



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

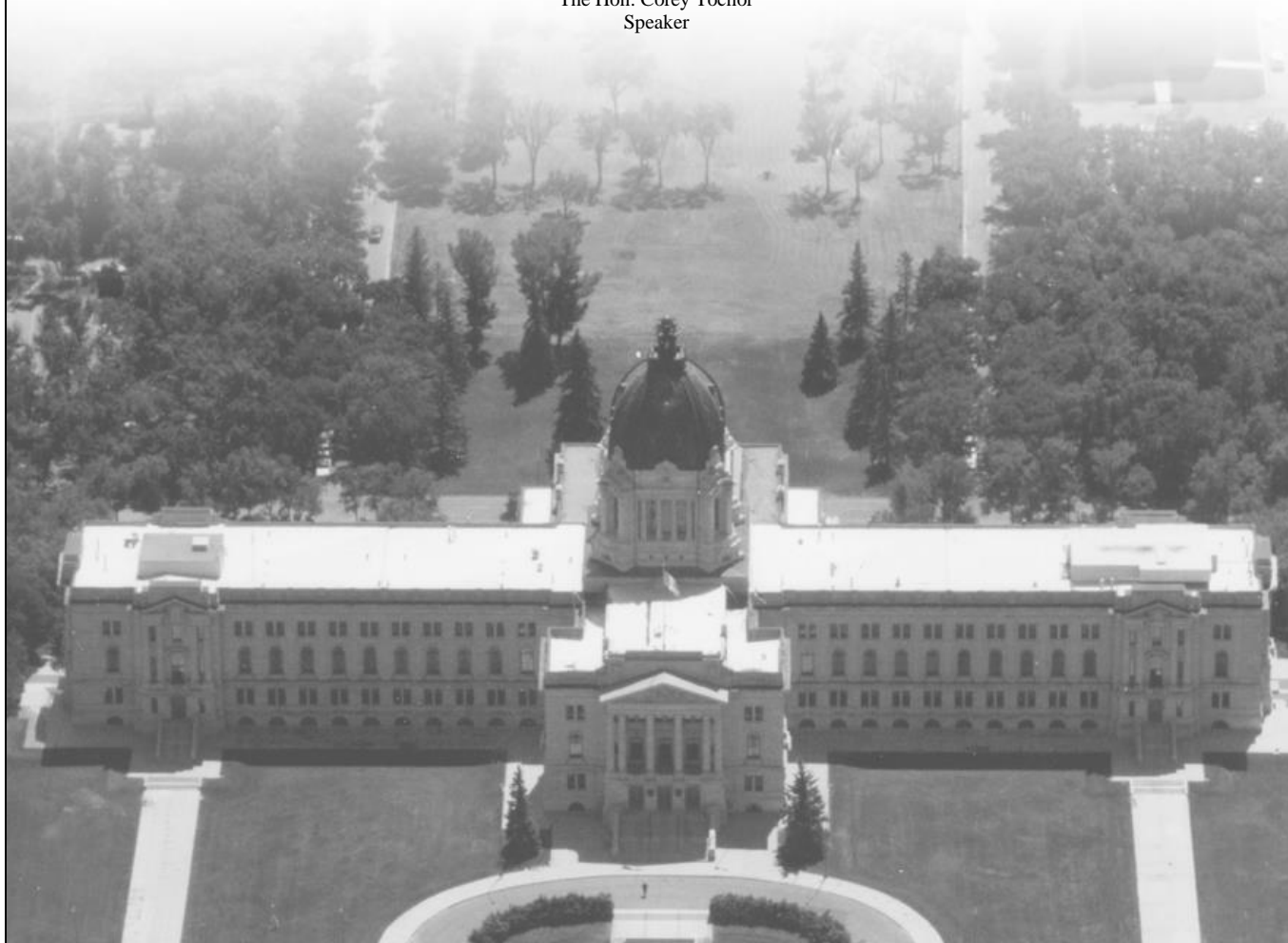
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Corey Tochor
Speaker



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

Speaker — Hon. Corey Tochor

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Leader of the Opposition — Trent Wotherspoon

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Lambert, Lisa — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)

Lawrence, Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)

Makowsky, Gene — Regina Gardiner Park (SP)

Marit, Hon. David — Wood River (SP)

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Wilson, Hon. Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (SP)

Wotherspoon, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)

Wyant, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)

Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

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

Clerks-at-the-Table

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

Clerk: — I wish to advise members that Mr. Speaker is not present today to open today's sitting.

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Later today we're going to be introducing amendments to *The Education Act*, and we have a number of people in your gallery that are here for that. I hope I don't miss any of the ones that are there. We have got some governance panel members, Ray Morrison and Duane Favel. I believe Doug Moen may be in the gallery as well. We also have . . . Well who says you can't recycle old people?

From the ministry we have Deputy Minister Julie MacRae and Assistant Deputy Minister Donna Johnson, and from the Saskatchewan School Boards Association we have President Shawn Davidson as well as Vice-president Aleana Young. I understand, Mr. Speaker, as well, that there are a number of members from the Saskatoon Catholic board, and the member for Churchill-Wildwood will be introducing those momentarily, Mr. Speaker. And I'd ask that all members join in in welcoming these people to their Assembly today.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to join with the minister opposite on behalf of our Leader of the Opposition and our Education critic, who I know would have loved to have the opportunity to welcome all of you to your legislature, all the governance panel members, my past former colleagues from Saskatoon at Saskatoon Catholic, and in particular Aleana Young who is actually a constituent of mine, vice-president of the SSBA [Saskatchewan School Boards Association], and Dr. Shawn Davidson, the president of the SSBA.

I wish you, all of you, a productive day of meetings, and thank you for all of your work in advocating on behalf of all of the students of Saskatchewan and promoting education in our province. I'd like all members to join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Lambert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to make an extended introduction.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has asked for leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member.

Ms. Lambert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and to all members of the Assembly, I would like to introduce Jim and Susan Carriere, two of my constituents seated in your gallery. Give a wave.

Jim is retired from SaskTel as a customer service manager, and he operates his own home renovation company. In fact he remodelled two of my bathrooms recently and did a great job. He was elected to the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Board of Education in 1997 and served as board Chair from 1998 to 2001 and again from 2003 until 2007.

Susan, his wife, previously owned a retail business in Saskatoon. They have raised four children. Their daughters are involved in education. One of their sons works for SaskTel, and their other son is involved in the pipefitting trade. They are proud grandparents of four beautiful grandchildren.

I would also like to introduce Debbie Berscheid who hails from Humboldt — Debbie. Deb has recently retired after working for 34 years as a special care aid on the dementia unit at St. Mary's Villa in Humboldt. She is married to Roger and they have two children. Their son works for Mosaic potash mine in Colonsay, and their daughter lives in St. John's, Newfoundland. Deb was first elected to the Humboldt Catholic Board of Education in 1994. After this board amalgamated with Greater Saskatoon Catholic — it had happened in 2005 — she was elected as the trustee representative for Humboldt. She currently chairs the joint operations committee for Humboldt Collegiate Institute.

I would also like to introduce Diane Boyko. Diane was first elected to the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Board of Education in 2003. We joined the board at the same time. She became the board Chair following Jim Carriere and has remained in that position to this day. When she is not working diligently on school board work, she is coordinating the Sundog Arts and Entertainment Faire. Diane has two daughters. One is a lawyer who lives in Victoria, and her other daughter is a teacher in Mexico.

I spent many years at the board table with Diane, Jim, and Deb, and consider all of them my friends. They offered support and encouragement during my election campaign. I ask all members to join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to make a couple of introductions today. First and foremost, I am so excited to welcome the grade 5 and 6 students from École Victoria School, here all the way from Saskatoon Nutana. It's my first school group in six years, Mr. Speaker, so I'm very excited about that.

They are accompanied today by their teacher, Mr. Grayson Beaudin, and also a number of chaperones, including Sarah Brown, Mindy Bratvold, Tyler Ritinger, Sherri Duggan, Chantel Serack, and Mike McKague, who also ran for city

council in the last city election.

So I know a number of the kids in this class. I know their parents. And they're all inquisitive and very eager to learn about what goes on here today. I had the chance to meet with them a few weeks ago, so I've warned them about question period so they know what it's like. But I'll be meeting with them afterwards to answer questions they might have. But for now I would like everyone to welcome these grade 5 and 6 students and their chaperones to their Legislative Assembly.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to take the opportunity to introduce a young gentleman to you from my riding, Mr. Christian Pollock. Christian is a third-year political studies student at the University of Saskatchewan, and currently he is working at the Diefenbaker Centre. So he's travelled with tours, including educating people on women's suffrage and commemorating the 100th anniversary of women's right to vote in Saskatchewan. He leads elementary school students — so maybe you guys might want to go to Diefenbaker Centre with him — encouraging youth to become involved in democracy. He's also responsible for developing material for the Diefenbaker Centre and does tours.

And just for all MLAs' [Member of the Legislative Assembly] awareness, this Sunday there's a grand opening of the exhibit for the 100th anniversary of the battle of Vimy Ridge. So everyone's welcome there as well.

So there's lots more to say about Christian, but for now I'd just like to welcome him to his Legislative Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for Parks, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I request leave for an extended introduction.

The Deputy Speaker: — The minister has requested leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Joining us today are a group of 23 public service employees seated in the Speaker's gallery. They are part of the parliamentary program for the public service. Participants are employees from the following ministries: Advanced Education, Agriculture, Economy, Education, Environment, Finance, Health, Justice, Social Services, as well as employees from the Office of the Provincial Auditor and the Legislative Assembly Service. The program includes an in-depth history and tour of the Legislative Building; briefings by the chief librarian, committees branch, and Executive Council; an opportunity to sit in the public galleries and observe question period; and an opportunity to meet with members on this side of House.

I have the opportunity to meet with them later; I think the Opposition House Leader and maybe yourself, as Deputy Speaker, as well. So I'd like to welcome these public servants to their Legislative Assembly this afternoon.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I see a number of Saskatoon Willowgrove constituents. Ray Morrison has been introduced, and it's good to see you here, Ray. And Ron Boechler, who is a Saskatoon Willowgrove constituent. I think it's Ron's first time here to the Legislative Building. Ron was employed as an emergency medical technician and has been a chief of police, and as a volunteer he's worked with the Blackstrap Youth Camp, YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association], Saskatoon Youth Soccer, softball, and is a trustee with the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools. Ron, I'd like to welcome you to the Legislative Assembly.

And I see Diane Boyko there as well. Diane's part of the . . . I was with her at the Saskatchewan Country Music Awards this past Saturday and she's on the committee for the Canadian Country Music Awards. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, she is a wicked two-stepper. So if she ever gets you on the dance floor, look out; you're in trouble, especially with the dancing abilities with somebody like myself. So, I'd like to ask all members to welcome these fine individuals to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister opposite in welcoming these public servants to their Legislative Assembly. Certainly the parliamentary program for the public service is a very valuable opportunity for public servants to come see the other side of the proceedings, and it gives us an opportunity certainly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly, and to say thank you very much for the service. I look forward to meeting with them later on today, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And, while I'm on my feet, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to say a quick word of hello to an old coach of mine. You know, coaches, they play a . . . Well it's 30 years ago that this individual was a coach of mine, and such were the lessons, Mr. Speaker, that it's, you know . . . here I am. But I want to say a fond word of welcome and hello, and thank you very much for all you do, to Mike McKague, who is a tremendous athlete in water polo and is a triathlete but also a very active member of the community in Saskatoon. But, you know, somebody that makes a difference in a bunch of different lives and certainly made a difference in mine. So it's really good to see Mike McKague here today, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And lastly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd say I don't know what the Deputy Premier was precisely trying to say to Mr. Doug Moen. Certainly as a former deputy minister to the Premier, good to see you here at your Legislative Assembly, Doug. Perhaps he was trying to say happy birthday. But with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, please join me in welcoming these important individuals to their Legislative Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Energy and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to rise in my place and introduce to you to all members of the Legislative Assembly, 15 students, grade 5 students from St. Olivier School

in Radville, Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, they're here today to watch the proceedings, and I'll have an opportunity to visit with them later this afternoon, Mr. Speaker. And I want to ask all of my colleagues, who are already helping out, but to help me in welcoming these 15 students, grade 5 students from St. Olivier in Radville to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to join with government and with other members in recognizing some of the esteemed and distinguished leaders that are here in our Assembly here today. And it's fair to say that education is the foundation of our future here in this province, economically, socially, culturally. And the foundation of education is in this Assembly here today with the elected leadership that's within the Assembly, the school board leadership as full partners and valued partners in education.

So it's my pleasure to welcome the leadership here on behalf of the SSBA of respective boards. And in fact, we have school divisions that are represented from the far southwest corner all the way up into the far North and all points in between, Mr. Speaker.

So on behalf of a very grateful opposition and a grateful province to those that serve our students, I say thank you and ask all members to join me in offering a very hearty and warm welcome.

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

Mr. Olason: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. To you and through you and to all members of the Assembly, seated in your gallery is Jana Len. Jana Len received her Bachelor of Commerce degree with a major in marketing from the University of Saskatchewan in 2010.

After some time in the advertising industry, she began her fundraising career at the Children's Hospital Foundation of Saskatchewan in 2012. In her role as director of donor relations, Jana travels extensively throughout the province working with individuals, community groups, as well as local and national partners to raise funds for maternal and pediatric health care in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, Jana currently sits on the board of directors for the Saskatoon Society of Fund Raising Executives, as well as the board of directors for Enactus at the U of S [University of Saskatchewan].

[13:45]

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Jana met with the children's hospital stakeholders earlier this morning. She will be meeting with the Minister of Health this afternoon, and this evening she will be meeting with the Regina chapter of the Knights of Columbus, who are partners in fundraising for the new children's hospital in Saskatoon University. So I would ask all members to welcome Jana to her Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to welcome several people here as well today. I want to start actually with the Massage Therapist Association of Saskatchewan, with whom my colleague from Regina Douglas Park and I had an opportunity to meet today, and I know members opposite had a chance too to meet with them as well. I'd like to welcome Lori Green, who is the executive director. We've got Garret Woynarski, who is the outgoing president this week, and Marles Kerns.

Thank you for all the work that you do in advocating to ensure that those who use the services of massage therapists receive the best-quality treatment possible. They're advocating to have legislation and regulation for massage therapists. I look forward to being a positive ally in making that happen. So thank you for your work here today.

And like my colleagues, there are many people in the legislature here today I would like to welcome: Mike McKague, who also was a coach of mine, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And he is the only person in this building who bore witness to the fact that I completed the marathon, thanks to Mike McKague's coaching. As my colleague said, he was a great coach and got me through that, and I think I could use his help as I embark upon running again, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I'd like to welcome Chantel Serack actually who . . . We have a very good mutual friend, my constituency assistant, Vanessa Hyggen. And Chantel and I were just at Vanessa's house a few weeks ago for an iron chef competition where the ingredient was basil. We all had to figure out how to make do with . . . what we could come up with that, and it was a fun evening. And Chantel and I actually also belong to an attachment parenting online mothers' group actually, an e-mail list, and have many, many shared interests, Mr. Speaker.

And last but not least I'd like to welcome Diane Boyko who is a constituent of mine and a friend, and to everybody else here in the legislature today. I'd ask all my colleagues to join with me in welcoming them to their legislature.

