



FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

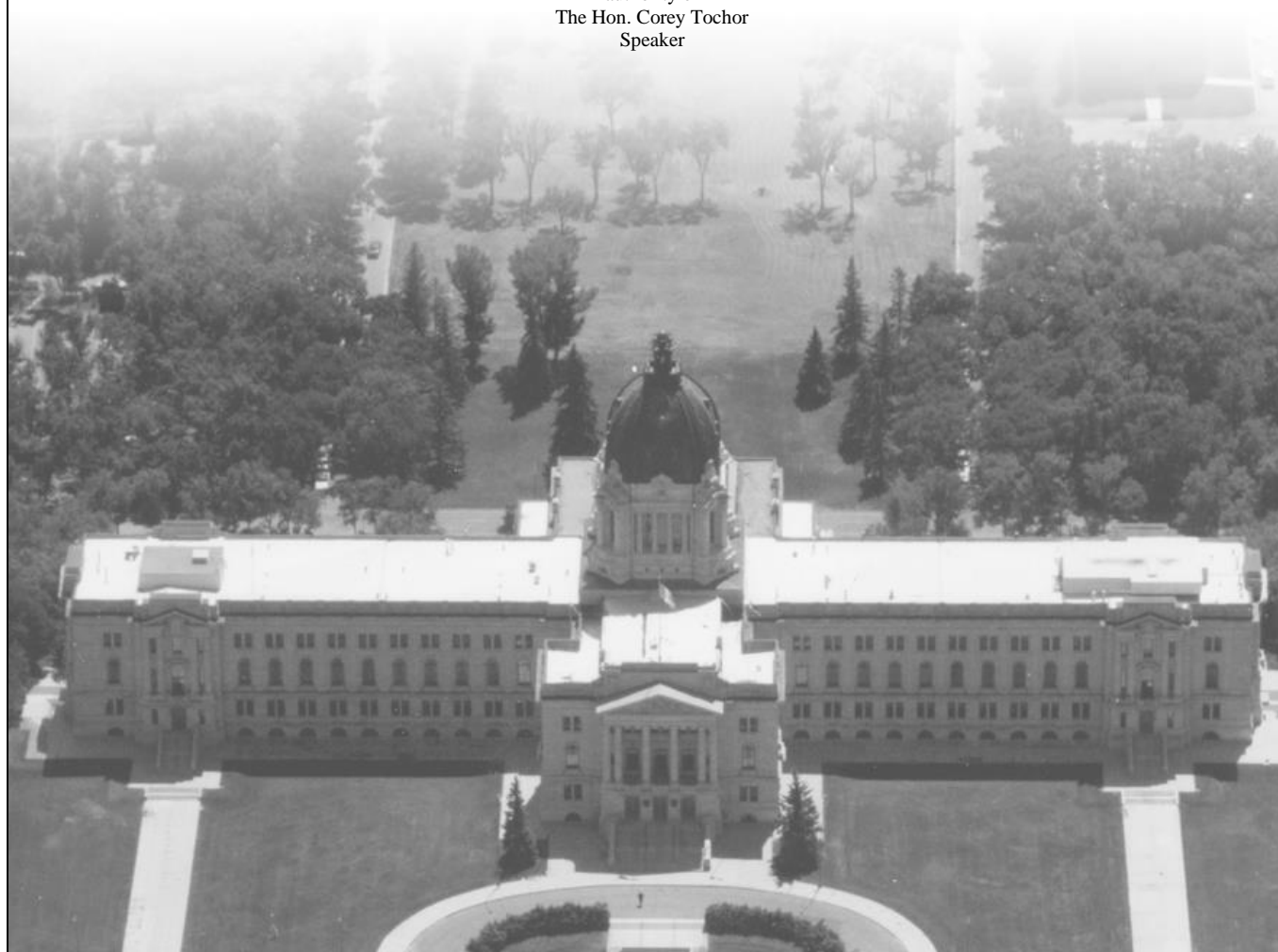
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Corey Tochor
Speaker



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

Speaker — Hon. Corey Tochor

Premier — Hon. Brad Wall

Leader of the Opposition — Trent Wotherspoon

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

Beck, Carla — Regina Lakeview (NDP)

Belanger, Buckley — Athabasca (NDP)

Bonk, Steven — Moosomin (SP)

Boyd, Bill — Kindersley (SP)

Bradshaw, Fred — Carrot River Valley (SP)

Brkich, Greg — Arm River (SP)

Buckingham, David — Saskatoon Westview (SP)

Campeau, Jennifer — Saskatoon Fairview (SP)

Carr, Lori — Estevan (SP)

Chartier, Danielle — Saskatoon Riversdale (NDP)

Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken — Saskatoon Willowgrove (SP)

Cox, Herb — The Battlefords (SP)

D'Autremont, Dan — Cannington (SP)

Dennis, Terry — Canora-Pelly (SP)

Docherty, Mark — Regina Coronation Park (SP)

Doherty, Hon. Kevin — Regina Northeast (SP)

Doke, Larry — Cut Knife-Turtleford (SP)

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

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

Fiaz, Muhammad — Regina Pasqua (SP)

Forbes, David — Saskatoon Centre (NDP)

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

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

Harrison, Hon. Jeremy — Meadow Lake (SP)

Hart, Glen — Last Mountain-Touchwood (SP)

Heppner, Nancy — Martensville-Warman (SP)

Kaeding, Warren — Melville-Saltcoats (SP)

Kirsch, Delbert — Batoche (SP)

Lambert, Lisa — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)

Lawrence, Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)

Makowsky, Gene — Regina Gardiner Park (SP)

Marit, Hon. David — Wood River (SP)

McCall, Warren — Regina Elphinstone-Centre (NDP)

McMorris, Don — Indian Head-Milestone (SP)

Meili, Ryan — Saskatoon Meewasin (NDP)

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

Michelson, Warren — Moose Jaw North (SP)

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

Morgan, Hon. Don — Saskatoon Southeast (SP)

Nerlien, Hugh — Kelvington-Wadena (SP)

Olauson, Eric — Saskatoon University (SP)

Ottenbreit, Hon. Greg — Yorkton (SP)

Phillips, Kevin — Melfort (SP)

Rancourt, Nicole — Prince Albert Northcote (NDP)

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

Ross, Laura — Regina Rochdale (SP)

Sarauer, Nicole — Regina Douglas Park (NDP)

Sproule, Cathy — Saskatoon Nutana (NDP)

Steele, Doug — Cypress Hills (SP)

Steinley, Warren — Regina Walsh Acres (SP)

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

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

Tochor, Hon. Corey — Saskatoon Eastview (SP)

Vermette, Doyle — Cumberland (NDP)

Wall, Hon. Brad — Swift Current (SP)

Weekes, Randy — Biggar-Sask Valley (SP)

Wilson, Hon. Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (SP)

Wotherspoon, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)

Wyant, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)

Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

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

Clerks-at-the-Table

Clerk — Gregory A. Putz

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

Principal Clerk — Iris Lang

Clerk Assistant — Kathy Burianyak

Sergeant-at-Arms — Terry Quinn

Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the
Legislative Assembly are available
within hours after each sitting.

<http://www.legassembly.sk.ca/legislative-business/legislative-calendar>

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

Clerk: — Members, I wish to inform you that Mr. Speaker will not be present to open today's sitting.

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I request leave for an extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member.

Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Sitting in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, it's my pleasure to introduce some special members of our community here today. Every year the World Class Players Cup holds a soccer tournament in Regina featuring numerous players from our community who are representing different countries of the world.

