



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

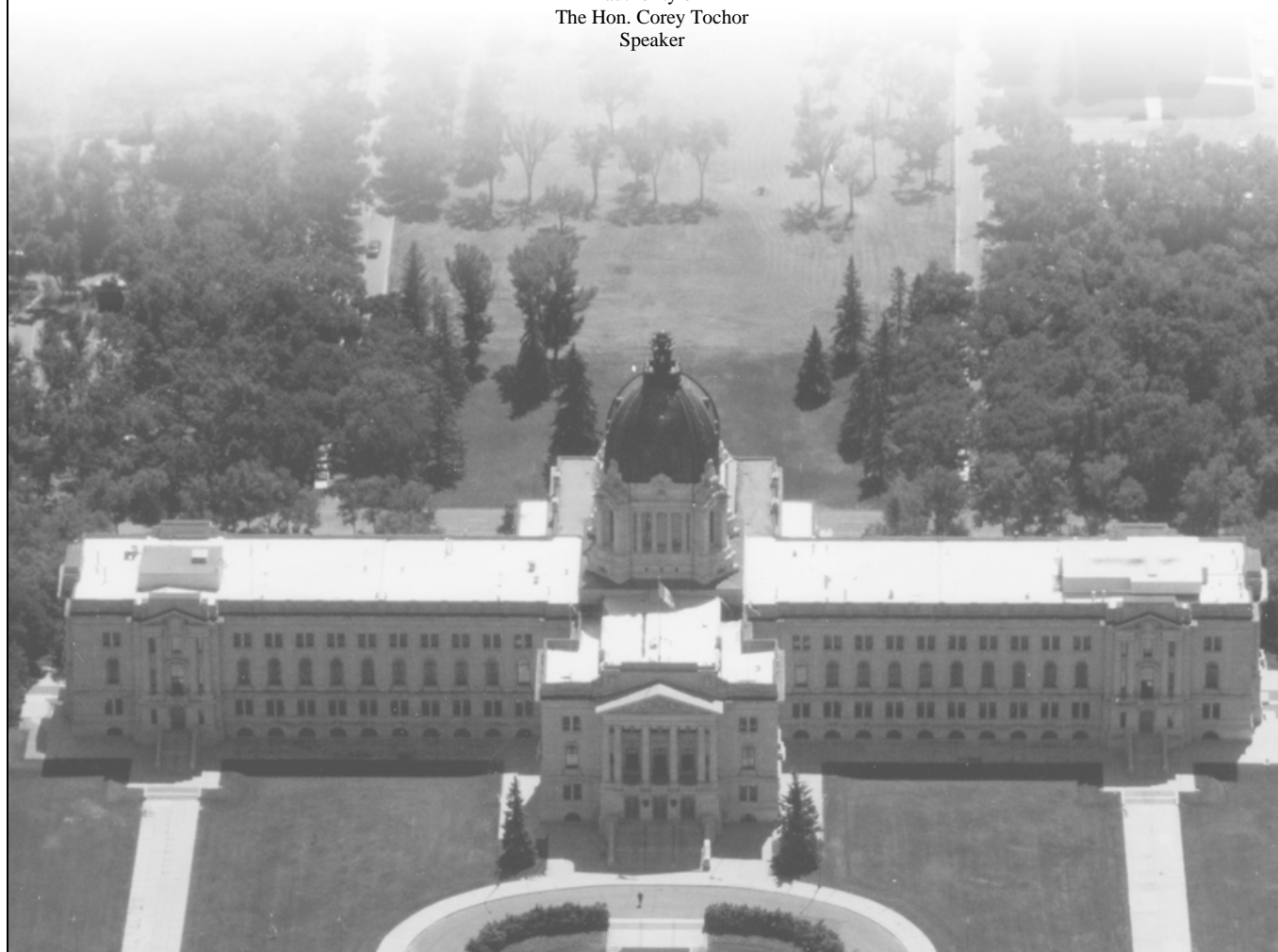
of the

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
2nd Session — 28th Legislature

Speaker — Hon. Corey Tochor
Premier — Hon. Brad Wall
Leader of the Opposition — Nicole Sarauer

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Makowsky , Hon. Gene — Regina Gardiner Park (SP)	
Marit , Hon. David — Wood River (SP)	Vacant — Kindersley

Party Standings: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 48; New Democratic Party (NDP) — 12; Vacant — 1

Clerks-at-the-Table

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

Principal Clerk — Iris Lang

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

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

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I request leave of the members of the House for an extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Premier may proceed.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Over the years our government has tried to recognize appropriately those who have served our province and our country, who have been willing to sacrifice themselves in that service and serve in the Canadian Armed Forces. And, Mr. Speaker, it's true of previous governments as well. I remember, in opposition, working with the member for Saskatoon Centre at the time who implemented some protection for reservists, some employment protection for reservists.

Since then, Mr. Speaker, we've designated the Highway of Heroes and we've had the stickers on government vehicles. And, Mr. Speaker, there's another initiative of the government, and I want to acknowledge the member for Cannington who suggested this to us early on in our time in government called the Scholarship of Honour.

Mr. Speaker, in a moment we're going to hear from the government's military liaison, the member for Moose Jaw Wakamow, in a member's statement about the Scholarship of Honour. But as members of the Assembly will know, the scholarship was created to recognize and assist members of the Canadian Armed Forces returning from military operations, as well as their spouses and children, should anything have befallen those in service.

Mr. Speaker, it is my great honour to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly today, two recipients of the scholarships. They're with us in your gallery, Mr. Deputy Speaker: Leading Seaman Nicole Baldwin, who is joined today by her parents, Sandra and Tony Baldwin, and her grandmother, Sharon Baldwin; and Captain Ian Bonnell, who is accompanied by his wife, Lindsay.

Mr. Speaker, Nicole served in Canada's navy for six years and is now completing her master's degree in toxicology at the University of Saskatchewan. Ian was a pilot, who served on two overseas deployment, in Afghanistan and the Philippines, where

he took part in the humanitarian relief in the aftermath of typhoon Haiyan. Ian is completing his M.B.A. [Master of Business Administration] through Royal Roads University.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to recognize those who received the scholarship but were unable to join us today. And they are: Lejla Imamovic, Brooklyn Reynolds, Curtis Boyes, Jonathon Bodnaryk, Victoria Bourque, Emma Dufour, Mark Giroux, Chad Hanson, Arthur MacKay, Michael Maharajh, Chloe McKenzie, Celeste Pawelec, Brian Perigo, Brian Robar, Jana Simms, Jeremy Storrington, Krista Storrington, Joshua Watt, Sheldon White, and Rohan Wilson.

Mr. Speaker, there are 22 recipients of the 2017 Scholarship of Honour. They have served our province. They have served the Dominion of Canada with courage and distinction, Mr. Speaker. And on behalf of a grateful province, we want to acknowledge them and wish them well in their studies.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too rise to welcome our guests who are servicemen and women to the galleries, recipients of the Scholarship of Honour. Leading Seaman Baldwin and Captain Bonnell, I welcome you to your Legislative Assembly today. As someone who's worn the relish and sweated out in combat boots at 40 degree weather, I think I'm an appropriate person to welcome you on behalf of the official opposition. I would ask all members to join me in welcoming these folks to their Legislative Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Crown Investments.

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to welcome, Mr. Speaker, two individuals seated on the floor of your chambers here, Mr. Speaker, two long-time friends of mine, Tim and Irene Johnson. Tim and I go a long ways back. We worked many years together at the Bank of Montreal. We travelled the province together, used to audit cars, count cars, and do all that kind of nice stuff. And many years in the winter, we'd be slogging through deep snow and doing whatever we had to do. And that was back, of course, obviously, Mr. Speaker, before Tim ended up being in a wheelchair from an injury when he was a youngster.

And his lovely wife, Irene, she's one of those Revenue Canada people that may have phoned you on occasion. And I'm clean. Trust me, I haven't done nothing wrong; it's all on the up and up. So, Mr. Speaker, but Irene tells me she's going to retire in April.

So I would ask all members to welcome me in joining Tim and Irene to their Legislative Chamber, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and today seated in your gallery, we have someone that has been here numerous times, and that's Marilyn Braun-Pollon, the

vice-president for Canadian Federation of Independent Business for prairie and Agri-business.

Mr. Speaker, over the summer the CFIB [Canadian Federation of Independent Business] received over 15,000 petitions from across the country from small businesses that oppose the federal tax proposals. And our government also listened to small business concerns, and that's why we will be introducing a bill today that increases the provincial small-business income threshold.

So I want everyone to welcome Marilyn Braun-Pollon to her Assembly as well as thank her for the advocacy work she does for all of the great small businesses we have within our province.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And on behalf of the official opposition, to you and through you, we would also like to welcome Marilyn Braun-Pollon to her Assembly here today. Marilyn is a true champion of independent businesses here in Saskatchewan, and of course across Canada, in the roles that she plays. And whenever we have the opportunity to discuss it, she is a passionate advocate for small businesses in Saskatchewan. And for that, we thank her for her work. So on behalf of the official opposition, I'd like to ask all members to welcome her to her Legislative Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: — Members, I too have two guests seated in the Speaker's gallery. They are two constituents, two sisters — Robyn and Tina Knowles. Members, you may recognize Tina, sitting on the right. The young ladies are sitting . . . Tina just gave us a wave. She was a Page in our last session. And she is here with her sister, Robyn, who is a student at the University of Regina, taking some classes in human justice, and she's on assignment from the university observing the proceedings. I met with them earlier today, and Robyn had a lot of questions about how this place works and some other questions about my involvement. And I would ask all members to welcome them to their Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to present a petition to provide funding for improved testing, diagnosis, surveillance, and treatment as it pertains to Lyme disease, vector-borne, and other zoonotic diseases, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The petitioners point out that there's been a dramatic increase in the number of ticks found in Saskatchewan over the past few years. They point out that the increase of ticks puts Saskatchewan residents at risk for Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases. They point out that measures must be put into place to protect Saskatchewan citizens from Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases. And they go on to say and point out that citizens who do contract Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases need to have the proper treatment available

in a timely manner and with the newest treatment available.

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

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Sask Party government to provide transparency with the surveillance of Lyme and other tick-borne diseases and provide funding for improved Lyme disease diagnosis and treatment.

Mr. Speaker, this petition has signatures from all across Saskatchewan, close to a thousand signatures. I'd just like to give a shout-out to Candace Uhlik who did a lot of work in getting these signatures, Mr. Speaker, from places like Arborfield, Alida, Swift Current, Regina, Christopher Lake, Nipawin, Carrot River, White City, Paddockwood, Prince Albert, Gronlid, Saskatoon, Birch Hills, St. Louis, Hagen, Estevan, Oxbow, Zenon Park, Frobisher, Hafford, Mayfair, Rosetown, Martensville, Shellbrook, Spiritwood, Smeaton, Weirsdale, Vanscoy, Foxford, Candle Lake, Cabri, and Hudson Bay, Mr. Speaker. I so present.

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to stand in my place today to provide a petition for a second bridge for Prince Albert. I'll bring attention to the following facts: that the Diefenbaker bridge in Prince Albert is the primary link that connects the southern part of the province to the North, and that 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 businesses that send people and products through Prince Albert require a solution; that the local municipal governments have limited resources and require a second bridge to be funded through federal and provincial governments and not a P3 [public-private partnership] model; and that the Saskatchewan Party government refuses to stand up for Prince Albert and this critical infrastructure issue.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan ask that the Saskatchewan 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.

Mr. Speaker, the individuals signing this particular petition come from the communities of Saskatoon and Regina. I do so present.

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

Ms. Lambert: — 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 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 this province.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the citizens of Meadow Lake and Saskatoon. I do so present.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition calling on the government to restore funding to post-secondary institutions. These citizens from Regina wish to bring to your attention that the Sask Party is making students and their families pay for Sask Party financial mismanagement; that Saskatchewan students already pay the second-highest tuition fees in Canada; that this budget cuts 36.8 million from post-secondary education; that this budget cuts 6.4 million from technical institutions; that funding the Saskatchewan Student Aid Fund and scholarships have been cut by 8.2 million; and that the Sask Party has broken a 2016 election promise by cancelling their first home plan. I'd like to 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, this is signed by citizens from Regina. I do so present.

[13:45]

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition regarding child care in Saskatchewan. Those who signed the petition wish to draw our attention to the following: to the fact that across Saskatchewan, licensed non-profit child care centres are taxed inconsistently and that many of our licensed child care centres pay commercial property tax — this is something that is not done in Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, BC [British Columbia], or New Brunswick; that child care is essential to the economy, yet most centres struggle to balance their budget. This impacts both the number of child care spaces as well as the quality of care. Quality child care has an enormous positive impact on a child's future outcomes and yields high rates of economic return. And child care centres are institutions of early learning and childhood development, and it's appropriate that they have the same tax treatment as schools. I'll read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan recognize that licensed non-profit child care centres provide programs that are foundational to a healthy society by including them in the Saskatchewan education Act and

exempt all licensed non-profit child care centres in Saskatchewan from property tax through changes to the appropriate legislation.

Mr. Speaker, those who signed the petition today reside in North Battleford, Lloydminster, and Nipawin. 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 stand in my place to present a petition on behalf of the residents of Balgonie. And the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan wish to bring to your attention the following: that the permanent closure of Main Street access to Highway No. 1 in the town of Balgonie is creating a lot of concern. And the people that want to send the prayer, Mr. Speaker, reads as follows:

Take the necessary steps and actions to leave the west-in, west-out driving access for vehicles into and out of Balgonie at the intersection of Highway No. 1 and Main Street.

We also respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan put up a locked gate on the apron between the eastbound lanes and westbound lanes of Highway No. 1 and Balgonie's Main Street intersection. This gate would allow emergency services access to the eastbound lanes of Highway No. 1 at the Main Street, Balgonie intersection, but would not allow the public access to cross east- and westbound lanes.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed this page and many other pages that we have presented and will continue to present on behalf of the town of Balgonie are from Regina; they're from Balgonie themselves; they're from McLean, Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And I'm so very proud to present this petition on behalf of the people of Balgonie, and I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Veterans' Week

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. November 5th to 11th marks Veterans' Week in Canada. Every person in this room has a story of a loved one, family, or friend who has served our country in times of need. As a retired Canadian Forces captain in the Cadet Instructors Cadre, I am fortunate to have spent a great deal of time participating in ceremonies and learning about the sacrifices that so many in uniform have made.

I was privileged to learn so much about our country's military history through formal lectures and having the opportunity to hear stories from veterans themselves. I encourage all Saskatchewan residents to take time this week to reflect on the legacy of Saskatchewan's veterans. For everything they risked and everything they've put forward in the name of life, freedom, and prosperity we collectively enjoy today, we give

veterans our thanks and remind them that they will always be remembered.

This week hundreds of ceremonies and events taking place across Canada are in honour of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice, defending Canada's interests at home and abroad.

While these celebrations are a vital component in recognizing the service of veterans, it is my hope that our veterans and their service remain at the forefront of our hearts and minds throughout the year. I call on all members to join me in honouring the achievements and sacrifices of all who have served our country as well as those brave women and men who continue to serve in uniform today.

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

Canadian Down Syndrome Week

Mr. Buckingham: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to recognize Canadian Down Syndrome Week. As a proud father of a daughter who has Down syndrome, I can personally relate to the importance of raising the awareness of Down syndrome. Canadian Down Syndrome Week was created by the Canadian Down Syndrome Society to show the world that Canada is a place where all people are valued. This year's theme is, once again, See the Ability. It encourages the inclusion and celebration of people with Down syndrome while dispelling myths and stereotypes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Saskatchewan Down Syndrome Society began in 2002 as a group of parents who wanted to support other parents whose children had Down syndrome. Today the Saskatchewan Down Syndrome Society works to enhance the quality of life of individuals with Down syndrome and their families through advocacy, awareness, and education. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to join the Saskatchewan Down Syndrome Society and the rest of Canada in empowering individuals with Down syndrome and their families.