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

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'd like to join with the Health critic opposite, Mr. Speaker, and welcome the members from the Massage Therapist Association of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, they hosted a luncheon today for MLAs. I wasn't able to attend the luncheon but I had an opportunity to meet for a while with outgoing president, Garret Woynarski. And as the member opposite mentioned, their executive director, Lori Green, and Marles Kerns, the incoming president, are also here.

Mr. Speaker, I'm also told that a number of other members of the board are also here and I apologize in advance for the pronunciation of some of these names. I'm told Mandy Fahr, Camille Lapierre, Gus — I'm sorry Gus — Giannoutsos. I don't know how Hansard's going to handle that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Also Erin Sobkow and Ken Ansell.

Mr. Speaker, I again would welcome these members to their Assembly. I look forward to meeting with them again in the future as they move forward with some projects they're

working on. I understand that they met with some of my colleagues this morning. Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members to please welcome them to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce mayor of Ile-a-la-Crosse, Duane Favel. I can barely see him behind the clock there, but I've had the opportunity to meet with Mr. Favel a few times and he's got an extensive background, Mr. Deputy Speaker. He's a former police officer, a former principal. He's been involved with the local health region. He sits on the local school board, but he's also been the mayor of Ile-a-la-Crosse for many, many years. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, according to the member from Athabasca, he's a terrible curler; he can't fish; and he can't hunt. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, apparently he's an accomplished actor and that helps him when he has to appear to be interested when the member from Athabasca's rambling on and on. So I would like everybody here, all the members here, welcome Mr. Favel to his legislature. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Energy and Resources.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in my excitement to introduce this great class from St. Olivier School, Radville, I forgot to introduce Lorrie Fiechter, their teacher who's accompanying them today. You'll notice, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they're only accompanied by their teacher. There are no chaperones with them. They're such a well-behaved class, Mr. Speaker. That's how they're raised in Radville. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so I do want to add a welcome to Lorrie to her Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I too want to rise in my place and join my colleague from Prince Albert Northcote in welcoming my hometown mayor of Ile-a-la-Crosse, Mr. Duane Favel. And yes, perhaps his name will not be called when they look at the accomplishments in the various sports of hockey or baseball or volleyball or track or basketball or curling. But, Mr. Speaker, for the record, in the area of the community of Ile-a-la-Crosse where he lives — there's about three households — there's no one could touch him in lawn bowling there. So I want to give him credit for some of the athletic ability that he has enjoyed, but to also point out that he's been a great colleague, a dear friend, and a very powerful leader of our community. And I take this opportunity to join all my colleagues in recognizing our mayor, Mr. Duane Favel. Welcome.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to join with members on both sides of this House to welcome a number of guests in the gallery. And I really don't want to start naming names, in part because it

would take me a long time, but also because I can't see everyone who's behind the clock there.

But those leaders in our province in the area of education, I just want to thank them, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for all of their work. I know there has been a lot on their plates over the last several months, and I just want to say that those of you who've put your heart and soul and your work and your effort into ensuring that we have an education system in this province that serves the needs of our children, I really can't imagine a more valuable endeavour and I want to sincerely thank each of you for the work that you do. And I would invite all members to join me in welcoming you to your Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: — I too would like to take the opportunity to welcome all our guests in all the galleries. Certainly pleased to see the galleries so full here this afternoon, but I would ask our guests not to participate in the proceedings. That includes applause. But certainly welcome to each and every one of you.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition. The people who have signed this petition are opposed to the Sask Party's plan to scrap and sell off Saskatchewan Transportation Company. They would like us all to know that STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company] provides a vital service to many seniors, workers, families throughout the province, and that by scrapping STC out of the blue and without asking permission of the owners, the Saskatchewan people, the Sask Party is sending a clear sign about how little they care about protecting our Crowns like SaskTel. And that STC helps to drive the economy with parcel services that serve farms and other businesses.

Mr. Speaker, I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan immediately stop the plan to scrap and sell off the Saskatchewan Transportation Company, and to resume transportation services to the people of Saskatchewan.

It is signed by many good people of our province. I so present.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to present a petition in support of legislation to regulate the profession of massage therapy, Mr. Speaker. The prayer reads:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan take the necessary steps and actions to establish a regulatory body to register, monitor, and regulate the profession of massage therapy for the benefit of patients, massage therapists, and the general public.

Mr. Speaker, this petition today, there's about 250 signatures,

but it's part of another petition that's been tabled that I believe there were about 1,500 signatures. And these petitioners today are from all across Saskatchewan. We've got, just on the first page alone, Saskatoon, Indian Head, Lanigan, Vanscoy, Wynyard, Manor, Kyle, Cumberland House, Preeceville, Clavet, Biggar, Spiritwood, Ogema, Halbrite, and it goes on and on, Mr. Speaker. I so submit.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cypress Hills.

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

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly 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 Swift Current, Aneroid, Morse. I do so present.

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

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to rise in my place under the call and direction of the member from Prince Albert Northcote for anyone, someone to help her in her battle for a second bridge for Prince Albert. Anyone, Mr. Speaker? So on that note, 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:

Ask that the Saskatchewan 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 as we do every day, Mr. Speaker, we're presenting this petition signed by many people from all throughout the province of Saskatchewan. And on this particular page we have people that have signed from Moose Jaw, from Regina, and from Weyburn. And I so present.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm rising today to present a petition opposed to Bill 40 and a potential 49 per cent Crown corporation sell-off. The people who signed this petition would like to bring to our attention the following: 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 almost \$300 million in dividends to pay for schools, roads, and hospitals. Those dividends should go to

the people of Saskatchewan, not private investors. And of course, our Crown corporations employ thousands of Saskatchewan people across the province.

Under section 49 of the *Income Tax Act* of Canada, Crown corporations are normally exempt from corporate income tax provided not less than 90 per cent of the shares are held by a government or province. So the Sask Party's proposal would allow up to 49 per cent of a Crown to be sold without being considered privatized. So, Mr. Speaker, this short-sighted legislation risks sending millions of Crown dividends to Ottawa rather than to the people of Saskatchewan.

I'd like to read the prayer:

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

Mr. Speaker, the people who have signed these petitions today come from Tisdale, Star City, and Saskatoon. I so present.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Today I'd like to present a petition regarding pay equity here in Saskatchewan. And the undersigned residents of Saskatchewan wish to bring to your attention the following: that the citizens of this province believe in an economy powered by transparency, accountability, security, and equity; and that all women should be paid equitably; and that women are powerful drivers of economic growth and their economic empowerment benefits us all.

And we know that the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives found that in Saskatoon in 2016, women earned on average 63 cents for every dollar a man makes, and in Regina, women earned on average 73 cents for every dollar 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.

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

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

And the people signing this petition today come from Grandora, Saskatoon, and Martensville. I do so present. Thank you.

[14:00]

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Prince

Albert Northcote.

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am pleased to present a petition to increase the funding to Prince Albert mobile crisis. Prince Albert mobile crisis unit has had to close its doors during daytime hours, resulting in a loss of resource to people in distress. 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.

I'll read the prayer:

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

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the petition that I present today are signed by residents from Moose Jaw. I do so present.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling on the restoration of funding for libraries in our province. As I've noted before, this is but one of the measures that those who value and support our libraries are putting forth to ensure that their voices are heard. And I think that they're doing a really remarkable job of ensuring that this issue is in front of us and that people really understand what was cut in the last budget, Mr. Speaker.

I will read some of the preamble to this petition: whereas the Saskatchewan government has cut funding for regional libraries in half or by 3.5 million and eliminated funding for libraries in Regina and Saskatoon, this drastic funding cut will have devastating impact on libraries, especially regional libraries and those who depend on them, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

They note that libraries are a vital part of communities across Saskatchewan, and this is certainly something that we're hearing from people right across this province. And libraries are more than just about borrowing books. Libraries have meeting rooms used by community groups. There are educational programs and clubs, publicly accessible computer terminals that are used by many. They also have programs for seniors, for children, employment support and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the list goes on. And these cuts will have a disproportionate impact on rural communities. Whereas libraries are vital community spaces, potential closures or reductions in service will severely impact our communities.

I'll read the prayer, Mr. Deputy Speaker:

Therefore in the prayer that follows, we respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan renew its commitment to the invaluable programming, educational opportunities, and public spaces that our libraries provide across this province and restore the 4.8 million in funding for public libraries that was cut in the

2017-2018 budget.

We are receiving petitions from across the province. Those signing the petition today reside in Saskatoon. I do so present.

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise presenting a petition calling on the government to restore funding to post-secondary education, Mr. Speaker. The undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan wish to bring to your attention the following: that the Sask Party is making students and their families pay for Sask Party financial mismanagement.

They point out that Saskatchewan students already pay the second-highest tuition fees in Canada. They point out that this budget cuts \$36.8 million from post-secondary education. They point out that this budget cuts \$6.4 million from technical institutions. They point out that the funding for the Saskatchewan Student Aid Fund and scholarships has been cut by \$8.2 million, Mr. Speaker, and they point out that the Saskatchewan Party has broken a 2016 election promise by cancelling their first home plan.

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

The petitioners respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan immediately restore funding to Saskatchewan's post-secondary institutions and stop the damaging cuts to our students.

Mr. Speaker, this particular set of petitions is signed by citizens from Saskatoon and Langham. I so present.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition regarding the taxation of non-profit child care centres. Mr. Speaker, across Saskatchewan, licensed non-profit child care centres are taxed inconsistently. Many of our licensed non-profit child care centres pay commercial property taxes, which is different from what's done in Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, BC [British Columbia], and New Brunswick.

Mr. Speaker, child care is essential to the economy, yet most centres struggle to balance their budgets. This issue threatens both the number of child care spaces and the quality of care. Child care centres are institutions of early learning and childhood development, and it is appropriate that they have the same tax treatment as schools do.

I'd like to read the prayer:

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

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

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Voice of Youth Leadership Summit

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. On Thursday, February 16th the member from Saskatoon Centre and I both had the pleasure of attending the 10th annual Voice of Youth Leadership Summit hosted by the Saskatoon Open Door Society.

Each year this summit is planned by and for our province's culturally diverse youth. It provides a sense of leadership and creates a welcoming environment where kids from different backgrounds can come together and foster better cultural understanding.

This year the summit was held at TCU Place and more than 100 students attended. During the event, students had the opportunity to speak with community leaders and stakeholders about the issues that are important to them. And, Mr. Speaker, in my panel the students were particularly interested in the TRC [Truth and Reconciliation Commission], so the reconciliation. The topics discussed included education, cultural bullying, and youth employment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our kids are the future of this province, and the events like this leadership summit really highlight how socially engaged they are with the issues that affect Saskatchewan. It's also a great opportunity to bring our youth together. With tragic crimes of hate still taking place in our own country, it is so important for our young people to experience culturally diverse events like this.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to ask all members to join me in extending thanks to this year's summit organizers for all their hard work, to the Saskatoon Open Door Society for hosting the event, and to all of those who participated for working to create change in Saskatoon and in Saskatchewan, and celebrating the cultural diversity of our young people. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford.

Maidstone Boys' Basketball Team Takes Silver at Hoopla

Mr. Doke: — Thank you. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is my pleasure to stand in this Assembly today and congratulate the Maidstone Huskies high school boys' basketball team on an amazing season. You see, this is the first time the Huskies have ever made it to the provincial championship. After years of hard work, Huskies coach, Ray Bodnarek, had this to say about the team:

This really shows what passion for the game, the hard work can get you. And when graduating players were here in grade 10, their goal was to make it to Hoopla, and they achieved it this year.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it looked like everyone in town showed up to cheer the Maidstone Huskies as they headed to Hoopla finals at the U of R [University of Regina]. For those fans that weren't able to make the trip, they watched the game live-stream in the Huskies' home gym.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the team was set on bringing home a medal, and after some great games, lots of hard work, and a nail-biter final, they were edged out in the gold medal game. Mr. Deputy Speaker, although the team was hoping for gold, they should be proud of their effort, and I would ask all members to join me in congratulating the Maidstone Huskies on a great season and a well-deserved silver medal. Thank you.

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

Global Asbestos Awareness Week

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Speaker, April 1 to 7 is Asbestos Awareness Week. Marked globally by the Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization, this week is a time to raise awareness about asbestos-related diseases.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, asbestos is the leading cause of workplace deaths in Canada, and it's estimated that 152,000 workers in Canada are currently exposed to asbestos. These figures however only account for the number of accepted claims and don't include people who can't prove work-related exposure. The number of people who have been affected by asbestos is therefore likely much higher.

Mr. Speaker, asbestos is a naturally occurring fibrous material which was regularly used in buildings from the 1950s until the late 1990s. If products containing asbestos are disturbed, the tiny fibres are released into the air. All forms of asbestos are carcinogenic, and the World Health Organization estimates that 125 million people in the world are exposed to asbestos in the workplace.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, much more can be done in our province to prevent our workers from being exposed to asbestos in the workplace. It starts by taking the recommendations of groups like Saskatchewan Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization seriously by expanding the current asbestos registry to include leased government buildings and licensing certification programs for abatement workers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I call on all members to recognize this week as a time to raise awareness about asbestos-related diseases and to remember those lost and to remain vigilant in the protection of Saskatchewan workers and families. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Melville-Saltcoats.

Distillery Awarded for World's Best Cask Gin

Mr. Kaeding: — Thank you. Mr. Deputy Speaker, last week at the prestigious World Drinks Awards a local Saskatchewan company was awarded the distinction of distilling the world's best cask gin. This occurred at the World Gin Awards in

London, England. Black Fox Spirits of Saskatoon, owned by ag entrepreneurs John and Barb Cote, were selected top of the class from entrants submitting samples from around the world.

Black Fox Spirits opened for business in August of 2015, taking over three years to construct, and acquiring technology and equipment from around the world. As a result, they now have a world-class facility located on Valley Road outside of Saskatoon.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the dry gin ingredients are using triticale, rhubarb, and flowers that are grown on site or sourced locally, and all the indigents for all their products are produced the same way. I should also mention that they also have a whisky in the works, but it is aging in oak barrels as we speak.

John Cote credits our government with helping to ensure that there is a regulatory environment “that fosters and encourages the production of quality products.” Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Cotes have been leaders in Saskatchewan agriculture for years. They were Saskatchewan and Canada’s Outstanding Young Farmers in 2001 and continue to be innovators.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I ask all members to join in congratulating the Cotes and Black Fox Spirits on winning the award for world’s best cask gin. Thank you.

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

Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society Gala

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Last Friday I had the pleasure of attending A Night with STARS [Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society] Gala along with the Minister of Highway and Infrastructure, the Minister of Central Services, the member from Regina Rochdale, the member from Cannington, the member from Moosomin, and the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

This year’s gala was filled with entertainment, inspiring testimonials, and was successful in raising over \$200,000 to keep STARS in Saskatchewan skies. The evening featured a performance by one of Saskatchewan’s favourite artists, Brad Johner and the Johner Boys.

The highlight of the evening was hearing Kody Scholpp, one of STARS’ VIPs, or very important patients, speak about his experience with STARS and his incredible fight to stay alive. Kody was involved in a car accident in the middle of a blizzard and was ejected from his vehicle in the dark. Mr. Speaker, it took his friends 20 minutes to find him in the snow, and his body began to shut down as hypothermia took control.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, having STARS, with their specialized emergency equipment and medical professionals on board, successfully saved Kody’s life. Thanks to STARS and the generous donors who made this and many more rescues possible, Kody’s healthy and alive today and has completely recovered.

It was great to attend this event with my colleagues and to be involved in giving back to our community, ensuring that access

to these highly specialized emergency medical transport services are ready and available to the people of our province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating the STARS foundation on a very successful event and thank the whole STARS team for the service they provide to the citizens of our province, especially the heroes in the blue suits. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Batoche.

