



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

of the

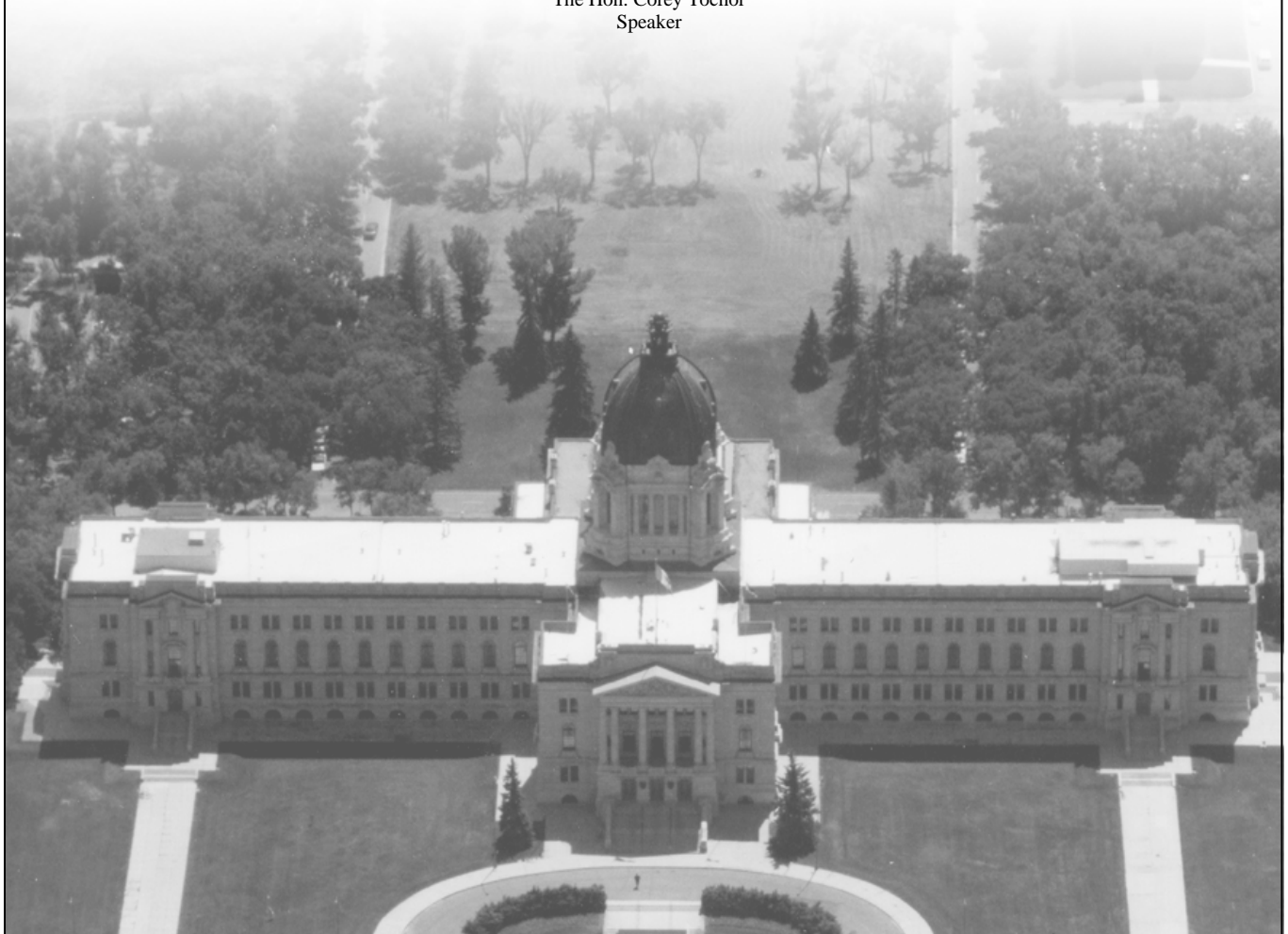
**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)  
Published under the  
authority of  
The Hon. Corey Tochor  
Speaker



**MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN**  
**2nd Session — 28th Legislature**

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

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| <b>Marit</b> , Hon. David — Wood River (SP)                    | <b>Vacant</b> — Kindersley   |

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

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**Law Clerk & Parliamentary Counsel** — Kenneth S. Ring, Q.C.  
**Principal Clerk** — Iris Lang  
**Clerk Assistant** — Kathy Burianyak  
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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

**The Speaker:** — Introduction of guests. I recognize the member from Meadow Lake.

#### STATEMENT BY A MEMBER

##### Apology

**Mr. Harrison:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday a point of order was made regarding a reference to the absence from the House of the member for Meewasin. In responding to the point of order, I may have inadvertently reflected on the absence from the House of the member for Meewasin, Mr. Speaker. For doing so, I do withdraw and apologize.

**The Speaker:** — Presenting petitions. I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

**Hon. Mr. Cox:** — I request leave for an introduction.

**The Speaker:** — Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

#### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

##### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Mr. Cox:** — Okay, thank you, Mr. Speaker. And to you and through you to all members of this House, it's my pleasure to introduce a couple of constituents of mine seated in the west gallery, Orville Bilous and Theresa Joss-Bilous. They're in town today for a function later tonight. And I would just like to say they've been long-time supporters of mine and great supporters of this party, and I just ask everyone to please welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Hon. Mr. Bonk:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Assembly, I'd like to welcome today four grade 12 students from Cowessess Education Centre. They're here with their law class today. And I look forward to meeting them later on today in my office, and we'll discuss a little bit about what happens here in their legislature. So I'd like to have all the members join me in welcoming them to their legislature.

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

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with the Minister for the Economy in welcoming Maria Sparvier and her students from Cowessess. Maria was an integral part of the SSTI [Saskatchewan Social Sciences Teachers' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy] committee that brings teachers to the legislature every year. And I would like to thank her for her service and to welcome her back to the

legislature, unfortunately this time in the gallery rather than at the mock parliaments on the floor here. So please welcome Maria and her students to the legislature.

#### PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

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

I'd like to read the prayer:

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the citizens of Leoville, Spiritwood, Rabbit Lake, and Shell Lake. I do so present.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to present a petition to re-open the Buffalo Narrows Correctional Centre. Mr. Speaker, the petitioners point out that the closure of the Buffalo Narrows Correctional Centre takes inmates far away from their families, which makes visitation difficult or non-existent at all. They point out that the closure of the correctional centre also took away from inmates the opportunity to get treatment and to obtain training tickets while they were there, Mr. Speaker; and that the closure hurts elders within the community when they were getting the help of inmates to do odd jobs, Mr. Speaker; and that the fact is that the closure of the correctional centre left 15 people out of work and created some financial hardship on their families and to local businesses, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan immediately reopen the Buffalo Narrows Correctional Centre to better our community for future generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, this petition today is signed by citizens from Buffalo Narrows. I so present.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'm rising to present a petition to end the unfair Sask Party tax hikes for Saskatchewan families and businesses. The people who have signed this petition want to bring to our attention the following: that the Sask Party has hiked taxes on Saskatchewan families and businesses by \$1 billion per year. At the same time, the Sask Party has handed over \$100 million in tax breaks to corporations and the wealthy and well connected.