This year, for the first time, Syria was represented in the tournament with a team sponsored by an anonymous donor. As you know, since 2015 Saskatchewan has welcomed almost 1,500 refugees from Syria, 590 of them in Regina. Most of the soccer team is made up of Syrian refugees. Participating in this tournament was an opportunity for the entire team and their supporters to enjoy a sport that is very popular in Syria while interacting with various other cultures and members of our community.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to let you know that today in the House is 19 members and volunteers of the Syrian soccer team, including their coach, Khaled Alshater. Accompanying them from the Open Door Society, Getachew Woldeyesus, manager of settlement and family community services, and a special welcome to Naeila Alshatir and Dr. Ahmad Moustapha. I invite them all to stand, and welcome again to your legislature. And again, we're so proud of you. And there'll be a member statement later, Mr. Speaker, but thank you.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to join with the member opposite and welcome this team to their Assembly. These individuals are an inspirational group, Mr. Speaker. I had the pleasure to meet with them briefly here today, Mr. Speaker, and to welcome Team Syria, the inaugural team, to the Saskatchewan legislature.

They participated, as was mentioned, in the World Cup. The World Cup here in Regina is really a remarkable thing, and it brings together those from all around the world that are building their lives and building Saskatchewan and coming together through sport, reflecting some of the best aspects of sport and some of the best aspects of who we are as a province, Mr. Speaker.

I'm thankful to each of those individuals, each of those players on the team for building their lives here in Saskatchewan. I'm thankful for the contributions that they provide. I'm thankful for how they'll shape and define our bright future, Mr. Speaker, and I'm also thankful to welcome the leadership from Open Door Society here today. So I join with the member opposite to welcome Team Syria, these very fine leaders and builders of Saskatchewan, to their legislature.

And while still on my feet, Mr. Speaker, seated in the east gallery is a group of brilliant young people who care deeply about our province, our communities, who we are, and people. These are young people that we all rely on to work together to build our province. And I just want to say to each and every one of them, thank you so much for your commitment to the people of this province, to our province. Thank you for the support to all of us in this Assembly, and looking forward to all the work ahead. So I ask all members to join with me in welcoming these young leaders to their Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Fiaz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to join my colleague and welcome these, my Muslim friends from Syria. And thanks for Dr. Ahmad Moustapha. Of course, this is a great country, great province, and giving us peace of mind and freedom and security. Of course, a lot of opportunities here. And you're welcome in your Legislative Building. Thanks.

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

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly, two of my family members, Greg and Alex Ross. So Greg and Alex have the opportunity to come down to Regina, visit with family, and also visit with some members of the Legislative Assembly.

This is a very important year. It's an anniversary year for Greg. Forty years ago in August, Greg moved up to Pinehouse Lake and he's just become a real member of that community. He served as a mayor for two terms, on council numerous terms, and just been really committed to his community. At one point, Terry asked Greg if he was ever considering moving home, and Greg said, I am home.

So you know, we'd love to have him here, but he loves his community of Pinehouse. And we're so proud of the work that Greg and his son and, well, his whole family does for that community. So please welcome them to the Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: — I'll recognize the member from

Saskatoon Riversdale.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With leave, for an extended introduction?

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member may proceed.

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure today to introduce to you and through you to all members of the legislature, my friend, Pam Arcand, in the east gallery and her youth care worker, Trinity Allen, who works for Egadz. Can you give us a wave? Pam and I have had the occasion to meet because she has an interest in politics, Mr. Speaker, which after today we'll see if that's strengthened or diminished. But I'd just like to tell you a little bit about Pam.

Pam is a hard-working individual that has a drive to complete high school next year. She recently obtained her driver's licence, which was a huge milestone for Pam. I can tell you, as a mom of a daughter who just a few years ago got a driver's licence, that was a milestone for me too. It was, I think, the best parenting milestone ever, Mr. Speaker.

Pam plays the guitar and has been taking lessons for quite some time. Her family is very musical, and that seems to be in Pam's genes as well. She enjoys going to the movies and spending time with her friends and family, and a highlight for Pam is going out to Watrous with her grandfather for the weekend. He has a place out there, and she loves to stay there with him. And Pamela also enjoys watching *Grey's Anatomy*.

So with that, I would like all my colleagues to welcome Pam and Trinity to their Legislative Assembly. It's their first visit here, so let's give them a warm welcome.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Kelvington-Wadena.

Mr. Nerlien: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. To you and through you to the members of the legislature, it is my honour to introduce the former member for Kelvington-Wadena, Ms. June Draude. June is currently the regional coordinator for Autism Society Canada.

Ministers of the legislature will well remember the clicking of red, high-heeled shoes in the hallway as a precursor to advocacy on critical issues of the day for the constituency. She continues to be a guiding light today as a mentor and good friend. Please join me in welcoming June back to her legislature.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to join with the member opposite. I see June Draude seated just back here. I can now make eye contact. It's a pleasure on behalf of the official opposition to welcome June Draude back to her Legislative Assembly. Certainly she's

someone that had a good relationship with many within this Assembly on both sides. And all of our best to June, and thank you for being here today.

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

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to the House, sitting in the west gallery I'd like to introduce a school group from the town of Kenaston. There are 17 grade 7 and 8 students also accompanied by their teacher, Ms. Sandra Lutz, and parent chaperones, Tammy Powder, Bonetta Beck, Lana Simonson. And also accompanying them is the bus driver, Norma Yelich.

I also want to welcome them here. I'm looking forward to having a photograph and answering any questions you may have of the following proceedings. Thank you, and welcome here.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'd like to introduce you and members of the House to David Sparling who's sitting in the gallery up here. He's been my legislative intern this past while and has done an outstanding job. And they finish up not too many weeks from now, but we want to recognize all the interns. But David has done an outstanding job for me, researching and attending meetings and all of that kind of thing. He's an outstanding intern.

He has an interesting bit of a bio. You know, he has done an awful lot of work. He graduated with a degree in political science and a minor in history. And of course that came out particularly during the summer, last summer, when he worked at the Diefenbaker Canada Centre and the different responsibilities there, and he brought that to our work together.

So I just want to ask all members to welcome David to his legislature. And I ask all members in joining me in thanking him for his good work. Thank you.

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to introduce Rachelle Bistriztan. We were just talking about how difficult her last name is to pronounce just yesterday at the intern supper.

As my colleague just mentioned, our time with our interns are nearing the end. This is the last week that I have the opportunity to be with Rachelle. And they have a few more weeks within their internship, but I really enjoyed my time with Rachelle. She came to Prince Albert, and I really do think she enjoyed her time there. We had an opportunity to meet with a lot of leaders in the community and some of the community-based organizations. And she learned a little bit about Prince Albert, and I hope that encouraged her to come and visit again.

But I also really appreciate the opportunity to learn from the interns, and especially Rachelle. And she knows a lot about the

community-based organizations within Regina, and she's volunteered and did a lot within the community. She's very smart, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it was nice to learn a little bit from her political science background. But she's also very compassionate. And I know she's going to be a strong leader in the future. And I look forward to seeing exactly how well you excel in life, and I hope we could keep our relationship together in the near future.

They're getting an opportunity to go to northern Saskatchewan in the next couple of weeks, and I know they're going to really enjoy their time there. But also the member from Batoche is going to give them a tour of our historical site of Batoche. And I grew up not too far away from there, so I know they're also going to enjoy that as well.