Remembering Oliver Cameron

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, Mr. Speaker, I would like to celebrate the life of one of my constituents. Oliver Cameron, better known as OC, passed away on March 29th. Born on Beardy’s First Nation, OC was known for his humorous personality and warm spirit. He dedicated his life to education, introducing the first teacher education program on the reserve he was from. Focusing on supporting youth employment, OC was a fantastic volunteer, selflessly giving his time to the nation’s Aboriginal Hockey Championships, North American Indigenous Games, and Sask Sport.

Mr. Speaker, OC’s passion for youth engagement and empowerment carried him through his career with Social Services, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, and Saskatchewan Indian Community College. He retired as director of Labour Force Development with the Saskatoon Tribal Council.

Mr. Speaker, during his retirement, OC was given the honour of serving as coordinator and master of ceremonies for the pipe ceremonies of the Saskatoon Tribal Council. In his later years, OC enjoyed golfing, gardening, and cheering for his beloved Saskatchewan Roughriders. OC was remembered by his loved ones and community supporters this past Monday. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in commemorating the life of Oliver Cameron. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[14:15]

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

Knowledge Centre Promotes Carbon Capture and Storage

Ms. Carr: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, our government is proud of our carbon capture and sequestration facility at Boundary dam. This technology has the potential to literally change the world and have a significant impact on reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to share the news that last week the International CCS [carbon capture and storage] Knowledge Centre and the Global CCS Institute have signed an MOU [memorandum of understanding] to accelerate the development of CCS technology around the world. The International CCS Knowledge Centre at Innovation Place is already one of the leading innovators in this technology, and this new partnership will expand the reach of this transformative technology.

The CCS at Boundary dam 3 was the world's first power project to successfully integrate carbon capture, transport, and storage, along with the creation of the knowledge centre, a partnership between SaskPower and BHP Billiton that helps accelerate knowledge of CCS around the world.

While our government has invested in this technology, which has the potential to transform the world energy supply, the opposition seems to dismiss the hard work of SaskPower and their partners to make this project a success. In fact, just today the Premier has made it clear in his visit to Washington that CCS technology is a great option for the US [United States].

Mr. Speaker, I would ask all members in this House to join me in welcoming the new MOU and thanking all of those at the CCS Knowledge Centre and its partners for their hard work. Thank you.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Auditor's Report and Details of Land Transaction

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party government is very quickly losing the trust of Saskatchewan people, and it's not too hard to see why. On top of the broken promises, the callous cuts, the desperate sell-offs, and the billion-dollar tax hike, they refuse to be straight with Saskatchewan people. They refuse to even answer very simple, straightforward questions about their GTH [Global Transportation Hub] scandal. Not in this House, not in the media, and they won't even listen to the Privacy Commissioner.

The Ministry of Highways received a freedom of information request for documents about the sale of land to CP [Canadian Pacific], CP Rail at the GTH. The government refused to release the records. The Privacy Commissioner was asked to intervene and our office asked Highways to see the documents too. Twice the Sask Party refused to release the documents. Twice the Privacy Commissioner called on the government to do so. Twice the Sask Party refused to do so again. To the Deputy Premier: why won't the Sask Party release those documents today? What are they hiding? And why won't they be straight with Saskatchewan people?

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Of course on this side of the House, we co-operate with the Privacy Commissioner and work with the commissioner on moving forward with those documents, as we co-operated with the Provincial Auditor, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the GTH. We asked the auditor to look into the matter, as did the Public Accounts Committee, Mr. Speaker. And the auditor had full authority to look into all aspects of the transaction. She did so. She did a very thorough job of looking into the matter by her own testimony to the Public Accounts Committee.

She made 10 recommendations, Mr. Speaker, eight for the

Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure, two for the Global Transportation Hub. We are implementing or have implemented all 10 of those recommendations, Mr. Speaker, and accept those recommendations.

The Provincial Auditor also stated at the conclusion, after her report was issued publicly that, I quote . . . These are the words of the Provincial Auditor, Mr. Speaker, an exact quote from the Provincial Auditor:

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

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Government's Fiscal Management

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, how pathetic and how weak. The question was to the Deputy Premier of Saskatchewan. Instead we have the minister get up and puppet the same lines that are discredited day after day, that have been discredited by the auditor, making a mockery of accountability, and just showing how out of touch they are, Mr. Speaker, with Saskatchewan people.

You know, they refuse to accept any responsibility on front after front for any of their mismanagement, their scandal, or their waste; for their cuts that hurt families and target our kids; or for their billion-dollar tax grab that takes over \$440 out of the average family's pockets this year alone. On top of that, they've introduced job-killing taxes on our small businesses and on those that literally build Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday over and over again, when asked about their cuts and their hikes, members opposite came back with the weakest of answers, responses like, oh well, two other provinces are that bad, too; oh, these other provinces don't have that program; oh, two decades ago this is how it was. What happened to keeping Saskatchewan strong? Don't they realize these cuts and these tax hikes are doing nothing to strengthen Saskatchewan, but everything to weaken us?

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

Hon. Mr. Doherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we've heard over and over again from the Leader of the Opposition that they don't like the tax package, that we are moving from taxing income and productivity in this province to consumption taxes. Even coming from a party, Mr. Speaker, that has several members in here that were still in the former government, and just as recently, those 10 years ago under premier Calvert, that raised taxes 21 times in this province, Mr. Speaker — raised taxes 21 times in this province.

With the changes we've made in this budget, Mr. Speaker, and budgets prior to this, we as the government have taken 112,000 low-income people off the provincial tax rolls altogether in this

province, something the NDP never saw fit to do in 16 years in office, Mr. Speaker.

Even with the expansion of our PST [provincial sales tax] base and an increase from 5 to 6 per cent . . . not as high as 9 per cent when you were in government, to the member from Saskatoon Centre, 9 per cent PST when you were in government, 9 per cent. Even with, Mr. Speaker, even with the changes, in 2007 under the NDP a person with \$40,000 income paid \$3,688 in combined provincial income tax and PST, Mr. Speaker. This year, with the changes to our tax plan, this year with the changes to our tax plan, that same individual making \$40,000 income will pay \$2,939, Mr. Speaker — down 20 per cent from 10 years ago. They're paying 20 per cent less in combined provincial income tax and provincial sales tax in this province today, Mr. Speaker.

Yes it is a major shift. I acknowledge that. But we're going to get this budget back to balance in three years time, Mr. Speaker.

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

Support for Municipalities

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, quite the response from the Finance minister, that not only couldn't manage, but couldn't keep his word to Saskatchewan people. You know, we've been hearing from people all across our province, Saskatchewan businesses. We've been hearing from our mayors and our councils and common-sense leaders, and in city after city, town after town, mayors and community leaders are telling us that they feel blindsided and ambushed by the downloading from that government.

The cuts to the grants-in-lieu were done without consultation. Not even the decency of a heads-up, Mr. Speaker. Many cities and towns of course already completed their budget, but now they're back to the drawing board because of these cuts, Mr. Speaker. They're being forced to put programming on the chopping block, infrastructure on the chopping block, and jobs on the chopping block. And they're being forced to jack up property taxes in an unfair way, Mr. Speaker. One mayor, one mayor told me that it was like, it was like having one foot stomped on and the other one having a brick dropped upon it, Mr. Speaker.

Community leaders are upset. Their constituents are speaking out and so are they. Why won't the Deputy Premier and the Sask Party listen to Saskatchewan people?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt this is a difficult budget and there is no doubt that we've asked our municipal partners to look for efficiencies to help with this budget as well, Mr. Speaker. There has been no sector that we have supported more than the municipalities. We have increased revenue sharing year over year over year. It is a predictable formula, which is something they had asked for when the previous members were in government and didn't receive.

But I would like to know, Mr. Speaker . . . because we all know that the resource revenue is down \$1.2 billion. That's not a secret, Mr. Speaker. I'm looking at the budget. The members opposite have had this budget for some time now. Where would they make the cut? Where would they find \$36 million? Would it be in education? Would it be in health? We have not heard one suggestion coming from the members opposite. We've heard criticism after criticism after criticism, but where would they find it? We've asked our municipal partners for just 3 per cent of what we're short, after years of giving them increases.

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, maybe the minister should stop listening to whoever is writing her talking points and start listening to the leaders in our cities and our towns. These mayors don't want special . . .

[Interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: — We might want to hear the question and we also would like to hear the answer, so I would just ask all members to respect the member that has the floor. I recognize the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

Ms. Rancourt: — These mayors don't want special treatment, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They want the province to make good on their commitments and they want them to stop downloading Sask Party problems on their backs. Mr. Deputy Speaker, these cities and towns need predictability and funding to take care of the people of this province, and all the minister can come up with, with an excuse, is a list of town names that she should be treating better.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if this was all about fairness, why did the Sask Party not run this on their last campaign? Why did they not run on it in the by-election last month? And, Mr. Speaker, why weren't they straight with the leadership of our cities and our towns before they made this cut?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and just for those that are watching, the document that I have is the budget document. That was the one that I referred that maybe the members opposite should take a look at and read, and see what cuts they would like to have in this document.

Mr. Speaker, it's interesting when she comments on downloading because I don't believe increasing revenue sharing each and every year for every budget, which is predictable — it's a predictable formula, Mr. Speaker — is downloading. The cities of Saskatoon and Regina alone are seeing two and a half times more than they did under the previous government.

Mr. Speaker, record infrastructure spending in this province is somewhat but not entirely through shared programs with our municipalities. We have invested more money in infrastructure than the previous government, record spending in infrastructure. But not just shared programs, Mr. Speaker. There's been stand-alone programs in all of our cities, Mr. Speaker. I don't

see that as downloading.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps the member opposite should take a look at her reading notes and maybe modify it. And the member opposite is beaking away, saying, talk to your mayors; maybe you should talk to your mayors. She knows perfectly well we have met with the mayors.

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, municipalities are getting hit from all directions because of the Sask Party's downloading. Mayors and councillors are speaking out, and not just about the cuts. They're also frustrated by the lack of economic investment that they are seeing in their communities. Times are tough, but the Sask Party is only making it worse.

Forestry has been an incredibly important industry to Prince Albert, and there is talk of reopening the Prince Albert mill. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with power bills continuing to skyrocket under the Sask Party, that looks a lot less likely to happen. And last year, the Meadow Lake mill warned about job losses with the Sask Party's ever-increasing power rates. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the people of Meadow Lake and the people of Prince Albert can't afford to lose any more jobs. Can the minister show me what is in this budget that will help get these mills and jobs back?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and you'll have to forgive me. I don't have the detailed list for each and every city, but I can say how hard done by Saskatoon and Regina has been. Along with around . . .

[Interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: — The opposition member asked a question. The opposition members may want to listen to the minister's answer. I recognize the minister.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, but I would just like to bring to the member opposite's attention, just in housing alone all across our entire province, we have invested now \$714 million. In the city of Saskatoon, the children's hospital, 235 million; two bridges, Mr. Speaker, 147 million; in capital expenditures at our U of S, 500 million; K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] schools in Saskatoon, 355 million; Shaw Centre, 7.3 million; Remai Art Gallery, 4.1 million; Gordie Howe Complex, 1.5 million.

[14:30]

In the city of Regina, let's talk about the Mosaic Stadium, 80 million; capital at the U of R, 60 million; K to 12 schools, 222 million; IPSCO Place renovations, Co-operators Centre, Brandt Centre, 22.5 million; the Lewvan highway exchange, 18 million; Regina bypass, \$1.8 billion. There's been \$158 billion of private and government investment for growth in this province, and it's a record that I don't think is downloading.

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

Management of Provincial Economy

Ms. Sproule: — It's strange, Mr. Speaker; we ask a question about the economy and forestry and we get a minister reading again from her speaking notes. You know what, Mr. Speaker, let's talk about finance. The Finance minister talks all the time about the need to diversify the economy, but besides hiking taxes on families by a billion dollars, adding over \$440 to the average family's bills, they have no plan for diversifying at all.

They say that they want 50 per cent renewable energy by 2030 but, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where's the plan? They say they support pulp and paper, but besides the promises they make every election, where's the plan? The budget is supposed to be the plan, but besides a list of cuts to the very programs we need to build for the future, where is the plan? A 1 per cent cut to the corporate tax rate will cost Saskatchewan \$60 million a year, but attract exactly zero new companies.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, does the Finance minister have a plan to diversify the economy and just doesn't want to show it?

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well of course, Mr. Speaker, one of the objectives of this government, and successfully attained, has been the diversification of this economy far beyond how it was diversified under their government.

Just today, later today, Mr. Speaker, I'll be moving second reading of the patent box legislation, the very first patent box program, and they're dismissing it, Mr. Speaker. Dismissing it — that's exactly what the NDP [New Democratic Party] do over there. They have no plan. They have no alternatives. They have no suggestions.

So we're introducing the patent box later today, Mr. Speaker. We have a manufacturers and processing tax decrease and change that's going to make us the most competitive jurisdiction in Canada.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, one of the most, most successful ways of diversifying an economy historically, and it has been shown over history, has been to open new markets, has been to open new markets. And how do you open new markets, Mr. Speaker? Through trade agreements. Every single trade agreement brought to the floor of this Assembly, whether it be the New West Partnership, whether it be the Canada free trade agreement which we will be signing later this week, which they oppose, Mr. Speaker; the Canada free trade agreement, which they oppose; the Canada-Europe trade agreement, which they oppose; the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which they oppose. As far as I know, Mr. Speaker, the free trade agreement with the United States, it's still their position that they oppose the free trade agreement with the United States.

This is a party opposed to trade. That's how you open new markets, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, for a wee second there, I was hopeful that maybe the Economy minister could share the plan that the Finance minister isn't able to share. But no, instead we get empty rhetoric and bluster. And with that we see that the Sask Party has been using that — empty rhetoric and bluster — to justify every bit of their mismanagement, scandal, and waste. And it's now they've dragged this province into the financial mess that they now refuse to accept responsibility for.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in October of 2014, oil prices started to drop, and the writing was on the wall then, but the Sask Party ignored the signs. Why? Well, a more cynical person might say that the upcoming election just might have had something to do with it. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they put Sask Party politics ahead of Saskatchewan people.

In 2016, they knew they needed to change the course, but instead of being straight with Saskatchewan people before the election they hid the budget and they hid the facts, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

How can the minister stand there now and act like the deficit — the \$18 billion debt, the cuts, the tax hikes, the sell-offs — how can he not accept that all of that does not sit squarely on his shoulders?

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — We're talking about an economic plan, Mr. Speaker. I talked about some of the initiatives that we're taking.

What do we know about their positions? They're opposed to trade agreements. We know that — all trade agreements. They haven't supported one of them, Mr. Speaker. We know they support the Leap Manifesto.

Their next leader, their next leader actually has the courage of his convictions. He's actually been probably the only one, the member from Meewasin, probably the only one, their next leader, to put some economic policy on the table. It's not popular. It's not going to be good for the economy, but we know what it is, Mr. Speaker.

We know he supports the carbon tax. He's been very, very clear about that. He supports Justin Trudeau's carbon tax. We don't, Mr. Speaker. We know he wants to shut down the coal industry, Mr. Speaker. On this side of the House, we don't. But at least he has the courage to be honest about it, Mr. Speaker.

We know that he's sympathetic towards the Leap Manifesto — that's been made clear — as is from the member who asked that question, Mr. Speaker. We know she supports the Leap Manifesto as well. On this side of the House, we don't.

Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to pursue economic policies that are going to create growth, not the policies on that side of the House that will damage and destroy this economy.

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

Funding for Libraries and Education

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, a total lack of responsibility and credibility. They're acting like the cuts that they made on their spreadsheets are not the same ones hurting our kids. They know better than that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and so do the people of Saskatchewan. They are the ones who slashed funding to our public libraries. They're the ones who forced libraries to make deep cuts, and they're the ones who said that everything is on the table. And now that minister wants to lecture libraries about the interlibrary loans. Give me a break.

On top of everything else, they're trying to scrap STC. And now maybe the minister missed this while he was slashing funding to our families, our seniors, and our kids, but the loan system relied on STC. Mr. Deputy Speaker, while the Sask Party were gutting and slashing funding, what did they think was going to happen? Did they really think that no one would notice or that no one cares?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for the question. It's an interesting question because it talks about how we move books around the province. It talks about using STC. But over the last number of years, any number of routes for STC have been cut. Ask the member opposite what's happening in those ones. Other couriers have sprung up in place.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we started looking around at options to make our libraries more vibrant, make them vital, and make them more sustainable, do you know what we found out? Canada Post has got a book rate: \$1 a book. Ship it right to the individual patron. Mr. Speaker, it's not for us to tell libraries how to operate, but it is for us to say to them, you find some efficiencies. We'd like to work with you and have some officials work with you to find those things.

And it's not right for the members opposite to say this is something that can't work, won't work. That's been the history of the members opposite. We're not like that. We look for solutions. We look for economies. We look for sustainability on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I cannot wait for the library folks to hear that answer. Mr. Deputy Speaker, these are Sask Party cuts and so are the cuts to our kids' classrooms. The Sask Party has eliminated school boards' ability to raise money, so the minister got the school boards up against the wall and now he's acting like the cuts that are happening aren't his fault. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the minister knows better than that and he should admit it.

Regina Public has announced that pre-kindergarten programs will be cut for kids with autism, hearing problems, and kids who have experienced, and I'm quoting, "profound trauma and

neglect.” Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Sask Party are making our most vulnerable kids pay for their mismanagement, scandal, and waste. And we keep hearing about core services, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Premier once said there was especially a role for government when it comes to those who are most vulnerable. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can’t think of anyone more vulnerable than these kids. What happened, Mr. Speaker? Why are the Sask Party targeting our kids?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, since 2008 the government has made a significant investment in pre-K [pre-kindergarten]. We’ve more than doubled the programs from 155 — this is in Regina — 2,480 spaces, to 316, which is 5,056 spaces. Each program has 16 spaces. Mr. Speaker, I can tell you as well, Regina Public has 41 pre-K programs, total cost of 2.577 million. Twenty-three of those programs were created since 2007-2008.

Mr. Speaker, we’ve increased Regina Public funding since ’07-08 by 40 per cent. There’s been an enrolment growth during that period of time of 10 per cent.

Regina Public provides some great services for their students. Mr. Speaker, they’re phasing out programs that are not funded by the provincial government. We intend to have some discussion with them. Those are programs that they’ve chosen to fund and created on their own. We’re not saying they’re good programs or bad programs. What we are saying is we want to look at them and see how they dovetail and fit in with the other things that we’re doing. And, Mr. Speaker, those discussions are ongoing.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are a lot of people that I hope are listening to these answers today. That is completely unacceptable. And I honestly have to ask: how can the minister stand in his place and give those so-called answers?

He sat as the Chair of the public school board, and he knows how this works. Thanks to Sask Party cuts, kindergarten kids who live up to a full kilometre away from their school will have to walk to school. The minister may tell us not to worry though because, as it stands today, after decisions in this budget they will only have to walk to school every second day because kindergarten has been cancelled on every other day.

And, Mr. Speaker, the Catholic school board in Regina says that they are contemplating 68 cuts that they’ve been forced to consider because of this shortfall. Mr. Deputy Speaker, why is this minister ignoring calls from across the province to reverse the cuts to our libraries and to our classrooms, and how can he stand there and stand behind these cuts to our kids?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday I made reference to certain communities in the province that don’t have a school anymore. There’s 176 of those schools that don’t exist because of the members opposite. I think I got as far yesterday as

Windthorst, Lintlaw, Endeavour, Pleasantdale, Denzil, Sonningdale, Centennial Park in North Battleford, Alida, Gainsborough, Willowbrook, St. James, Dore Lake, St. John’s School in Estevan, Benson School in Benson, Margaret Mcclumb in Semans, Simpson School, Radisson. Mr. Speaker, the list goes on and on and on of schools that have been closed, people that have moved to Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, we’re not taking lessons from those people. We’re working with our school divisions. We’re working with our libraries. We value the citizens of our province and we value the children of our province, and the people over there have no, no right to make any comments or any ... [inaudible] ... whatsoever because these are people that have demonstrated how utterly incompetent they are.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 63 — *The Education Amendment Act, 2017/Loi modificative de 2017 sur l’éducation*

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier and Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 63, *The Education Amendment Act*, be now introduced and read a first time.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the Deputy Premier and Minister of Education that Bill No. 63 be now introduced and read for a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — First reading of this bill.

The Deputy Speaker: — When shall the bill be read a second time? I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 64 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes (SaskPower and SaskEnergy) Amendment Act, 2017*

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 64, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (SaskPower and SaskEnergy) Amendment Act, 2017* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Deputy Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Government Relations that Bill No. 64, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (SaskPower and SaskEnergy) Amendment Act, 2017* be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

[14:45]

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — First reading of this bill.

The Deputy Speaker: — When shall the bill be read again?

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Next sitting of the House.

The Deputy Speaker: — Next sitting.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Chair of Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice

Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice to report Bill No. 47, *An Act to Reduce Salaries of Members of the Legislative Assembly, 2017*, a bilingual bill without amendment.

The Deputy Speaker: — When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole on Bills? I recognize the Minister of the Economy.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and that the bill be now read the third time.

The Deputy Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 47 and that the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Deputy Speaker: — Leave is not granted. When will this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister of the Economy.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Later this day.

The Deputy Speaker: — Later this day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

Clerk: — Committee of the Whole.

The Deputy Speaker: — Committee of the Whole. I now leave the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ON BILLS

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*

Clause 1

The Acting Chair (Mr. D'Autremont): — Order. Committee of the Whole will come into order. Before us today is Bill No. 47, *An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly Act, 2007*. Clause 1, short title.

If we vote this off, then there are only questions on the specific clauses. So clause 1. I recognize the member . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Does the minister want to give a statement as well . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Okay, well you can do it in your response to his. Okay, I recognize the member for Saskatoon Centre.

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. And this is a very important process that we're taking today because it is an important piece of legislation that we have here before us, Bill 47. It's one that is unique and different — we've not seen this kind of legislation in Saskatchewan in my memory — because it deals with a kind of an issue that should have been dealt with at the Board of Internal Economy. And I just want to introduce a few brief comments, and then we can go to clause by clause. And we have some amendments for clause by clause.

But as I said, with this bill we can, and we have said in the media, we can live with the 3.5 per cent cut. We understand and we respect the government's right as the majority party in the House to do that as they manage the affairs of the province, and so we respect that.

But we have deep, deep, grave concerns that this is a flagrant attack on the caucus grants, both on the government side but particularly on the opposition's side, because it interferes with our work to do the job of opposition here in Saskatchewan, which is very, very important, particularly in the matters that we're dealing in the House, in question period, and we'll be dealing with in estimates, and a significant budget that's cutting so many needed programs in Saskatchewan and raising taxes and cutting programs. And so this is very, very important.

I don't want to make a long speech, but I do want to cover some key points. And I just want to read a brief quote into the record from last night, and it's about *The Opposition in a Parliamentary System*, a quote from Gerald Schmitz, December 1988. And it talks about the:

. . . principle means that government must rest on the consent of the governed — which means, *inter alia*, that the minority accepts the right of the majority to make decisions, provided that there is a reciprocal respect for the minority's right to dissent from these decisions and to promote alternative policies.

And, Mr. Chair, that's what we have been raising, our concern with the process since March 8th when we boycotted the Board of Internal Economy meeting with the rush to get a 3.5 per cent cut to the MLAs. We had already met twice before, once in

December and once in January, to deal with wage issues, where we accepted a freeze that was presented by this government. And then we saw a further request. And the typical process for the board to work on is for informal conversations to happen between both sides of the House, so that when we do meet in the committee, there are no surprises and we can all be on board and we can try to reach that common ground.

So, Mr. Chair, I just want to state the four key points, concerns, issues that we want to raise, and make sure that they're highlighted.

First, this bill overreaches and it punishes the opposition, which is a key component to the democratic government as we know it and we respect it in Saskatchewan. We have never seen such a point where this punitive action of imposing a 10 per cent cut on caucus grants has ever been done before. We accept the 3.5 wage cut. We understand that. We understand that. But we don't, we cannot condone and we can't sit silently by while this government, with this kind of majority, imposes a 10 per cent cut to silence opposition in Saskatchewan.

Second, Mr. Chair, is this bill underachieves and is a severe disappointment because it does not hold cabinet accountable for the mess that we are in. They would lead us to believe that this is all about natural resources, a collapse in natural resources. Now we understand what's happening in Saskatchewan, but this is a cabinet that for the past 10 years have made the decisions that they have made, and eight of our best years, eight of our best years, failed to provide for those years when most people who've been in this province understand that the price of natural resources would go down. So it underachieves. It does not hold the cabinet to account. We're asking for a 20 per cent cut on their bonuses, and that's what should happen.

Mr. Chair, we heard, in fact we heard today, we heard today that we offer no solutions. We offer no solutions. That is absolutely not true. That's absolutely not true. We say, let's take a look at this House because we are over-governed. We have five too many MLAs in this House.

Now those folks over there, they cranked it up by three, did not campaign on that in 2011. All of a sudden we came back from the 2000 election. They said they wanted three more MLAs. We are the most over-governed province in Canada. We look to our neighbours in Manitoba. They represent 22,000. Here it's 16,000. Alberta is 45,000 and BC is 65,000 people. We have to do something. This is a sustainable initiative that would help us address the issue of making some solutions that they're trying to reach.

And, Mr. Chair, I do want to say that, and this is the fourth and final point, that it's a sad situation for the Board of Internal Economy that gets to solutions because of mutual respect that we have between both sides, and that has gone off the rails because this government has acted in haste and has failed to consult with the opposition. And we've actually had a good record of working together. We've hired four officers of the legislature. We've done that well. And we have changed some of the standing orders. We've worked on that. We've changed directives. We've worked on that. All of that has been productive, but we have gone off the rails and we really need to work to restore that relationship. So, Mr. Speaker, we see this

happening in Ottawa right now. In fact the Conservatives, I understand, call it political thuggery that's happening by the Liberals.

But, Mr. Chair, those are my opening comments. I will have amendments to the clauses as we go through that. And with that, I'll take my chair.

The Acting Chair (Mr. D'Autremont): — I recognize the Minister of the Economy.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and I'd like to thank the member opposite for his submissions. I think, you know, members who were either watching or attending the discussion at Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice Committee last night would have seen, I think, a productive and for the most part thoughtful, coherent discussion around the matter. And I thank the member for reiterating some of the remarks he made last night, and I'm going to reiterate some of the remarks I had made as well in turn.

And I would agree with the member that it's very unfortunate that we are here in the Chamber having a debate at committee stage, which is very unusual in this House. This is I think only the second occurrence I can think of in the years I've been here, and I think only the second occurrence, since we changed the way legislation flows through the House, that this has occurred on.

And this is a matter that is properly and should be before the Board of Internal Economy. We wanted to deal with the matter at the Board of Internal Economy. It very much would have been my preference to have the matter dealt with at the Board of Internal Economy, but the opposition didn't show up at the Board of Internal Economy.

[15:00]

And the way the board is structured, the member pointed out rightly last night, which is correct, that the board is structured on a kind of two, two, and two basis. Two members of executive . . . or appointed by Executive Council, two members of the government not a member of Executive Council, and two members of the opposition. If any two members don't show up at the board, the board can't conduct its business. And the board is a creature of statute, not a parliamentary committee so subject to different rules of statute. So it's a unique entity.

So it's unfortunate that we're here. And I think it's, as a precedent, I think it's unfortunate for the institution that we would be here. And I know the member cares, cares a great deal about the institution. I do as well, Mr. Speaker, and I know . . . Or Mr. Chair. And I know that you very much do as well, and it is unfortunate that we're here.

I'm going to address the substance of the member's argument with respect to the reduction matter, then I want to talk a bit about the role of opposition, which . . . I've been in opposition; I understand the role — not as long as the member opposite has been and will be. But that being said, it's a significant and important role.

As for the substance, I think the argument the member's making

is that Executive Council . . . or executive government should bear a larger or a large portion of a reduction. And this bill, which is a very simple bill — it's three clauses; we'll go through it soon — reduces the salaries of members of the Assembly by 3.5 per cent, and it reduces the political offices of both government and opposition, which are taxpayer-funded offices, by 10 per cent each. So about \$130,000 for the government side, and I believe a little over \$60,000 for the opposition side.

So in terms of reduction though, I want to just point to some facts with regard to executive government, and make a comparison to the last full year of the NDP government, which was '06-07, compared to the last year of this government, a Saskatchewan Party government.

The number of out-of-province trips in '06-07, NDP was 131. In the last fiscal year the number of out-of-province trips for us was 44, down 66 per cent . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well I mean the members are heckling, Mr. Speaker. We gave the member opposite the right to put forward his arguments without interruption, and I would hope the Opposition House Leader would reciprocate as well, as we're having a substantive debate.

The cost of out-of-province travel in '06-07 for the members opposite was \$264,000; for us last year it was \$75,000, 72 per cent less, reduction. The total for in- and out-of-province travel, the aggregate total for the NDP '06-07 was \$975,000; for us, \$344,000, down 65 per cent.

Executive air usage: their last year in government, '06-07, \$509,000; '16-17 for us, \$104,000, down 79.4 per cent. In addition to that, we announced that we will be discontinuing executive air and selling the aircraft, winding down the airline. The trip usage is down very, very significantly.

I also would point to the cost of Executive Council, executive government, and ministers' offices from our government versus the last full year of the NDP government. Monthly salaries down 30 per cent from the last year of NDP government, \$365,000 lower per month — per month. Four million dollars per year. Very significant, Mr. Speaker. Twenty-five less staff in Executive Council under this side of the House than under that side of the House. Twenty-seven fewer staff in ministers' office on this side of the House versus when members opposite were in the House. So very significant reductions, far, far in excess.

And I understand the political imperatives for members opposite putting forward the arguments that they are. But substantively the political costs of government, which is I think what they are getting at, and the political costs of Executive Council, which I think is what they are getting at, are down massively from what they were under the NDP.

And you know, with respect to the argument advanced by the member opposite with respect to the role of the opposition, I would take the argument seriously and I do take the argument seriously. I think the argument is overwrought — that a \$64,000 reduction in a caucus office, political office taxpayer stipend would have as detrimental an impact on their ability to oppose.

In past years we know, we know budgets for the party, the

political offices, have been significantly less. We know that there was a 25 per cent reduction to caucus office budgets in the early '90s proposed and instituted by the members opposite. But we also know, we also know the history of the development of our parliamentary system. Everybody knows of the, you know, Magna Carta obviously, which . . . What all of these things led to was the Bill of Rights and the *Act of Settlement*. And these are kind of the cornerstones of the British constitution which, you know, consisted of parliament . . . You know, there were party groupings-ish at that point in Westminster, Mr. Speaker, but the biggest party grouping was largely parliament versus the Crown and parliament asserting its rights and privileges versus the Crown, at which point it was very dangerous to do so.

