of oil travelling through pipelines in the province, but this big drop.

And that likely has something to do, Mr. Speaker, with the method of recording using this government's recently introduced integrated resource information system, an online reporting system for any challenges that go on with pipelines. And that's going to be shown to be of a bit more concern as we get deeper into the current amendments, Mr. Speaker. But what IRIS [integrated resource information system] really allows us to do, or is supposed to allow us to do, is have companies, when a spill is reported, report that spill quickly and thoroughly.

So when I say quickly that means within the first five days they've got a report, says this is what has happened; this is our initial understanding of the spill. And then within 90 days they're to have a detailed report that fully describes the amounts, the damages done, etc. And within six months they're expected to have a report that not only details that initial understanding of the spill, it not only details the ramifications of this spill, but also their methods put in place to remediate what damage has been done from that spill, Mr. Speaker. And that's a good thing, a good system to have, very important to have that in place if it's used and used properly, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And what seems to be the case is that according to IRIS there are hundreds of known spills in which the detailed and reclamation reports, months and even years later, have not yet been filed. They're either overdue or they're missing. People just aren't, these companies aren't following through with that reporting. And as of February 17th that included the Husky spill, that very large spill that gathered international attention to the damage done to the North Saskatchewan River and the communities around it. We've seen this process, through the Husky spill, with that company and this government being very slow to provide answers and being very slow to provide samples to the communities and scientists and others that need it to do the work to understand just what was going on in that spill. And we saw an article in *The Globe and Mail* this fall that was criticizing Husky for not providing those samples at a reasonable time, and also this province for not having an independent regulator.

So when we had this major spill, what we heard from this government was that it was up to the Minister of the Economy to do the full assessment. The Ministry of the Economy, as you well know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is a bit of a grab bag of files, lots of different things in there including Immigration and others, which means that they don't necessarily have the proper specialized attention to the issues at hand. Having files like that in a broad-based basket like the Ministry of Economy might not result in the type of focused analysis that is necessary. And it could be more focused rather on the short-term profit, on the profit of some of those corporations — perhaps some of the corporations that donate significantly to the Saskatchewan Party, be more concerned with their profits than they are with the Saskatchewan people or the environment that sustains us and that allows us to have a functioning economy.

So really what we have, Mr. Speaker, is a patchwork system involving the Ministry of the Economy, Ministry of the Environment, and the Water Security Agency digging into these matters. Other institutions, for example Alberta, have developed an independent regulator, something that has been praised by many as a much more robust system to actually analyze what's going on with oil spills and with pipeline safety.

That brings us to what's happening here in these amendments. And as I said, this is a very important topic, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I believe there are some important additions to our ability to have safe transport through pipelines through this bill. There are some things that are commendable, one example being that initial change of the inclusion of flow lines, the flow lines part of the pipeline system — 80,000 flow lines in this province previously exempt from any of the pipeline safety Act, so not having any type of oversight. So that's really important

that we include those in this Act.

And the change of the definition, amplifying the definition of pipelines to make sure that we're not only talking about hydrocarbons, steam, and carbon dioxide. This is very important to make sure that anything that's travelling by pipeline is governed by the same regulations.

Of course we want to be really clear about what else could be going through pipelines and make sure that we really understand what is the extent, what products, whether it's for example diluents mixed in with the bitumen from certain sources that could be posing a greater risk. And make sure that analysis is done, that this pipeline Act will actually provide us with enough security and safety for this enhanced variety of contents that could be passing through pipelines in our province.

The other thing we see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in this bill is an increase in power to inspectors, increased power to enter property, and be able to access pipelines and observe them and inspect them. And also increased ability to ask for information, to obtain information from companies, from owners, from others who are doing the work with the pipelines, making sure that they're able to access that information better.

[16:00]

We also see — and that's a really important thing to be able to do — adding power to those inspectors to be able to do the work of actually inspecting all of the pipelines, flow lines, and those pipelines covered under the existing legislation. Very important, but I'll return back to a caveat on that a little bit later.

Another thing that we see in this legislation is immunity to the government from litigation from pipeline owners if there was some mistake from the inspector, so long as that work was done in good faith. And that seems like a fairly legitimate thing, so long as that good faith is able to be shown, that that should protect the government from any further liability.

Another thing that we see in this Act is the introduction of the use of the IRIS system that I mentioned earlier. I just want to make sure that I get the acronym right: the integrated resource information system. So that, as I said, we've seen some concerns over that, that we . . . Are we are seeing the owners of pipelines actually reporting spills effectively and thoroughly and giving their full reports at the 90 days and six-month period to make sure that all has been done in terms of understanding and taking efforts to rectify whatever damage has been done?