The Sask Party increased the PST [provincial sales tax] to 6 per cent and applied it to everything, from groceries and children's clothes to a case of beer and even insurance premiums. Because of the Sask Party's PST increase, Saskatchewan has become the only province in the country where people are charged PST on life and health insurance premiums.

Mister party, the Sask Party's new tax on crop insurance is a devastating hit to producers, and yesterday at the SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] convention, Mr. Speaker, the delegates there overwhelmingly voted against this tax on crop insurance. Mr. Speaker, I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Sask Party to immediately stop their unfair tax hikes on Saskatchewan families and businesses.

Mr. Speaker, the individuals who have signed this petition today are from the city of Regina. I do so submit.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition to get big money out of Saskatchewan politics. And the people signing this petition from the province of Saskatchewan . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . There you go. They're very interested in this one. That Saskatchewan's outdated election Act allows corporations, unions, and individuals, and even those outside the province to make unlimited donations to our province's political parties.

For example, Mr. Speaker, over the past 10 years, the Saskatchewan Party has received \$12.61 million in corporate donations, and of that, \$2.87 million are coming from companies outside of Saskatchewan. And we know that the federal government and the provinces of Alberta, Manitoba, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and now British Columbia have moved to limit this influence and level the playing field by banning corporate and union donations to political parties.

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

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan call on the Sask Party to overhaul Saskatchewan's campaign finance laws and to end out-of-province donations; to put a ban on donations from corporations and unions; and to put a donation limit on individual donations.

Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition come from the city of Regina. I do so present.

**The 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 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 and 6.4 million from technical institutions; that funding for 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.

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

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan immediately restore funding to Saskatchewan's post-secondary institutions and stop the damaging cuts to our students.

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by individuals from Saskatoon. I do so present.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition calling on the Legislative Assembly to stop the Sask Party attack on our kids' classrooms. Those who have signed this petition wish to draw our attention to the following: that the Sask Party has cut at least \$674 in government funding for every student across this province; that the Sask Party has hiked education property taxes by \$67 million but has cut the total government portion for education by \$121 million, and even though the Sask Party is making us all pay more, our kids are actually getting less; that the Sask Party cuts mean that students will lose much-needed support in their classrooms, including funding for buses for kindergartners and supports for children with autism and special needs.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call upon the government to reverse the senseless cuts to our kids' classrooms and stop making families, teachers, and everyone who works to support our education system pay for the Sask Party's mismanagement, scandal, and waste.

Mr. Speaker, those who've signed the petition today reside in Regina. I do so present.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I stand in my place again today to present a petition on behalf of the residents of Balgonie. And, Mr. Speaker, the people of Balgonie are concerned about the permanent closure of their Main Street access to Highway No. 1.

And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan take the necessary steps and actions and leave the west-in, west-out driving access for vehicles into and out of Balgonie at the intersection of Highway No. 1 and their Main Street.

They 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 also would not allow the public access to cross east- and westbound lanes.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as we say every day, there are people that have signed this petition on behalf and support of the people of Balgonie from all throughout the province of Saskatchewan. And on this particular page they are from Balgonie; they're also from McLean, Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And I so present.

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Sexual Assault & Information Centre's Fashion Show Fundraiser

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I recently had the privilege of attending the Saskatoon Sexual Assault & Information Centre's 14th annual fashion show fundraiser, Luncheon en Vogue, along with my colleague from Meewasin. Each year, businesses and individuals within the community gather together to raise funds for an organization that works tirelessly to assist survivors of sexual abuse, as well as working to stop it from happening in the first place.

In addition to offering clients support services, the SSAIC [Saskatoon Sexual Assault & Information Centre] visits Saskatoon schools to hold their sexual assault awareness prevention programs, including their *I'm the Boss of Me* puppet show. The Saskatoon Sexual Assault & Information Centre provides valuable services for the community, such as a 24-hour crisis hotline and free counselling services for survivors.

A summary report for 2016-17 states that the centre served 456 new clients — a 19.5 per cent increase from the previous year — and provided 2,074 counselling sessions and follow-up services, amounting to a 10 per cent increase from the previous year.

One of Luncheon en Vogue's most enthusiastic supporters is the Saskatoon Police Service. To help raise money for the SSAIC, police officers gamely walked the runway in clothing by Anthonys Fashion and The Shoe Boutique, with their hair and makeup styled by Paramount Day Spa Salon & Boutique. The luncheon also featured a performance by the talented musician Jorgina Sunn.

The Luncheon en Vogue was a pleasure to attend, Mr. Speaker, and it was encouraging to see so many people, including our outstanding police force, come together to support a valuable organization devoted to sustaining the well-being of our community.

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

#### Remembrance Day and the Battle of Passchendaele

**Mr. Lawrence:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This morning in the rotunda we held our legislative Remembrance Day ceremony, and I'd like to take a moment to recognize this day.

Mr. Speaker, this November there is an anniversary of particular note. November 10th marks the 100th anniversary of the conclusion of the Battle of Passchendaele. This battle was significant in the conflict in the First World War, and Canadian soldiers played an essential role.

In mid-October the Canadian Corps arrived at the Passchendaele front, and by November 10th they delivered victory. But not without cost — 15,654 Canadians fell taking the Passchendaele ridge. But numbers cannot do justice to the sacrifices made.

[13:45]

I'd like to read a quote from Alexander Decoteau, who was born on the Cree Red Pheasant reserve near The Battlefords. This is from a letter he wrote to his sister dated September 10, 1917:

A man has a lot of time to think of his people and home out here, and one does get awfully lonesome at times. I know on my last trip to the front line, I dreamed of home.

Private Decoteau died on October 30th during the battle of Passchendaele.

Mr. Speaker, from the muddy French countryside to the deserts of Kandahar, we remember all who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country. We will remember. Thank you.

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

#### Recipient of the University of Regina Outstanding Young Alumni Award

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Every year the University of Regina Alumni Association celebrates the Alumni Crowning Achievement Awards. This year's distinguished recipients of awards included author Guy Vanderhaeghe, Dr. Margaret Dagenais, Dr. Gregory Kratzig, and Dr. Joan Halmo. But the recipient I particularly want to honour today is one Thomas Benjoe, who received the Outstanding Young Alumni Award.

Thomas Benjoe is a proud member of Muscowpetung First Nation. He was raised in my home neighbourhood of North Central and graduated just six years ago from the First Nations University of Canada with a degree in business administration. After graduation he had begun a very promising career with the Royal Bank of Canada before being approached to take on his current position, president and CEO [chief executive officer] of File Hills Qu'Appelle Developments, a partnership of the 11 First Nations communities that make up the File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council. FHQ Developments generates revenues of some \$35 million a year, and it couldn't be in better hands, Mr. Speaker.

Thomas Benjoe credits his work ethic and love of learning to his mushom, who raised him. He points to the tradition of doing the beadwork for the family powwow dancers that was handed down to him from his great-grandmother, and he believes that success in business is about creating wealth for the community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in recognizing Thomas Benjoe and all of the recipients of this year's University of Regina Alumni Crowning Achievement Awards. Thank you.

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

### A Veteran's Story

**Mr. Nerlien:** — Mr. Speaker, for the moment I am Driver G.E. Gaudreau, L8502. When I joined active service in 1940, I was sent to Red Deer to train for two months, then sent overseas as a truck driver.