So again, I really appreciate the opportunity of learning from our interns, and I hope Rachelle also appreciated her opportunity with me as well. I know some days were crazier than others, but again thanks, Rachelle, and I'd like all members to welcome Rachelle to her Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Deputy 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 off and sell off of 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 a parcel service that serves farms and other businesses. Mr. Deputy 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 Saskatchewan Transportation Company, and to resume transportation services to the people of Saskatchewan.

It is signed and supported by thousands and thousands of Saskatchewan residents. I so present.

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

[13:45]

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am pleased to present a petition again opposing the Sask Party's cuts to spiritual care. Mr. Speaker, it was interesting to me, just a couple of days ago in committee we had a brief conversation about spiritual care and the minister told me this wasn't a service provided in all health regions, so they chose to cut this valuable service. So instead of expanding something that was working and working well for people, the government cut it.

That was their way of addressing inequity, Mr. Speaker.

The petitioners point out that with the 2017-18 budget, the Sask Party has eliminated funding for spiritual care services within our health region facilities, Mr. Speaker. They point out that our province will be the only one within Canada to not fund this support for patients, residents, and their families seeking wellness. The petitioners point out the Sask Party hid their plan to scrap funding for spiritual care within health region facilities during the 2016 election. Mr. Speaker, just a year ago they said nothing about this.

The petitioners point out that spiritual care responds to the spiritual and emotional needs of patients and residents and provides a compassionate listening presence in times of crisis, and that spiritual care supports families, patients, and residents in making difficult decisions. And lastly they point out that spiritual care can provide support for all families, patients, and residents in obtaining comfort and support, regardless of their faith or belief, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan immediately reinstate the funding for spiritual care services in this province's health region facilities.

Mr. Speaker, this petition today is signed by citizens from Hanley, Dundurn, Outlook, and Saskatoon. I so submit.

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

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

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

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens of Ogema, Pangman, Bengough, Hardy, Viceroy, Ceylon, and Parry. I do so present.

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

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to stand in my place today to offer support and answer the call, and under the direction of the member from Prince Albert Northcote to have support for this petition. Anybody in the Assembly who wants to stand and support her would be most certainly appreciated.

And, Mr. Speaker, I stand today to present a petition from the city of bridge, where the people of the area want a second bridge for Prince Albert and north. And, Mr. Speaker, the need

for a second bridge for Prince Albert has never been clearer than it is today. Prince Albert and many, many communities north of Prince Albert, and many businesses in Prince Albert and north of Prince Albert that send people and products to Prince Albert require a solution. So the prayer reads as follows:

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

Now, Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed this petition — as we present page after page, day after day, week and week, and month after month, from many parts of our province — the people that have signed this particular page are primarily from Prince Albert. And I so present.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise today to present a petition concerning pay equity here in Saskatchewan. And the undersigned residents of the province want to bring to our 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 that a man makes, and in Regina women earned on average 73 cents for every dollar that a man makes. According to the most recent StatsCan data, the national gender wage gap for full-time workers is 72 cents for every dollar a man makes.

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

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

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

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm proud to stand in my place today to present a petition to increase the funding to Prince Albert mobile crisis. Due to a cut in funding, Prince Albert mobile crisis unit has had to close its door during daytime hours, resulting in a loss of resource to people in distress. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because this week is Mental Health Week, I feel it's very important to identify the role that

mobile crisis plays in Prince Albert with regards to helping individuals who are having mental health issues or symptoms.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, mobile crisis unit workers are trained to identify individuals who are struggling with mental health. They're aware of the services that are available in the community for individuals needing services. And they're also trained in using the suicide risk assessment tool that evaluates the client's risk of suicide. And we know with the high rates of suicide we have in the province, but not only in the province but in Prince Albert and the North, it's really important to have these crisis intervention workers available when they need the support.

The daytime closure of Prince Albert mobile has put stress on Prince Albert Police Service, Victoria Hospital staff, and other agencies who may not be trained and/or qualified to provide counselling and intervention services to clients.

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

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

Like I've said before, Mr. Deputy Speaker, individuals across this province realize how important it is to provide crisis service for 24 hours every day of the week in the third-largest city of this province. And so we have individuals who signed this petition; they come from the communities of Redvers, Carrot River, and Regina. 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 government to stop Bill 63. Those who have signed this petition, Mr. Deputy Speaker, wish to draw our attention to the following: that they are opposed to the changing of *The Education Act* with Bill 63 as it currently reads until the government takes part in active and good faith, transparent conversation with the Saskatchewan School Boards Association; that there shall be transparency and agreement upon all, if any, changes in *The Education Act*; and that it is imperative that the government recognizes that there must be appropriate time frame in which the elected board members are able to convey all information of decisions affecting their communities.

They wish that the government would recognize that the local school boards are the voice of Saskatchewan communities and that decisions should remain with such elected boards. I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan repeal Bill 63 and preserve governance of elected school boards.

Mr. Speaker, these signatures are rolling in from all around the province, as are hundreds upon hundreds of emails calling for exactly the same thing. The particular people who have signed

this petition today reside in McTaggart, Trossachs, Yellow Grass, and Weyburn. I do so present.

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition calling for a reverse to cuts to the Lighthouse program in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker. The petitioners in the prayer that reads as follows:

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

Mr. Speaker, this particular petition is signed by citizens from the good cities of Saskatoon and Meadow Lake. 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 to ensure job security for survivors of domestic violence. Saskatchewan has the very dubious distinction, Mr. Speaker, of having the highest rate of domestic violence by intimate partners amongst all Canadian provinces. One in three Canadian workers have been impacted by domestic violence, and for many of them the violence follows them to their workplace. Employers lose \$77.9 million annually due to the direct and indirect impacts of domestic violence.

Mr. Speaker, Manitoba has already enacted legislation similar to our private member's bill that we tabled a few weeks ago and Ontario is on its way to enacting legislation that ensures job security for victims of domestic violence.

I'd like to read the prayer:

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

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the individuals signing this petition today come from Swift Current, Wymark, and Ponteix. I do so present.

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

Mr. Meili: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition calling on the government to restore funding to post-secondary

institutions. Mr. Speaker, post-secondary students in this province already face among the highest levels of tuition in the country and growing levels of debt. We have seen a precipitous drop in the number of students from low-income families that are accessing higher education, the lowest rate in Western Canada, Mr. Speaker.

In that context we see the introduction of a 5.6 per cent cut to the budgets of universities and colleges, the largest cut in the history of those institutions. Alongside that we see a cut of \$8.2 million for student aid and scholarships, the elimination of the SAGES [Saskatchewan advantage grant for education savings] grant that allows families to save in advance of education, and the elimination of the tax credits for tuition and books, Mr. Speaker. All of these decisions make it more difficult for students and their families to afford education.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, 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, the individuals signing today's petition are from Regina and Saskatoon. I do so submit.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Saskatchewan Book Awards Ceremony

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This past Saturday, April the 29th, I was delighted to attend the annual Saskatchewan Book Awards Ceremony in Regina along with my colleague from Regina Douglas Park and the member for Regina Rochdale.

Established in 1993 by the Saskatchewan Writers' Guild, Saskatchewan Publishers Group, and Saskatchewan Library Association, the Saskatchewan Book Awards have become a pillar of Saskatchewan's literary scene, and the awards ceremony attracts more than 1,000 guests every year. This year's ceremony was hosted by James Daschuk, the award-winning author of *Clearing the Plains*. Fourteen awards were presented throughout the evening, representing a vast number of genres and the diverse and socio-cultural backgrounds that Saskatchewan authors and publishers bring to the table.