With those limitations shown with the use of IRIS so far, we'd want to make sure that (1) that that is corrected; and (2) that the IRIS system for licensing will be thoroughly used; that we won't see people failing to fully complete; failing to complete in time prior to beginning a construction project, that that would be done without full and proper use of this IRIS system. So that will obviously need some further examination to be certain that that's done properly.

Another thing that's outlined in this legislation is the shift away from regulations to what is described as directive, and that's

described as something that's been happening in other jurisdictions. And that is the case, that's been happening in many places. There has been some concern raised about that direction in other places, Mr. Speaker, where there's some concern about the uniformity of directives. So you want to make sure that the directives that one company is receiving are the same as the directives that another company is receiving, so that there is uniformity across the board in order to ensure fairness, in order to ensure equitable and equal application of the laws.

Also want to make sure that those directives are clear, that it's very clear to those who might want to start a project, a proponent of a pipeline project, but also to the general public, exactly what is meant by those directives, that they are as clear as the pre-existing regulations and that they're very clearly available, which comes to the last point which is around transparency. There are concerns from some quarters that directives may be less publicly distributed. So you'd want to make sure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that whatever directives are put in place are as publicly available online, etc., as the current regulation so that we have that transparency.

And that's certainly something that we want to be very cognizant of with this government in particular where we've seen troubles with transparency. We've seen troubles with transparency around, for example, failing to produce a budget prior to the last provincial election and hiding what was happening with the finances from the electorate. Troubles with transparency, right now failing to share the third quarter report and leaving that up until budget day. Failure to be transparent around what's happening with NORTEP, that change in that program of northern education — a process that was under way, a process started by this government that was then ignored and the bid or the project given to a college that didn't even participate in that process.

And of course the type of transparency that we see when we see language misused. For example, this Bill 40 that is before us where we're being asked to reimagine the definition of privatization and take what is really an unlikely and counterintuitive definition that you could privatize nearly half of something and call it still a public good. Really that's the lack of transparency that we've seen. So we would want to make sure that whatever is happening with that shift from regulations to directives, that we're very attentive to what's happening and making sure that transparency is being served.

Also in this legislation we see a change in the fines from \$50,000 to a max of \$500,000. And that may be more in keeping, as the minister said, that that's more in keeping with fines in other jurisdictions.

However once again as we've discussed in the Water Security amendments, increasing the fines is a very fine thing. Increasing the fines can be helpful to change behaviour, but only if they're actually applied. So a really important question for us to ask, and I think we'll want to discuss in committee is, have these fines ever been applied? Have we seen people being fined? And have we actually seen that these fines, whether at the current level or at a higher level, are actually an effective deterrent? Are they useful as a way to actually change behaviour? And you know, the problems we're seeing and describing with spills

being reported, you know, will these fines actually lead to under-reporting? Will we have the type of attention to what's going on to make sure that the fines are a useful deterrent because people know that they will be actually pointed out when they have done something wrong and that they will be expected to correct it, and will they actually be applied?

The other things that we see in this legislation are new rules regarding the transfer of pipelines, that that transfer from one pipeline owner to somebody new owning that project, that that would have to be done in the public interest, which I think is really interesting. It's important, of course, and it's a very good concept. There's not a lot of definition of what that means, what will be considered in the public interest, how will that public interest be defined. And I think that's important for us to get into. Will that public interest be very narrow or will it actually be looking at a triple bottom line of what's good for the province's economy, what's good for the social well-being of the people of the province, what's good for protecting the environment?

And also of interest I think is that that clause around public interest really seems to apply only to the transfer of pipelines from one owner to another. And one wonders if the same process of public interest will be taken into account and put into place when we're looking at new pipeline projects. Will those always go through a rigorous triple-bottom-line analysis?

Another thing that's being introduced in this legislation that is quite valuable is the insistence on financial assurance, so knowing that a pipeline owner or proponent of a new project is actually able to have the funds in reserve to deal with a problem if one should arise, and that they have an emergency response plan in place to deal with a problem should that problem arise. And that seems like a very wise thing. It's a bit surprising that that hasn't been the case.

One of the things that did concern me slightly however was the language that the minister used in describing that particular aspect where he said, and I quote, that they would provide "... new regulatory authorities to require financial assurance from operators for pipelines located in high-risk locations such as water crossings."

Now I spoke at the beginning of the spill that recently happened at the Ocean Man First Nation community. That wasn't near a major body of water, but that still has significant impacts on the land around that spill, the people living on that reserve. So we would want to make sure, Mr. Speaker, that that applies not only to water crossings but actually anywhere that a pipeline is crossing, that there should be in place an emergency response plan, that there should be in place the financial assurance to make sure that any spills that do happen are able to be remediated, that the company that has put that pipeline in place also has the financial and planning resources to be able to respond quickly.