I later transferred to the 1st Division. We were told they had landed in Sicily. We were in Algiers. We were camped in the sand. We were rationed 2 gallons of water per day, but the kitchen took most of that. It was usually over 100 degrees every day. We travelled at night to keep the trucks from boiling over. There were no roads, and we travelled by compass.

Later redeployed to Italy, the most horrible thing happened to me in Ortona. I was sent with two young men from PPCLI [Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry]. We crossed the killing ground on foot, over dead bodies and parts. We were told to go where a movie was showing in a yard between the buildings. I sat with my back to the wall. A shell fell in the yard. The boys were blown to pieces in front of me. I was completely covered in body parts. It was December 24th. It was not a very good Christmas that year.

I went to Pescara. On a sharp downhill, a gun went off and I received the full blast. Later I was on the road, my nose bleeding, one eardrum blown out. That is why I am deaf today. When in Italy sometimes we were down to 10 per cent strength. I wrote on a card: "Give me orders in writing. I am deaf."

Mr. Speaker, I know this story because George Gaudreau has been married to my mother for 45 years and now is in his 100th year, living at home with her. Mr. Speaker, our veterans are real people with real stories. Thank you.

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

### Muslims for Remembrance

**Mr. Fiaz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On October 27th, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamma'at Canada began its 7th annual Muslims for Remembrance Day campaign across this country. Muslim communities from all over Canada stood alongside the Royal Canadian Legion handing out poppies together, remembering the sacrifices that were made to keep our country safe.

Mr. Speaker, there was a special commemorative poppy campaign that was held at mosques across the country, bringing

an entire community forward to remember together. The poppy is a true symbol of sacrifice and of unity, as it continued to blossom and flourish even after fields were destroyed due to the artillery bombardment of World War I.

Mr. Speaker, we reflect on the loss that this country felt. We reflect on the sacrifices made. We remember those who answered the call. We come together in unity and thank all those men and women who served together, so that we may together live in this beautiful country today in peace and harmony.

I now ask all members to join me in thanking the Muslims for Remembrance campaign on their efforts for bringing Canadians closer together to remember the important sacrifices that were made for our country. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### A Soldier's Sacrifices

**Ms. Ross:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to share with this assembly the story of my father-in-law, William Samuel Ross. At the age of 22, Bill answered the call to serve his country. He served with the South Saskatchewan Regiment.

In one of the darkest days of the Second World War, Bill's regiment, along with the British and American allies, launched a raid on the town of Dieppe in Normandy, France. A German convoy took control of the raid, and the allies were met with overwhelming fire.

Mr. Speaker, August 19th, 1942, the South Saskatchewan Regiment's boat drifted away from its allies, and they were captured. 1,946 soldiers were captured that day. They became prisoners of war and were transported to Stalag Lamsdorf VIII-B, a notorious prisoner of war camp where they would endure starvation and torture. Bill was also forced to partake in the death march, a 1500-kilometre march in the middle of winter. Bill was liberated and returned to Canada. Bill continued to serve his country in the Canadian Armed Forces, dedicating 30 years of his life to this nation.

Mr. Speaker, the South Saskatchewan Regiment lost 84 members at the Dieppe raid, and in this time of remembrance, we must thank these young men for their efforts and their sacrifice for their country.

William Samuel Ross passed away in 1981, and though his family hold him in their hearts every day, I take this time to remember him, to especially reflect on the sacrifices he made for his family, his community, and our country. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize our Provincial Secretary.

### First Red Cross Hospital in the British Empire

**Hon. Ms. Wilson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With Remembrance Day fast approaching, I'd like to share with the Assembly a story about the Red Cross that includes a personal touch and holds a special meaning for myself.

Shortly after the end of the First World War, the Red Cross turned its attention and resources to helping those here at home in Saskatchewan. As a result, the very first Red Cross hospital in the British Empire was established just outside of the town of Paddockwood. This hospital, staffed and supplied by the Red Cross, served the small and remote communities, including a large number of returning soldiers who were settling in the area.

Mr. Speaker, not a doctor, but a nurse-in-charge managed this hospital full time while living in the community. These nurses did it all, from giving medicine and setting legs to delivering numerous post-war babies. This model proved to be so successful that 24 more outposts were opened in Saskatchewan, as well as over 200 more across Canada. As the years passed, these hospitals helped the community grow, including the birth of my parents Ella Neurauter and Walter Helbig at the very first outpost hospital outside of Paddockwood, where a monument stands on duty today.

As we remember the sacrifice of all those involved in the war, let us also remember the contributions they made in developing the communities we know and love today, after they returned home. We remember them.

#### STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

##### Ruling on a Point of Order

**The Speaker:** — Before question period, I'll rule on a point of order that was raised yesterday. Yesterday a point of order was raised by the Deputy Opposition House Leader concerning the member's statement by the member for Indian Head-Milestone. She alleges that the member for Indian Head-Milestone contravened rule 51(b) which states that a member shall not reflect on the absence of another member.

I reviewed the record. On page 2822 of *Hansard* the member for Indian Head-Milestone stated, "It wasn't too many years ago that the *Leader-Post* and many [other] papers around the province read, 'Doctor shortage on the rise.' In fact, doctor shortage even today in the House, I see again."

In response to the point of order, the Deputy Government House Leader said that the member for Indian Head-Milestone did not specifically "reflect on" the absence of the member for Saskatoon Meewasin. He stated, "... the operative provision, being 'reflect,' was not met."

The purpose of the ruling is to prohibit members from expressing opinions or observations why a member is absent from the Assembly. The member for Indian Head-Milestone did not specifically mention the particular member's absence but his choice of words and actions did convey a message that came close to doing indirectly what we cannot do directly. For this reason I caution the member.

I thank the Deputy House Leader for the respect for this institution and for his apology earlier today. I ask all members to be truly parliamentarians, and we will be having better decorum today in the Assembly.

#### QUESTION PERIOD

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

#### Usage of Private Email Accounts

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Mr. Speaker, every single time we ask the Premier about doing government business on his partisan email that is housed on a server at the Sask Party office, he tries to laugh it off. He makes excuses and he wants to rant about other things. But, Mr. Speaker, you know what he doesn't do? Answer the question. In fact yesterday he even hid from reporters and refused to answer their questions. The question is simple: why did the Premier's office say his email was down when it was not?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, when this matter was first raised and I was asked by the media earlier this spring about the issue, I said that I would do my best to use the government email account in all occasions. I would note, by the way, that that doesn't happen in this Assembly on either side of the House to 100 per cent degree. I think we've received emails from certain members over there who are doing constituency business not on their government email account. I think as long as those are available and obviously sent to another government account, that's not a problem. But let's be very clear that others in this Assembly, including members on that side, are using non-government accounts to conduct government business.

But when I was asked by the media about it, I said I would do my best, knowing that I probably would fall short, Mr. Speaker, especially if I get an email on a thread from someone who had been using the old non-government account and I didn't pay attention to change the account and just replied. Moreover, I had said that if the email server of the government was giving some trouble, in order to continue to do the work I would probably use a non-government account.

And I would make sure that the emails, as they are in this Assembly, are available to members in terms of whatever is applicable to normal freedom of information requests. I would also ensure that they were turned over, collected and turned over to the Provincial Archives, which is happening even now, Mr. Speaker. And so I hope that answers the hon. member's question.