And you know, I pointed out yesterday, we still have vestigial sort of traits with respect to that and practices in this Assembly, the Speaker being dragged up against his will to the front of the room being one of them, when newly elected. That's because Speakers used to actually be, you know, regularly executed by the Crown for asserting the rights of parliament versus the Crown. And it was a very dangerous thing to be in opposition to the Crown, but there were very brave parliamentarians throughout the course of the development of the Westminster system that asserted that authority of parliament.

And it was largely traded by the Crown when the Crown needed money, when the Crown largely needed money to wage wars was the main reason. And parliament would assert its authority and say, in order for us to grant you certain taxation revenue, you're going to have to give us some additional money. And that kind of culminated . . . And there were a number of important points along the way in the development of parliament, but I think the Bill of Rights in 1689, in the immediate aftermath of the Glorious Revolution in 1688, would be the kind of seminal constitutional document in the Westminster system.

And people hear Bill of Rights and they assume, well that means the rights of individuals and subjects, and that's not actually the case. The Bill of Rights is about the rights of parliament versus the Crown. And the Bill of Rights entailed free elections and required there to be freedom of speech in parliament on all these matters. So I don't take this lightly in terms of the argument the member makes of the importance of an opposition in a parliamentary system.

I would say, having spent some time in Ottawa, that our legislature is a model of how a Westminster parliament should work vis-à-vis Ottawa where you have, you know, the motion 6 that the government introduced last year, which was a genuine travesty. And if Harper, the former Prime Minister Harper had ever introduced something even approaching that, I could only imagine the newspaper headlines and editorials about it. But somehow they more or less got away with introducing it. They ended up rescinding it. It was a motion of the House, which was a good thing. They've tried to do the same, a similar thing with a report issued which was debated last week in the procedure and house affairs committee, filibustered successfully for now by the official opposition in Ottawa along with members of the member's party in Ottawa also.

So all this to say that I don't take the argument he makes lightly

with respect to the role of opposition. And my colleagues have heard from me as well when we have discussions around these things that, you know, one day we're going to be in opposition as well, and the rights and authorities of the institution and the opposition within the institution are something we need to keep in mind when going through standing order revisions or directive changes with things of this nature. So I don't take it lightly. I would contend that the arguments advanced with respect to the impacts of a reduction of 10 per cent in the caucus office, political office budget are overwrought. And for that reason, I won't be supporting and the government won't be supporting amendments in that regard. And we will be supporting the bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Chair (Mr. D'Autremont): — Okay, if there are no further questions, short title, clause 1, is that approved?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Acting Chair (Mr. D'Autremont): — Carried.

[Clause 1 agreed to.]

Clause 2

The Acting Chair (Mr. D'Autremont): — Clause 2. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Centre.

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I have an amendment that I would present to the table. Okay, I would . . . I'll read my motion . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Okay. Well I won't talk long but I do have . . . This is regarding section 46.1(c), and this is the removal, striking out the line where the funding to each caucus pursuant to clause 54(a) is reduced by 10 per cent.

We've talked about this in the House. We've had committee. But I do want to move this motion. So I move clause 2 of the printed bill to be amended:

Amend Clause 2 of the Printed Bill by striking out 46.1(c) as being enacted by Clause 2 of the Printed Bill.

And I've signed it today. And I also will present a French version as well.

The Acting Chair (Mr. D'Autremont): — The member for Saskatoon Centre has moved:

That Clause 2 be amended of the Printed Bill by striking out 46.1(c), as being enacted by Clause 2 of the Printed Bill.

Is the committee ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Acting Chair (Mr. D'Autremont): — Is the amendment approved?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Acting Chair (Mr. D'Autremont): — The amendment fails. Call in the members.

[The division bells rang from 15:12 until 15:16.]

The Acting Chair (Mr. D'Autremont): — All those in favour please rise.

[Yeas — 10]

Wotherspoon	Vermette	Chartier
Belanger	Sroule	Forbes
Rancourt	Beck	McCall
Sarauer		

The Acting Chair (Mr. D'Autremont): — All those opposed please rise.

[Nays — 43]

Moe	Stewart	Wyant
Reiter	Morgan	Harpauer
Doherty	Duncan	Beaudry-Mellor
Hargrave	Heppner	Boyd
Marit	Tell	Eyre
Merriman	Harrison	Ross
Weekes	Brkich	Kirsch
Bradshaw	Steinley	Makowsky
Phillips	Lawrence	Wilson
Campeau	Docherty	Michelson
Doke	Cox	

The Acting Chair (Mr. D'Autremont): — Order.

Olauson	Steele	Young
Fiaz	Dennis	McMorris
Carr	Nerlien	Lambert
Buckingham	Kaeding	

Principal Clerk: — Mr. Chair, those in favour of the motion, 10; those opposed, 43.

The Acting Chair (Mr. D'Autremont): — I declare the motion lost. I recognize the member for Saskatoon Centre.

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I have one more amendment for clause 2. This amendment deals with the suggestion we had, the belief that we have that the cabinet members who have created the situation, the mess that we find ourselves in, should have some penalty on their bonus that they receive — that in fact they're asking others throughout the province to shoulder a much harder, a much bigger part of the solution than they are. We think that they should accept a 20 per cent cut in their bonus. And so I'd like to read the amendment:

Clause 2 of the Printed Bill

Amend Clause 2 of the Printed Bill, by adding the following after proposed section 46.1:

Maximum payments — Members of Executive Council

46.2(1) Notwithstanding any other Act, law, or Order-in-Council, any member who is also a member of

executive council is not entitled to and must not receive more than \$39,175 in annual salary funded from the General Revenue Fund.

(2) Any amount that exceeds the maximum set out in subsection (1) is a debt due to the Crown and may be recovered pursuant to *The Financial Administration Act, 1993*.

I have dated this today and I have signed, and I have a French version. I do so present.

The Acting Chair (Mr. D'Autremont): — The member for Saskatoon Centre has presented an amendment to clause 2. Will you take the amendment as read?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Acting Chair (Mr. D'Autremont): — Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Acting Chair (Mr. D'Autremont): — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Acting Chair (Mr. D'Autremont): — The nos have it. I recognize the members . . . Call in the members.

[The division bells rang from 15:21 until 15:22.]

The Acting Chair (Mr. D'Autremont): — All those in favour please rise.

[Yeas — 10]

Wotherspoon	Vermette	Chartier
Belanger	Sproule	Forbes
Rancourt	Beck	McCall
Sarauer		

The Acting Chair (Mr. D'Autremont): — All those opposed please rise.

[Nays — 43]

Moe	Stewart	Wyant
Reiter	Morgan	Harpauer
Doherty	Duncan	Beaudry-Mellor
Hargrave	Heppner	Boyd
Marit	Tell	Eyre
Merriman	Harrison	Ross
Weekes	Brkich	Kirsch
Bradshaw	Steinley	Makowsky
Phillips	Lawrence	Wilson
Campeau	Docherty	Michelson
Doke	Cox	Olauson
Steele	Young	Fiaz
Dennis	McMorris	Carr

Nerlien	Lambert	Buckingham
Kaeding		

Principal Clerk: — Mr. Chair, those in favour of the motion, 10; those opposed, 43.

The Acting Chair (Mr. D'Autremont): — I declare the motion lost.

Clause 2, is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Acting Chair (Mr. D'Autremont): — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to agree?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Acting Chair (Mr. D'Autremont): — Carried.

[Clause 2 agreed to.]

[Clause 3 agreed to.]

The Acting Chair (Mr. D'Autremont): — By Her Majesty, and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows: Bill No. 47, *An Act to Reduce Salaries of Members of the Legislative Assembly, 2017* . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . That's a statement. I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill 47 be reported without amendment.

The Acting Chair (Mr. D'Autremont): — It has been moved by the committee that the committee report Bill No. 47 without amendment. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Acting Chair (Mr. D'Autremont): — Carried. Mr. House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Chair. I move that the committee rise, report progress back to the Chair.

The Acting Chair (Mr. D'Autremont): — It has been moved by the Government House Leader that the committee rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Acting Chair (Mr. D'Autremont): — Carried.

[The Deputy Speaker resumed the Chair.]

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cannington.

Mr. D'Autremont: — I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice to report Bill No. 47, *An Act to Reduce Salaries of Members of the Legislative Assembly, 2017*, a bilingual bill, without

amendment, and ask that the committee . . . I've been instructed the committee rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Cannington has reported Bill No. 47, *An Act to Reduce Salaries of Members of the Legislative Assembly, 2017*, without amendment. The minister may move third reading. I recognize the Minister of the Economy.

THIRD 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*

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I move that the bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

[15:30]

The Deputy Speaker: — The minister has moved that Bill No. 37, *An Act to Reduce the Salaries of Members of the Legislative Assembly, 2017* be now read a third time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Deputy Speaker: — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. On division.

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 61 — *The Saskatchewan Commercial Innovation Incentive (Patent Box) Act*

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise again today to speak on second reading of the Saskatchewan commercial innovation incentive bill. This new growth tax incentive will offer eligible corporations a reduction of the provincial corporate income tax rate. The reduction would be to a rate of 6 per cent on qualifying income for a period of 10 years. To be eligible for this incentive, corporations will need to have qualifying intellectual property that is commercially developed in Saskatchewan.

Eligible corporations will be able to extend the benefit period to 15 years if the majority of the related research and development has been conducted in our province. To ensure this new incentive is available to as many innovation sectors as possible, it will cover various types of intellectual property including patents, plant breeders' rights, trade secrets, and copyrighting areas such as computer programs and algorithms.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan commercial innovation incentive will make Saskatchewan the first jurisdiction in North America to offer a broadly defined intellectual property commercialization program. Qualification will be determined based on criteria outlined in the incentive's established scientific and economic eligibility tests, and the National Research Council's industrial research assistance program, or IRAP, will be a program partner in assessing the scientific test.

Established in 1962, NRC [National Research Council] IRAP is widely respected for its long record of outstanding outcomes in the area of innovation and commercialization assistance to Canadian companies.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to note that extensive consultations went into the design of this new incentive. A working group was established with members from across the Government of Saskatchewan, including the ministries of Economy and Agriculture as well as Innovation Saskatchewan. The group consulted with innovation-focused companies, industry associations, relevant legal experts, local innovation institutions and organizations as well as small- and medium-sized enterprises across the province.

All of this preparation was necessary to design a program that will improve Saskatchewan's investment climate across all innovation sectors by incentivizing local companies from around the world to bring intellectual property to local, national, and international markets from our province, and promoting increased commercially focused research and development activity in the province.

To apply for the Saskatchewan commercial innovation incentive, a company will need to successfully complete a scientific as well as an economic eligibility test. Application for the scientific eligibility test will be conducted online through the Ministry of the Economy. On successfully completing the test, this company will need to create an eligible corporation solely dedicated to the commercialization of goods, services, or processes directly related to their qualifying intellectual property and related research and development activities.

This will isolate revenues and expenses generated through qualifying intellectual-property-related activities from other corporate income earned through other activities. We found this requirement was necessary to protect the integrity of both the program and our taxation system.

In addition, before an eligible corporate entity is able to claim a tax benefit, they will have to demonstrate new economic growth benefits to our province. These could include the creation of new jobs, significant new capital expenditures, new research and development spending, and new tax revenues. The government will also allow applicants to propose additional new economic benefit benchmarks to the province not captured in the previous benchmarks. This benchmark must be pre-approved by the Minister of the Economy when a company first submits its scientific eligibility application.

Once the economic eligibility test is successfully completed, the corporation can begin to claim its provincial corporate income tax rebate at a time of its choosing. This flexibility to decide when to begin the 10- or 15-year corporate income tax rebate

period is significant for eligible corporations because it will allow them to scale up operations and profitability before they start claiming the rebate.

This new tax incentive is a fulfillment of a promise we made to the people of the province that will position our province as a world-class destination for companies looking to bring new innovations to market, will help diversify and strengthen Saskatchewan's economy, advancing a number of our government's priority listed in the plan for growth. It will also help ensure our province's economic competitiveness, improve and expand our priority sectors by encouraging the introduction of new productivity-enhancing innovations, and create greater opportunities to secure foreign direct investment and entrepreneurial talent attraction.

More importantly, through this incentive, our government is planning for a future where Saskatchewan can continue to lead on the innovation front for the benefit of all Saskatchewan people. Mr. Speaker, I move the second reading of *The Saskatchewan Commercial Innovation Incentive Act*. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of the Economy has moved that Bill No. 61, *The Saskatchewan Commercial Innovation Incentive (Patent Box) Act* be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think what's really important is that as you look through this bill and we can certainly . . . From our perspective as the official opposition, there's no question that we have to make Saskatchewan a very competitive, business-friendly environment.

There's always opportunity for us to showcase the history that the NDP had when it came to economic development strategies, in particular, attracting the oil and gas sector to be able to come to Saskatchewan, establish their businesses here, and certainly create the jobs and the benefits that we've seen for the past 10 years, Mr. Speaker. So we're very proud of our history of making sure that if we diversified the economy, we'd be a very attractive place in which businesses can thrive and certainly exist.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that's really important I think . . . In meeting with a number of very solid corporate partners in the province of Saskatchewan, they always talk about stability, and predictability as well, Mr. Speaker. I think those are really solid hallmark messages from industry itself.

So when you have the added PST on some of the construction industry that's impacted, Mr. Speaker, that is not predictability. That is not stability, as we've seen evidence of the Saskatchewan Party undertaking at this last budget. We see some of the callous cuts and the billion dollars more in taxes that the Saskatchewan Party have placed on the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. So everything from children's clothing to libraries closing to STC closing, Mr. Speaker — these are all things that add to the challenges of trying to keep our economy strong by keeping our families strong and our taxes low and our services superior, Mr. Speaker.

So I think we have a lot of work to do on this particular file. Our caucus is going to be looking at this bill very thoroughly, Mr. Speaker. There's no question that the hurt that's out there in Saskatchewanland is very apparent. We're getting a lot of information. A lot of people are very, very, very angry at this government for the callous cuts that they made most recently, Mr. Speaker. And this is from a government that had a robust economy. They had money in the bank, all of which they inherited, Mr. Speaker. And yet here we are today facing a \$1.3 billion deficit in 2017 alone. And our debt will grow to 23 billion.

These are disincentives, Mr. Speaker, for making the Saskatchewan economy strong. It's all part of the picture, Mr. Speaker. So when we have these bills that are coming forward, there's a number of questions that we ask. And obviously, there's a couple of flags that I want to point out here as well. Number one, the section 9(2), subsection 9(2) gives the minister the authority to override the economic test and grant the permit at the minister's discretion, Mr. Speaker. There's no question that the government shouldn't be in the business of picking winners and losers. We've seen that act from this government way too often, Mr. Speaker.

So there's a lot of things that we have to ascertain as to how this bill will affect the economic plan for the people of Saskatchewan. If there is . . . There's obviously none from the Saskatchewan Party, but overall there is a corporate plan by many of the business communities throughout the province. And they need to know how this will impact their investment and how it'll also affect the neighbourhood, so to speak, when it comes to business development and the people that are driving that change, Mr. Speaker. How does this impact the trade agreements? Is there anything within this bill that violates trade agreements? These are some of the fundamental questions that we have, Mr. Speaker.