One of the priority areas of this government's disability strategy was to raise awareness and understanding of the rights of people with disabilities. I hope that all Saskatchewan citizens will see the ability in each other as we work towards becoming a more inclusive and supportive province. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Prince Albert Lions Club Celebrates 70th Anniversary

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. On Saturday, September 30th, a special celebration took place in Prince Albert as the Prince Albert Lions Club celebrated their 70th year of service in the community. The club was originally chartered in September 1947 at the Prince Albert municipal airport's Airliner Club. Dr. Chipperfield was the first president, and at the time the club had 39 chartered members.

The Lions' first goal was to support the blind and visually impaired, a goal still pursued today through used eyeglasses collection drives and ongoing support of the Lions eye bank.

Over the years the Prince Albert Lions Club has expanded its service to include high school scholarships and Operation Red Nose. Operation Red Nose is a ride program over the Christmas season that aims to reduce impaired driving by helping people and their vehicles get home safely. We know Saskatchewan has nation-leading impaired driving rates, and we recognize how valuable these efforts are for our community.

I would like to thank the Lions Club for their sponsorship of events including Prince Albert's annual crafts and antiques sale, the Prince Albert Exhibition parade, Easter Bunny sales, and youth volunteer awards.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I ask that all members join with me in congratulating the Prince Albert's Lion Club on their 70th anniversary, and in recognizing the club's many contributions to the city of Prince Albert.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Biggar-Sask Valley.

Member Elected Chair of Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians for the Canada Region

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm proud today to rise and acknowledge the member from Regina Rochdale for being appointed the Chair of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians, or CWP, for the Canada region.

Created in 2005, CWP Canada region is composed of women parliamentarians of the provincial and territorial Canadian legislatures and the federal parliament. There's an international body for CWP, as well as nine regional groups spread across the world. The organization's mandate is to encourage more women to seek public office. They look to achieve this through education, connection, empowerment, and engagement.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Regina Rochdale has been involved in the CWP Canada for a number of years. She previously served as the Deputy Chair from 2014 to 2017, and she will now serve as the Chair for a three-year term.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, having strong women representation in politics is vital to our success, not only as a party and government but as a society as a whole. Despite the progress that has been made, there's still much more to do. It is the responsibility of everyone in this Assembly to follow this member's lead and encourage young women throughout this province and country to pursue careers as elected officials.

On behalf of this entire Assembly, I'd like to congratulate the member from Regina Rochdale on her new position. Thank you.

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

Jim Pattison Children's Hospital Radiothon

Mr. Olason: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Last week was the 15th annual Jim Pattison Children's Hospital radiothon presented by CIBC Wood Gundy, which was broadcasted live from the Hill Tower II in Regina. The funds that were raised this year will go towards current urgent pediatric medical equipment for the new Jim Pattison Children's Hospital in Saskatoon.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this year's event raised over \$450,000. Generous donors arrived to the radiothon from all over the province, providing funds, sharing their stories, and showing their support for families in their communities who will greatly benefit from this hospital being opened.

In addition to raising funds towards the hospital, donations from this year's event will also go towards helping purchase two important pieces of equipment for the provincial pediatric transport team which makes over 550 trips a year. The equipment needed includes a transport ventilator and isolette which helps the most vulnerable babies, keeping them breathing and warm.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are just two years away from seeing the efforts of events such as this bring the children's hospital to reality, opening its doors and expert services to many families in need.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I ask that all members please join me in thanking Harvard Broadcasting and CIBC Wood Gundy for their commitment to the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital as well as the many sponsors who helped make this all possible. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Saskatchewan Scholarship of Honour Recipients

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Saskatchewan has a strong history of men and women serving in Canada's Armed Forces, and today I stand in this House to acknowledge and thank some of them through the Scholarship of Honour. This scholarship was created in 2009 to recognize sacrifices made by members of the Canadian Armed Forces. To date, 183 scholarships have been awarded. It gives eligible returning members, as well as the spouse and children of injured or fallen members, a \$5,000 scholarship towards their post-secondary studies.

Mr. Speaker, we celebrate 22 of these heroes, two of them who join us in the House today.

I would like read into the record a note from one recipient, Mark Giroux, who was unable to attend today's event. He writes that the Scholarship of Honour "... has enabled me to learn the skills that will greatly assist me with my transition to the civilian workforce when I am released from the military."

Mr. Speaker, the scholarship is a small token of our gratitude for the servicemen and women who gave our country so much more. I would ask all members to please join me in thanking the

two members who have joined us in the House today, as well as extend our deepest gratitude to all scholarship recipients for their service and commitment to our country and wish them the best in their academic studies. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

International Trade Centre Opens at Evraz Place

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Today's a pretty big day in Regina. The International Trade Centre, being built right here at Evraz Place, was officially opened this morning. They are now preparing to host their first major event, Canadian Western Agribition, from November 20th to 25th. The 150,000-square foot facility will be filled with more than 1,200 international guests from 75 different countries.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this facility was partially funded by the Growing Forward 2 agreement, a five-year, \$3 billion agreement by the federal, provincial, and territorial governments to expand and strengthen Canada's agriculture industry. As Canada is the fifth-largest agriculture exporter in the world, it is important to continue to make strong investments in facilities such as this to help maintain growth in our agriculture sector. The facility also received funding from the city of Regina, the Regina Hotel Association, and Canadian Western Agribition.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, agriculture's a driver of our provincial economy, and our government is committed to making sure our industry can continue to be competitive in the world markets. This facility will boost international events that display the quality and capability of Saskatchewan's agriculture sector and attract new events and visitors to our great province.

Mr. Speaker, I'd ask that all members of this Assembly join me in recognizing the completion of this incredible facility and thank all those parties involved.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Auditor's Report and Details of Land Transactions

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This Premier doesn't like it when we ask questions about the GTH [Global Transportation Hub] but, according to the people who are running to replace him, it's the topic that even Sask Party supporters are asking about all across the province.

The Premier's tired lines about the auditor's report and her finding "no wrongdoing" just don't cut it anymore, and the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] were interested enough in possible wrongdoing to go ahead with an investigation. The Premier seems to think that we shouldn't ask any questions about it until the investigation is over, but I think the Premier should set a higher bar for himself. After a decade as Premier, he should know that he needs to be held accountable to the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, there are two very different versions of how involved he was with the GTH. One is from him: he was involved from the start. The other is from his office: he had no involvement in any of the negotiations. Mr. Speaker, can the Premier please tell us which version he told the RCMP?

[14:00]

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, it's interesting. The new Leader of the Opposition has run out of questions because it's the same one she's asked nearly every day since the session began . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well now they're saying, well you should answer it. I did answer it. I said the correct answer is both, Mr. Speaker; both things are true. And what I told the RCMP when they interviewed me was the truth. We answered the questions truthfully, Mr. Speaker. I expect all those who were being interviewed did the same thing.

Mr. Speaker, she sort of, just sort of in her preamble though, minimizes the work of the Provincial Auditor, and I don't accept that. Well they're laughing about it. You know, when they had their issues — for example, things like SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company], things like Murdoch Carriere — there was never any independent officer of the Legislative Assembly that looked at those matters. They never had the courage to refer those very serious issues to an independent officer of the legislature . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well we did on the Global Transportation Hub issue for good reason, because there were questions that needed to be answered.

So they can . . . They're actually minimizing a process they asked for. That's the interesting part. They demanded the Provincial Auditor look at it. The Provincial Auditor did. It was exhaustive, Mr. Speaker, and her public comments, notwithstanding the recommendation she made about mistakes made on this side, her public commentary was that she didn't see red flags around conflict of interest or fraud, Mr. Speaker. And now we await this other review.

I will not rule out an additional review potentially, Mr. Speaker. But the fact of the matter is she's asked this question in the past. I just answered it as I've answered it before.

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

Usage of Private Email Accounts

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier's original statement was, "I was there through this whole process. I know what was intended and what wasn't." Mr. Speaker, the "whole process" obviously includes the negotiations as well. But the problem is that there always seems to be two versions to every story that comes out of the Premier's office.

Let's take another example: his government emails. We know the Premier promised he would stop using the partisan email with the server housed at the Sask Party office for government business, but we also know he kept using it anyway. In September, for instance, he used it to make sure a GTH story was being controlled. Mr. Speaker, his office said he didn't use

his government email because "the Premier's government email wasn't working for the better part of two weeks in September, and this was one of the days."

Mr. Speaker, seriously, two weeks? The Premier of this province was without email for two weeks? What steps has the Premier taken to make sure that such a problem doesn't happen again?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much for that. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member again for her questions about which email account I am using. Mr. Speaker, I know members on both sides of the House have used non-government email accounts. Perhaps it's been a product of when you have an existing thread with someone, you're corresponding, sometimes the default email account comes up and you send it before you realize you should've switched to some non-private account. I think that's happened to members opposite because we've received the emails, Mr. Speaker, and I think that's reasonable, so long as all of the emails that we send to anybody on government business are available for the Provincial Archives — that's an important test — or are subject to FOI [freedom of information]. Mr. Speaker, they are asking those questions because we ensured that any emails I may have sent, inadvertently or otherwise, on a non-government email account were made available in an FOI. That's how they know about this issue, is because we made sure that regardless of how . . . what account was used, the freedom of information request would apply to those emails.

Mr. Speaker, the other reason you might want to have private email accounts not used, or non-government accounts used, is for the purposes of the historical archives of the province. Here again I would invite the new Leader of the Opposition to explain to the people of the province why eight of her colleagues, eight former NDP [New Democratic Party] ministers, have the taxpayers' files in their basement — have yet to, in 10 years, turn over those documents to the Provincial Archivist. That's what the regulations of the province require of them. So while she's pointing her finger at others, she might want to inquire with her colleagues, former NDP ministers, who have taxpayers' residence documents in their basements, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, the official story was that the Premier's email wasn't working for "the better part of two weeks." Now can you imagine how busy the IT [information technology] folks must've been trying to fix this problem? Well we asked the Ministry of Central Services, through an access to information request, for all correspondence related to technical difficulties with the Premier's government email account, and any accounts in the offices of the Premier, for the month of September. Mr. Speaker, in response we were told, "The records that you wish to access do not exist."

Mr. Speaker, they sent us a thorough list of all of the technical difficulties experienced by Government of Saskatchewan email users during that month, but nothing for the Premier. Mr.

Speaker, if it was broken for two weeks, why did the Premier not take any of the usual steps to fix this government email? And given his apparent lack of regard for following the proper process to get his government email fixed, what assurances do Saskatchewan people have that he will take the appropriate steps to turn over to the Privacy Commissioner the contents of the Sask Party email server that he has been using for government business?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have five excellent women and men who are travelling the province of Saskatchewan. They are meeting in town halls. They're meeting individually. There's been forums. They've met with thousands of people together, and they've been reporting back to the caucus the issues they've been hearing from Saskatchewan people. And I'm surprised that this is not anywhere near the top of the list of those. This whole issue of private and public . . . Especially when, I would share with the hon. Leader of the Opposition, the commitment that these emails, the ones that should be accessible by FOI regardless of what account they've been sent on, will be made available to freedom of information requests — as we know has been the case already, because they discovered this issue because we gave them an email that I sent from a non-government account.

Moreover, moreover, all of the emails have . . . all of the emails are . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . well the member for Nutana . . . Oh, she likes to talk from her seat, especially when she doesn't like the answer. Especially when she realizes her leader of . . . the leader of her party is asking questions that don't resonate anywhere in the province of Saskatchewan. But I will just say this. Let me just say this, Mr. Speaker. Any emails from a non-government account I've used will be collected, are being collected, so they can be turned over to Provincial Archives on the soon and coming day when the member will be free of having to ask me questions every day in this House.

But, Mr. Speaker, while she's asking questions of me, she should ask John Nilson, former Justice minister; Andrew Thomson, former Finance minister; Joan Beatty, former minister of Northern Affairs; Graham Addley, minister of seniors; Eldon Lautermilch, minister of SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Corporation], why they never turned over their files to the Provincial Archives.

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

Employment and Global Transportation Hub

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Answers like that are an insult to Saskatchewan people who are working hard every day and who are playing by the rules, Mr. Speaker. Meanwhile it looks like the Sask Party are playing by an entirely different set of rules. Nowhere is this more clear than the Sask Party's GTH scandal.

Mr. Speaker, if the GTH does ever become fiscally viable, it could create jobs. Brightenvue alone could create up to 600 new jobs. But because the Sask Party twisted the SINP [Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program] regulations and

created a loophole for businesses at the GTH, not one of those jobs will have to go to someone from Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, even though it's located in Regina, any foreign business that sets up shop at the GTH doesn't get treated like a business in the city. Mr. Speaker, why did the Sask Party bend the rules to help new foreign investors instead of the tens of thousands of Saskatchewan people who are looking for work?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of the Environment and the Minister Responsible for the GTH.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the member opposite in her preamble said that that the global transportation at some point may create jobs. In fact it is creating jobs. There's over 800 people that are employed at the Global Transportation Hub. There's over 1,800 construction jobs that have been created and in fact there is construction going on today. I would invite the member opposite, join me on a tour. We'll go to the Loblaw facility that I toured just a couple of weeks ago, and we'll see, at any given time, there's over 200 people employed at the Loblaw centre as a part of 800 people that are employed.

With respect to Brightenvue, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite will know that the legislation that was put before this House, the legislation that was put before this House was introduced in the fall of 2012, which did create a municipal-like structure as an authority which all inland ports . . . if you're going to operate an inland port, do inland trade, and especially in a province that's over 95 per cent of what we produce is exported, is traded . . . It was introduced in the fall of 2012. It was passed in the spring of 2013. Brightenvue never contacted the government, the Global Transportation Hub, until late summer of 2013, well before the bill . . . well after the bill ever was introduced.

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

Carbon Pricing and Carbon Capture and Storage

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's so hard to get a straight answer out of anyone over there, but let's try another topic. Boundary dam and the carbon capture . . .

[Interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: — It would be helpful if we could hear the question and also the answer, and I'd ask for the members' co-operation. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Boundary dam and carbon capture utilization and storage. The Premier loves to brag about it, and the former minister was in Estevan last month saying there was "great potential for further expansion." But, Mr. Speaker, on Friday SaskPower's president and CEO [chief executive officer], Mike Marsh, said the opposite — that expansion would cost too much and that he was recommending against any plans cabinet might have to expand CCS [carbon capture and storage] in the foreseeable future.

So, Mr. Speaker, which one is it? Will the Sask Party take the advice of the experts, including SaskPower's president and

CEO, or will they ignore that advice and keep spending hundreds of millions of dollars on Boundary dam?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Environment and the Minister Responsible for SaskPower.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think in the preamble the member indicated the government has bragged about this project. I think that was the word she used — bragged. Mr. Speaker, with respect to carbon capture and sequestration, a number of people have in fact touted or bragged about the benefits of this, including Lorne Calvert, June 14th of 2007. Mr. Speaker, he said, “We have pioneered, we have pioneered in this province some of the technology around carbon [capture] . . . sequestration, capture and sequestration.” I guess he had to repeat himself on that for some reason, but that’s April 29th, 2009.

Here is their plan on June 14th, 2007, a five-component plan or . . .

[Interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: — The members co-operated and we heard the question. I’d asked the opposition members to co-operate so we can hear the answer. I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In their five-point plan in June 14, 2007, there are five emissions reductions wedges, and I quote — wedges — “Carbon dioxide capture and storage measures in . . . [the] oil and gas industry and in the province’s electrical sector.” Mr. Speaker, Ralph Goodale has also, just in this year, in addition talked about significant reductions in the total of greenhouse gases, which I believe the member opposite also indicated just in the last couple of days. Well, Mr. Speaker, I have Regina Rosemont as well. I have quotes from him. I have Harry Van Mulligen. I have quotes from him as well, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, all that to say is that SaskPower is going to continue to do their due diligence as we move forward on making decisions on Boundary dam 4 and 5, Mr. Speaker. That’s going to be a part of that deliberation in terms of what the energy mix going forward into the future for Saskatchewan will look like.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, denial is more than a river in Egypt. The Sask Party leadership candidate that the Premier basically endorsed here in the Assembly last week, that Sask Party leadership candidate said, “Carbon isn’t a villain,” and, “We have invested in the right science and technology.”

Mr. Speaker, let’s check the actual facts. Since 2014, SaskPower has had to pay over \$20 million in penalties alone because they couldn’t deliver as promised to Cenovus. And don’t forget in 2015, the plant had to be shut down so many times it “prevented the plant from achieving an acceptable level of reliability and performance.”

Mr. Deputy Speaker, last year despite all of the facts piling up

against it, the Premier, when he travelled to China, bragged about Boundary dam 3. The fact is, the business case for natural gas is a better alternative. It was strong in 2012 and it’s overwhelming now. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to that minister: how many more hundreds of millions of dollars will he make Saskatchewan people pay for a Sask Party CCS experiment?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of the Environment and the Minister Responsible for SaskPower.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, here’s also another . . . somebody that bragged about this technology:

I think we can notice the discussion that goes on globally here now around carbon capture and sequestration. We can be proud of the investment that Saskatchewan New Democrats and that the innovation of Saskatchewan people had in making this possible.

Mr. Speaker, that’s the member from Rosemont just a couple of years ago, who is running to be the leader of the New Democrats — and I assume the Premier of the province of Saskatchewan, heaven forbid.

[14:15]

Mr. Speaker, of course the Premier’s going to talk about carbon capture and sequestration technology when he goes to places like China, because we know around the world there’s over 2,000 coal-fired power plants that are currently either in development or in planning stages.

Who else has talked about this? Well I can say that, Mr. Speaker, there were delegates in Regina just a couple of weeks ago that looked at carbon capture and sequestration at a symposium that we hosted. Over 12 countries from around the world, including, Mr. Speaker, including prominent researchers from places like the University of Texas, officials from China, from other countries that said that we need to continue to look at this technology that we’re demonstrating here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we will look to see whether or not it makes sense in the short term as we increase the power mix in this province, Mr. Speaker. But, Mr. Speaker, that will be a part of the deliberations and the due diligence that this government does. But no final decision has been made.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I wish this minister showed as much concern for Saskatchewan ratepayers as he did for the international guests that come to this House.

If the minister, if he doesn’t like what I have to say, again what about SaskPower’s CEO? SaskPower’s CEO says that power generation costs twice as much from CCS technology as it would from natural gas. And this makes sense, Mr. Speaker. We know that amine costs have been increasing year over year. We know the business case for the project was flawed from the beginning and has been derailed by the lack of CO₂ sales and exorbitant penalties. And we know the plant was offline for

three whole months this summer, Mr. Speaker. Through higher taxes and higher power rates, the Sask Party have forced Saskatchewan people to dump millions into this project with no end in sight.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to the minister: will he commit today to not expanding the wasteful CCS project to Boundary dam 4 and 5?

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister Responsible for SaskPower.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Well, Mr. Speaker, I won't commit today, because the due diligence hasn't been done. I don't know. Maybe that's the way that the NDP make decisions, and how they made decisions when they were government, Mr. Speaker. But we'll do our due diligence, Mr. Speaker, in making that decision.

I can report, Mr. Speaker, that last month 85 000 tonnes was captured, the highest performing month since the process came online in October 2014. And I could also, should remind the members opposite that at the time, over the number of years that Boundary dam 3 was being looked at and the due diligence was being done at that time — including when the members opposite were the government, where they were happy to promote some fancy carbon capture clean coal buttons and that's about as far as they got — but they would know that the price of natural gas ranged from anywhere from \$4 a gigajoule all the way up in the mid part of the last decade as high as \$17 per gigajoule. So the rate of natural gas, the price of natural gas, fluctuated significantly over the years that the project was being done in terms of the due diligence of that project.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite acknowledged that this technology actually is capturing carbon emissions rather than emitting them to the atmosphere — I think that's the point in all of this, Mr. Speaker — and certainly is doing a far better job in terms of technology than a carbon tax. And I think the members opposite need to decide whether or not they support, on this issue, the Prime Minister of this country or the Premier of Saskatchewan.

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

Employment of Women in Saskatchewan

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, BD3 is another example of the Sask Party's wasteful mismanagement. And instead of waving it off as nothing, they need to realize there are real consequences being paid by real people that go beyond higher power bills. While the Sask Party is busy trying to fill their growing deficits and massive debts, they're abandoning Saskatchewan people who are looking for work. As I've told the minister before, this year, 28 per cent more Saskatchewan women had to apply for EI [employment insurance]. Friday, October's job numbers came out and showed even fewer women working in our province, and a growing number have given up looking for work.

Mr. Speaker, concretely, what is the minister doing to help women facing the brunt of the Sask Party's cuts?

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

Hon. Mr. Bonk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The first thing is we want to make sure everyone knows we empathize deeply with anyone who's been affected by the recent job losses. Our economy has been hit by the resource downturn. It's been a very . . . has had some effects on our economy. But if the member was to look at September's job numbers, she would've seen that there is 1,300 more women working in our province than there was the year before, as we know that we need to look at long-term trends when we look at job numbers. In fact, over 60,000 more people are working in Saskatchewan now than they were in the last years of the NDP.

We are doing this. We know there's more work to do, but we'll stand by our records of job creation, compared to the NDP when they were dead last in job creation in this country.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, what the minister doesn't seem to understand is that the participation rate for women in the workforce is also dropping, which shows that some people have even given up looking because they've given up hope.

If this government was serious about helping women in the economy and in society, they would stop cutting from health care and education — areas of work in which women tend to be over-represented — and they would enlist in the expertise that you might expect from a status of women's office. Mr. Speaker, in Alberta they have over 25 staff working in that office. In Manitoba it's four. In Saskatchewan, the Sask Party have one. One person for a province of over a million people. And the position was only filled after they left it vacant for a year.

Can the minister explain how the Sask Party can justify so little representation, especially why women are being hit so hard by the Sask Party's heartless cuts and unfair tax hikes?

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

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we have a new executive director. Her name is Jessica Broda. She has a lot of great ideas about how we best promote the interests of women in this province and within the economy. Still, the member opposite has to admit that the status of women has become more of a philosophy or of a movement than the focus of just one office, Mr. Speaker.

The status of women is all around us. There are six women among the members opposite, 10 on this side, and I know we feel up to the job, Mr. Speaker. So did Sarah Ramsland, Saskatchewan's first female MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] who was elected in 1918 in the Pelly District, Mr. Speaker, only two years after women secured the vote. How far we've come.

I agree with the former NDP MLA Deb Higgins who said in 2003 that she felt it was appropriate that women's issues be looked at across government, that every department has a

responsibility to look at initiatives and programs in terms of how they affect women and equity issues across the province. In other words, Mr. Speaker, every ministry is the ministry of the status of women.

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

Support for Agricultural Producers Following Fire

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The wildfires near Burstall, Leader, and Tompkins had tragic human cost. They also scorched tens of thousands of acres of land and claimed the lives of thousands, or of hundreds rather, of cattle. Producers say the fire will have an impact on production for years to come. On Throne Speech day, the Agriculture minister said, “We’re hoping to do more, one way or another.” We also hope that as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But like the producers who are suffering, we’d like to know what the plan is sooner than later.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the government set up a \$300 million contingency fund for circumstances like these. To the minister: will this government use their contingency fund to help these producers?

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

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member for her question. First of all, I extend my condolences to the family and friends of James Hargrave who lost his life fighting those fires. James was a husband, father, and a cattle producer who will be deeply missed and fondly remembered.

Contact has been made with impacted municipalities, and we’ve been helping producers through those municipalities to dispose of carcasses that were burnt in the fire and in a safe and effective manner, Mr. Speaker. We have veterinarians on the scene and have had for some time to assist with animals that suffered injury from the fires and smoke, but did not die from it, immediately at least. And the programs that are available generally do not cover insurable assets, and most of the losses in these fires, unfortunately, were insurable assets. But we, you know, we’re still evaluating what can be done and, you know, and looking for ways to help without . . . outside of those programs that just don’t fit this situation, I’m sorry to say.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 84 — *The Income Tax (Business Income) Amendment Act, 2017*

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 84, the income tax (business taxation) amendment Act, 2017 be now introduced and read a first time.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Finance has moved that Bill No. 84, *The Income Tax (Business Income) Amendment Act, 2017* 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?

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Next sitting of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 85 — *The Reclaimed Industrial Sites Amendment Act, 2017*

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

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 85, *The Reclaimed Industrial Sites Amendment Act, 2017* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Energy and Resources has moved that Bill No. 85, *The Reclaimed Industrial Sites Amendment Act, 2017* be now introduced and read 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?

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Next sitting of the Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 86 — *The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 2017*

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

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 86, *The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 2017* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Social Services has moved that Bill No. 86, *The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 2017* 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. Merriman: — Next sitting of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 605 — *The Saskatchewan Employment (Support for Survivors of Domestic Violence) Amendment Act, 2017*

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move that Bill No. 605, *An Act to Provide Support to Survivors of Domestic Violence* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Leader of the Opposition has moved that Bill No. 605, *The Saskatchewan Employment (Support for Survivors of Domestic Violence) Amendment Act, 2017* be now introduced and read 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?

Ms. Sarauer: — Next sitting of the Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 606 — *The Election (Fairness and Accountability) Amendment Act, 2017*

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

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move that Bill No. 606, *An Act to amend The Election Act, 1996 to provide fairness and accountability in election fundraising* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Centre has moved that Bill No. 606, *The Election (Fairness and Accountability) Amendment Act, 2017* be now introduced and read 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?

Mr. Forbes: — Next sitting of the Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker: — Next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

[14:30]

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 1 through 15.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Government Whip has tabled answers to questions 1 to 15. I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I wish to order the answers to questions 16 through 18.

The Deputy Speaker: — Questions 16 to 18 are ordered.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 76 — *The Parks Amendment Act, 2017*

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Thanks so much, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to speak about *The Parks Amendment Act, 2017*. Our provincial parks continue to have strong visitation, boasting almost 4 million visits both the last two years. It's important we continue to improve park opportunities to ensure every one of our parks' visitors enjoys their time in our great parks, Mr. Speaker.

This government is committed to improving and expanding the provincial parks system in Saskatchewan. My ministry has been working towards the commitment by endeavouring to establish two new provincial parks. Great Blue Heron Provincial Park, the first new park in 20 years, was proclaimed in 2013. The Act I'm speaking on today focuses on the introduction of a second new provincial park and also includes a number of other minor changes.

First I'll discuss the new park designation in the Porcupine Hills area. Over the last six years my ministry has held open houses, trade show events, knocked on doors, sent letters, and used online surveys as well as the SaskParks website to consult with as many people as possible in the area. My ministry used a unique nine-step process to consult with First Nations and Métis communities as well as cottagers, campers, and surrounding communities in order to identify and resolve potential concerns.

The name of the new park is identified in this bill as Porcupine Hills Area Provincial Park. However this name chosen from the geographical area is only temporary. My ministry's intention is that the park name will be amended prior to proclamation after local jurisdictions and Aboriginal communities are given a chance to suggest what the park should be named.

The Porcupine Hills area is located about four hours' driving distance from both Regina and Saskatoon. It's along the Manitoba border just south of the town of Hudson Bay. The proposed park will consist of two blocks, Mr. Speaker: the Woody River block and the McBride Lake block, each with its own unique and picturesque landscapes. The Woody River block is covered with dense evergreen forests and lakes, several campgrounds, a cottage subdivision, and a year-round lodge. It incorporates the existing Woody River rec site, recreation site plus additional Crown land.

The McBride Lake block is a mixture of open grasslands and mixed aspen, birch, and white spruce forest cover. The block has a number of smaller lakes, two campgrounds, and three cottage subdivisions. It incorporates four recreation sites: McBride Lake, Pepaw Lake, Parr Hill Lake, and Saginas Lake, as well as surrounding Crown land.

The Porcupine Hills, and especially the McBride Lake section, have a rich cultural history for Aboriginal people. In particular, the Pepaw plains area of the proposed park contains burial and ceremonial sites and has been an important medicinal herb gathering area for a number of nearby First Nation communities. There are no electrified campsites or paved roads within the park, Mr. Speaker. From the feedback we received, that's the way people like it, and that's just how we plan to keep it. Camping, fishing, and hunting have become prevalent in the area, especially in the McBride Lake section which becomes busy in fall with sport hunters looking for bear, whitetail deer, elk, and moose. Hunting will continue as it does today once the park is designated. In the winter months, snowmobiling is quite popular, with several groomed trails available.

As part of the 1998 Pasquia/Porcupine integrated forest land use plan led by the Ministry of the Environment, these two blocks of land were removed from the forest management agreement for the purpose of exploring park dedication. Since that time, the government has worked with public and Aboriginal communities in the region. This work will continue and will specifically ensure that First Nations and Métis communities find ways to keep their traditions and culture alive in the park and are looking at those partnerships.

Mr. Speaker, the Porcupine Hills area is a place of natural beauty and cultural diversity and a popular area for recreational use on a year-round basis. Dedication as a provincial park will help to raise awareness of the area's significance for the benefit and enjoyment of our residents and visitors for generations to come. This will also result in an additional 25 800 hectares of Crown land being protected as parkland.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I'll provide a few more details on the secondary amendments in the Act, the first one being adding a statute of limitations. A new section is being proposed to extend the limitations period for prosecutions within *The Parks Act*. Currently there is no specific limitation period within the Act or

regulations. As such, limitations default to *The Summary Offences Procedure Act*, which specifies six months. That's too short a period to investigate issues or to make a determination on how to proceed. In comparison, other similar Acts with limitation periods include *The Saskatchewan Employment Act*, *The Wildfire Habitat Protection Act*, and *The Wildlife Act*, which have two- and three-year periods. The proposed amendment would allow for prosecutions to commence up to two years from the time the ministry becomes aware of a contravention.

Number two, park boundary descriptions. We have several park boundary descriptions which are being brought forward for minor amendments. Christopher Lake protected area, Candle Lake Provincial Park, Danielson Provincial Park, and Greenwater Lake Provincial Park have some minor exclusions being proposed. These relate to some future planning, roadway widening work, canal expansion, and description corrections. A few items of boundary clarification are also included whereby the park description requires improved wording to more clearly describe the boundary.

Many of our parklands are defined by descriptions using original township maps and water bodies, and that does not always coincide with the Information Services Corporation's current mapping. It would be extremely costly and time consuming to formally survey all our parklands, so instead we're making amendments to address known inconsistencies. The park boundaries being clarified include Douglas, Great Blue Heron, Lac La Ronge, and Meadow Lake.

And the third part is forestry terminology amendment. An administrative amendment is needed to provide a new definition of timber to replace the term "Crown timber" removed from *The Forest Resources Management Act*. The forestry amendment also provides clarification that timber harvesting within parks can be authorized under both *The Forest Resources Management Act* and *The Parks Act*, depending on the type of project. Initial directives on those distinctions are provided at a policy level. Under the Canada-US [United States] Softwood Lumber Agreement, we have consulted with the softwood lumber group to ensure changes do not affect the agreement as it is renegotiated.