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

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Mr. Speaker, again that didn't answer my question. During that time period in September, Mr. Speaker, the IT [information technology] has no record of the Premier's email being down. Executive Council has no record of the email being down. So why did the Premier's office say his email was down when it was not?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, I think it was towards the end of August where the email was giving . . . the server was giving me particular troubles. And I just indicated to, even to colleagues, look, if they need to get a hold of me, use the non-government email. I was using the non-government email through some dates in September certainly and then slowly moved back to the government account when it was clear that that was working successfully.

And by the way, if the government account falls off again in terms of its efficacy, I'm going to continue to email, knowing that those emails are subject to FOI [freedom of information] if they're from a non-government account and also that they're part of the Provincial Archives.

I would point out again to the members opposite and to anyone else that might be listening that I think it's important that documents that belong to the people of the province from an archives perspective, that they stay with the people of the province. And there are eight NDP [New Democratic Party] ministers who have yet to hand over their government files — which would be the equivalent of a government email — their government files to the Provincial Archives.

And the members opposite sort of would have laughed that off as the past. I think it's important. One of them's the minister of Justice, the minister that presided over the Murdoch Carriere affair. One of the them's the minister that was responsible for the SPUDCO [Saskatchewan Potato Utility Development Company] affair. There is the Finance minister. There's the Culture minister. There's eight members, ministers.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member would do the House a service as the leader of her party of these members if she would make a request to them to please hand over their files that belong to the people of the province back to the people of the province.

[14:00]

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

#### **Circumstances Around Review of Global Transportation Hub**

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Mr. Speaker, like Bill Boyd and his court dates, the Premier just keeps trying to kick the can down the road. But on these important questions of trust and transparency, the Premier is all show and no go.

Mr. Speaker, yes, the auditor did do a report and we've been asking questions of this Premier and that cabinet since the day it was published. But we're not getting any clear answers. As a result, the people of Saskatchewan still have questions about the Sask Party's GTH [Global Transportation Hub] scandal. If he doesn't trust me, well he can ask the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police], or he can ask all of the people that are running to replace him in his job. They say they all get asked about the GTH everywhere they go.

Mr. Speaker, that Premier's chief of staff quit when an email came out that put him at the centre of the controversy. That Premier let Bill Boyd ride off into the sunset, and that Premier has four weeks left to answer questions in this House. So two simple questions. Does he regret not firing Bill Boyd, and does he think Laurie Pushor should still be working for the government?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of the Environment and the Global Transportation Hub.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr.

Speaker, it's been indicated on a number of occasions in the House and outside of the House. The Provincial Auditor has looked into this matter, has issued a report to the Legislative Assembly that included a number of recommendations that the Global Transportation Hub has implemented and is working under. This government also co-operated fully with the Provincial Auditor's office, providing any documentation, all cabinet information that the Provincial Auditor requested or looked at or needed to look at, and again provided a full report on this matter. And the members opposite will know that the RCMP are looking into this matter, and we await their findings.

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

#### **Regina Bypass Project and Highway Safety**

**Mr. Meili:** — Mr. Speaker, it's not only on the GTH that members of the public really want some clear answers. They're also wondering about the Regina bypass project that ballooned from \$400 million to \$2 billion, Mr. Speaker. They say this project was studied to death, but it's cut off Balgonie. It doesn't work for farm equipment. It's got first responders raising safety concerns, and now the signs they've put up are causing traffic jams and confusion.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier admit that signing over control of a Saskatchewan road to a French conglomerate wasn't the wisest choice?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Highways and Infrastructure.

**Hon. Mr. Marit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let's make it perfectly clear, Mr. Speaker. This project went from \$400 million to over a billion dollars because we expanded the project, Mr. Speaker. It went from three overpasses to 12 overpasses, Mr. Speaker, and it's going to go around the city of Regina.

This project was much bigger than what the member opposite said, and it's a good project for the province of Saskatchewan to grow the economy and to diversify, Mr. Speaker. The accesses are there. The signs are up, and the bypass is flowing real good. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Mr. Speaker, governing is about choices, and this government has chosen to put 60 per cent of its highway budget into a single project in Regina and put off other important work. In the wake of deadly crashes on Highway 5 between Saskatoon and Highway 2, we've had recent crashes and the mayor of Humboldt recently told the media that that road has been bad for years.

Mr. Speaker, the government has been talking about expanding this highway to make it safer, but talk is cheap. And a spokesperson for the Ministry of Highways recently told reporters that the actual construction schedule is going to depend on future budgets.



How does the Premier justify handing \$2 billion to a foreign company for a single project in Regina while making rural communities wait for the changes to make their roads safe now?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Highways and Infrastructure.

**Hon. Mr. Marit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to announce in this House today, Mr. Speaker, we have open passing lanes on No. 5 west of Humboldt right over to junction No. 2, and we are looking at the plan for east of Saskatoon. It's in the works that we're going to proceed that way. We're actually starting to do some of the preliminary work right now, as we speak, Mr. Speaker. Let's make it very clear: this ministry takes highways very . . . concerns of safety, very important, and we are doing everything we can to improve the safety on our provincial highways, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Water Management and Environmental Protection

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, it was the same kind of bluster and arrogance that in 2012, the then Environment minister promised that they would have a policy in place to protect our wetlands by 2015. Five years later, and I don't even know how many Environment ministers later, there is still no plan in sight.

Mr. Speaker, wetlands are important carbon sinks. Preserving them is also an important step to managing the quality of our water. But instead of following through with their promises, the Sask Party is falling short. Mr. Speaker, while they continue to turn a blind eye to illegal drainage and force downstream farmers and municipalities to suffer the consequences, can the minister tell us when will the Sask Party finally introduce their promised strategy to "retain and restore wetlands"?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to take this question and I'm pleased to have been recycled as the Minister of Environment.

Mr. Speaker, there's a number of areas from 2007 over the last 10 years that we've had to work very hard on in terms of making changes to how the environment is not only monitored and managed but protected, Mr. Speaker. The members opposite would know, and perhaps new members don't know, that under the NDP for 16 years, GHG [greenhouse gas] emissions, for example, went up by 70 per cent under the New Democrats, Mr. Speaker. There was no action on that matter, Mr. Speaker. There was no action on improving problems around drainage, Mr. Speaker. We know a number of the problems that were experienced in this province existed under the NDP, Mr. Speaker.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, what members may not know, in fact, is that there was in fact a bill introduced by a private member of the NDP after they had lost the election, looking at air management, Mr. Speaker. And what that bill proposed to do was ban laughing gas in the province of Saskatchewan. That's as much progress as we had under the NDP when it came to the

environment. We're working hard to address all of these areas, but there was a lot of work that wasn't done under this former government.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, there's lots of hot over there, but not one word about the wetlands here in Saskatchewan. We lose 25 acres of wetlands to illegal drainage in Saskatchewan each day. That's nearly 10,000 acres or over 7,500 football fields each year. And still this government does nothing.

Time and time again they've promised to stop illegal drainage, but instead of taking action they're turning a blind eye. I've seen it myself, Mr. Speaker, in the Quill lakes area. There's a supposed moratorium on drainage, but it's still happening. The law is being broken because this government refuses to enforce it.