And certainly there have been some concerns with the speed of response with some of the spills in recent years and this could be a very valuable addition to make pipelines safer in the province, but you'd want to make sure that it didn't apply only to water crossings but actually applied to everywhere that pipelines are passing.

I now want to return to what I think is the largest priority concern. As I mentioned, this bill adds powers to the inspectors to be able to do their work in a slightly better way, which I think is a very valuable thing to be able to ... And I'll just want to quote again here the minister, where he said, "... new inspection, investigation, and compliance audit powers for ministry staff," which I think is an excellent consideration. However in the same speech the minister said that, and I quote, "The proposed amendments will not automatically trigger new spending on pipeline regulations."

Now that may be the case and perhaps new spending isn't required, but it is important for us to think about, if we have new powers for inspectors, more work for inspectors to do, do we have the inspectors to do so? Do we actually have the people on the ground that are able to do that work? In 2016, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there were 78 inspections of pipelines in Saskatchewan. In the same year in Alberta — and granted there are more pipelines there, but nonetheless there's quite a lot here in this province — over 2,000 in Alberta, 2,000 inspections versus only 78 in this province. That strikes me as concerning. You know, when we hear those numbers of 80,000 flow lines, clearly that means there are many thousands of pipelines as well. Are those being inspected regularly enough for us to be feeling secure that more incidents like the Husky pipeline spill, more incidents like Ocean Man are not going to occur?

And when you think about inspectors and the inspections that they do, we've heard no new money here so I'm assuming that means no more inspectors. We've also been hearing a lot from this government and the Premier about the idea of pay cuts for workers in the public service and this idea of unpaid days off. So there's more work to be done, and there's more work going to need to be done as we add those 80,000 flow lines into the mix of things that need to be inspected. If we're also, while there's more work to be done, telling people that once a month they don't need to come to work, that's a bit of a problem.

So we need to make sure that we don't have those unpaid days off. That's not a good idea in any part of the public service, including in something so essential as making sure that pipelines are properly inspected in order to protect and preserve the environment around them, protect waterways, protect farm land, protect other important elements of our environment. Because the work is already not being done enough, and we're telling the inspectors they'll have more work to do but that they'll be paid less and be allowed to do it less often.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I'll just review quickly some of the major elements of this bill that are of concern and interest to us. One is the inclusion of flow lines, the 80,000 flow lines previously exempt. We think that's a very positive thing. We do think it's important to broaden the definition of pipelines to talk about anything that's being transported through pipes, not only hydrocarbon, steam, and carbon dioxide but also to make sure as a caveat to that that we're actually investigating the risks of any new materials or different materials than previously used that are being transferred through that method.

Encouraging and applauding the increased power to inspectors and inspections, as I said, but of course, wanting to make sure that that is informed by an understanding that if you want them to do more work and be able to do more work, you have to



make sure that the people are there to do the work.

The use of the IRIS system for online licensing, again potentially favourable, might be a portal to allow people, allow companies to register more easily. You want to make sure that IRIS is actually being used properly. Some instances of concern around whether or not that's being used well enough in terms of reporting incidents of spills. Will it be used properly in terms of registration of new pipelines and their approval?

Of course, the shift from direct regulations to directives, Mr. Speaker, is something of concern as we want to make sure that that's done in a way that is uniform, clear to the proponents of projects, and transparent to the public. Regarding the increase in fines from 50 to 500,000, that is an important consideration, wanting to make sure that we actually look at the evidence. What's been done in other jurisdictions? Has been that change, has it actually changed behaviour? Is it a successful deterrent, and is it applied? Have we been applying the existing fines in such a way that they'll actually change behaviour, and will we apply those that are proposed?

[16:15]

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I will simply say that I think that this is a bill that is very important for us to be considering. It adds a great deal of points for discussion, and is important for us to look at ways that we can prevent the types of incidents that we've seen in recent years, such as Ocean Man and the Husky oil spill, but also that we are more ready to deal with oil spills, should they happen. With that, I would like to adjourn debate on Bill 43, the amendment to the pipeline safety Act. Thank you.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

#### Bill No. 44

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

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And as ever, thanks to colleagues for the support and I'll try to live up to their expectations for the speech, not be a drain on their faith or anything like that, but anyway.

This is, all kidding aside, Mr. Speaker, out in too many places in the province this is as deadly serious a piece of legislation as they come.

And I guess, Mr. Speaker, just by way of explanation, earlier on

I was talking about coming, my grandma and my father coming off the farm in the '50s, and they were flooded out, Mr. Speaker. They had initially proved up the back quarter. My ancestors back in the 1880s let it go soon thereafter, having come to the opinion that the only thing it was good for growing was ducks. But the cycles changed, and they proved it back up for 1906, and that's still the McCall home quarter. And I'm on the title with my father, my brother, and my sister for that parcel of land.