And four, clarify authority to evict for alcohol-related offences. Each year our ministry establishes an annual alcohol ban over the May long weekend in all our provincial campgrounds. With the advice from our counsel in Justice, we are proposing a minor adjustment to close the gap to support an enforcement officer's ability to carry out the annual alcohol ban. We would be adding clarification that an enforcement officer may evict for contravention of the annual alcohol ban as is currently supported by *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act*. Keep in mind that eviction is often the last resort. Our enforcement officers apply warnings and tickets before they would go so far as to evict.

And the fifth part is housekeeping. There are a number of housekeeping amendments being made to improve the language, clarity, and gender references throughout the Act.

To conclude, I am pleased to move second reading of *The Parks Amendment Act, 2017*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — The minister has moved that Bill No. 76, *The Parks Amendment Act, 2017* 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'm once again very pleased to take my spot in my place today to give the initial comments as it pertains to Bill No. 76. And before I do that, Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the member that has become the Minister Responsible for Parks. I realize that's his first portfolio and that it is a very interesting portfolio, as on one occasion I sat as the Minister for Parks. And it is certainly a learning experience, and there's a lot of valuable people out there that can give some really solid advice on many fronts as to how we not only protect our parks but expand them as well.

Now, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that's really, really important I think is that we have to understand that when you create a park it should be an opportunity for celebration. But it's incumbent upon the government to make sure that they bring in as many groups as they possibly can to try and garner as much public support for the establishment of such a park. And yes, RMs [rural municipality] should be involved. Community councils should be involved. Interest groups should be involved. These are the type of people that will give you some highly valuable advice. They'll give you local insight, and they'll certainly give you some perspectives that you wouldn't get as a member of a government, and certainly being far removed from the community in question that's looking at hosting such a park.

It's really important, Mr. Speaker, is to reach out and seek that advice. And on many occasions, as the minister will be subjected to over time, you will get advice from many quarters. It's important to hear their advice and, as we all know, on occasions government sometimes will or may not use that advice, but the important thing is to listen in and hear what the various groups have to say.

Mr. Speaker, there are housekeeping amendments in this particular bill. But I want to focus on two parts of the bill, if I may, to give the minister our perspective as the official opposition, and the people that are engaged in this process to have them understand that we too want to give the bill as much thorough reading as we can to understand what the bill is trying to do, and to also get perspectives from some of the people that might be engaged in the creation of this new park. I understand that there's Woody River is one of the areas that we're trying to incorporate as part of this new park, as well as McBride Lake lot being the second piece that would complete the designation of this park.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to focus on the two parts I think that are problematic in this particular bill, and that things must be taken into account for some of the things that people are concerned about. The first I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, is that as we create these new parks, what you want to do is you want to respect as many of the stakeholders as you possible can, and as I mentioned, RM councils and the business community, the community in question, the outfitters. It's actually a pretty difficult job at times to manage all the expectations of people in any given area, never mind the province-wide system of trying

to maintain and enhance parks because both of those jobs create a great amount of foresight, a lot of effort, and of course a lot of work and thought.

Now one of the things I think is important is — that I've always maintained as the official opposition member today and in my past and certainly as a government — that you must have full engagement of all the parties involved. Now I know that the minister is aware of a few of the concerns from the Aboriginal group, the indigenous group, and it's important to point out that a lot of the Aboriginal people in any area need to have full engagement. They need to be fully involved.

I might add as well, Mr. Speaker, a lot of those people in that particular area are great Roughrider fans. They pay their taxes. They contribute to the well-being of Saskatchewan, so they're just as equal and just as important as everyone else, and they've always maintained that, and they'll continue to do so. And what they will also maintain, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that they're going to bring forward some of these concerns and some of the issues that really concern them when we look at setting up a park.

Now one of the things that the indigenous people would be concerned about off the hop, Mr. Speaker ... Not having discussions with them but I've been privy to some of these exercises in the past, and certainly the experience that I've had dealing with some of the groups that are impacted by things of this nature is that a lot of the Aboriginal people, they really, really begin to worry about access to the land.

[14:45]

As we know, Mr. Speaker, everything from the sale of the prairie grasslands, Mr. Speaker, that has an effect on access for many of the Aboriginal people. When you start seeing the provincial government sell off even some of the Crown land to the highest bidder, it really begins to add concern to the Aboriginal groups and to the people of the region as to why their concerns were not heard.

And from what I understand, Mr. Speaker, the Aboriginal people themselves who had centuries of experience on that land passed down through generations, they talk about some very, very specific issues, Mr. Speaker. And some of the specific issues I'm making reference to is the fact that they've had a traditional way of going to this land and hunting. Now, does the designation impede them from doing so? I would think it does, because some of the things that also made reference to the bill is on prosecutions. And we all know that when you mention in the same bill the notion of denying access to people who traditionally had access on that land — whether they're Aboriginal or not, Mr. Speaker — that when you mention prosecutions in the same breath, it begins to raise some levels of concern amongst those impacted groups. And the Aboriginal people are a big part of those groups that I mentioned.

Now, Mr. Speaker, throughout history and throughout time, there's many, many cultures that come to Saskatchewan, and the Aboriginal people have been great people to negotiate with and deal with when it comes to recognizing all people. And they've also been great to deal with when you look at some of the issues that we share, the vision that we share, and

particularly on parks. So it's important to note that the Aboriginal community, the indigenous community has been very co-operative, have been very respectful, have been engaged, and had been very thoughtful in some of their discussions with the government.

So when it comes to this park, my point being when it comes to the indigenous population, that you must afford them the level of respect which I assume we do on all discussions and negotiations that pertain to this park. And some of those issues that they have brought forward, I think, need to be recognized in this Assembly and certainly need to be incorporated in how the minister wishes to approach the creation of this park because these issues are of vital importance to them, to their heritage, to their history, and of course to their culture.

Now, Mr. Speaker, some of the First Nations and some of the Aboriginal groups in the area have, as I have said, they've collected medicinal herbs in that particular area. They've hunted and fished and trapped in those areas over time. It may not be specifically in that area but a lot of times they have occupied that land and done many life-sustaining harvesting, whether it's of berries or animals or so forth, or herbs. These are some of the things that they've done for centuries, Mr. Speaker.

Now when you create a park, does that create a no-trespassing attitude to the Aboriginal or the indigenous community of that region? Many people believe it does. Does it really weaken the significance of our treaties? Many people strongly believe that it does. How about the notion of burial grounds, Mr. Speaker? These are some of the things that are really important to the indigenous community, as they are to all communities, is that we must be very, very cognizant of burial grounds and respect where our ancestors lay. It's important to all cultures and to all races, and it's just as equally important to the Aboriginal community. So is there burial grounds within the area that is being described by the minister as creating a new park?

The other matter that's important, Mr. Speaker, within the indigenous community is the whole notion around duty to consult. A lot of people are really worried over time and the Aboriginal community themselves, in particular the First Nations, they really protect their treaty rights. And people ought to know that in this day and age a signed agreement, whether it be 100 years or 150 years ago or five years ago, the ability to recognize and protect and defend their treaty that they signed in co-operation with the Government of Canada, with the Government of Saskatchewan — that needs to be respected. And the history of our treaty and the signing of the treaties are really important for us to understand. So many of the First Nations will protect their treaty rights as hard and as strong as they possibly can, and they'll continue to do so.

So when the courts come along and the courts recognize that this treaty is a live, breathing agreement between the First Nations and the Government of Saskatchewan or the Government of Canada, referred to as the Crown. This is a live, this is a breathing, this is a very connected partnership document that the First Nations will continue holding clear and dear to their heart and to their chest, Mr. Speaker, because it's obviously something that they will need in this modern age to protect their interests and their people and their future. And

that's why when courts come along and they tell governments, it's important for you; you have a duty to consult the Aboriginal people — the First Nations people in this case — when it comes to doing any kind of development, whether it be park development or whether it be economic development. And the list goes on as to what one can construe as being development.

So it's important to point out to the minister that duty to consult does apply in this instance when you are actually taking land away from traditional means in which the First Nations or the Aboriginal people, the Métis people, have accessed that area for years, if not generations, that you have a duty to consult.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there's an important distinction that many people make when we talk about the notion of duty to consult. There's also an attachment called duty to accommodate. Now there's all kinds of interpretations as to how the Supreme Court of Canada would look at that duty to accommodate as to whether that really means duty to agree.

So there are many interpretations legally, but my advice to the minister on this particular bill is that I don't think we need to argue the process of how we interpret the duty to consult nor the duty to accommodate. I think what should happen, clearly, is that we should (a) have respect for the treaties that we signed; (b) that we must engage the Aboriginal community fully at the start with very, very comprehensive discussions; and we also to have to respect like we do with all the other participants in this process, whether it be a reeve and council or whether it be a special interest group or whether it be a business interest, that we have to respect them to bring the Aboriginal community to the table and say, look, what could we do? What could we do?

And they have some excellent ideas, Mr. Speaker. There are some serious reservations on the First Nations' part, from what I understand, on a number of fronts. And I mentioned things, for example denying them access to a newly proclaimed provincial park. Is that really an affront to the right to consult and the right to accommodate? They also look, as I mentioned earlier, at the practice of gathering herbs and berries and so on and so forth. And as well, Mr. Speaker, does that weaken their treaty in some way, shape, or form?

These are all real serious worries that the First Nations and indigenous people of the province have when they negotiate with the province. So I'd point out there is a lot of issues that are left outstanding that need to be addressed.

I don't think that you will find many Aboriginal people that would argue with the protection of land. There would not be very many First Nations people that would argue that trying to create a space where nature and human beings could coexist and a place where we can really protect our culture and our need to appreciate the land in many ways, shapes, and forms, I don't think you'd find that argument from any First Nations person, Mr. Speaker. So there's a great amount of co-operation that they would afford the process. There's also a great amount of understanding of other people's desires and needs on the land.

And as you know, Saskatchewan has been known to continue building forward a relationship between the First Nations and non-First Nations people on many fronts. And when it comes to parks, Mr. Speaker, we must be very careful. We must take the

time to understand exactly what the First Nations' issues are. Not to take away from the other concerns as I mentioned earlier, but to really take the time and listen, listen very carefully to their points, that should there be an effort to protect the burial grounds. Should there be an agreement to allow access to the park for some of the First Nations activities that they've done for centuries, Mr. Speaker?

And should we be very, very careful to not mention the word "prosecutions" at the same page that we're mentioning a creation of a new park, at the same page we're talking about Aboriginal rights and of course the protection of treaty? Those three sections lined up side by side, Mr. Speaker, it shows that there could be an adversarial position on this particular bill. And it needn't be that way, Mr. Speaker, that perhaps through thoughtful discussion, good dialogue, and a respect for all peoples' desires and needs and wants attached to this particular piece of land, that those must be incorporated in the creation of a park.

And if you can imagine for a moment that we address the First Nations' concern and everybody's in agreement that this park would serve in many ways, shapes, or forms the interests of all Saskatchewan people, then we can see the logic behind creating this park was thoughtful. Then we can say that the intent here was pure, and then we can say, Mr. Speaker, that the parties bought into the agreement and therefore we'd move the bill along as per the speedy implementation of this new park which would benefit many, many people.

So we do have a lot of discussions on this particular bill. We want to see what the First Nations' perspective is. We would like the minister to share as well what some of the other advocates are saying about this particular ... in the establishment of a provincial park.

But my closing point on this particular bill, Mr. Speaker, is that you must incorporate the First Nations' and the treaty people's concerns as it pertains to this particular park. If you're going to have their buy-in then you must respect their wishes. You must also respect the court's wishes under duty to accommodate and duty to consult, Mr. Speaker.

And as I had mentioned before, the First Nations have been a part of this particular province for centuries, Mr. Speaker. They have been great co-hosts of this great province. They have been co-operative on many, many fronts, and that's why today I think at the very least, at the very least, with the court cases, the discussions, the points they've raised, and all the arguments made on many fronts, that this government ought to respect the duty to consult, the duty to accommodate, and also the desires of the Aboriginal people of those areas when they try and designate this park as a provincial park, Mr. Speaker.

With their blessing and their input and their guidance, this park could be a model park for the rest of the country to follow but, Mr. Speaker, unless and until we do that then we're going to take the time as the official opposition to really go through this bill and contact as many of the proponents of this bill and those that have concerns, whether they're First Nations or not, as to what problems may occur as a result of this particular bill and the establishment of this particular park.

So on that note, Mr. Speaker, my colleagues will have a lot more to say, but it's obviously an important lesson for the minister to learn that First Nations must also have buy-in here, and if you don't have their buy-in then we've got some major problems. So on that note I move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 76, *The Parks Amendment Act, 2017*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 76. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 77 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Superannuation Plans) Amendment Act, 2017*

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to move second reading of *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Superannuation Plans) Amendment Act, 2017*. Mr. Speaker, this bill serves to amend both *The Liquor Board Superannuation Act* and *The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Act*.

The first amendment proposed in this bill, Mr. Speaker, is to amend *The Liquor Board Superannuation Act* to designate the minister responsible for the Act as the sole member of the Liquor Board Superannuation Commission, or the commission. The commission is responsible for the administration of the Liquor Board superannuation plan, or the plan, while the day-to-day administration of the plan is delegated to the Public Employees Benefit Agency, PEBA, Ministry of Finance.

The Liquor Board and public service superannuation plans have been closed to new members since 1977. As of March 2017, the Liquor Board superannuation plan has two active members, both of whom have exceeded 35 years of service and are eligible to retire. In 2012 a third party was engaged to review the governance of both the Liquor Board and the public service superannuation plans, given the decline in their active membership and the associated work for administering the pension plans. The primary function of the plan at this time is to pay pensions. The key recommendation of the review, which was accepted by the former minister responsible for *The Liquor Board Superannuation Act*, was to designate the minister as the sole member of the Liquor Board Superannuation Commission once the plan approached zero active members. The minister will be supported in this role by PEBA, who will continue to provide administrative services to the pension plan.

[15:00]

Mr. Speaker, the second proposed amendment in this Act serves to amend *The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Act* to allow the restricted retirement option, commonly referred to as RRO, to continue until otherwise ended by a legislative amendment. The RRO provides a means for executive government and the Crown Investments Corporation to offer early retirement to eligible employees in corporate downsizing or restructuring. Proceeding with the amendment does not

commit the Government of Saskatchewan to a future course of action. The RRO provision has been extended annually by an order in council since December 31st, 1995. The amendment eliminates the need for an annual order in council.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Superannuation Plans) Amendment Act, 2017*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Finance has moved that Bill No. 77, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Superannuation Plans) Amendment Act, 2017* 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. Speaker. Again I'm pleased to stand in my place to present our initial thoughts around Bill 77, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Superannuation Plans) Amendment Act, 2017*. Now, Mr. Speaker, there's obviously a lot of questions we have on this particular bill, but I wanted to point out as a result of the initial look at this bill, it really . . . The bill shuts down the appointed commission to manage the superannuation plan for the Liquor Board employees. And the plan has been closed to new members since October 1st, 1977 from what I understand, and because there are only three active members in this plan as of December 31st, the government is shutting down the order in council appointing members of the board and replacing them with the decision-making ability of the minister.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think one of the things that we ought to know as a result of this particular bill is what's the opinion of the . . . There's three members left in this particular superannuation bill that we, or superannuation plan rather, that we ought to be able to seek their input and seek their valued opinion on this particular bill and see if they have any concerns as it relates to their particular bill.

And the reason why, Mr. Speaker, is that you look at the relationship with the Saskatchewan Party as it comes to pensions and their attack on working men and women, that any particular plan to replace them, to replace the board that's protecting some of these interests with them being in total charge, even for three members, Mr. Speaker, it really begs the question is that we need to find out what details that these three members, or how these three members would be impacted and what detail that the government is planning on implementing to manage the superannuation plan of these three members.