But obviously at the outset I would say that our caucus is looking at this bill. We're looking at it very thoroughly. We're going to be networking with different organizations that have most recently been angered by this government's activity around the budget — a \$1.3 billion deficit, a \$1 billion tax grab, and hurting the poor of the poor, Mr. Speaker. And this is something that we've seen evidence of the Saskatchewan Party for this last several years. So we simply do not trust anything that the Saskatchewan Party brings forward.

While we agree diversifying the economy is really important, being a place to attract investments is equally important, Mr. Speaker. But also having a strong, vibrant Crown sector, a good labour force, and a good pool of highly skilled people to drive some of the industry, Mr. Speaker. These are all basic things that we speak about.

So this is something that we're going to obviously be putting through the microscope from the official opposition's perspective, and it's something that we ought to pay attention to as well. So, Mr. Speaker, on that note, I move that we adjourn Bill No. 61, *The Saskatchewan Commercial Innovation Incentive (Patent Box) Act*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 61, *The Saskatchewan*

Commercial Innovation Incentive (Patent Box) Act. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 62 — *The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Amendment Act, 2017*

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to speak on second reading of the amendments to Bill 62, *The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Amendment Act*. These amendments to the Act will allow for the following change: they will reduce the provincial tax credit rate from 20 per cent to 17.5 per cent for the 2018 and subsequent tax years. The *Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Regulations* will also soon be amended to reduce the program cap for pool funds from \$80 million to \$70 million annually and reduce the annual fund cap from \$40 million to \$35 million annually.

The amendments to the Act and regulations will allow for the reduction of the maximum annual foregone revenue from \$16 million to \$12 million, and the reduction of the individual tax credit amount from 1,000 to \$875 annually for individual taxpayers who invest the maximum \$5,000 annually.

In addition to the changes I've listed, the amendments to the Act will transfer the responsibility of issuing tax credits from the Minister of the Economy to SaskWorks Venture Fund Inc. and Golden Opportunities Fund Inc., where they will be issued electronically. These are the only pool funds registered under the program at this time. In the past, the Ministry of the Economy printed and mailed out approximately 25,000 tax credits to investors. However for the 2016 tax year, this service has been contracted out to a third party to assist in cutting costs. This transfer will reduce government expenses. Issuing the electronic tax credits will also save significant printing and mailing costs for the fund issuers and will allow the credits to be delivered sooner to investors.

These amendments have been arrived at from consultation and collaboration between SaskWorks Venture Fund Inc. and Golden Opportunities Fund Inc. Government understands that small- and medium-sized businesses in Saskatchewan have a need for long-term, patient capital and we have provided enough resources to ensure that the labour-sponsored venture capital corporation industry will continue to be available to fund the growth of those businesses. These amendments to the Act will ensure the sustainability and success of these funds into the future while ensuring the province can meet the challenge presented by reduced resource revenues, for the benefit of Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, I now move the second reading of amendments to Bill No. 62, *The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Amendment Act*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of the Economy has

moved that Bill No. 62, *The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Amendment Act, 2017* be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again I'm pleased to stand in my place to give the initial comments around Bill No. 62. Now, Mr. Speaker, this is . . . I'm going to be very succinct in my comments as it relates to not only this particular bill, but Bill 61. On one hand, we have the Government of Saskatchewan proposing *The Saskatchewan Commercial Innovation Incentive (Patent Box) Act*, in which they're able to strategically give credit, tax credits of course, to companies that are doing certain things in certain ways. And as I made reference to earlier that we want to ascertain whether those are good programs through the business contacts that we do enjoy and determine whether that particular program is of value to the people of Saskatchewan.

[15:45]

Now, Mr. Speaker, the very next Act comes along and says, okay well we're going to give a special deal to the larger corporations, and we're going to again evaluate those deals as to whether they are effective or not. But then all of a sudden they bring along Bill 62 which reduces the tax credit given to investors in labour-sponsored capital corporations from 20 per cent to seventeen and a half per cent, Mr. Speaker. So cutting this tax credit for those that want to invest in Saskatchewan-based businesses, Mr. Speaker.

This is what our argument is all the time when it comes to the Saskatchewan Party. We don't believe, we have absolutely no confidence that they know what they're doing because of bills of this sort. You have one Bill 61 that contradicts Bill 62 and really you begin to wonder does anybody know what they're doing on that side when it comes to economic planning, Mr. Speaker. Because on one hand, the left hand doesn't know what the right hand's doing. And this is exactly the contrast that I want to make on Bill 61, where they're giving certain corporations the tax breaks and, on the other hand, on the labour-sponsored venture capital, they're taking away the tax credit, Mr. Speaker, of people that want to invest here in the people of Saskatchewan.

There are 50,000 people that invest in this particular program, Mr. Speaker. We think that this will hurt our economy. We think this will hurt families and, Mr. Speaker, there is no question that even the impacts on the credit union systems that do a lot of investing into our communities and to our businesses, that'll also hurt.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is part of the problem that we see when it comes to the Saskatchewan Party. We simply believe and we strongly believe, and I for one strongly believe that they simply do not know what they are doing. So here we have a helter-skelter approach. On one hand they're giving companies a certain tax break. On the other hand there's Bill 62, alludes to they're reducing the tax credit for investors into Saskatchewan-based businesses, Mr. Speaker.

And here we go again. Confusion reigns in the Saskatchewan Party ranks, Mr. Speaker. And that's why it's important that on

the official opposition's perspective, we take the time. We research. We do the networking. We contact the business groups that know what's going on, and we tell them.

And the most recent example is a billion-dollar tax grab for the Saskatchewan Party that couldn't manage their way out of a wet paper bag, Mr. Speaker. And here we have another example of the confusion between the Minister of Finance and the Minister of the Economy. And, Mr. Speaker, this is the reason why we have absolutely no confidence in their ability to not only diversify our economy, but to strengthen our economy because of the contrasting positions that they have on Bill 61 and Bill 62. So on that note, Mr. Speaker, we have a lot more to say on this bill. There will be a lot more capable people that will express their opinions, and I move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 62.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 62, *The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Amendment Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 48

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Harpauer that **Bill No. 48** — *The Education Property Tax Act* be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to enter into debate on Bill No. 48, *The Education Property Tax Act*. Mr. Deputy Speaker, of course there's a lot that's going on in education right now in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and this Act is but one part of it. But I think, as with all bills before us, it's best that we understand it, not in isolation which causes all sorts of problems, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but that we look at it within a larger context.

So this bill that's before us, in summary, proposes that rather than municipalities collecting education property tax and directing it to school boards, who then would submit it to the Ministry of Education, to the provincial government, that that education property tax would be collected and then directed directly into the General Revenue Fund, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And this isn't the first that we've heard of this proposal. I know last year I remember we did some media, and I know that the SSBA had some things to say about it at that time.

At that point, the president, Connie Bailey, noted that their position has always been that education property tax should be made for education only. We think that our taxpayers in our communities, and those in education would expect that there is transparency on that level. So I think I'll start with her

comments there, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I think that there was some retort that of course that would happen, that those monies would be directed back into education, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I think that there's a lot of reason out there for some skepticism about that.

We see a budget before us right now that proposes to collect an additional \$67 million in education property tax while at the same time pulling \$54 million for the next school year out of the education system, the classroom funding alone. And of course that has had devastating impacts that are starting to roll in at this point.

This is also . . . Part of this context is the fact that last year there was a contract signed with teachers which had some very modest incremental increases in it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And the minister made a point of noting that he was only going to forward half the money for that contract that had his signature on it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So boards, I think, are quite reasonably a bit wary, if I can use that term, that the money that is being collected in education property tax and then going straight into the GRF [General Revenue Fund], that it'll find its way into our classrooms.

And that's exactly where it is needed, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We have a crisis of funding in our classrooms right now. But we also have a crisis of trust and of direction that really dates back, you know, not just to this bill, not even back to last year. I would go back, certainly all the way back to 2009 when the decision was made to take away the ability of boards to set their own mill rates. And what we've seen since then has really been an interim funding model, and there has been a real lack of clarity, of predictability, certainly of adequacy. And that adequacy was really compromised to a higher degree over the last several years. So this isn't the first year that schools and the classrooms have dealt with underfunding from this government. It has been a series of years.

One of things that has not been really well addressed is growth, funding for growth within the sector. I know growth traditionally, when funding was coming forth for school boards, the number of students, it was based on the September 31st enrolments, which meant when you had schools that had growth that sometimes there was even an 18-month lag in boards actually receiving that funding, the way it was calculated. And this, as you can imagine, when you've got systems like Saskatoon Public, for example, that are seeing about 900 additional students in their system every year and there's no funding for them, that that is a problem. I think Regina Public's about 700. And certainly there are systems around the province that have seen growth that hasn't been properly funded.

And that is one of the concerns that school boards have. The issue of the funding model, again we saw that introduced on budget day. In fact there was a lot of information out there around education, but I'm afraid not a lot of answers.

And I know that the school boards and I'm sure that ratepayers as well will want to have full assurances that any money collected for education finds its way back into education. And they want some accounting of that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They want it accounted for, how much is collected within every school division directed into the GRF and how much comes

back to them. And again I mean we had legislation that was introduced today, a bill that will really thwart — we don't know the full extent yet, Mr. Deputy Speaker — but will really thwart those local voices.

We just had people go around the province. I know that we did. Members on this side did. But there was also Mr. Perrins as well as a panel that went around the province hearing from people. And one of the things that they heard very, very clearly was that people value local voice. They value local autonomy within education. And they don't just mean, keep my school board because, you know, I like to see a picture of my school board trustees up on a wall. They meant that they value local voice, autonomy, and local decision making. They want to know that the money and the care that they put into their local school, that it is being looked after and directed by people who understand their community, by people who are elected by people in that area, and really that there's accountability to those people who support those schools.

And if they are not happy with their performance, they can phone them. I know a lot of trustees, they publish their cellphone numbers. They live in those communities. They shop and their kids go to school in those communities. And they're accessible in a way that the minister would not be or anyone. You know, the minister in Regina won't know what's going on in Fox Valley or in Creighton or in Meadow Lake or down in Milestone or any place like that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that we heard that that's very important to people around this province.

But the decision that was undertaken, it would appear, is to keep those boards, but really cut off any ability that they have to make decisions, to make monetary decisions, to direct how money is spent within the school division. I think that really breaks the spirit of what people were telling the panel, the folks moving around the province. So that sort of lends to the context of this bill and why there is really a lack of trust about just how these funds will be directed into education.

You know, we're seeing those very, very difficult decisions coming across right now — cutting of pre-K programs, cutting of busing distances, cutting of staff, cutting of support staff, supports really for the most vulnerable children in our systems, but really supports for all students, increasing class sizes. And I'm afraid that, you know, there's more to come within education.

And it is really, you know, frustrating when we have had this time, especially in a system like education where we've had all of this time to . . . You know, really record revenues. We could've invested in the system in a meaningful way and seen by now a return on that investment. Not only those kids getting the best education that we could possibly give them, but also we'd be seeing dividends in terms of, you know, kids being ready to learn, kids not needing additional support, children being able to seize opportunities to go on to post-secondary education and really to fulfill their potential.

What we've seen instead, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I will be careful with my words, but I don't think that I can over-characterize exactly how difficult things are in our education system right now and how low the level of trust is out

there, how high the level of frustration and angst. And you know, we hear it everywhere. And it's amazing. Every local context is different, but we really hear the same things, no matter where we're at, a lack of feeling of being respected and heard, a lack of understanding about how education . . . the state of education in classrooms around this province.

And it really seems a funny place just in terms of, you know, what is, I suppose, morally right, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in terms of, you know, asking kids to pay for a situation that they didn't create. But really an unfortunate, at best, way to deal with the budget crisis, to actually axe in a place like education where really this is our future. This is how we're going to make our way. This is how we diversify the economy. This is how we make sure that workers and people in this province have the skills that they need to think creatively about the problems that are before us. So I suppose, you know, the taxation is one small part of this, but I think you really do have to look at it in the larger context.

[16:00]

I guess another question just in terms of, you know, how this bill has rolled out . . . We have *The Education Property Tax Act* and the consequential amendments Act, but what this does is actually replace a number of . . . This is a brand new bill that replaces sections in a number of bills. And I'm just going to see if I can find all of the bills that it replaces, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So that would be a question that I would have is why we are seeing this whole new bill in front of us.

So this education property tax Act replaces sections in *The Cities Act*, *The Revenue and Financial Services Act*, *The Education Act*, *The Government Relations Administration Act*, *The Municipalities Act*, *The Northern Municipalities Act*, and *The Tax Enforcement Act*. And so that would just be a question that I would have. And I know that there will be a lot of questions and assurances sought as we move into committee with this bill.

I know that there will be also a lot of attention on this piece of legislation as well as the one that was introduced today. And we will be hoping that we'll have every opportunity to meet with stakeholders, those who will be impacted by both, I guess all three pieces of legislation, and really take some serious thought about what it is that is going on in our education sector right now and where we want to go in this province. We have an opportunity. We've perhaps missed one window, but we always have a new opportunity to sit down and really, you know, think and put in the hard work and the creative vision of what it could look like in this province if we really invested in education in the way that it deserves, that our kids deserve frankly, that the future of this province deserves.

So we will continue to meet with those stakeholders. We will continue to reach out to people and get their feedback on this bill that we see before us and the next one that I will be speaking to. But I think we'll have the best opportunity perhaps to have some time in committee to ask some of those questions.

So with that, I would like to move that this . . . Okay. With that, I will conclude my comments.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the Minister of Government Relations that Bill No. 48, *The Education Property Tax Act* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Clerk Assistant: — Second reading of this bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I move that Bill No. 48, the education property tax amendment Act, be committed to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

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

Bill No. 49

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Harpauer that **Bill No. 49** — *The Education Property Tax Consequential Amendment Act, 2017/Loi de 2017 portant modifications corrélatives à la loi intitulée The Education Property Tax Act* be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise now to enter into debate on Bill No. 49, which is the consequential amendment Act to *The Education Property Tax Act* that I just spoke to. Again I'll note that this is a brand new bill, so we'll be having some time to look at all aspects of it, including the consequential amendments which is the second piece of legislation.

And maybe just to summarize some of, you know, on the whole what the two bills together mean and some of the questions that we have, to recap for those who missed the first part, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what we have here is a proposal for municipalities to collect the education property tax and to remit that property tax directly into the General Revenue Fund. And this is something again that we will be meeting with stakeholders, such as I noted the SSBA, who had some comments about this back last year when this idea was first floated. And their main concern was that the monies collected, that they be transparently accounted for and set aside in a way that made it apparent how much was collected in education property tax and from each division, and how that money was accounted for and flowing back into the education sector.

I'm just looking through some comments here. And again the broader context of that is, you know, not only this bill, which is a new bill, but really the level of trust that exists within the sector right now.

We have seen, you know, in addition to the underfunding of

education, some lack of clarity, transparency, long-term planning. You know, some of the things that school boards have been asking for, for a number of years — I mean going back to 2009 for sure is what I can speak to with some first-hand experience — would be predictability, accountability within . . . for funding for that sector. And of course that major change going back to 2009, which was when the decision was made to remove boards' ability to set their own mill rate for education property tax. Public school boards, I guess.

And that's something to mention. Within this legislation it does note — I'm just going to look for it here, Mr. Deputy Speaker — that there are some, constitutionally there are some different provisions made, of course, for Catholic school boards in the province. But in that it respects that this is also legislation brought forth that does provide direction in both English and French, I think, which is appropriate, and this is something that my colleague has noted before, that that is important that we have that, you know.