And certainly, Mr. Speaker, we've seen that particular piece of land go through a lot of different changes as well. And you know, again there's some broader super cycles at play. But certainly, come time for what led to my grandma and my dad leaving the farm in the mid-'50s, it was a terribly wet part of the calendar. And my father remembers the hoooves rotting off the cattle, things were so wet. The ditching that they did in the sort of . . . You know, my father, you know, all he needs to do is smell the cordite or dynamite, Mr. Speaker, from the ditching they were doing and it takes him back to a time that exacerbated health problems for my grandfather, and during which my grandfather passed away. And then dad and grandma tried making a go of it on the farm for another year and decided to move to the city.

And I guess that's something I always think of when you see the different issues that come with ditching, and the way that that sets neighbour against neighbour and the kind of issues that that involves, and the role for government to play as an honest broker in navigating those conflicts, Mr. Speaker.

I also think about back to the flooding that went on at Waldsea and at Fishing Lake in 2005-2006, and the way the closed basins in this province, they're right out there in terms of . . . If you're going to have problems with ditching and whether government is playing the proper role as regulator, again as honest broker or not, and different things being let to go, then if you have those wet years, the ditching rolls into the closed basins and then of course there's nowhere for the water to go. And we see that again recently in different places in this province, Mr. Speaker, where that impacts lives and homes and livelihoods in ways that it hasn't previously, Mr. Speaker. So I guess I just want to say that off the top by way of recognizing the complex set of issues that a piece of legislation like this represents.

And you know, questions of keeping watersheds discrete and, you know, you think about the different discussions we have with our neighbours in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, in terms of different watersheds, problems here washing up on Manitoban shores and the way that that's another sort of variation on the theme of the very real conflict that goes on between neighbours when it comes to land that is overtaken by the groundwater and then by the moisture. And it again poses some very difficult situations, Mr. Speaker.

And, Mr. Speaker, I know not exactly in your neck of the woods, but certainly I think about Little Quill and Big Quill lakes — and now of course it's all one Big Quill — and the heartbreaking circumstance that that poses for the families who can't get out on the land to seed, that see their capital being eroded. There's a story I'm familiar with with a widow whose . . . That's the estate. That's the stake for moving on to the next

stage of life, and is it worthless? So in a lot of different ways, there's a lot of work that's been done on this legislation, and I don't know if we're there yet, Mr. Speaker, in terms of where we need to be.

And certainly I don't agree with everything that happens at a SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] convention. But you know, you've got the member from Wood River sitting in the cabinet, and the way that SARM was not supportive of this legislation, despite having been very much involved in the consultations that have gone into developing it. And again just referring to the minister's second reading speech from March 6th when we'd just come back into the House, it's again a signal to the kind of conflicts that this legislation and related regulation and the Water Security Agency seek to ameliorate.

So in terms of the way that different lenses have been put on these problems, there's the work from the Ombudsman that's been done. The minister does a good job of outlining the consultations that've been undertaken by the Water Security Agency in terms of the measures that are proposed, Mr. Speaker. Again we're very interested to hear what the different stakeholders have to say, and we'll be doing consultation with those folks to make sure that we've got a clear picture on who's in support and if there are better ideas to be brought to bear, Mr. Speaker, then where are they in relation to this legislation.

So, Mr. Speaker, I realize that there's a lot of work to be done on this. This is legislation that again was brought in at the start of this session. It certainly impacts the ability to get out and do that consultation, but we're certainly going to endeavour to do the best we can there, Mr. Speaker. But at its base, this is something the government needs to get right, and it's something that people rightfully look to a government to get right because it's . . . You look at the, you know, the packed halls that accompanied community meetings in Quill Lake and throughout that region. And again, Mr. Speaker, we pray for a good spring and a good staging of the runoff. I know that the southeast of the province has been forecast for particular challenges, and may those not be realized, Mr. Speaker.

But again, this legislation is smack dab in the middle of some conflicts that have been going for, in some cases for years, Mr. Speaker, and we'll be very much looking to the affected parties to come forward with their consideration of the legislation. And again we, you know, thank the minister and officials of the Water Security Agency country but as well we thank the affected parties because this is a, like I said at the start, this is about as real as it gets for some folks in terms of their livelihood, in terms of being able to make the living off the land that has often been in, you know, been in some families generations.

So, Mr. Speaker, I know that other of my colleagues have a more informed perspective to bring to bear. I know that our work of consultation on this legislation is ongoing. And in aid of those objectives, Mr. Speaker, I'd move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 44, *The Water Security Agency Amendment Act*.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 44, *The Water Security Agency Amendment Act, 2016*. Is it the

pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — 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 adjourns. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:28.]



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