So there's not a lot of trust that we have in the Saskatchewan Party when it comes to protecting workers' interests, Mr. Speaker. We've seen evidence of that as they go back to every working . . . all the working men and women of our province, and ask them to pay 3.5 per cent of their salary to cover some of their deficit costs, Mr. Speaker. And here we go again: a bill asking for them to have greater power over, yes, three employees or three active members. Well, Mr. Speaker, we want to find out what kind of money is involved, what the opinion of the three active members are, and what's the intent of the government. What kind of decision-making ability is the minister heaping upon herself to deal with this particular aspect?

And while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, it's really a tough day

for a lot of people that used to work for the Liquor Board. This is obviously a superannuation plan that affected the former workers and, Mr. Speaker, I think you're going to find more and more of the challenges of dealing with former workers of the liquor stores of the province of Saskatchewan as the Sask Party begin to sell them off, store by store, location by location. And every time they sell a store, Mr. Speaker, they are taking money away from the people of Saskatchewan that would profit otherwise under the SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority], and those profits now are going out of province and certainly heading to points unknown.

In the meantime, when we need more money for Saskatchewan's need, we won't be getting it from the Crown corporations like the liquor stores, Mr. Speaker. We'll have to go back, as the Saskatchewan Party did. We'll have to go back and have to see if we can find other ways and means in which they can generate revenue. And, Mr. Speaker, about the only place that the Saskatchewan Party has been able to find ways to generate revenues has been through a billion-dollar tax hike this year alone — \$1 billion in new taxes as a result of the Saskatchewan Party, courtesy of the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker, and they keep doing it. They also created a \$300 million contingency fund or backup fund, and all I see that fund being used for is to backpedal on the current leadership debates or the current leadership candidates. They keep backpedalling on some of their promises as it pertains to what they would fund and what they would not fund.

So as I look at the manner in which they handle our finances, Mr. Speaker, it is a sham. So even though there are only three employees being impacted by this superannuation plan, we want to make sure we scrutinize this bill and we find out exactly what is going on with this bill or any other employees or any other plans as the Sask Party begin their process of having a wall-to-wall sale of our Crowns. And, Mr. Speaker, that impacts all taxpayers in the future because revenues from the Crowns will now have to be, as the Sask Party has shown us this past year, the revenues of those Crowns will now have to be replaced with more taxes from the people of Saskatchewan. And the Saskatchewan Party has shown us that example in spades this past budget year.

So, Mr. Speaker, again as we look at this particular bill, we have no trust whatsoever when it comes to operating the finances of our province with the Saskatchewan Party. We particularly are very, very defensive when it comes to protecting working men and women of this province, and protecting our Crowns. These are some of the things that are paramount to what we stand in the Assembly for today, and that's one of the important things that people of Saskatchewan ought to know.

And we all know that having a robust labour force, a dedicated civil service like we have, having investment opportunity for businesses big and small, and then corporate Canada come to our province to help create those mortgage-paying jobs — those are all real things in the province of Saskatchewan.

But when you have a party that puts a billion-dollar tax hike in one year on working men and women, and buying children's clothing and paying everything from insurance to your power bill to heating costs, Mr. Speaker, you can see how they have

failed miserably at protecting the people of Saskatchewan's interests. And that's one of the reasons why we are especially careful as they come along and tell us that they're going to be conferring decision-making ability to themselves on any matters pertaining to a superannuation plan. We become concerned. We become very skeptical. And of course we become very defensive.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated, as we noted throughout the leadership race of the Saskatchewan Party leadership candidates, they have changed every second day as to what they would fund and not fund. They have had no discipline whatsoever on moving forward on their budget bill of this past spring, Mr. Speaker. We're seeing the cracks and the confusion and the lack of a team over there, Mr. Speaker. It is very obvious from our perspective.

So I think when you look at the confidence of managing any money for any amount of employees, we are concerned and we're very skeptical of that. And that's why we will take the time to understand the bill. We will take the time to try and speak to people that may be impacted by this. Oh and there may be only three, but there's other superannuation plans that could be at risk here as well. We want to be able to anticipate that.

And that's why it's important, Mr. Speaker, to pay very close attention when ministers confer certain special powers upon themselves. Because based on their history, Mr. Speaker, they have not served Saskatchewan well. And this is the reason why we shall and will continue monitoring these bills to make sure that there isn't some plan that they have up their sleeve to try and hurt and continue their war against working men and women of this province.

So on that note, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 77.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 77, the miscellaneous statutes superannuation amendment Act, 2017. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 78 — *The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2017*

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to move second reading of *The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2017*. Mr. Speaker, the municipal employees' pension plan, commonly referred to as MEPP, is a defined benefit pension plan administered by the Municipal Employees' Pension Commission for the employees of schools, rural municipalities, cities, towns, colleges, villages, and libraries and a variety of other municipal-level employers.

As of March 31st, there were close to 25,000 plan members in MEPP and 737 employers participating in the pension plan. Mr. Speaker, the Municipal Employees' Pension Commission wants to continue the financial sustainability of MEPP. Having been

in consultation with its actuary and plan stakeholders, the commission is seeking approval of this Legislative Assembly to amend the plan to remove those provisions that impact the financial stability of the pension plan.

This Act, Mr. Speaker, proposes to eliminate the portability of the pension benefit for members eligible for pension upon termination of employment. Moving lump sums of money out of the plan at retirement is a financial drain on the pension plan and is in contradiction to the steady stream of payments the plan is funded to provide to members in retirement. This amendment causes the option of a temporary pension to transferring members to become redundant. Consistent with the elimination of the portability of pension, Mr. Speaker, members who have pre-1994 contributions in the plan will not be allowed to remove a portion of those pre-1994 contributions on termination or retirement as a partial settlement of the member's benefit. This in turn will maintain the value of the pension benefit for members.

Currently on retirement or termination, members who have contributed more than 50 per cent of the contributions required to fund their pension benefit may use the excess funds to increase the value of their monthly pension benefit. With the passing of this bill, Mr. Speaker, members will be required to move their excess contributions out of the pension plan within two years of their termination date or immediately upon their retirement. This will eliminate any unforeseen liability resulting from the increased pension.

Amendments of a more administrative nature are also required. This bill, Mr. Speaker, proposes to change the composition of the Municipal Employees' Pension Commission. *The Municipal Employees' Pension Act* requires a review of the composition of the commission every five years. A review was conducted in 2015 and a report was submitted to the then minister of Finance in 2016. The minister accepted and agreed to follow through on the recommendations contained in the report. As such, it is recommended that the election of a chairperson and the vice-chairperson for the Municipal Employees' Pension Commission shall be for a term of two years instead of one year.

It is also recommended that the composition of the commission increase by two members. One member is to be appointed by employers who employ firefighters and police officers, and the other is to be appointed by Saskatchewan locals of the Canadian Union of Public Employees that represent MEPP members.

These amendments to the composition of the commission serve to ensure more equitable representation for all stakeholders and will enhance the continuity of the commission's operations from one year to the next. In addition, Mr. Speaker, this bill contains amendments to enhance the administration of the plan. One amendment is intended to clarify the definition of full-time hours for all members of the plan. Besides facilitating consistent interpretation of full-time hours, salary, and service for members, the amendment will also serve to simplify reporting to the plan for the employers.

A second amendment will require all employers to remit contributions to MEPP within 15 days after the end of a pay period. This will provide a more equitable basis for the timely

remittance of contributions by all employers.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of *The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2017*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Finance has moved that Bill No. 78, *The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2017* 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. Speaker. Again I want to preface my comments with the earlier statement I made about the previous bill, that obviously there is a great amount of defensiveness, not only from the opposition, but from any working men and women across the province when it comes to the Saskatchewan Party proposing changes to any of their pension plans, Mr. Speaker, or to how they're going structure a board and so on and so forth.

[15:15]

So, Mr. Speaker, we have to be very, very careful. And this is a lesson that we obviously have been taught over time by many of the people that work together, that strive together, and that bargain together and that of course is our the unions of the province of Saskatchewan. So, Mr. Speaker, we've often maintained on this side of the Assembly, I've said it on many occasions, that if in Saskatchewan the great opportunity is to balance the interests of our province, is that we obviously look at the notion of creating a sustainable economy which a big part of that is to have the large corporations and the small, medium-sized businesses come to our province and help create mortgage-paying jobs and of course to begin the process of strengthening our communities for years and our province for years to come.

So that part of the preface of my comments is the fact that we understand that investment into our province is critical and key if we're going to continue seeing those jobs come forward. But as we invite corporations into our province, we fully expect them to profit from their investment here, Mr. Speaker. That's how the free economy works.

And one of the things that we think is also important to recognize is that the labour force that helps drive that investment for profit should also be able to sustain real good, mortgage-paying jobs through discussion and bargaining and certainly protecting their interests. And a big part of that is to have the unions talk about not only their salary, Mr. Speaker, but as the case makes reference to Bill 78, their pension plans for a safe and comfortable retirement once they finish working and giving their lives to whether it be a Crown corporation or a private corporation or a medium- and then small-sized business, Mr. Speaker.

So it's really a balance. We've said all along that having the corporations come to the province and help develop the resources should obviously profit, Mr. Speaker, and that the people that work and help drive that profit and help drive the resource economy overall, they should be able to negotiate a fair salary. And part of the negotiations for employment include the notion of a pension of which not only that they make

payment on, but the employer makes payment on as well.

The system would work fine, Mr. Speaker, if we continue down this road and we obviously look at that balance because, as we said, it's important to find those balances within the economic construct of our province.

With that being said, Mr. Speaker, we find from time to time we have a right wing government as is evidenced today with the Saskatchewan Party, where they try and weaken the ability for people to organize, to negotiate better health benefits, better salaries, and of course a pension plan. Those are very basic things that every working man and woman in this province would like. And we find that somehow that a right wing government come along and that their job is to try and break the union, try and have zero contribution to the future of workers, Mr. Speaker, and that they actually, the Saskatchewan Party detest the working men and women of this province when it comes to things like pensions.

But, Mr. Speaker, to have a highways worker get up at 5 o'clock in the morning to clear a road for many people of the province of Saskatchewan, well that person, whether it be a male or female, takes pride in his or her work. And, Mr. Speaker, they do that as a service to Saskatchewan, and that's the dedication that we speak of on this side and why it's important to continue recognizing the value of the employees. And certainly some of the issues that they negotiate — whether it be better dental health benefits, whether it be better salary, in this case, pension — we have to respect their position and their ability to collective bargain on some of these fronts.

So that's important, Mr. Speaker, as we hear the words of *The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act*, Mr. Speaker, from the Saskatchewan Party, any member of the Saskatchewan Party, you know, we begin again the process of being very, very careful with what these folks are trying to do.

It's important to note that if you look at the history of the Saskatchewan Party, as I mentioned earlier, everything from the billion dollar tax increase, to try and claw back three and a half per cent from every working man and woman in this province to cover for the scandal, mismanagement, and waste, Mr. Speaker, that's typical of the Saskatchewan Party. And that's one of the reasons why we simply don't trust them when it comes to protecting working men and women's interests in our province. And we actually, we'll take the time to talk to CUPE [Canadian Union of Public Employees]. We will take the time to talk to the employees of some of these municipalities that are looking at this particular Act and see what effect or what impact it may have on them.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's important to note that these are issues that are serious to many working men and women of our province. They are impacted by decisions that we're making in this Assembly. They are impacted by some of the callous cuts by the Saskatchewan Party on many of their services. And, Mr. Speaker, that's one of the reasons why we don't trust the Saskatchewan Party to not only balance the interests of investment into our province, but to protect the labour force that the corporations and the companies rely on on a continual basis.

So, Mr. Speaker, we need to understand this bill a lot better. We

need full engagement of some of the people that may be impacted by this. We understand that some of the updates are around language, but the key issue that we're going to take a lot of time to understand, Mr. Speaker, is really what they're trying to do with this bill. And from our perspective, we will not trust unless we find the intended purpose of this particular bill. And it's only through consulting some of the impacted workers and some of the organizations mentioned in this bill to see how we can do all we can to serve and protect the working men and women of this province as best we can from the opposition perspective.

So on that note, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 78, *The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2017*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 78. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 79 — *The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2017*

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to move second reading of *The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2017*. Mr. Speaker, the public employees pension plan, also known as PEPP, is a defined contribution pension plan administered by the Public Employees Pension Board. The plan, established in 1977, provides a means of saving for retirement and a means of receiving retirement income for its membership: the employees of executive government, government agencies, Crown corporations, and other employers. As of March 31st, there were close to 65,000 members of PEPP and 146 employers.

Mr. Speaker, the world is always changing and the provisions of PEPP need to change to keep up. The six amendments proposed in this bill will, if enacted, enhance the provisions of PEPP. They will improve the rights of PEPP members and their spouses and improve the service provided to PEPP members.

The first proposed amendment would provide immediate vesting and locking in of required member and employer contributions. Vesting entitles the member to the contributions made by the employer on the member's behalf. A member who terminates prior to vesting forfeits the employer contributions, which PEPP then uses to defray administration costs. Currently members must wait one year to become vested. Locking in means that the member's account balance must be used to provide a retirement income. Currently, locking in happens at one year of membership. The proposed amendment will mean that vesting and locking in occur when the member enrolls in PEPP.

Two related amendments would also provide the spouses of PEPP members with additional rights. In the case of a member's death, the amendment would clarify that the spouse

of a deceased member may keep any amount left to him or her in PEPP. With respect to that amount, the spouse would have the same rights as any other non-working member of PEPP. In the case of a breakdown in a spousal relationship, the amendment would permit the spouse or ex-spouse of a member to keep in PEPP any amount resulting from a division of the member's account balance. With respect to that amount, the spouse or ex-spouse would have the same rights as any other non-working member to PEPP.

A proposed amendment would remove a 15-day waiting period for the unlocking of voluntary contributions on termination of employment.

With respect to the authority of the Public Employees Pension Board, which is the trustee of PEPP and the body responsible for administering *The Public Employees Pension Plan Act*, the amendments would clarify that the board may make policy to administer PEPP with respect to out-of-province members and their monies, which is subject to the laws of other provinces.

The amendments I have discussed thus far are being proposed on the recommendation of the Public Employees Pension Board. One final amendment is a purely administrative nature. It is to update the Act to reflect the new name of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union which is now known as Unifor. Unifor is one of the organizations that appoints a member of the board.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of *The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2017*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Finance has moved that Bill No. 79, *The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2017* be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Again, Mr. Speaker, thank you so very much for giving me the opportunity to give the official opposition's first response to Bill 79, *The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2017*. And, Mr. Speaker, as we look through the bill we notice that there are a few housekeeping items that the minister alluded to in her closing statement as it pertains to CEP [Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada] being now represented by Unifor and the fact that we have to update some of the membership content, you know, of the commission.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 79 deals with the public employees pension plan and while there are a few parts of the Act that are primarily housekeeping amendments, Mr. Speaker, we have to really begin to look at some of the issues that the bill also presents, as I pointed out and as the minister made reference to, talking about some of the change that'll allow the board to include members who might live outside of Saskatchewan after their employment. How does that affect the overall process of the PEPP project? As well, Mr. Speaker, there's also changes to include allowing spouses to stay opted in should their partner leave, etc. So these are some of the amendments that the Bill 79 made . . . that the bill spoke about and according to the minister these were things that were asked of the government by the public employees pension plan management team. And, Mr.

Speaker, this is something that is quite an important bill to pay attention to as we want to know what the effects are and what the impacts are.

Obviously when you talk about to allow the board to include members who might live outside of Saskatchewan after their employment, I'm not sure how it pertains to protecting Saskatchewan's interest versus protecting the employees' interest. How does that affect some of the changes within the bill itself? We need to understand that more thoroughly. And obviously we need certain advice from certain groups, and I would daresay, Mr. Speaker, that perhaps it gives us the opportunity to go sit down with the PEPP management board to ask them the impacts and the reasoning and the logic behind why they requested the Government of Saskatchewan to make some of these changes.