Mr. Speaker, in June of 2016 the second-last Environment minister committed to taking action in the Quills, but a few short months later the last Environment minister admitted that no illegal drainage in the Quills had been or even would be shut down. So will this Environment minister have the courage to finally enforce the law, or will we have to wait for the next one or the next one or the next one?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think the member opposite would know that this government has taken significant action on this file, action that wasn't taken under the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, action that in fact hadn't been taking place over the last number of decades in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Under the former minister, legislation was passed in 2017. Regulations were introduced in 2015, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we want to work with all of those associations, the watershed associations, the C & Ds [conservation and development area authority], to ensure that we are managing the system. It is a very complex system, a network of drainage works all across the province, Mr. Speaker. And that's what we'll continue to do: work with all the stakeholders to ensure that this is managed in the most appropriate fashion.

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

### Support for Municipalities

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Mr. Speaker, last week I told the minister about the tough decisions that the city of Prince Albert had to make to respond to the Sask Party's cuts, but we are not alone. In Saskatoon, for example, the city was forced to raise fees and property taxes too. In Regina the council even added a line to show where some of the Sask Party cuts were hitting the people who live here. And at SARM's mid-year convention, rural representatives have shared with me how much they are struggling with provincial funding cuts.

Mr. Speaker, we know the Minister of Education likes to play

shell games to cover up for their cuts, but will the Minister for Government Relations accept the facts and admit that these municipal tax hikes and service cuts are Sask Party tax hikes and service cuts?

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

**Hon. Mr. Doke:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess in regards to EPT [education property tax], I will respond. When we first formed government, we committed through reducing the EPT so that education funding would be 60 per cent from the GRF [General Revenue Fund] and 40 per cent from the EPT. We actually went beyond that, and the split was 65 per cent from the GRF and 35 per cent from the EPT. We have returned the EPT funding to a level to meet campaign commitments of 60/40 split.

Mr. Speaker, I would also say that since 2008-2009, our government has reduced cumulative education property tax burden on residents by \$1.3 billion. And I can say that all the money that's collected from EPT that goes into the GRF is spent by another two and a half times. Thank you.

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

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Mr. Speaker, these municipal leaders know a budget cut when they see one. Saskatchewan people know what a tax hike is. And at the root of it all is the Sask Party.

Mr. Speaker, back in my own community of Prince Albert, the Sask Party's cuts have forced the city to freeze funding for police services. Mr. Speaker, at a time when the Sask Party has also cut important services that help to curb crime and keep people off the street and while police chiefs across the province are saying they need more social services and more support, how can the Sask Party possibly justify cutting services, downloading to municipalities, and forcing communities across our province to consider cutting policing budgets?

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

**Hon. Mr. Doke:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In 2007-18 over 257 provincial revenue sharing . . . 257 million was given to the municipalities, up 130 million or 103 per cent since 2007-08 — unconditional, no-strings-attached funding for our municipal partners. Since 2007-08 over \$2 billion has been provided to Saskatchewan municipalities.

Mr. Speaker, we are truly looking after our municipalities and if the member opposite would just have a look at the numbers, she would recognize that.

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

#### Funding for Indigenous and Northern Students

**Mr. Belanger:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We know that the Education minister has a few thoughts on indigenous teachings in the classroom. But when it comes to the education of indigenous children, there are serious issues that

should concern her much more.

Mr. Speaker, the funding gap is leaving on-reserve students behind. Graduation rates for indigenous students across the province remain far too low. Aboriginal retention workers have been cut from classrooms and the legislative secretary responsible for First Nations student achievement quit five months ago.

Mr. Speaker, when we said legislative secretaries weren't doing enough, we didn't mean that they should drop the ball altogether. Mr. Speaker, why has this government infused their budget with so many cuts that hurt indigenous students and our province's future? Is this just another one of Sask Party's philosophy?

[14:15]

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

**Hon. Ms. Eyre:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, graduation rates of course continue to be a challenge but we did see an increase this year which we took as a great sign of progress. That has always been a key goal of this government, to move in that direction, and again there has been progress.

Let's take the North for example, Mr. Speaker, in terms of some of the things that we are trying to achieve in terms of First Nations education. Since '07 we've increased funding to the northern school divisions by 28.5 per cent. We've invested over 4 million in the new Birch Ridge School in Turnor Lake. It's just some examples — extensively renovated Churchill Community High School, Mr. Speaker, and La Ronge high school; provided mental health, first aid to all three northern school divisions.

And again in terms of garnering efforts towards the graduation rates and improving them that the member opposite references, the Following Their Voices program has expanded to four new schools in La Ronge, Ile-a-la-Crosse, Canoe Lake First Nation. And we provided 73 per cent of the funds to the northern library system, over \$970,000. Efforts in the right direction, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We should all be genuinely proud of our schools taking action on reconciliation and recognizing our shared histories. But that was not the question I asked. I asked specific about the budget cuts, and she wants to talk about their record.

Mr. Speaker, this government and that Education minister cut NORTEP [northern teacher education program], a program that for 40 years gave hope to our youth and entire communities. It educated northern students who taught in the North. And, Mr. Speaker, the education funding gap between on-reserve and off-reserve students is still leaving indigenous students behind, and yet NORTEP was cut to add further pain to the education efforts of our Aboriginal people.

A year ago, the Premier said we needed to be vigilant on closing this gap. So far, nothing. Zero progress, Mr. Speaker.

So why won't the Education minister finally take some action and work to support all students across this great province? Why won't they just fill that funding gap and send the bill to Ottawa?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cox:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I would just say at the outset that teacher education in the North is very important to this government. But the consolidation of that education programming in the North was about expanding the programs and enhancing access to northern students while we also ensured that the programs would remain high quality and sustainable.

Northlands College has had 40 years of experience in educating northerners and has seen significant increases. For example, since 2007, Mr. Speaker, enrolment in that university's education programming has increased by 226 per cent. We're going to continue to work with our northern partners and make sure that we have quality education in that North.

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

#### **Wait Time for Young People to Receive Mental Health Services**

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Closing the funding gap is a pivotal step in reconciliation, and with indigenous youth across the province seeing so little hope that they are choosing to end their lives, there isn't time to sit back and wait. Action is needed now.

Mr. Speaker, psychiatric services in the North are so lacking that many northern youth are referred to Saskatoon. But a family doctor in Saskatoon recently said, with two positions vacant, the wait times for young people to see a psychiatrist are between 18 months and two years.

Whether it's an urban centre, a rural community, or the far North, the trend remains the same. Wait times are dangerously high and youth are struggling to get the services they desperately need. Does the minister have a plan to make sure youth can access the services they need? If he does, how much longer will our kids have to wait to see it in action?

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

**Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Mr. Speaker, this government and my co-minister and myself take this issue very seriously. And when you hear of these suicide issues in some of these communities, whether urban or rural, it hits close to home, Mr. Speaker. All of us, I think, have been touched by suicide in one shape or form.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about the psychiatric numbers, Mr. Speaker, the minister and I were in Edmonton at the FPT meetings, the federal-provincial-territorial minister meetings, only a couple of weeks ago. The same challenges in recruiting psychiatrists, for example, are across the country. In fact, I

think when we look at some of the initiatives that we've had in the province here, we're actually doing a little bit better than some of our partners.