Mr. Speaker, this year's award winners were truly talented and inspiring local writers. One of the biggest winners of the night was the recipient of the Regina Public Library Book of the Year Award, and that was world-renowned author and Saskatoon resident Yann Martel, with his book *The High Mountains of Portugal*.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's literary community currently includes more than 300 authors and 30 book publishers, and their contributions to the fabric of our province are immeasurable. Exposure to Saskatchewan literature promotes

an understanding of the history of our province, and it encourages people to engage with local narratives that can foster a lifelong love of literacy.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in thanking the Saskatchewan's book of the year awards for a lovely evening in support of literacy in our province. Thank you.

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

English as an Additional Language Conference

Ms. Lambert: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This past week I was fortunate to bring greetings to the Saskatchewan Teachers of English as an Additional Language and Teaching English as a Subsequent Language Conference held in Saskatoon.

The work of Saskatchewan TEAL [Saskatchewan Teachers of English as an Additional Language] and TESL [Teaching English as a Subsequent Language] Saskatchewan is admirable, for they bring educators and students together who are passionate about English as an additional language.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the new Canadians who have arrived in Saskatchewan play a very important role in our economy. Therefore, developing appropriate resources for both educators and learners has been a major priority of this government since 2008 when the settlement service delivery model was introduced.

I would like to highlight this government's dedication to our new neighbours, as this year's budget earmarked \$33 million to support the needs and services of English as an additional language learners and educators. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this support will go towards teachers, facilitators, settlement workers, consultants, and resources. Along with this support, the government also provides free over-the-phone interpretation in 24 languages to support school staff in communication with the parents of their students.

I thank Saskatchewan TEAL and TESL associations for this conference, as it gave educators the opportunity to collaborate and share new ideas on how to deliver services more efficiently and effectively. I ask all members to join me in congratulating the organizers of this conference on a successful event and thank them for their dedication to the English language being available and accessible for all. Thank you.

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

Walk for Multiple Sclerosis

Mr. Meili: — Mr. Speaker, this past weekend I was proud to participate in Canada's 27th annual walk for multiple sclerosis. The Saskatchewan Blue Cross organizes MS [multiple sclerosis] walks throughout communities in our province, and my son and I were pleased to be able to walk with hundreds of people through Saskatoon's beautiful Meewasin Trail. The event raised more than 150,000, exceeding our city's goal.

Mr. Speaker, MS is a devastating neurological condition that can result in vision loss, muscle spasms, mobility problems, and various other symptoms. Canada has the highest rate of MS in the world and Saskatchewan the highest rate of MS in the country with over 3,500 people in the province currently suffering.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, MS remains a mystery. We still don't know the exact cause nor do we have a cure. And that's why it's so important that we strive to improve the lives of those living with this condition and to support the institutions that can do the research to truly understand what is happening with MS.

The money raised from efforts like the walk for MS are invested in world-leading research, much of which is happening right here in our province. There's some truly innovative work taking place at the University of Saskatchewan's MS clinic, and local fundraising efforts are getting us that much closer to finding a cure.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask all members to join me in congratulating the MS Society of Saskatchewan and the Saskatchewan Blue Cross on organizing another successful walk for MS campaign, and thanking all those who came out this year to walk and raise funds for this valuable cause. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

New Elders' Complex in Pinehouse Lake

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my pleasure to stand in the Assembly today to let members know that the elders' complex built by Pinehouse Business North is on time and on budget. This complex is a fantastic addition to the community of Pinehouse Lake and was truly a community effort that will serve their elders well for years to come.

The housing complex is more than 12,000 square feet, has 12 units, common areas including a kitchen, and public seating areas. This facility was also responsible for creating 26 local jobs and further utilizing contractors from Pinehouse Lake.

It was a locally driven project built by a local company. Pinehouse Business North started in 2007 and is owned by Aboriginal people from Pinehouse Lake, with an emphasis on local employment with the dividends being enjoyed right within the community. Further, they specialize in labour services and construction in the mining industry, focusing on Aboriginal employment and building excellence.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to ask all members to join me in thanking Pinehouse Business North for their work in the community and congratulate Pinehouse Lake on the completion of their elder living complex. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Saskatchewan Resident Aims for Spot in Astronaut Corps

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise to share some exciting news about a former constituent of mine. Jason Leuschen, a graduate from the University of Saskatchewan engineering program, has advanced to the next phase of astronaut recruitment for the Canadian Space Agency, with final selection happening this June. Only two people will be selected as new members of the Canadian astronaut corps. He is currently one of 17 finalists dreaming of being Canada's newest astronaut, having been selected from nearly 4,000 applicants.

Jason grew up on a farm near Bruno, Saskatchewan. He is currently training with the Royal Canadian Air Force to be a helicopter pilot. He remembers his childhood in Saskatchewan as being his inspiration for his pursuit, saying, "I fell in love with the sky, growing up on a farm in the land of the living skies."

The idea of becoming an astronaut was cemented for Jason after he met Canadian astronaut Marc Garneau at the Canada-Wide Science Fair. Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate Jason on his success in this process so far, and I want to let him know that a whole province is behind him as he aims for one of the two available spots in the Canadian astronaut corps. I invite all members to join me in supporting Jason on his exciting journey. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Local Syrian Team Plays in Soccer Tournament

Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Saskatchewan is an open and welcoming province. In December of 2015, I had the pleasure of welcoming the first plane of Syrian refugees into Regina. Assalamu 'alaykum.

Mr. Speaker, our guests in the gallery lived in refugee camps for many years before making it to Canada. It would be unimaginable for many people to understand what they've been through. Although they've lost so much, their love of sport never faded. There's a lot we take for granted, Mr. Speaker, and having a safe place to play is one of these.

After collecting donations from the community, led by Khaled Alshater, this group entered into the 2017 World Class Players Cup soccer tournament, representing their home country of Syria. Mr. Speaker, the team is made up of mostly Syrian refugees you see in your gallery here today. With strong support from their cheering fans, they made a lasting impression and an impact on the tournament for all who attended. They had a wonderful tournament and are looking forward to participating next year. The organizers of the team are now looking into starting up a kids' soccer camp, open to all children to come and learn new skills and gain new friendships.

Let us all remember how fortunate we are to live in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating the Syrian refugee soccer team on a successful tournament, and wish them all the best as they settle into their

new communities. Welcome home. Thank you.

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

New Potash Mine Opens

Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, for the first time in nearly 40 years, a new potash mine is open in Saskatchewan. The Premier, myself, and the Minister of Energy and Resources, other colleagues, and dignitaries from across the globe were at the newly named Bethune mine site.

Mr. Speaker, the name K+S might be familiar to some of the older people in Saskatchewan. In the '70s, the NDP [New Democratic Party] government of the day pushed the companies and their predecessors to K+S out of the province by nationalizing their mines. The result was stalled investment for decades.

Mr. Speaker, we are thrilled that K+S broke ground in 2012 to build this new state-of-the-art mine in my constituency. Expected to produce 2 million tonnes of potash per year, this \$4.6 billion project is well positioned to be successful for decades.

Our government has made it clear that Saskatchewan is open for business. These 400 workers employed at the new mine and the whole province can count on our government to make sure that Saskatchewan is a great place to live, work, and invest.

Also, I would like to note that the K+S president, Ulrich Lamp, announced yesterday that they will be making a \$1 million donation to STARS [Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society] air ambulance. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating K+S, their employees, and the local community on the grand opening of the Bethune mine and thank them for their generosity.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Details of Land Transactions

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the backroom talks, the side deals, the corporate giveaways — there's no shortage of evidence that instead of serving Saskatchewan people, the Sask Party are putting themselves, big corporations, and the wealthy and well-connected first, Mr. Speaker.