So while the bill, parts of it, is primarily housekeeping, there are two things or three things that we have to pay very close attention to and obviously we need to research what they mean. And that is of course including making sure that the CEP members that are not represented by Unifor, that that would be addressed. And as I mentioned, people living outside of Saskatchewan after their employment is over with Saskatchewan, that the changes could include them. What does that mean for the PEPP plan and for the employee? And of course how long the spouse is to stay opted should their partner leave.

So those are some of the issues that we're going to research, Mr. Speaker. This is obviously some changes in how we do business, and we just need to understand it better and get advice and input from those that certainly manage and watch the PEPP interest as best as they could. And they've done a fairly good job of that, Mr. Speaker, but we still certainly need to see and understand their reasoning and logic behind asking the government to put these changes in place. So as a result of that, I certainly move that we adjourn debate on Bill 79, *The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2017*.

[15:30]

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 79, *The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2017*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — That's carried.

Bill No. 80 — *The Municipal Financing Corporation Amendment Act, 2017*

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 80, *An Act to amend The Municipal Financing Corporation Act*. Mr. Speaker, the proposed recommends two changes to the legislation of the Municipal Financing Corporation. These changes are important to a growing province with growing municipalities in need of

key infrastructure to help better serve Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, the first change repeals MFC's [Municipal Financing Corporation of Saskatchewan] 30-year borrowing limit which is a provision that dates back to the 1970s. Capital markets have evolved since then to permit borrowing for longer, more cost-effective terms. Repealing the 30-year limit would put MFC in line with most other Crown corporations which are subject to a 40-year limit in *The Crown Corporations Act*.

The second change is to increase MFC's debt limit from 350 million to 500 million. MFC's debt limit was set at 250 million in the 1970s, and it was raised to 350 million in 2010 to assist local governments in addressing their infrastructure needs. It is prudent to increase the limit once again to ensure that this demand continues to be met and no one is turned away. MFC's debt is self-sustaining debt like the debt of SaskPower, SaskEnergy, and SaskTel, and it does not affect GRF [General Revenue Fund] operating debt. Local governments are fully responsible for repaying any amounts that have been loaned to them. In a growing province, given demand from local governments for infrastructure financing, increasing the debt limit should provide the capacity needed to meet the needs of the local governments for the foreseeable future.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of *The Municipal Financing Corporation Amendment Act, 2017*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Finance has moved that Bill No. 80, *The Municipal Financing Corporation Amendment Act* be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the minister . . . or the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Just three years too early, Mr. Speaker.

I wanted to chat a bit on Bill No. 80, *The Municipal Financing Corporation Amendment Act, 2017*. And this particular bill, Mr. Speaker, as the minister has spoke briefly on it, it allows the financing corporation of Saskatchewan, the Municipal Financing Corporation of Saskatchewan the ability to borrow \$500 million which is an increase from \$350 million. And, Mr. Speaker, she made in her closing comments, the growing part . . . or Saskatchewan is growing and extra money is needed for the Municipal Financing Corporation.

And, Mr. Speaker, there's no question that from the municipal perspective as we look throughout the history of a lot of the municipal governments, municipal governments are not allowed to go into debt to the extent where they can't pay it. They obviously have to be able to show that they do have the ability to pay. And you're seeing more and more of the municipalities taking more and more of the roles and responsibility of the government. And sometimes, Mr. Speaker, we have to be cognizant of the fact that as you take on more responsibilities as a municipality, you lessen the pressure and strain on the senior governments. And one has to begin to assess whether the impact is going to be minimized or is going to have a dramatic effect later on in your finances.

So as you look at the Municipal Financing Corp. being allowed

to lend out \$500 million, which is an increase of \$150 million, one can surmise and can certainly understand that perhaps there are some larger projects with higher costs that the increase could certainly accommodate, Mr. Speaker, because many communities are doing more things on their own.

And the only thing I would say is that we have to, as an opposition, we have to really sit down and say, okay, if there's additional dollars that the Municipal Financing Corporation is being allotted to, in this case \$150 million, we need to determine through committee — we'll have that process of course as the time permits — to ask the questions as to what projects are we looking at that have substantiated the increase of \$150 million, Mr. Speaker.

We've also got to see what communities are being impacted and being affected by this. And more so we've got to also understand is what financial drain this could also create on some of the municipalities that certainly have ambitions. But, Mr. Speaker, they, like anybody else including ourselves, need advice as to how this affects and impacts their financial future.

And I'll give you a good example, Mr. Speaker. When we talked about housing in northern Saskatchewan we saw . . . And I'm not certain if this was part of the loan or the project proceeds, whether it was done through a loan or whether it was done just through a mortgage financing arrangement. I think it was done through a mortgage finance arrangement, Mr. Speaker. But what happened was the provincial government came into Ile-a-la-Crosse, they came in with their federal representative and they announced a million-dollar housing plan, housing project.

And the problem was, Mr. Speaker, was that just over 45 per cent were costs being covered by the provincial government and the federal government. And in the past, Mr. Speaker, 100 per cent of providing housing to the people of Saskatchewan in the past was covered by senior governments, whether it'd be the provincial government or the federal government.

Now when the municipality was asked at the time to cover over half of the cost of building these new homes, Mr. Speaker, it was an enormous strain on the town's finances. As a small northern community, if you are required to cover \$550,000 of housing costs that you weren't anticipating, then obviously you've got to be very, very careful.

And what happened was as the ministers — at the time it was a Conservative government in Ottawa and of course the Sask Party government here in Regina — they took part in the shovel ceremony where they were breaking ground for five new houses, and what they were actually doing was digging a deficit, a big hole for the future of the community of Ile-a-la-Crosse. But because some of these communities are so desperate for housing, Mr. Speaker, the municipality through their development corporation took the lead, took the lead to try and get the money so they can build more homes for their people.

And what happens, Mr. Speaker, is you live in certain socio-economic conditions. You're not actually lending or building these houses for people that have 100 or \$150,000 a year income, Mr. Speaker. A lot of times these are the working

poor; they're the low-wage earner. And there are some families that are on assistance that were living in deplorable conditions in terms of overcrowded houses or poor housing overall.

So what happens in that case, Mr. Speaker, the mayor and the council in their wisdom decided to go to a mortgage to build more units so you could have more people that have decent homes in their community, and they're willing to go in debt. Well the fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that desperation allowed them to go into debt because the senior governments come along and said, we're not going to continue building houses for you folks. We're getting out of that particular part of it. So as you lessen the responsibility on the senior government, you increase the local government's financial future for many, many years to come.

So at the time, I was critical of the fact that senior governments were walking away from 100 per cent financing of homes where they had to now turn to municipal corporations to borrow the money to build homes for those that desperately needed homes, and they took care of the high-risk tenants and the high-risk clients in terms of paying their rent, and of course paying down this mortgage that the town of Ile-a-la-Crosse was responsible for. And, Mr. Speaker, it was quite shameful from my perspective in the sense that senior governments heaped that particular debt onto these communities. Because of the desperate need for houses, most communities decided to go into debt, and as a result of that, that's going to affect them for years and years to come. They simply had no choice, Mr. Speaker, because the senior governments were walking away from that responsibility.

And that's why when you talk about Municipal Financing Corporation, Mr. Speaker . . . And it may be not housing that the fund is available for, and we'll find out the details as we go through committee. But the fact is that if that's an example of how the government wants to lessen their responsibility to local citizens and heap more of this responsibility onto community corporations, then that's my whole point, Mr. Speaker, is we have to make sure that we don't see the government doing this more and more and more and more. And again municipalities across the province have seen this downloading, and they'll continue seeing that unless and until the government gets the message loud and clear that you can't use backdoor financing such as the Municipal Financing Corporation of Saskatchewan to lessen your responsibility and increase debt to the municipal governments across the province.

As well, Mr. Speaker, as we all know, in some northern communities, some communities can actually afford to borrow money. It's a strain on them. It is difficult for them to do a lot of things after they commit their financing to housing. But there are some communities that can't afford to do a cost-sharing process with the federal and the provincial government. So what happens to them, Mr. Speaker? They don't get any housing allocation.

So it's really a detriment, I think, overall to the municipalities in the North. Once the federal government and the provincial government exit their role and their historical role of providing housing at 100 per cent of their costs, Mr. Speaker, through taxation, then the onus goes onto the municipal corporation to borrow the money to match some of the grants from the federal,

provincial government.

So while they go in a hole to house their people, the communities that cannot go into debt, they'll go deeper in the hole of debt, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that they'll never get another housing allocation in the future simply because they can't afford it, and their people will continue living in deplorable housing and in overcrowded housing as well.

So it's really a thing that we have to pay attention to, Mr. Speaker. It is obviously something that we want to take the time to understand. And through committee, people will have the opportunity to, on our side of the Assembly, ask the minister very specific questions about the Municipal Financing Corporation and the parameters in which they operate. And at that time, Mr. Speaker, we'll have more to say on this particular bill. So on that notion, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 80, *The Municipal Financing Corporation Amendment Act, 2017*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 80, *The Municipal Financing Corporation Amendment Act, 2017*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 81 — *The Traffic Safety (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act, 2017*

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Crown Investments.

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2017*. The Act, administered by Saskatchewan Government Insurance, outlines traffic laws and rules of the road. There are numerous changes being proposed to the Act. Most are of a housekeeping nature or are being undertaken to formally reflect in legislation what is already happening in business practice. I will highlight a few of the more significant changes.

Mr. Speaker, we know that impaired driving is a problem in Saskatchewan, and we know that awareness efforts undertaken by SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] and increased enforcement are helping to bring about a change in Saskatchewan people's attitudes towards this problem. People are realizing that driving while impaired is never acceptable, that it's important to plan a safe ride ahead of time. It's also important to step up and prevent friends and family from driving impaired, to be a good wingman, and to look out for them. Otherwise the results can be devastating — hundreds injured, dozens killed, and countless shattered lives left behind.

I have attended two roadside memorial events over the past year to commemorate deaths of innocent victims killed by impaired drivers, and I'd love for there to be no reason for anyone to attend this type of event again, Mr. Speaker. The impacts of impaired driving are just devastating.

Mr. Speaker, our government has made significant law changes to toughen the consequences for impaired driving with harsher licence suspensions and fines and longer vehicle seizures. Mr. Speaker, we are now going to step further to make the consequences more severe for drivers who are impaired and who make the terrible decision to transport children.

[15:45]

Experienced drivers with blood alcohol content between .04 and .08 or who fail a field sobriety test will face a seven-day administrative driving suspension if they are transporting any child under the age of 16. That means instead of a three-day suspension on a first offence, it's a seven-day suspension. Instead of a 21-day suspension on a second offence, it's 30 days. And for a third offence, it increases from 90 to 120.

We are also increasing the length of time a vehicle will be seized in these situations, Mr. Speaker. Both new and experienced drivers will have their vehicles seized for seven days on a first offence, up from three days. It increases from 7 to 30 days on a second offence, and on a third offence, it increases to 60 days, up from 7 days for new drivers or 14 days for experienced drivers. There are significant changes, demonstrating our government takes seriously the safety and welfare of our most precious cargo — our children.

Mr. Speaker, *The Traffic Safety Act* also sets out the administrative penalties for drivers charged with impaired driving-related offences under the Criminal Code. Currently if a driver is charged with exceeding the legal limit for alcohol or refusing to comply with the demand by law enforcement, they are subject to an indefinite administrative suspension of their driver's licence pending the court's outcome of the criminal charge. As well their vehicle is seized. The proposed amendment will allow law enforcement to issue an indefinite administrative suspension when a driver is charged with impaired driving under the Criminal Code.

As well, Mr. Speaker, *The Traffic Safety Act* sets out the length of time SGI can look back on a driver's record to see prior related offences to determine the length of a driver's suspension and vehicle seizure. The more prior offences a driver has, the longer the period of suspension and/or vehicle seizure. Currently SGI can look back five years for previous offences. The proposed amendment will extend this look-back period on these type of offences to 10 years to determine driving suspension, vehicle seizures, educational programming, and ignition interlock consequences. This ultimately improves traffic safety, Mr. Speaker, by ensuring those risky drivers feel the consequences of their poor decisions.

Mr. Speaker, one more change I'd like to highlight is the proposal to eliminate operating authority certificates currently issued by the Highway Traffic Board. Operating authority certificates are required for transporting passengers for hire, for example, by limos and chartered buses. Taxis don't require operating authority certificates because they are regulated by a municipality. Operating authority certificates were intended to outline specific requirements of the certificate holder regarding routes, insurance, rates, background checks, and more. Over time the Highway Traffic Board has been issuing them in a much more general way, and they have almost evolved into a

rubber stamp. Thus it makes sense to deregulate this process. SGI will strengthen other regulations as required to ensure there is sufficient oversight regarding safety requirements.

Mr. Speaker, we may have had an unreasonably hot and dry summer in Saskatchewan, but winter will be here before we know it. In fact it's already here, Mr. Speaker. There will be plenty of ice and snow and that means snow removal equipment will be out on the highways to keep our roads safe.

The last change I will mention, Mr. Speaker, updates the rules for slowing to 60 kilometres per hour around highway equipment, snowplows, so they are consistent with the rules for passing emergency vehicles and tow trucks. There has been confusion around this issue depending on the warning lights being engaged or not. So whether the snow removal vehicle is in motion or not, this change clarifies that drivers are required to reduce their speed to 60 kilometres per hour when passing highway equipment that is stopped on the highway and with its warning lights in operation, when travelling on the same side of the roadway as the highway equipment.

As I mentioned at the outset, Mr. Speaker, there are numerous other incidental changes being made to the Act. These include changes to gross vehicle weight for towed conveyances, clarifications around permits issued in other jurisdictions, updating the definition of the word "trailer," amending the definition of "farm implement," and other small changes.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2017*.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — The minister has moved Bill No. 81, *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2017*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I want to give some comments on Bill No. 81, *The Traffic Safety (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act, 2017*. But prior to my brief comments on this particular bill, I want to pay tribute to my colleagues, the member from Cumberland and the member from Saskatoon Riversdale, in the sense that they've contributed a lot of time as they travelled throughout the province to talk about some of the challenges as it pertains to unnecessary deaths in vehicle accidents as a result of impaired driving. Mr. Speaker, I think these two champions deserve significant praise in the sense of the work and the compassion that they showed during their travels through many communities, as it relates to traffic safety in the province overall, but more particularly their actions as it came to impaired driving.

I noted that some of the aspects of the impaired driving bill that's being introduced today were points that were raised by my two colleagues, as they certainly heard and saw evidence in the stories of how difficult this issue is. There's no question that their work ethic and some of their minority report decisions that they obviously put in place ... Now we're seeing that the government is adopting some of those positions, and I want to make sure that we commend my two colleagues that spent a lot of time and done a lot of work to make sure that some of the opinions as expressed today's bill are certainly incorporated in

our strategy overall.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 81, *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act*, the summary of this particular bill for those that need an additional summary is that a driver with a blood alcohol content of .04 or higher who transport children under the age of 16 will face longer licence suspensions and longer vehicle seizures. The length of suspension and seizures increase for repeat offenders. And, Mr. Speaker, one of the provisions is the looking-back period extended from five years to 10 years, allowing for tougher penalties for repeat offenders. Law enforcement can offer an indefinite administration suspension, which means making roadside consequences for those charged with impaired driving under the Criminal Code consistent with those charged with exceeding .08 BAC [blood alcohol concentration] or again, refusing to comply with a demand for a test.