We have a recruitment effort under way for the two psychiatrists in Saskatoon, as well as a temporary position to fill the gap in the short term, Mr. Speaker, as well as two new psychiatrists that were recruited for North Battleford at the Union Hospital there that will offer Telehealth services to the North, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Mr. Speaker, the wait times I gave were for the largest health region in the province, the region in which a children's hospital is slated to open in two years. And they can't recruit or retain the mental health care professionals they need? This is incredibly concerning. There are 67 psychiatrists working in the province, but the Canadian Psychiatric Association suggests Saskatchewan should have 170. Let me help the minister with the math on that. That would mean we need 154 per cent more.

And so I ask again, since we didn't see anything in their Speech from the Throne on mental health, what is the plan to decrease the waits, to recruit more mental health care providers, and when will the Sask Party make this a priority?

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

**Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Mr. Speaker, as so often is the case in this House, we have to correct the NDP and their record, Mr. Speaker. There might have been less than — a lot less psychiatrists working in the province under the NDP, Mr. Speaker. We've increased those numbers by 29 per cent to 112, Mr. Speaker. And I just talked about the two that were recruited for North Battleford that will be helping the North.

Mr. Speaker, we also have to keep in mind there's many different mental health services available to the youth and the citizens in this province upfront. There's the 811, which isn't a do-all end-all but it does direct people, have instant contact 24-7 with mental health professionals via telephone. We also have mental health workers, we have psychotherapists. We have a gamut of professionals throughout the system, Mr. Speaker, that do help with mental health.

In fact, I would point the members to some of the things they don't like, is continuous improvement, where my region back home in Sunrise Health Region shortened those wait-lists for youth needing services to zero, Mr. Speaker. In fact we see 80 per cent of youth that have psychiatric issues that need care are getting those services within five days.

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

#### **Employment of Women and Provincial Economy**

**Ms. Mowat:** — Mr. Speaker, earlier this week I asked the minister what she was doing to help the increasing number of

women in our province who are struggling to find work and those who have given up looking for work because there's no work to be found.

Mr. Speaker, there was a 28 per cent jump in the number of women relying on EI [employment insurance] this year. There are 3,400 fewer people with jobs in Saskatchewan right now compared to this time last year. Mr. Speaker, 3,300 of them are women. That's not some philosophy; that's a fact.

How can the minister not think this is significant? How can she deny that her government is failing Saskatchewan women?

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

**Hon. Mr. Bonk:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Low global commodity prices have had an impact on our labour market in the past few years. And I empathize with anyone who has been impacted by recent job losses. But despite these challenges, our unemployment rate is at 5.9 per cent — lower than the national average of 6.3 per cent — and we're far better off now than we were under the NDP.

And we're seeing improvement in other areas, Mr. Speaker. Jobs in oil and gas extraction were up by 1,400 and by 600 in the supporting activities for mining, oil and gas extraction industry. These industries are drivers of our economy and we see positive growth in these and we look forward to more of them in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### **Bill No. 89 — *The School Choice Protection Act* *Loi sur la protection du choix d'école***

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

**Hon. Ms. Eyre:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 89, *The School Choice Protection Act* 2017 be now introduced and read for the first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Education that Bill No. 89 be now introduced and read the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

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

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

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

### **Bill No. 90 — *The Heritage Property Amendment Act, 2017***

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Parks, Culture and

Sport.

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 90, *The Heritage Property Amendment Act, 2017* be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport that Bill No. 90 be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

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

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — Next sitting.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

### **Bill No. 91 — *The Snowmobile Amendment Act, 2017***

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

**Hon. Mr. Hargrave:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 91, *The Snowmobile Amendment Act, 2017* be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Crown Investments that Bill No. 91 be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

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

**Hon. Mr. Hargrave:** — Next sitting.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

### **Bill No. 92 — *The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Amendment Act, 2017***

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

**Hon. Mr. Hargrave:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 92, *The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Act, 2017* be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Crown

Investments that Bill No. 92 be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

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

**Hon. Mr. Hargrave:** — Next sitting.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

**Bill No. 93 — *The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Holding Corporation Amendment Act, 2017***

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

**Hon. Mr. Hargrave:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 93, the Saskatchewan telecommunications corporation amendment Act, 2017 be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Crown Investments that Bill No. 93 be now introduced and read the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

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

**Hon. Mr. Hargrave:** — Next sitting.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

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

**Mr. Lawrence:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answer to question 19.

**The Speaker:** — The Government Whip has ordered the response to question no. 19.

**GOVERNMENT ORDERS**

**SECOND READINGS**

**Bill No. 87 — *The Data Matching Agreements Act***

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of *The Data Matching Agreements Act*. This is a new Act that will allow for the matching and linking of information and databases to facilitate fact-based decision making within government. This Act promotes co-operation amongst government institutions sharing information while still protecting the privacy rights of individuals, following recommendations made by the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. Mr. Speaker, this new Act will create a statutory authority for government institutions and prescribe local authorities to enter into data-matching agreements and participate in data-matching projects using personal information or personal health information.

Data matching is where information from one database is matched or linked with information in another database. This Act will establish requirements for the initiation of a data-matching program by a government institution or prescribed local authority and also place requirements on participating organizations.

Mr. Speaker, the new Act will require parties to a data-matching project to enter into a data-matching agreement which meets the criteria set out in the Act. Oversight will be provided by the government access coordinator where the initiating organization is a government institution, and the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner generally. The government access coordinator and the Privacy Commissioner will review agreements and provide comment.

The new Act establishes reporting requirements where a data-matching project has been completed and sets out expressed good faith liability protection for disclosing information and compliance with such an agreement. Of course the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner will continue to retain all of its investigative and recommendation power under *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and *The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Mr. Speaker, the government access coordinator is a new role that will be created through consequential amendments to *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. The government access coordinator will review data-matching agreements for government institutions and provide comment. The government access coordinator will also receive reports from government institutions where a data-matching project is completed.

[14:30]

Mr. Speaker, with respect to *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, the government access coordinator will also receive and respond to access requests, working towards centralization of access to information service for government institutions.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of *The Data Matching Agreements Act*.

**The Speaker:** — The Deputy Premier has moved second reading. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And as the custom here, I'm pleased to stand in my place today to give the initial comments on Bill No. 87, *The Data Matching Agreements Act*.

And, Mr. Speaker, as I understand the notes from the minister, when he made reference to a number of points of his bill in the sense of being able to use a large amount of data and to match the data to a number of agreed . . . a group of people to share some of the data that they have in common, that may be of assistance to each other on a variety of fronts, as I understand the bill being introduced.

So this data matching agreement Act, really you begin to ask the question, what is the purpose of this particular bill? What is the intended objective, Mr. Speaker, and who is it meant to assist? Is it meant to assist the government? Is it meant to assist the private sector? Is it meant to assist the various groups that are out there, Mr. Speaker?

It's important to note that as we look at the modern-day technology and all the different aspects of social media or the Internet, Mr. Speaker, there's more and more worries about keeping information confidential for a variety of sources, whether it be government or business or even countries overall, Mr. Speaker. And we're all very familiar with the ability of hackers to go into any system, Mr. Speaker. That's always a constant threat. And we've seen evidence of that not only in the banking industry, Mr. Speaker, but all throughout the world. As you know, there's numerous cases of this, of the world being apprised of certain confidential information that was hacked out of secure servers, Mr. Speaker. This is the worry that a lot of people have when they talk about technology in the modern age, that this is obviously something that is very, very concerning to a lot of people.