Let's just look at the basic facts behind their growing GTH [Global Transportation Hub] scandal. Yes, the previous government had a plan to create a transportation hub. Yes, that land included moving the CPR [Canadian Pacific Railway] rail yard. But, Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party formed government and two years later they turned that plan into a Sask Party scandal. They gave the corporation 300 acres for free.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier at least admit that giving away 300 acres of land for free was the Sask Party's decision? He was the Premier, and for him to suggest otherwise is simply not

true.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend is getting real close to admitting what happened when the NDP were in power, Mr. Speaker. But I'll help him again, Mr. Speaker, because we're aided by cabinet documents.

It's strange when you have a cabinet meeting, Mr. Speaker. Typically when members opposite were in government and you have a cabinet meeting, someone's writing all the decisions down including, Mr. Speaker, the fact that in April of 2007, when members opposite were the governing party, Mr. Speaker, \$33 million was set aside for the project that would relocate these CPR tracks. Now \$33 million is a lot of money that they approved to go to CPR. Here's the good news: it didn't take anywhere near that to get the job done, Mr. Speaker. When we took over government and looked at the file, we were able to get that done for a lot less.

Here's another reference from a cabinet document:

For the ministry to finalize negotiations and formal agreements with the Government of Canada, CPR, and the city of Regina regarding their respective contributions required, an estimated contribution from the provincial government [that would be the NDP government] of \$33 million.

We thank them for the decision to initiate the project, Mr. Speaker. We are grateful we were able to get it done for a lot less than that.

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

Intent of Bill No. 40 and Ownership of Crown Corporations

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Good spin, but of course the facts are the facts, Mr. Speaker. And they gave away 300 acres of land for free. And now they're scheming in backrooms to sell off our Crown corporations. No wonder they rushed last week to force forward and pass Bill 40.

The Minister Responsible for Sask Tel has been taking part in non-meeting meetings in his office. Still, Mr. Speaker, the Premier has denied any plans to sell off our Crown corporations. Last week they looked us in the eye and said they weren't aware of any plans to sell off SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance]. This was just last week, Mr. Speaker. Well last night the minister responsible said, "Yes, I'm aware of some high-level discussions that have taken place."

Mr. Speaker, we went from nothing's for sale to discussions on SaskTel and SGI, and people are advertising that they've won STC routes that the Sask Party says aren't for sale. Mr. Speaker, it's past time. Will the Premier come clean with his scheme to sell off our Crown corporations?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we introduced Bill 40 into this House in October of last year. We introduced Bill 40 in this House in October of last year. When it was introduced, we indicated that we would be open to partnerships if they strengthen Crowns, if they keep utility rates low in the province, if they protect the jobs in the province, if they ensured head office strength in the province of Saskatchewan. This was in October of last year. Well the Deputy Leader's saying, say it. If he would stop talking, he would hear me say it. I've been saying it since last October, Mr. Speaker.

And moreover, long before I arrived on the scene, premiers have been saying exactly the same thing, Mr. Speaker, exactly the same thing. For example, Premier Romanow. Premier Romanow noted in an article in the *Leader-Post*, April 20 — the reporter was James Parker, someone we know reasonably well — the then NDP premier said SaskTel may start looking for a partner. Here's what then NDP premier Romanow said:

Supposing they [some other company] had some great Internet scheme or idea which would be both a good thing for the people of Saskatchewan and profitable for SaskTel.

And in the arrangement of the partnership, some swapping or exchanging of shares was part of the parcel of the payment process. I'd look at it then.

That's what the NDP said in 2000 under Premier Romanow, not about selling a controlling interest in the Crowns but about seeking a partnership. And if it strengthened the Crown, it made sense for the bottom line for the Crown and the employees, Premier Romanow said he'd look at it.

Mr. Speaker, why won't the NDP agree that that's a pragmatic approach? We will keep control of the Crowns, but we ought to be open to strengthening them with partnerships, the kinds of which Premier Romanow advocated in 2000.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier of Saskatchewan has a major trust issue. This is a Premier a year ago that looked in the eyes of Saskatchewan people and told them that selling off the Crowns was not on. He took that pledge. Of course he wasn't straight with them, and he has no mandate.

[14:15]

We have ministers over there that are now scrambling to get out of this tangled web, some of them that are starting to come clean. Last night the minister responsible skirted and dodged questions, but finally admitted that there are 11 different entities that they've talked to about the sale of SGI. Mr. Speaker, 11 different options for a sell-off. And yet of course they've been denying it all along, and we hear this nonsense here today again from the Premier. It simply can't be swept under the rug. They're clearly looking to sell off SGI. The minister even boasted last night and tried to pitch this deal as some sort of good deal.

Mr. Speaker, it's pretty clear what they're doing here. If the Sask Party is trying to sell off SGI, a valuable Crown corporation that Saskatchewan people want to keep, how can the Premier defend this against his statement that they had no plan? Why won't he be straight with Saskatchewan people?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend omits the fact that the legislation they opposed, Bill 40, actually defines privatization. There will be no sell-off of a Crown. In fact under the legislation, a sell-off is impossible.

What is possible, Mr. Speaker, what is possible though are partnerships that might strengthen the Crown corporations while the people of the province keep control — 50 per cent plus. So of course the Minister of SGI has been having meetings about that, about opportunities to strengthen SGI without losing control. And, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if he's contacted his predecessor, the NDP leader from 2000, who as Premier said the following. The article in the *Leader-Post* says this:

But he [Romanow] said the government would consider a swap of shares with a partner under the right circumstances.

“Supposing they had some great Internet scheme or idea which would be both a good thing for the people of Saskatchewan and profitable for SaskTel.

“And in the arrangement of the partnership, some swapping or exchanging of shares was part and parcel of the payment process, [Romanow said] I'd look at it then.”

Do you know what, Mr. Speaker, if it wasn't for Bill 40, today Premier Romanow would not be able to look at such a deal. Bill 40 will allow for this kind of a deal to be considered, as Premier Romanow said might be a good idea if it strengthens the Crowns, if it protects head offices in the province. Well they hate the answer to this question. And if, Mr. Speaker, it maintains 50 per cent plus majority controlling interest in the hands of the people of the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, absolutely, ministers are going to be canvassing opportunities to achieve those things for our Crowns.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, this is a Premier that's betrayed Saskatchewan people, that's broken his word, and as he sells off our Crown corporations, he's selling out Saskatchewan people. Saskatchewan New Democrats will fight him every step of the way.

He's chopped up and they're selling off STC. They've had 11 meetings to sell off SGI. They're even pitching it as a good idea. And, Mr. Speaker, they're having meetings to sell off SaskTel.

An Hon. Member: — No, that's not true.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Oh I hear the Premier jeering over there.

So stop me if you've heard this one: a chief of staff, a minister, and a major telecom lobbyist meet in a minister's office. This is no joke, Mr. Speaker. But once again it'll be the friends and well-connected of the Sask Party who are laughing their way all the way to the bank while Saskatchewan people are forced to pick up the tab, Mr. Speaker.

On Monday the Premier defended the SaskTel minister right before the minister contradicted the Premier's version of the story. So will the Premier finally come clean? And if the Sask Party Premier wants to keep ramming forward his damaging sell-off scheme of SGI, SaskTel, and our Crowns, will he at least have the decency and backbone to take it for a vote to Saskatchewan people?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, Bill 40 clearly defines what privatization is and what the government is prevented from doing. It says that 50 per cent plus one, the controlling interests of the Crown corporations, must stay in perpetuity with the people of the province and with the government of the province of Saskatchewan. I agree with Premier Romanow from 2000 when he said it might be pragmatic to look at partnerships though, within that confine, within that restraint. That might strengthen the Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker.