But getting back to the confidence that boards have, but not only boards. I think those people that are paying education property tax and those who are concerned about education and educational services in the province, we've seen that with this budget alone, an additional \$67 million being collected in educational property tax, yet at the same time, as I noted earlier, a \$54 million reduction in the money going right into, going into classrooms. This at a time . . . You know, the government likes to talk about opening 21 new schools, which is a real thing, but that doesn't get you education alone, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You have to staff those schools, make sure that kids have buses to get to those schools, furniture, you know. And not just the teaching staff. You have the educational assistants and the occupational therapists, all those who maintain our schools. These are all important parts. Members opposite talk about the core services of government, but you have to understand how these services all fit together to be able to provide education to our children. You know, it wouldn't take a long time in a classroom if you weren't cleaning the desks, before you would find that most of your kids in the classroom are home sick because they do tend to, you know, have germs, little people in classrooms. So all of these pieces do fit together.

You know, you can look at a spreadsheet and find all sorts of places to cut, but you might find, and particularly in education when you cut them, it might have some consequences that you didn't understand or that have a very real impact on the core.

I think we can agree that the core focus of education is students, student well-being, student learning. But there are many things that contribute to that learning that I'm afraid we're not paying particular attention to, and that is going to be at the peril, I'm afraid, of our kids, of our education system, and ultimately at the peril of our province when we fail to provide these kids with the education that they deserve and we need them to have, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

There are, you know, the investment in schools, as I noted, has decreased by \$54 million, plus we have 21 new schools, but also we have about 2,000 additional students coming into the school system. You know, I believe that the minister stated that there was no more important metric than the number of people coming in. But I would suggest that, okay, that is an important

metric, but so too is the ability to provide services to those people. We don't want to just, you know, shoehorn people in and not provide any services to them. So I would suggest that, you know, that's a false dichotomy. Both things are important. We don't have to just look at numbers. We have to look at quality and effectiveness and, you know, those are monetary terms.

But another piece of this is just the respect, the direction within the sector. You know, we've met with a lot of folks by now around the province. And I think that sometimes we're seen to be a bit hyperbolic about just what's going on out there, but if members opposite haven't had the opportunity to go out and talk to school boards and go sit in a classroom or talk to students or parents out there, I think they would pretty quickly understand that it isn't hyperbole. It's a real issue out there in the province, in the sector. A lot of people who work in and around our schools are feeling like the intensity has gone up; the supports have gone down. They feel blamed. They feel disregarded. They feel like the work that they're doing isn't appreciated. And really, what more important work is there, Mr. Deputy Speaker, than ensuring that our kids have the proper education? But they're feeling like that work is devalued.

And that has very real impacts. Aside from monetary costs, that has impacts in terms of people. It has impact in terms of, you know, kids pick up on those things. They can tell when people around them are feeling, or the students around them, when they're feeling valued and respected.

And it's not just the education system, Mr. Deputy Speaker. When we talk about pulling speech and language pathologists out of our schools, or occupational therapists or physical therapists, it's not like those cuts aren't being made within the health sector as well. So there is difficulty addressing those needs in the community, you know, for kids that have means and kids that don't, frankly. Wait-lists are very long. Child psychologists, child and youth services, educational psychologists, those wait-lists are long and the needs are high and rising . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And EAL [English as an additional language] students. That's my colleague here. We have a lot of folks who've been involved in education for a long time on this side.

You know, there's never been proper support for the English as an additional language students who require those supports. So you know, these are supports that if they are provided, those kids will perform at or better than kids who are native English speakers. But they need those supports. So if we fail to provide those supports in a timely manner, it not only has an impact on that child's learning, as well as everyone else in the classroom, but it has a long-term impact on their ability to catch up to grade level.

We have to provide supports in education in a timely manner. And that, I guess I'll tie it back into this bill, is anything we do to pull money out of education that ought to rightfully be there, or to obscure the process of how that money is collected and directed back into the school system, it's going to be a problem for members on this side and, I would submit, people around the province. They want to know how these dollars are being collected and how they are flowing back out. And perhaps there is a mechanism for that to be accounted for and be transparent,

and we would certainly welcome that answer if that were the case, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

[16:15]

But you know, I think I understand people's lack of confidence that all of these issues have been properly vetted, well understood, that they have . . . that all of the consequences have been looked at because frankly there is a bit of a history by now. I think we're . . . I've been here for a year and certainly that has been as punctuated, this sector, for that whole year.

But going back to my time when I first served on the board in 2009, that has been an issue. It has been an issue around the province and one that frankly hasn't been rectified. So if people are a bit skeptical about this . . . And I've been told that we ought to, you know, well of course if we collect the money, the money will be there. I think it's reasonable that they are a bit skeptical about that, frankly.

We want to make sure that the money that is collected for schools makes its way into schools. At least that, if not looking at investing. You know, we look at investments in the early years education. The government's own early years document notes that when you make an investment in quality early childhood education, every dollar that you invest returns 4 to \$9. I know I've spoken about this before, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I would tell you if that were an investment that you could be guaranteed, we'd take it every time. And it's an investment we're failing to make in our kids.

So we will be watching, following these bills with interest. Again as I said, we will be consulting with members on this side and members out in the community to make sure that all of those concerns are addressed. But with that I think I will conclude my remarks.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister of Government Relations that Bill No. 49, *The Education Property Tax Consequential Amendment Act, 2017* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Clerk Assistant: — Second reading of this bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I designate that Bill No. 49, *The Education Property Tax Consequential Amendment Act, 2017* be submitted to the Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

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

Bill No. 50

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed

motion by the Hon. Ms. Tell that **Bill No. 50 — *The Provincial Capital Commission Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter into debate here this afternoon on Bill No. 50, *The Provincial Capital Commission Act*. Mr. Speaker, it relates directly to something that I cherish and I know that people across our province cherish, being Wascana Park.

Mr. Speaker, right in the heart of Regina, the pride of Saskatchewan, the pride of Regina, this is a special park, Mr. Speaker, that is truly the gem of our proud city, of our capital city, Mr. Speaker. It's the kind of place that our entire province is proud of, that connects with, Mr. Speaker. It's a place that my family has always and continues to connect with, Mr. Speaker, and it's a place that I greatly value. It's a place that sort of epitomizes that idea of, the best time to plant a tree was, well in this case, 100 and some years ago, Mr. Speaker, and the next best time is tomorrow.

But it also highlights really an approach of this government that needs to be taken on by the people of Saskatchewan, an arrogant government that thinks they need to have their hands in everyone's pockets, that's taking control of local entities across our province that provide us strength and provide us value. And we see this of course with the arrogant and damaging takeover of NORTEP [northern teacher education program] in the North. We see that of our school boards and local education, Mr. Speaker. And we see it on other fronts, and it's beyond concerning to see this government also exert its control to take over Wascana Park, Mr. Speaker.

And you know, this is a special place. It's a place that people gather. It's a place for recreation. It's a place for cultural gathering. It's a place for education. It's a place of incredible festivals. It's a place for conservation and supporting ecology and in teaching that, Mr. Speaker, and it's the kind of place that we're lucky to have.

Wascana Park itself, although formally became an entity in the early '60s, it's been really, you know, a century and more of planning that's made this special place happen. And it's that sort of long-term vision that we should expect from government on other areas, Mr. Speaker. But in this case it happened really by way of conditions in the late 1980s, Mr. Speaker. I believe 1980 . . . or 1880s, back in 1883, originally the dam was put in place further west than it is right now, Mr. Speaker, and it flooded a fair amount of land, which created the lake. And at that point it was the CPR [Canadian Pacific Railway] that dammed the lake to cool its rolling stock, Mr. Speaker. So it played an important role at that place and time in our history, and really the settlement of and development of Western Canada and our province, Mr. Speaker.

And shortly thereafter, of course, as population came together, it was found to be a place for recreation and for canoeing and paddling and for swimming and for picnics. And if you look at the early pictures of Regina, trees were being planted on this barren land at that time, and really a lot of efforts that were bringing together the incredible, beautiful park that we all love

here today, Mr. Speaker.

We know that it's gone through many efforts, Mr. Speaker, a lot of care of many. The boards throughout time that have been stewards of this park, who have put their heart and soul into this park, the many volunteers, Mr. Speaker, the staff of this park, the administration of this park, that have really built something that is a proud legacy for all of us. But not just a proud legacy — the kind of place that my family, and I suspect yours, Mr. Speaker, and many others are able to enjoy all throughout the year, Mr. Speaker.

It had gone through different deepening processes I believe in the 1930s, creating jobs and deepening the lake and making it more suitable for recreation and to serve our city, a growing city, Mr. Speaker. Of course that happened again as well in 2003. And you know, when you look at sort of the investments a government makes, that investment there, the provincial government, the NDP at the time, along with the federal government, along with the city, made an investment to deepen that lake. And what a special investment into this park that's really given enhanced utilization of this incredible, incredible park.

Its claim, of course, is that it's the largest man-made park in North America. And Mr. Speaker, I'm proud. I think I've found every last corner of that park, whether hiking or whether picnicking as a family or whether jogging, Mr. Speaker, whether paddling, and even explored the islands, Mr. Speaker. I have a two-and-a-half-year-old, of course, who loves getting out to Pine Island, or loves, you know, getting down on the Devonian paths and enjoying what connects us there to Boreal Island and Prairie Island, which are further down the Devonian path.

And of course Wascana Park, in the heart of the city, connects our entire city as well with those Devonian paths and the park system to the northwest, Mr. Speaker, all the way down to the southeast and the university. And for my entire life I've utilized that path and those parks and Wascana Park. Places like A.E. Wilson Park, Mr. Speaker, and Rick Hansen park, they're all . . . which are there supported by Wascana Park, are really special places.

You know, if we think of what this park means to our city, you need to think of just the life it brings to the city and the quality of life that it adds. And of course it's a place to gather. And just think of the festivals and the cultural pride that's on display in Wascana Park, whether it's the annual Canada Day celebrations, which we always get out to and soak up and enjoy, gathering as an entire city, and in many ways as a province in this beautiful park. Or whether you've got the CariSask festival with all of its colour and its great food and its dance, Mr. Speaker, through to the dragon boats and SaskTel Summer Invasion and Waskimo fired up again, Mr. Speaker, out there in the winter, through to the canoe and kayak championships, Mr. Speaker, and all the competition and sport that occurs on the water, Mr. Speaker. It's really something remarkable.

Or all the running and all the races that support important causes, but also support health and well-being, Mr. Speaker. I've run that park for the Queen City Marathon. I've run it for the Regina police half marathon. I think we're running it again

here fairly soon with a bit of gentle competition across the floor, Mr. Speaker. We get out and we walk and we run for the CIBC Run for the Cure, Mr. Speaker. And so really this park is sort of the lifeblood of our community and it gives us life, and as I say, it gives us quality of life.

And there's, you know, not only we have the natural beauty, we have the role it plays in environmental stewardship and the ecology, Mr. Speaker. We know of places . . . There's all sorts of environmental education that occurs with the water and the lands, and places like the waterfowl display park where you're able to have kids and community interacting with migratory birds, Mr. Speaker, and with painted turtles, and all sorts of learning. A reminder, Mr. Speaker — don't feed, don't feed them bread, Mr. Speaker. It's not good for them. Bring them some lentils or something, Mr. Speaker.

And all the other, all the great memorials, all the great, you know . . . And you know, often I go around that park as I jog and I'll see a bench with a little plaque on it and a story and a memory of someone who loved that park before. And the fact that the family or that person wanted to leave their mark and to support the park is an example of the love that we have for this park in Regina and in Saskatchewan.

Just the same, you know, we can get outside the doors. It's the place. It's the park. It's the home of the seat of government, Mr. Speaker, our Legislative Assembly, our house of democracy and places that support that. If you look to Speaker's Corner, Mr. Speaker, you know, a remarkable space that has an important role in our history as a nation and as a province, but also in supporting civil society and the role of democracy, Mr. Speaker.

You can get outside and get to the War Memorial, which commemorates and remembers all those that selflessly served and sacrificed and that were lost from this province, Mr. Speaker. Or a little bit around the way you've got Trafalgar fountain, Mr. Speaker. And just past that of course you have the Holodomor memorial, looking back and remembering that terrible famine, Mr. Speaker, the terrible atrocity, Mr. Speaker, and an important part of the fabric of Saskatchewan with our proud Ukrainian Canadian roots, Mr. Speaker.

Of course we've got all sorts of amazing places for recreation, from the rowing club to the canoe and kayak club, Mr. Speaker, on the shores of the lake. A hub of activity and life, Mr. Speaker, a place I love to get out for a paddle, Mr. Speaker. And then just all of the special places that people get to — Candy Cane Park, Douglas Park, and that incredible Leibel Field that's been built through the dollars and the support of so many to build Regina Minor Football in this province.

And this is again an example of an asset that's valued by our city and what it means for Regina Minor Football. And it's an example of how this park is able to take the love and care and passion of many, the volunteerism of many, the charitable giving of so many, and to build our community. And I think of those people that are . . . Antonini and so many others that have been involved in building Leibel Field. And that very much embodies what's possible with a public park like this. And it's why it's important that we preserve the independence of this park, a gem to our entire city.

[16:30]

From a recreation perspective, you've got Wascana Pool, Mr. Speaker, and just limitless opportunities for our community to come together, to gather, to enjoy, and to be healthy, Mr. Speaker.

You go around the park on a Sunday afternoon, Mr. Speaker, and you know you'll see families from all over our province, all over our city, but families that have come in many ways from all over the world as well, Mr. Speaker. And I find it incredible, on a given day as you work your way around, to see a lot of families that have recently settled in Saskatchewan, new immigrants, newcomers, Mr. Speaker, that utilize Wascana Park and that public space and find it to be such an incredible asset, Mr. Speaker.

So when we're talking about Wascana Park, we're talking about a gem, a gem of this city, a gem of this province, a place that we're all proud of, Mr. Speaker, and a place that we need to fight for. And you know, this is a place that was planned for, involving urban park architecture years ago, and the foresight of many, the volunteerism of many, the planting of trees of hundreds of years ago, and the organization of this incredible place.

And we should not let the Sask Party take it over, Mr. Speaker. We should not let the Sask Party get its grips on Wascana Park in the same way that they've got their grips all over education or the way they're taking control of so many other local entities, Mr. Speaker. And we see the Sask Party disgracefully taking over Wascana Park at the same time as that they've broken their word and have shortchanged our cities and our towns, Mr. Speaker, leaving our city here in Regina shortchanged, Mr. Speaker, and losing some of its control over this very important park.

And I think you have to question, of course. This is the party of big money, Mr. Speaker, and more and more than ever of self-interest, Mr. Speaker. This is the party that has filled its pockets, Mr. Speaker, with big money, big corporate money, Mr. Speaker, from out of province and large corporate dollars and donations.

And time and time again, Saskatchewan people are learning that they just can't trust the Sask Party, because more and more they don't know who they're serving, Mr. Speaker. They don't know if they're serving those big-moneyed interests that have filled the coffers of their party, Mr. Speaker, or whether they're serving Saskatchewan people — who they should be — day in, day out, serving as their government, Mr. Speaker. And I guess, you know, it's on that front, Mr. Speaker, that Saskatchewan people have every right to have very serious control with the Sask Party's takeover of Wascana Park.