And what we should do as a government, Mr. Speaker, is if it is something that is going to be of net benefit to the people of Saskatchewan, then we need to explain specifically which organizations have asked for this particular bill. What's the intended objective of this particular bill? And why, out of the blue, in 2017 are we now deciding to put this bill forward to talk about getting large pieces of information? And members opposite, certainly, you know, they have access to a lot of information, and they want access to more information.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the part that is a bit worrisome whenever the Sask Party gets up and talks about more legislation to provide more insight into people's lives, Mr. Speaker, we want to be very, very careful that we recognize privacy, something that a lot of people would like to continue and paramount in some of their businesses or their lives. And I would point out, Mr. Speaker, that this is something that needs a lot of thought. It certainly needs a lot of thought.

Now it's a bit rich coming from the Saskatchewan Party government that talks about *The Data Matching Agreements Act*, Mr. Speaker, when we can't seem to get their Premier to use a government email account so we're able to access that information through the FOI process.

There was a lot of discussion around how the Privacy Commissioner would be engaged, Mr. Speaker. The minister

spoke about the need for the proper process to access some of the information that may be available between the different parties in this particular bill. So the list goes on as to what the potential challenges could clearly be with this bill, and we need to make sure that this is not something that, at the end of the day that is simply more oversight. Some people like to make reference to more oversight from big brother.

Now, Mr. Speaker, again as I said at the outset, it's a bit rich coming from the Saskatchewan Party when we can't get the Premier of the province of Saskatchewan to use the government emails that we could access to see what discussions were around some very important matters and, more recently, the GTH land scandal, Mr. Speaker. The purpose that a lot of people in the province have asked me is . . . [inaudible] . . . what's the importance of having the Premier's emails become accessible to the opposition and to the public?

Well, Mr. Speaker, it is very important. Because any time the Premier talks about any issue on the email, that they should be subjected to an FOI where the public, as our Premier, have a right to know what he's talking about. So when the opposition says, when the opposition says, can we have a copy of any emails you have, Mr. Premier, on the GTH, on the GTH and what your involvement is, and then he says, well our government email account was down so I used the private Sask Party email, well, Mr. Speaker, we can't go to a private email called the Sask Party email account and ask for that information, primarily because they're a private organization.

So that's the purpose in the opposition. We get up every day and we say, can we have your emails that you sent to express your involvement in the Global Transportation Hub land scandal? Can we have those emails? That was the question that was asked of our leader, and consistently the Premier has not answered. So on one hand they want more data collection and more data-pooling information as identified in *The Data Matching Agreements Act*, but they themselves do not want to provide information through their email accounts as to what they discussed on the GTH to the people of Saskatchewan.

So that's exactly my point in terms of the hypocritical approach of this particular government. And once again we see, through the data matching Bill No. 87, that what they want to do is take a large number of information from a large number of sources and put them all together in a pool and then have the data that one organization may have on a certain group and then match that with the government and use that — for whatever purposes, Mr. Speaker, is totally beyond me.

So as they bring that process forward, then we turn around and we say, okay if you want to be able to build a big brother network — which I view this thing as; we never know who their intended benefactors are — we would like you to also give us information on your email accounts as the Government of Saskatchewan because that information is highly valuable, Mr. Speaker. It's very important that we have access to that information.

And we hear the two responses from the Premier indicating that he inadvertently used a private email, Mr. Speaker: I may have just replied in a private email; I didn't do it on purpose. And the other argument he made, Mr. Speaker, is that, according to his

office, that his email account for the government was down for a number of weeks. So we checked. We checked and lo and behold, Mr. Speaker, there was no report of an email account being down in the Premier's office for two weeks. There was none of that.

So we're asking the question, okay, if the people of Saskatchewan have a right to know what you're sending in your email as our Premier to various government departments and to various members of his government on something as critical as the GTH land scandal, then the people have a right to know what you're saying in that email.

And all emails within the government ministries are subjected to freedom of information. And what happened was the Saskatchewan Party or the Premier said, well I'm going to use a different email account. I'm going to use the Sask Party email account. That way none of this information I have on the GTH is FOI-able, so therefore we don't have to report this information to the public or to the Leader of the Opposition, who has been steadfast in her request, in her demand to have that information come forward.

Now, Mr. Speaker, why is that important? A lot of people back home would ask me, why is the Premier's email so important to you folks? And I tell them because whatever he sent in the email as a result of discussions and negotiations around the GTH . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And the Premier's chirping from his seat right now, Mr. Speaker. The reason why we needed that information, sir, we needed that information to see what your involvement was in the GTH. That's what we want to know.

We want to know when were you involved because you give us two different stories. One story you say, I was involved right from the start, and the other story is that I found out about it later. So we say, well let's check out your email. We'll help you out and find that information for you. And he said, well I can't remember if I used my government email or my Sask Party email account because I had to communicate with the people. Well the people of Saskatchewan want that communication.

So that's why, when we talk about emails, Mr. Speaker, from the perspective of the opposition, as the Premier he obliged himself and his party that he would be transparent and accountable and that any actions that he's undertaken as our Premier, the public should have a right to know as to what is happening to the Government of Saskatchewan, and thereby they should be using government email accounts. So any correspondence from the Premier's office or discussion or even memos that he's had on the GTH, guess what, Mr. Speaker? We can't access that information because he's used the Saskatchewan Party email account. And, Mr. Speaker, this is the same government, this is the same Premier that talked about accountability and transparency.

So now we come along and we, as the opposition, we ask the question, well can you give us that information? And the Premier said, I've co-operated fully with the auditor. Well the fact is they didn't co-operate with the auditor to the extent the auditor should have received co-operation on when it comes to the GTH. All his email information on his private server should have been provided to the auditor, Mr. Speaker.

And the report of the auditor on the GTH, Mr. Speaker, was very confined. It was a very confined role that she had to play. All she could basically interview were government employees. They couldn't go beyond that to talk to prospective people that may have been in conflict, Mr. Speaker. She had a very limited ability to interview certain people.

And that's why today, when you hear the member from Regina speaking of some of the challenges as it pertains to trying to get to the bottom of what happened at the GTH, Mr. Speaker, we have to make sure that when the auditor's name is being used in this Assembly . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . As my colleague says, that the auditor's report exonerated no one, Mr. Speaker. She was very confined in what she had to say and it's a bit . . . Mr. Speaker, it would be shocking, if not amusing, that the ministers of the day continue standing up and making reference to the auditor's report. And I know, Mr. Speaker, and everybody in Saskatchewan knows, the media know that the auditor's report was very constrained, very confined. There were some tight timelines and there was only certain people that she could interview.

And these are some of the things, Mr. Speaker, that we would find evidence of if we had access to the Premier's email account. And obviously because it's hidden in the Saskatchewan Party headquarters basement in their server, that we simply can't access that information. And that's why email record keeping is so important, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Why is the Government House Leader on his . . .

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** — I would like to make a point of order.