Well, well the members are saying, take it to the people. I know I campaigned in the election in 1999. I remember then Premier Romanow saying the Crowns were not for sale and yet just a year later he was able to rationalize that this kind of a partnership was pragmatic and something to be considered, Mr. Speaker. And I would expect, I would expect that members opposite, even as angry as they might be, would agree that what was fair for the NDP in 2000 is more than fair for the Saskatchewan Party this year.

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

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, I know it's spring, I know it's spring but if the Premier could spare us the hibernation routine, Mr. Speaker, or the Rip Van Winkle routine. I'm familiar with the Premier that stood in 2007, 2011, and 2016 and said that he'd respect the Crown corporation protection Act, Mr. Speaker. And that Premier's seated right over there, Mr. Speaker.

So I wonder if the Premier could do us all a favour and point to where, in the previous three elections, where he takes the mandate from to sell off up to 49 per cent of SaskTel, SGI, or pick your Crown, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I've stood in this House and I've stood in committee, Mr. Speaker, and answered this question. Legislation was tabled by the New Democrats when they were in government which was deficient. They did not, they did not define the word “privatization,” Mr. Speaker.

What this Act does quite simply, Mr. Speaker, is to resolve a deficiency, and the legislation was tabled to define the word “privatization,” Mr. Speaker. It was a definition, it was a definition which was taken, took guidance from the World Bank, Mr. Speaker, in preparing that definition. That’s all this legislation does.

As members opposite know, Mr. Speaker, legislation without definition is worthless. This bill, Bill 40, brings clarity and definition to that legislation.

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

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, again I’m familiar with the record of a Premier that stood in this Assembly in 2004 and voted for the Crown protection Act, and then defended it in 2007, 2011, and 2016, Mr. Speaker. And didn’t say, you know . . . laughed off any concerns that would be raised about, you know, if they try to return to their Tory ways and try and privatize these assets against the will of the Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker. The overwhelming number of Saskatchewan people support keeping SaskTel in public hands. They don’t support this backdoor way to privatize 49 per cent of this valuable corporation, Mr. Speaker.

When we asked the minister responsible for it, Mr. Speaker, he says that he had . . . You know, when we asked him if they had had meetings about this or discussions, he’s got to come forward and correct the record. Well in one of those meetings, Mr. Speaker, where he just, he’d run into somebody and then, you know, apprised them with the fact that Bill 40 was coming down the line and that that was the new policy, Mr. Speaker, that meeting took place in his office with his chief of staff, Mr. Speaker. It wasn’t like they ran into each other at the lunch line.

So can the Minister for SaskTel tell us here in the House, which was the large Canadian telecom outfit that he’d met with? And what did he have to say about the opportunities that would be available under Bill 40?

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I’ve said in the House, I’ve taken the opportunity to correct what I had said in committee, Mr. Speaker. I did it . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well, Mr. Speaker, the bill was actually passed on the Wednesday, I believe. But, Mr. Speaker, I believe that when I make a mistake, I need to own up to it. I did so. I conferred with officials the following day. I sent a letter to the member opposite.

Mr. Speaker, we sometimes make mistakes. In fact just on April 27th, the interim Leader of the Opposition said, “Yes, I have no problem apologizing, withdrawing and apologizing for those words,” Mr. Speaker. Well he had enough of an apology that somebody had to ask him to offer the apology, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will not, I will not call into the question the character of the interim Leader of the Opposition. I hope he would do the same for me, Mr. Speaker, and members of this House.

Mr. Speaker, we are looking for opportunities to strengthen the Crown corporations, something which apparently Roy Romanow would agree with.

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

Mr. Meili: — Mr. Speaker, while the minister is admitting mistakes, I wonder if he might admit if there are any others.

Last week, just after he says he learned that he reported something in a committee that wasn’t true, I asked the minister if there’d been any talk of opening up SaskEnergy to private investment. He didn’t take that chance to correct the record on SaskTel that night when he was able to do so, and he said, no, regarding SaskEnergy. That’s the same answer he initially gave on SaskTel. It’s the same answer we heard from the Minister of Justice on SGI.

Given the shifting sands on those two Crowns, I’d like to give the minister a chance to clear things up. Regarding SaskEnergy, do you have any news to report on meetings about a wind-down, a partnership, an investment opportunity, asset recycling, or any other code word for privatization, any other code word for a sell-off?

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with respect to SaskEnergy, the only thing that I have asked of the senior management: one, as we do with all the Crowns, they have a business to run — to make sure they run that business to the best of their ability, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have also asked whether or not that an opportunity for a partnership that was explored in the early 2000s by the members opposite if, Mr. Speaker, that would still be something relevant to look at, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of partnering with potential private companies, Mr. Speaker, obviously SaskEnergy and TransGas do a lot of business in moving gas into the provinces. If there’s an opportunity to even store more gas for Alberta-based companies, Mr. Speaker, that’s something that the company is exploring and needs to explore, Mr. Speaker. But I don’t think that that’s out of the normal course of business.

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

Lobbyist Registry

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, this doublespeak, this government’s doublespeak on privatization is just not believable. The big phone companies are measuring the drapes at SaskTel and they’re already talking to 11 companies about carving up SGI and serving it to their corporate buddies.

And who’s been lobbying the government on these sell-offs? Fat cat conservative lobbyists, the same ones who’ve bankrolled the Sask Party’s elections. Since 2007, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one conservative insider’s lobbying firms have given the Sask Party more than \$20,000, and now he represents Rogers. A

long-time Sask Party insider is getting the inside track for Telus.

It's so obvious that this government has totally forgotten who they're working for. They're taking tens of thousands of dollars from big-time corporate lobbyists who are getting paid to ensure a sell-off of our Crowns. Mr. Speaker, why won't they join us in getting big money out of Saskatchewan politics?

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the reason that the member has that information is that we have a lobbyist registration in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker — a lobbyist legislation, Mr. Speaker, which was developed with the help of both sides of the House, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, the lobbyist registration allows people in this province to understand, to look to see who's lobbying their elected officials, Mr. Speaker. Before this lobby registry was launched last year, Mr. Speaker, there was no way of having that information, Mr. Speaker.

So now members of the public, Mr. Speaker, in a very transparent way have an opportunity to know who's lobbying their elected officials, Mr. Speaker, have an opportunity to know what they're lobbying their elected officials are, Mr. Speaker, and this is precisely the reason why we have this legislation.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And you know the Minister of Justice would know full well that my colleagues submitted a minority report on the lobbyist registry, so they should come clean on that. They should come clean on that.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the lobby and election laws aren't being broken. It's the laws themselves that are broken, and the lobbyist registry just doesn't go far enough. You don't have to register if the Sask Party calls you, and you don't have to register if you're talking to the government about how a law affects you or your business. Mr. Deputy Speaker, what would you lobby the government for, if not for something that would affect your interests?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, even for those who do register, it's more about what they may lobby about, not what is actually happening and when. Mr. Deputy Speaker, when will the government do the right thing, fix the lobbyist registry, and join us in getting big money out of Saskatchewan politics?