Mr. Speaker, the minister also alluded to slowing down to 60 kilometres an hour when you're meeting a snowplow when they're stopped on the side of the road, or in passing other vehicles providing assistance if the prescribed lights are in operation. Mr. Speaker, it takes a lot of effort over time to teach drivers about school bus safety. Obviously when you have the flashing lights from a school bus and the stop arm is clearly extended on a school bus, there was times where people didn't really understand that they had to stop, I think it's 15 metres behind the bus, either way. And I think over time, Mr. Speaker, people have finally got the message through, and now you're seeing that people are consistently stopping when it comes to a school bus with their lights flashing and their stop arm extended. And that took a lot of public education. And, Mr. Speaker, I think slowing down to 60 kilometres an hour when snowplows are stopped at the side of the road, Mr. Speaker, obviously we have to be very careful when it comes to the safety of the highways worker and of course, as was evidenced this past spring, Mr. Speaker, with the tow truck operators as well.

These are people that we certainly respond, or we need on our highway system. Whether it's a highways worker clearing off the snow or whether it's a tow truck operator that is helping a driver in distress or whether it's a first responder responding to a car accident, Mr. Speaker, we all have to be very, very careful and all of us can learn how to slow down in some of those zones. And over time, I think if we were to continue with the public education, and certainly expressing this through strong public advertising, that the people will certainly understand what is being done with this particular bill.

Now, Mr. Speaker, again I want to commend my colleagues for their fine work. And they'll obviously have a lot more to say about this particular bill because they went to a lot of the hearings and they certainly were privy to a lot of the discussions. And I was really impressed when they did a minority report that countered some of the measures that were not being undertaken by the then minister of Highways.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there's also some questions as we look through the bill under the operation authority certificates. This means that those operating a vehicle on the highway for the purpose of transporting passengers no longer need an operating authority certificate. Well we have a lot of questions on that. We're going to be asking the minister a lot of questions, as it

removes transparency and accountability. We've got to get those questions on the record, and as I mentioned, there are people within our caucus that will be doing so.

So I'm giving the minister a heads-up on that front. There will be questions asked of you. There is some deep concern in that regard, and obviously as an opposition caucus, we need to ensure that people are safe when they're travelling as passengers on highways across Saskatchewan. That is paramount in our mind. So as we look at this particular aspect of this as it pertains to the operation authority certificates, we do have some serious questions and some very pointed questions to ask you.

So, Mr. Speaker, when the time permits and the time comes, I'll be referring to my caucus colleagues who have some great information on this front, and they'll give their insight as to what is necessary and how this bill can or cannot help in the quest to make Saskatchewan a safer place to travel. So on that note, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 81, *The Traffic Safety (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act, 2017*.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — The member has moved debate on this bill. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — Carried.

Bill No. 82 — *The SaskEnergy Amendment Act, 2017*

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the Minister of SGI.

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of Bill 82, *The SaskEnergy Amendment Act, 2017*. Mr. Speaker, the bill proposes necessary updates to *The SaskEnergy Act* to balance the corporation's needs with the changing needs of customers. These updates will allow the corporation to better serve private sector business opportunities to support growth and competitiveness.

The major focus of the proposed amendments is on sections 23 and 60, the exclusive rights for distribution and transportation of natural gas. The natural gas marketplace has seen major changes since *The SaskEnergy Act* was passed in 1992. The proposed changes to these sections will modernize the Act by recognizing today's industry needs and support new business ventures in the province that were not as common when the Act was first developed.

These amendments will allow SaskEnergy to provide efficiencies and enhance safety to the corporation and its customers by allowing flexibility to determine the end point of the gas distribution system; increase compressed natural gas and liquified natural gas opportunities in the province by allowing for third party trucking to qualified companies; and support the development of enhanced oil recovery and natural gas markets in the province by allowing operators the right to move high-pressure natural gas across land parcel boundaries; and move the exclusive business rights definition from the Act into *The SaskEnergy Regulations*, allowing the corporation to

make necessary updates to accommodate changes in technology and marketplace conditions.

SaskEnergy is also proposing amendments to sections 16, 34, 35, and 45, considered housekeeping matters, ensuring the Act is current with recent case law and corporate policies; section 12, to prevent SaskEnergy's insurance premiums from rapidly increasing due to nuisance claims, making it consistent with SaskPower's legislation; and sections 54 and 64, which will enable the Lieutenant Governor in Council to make regulations respecting the exclusive business rights definition to better enable SaskEnergy to make updates as needed.

These amendments are intended to address modern industry needs and align with corporate priorities. SaskEnergy's core operations of natural gas distribution and transmission services remain in place. This will continue to allow the corporation to operate safely and efficiently in the best interest of all customers.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to move second reading of Bill 82, *The SaskEnergy Amendment Act, 2017*.

[16:00]

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — The minister has moved that Bill No. 82, *The SaskEnergy Amendment Act, 2017* be 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. One of the things I think is really important as the opposition is that it's really incumbent upon us to look at all, every aspect of every bill as to what the changes may or may not bring to not only the province of Saskatchewan overall but in particular our Crowns.

We have very, very . . . We have a very guarded position when it comes to our Crown corporations of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, whether it's SaskEnergy — certainly not what it was at one time, but still a very important part of our distribution system of natural gas throughout the province — and whether it's SLGA, whether it's the land titles office, that any time we have the Sask Party dealing with a Crown corporation, Mr. Speaker, the opposition is very, very aware. They're very guarded against the Saskatchewan Party position on the Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker.

We've seen an incredible attempt to flip-flop and then flip-flop again on the whole notion on Bill 40, so when any minister from that side of the aisle stands up and starts talking about the best interests of the Crown corporation, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the people of Saskatchewan will forgive us for taking their position and their issues on anything, including this particular bill, with a grain of salt when it comes to protecting the interests of our Crown corporations. We simply do not trust them. We do not believe them and we never will, Mr. Speaker.

And it's actually an amazing flip-flop. I've been in this Assembly for a while and to see every single one of their members get up and the member from Carrot River expanding on the value of this incredible Bill 40, of how it was visionary and cutting-edge and how important it was, and how excited he

was that we're going to put this bill forward, Mr. Speaker. And here all this time, Mr. Speaker, he was simply reading off prepared notes. And he had no commitment, no plan except to read off the prepared notes, Mr. Speaker. And then a year later, not barely a year later, they changed their mind. They said, okay, we're not going to do that now. So I'm sitting there saying, well okay, why don't you get up and make 40 speeches of that like you did last time? I want to see why you changed your mind.

And, Mr. Speaker, the bottom line, the reason why they changed their mind and went — what is it? — 360 degrees opposite of what they were a year ago is because they don't know what they're doing. They simply don't have a clue as to how to govern. They can't manage our finances, and we certainly can't trust them to look after our Crowns.

So when any bill that pertains to the Crown corporations of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, as this particular bill does, Bill 82 . . . It talks about things such as the closure of customer services to pedestrian traffic, Mr. Speaker. How does that affect this Crown overall? What kind of dollar value are we talking about as it pertains to the Crowns? And this particular Crown, Mr. Speaker, SaskEnergy, what kind of dollars did they save as a result of that?

So what we're seeing, Mr. Speaker, this bill, Bill 82, actually is part of the critical evidence that we're building against the Saskatchewan Party in the sense that they're weakening the Crowns. Because those right wingers over there don't believe that the Government of Saskatchewan, nor the people of Saskatchewan, deserve to own their own insurance Crown, that they don't believe that we should own our own power corporation, Mr. Speaker. So what happens is they arbitrarily and certainly quietly, they begin the process of dismantling the Crowns and weakening the Crowns. And obviously, Mr. Speaker, through Bill 40, they're trying to sell 49 per cent of the Crowns.

And you know what happened there, Mr. Speaker? No corporation in their right mind would entertain an option of sinking millions of dollars into buying an asset like SaskPower if they only own 49 per cent and they didn't have any say in the management of the Crowns. So here you have the confused Sask Party in the middle of this Crown debate, whether to sell or not. Forty of them got up and sang the praises of selling, and then they said, oh we're only selling 49 per cent; oh it's only a definition. Then a year later they all change their minds. So really they didn't have a clue what they were talking about and they still don't, Mr. Speaker.

So that's why when it comes to the Crown corporation, no one trusts the right wing Saskatchewan Party. They tried to sell the Crowns. They couldn't figure out how to do it, Mr. Speaker. They got laughed at by the corporate people that were interested. They weren't going to buy 49 per cent of an asset; they wanted the whole thing.

And the same token, the people of Saskatchewan didn't want to sell their Crowns. And these guys across the way, they thought they had it all figured out and they all stood up and sang the praises of Bill 40. And a year later, Mr. Speaker, a year later they're all eating crow. They're all eating crow, and that's why

you should never elect a conservative right wing government because they don't have a clue how to govern the province of Saskatchewan, and they don't have a clue how to handle and protect our Crowns, and they don't have a clue how to manage our finances.

And here we are, here we are a scant nine years later. Our debt is \$23 billion, thanks to you guys. And we have no more liquor stores to generate profit for health care and education. And we have no land titles branch, because they made \$14 million and then you tried to sell the rest of the stuff. Some of you guys just don't have it figured out, do you?

So the bottom line is Saskatchewan people do not want you to sell the Crowns. Get it through your heads. They don't want you to sell the Crowns. Forty-nine per cent and which corporation . . . I don't know what economic school that you folks went to, but which corporation would come buy half a company, sink millions of dollars into buying half a company and say, okay, now you control it. No corporation in their right mind's going to give you guys . . . buy 49 per cent of any Crown corporation. But you try to skirt up the middle. You try to . . . you know why you try to skirt . . .

The Deputy Speaker: — Order. I think the member knows that the remarks should be put through the Chair. I recognize the member.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. But my point being is this confused, right wing, extreme right wing, conservative Sask Party . . . I don't know what to make reference to them anymore, Mr. Speaker. They confuse the heck out of me.

And where they confuse me, Mr. Speaker, is after they try to sell half our Crowns — no corporation wanted half of something — then they turn around and they ate crow on that Bill 40. And then to make matters worse, Mr. Speaker, they come along and they put a billion-dollar tax hike on the people of Saskatchewan.

So I'm trying to figure out, are these guys conservatives? Are they Saskatchewan Party? And the best tell, Mr. Speaker, is how they deal with the Crowns. That's the best tell. And I can tell you today that that's a massively confused right wing party across the way, Mr. Speaker. Some of them are conservatives. Some of them, I don't know what background they come from.

And when it comes to economics and the Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker, let me give them an update. Crown corporations make money. They make money. They make profit for us, Mr. Speaker. They make profit for us. And that profit comes from the Crowns and goes to the government, the General Revenue Fund. So we get money from the Crowns, you guys. We get money from the Crowns. That money goes into health care, goes into education, goes into agricultural programs, goes into municipal financing, and goes into people's pockets by things like salary, Mr. Speaker, for people that work for the government.

And then when we have that money coming in, we don't have to go to a billion-dollar tax hike to cover your mismanagement. The Crowns, the Crowns could have helped cover your

mismanagement. But you guys wanted to sell it. You guys wanted to sell these Crowns. And once you sell them, once you sell them, they're gone. Like why can't you right wingers figure that out? If you guys are supposed to be these great business minds, I just can't figure you out. It must be totally beyond me because I'm sitting here, I'm sitting here thinking, okay, how does this right wing voodoo economics work? How do these guys think?

So let's see. The Saskatchewan Party done a billion-dollar tax hike. A billion dollars — there was not one tax you guys didn't like — a billion dollars, and then you put us in debt for years to come. You went from \$10.2 billion when we left government to 23 billion by 2021. So let's see, a billion-dollar tax hike, a record debt, \$23 billion thanks to you guys. We haven't even incorporated what the P3 costs are.

You're trying to sell the Crowns but nobody wants to buy half a Crown, so they told you no. And the people of Saskatchewan are saying, well you sell our Crowns, what are we going to have left? And then you say, oh we'll make money from that. But we have to cover your debt plus your P3 debt that you got planned later on for us. Well if we end up selling off the Crowns, they're gone forever and so is the cash. I don't know why the member from Melfort can't figure that out. If you're such right wing economic giants . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well help me understand this.

[Interjections]

The Deputy Speaker: — Once again I'd like to remind the member to put his comments to the Chair.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm just trying to . . . I'm not an economist by any stretch of the imagination. I'm a hockey player dabbling in politics. But I'll say this. I'll say this, that I think I understand the economy and the effects of Crown a heck of a lot better than 99.9 per cent of the Sask Party caucus, Mr. Speaker. And that's why it's important to tell people when it comes to any bill, Bill 82, any bill pertaining to the Crown corporations of Saskatchewan, I can't help but feeling defensive about our Crown corporations and the hair on the back of my neck stands up.

Because who's proposing some of these changes, Mr. Speaker? It is the Sask Party, and I say to them today that it's very simple. That if you sell off the Crowns, they're gone forever. They're gone forever like some of your leaders will be gone here in a few short months, Mr. Speaker. Time for them to head out of Dodge. Time for them to head out of Dodge, Mr. Speaker, and they're heading out.

But the people of Saskatchewan want to keep our Crowns. I can't understand why they can't get that, Mr. Speaker. Those Crown corporations belong to us. We employ people. We create profits for the General Revenue Fund. But you know what, Mr. Speaker? They are so blinded by their philosophical belief that they don't believe in the Crowns that they'd actually have Saskatchewan come into financial ruin to prove their point, to prove their point. And by then, Mr. Speaker, they're all going to be heading out of Dodge. They're all going to be heading out of Dodge like the former member from Kindersley, like the current Premier. And there'll be a few others leaving, Mr.

Speaker. A few others have left. There'll be a few others leaving. Mark my words.

Why? Because they have destroyed the future of this province. They have destroyed the future of this province. And they laugh, Mr. Speaker. They laugh because they'll go home to the comforts of their home, and we'll be left with record debt, and not to mention the P3 debt that's going to be coming due to us. And, Mr. Speaker, they will have left behind Crown corporations that are saddled with debt, Mr. Speaker, but more so always under a threat of sale. And that's a crying shame, Mr. Speaker.

And that's why I tell the people of Saskatchewan, I think we've had enough of the Sask Party. It's time to get rid of them because people don't trust them anymore, Mr. Speaker. They have mismanaged our finances. They have actually increased our taxes exponentially. Half of them are going to have their foot out the door, ready to head out of Dodge, Mr. Speaker.

And I think it's time, I think it's time that Saskatchewan sends them a message. And the message that they send them is that from the NDP perspective, Mr. Speaker, from the NDP perspective, we are going to help build a brave new economy, on side and in partners with the Crown corporations, Mr. Speaker. We need corporate Canada to come and invest in our province of Saskatchewan, but we also need good mortgage-paying jobs, Mr. Speaker.

[16:15]

We have to balance our economy when it comes to the environment, Mr. Speaker, and we also have to make sure that rural Saskatchewan is strengthened for years to come through things like good, solid water management strategies, Mr. Speaker, and making them part of a brave new economy that really talks about green energy, whether it's a carbon sink bank, Mr. Speaker, or generating power through a variety of sources, whether it's cogeneration opportunities or things like electricity generation of all kinds and all sorts, Mr. Speaker.

So the NDP do have a plan. We do have a vision, Mr. Speaker, and that vision isn't selling the farm and having dollars shipped out of our province each and every single day that the Sask Party is in power, Mr. Speaker. And as I've said it a thousand times in this Assembly, we've seen this act before. And I would encourage the people of Saskatchewan to get rid of this government. They are bad for us, Mr. Speaker. They have hurt so many people and they have to . . . Through their mismanagement, to their scandals, and to their waste, it is actually despicable what they're doing to the province of Saskatchewan — despicable. And there's 50, 49, 48 — is it 47 now? — we're counting down here. It started off at 50. Now it's 49. Now it's 48, then it's going to be 47. And pretty soon, Mr. Speaker, they'll go back to where they were in 1991: down to five, down to five, Mr. Speaker.