We've learned we can't trust them with the small stuff. We've learned we can't trust them with the big stuff. And, Mr. Speaker, we have to question what motivations they have, what agendas they have, what special and big-moneyed interests are potentially influencing this decision, Mr. Speaker, and what they want to do, what they want to do with Wascana Park, Mr. Speaker.

Wascana Park serves all of us. It's a public space for which, as I say, creates life in our community and adds quality of life to all of us, and it's the kind of park that Saskatchewan people should be enjoying for centuries, Mr. Speaker. And we should not let a government deficit of decency, deficit of dollars, take this park over, Mr. Speaker. And I know that all the patrons of this park, all the volunteers of this park, the donors of this park, Mr. Speaker, the supporters of the park, and the public at large in Saskatchewan will rise up to fight back and to tell the Sask Party, get your hands off Wascana Park, Mr. Speaker.

This is a gem for all of us, a place of pride, something that needs to be left in the hands, with some independence, of its exceptional board and administration and all those that build the park. And my message to the Premier and the Sask Party at this time where we see them breaking trust day after day with Saskatchewan people, is get your hands off Wascana Park. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And at this point in time, I adjourn debate on Bill No. 50, *The Provincial Capital Commission Act*. Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Leader of the Opposition has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 50, *The Provincial Capital Commission Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 52

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff that **Bill No. 52 — *The Meewasin Valley Authority Amendment Act, 2017*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Forbes: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I appreciate my colleague's comments about Wascana too. And so many ways, this random approach to how they are approaching conservation in our urban parks, I have some real concerns, the way that they want to take over Wascana Park but yet step away from all the other urban parks that we have in this province.

And of course this is a very important bill to me, as I represent a good chunk of my riding from 24th down along the riverbank fronts the Meewasin Valley, the MVA [Meewasin Valley Authority], and so we watch carefully. And it is a real gem, a real diamond jewel, you know, along the river, and it has been so important to the people of Saskatchewan and the people of Saskatoon. And I really think we've had something so special, so special in this province when we talked about the six urban parks and the two big diamonds, you know, when you think of Meewasin and Wascana.

But you had Wakamow. You had Weyburn, the river is called the Souris, and that is a very important park. It's still there, but you know, now that the government has stepped aside. The same in Swift Current, the same in Prince Albert, and the same

in The Battlefords where this government has forgotten its responsibility, forgotten its responsibility. Because the common factor in all of these parks is that a river runs through it and that river steward is this government. It's a constitutional responsibility. They look after the waterways in this province, and these folks have stepped away from that responsibility.

You know, in the Meewasin Valley Authority the makeup of the park is some 15,500 acres. About 40 per cent of that is Crown land but a quarter of that, or 4,000 acres, are classified as water bodies, meaning that the riverbed or banks account for a quarter of Meewasin's total land.

So this government would have us believe that in fact . . . They create this idea that urban parks are places that are playgrounds and that kind of thing. And a very important component to any urban park is that interaction between families and the natural environment, but it's much more than that. There is a responsibility, there is a huge responsibility for this government to step up to the plate and be partners with the other people involved, the other stakeholders, and that would be the municipalities. And in our case, we have a university there.

And we've seen this government step away, which is really so sad, so sad because, you know, when these parks, the history and . . . A colleague from Rosemont talked about the history of Wascana. We have the history here in Saskatoon where Raymond Moriyama was hired to look after a grand master plan, a 100-year plan back in the '70s — I believe it was '78 — to develop a plan of stewardship, conservation, education, and recreation within that belt along the Meewasin River Valley. And it's a wonderful concept, was a wonderful concept. It is very much alive. And of course we know it is because last summer when this government announced that it was going to reconsider its role, people of Saskatoon and Saskatchewan, in fact right across the country, signed a petition of some 2,000 names. Now that petition wasn't tabled in the House. It went straight to the minister, but we received a copy. The people were kind enough to make sure all the MLAs involved from Saskatoon received a copy of that petition, so we know what the minister got.

And so we know it is near and dear to the people of this province and of Saskatoon. And so there is a huge responsibility for the people, the minister to get it right and . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well there you go. We weren't debating that part, so I would like that time extra, that time back, Mr. Deputy Speaker. No. Actually, but there's the key point was there were people who were very, very much concerned. And so we want to make sure this government does step up, do the right thing, take its responsibility.

Now it is sending odd messages. This is the thing about this bill that is a concern. And I know the minister will say, hey we didn't completely cut all of the money going through there. And we understand too, the universities support it. But the cut to statutory funding, statutory funding, is really alarming because what that means now is that there is no, there is no fixed amount that the authority can count on.

And that is worrisome, you know, because the record of this government when it comes to budgeting, and I have to say we're in for some very tough budgets. We've seen a very tough

one here that really does reek of the mismanagement of this government for the past many years. But I don't think we've seen the end of it, and this is what's concerning people in Saskatoon is, if they're cutting the statutory funding, then maybe the other shoe next year will fall. Maybe there's another shoe to come. And I do have to share that concern that in fact we do have some real concerns with this government abdicating its responsibility.

And it's not one, not one that is just an academic one. This is one that is constitutional, you know, in terms of the Crown land that's involved, the Crown land that's involved with the river valley, the waterways that's involved. This government, this provincial government has a responsibility to step up and be a true partner.

Now you know, there are many parts of this Meewasin Valley Authority. And it's the leadership that has shown and has been recognized right across Canada, in fact around the world, in terms of stewardship, and now this government is stepping back. It's amazing, the kind of things that they have done. I only have to talk about the northeast swale, Saskatoon's ancient river channel. I was very fortunate to go on a tour a few years ago where they highlighted what a conservation opportunity this is in terms of the number of species that are there, the number that are at risk, that really we have an opportunity to do something beautiful, and yet we are stepping back.

And of course the other part that Meewasin has played a major leadership role in is around Wanuskewin Park. And you know, I am just so excited about what's happening at Wanuskewin with the idea that we'll have bison introduced so close to the city. And this will become another major part of that set of jewels along the Saskatchewan River Valley and Wanuskewin there, with its history that goes back thousands of years, honouring the First Nations and how they came to meet in a very special place to hunt, to gather, for so many different reasons. And in fact we'll be, in not that many years perhaps, surrounded by urban development with Martensville and Warman. And as that starts to close in, we'll have this beautiful park in the middle with wild bison. What a vision that is.

So this is the kind of thing that is so important for Meewasin. And this government needs to make sure it's at the table, that it's at the table with the leadership that it has had in the past, has had in the past but now is stepping away. And what worries me is, and it's part of the . . . worries me with this government, it's sort of a divide and conquer. And I worry that they'll start to play off different parks. Who can be the best at lobbying? And I think what this government needs to do is step up again and become true partners with ASUPCA [Association of Saskatchewan Urban Parks and Conservation Agencies], that's the Association of Saskatchewan Urban Parks and Conservation areas. It's a very important organization, but they need to support all six parks throughout the province.

[16:45]

And you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know the Finance minister will say, once again they're saying, where are you going to get the money? Where are you going to get the money, right? That's what he always says in question period. It's a bit of a dodge while he's trying to think of an answer, but really,

it's really simple where you can get the money from.

These guys here have made a choice, made a choice. And I look at the Saskatoon MLAs, they've made a choice to cut the taxes for the wealthiest in this province. They've made a choice to cut that tax, and that tax cut is going to cost \$38 million, \$38 million every year. What you could do, what you could do with that \$38 million. Well I can tell you, first thing you can do is restore the funding and actually increase the funding to Meewasin and to the other urban parks and make sure that the six urban parks are supported here in Saskatchewan. I know this bill speaks specifically to Meewasin, but you could do that. You could do with the 38. You wouldn't even put a dent in the \$38 million.

You know what else you could do with that \$38 million? You could restore funding to STC. And you're not even spending half the \$38 million, you know. You could restore funding to the regional libraries. This is what you could do if you didn't give that tax cut to the wealthiest. There you go. We are thinking about these solutions, and they can be done. But here we have a government who is bent on giving back to their friends, to their wealthy friends and donors.

This should not be an issue here. This is affordable, and these are the priorities we have in Saskatchewan — health and education and making sure we support those things that do make Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, and the other cities unique. And that's the rivers that run through, you know, our cities. And this is really interesting because quite often we don't think this way about our cities. We don't think of our cities having rivers running through them, major rivers with histories. Well we do. We do.

We had the member from Rosemont just talk about the history of Wascana Creek, the mighty Wascana Creek. I'm sorry, guys from Regina. It's not quite the same as the mighty South Saskatchewan. I know you get floods every once in a while, but we . . . I think we have a better river. And the same with the Souris River, not quite the same as the South Saskatchewan, not quite the same as the South Saskatchewan. But then you have the North Saskatchewan, the North Saskatchewan with North Battleford and P.A. [Prince Albert]. Amazing rivers. We should take a lot of pride in those rivers. And we should take a lot of pride in the fact that Saskatchewan is a unique province.

This government needs to step up to the table, needs to bring the resources but not only the financial resources. This is one thing that I've watched very closely because, you know, at one point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was on the Meewasin Valley Authority Board, and I was able to see that the province can not only bring financial resources, but technical resources, vis-à-vis the park planning, because we had people in the provincial ministries who had that expertise. I'm not sure that we have that any more because this government's cut back. We don't have that expertise anymore. We don't have the environmental technology expertise that we once had that the people in the parks could really count on.

So this is a shame. This is a shame that this government has stepped away from its responsibilities. But this is not, as I said, some sort of academic responsibility or some abstract idea. It's a constitutional responsibility. We are responsible for the

Crown lands in this province. We are responsible for those lands, and we are responsible for the waterways and the water bodies. We can't step back from that and particularly along, I think, the North Saskatchewan, the South Saskatchewan when you have serious issues around slumping, erosion, flooding. Of course the major dam all along the South Saskatchewan, the Gardiner dam, a huge responsibility. And here we have this government acting as if this is not a core part of government services. It is a core responsibility. It is core. They cannot walk away and say, no it's not. It truly is.

So, Mr. Speaker, I know that we will have lots of questions on this. I know there will be stakeholders who have lots of questions on Bill No. 52, *An Act to amend The Meewasin Valley Authority Act*. So we would be willing to move this to committee now. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister for Parks, Culture and Sport that Bill No. 52, *The Meewasin Valley Authority Amendment Act* . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Are we done? Okay . . . that Bill No. 52, *The Meewasin Valley Authority Act, 2017* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Clerk Assistant: — Second reading of this bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I designate that Bill No. 52, *The Meewasin Valley Authority Amendment Act, 2017* be committed to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

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

Bill No. 59

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 59** — *The Summary Offences Procedure Amendment Act, 2017* be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my honour to rise and speak to Bill No. 59. I'm cognizant of the time so I'll keep my comments brief. And I know I'll have the opportunity to speak to this bill at committee where I can ask the minister several questions which I do have.

I've had the opportunity to review the bill along with the minister's remarks, and I've spoken to a few stakeholders and I hope to speak to some more prior to the committee meeting about this bill. But if there are any other stakeholders out there who have comments or concerns or questions and I haven't

reached out to them, I strongly encourage them to reach out to me.

Now from my understanding of what the minister's remarks were, it sounds like the plan is to remove traffic fine offences from the ability to fall under the fine option program. So individuals who have fines through traffic offences will no longer be able to utilize the fine option program if, for whatever reason, they can't pay for their fines. From what it looks like though, that will all come out in the regulations. And there is the potential that this could result in more offences being included in the future without it going back to the House. So there's always that concern, Mr. Speaker, when things get moved into regulations, what that means for future consideration on future changes.

The minister mentioned that there might be a low-income exemption for this. I'm not too sure how that's going to work. I'm not too sure what that's going to look like, so that's a question I'm going to have to the minister when we speak.

The minister also said there will be savings, administrative savings of \$230,000. I'm interested to delve into that a little bit more. I sure hope that this isn't nothing more than a cash grab from the Sask Party to deal with their mismanagement, scandal, and waste, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I hope that some serious thought was put into this and that it's being done in a logical, smart way for the improvement of our justice system.

I have some concerns on how this is going to impact our community-based organizations, Mr. Deputy Speaker. A lot of them rely on the volunteer service that individuals do when they're using the fine option program. So instead of paying the fine you can spend X amount of hours doing volunteer service, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I looked, a quick search. Even Regina Cat Rescue here in the city relies on or allows for individuals who are using the fine option program to do their volunteer work through that. So I'm curious to know and I'm concerned about what this is going to mean for CBOs [community-based organization] that do rely on some of their volunteer work to be done through this program.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm also concerned about what this is going to mean in terms of impacting our jails, Mr. Deputy Speaker. If individuals can't pay for their fines or don't pay for their fines, they could incur jail time. And we already have severely crowded jails in our province, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And it's not going to help the justice system. It's not going to help recidivism or our overcrowding situation by having individuals who are charged with non-violent offences — because that's what we're talking about right now, Mr. Deputy Speaker — to end up having to serve time in jail because they didn't pay for their fine or they could not afford to pay for their fine.

So there are some legitimate concerns that I have with respect to this bill. I will have the opportunity to speak more to this with the minister. I think it's more appropriate to have that conversation at committee rather than these debates, so with that I will conclude my remarks on this bill.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is

a motion by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 59, *The Summary Offences Procedure Amendment Act, 2017* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Clerk Assistant: — Second reading of this bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I designate that Bill No. 59, *The Summary Offences Procedure Amendment Act, 2017* be committed to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

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

Bill No. 60

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 60 — *The Legal Profession Amendment Act, 2017*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise and join in on the debate for Bill No. 60. Similarly I've had the opportunity to review the bill as well as the minister's comments and I have spoken to a few stakeholders. Again, still looking for more feedback from other stakeholders before this goes to committee.

I know there are some questions with respect to this bill that I am hoping to have answered by the minister. In particular this is a self-regulated profession, Mr. Speaker, and public protection is paramount within this profession. And when we're talking about exempting, and right now to qualify for or to be able to practice law under the Law Society's rules, you have to be ensured through SLIA [Saskatchewan Lawyers' Insurance Association Inc.] and then there's a few minor exemptions in that. I won't get into detail about that now, but it's very important from a public protection standpoint, Mr. Speaker, that our lawyers in the province are properly insured so when something goes wrong there is an avenue for individuals to get recourse. So I want to ensure that.

And then the minister had mentioned that there's some overlap in the insurance through their employer, through the government as well as through SLIA, Saskatchewan Lawyers' Insurance Association. And I want to ensure that there is actually, absolutely complete overlap, that there's no issues there. There's nothing that's going to fall through the cracks because this is really important stuff that we're talking about, Mr. Deputy Speaker. When we're talking about protection of the public, it's incredibly important that we get this right.

And similarly to the last bill I was talking about, I'm concerned

about again this being a bit of a way of a cost-saving measure from the Sask Party to cover up their scandal, mismanagement, and waste. And I'm not too sure how well thought out this has been, and I want to make sure that the public, the protection of the public is paramount when we're talking about this particular issue because it does cost the government some money to have their lawyers properly insured. And I want to ensure that we are keeping the focus, like I said, on the protection of the public.

So I'm looking forward to having this conversation with the minister. I'm hoping he'll come or his officials will come with answers to my questions and the concerns that I've heard so far. So with that I will conclude my remarks on Bill No. 60.

The Deputy Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 60, *The Legal Profession Amendment Act, 2017* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Clerk Assistant: — Second reading of this bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I designate that Bill No. 60, *The Legal Profession Amendment Act* be committed to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

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

It now being 5 o'clock, the normal hour of adjournment, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.]

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