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I find that question to be just remarkable, Mr. Speaker. We co-operated on this legislation. Yes, they filed a minority report, Mr. Speaker, but there was precisely two things which we disagreed on. The basic elements of this legislation, Mr. Speaker, was agreed on between both sides of the House, and now the member, now the member complains about the very piece of legislation which

they worked on to support.

Mr. Speaker, all political parties are required to register and report their donations and expenses. That's transparent, Mr. Speaker. The lobbying legislation, Mr. Speaker . . .

[Interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: — The member asked the question. We may want to give the minister an opportunity to answer. I recognize the minister.

[14:30]

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, the lobbying legislation augments the transparency that the Saskatchewan people have with respect to who is lobbying their elected officials. And, Mr. Speaker, the member speaks out of both sides of his mouth. They're out looking for corporate donations, Mr. Speaker, for their political events; \$356,000 in donations to various NDP campaigns from the unions, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, the legislation is very, very clear. People are allowed now to see who's lobbying their elected officials, Mr. Speaker. They can see who's donating to those parties, Mr. Speaker. That's transparency.

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

Role of School Boards and Intent of Bill 63

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, they also gave a \$60 million tax giveaway to their corporate friends, and all across the province parents, teachers, and community members have told me that they are concerned about the government's \$60 million cut to our kids' classrooms. People are also concerned about the Sask Party's plan to silence local voices from education with Bill 63. And it is no secret that the minister wanted to scrap locally elected school boards altogether.

But the Saskatchewan people spoke out, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And when he realized he couldn't get away with it, he decided to take away their decision-making powers, their voice, the voices of locally elected school board trustees instead. This is another Sask Party power grab. And the Saskatchewan people have been very clear. They do not want this bill. So will the minister finally listen and scrap Bill 63?

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, they want to talk about Bill 63. Bill 63 is going to prevent the very problem that we're having right now as a result of the Theodore lawsuit. Mr. Speaker, it's the NDP that need to explain their position on that ruling. Do they support school choice for parents and students or not?

Our government's position is clear. We'll use the notwithstanding clause to protect non-Catholic students' right to attend a Catholic school. The NDP position? Who knows? The Leader of the Opposition would only say that he supports

consideration of using the notwithstanding. What does that mean, Mr. Speaker? Supports consideration, like he wants to think as if that's a new and novel thing.

It's a simple question, Mr. Speaker: do they support non-Catholic students being able to attend Catholic schools, yes or no? Do they support the ruling that would have the effect of taking 10,000 students out of their school?

Mr. Speaker, we're not there. They are.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know it's a foreign concept for the members opposite to do any planning before they take action, but I suggest that they start doing so.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the minister knows that Saskatchewan people do not want this bill. And of course I support publicly funded education and I support . . . That support includes both the Catholic and the public systems.

What I do not support is that minister taking \$60 million out of our kids' classrooms while giving his corporate friends \$60 million in tax breaks. And what I don't support is that minister's plan to silence local voices in education and give full control to himself and to cabinet.

How can he possibly think that he is better at making decisions than locally elected trustees? Why won't he listen to Saskatchewan people and scrap Bill 63?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the interim leader for getting his critic on the same page as he is, at least a little bit.

Mr. Speaker, there's another important question that needs to be answered. Last week the critic said she doesn't support government funding for faith-based schools like Luther College, Regina Christian, or Huda School. That's the first time we heard that from the NDP. Mr. Speaker . . .

[Interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: — The member asked the question. She may want to give the minister . . . Order. I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite accused us of diverting funds to something other than a publicly funded system so we could move things into a faith-based system. Mr. Speaker, our government provides funding for 3,600 students and 26 faith-based students in the province. Where are the NDP on that one?

Mr. Speaker, we're going to stand with all of the students in this province. We're going to make sure that they're well funded and the schools are well run and we're not taking any lessons from the people over there.

[Interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: — I'd ask the members to come to order.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Chair of the Standing Committee on House Services.

Standing Committee on House Services

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on House Services to report that it has considered certain estimates and to present its sixth report. I move:

That the sixth report of the Standing Committee on House Services be now concurred in.

[Interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. I think question period is over. We're moving on. It has been moved by the Deputy Chair:

That the sixth report of the Standing Committee . . .

[Interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. It has been moved by the Deputy Chair:

That the sixth report of the Standing Committee on House Services be now concurred in.

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.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on the Economy.

Standing Committee on the Economy

Mr. Makowsky: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on the Economy to report Bill No. 51, *The Saskatchewan Grain Car Corporation Repeal Act, 2016* without amendment.

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

Hon. Mr. Marit: — 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 and that Bill No. 52, *The Saskatchewan Grain Car Corporation Repeal Act* be now read a third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — The minister may proceed.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 51 — *The Saskatchewan Grain Car Corporation Repeal Act*

Hon. Mr. Marit: — I move that the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

The Deputy Speaker: — The minister has moved that Bill No. 52 be now read a third time and passed under its title. . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh, Bill 51, *The Saskatchewan Grain Car Corporation Repeal Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion? Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Deputy Speaker: — All those in favour say aye.

Some Hon. Members: — Aye.

The Deputy Speaker: — All those opposed say no.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Deputy Speaker: — I believe the ayes have it.

An Hon. Member: — Recorded division.

The Deputy Speaker: — On division. It's carried on division.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 70

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Doherty that **Bill No. 70 — *The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2017*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Meili: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill No. 70, the amendment to *The Provincial Sales Tax Act*.

Mr. Speaker, I will start to speak to this by reading from an article that was published in the *Leader-Post* on the 22nd of April of this year. We had an economist by the name of Nick Falvo. Nick is an economist from Carleton University, research associate there. He has a Ph.D. [Doctor of Philosophy] in public policy and is based in Calgary.

[Interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. The member from Saskatoon Meewasin has the floor. I recognize the member.

Mr. Meili: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So this article from Dr. Falvo talked about this budget. And the final conclusion was . . .

[Interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: — I've asked the members to come to order. The member from Saskatoon Meewasin has the floor. I'm having a difficult time hearing him. He's very close to the dais. I'd ask members on both sides of the House to come to order. I recognize the member.

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, appreciate it. Mr. Speaker, this article was titled "Saskatchewan's budget is Robin Hood in reverse." And I'll skip ahead to the end in terms of the actual conclusion because I think it's a very good statement about what budgeting should be about: "Good budgeting invests in people while strengthening the economy." And Dr. Falvo concluded that "This budget did neither."

To exactly what is he referring? I think there are multiple different ways in which this budget confirms that set of statements, but he describes a few things that are particularly pertinent to the bill before us today, Bill No. 70.

Dr. Falvo talks about the way in which this budget increased the provincial sales tax from 5 to 6 per cent and stated that ". . . this will hurt lower-income households more than higher-income households."

It also expanded the PST [provincial sales tax], as you well know, to cover children's clothing and many other things that weren't previously covered:

The province's low-income tax credit . . . [is to] receive a \$34-million enhancement, ostensibly [Dr. Falvo describes] to cushion the blow for low-income households — but this [he states] pales in comparison with the estimated \$872 million in revenue that the PST changes will bring in.

Yes, that's nearly a billion dollars, Mr. Speaker.

According [the article goes on] to the recent analysis [published in *Maclean's*] by Trevor Tombe and Blake Shaffer [two economists], all of these tax changes will hit lower-income households harder than higher-income households. Factoring in the cuts to income tax, the increase to PST, and the Low Income Tax Credit, earners in the bottom 10 per cent will see a two-per-cent increase in taxes as a percentage of household income. That steadily declines as incomes rise . . . [with] those in the top 10 per

cent will see no increase at all to the taxes they pay.