So I'll point out this: when it comes to the Crown corporations, we do not trust the Sask Party with our future. And the number one tell, the number one tell, Mr. Speaker, as to how confused they are, every single one of them made speeches, speeches, speeches about Bill 40. The member from . . . Is that Yorkton? Where is that guy from? I don't know where he's from. I can

see he's in the back there somewhere. But he was making speeches. He was making speeches, right wing speeches about Bill 40. And today now he's eating crow. He's eating crow because you know what happened, Mr. Speaker? He was told what to say. He was told what to say. Here is your speaking notes. You will do and say as you're told because that's the right wing mantra. You just keep saying the same thing over and over again till you believe it and maybe people in Saskatchewan will believe it.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we saw this act before. And I tell the people of Saskatchewan, when it comes to the Crowns, when it comes to debt, when it comes to the economy, when it comes to raising taxation, the Saskatchewan Party has failed miserably. Not only the current state of Saskatchewan, but for the future, for years and years to come we will begin to suffer from their mismanagement, corruption, and waste, Mr. Speaker. And that's a shame. Because what's up next is the Crowns. What's up next is going to be private health care. What's up next — insurance on life, or life insurance premiums. It's starting, Mr. Speaker.

We talked about the carbon sequestration of SaskPower today, of how they mismanaged that file, Mr. Speaker. And the Minister Responsible for the Environment or the carbon sequestration project said, give me another question. And the question I asked him: who's paying those bills? Who's paying those bills? It's not him. It's not the Sask Party. It's you and I, Mr. Speaker; we're paying that through our power bills. When I go to northern Saskatchewan and I see the 3 or \$400 power bills that people are paying, Mr. Speaker, every single month while we've got a carbon capture tax compliments of this government, Mr. Speaker, that's who's paying it. And we'll be paying that for years and years to come.

And the sad thing is it's not going to SaskPower, Mr. Speaker. Do you know where it's going? It's going to Cenovus — Cenovus — because those guys couldn't manage to keep up their carbon supply to an oil company, so they had penalties. So I don't know what the price was this year. The member from Saskatoon Nutana identified the cost today, and we're giving those guys millions of dollars each year because of the mismanagement of the Sask Party.

So you tell me if we should trust any word from the minister that proposed changes on Bill 82. The answer I tell the people of Saskatchewan: no way. No way do you trust them with the future of the Crowns, because one day they're totally bent on selling them, then they got a memo from the people of Saskatchewan. All of a sudden, they saw the light, but the Premier saw the light on his way out.

And, Mr. Speaker, the remains and the tatters of the Saskatchewan Party called the Sask Party caucus across the way, Mr. Speaker, now is the time to get rid of them before they sell anything more. Enough of the wall-to-wall sale of our Crowns. Let's protect them and let's enhance them. Let's build them up. Let's modernize them. Let's make them even greater and grander. And let's make them a good, true partner in the economic building of Saskatchewan for years and years to come.

So, Mr. Speaker, there's more to say on this particular bill. So

thereby, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 82, *The SaskEnergy Amendment Act, 2017*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 82, *The SaskEnergy Amendment Act, 2017*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 83 — *The Environmental Management and Protection Amendment Act, 2017*

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak and deliver second reading of Bill 83, *The Environmental Management and Protection Amendment Act, 2017*. These amendments provide legal clarity and enhance government's ability to ensure that our environmental resources are sustainably managed and our environment remains protected. The amended legislation is consistent with other provincial resource management legislation, and is also in line with Saskatchewan's results-based approach to environmental regulation. The amendments will expand the definition of "person" to allow the ministry to issue permits to certain associations or organizations that carry out activities regulated by the Act or associated regulations.

In addition, members of the Saskatchewan Environmental Code advisory committee change frequently due to changes within organizations and associations. The amendments will transfer powers from the Lieutenant Governor in Council to the minister, allowing for more timely appointments of new and replacement members of the committee.

To provide you with a better understanding of the Saskatchewan Environmental Code advisory committee and its work, this group replaced the code development committee in 2016 after the first set of code chapters were implemented in 2015. It has met six times since then.

The code, the first of its kind in Canada, introduced a new results-based approach to environmental protection and resource management that emphasizes outcomes not processes. The code reduces government red tape by replacing some permits with notifications and allows timely authorization of various activities such as water and sewage main construction, hydrostatic testing, and spill reporting.

The code is already improving processes and removing red tape; for example, turnaround times to approve acceptable solutions for water and sewage mains have been reduced from several weeks to one day. The ministry, upon the recommendation of the code advisory committee, is moving forward with new code chapters and committees to develop technical content for the next chapters. These amendments will strengthen this group's ability to carry out this important work for the province.

Today's amendments also strengthen the province's ability to enforce legislation around out-of-province beverage containers that are inappropriately brought into Saskatchewan to take advantage of our recycling program. The government's former litter control Act, where the province's beverage container recycling program was housed, was repealed when *The Environmental Management and Protection Act, 2010* was proclaimed. At that time it was believed the new Act provided adequate authority to charge any individuals and/or organizations purposely redeeming out-of-province beverage containers at Sarcen depots.

After operating under the Act since June of 2015 and having experienced several enforcement challenges in this area, the Ministry of Justice has advised that an additional enforcement provision in the Act be created similar to the former litter control Act provisions. The new provision will identify the delivery of out-of-province containers to Sarcen and the submission of false information to depot operators as offences pursuant to EMPA [*The Environmental Management and Protection Act*] 2010. The amendments will provide new enforcement tools for cross-border beverage containers that are returned for refunds where there is no Saskatchewan-paid deposit.

Thanks to Sarcen and the people of Saskatchewan, we have one of the most successful beverage container recycling programs in Canada, with more than 80 per cent of containers consistently returned for recycling. Sarcen is an important organization in our province. By recycling beverage containers, paint products, electronics, Sarcen protects our environment, provides employment opportunities, and supports economic development. These amendments aim to keep this beverage recycling program strong, successful, and sustainable into the future.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the amendments provide the minister the ability to appoint a program operator for waste stewardship programs where public interest is threatened by the imminent discontinuation of a stewardship program. This has been raised with the ministry in the past.

The amendments will also clarify language in several sections of the Act, including the following: in regards to precautionary drinking water advisories, the Act includes a reference to the environment with respect to causing an adverse effect but does not reference human health. Drinking water is tied directly to potential harm to human health. For clarity, amendments will include reference to harm to human health and the environment, and this is consistent with wording from the 2002 Act.

With respect to the abandonment of waste, the amendment changes the wording from an allowance to a prohibition to ensure issuing charges for disposal of waste is clear and consistent with other prohibition wording in the Act. The current wording makes it difficult for officers to lay charges. This section has been reworded to a prohibition that states no person shall discard waste other than to an approved location. No change to the intent of the section has been made.

The amendments will also clarify language for audits, inspections, and investigations to ensure environment officers have the appropriate powers to carry out their duties. Inspection

powers were lacking in EMPA 2010 and are now similar to the powers provided for conducting audits. The amendments make it clear what authorities an environment officer has when conducting an inspection or audit, such as requiring the use of machinery and taking samples and copies of records. With respect to the investigation and enforcement powers, clarity has been brought to when a court judge may issue a warrant and when environment officers may seize items.

The amendments also provide the authority for the court to dispose of items forfeited to the Crown. The amendments are consistent with other enforcement powers provided in other Acts, such as *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* and *The Wildlife Act, 1998*.

A further amendment will include provision for a person to request that information of a commercial, financial, scientific, or technical nature that may reveal proprietary business, competitive, or trade-secret information to be kept confidential beyond the original five-year time period. Every five years a person may reapply to have that information kept confidential. This will be done through the original application process.

Further, the code only applies to waterworks and sewage works mains. Therefore permits are required for collection and distribution systems. The list of activities for which permits are required for waterworks and sewage works will be updated for clarity to better align with existing legislation.

Other housekeeping amendments will ensure the Act is responsive to current legislative needs. This includes expanding the definition of "person" to capture associations, partnerships, and other organizations not otherwise captured and ensuring environmental protection orders can be issued for all adverse effects caused by any chemical, physical, or biological alteration.

Saskatchewan is an incredibly beautiful place to live. We have outstanding prairie landscapes, pristine lakes, fresh air and breathtaking sunsets. We want to keep our environment and our communities as clean and healthy as possible. That objective is not only our privilege but it's our responsibility. The amendments in Bill 83 represent a significant step forward for sustainable environmental management in Saskatchewan and demonstrate our commitment to protect the environment and to fully implement a results-based approach to environmental regulations.

Mr. Speaker, as Saskatchewan continues to grow as a province our government will continually adapt and implement leading-edge environmental management practices to address the challenges of growth and protect our enviable environment. Our government will continue to work with stakeholders to identify additional opportunities to refine the province's environmental legislative framework including the Act, regulations, and the Saskatchewan Environmental Code. And, Mr. Speaker, with that I now move second reading of Bill 83, *The Environmental Management and Protection Amendment Act, 2017*. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of the Environment has moved that Bill 83, *The Environmental Management and Protection Act, 2017* 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. Speaker. Again, I'm proud to stand and give a first observation, if you will, of the bill that's being proposed, Bill 83 — the first blush — *The Environmental Management and Protection Amendment Act, 2017*. And, Mr. Speaker, the first thing we notice on this particular bill . . . And I'll certainly do the connection with all the other network of people that are impacted by any bill that the Sask Party brings forward.

[16:30]

But as typical, Mr. Speaker, Bill 83 starts off with a very simple phrase and it says a bunch of nice fancy words, but the net effect is that this bill will allow the minister to appoint new members to the Saskatchewan Environmental Code advisory committee instead of having them appointed by order in council. So really it provides the power to the minister, and from our perspective, Mr. Speaker, that radically decreases accountability.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there's no question in our mind as I listened to the minister's comments on the environmental issue and some of the points that he brought forward . . . He talks about the new authority to the minister to operate a product stewardship program. He talks about inspection powers for environmental officers to conduct inspection and audit, and he kind of goes on and on about some of the things that they wish to do as it pertains to water regulation. And certainly the environmental integrity of the province of Saskatchewan was something that he wanted to maintain, Mr. Speaker.

But what he has to do, Mr. Speaker, is he has to chat, move over to talk to the Minister from Agriculture because any time the Minister of the Environment has some initiative being planned, the Minister of Agriculture comes along and says, no, we're not going to do it that way; we're going to do it this way. And, Mr. Speaker, we've seen that time and time again where the minister comes up and he espouses great work and great plans that he wants to do, and then along he comes later on and says, well I can't get that done because I've been overruled by the Minister of Agriculture. We've seen it time and time again, Mr. Speaker.

Now I have to explain to the Minister of the Environment, when you're in cabinet the Minister of the Environment is usually the person that really works a bit in isolation, because obviously when you look at assessing any project, Mr. Speaker, that you can't have the Minister of the Economy overrule you on an environmental matter. The whole notion around Minister of the Environment is you must have environmental preference in your thinking and you're kind of in a cocoon when it comes to influence or bartering or getting direction from a minister that could be contrary to protecting the environment like you're compelled to do so as the minister.

So, Mr. Speaker, we've seen time and time again the flip-flop of this minister and many other ministers when the Minister of Agriculture comes along and the Minister of the Economy comes along and tells the Minister of the Environment, you will not do that. And what happens, Mr. Speaker, is the Minister of

the Environment slinks away and doesn't do his job.

And that's exactly what I fear is going to be happening here despite all the words behind this particular bill, Mr. Speaker. He will be overruled by the Minister of Agriculture or the Minister of the Economy, and there goes your independent integrity-based system of environmental protection for Saskatchewan if you have the minister that won't stand up for his own words in this particular Assembly.

So that's why it's important, Mr. Speaker, that as the opposition, we kind of explain to him, this is what you should do when you're in government. You should actually stand separate, and all your decisions should be scientific based. It should be environmentally conscious and it should be independent. And you should not be influenced either way.

In fact I would dare say that the Minister of the Environment, when it comes to fulfilling his obligation in cabinet, has more of a status and has more cachet, if you will, when it comes to the integrity of the environmental protection, even against advice from the Minister of Agriculture or the Minister of the Economy or the Minister of Finance. And they have to understand that, Mr. Speaker. And what happens now is nothing more than a shell of environmental protection. We've seen that time and time again from this government.

And we were hoping that the new minister, perhaps he would actually do his job as the Minister of the Environment and protect the environment, Mr. Speaker. That's what we thought he would do. But what we're seeing, that he's giving himself more power and, Mr. Speaker, he's having the decision-making ability, as opposed to having cabinet appoint some of these folks that could come from a wide background, Mr. Speaker. And whenever, whenever the Minister of Agriculture or the Economy comes knocking on his door, right away, Mr. Speaker, environmental integrity is out the window and the agenda of those senior ministers take over. And this is the worry I have when it comes to environmental integrity, environmental protection, and certainly any bill that's being proposed by the Minister of the Environment.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, the solution is simple. The solution is very simple. And I want to give the minister the ABCs of being an environment minister. First of all, you don't have to compromise the economy to balance environmental interests. There is such a word as balancing the needs, Mr. Speaker. And there is a way you can engage corporate Canada and corporate Saskatchewan to assist in protecting the environment as best as they can because it makes good sense and good PR [public relations] to have these companies, whether they're oil companies or potash companies, to be part of the solution. You can actually engage them, Mr. Speaker.

In fact, in fact, Mr. Speaker, there are many oil companies in Alberta and Saskatchewan, they're actually investing into the next wave of green energy options. Yes, it's true. Oil and gas companies are actually investing into the green economy. So they're thinking 20, 30 years down the road, and that's actually something that we should embrace as a province. We should say, yes, the companies that are out there, the companies that are out there that are doing good work in Saskatchewan, they can become a big part of the solution. So when we say balance

the economy with our environmental needs, Mr. Speaker, it is a two-way street, that there are ways.

And you think for one minute that the people of Saskatchewan are telling the Sask Party go ahead, do what you want to the environment, as long as we have a job? Well, Mr. Speaker, absolutely. People need to work. People need to work. They need to have a job. There's no question about it. Most of the people that are working will also say, we need to do something for our environment to make sure that we protect the water we drink, the air we breathe, and the parks that we create. That's really important, Mr. Speaker. So we can't operate in silos, and we certainly can't dance to the tune of the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of the Economy when it comes to environmental protection.

And I see the Minister of Agriculture has joined the Minister of the Environment, and all of a sudden he's pretty quiet, Mr. Speaker. That goes to my point. That goes to my point, is that he will dance to his tune.

So I will say on this particular bill, there's a lot of work ahead of that Minister of the Environment to prove to Saskatchewan that he is going to do his job, that he is going to protect the interests of the environmental issues that threaten our province.

We want to be leaders. We want to be leaders, Mr. Speaker, but the problem we have is every time the minister gets up and talks about the carbon sequestration project, we think that when we go pay our power bill, we shouldn't make the cheque out to SaskPower Corporation. We should make it out to Cenovus Energy because you've not been taking carbon out of the air and selling it to them at the rate that you agreed upon. And that goes to my point, is that somewhere along the line, you got trumped. And the bottom line is that the balance is simply something that we have to work on, Mr. Speaker.

I'll close on this point: you can indeed engage the public sector, the corporations that work and live in Saskatchewan. They can help you become environmental stewards. They have a lot of proactive thinking. By the same token, we have to make a conscious effort to be independent in cabinet to protect the water we need, to protect the air we breathe, and to protect the forest and the lands that we live on. We can indeed achieve that balance, Mr. Speaker.

So on this bill, I see it all about giving him more powers, more powers to appoint his own board. It goes against transparency and accountability. And mark my words, Mr. Speaker, there'll be a time when he'll be told to not respond when given direction by senior ministers in that right wing government, to simply forget about the environment and do as he's told. And, Mr. Speaker, when that happens, then you know that there are more serious problems than we assumed over here.

So on that note, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn Bill No. 83, *The Environmental Management and Protection Amendment Act, 2017*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 83. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the member from Meadow Lake.

Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:40.]

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