That's right. The taxes were changed in such a way that those who are at the lowest end of the economic scale pay the most of their household income, and those at the highest, see no change at all. Mr. Speaker, that's getting it backwards. That isn't the right way to do it.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at the expansion into clothes for children, that's clearly something that's going to hit younger families more. It's going to hit lower income families more. When we look at the addition on to restaurant and other pre-prepared meals, when families are struggling with food security, sometimes they don't have an option. Sometimes they don't have a place to cook. Sometimes they don't have the option to actually avoid some pre-prepared meals, but now that's going to be more costly, so a greater contribution to food insecurity. When you look at students, students in university who are accessing meals, for example on campus, already life is difficult for them, less affordable for them. This hits them once more.

At the same time as we're seeing no increase in supports for people in low income, we're only seeing this budget talk about an increase in overall spending on social assistance, but no actual increase in the amounts that individuals or families will get. Basically a prediction that there are just going to be more people in poverty, more people requiring social assistance.

Mr. Speaker, nothing in this budget makes it easier for families to get by, gets them more money in their pockets. But it does make life more expensive: this growth to the PST, the expansion into other areas, and the elimination of STC, which makes transportation much less affordable.

Mr. Speaker, along with these introduced changes to clothes and restaurants and other basic necessities, we also see the PST being added to insurance premiums, added to insurance premiums in such a way that for many families, including farm families who spend on crop insurance, there's going to be a very significant increase in their costs and overall a decrease in the impetus to seek out insurance, to plan ahead, which I think in some ways is emblematic of this budget overall. It's a failure to think ahead, and by putting the PST on insurance, makes it more difficult for families to plan ahead as well.

[14:45]

Perhaps, you know, one of the other major areas where we see the PST expanded to, Mr. Speaker, that I don't know if it's been fully understood quite the impact that will have, is in the area of construction with now PST being applied to new builds and renovations. Now we've heard that that's only a portion because PST was already on materials. However, materials only make up 30, at most 40 per cent of a new build. So you've got an increase of 1 per cent on that and then an increase of 6 per cent on every other part of that new build or renovation.

So you're basically seeing a 3 to 5 per cent increase in costs for every construction project. So that means projects won't be completed. There will be projects that just won't be affordable anymore. The margins are tight on that sort of construction activity. Removing 3 to 5 per cent of the profit because of PST,

that's going to make it more difficult for projects to be built. It's going to be more difficult for people to get into that first home or to renovate their home. It's also going to mean that capital expansion for schools, universities, for health regions, all kinds of government expenditures are going to become more expensive. It means we're going to do fewer capital investments, or we're going to do less of the deferred maintenance that needs to be done.

Mr. Speaker, that introduction of the PST on construction is a significant barrier to further activity in a sector that is well identified by economists as key. When you're in a recession, you want more construction activity happening, not less.

And that underlies some of the significant problems that exist with this budget where we have decisions being made. Disinvestment in health and education, the imposition of taxes that are actually in the way of growth — all of these are factors that mean that this budget will actually be less successful in influencing the kind of economic recovery that we truly need. When we're in a difficult time, you don't introduce an austerity budget that actually makes it more difficult for your economy to grow. But that's exactly what we've done. Mr. Speaker, we've seen in this budget — and this PST is a very significant example thereof — decisions that will make it harder for Saskatchewan people and harder for our economy to recover.

When you look at that shift, when you look at that shift from people who are paying more in their household income, as you increase the PST while you decrease income tax, you see a shift with people in the bottom 10 per cent of the income bracket, increasing their taxes as a percentage of household income by 2 per cent. Those who are in the middle, in the 50 per cent, they will see an increase of 1 per cent. And those at the very top, the top 10 per cent of earners in this province see absolutely no change in their taxes. The PST and the income tax evens it out as the percentage of household income.

Mr. Speaker, that's backwards. That's rewarding the wealthy and well connected and making life more difficult for people who are already struggling. Add on to that a corporate tax cut while you're cutting education, while you're cutting health, while you're cutting so many other key elements of providing services for our society and reviving our economy. Mr. Speaker, it's very clear that this is the wrong direction.

It is backwards motion, and I certainly will be joining my colleagues in not supporting Bill No. 70. And I'll adjourn debate for today on that bill, and we'll have more discussion in committee. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Meewasin has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 70, *The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2017*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In order to facilitate committee work this afternoon, I move that

this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:50.]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Docherty	2377
Wotherspoon	2377, 2378
Fiaz	2377
Ross	2377
Chartier	2378
Nerlien	2378
Brkich	2378
Forbes	2378
Rancourt	2378

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Vermette	2379
Chartier	2379
Bonk	2379
Belanger	2379
Forbes	2380
Rancourt	2380
Beck	2380
McCall	2381
Sarauer	2381
Meili	2381

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Saskatchewan Book Awards Ceremony	
Beck	2381
English as an Additional Language Conference	
Lambert	2382
Walk for Multiple Sclerosis	
Meili	2382
New Elders' Complex in Pinehouse Lake	
Ross	2382
Saskatchewan Resident Aims for Spot in Astronaut Corps	
Harpauer	2383
Local Syrian Team Plays in Soccer Tournament	
Docherty	2383
New Potash Mine Opens	
Brkich	2383

QUESTION PERIOD

Details of Land Transactions	
Wotherspoon	2383
Wall	2384
Intent of Bill No. 40 and Ownership of Crown Corporations	
Wotherspoon	2384
Wall	2384
McCall	2385
Wyant	2385
Duncan	2386
Meili	2386
Lobbyist Registry	
Forbes	2386
Wyant	2387
Role of School Boards and Intent of Bill 63	
Beck	2387
Morgan	2387

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on House Services	
McCall	2388
Standing Committee on the Economy	
Makowsky	2388

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 51 — <i>The Saskatchewan Grain Car Corporation Repeal Act</i>	
Marit	2389

ORDERS OF THE DAY
GOVERNMENT ORDERS
ADJOURNED DEBATES
SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 70 — *The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2017*

Meili2389

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. Brad Wall
Premier
President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Tina Beaudry-Mellor
Minister of Social Services
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff
Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport
Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission

Hon. Kevin Doherty
Minister of Finance

Hon. Dustin Duncan
Minister of Energy and Resources
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Telecommunications

Hon. Bronwyn Eyre
Minister of Advanced Education

Hon. Joe Hargrave
Minister of Crown Investments
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Government Insurance
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Transportation Company

Hon. Donna Harpauer
Minister of Government Relations
Minister Responsible for First Nations,
Métis and Northern Affairs

Hon. Jeremy Harrison
Minister of the Economy
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Liquor and Gaming Authority
Minister Responsible for The Global
Transportation Hub Authority
Minister Responsible for Tourism Saskatchewan
Minister Responsible for Innovation

Hon. David Marit
Minister of Highways and Infrastructure

Hon. Scott Moe
Minister of Environment
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Water
Security Agency
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Corporation

Hon. Don Morgan
Deputy Premier
Minister of Education
Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety
Minister Responsible for the Saskatchewan
Workers' Compensation Board

Hon. Greg Ottenbreit
Minister Responsible for Rural and Remote Health

Hon. Jim Reiter
Minister of Health

Hon. Lyle Stewart
Minister of Agriculture
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Crop
Insurance Corporation

Hon. Christine Tell
Minister of Central Services
Minister Responsible for the Provincial
Capital Commission
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Gaming Corporation

Hon. Gordon Wyant
Minister of Justice and Attorney General
Minister Responsible for SaskBuilds
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Power Corporation