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

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** — The member opposite full well knows — he's been here long enough — that when a bill's put on the floor, to discuss the bill and not to be wide ranging. I've listened intently and I'll ask the Speaker to, if he has to review *Hansard*, to listen. For the last five minutes I haven't heard any reference to the particular bill except just basically a basic rant. So I would ask the member to return to the bill that is on the order paper that is being discussed.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm glad to see the member from Arm River back in the Assembly, the Government House Leader . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . My apologies, Mr. Speaker. I, of course, apologize and withdraw that particular comment, but it's always good to see the member in the House.

And, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the traditions that guide debate, the member will well know that when you've got a subject as broad as data matching, Mr. Speaker, that certainly there are a number of subjects that that naturally leads to, many of them that are currently in the public eye squarely this day, Mr. Speaker. So I would submit that as great as it is to ever see the member from Arm River in the Assembly, that his point of order be not well founded, Mr. Speaker, and that the member should be able to continue on in his great and edifying speech.

**The Speaker:** — I too was listening very carefully to the member from Athabasca, and we do have pretty good latitude on speaking to different bills, but I do caution the member to do his best to tie his message back to the bill. And I do not take the point of order well taken. I recognize the member from Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I referred to one section of the Bill 87 to reinforce my point, Mr. Speaker. The bill clearly states that the intent in here, or the intended objective here within the bill says, and I quote, “Individuals will also be able to request information collected. Government coordinators will also be legislated to provide information regarding this entire process.”

[14:45]

So a big part of collection of data also engages the email option for people to share information. So as you have a block of information between various organizations and entities, including government, and they share this information, my point being that you should not have certain information privy to certain parties and not to others. So the point being that government coordinators will also be legislated to provide information regarding this entire process.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is in line with what the bill is involving and speaking about, and that’s why it’s important for the member from Arm River to figure out that emails are a big part of the technological options available through this bill. So, Mr. Speaker, the member from Arm River should actually try and make the link that when we talk about data matching, it includes all data, Mr. Speaker. That means transcripts, letters, and, Mr. Speaker, emails. It’s a big part of the technology in this day and age, I would remind the member from Arm River.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would point out that a lot of folks in northern Saskatchewan understand the complexities of the Internet and that this is really a global community, and there is a lot of information that people . . . It’s amazing what information that they could glean out from just basically what we would refer to as surfing the Net.

And it’s important that we have strategic issues, and I look at the business community as an example. A lot of their information that they want to share and certainly retain for their own proprietary interests, Mr. Speaker, that they should be able to have a secure server, and that in the event that they want to join a process such as this, you would assume that the entities that are establishing this particular process and this particular project and . . . as identified in Bill 87, and this being the Government of Saskatchewan, that they would be equally co-operative with that business when it comes to sharing information, whether it be through correspondence or through emails.

So that’s why it’s important, Mr. Speaker. The link is clear: that any electronic communication by sharing information and data matching, Mr. Speaker, is open and subjected to debate on this particular bill. So I’m going back to the Premier and his whole email issue, Mr. Speaker, and I’m pleased with the latitude provided because it is . . . It does encompass that process and I certainly concur with that premise.

And it’s important to point out that as the people of Saskatchewan have identified, there is so many complex issues that need to be managed well, and exchange of information is highly valuable when applied well. Coordination and efficiency within all organizations, including the government in Saskatchewan, is pretty important to a lot of people, and if it’s applied well, then all these objectives are basically things that we would be supportive of.

But, Mr. Speaker, my point being that if on one hand the government wants to talk about data collection and data matching, want to bring in companies and different organizations to share a wide swath of information and correlate between all the organizations which data that we could share and that which data that we have a match on and which we can exchange information, this is an important aspect of more and more oversight, and some people may not like that process. Others may like it.

We just need to know, Mr. Speaker, if that is something that different organizations have concerns about, or different people, different companies may have some reservations about. And that’s why it’s important as we introduce bills of this sort, no matter how many times the Saskatchewan Party appear to make some of these bills benign, there are some real challenges to what they’re proposing, and I would suggest that this particular bill may have some wide-reaching consequences, Mr. Speaker, and certainly something that we have to watch and provide oversight as best we can as the official opposition.

That being said, Mr. Speaker, we know that there’s organizations out there that are familiar with this process, as I said earlier on. There are people that provide oversight, and people surf the Net. They come across some of these bills and some of the intentions of these bills, and they have a lot of different perspectives. And that’s why, as the opposition, I would encourage them to contact us. If there is some part of the bill that is concerning, that you feel may be impugning your civil liability or hurting your company from growth or allowing more oversight by big brother, so to speak, then we need to hear, we need to hear those comments and concerns, Mr. Speaker. And there may be some very valuable parts of this bill as well. We also need to hear that as well, Mr. Speaker, and that’s the point that I would raise as we look through some of these bills.

But the whole intent, Mr. Speaker, as we talk about these bills, is that many of these companies and these organizations and these private individuals that may be interested in this particular process, I would suggest to them, Mr. Speaker, that they look at the actions of the Government of Saskatchewan that is proposing such a bill, and from there that you arrive at the determination on your own whether you should trust that partner or not. And my point being today that based on the performance of the Premier when it comes to accessing his email account, that they have not followed the rules in terms of providing information in a timely fashion.

Now, Mr. Speaker, so it comes to accountability, it comes to transparency, and it comes to respect amongst the partners. And I would suggest to those that may be looking at the options and the opportunity and the threats of *The Data Matching Agreements Act*, Bill 87, that you forward that information to



us. And certainly from our perspective, the help is very much appreciated because we don't understand how this could affect a number of organizations and people and companies. We need obviously the time and the option to discuss that and look at that.

So, Mr. Speaker, there is all kinds of issues that impact the sharing of information. As I've said at the outset, the technological opportunities of 2017 are amazing. And there's also a threat not only to the banking industry but to government entities as well in releasing private, confidential information that's not meant to be public. And, Mr. Speaker, in many cases that'll hurt companies, and it'll certainly hurt a lot of organizations and people out there that may be unsuspecting victims.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have no choice but to take the time, look at *The Data Matching Agreements Act*, and see what the intended objectives are, see who the potential partners are. We need to do a bit of network and a bit of research work on our part to make sure we understand what is being planned with this bill.

But I'll close on this particular point on Bill 87, Mr. Speaker, that if you look at the actions of the Sask Party government who is proposing this bill, where we see the Premier has refused to give us emails that he has sent as the Premier to the members of his caucus and various other ministers, I'm assuming, and he used a private email account which is the Sask Party email in the basement of one of their Sask Party offices, and that's where all the information is being stored — that's where all the information is being stored — I think, I think that information should be made public. If you're the Premier of the province, you shouldn't be sending emails, confidential emails, on a private server that's housed in your Sask Party headquarters. That email should be handled through the Premier's email account.

And what's worst, Mr. Speaker, what's worse is that when we asked why he was continuing to use the email account of the Sask Party, his office indicated that the government email was down, that it wasn't operational for two weeks. So dutifully as we should, the opposition made inquiries through FOI, so we got hold of the SPMC [Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation] guys and we said, well can you give us a record of when the Premier's government email is back online, and we were told that there was no report of any email server being down.

So again, Mr. Speaker, on both fronts we never got a straight answer. And that's a crying shame because people deserve information, especially when it comes to the Global Transportation Hub, the challenges we have in the whole scandal that's associated with the land around the Global Transportation Hub.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would point out again, a lot more information is required as to what the intention of this bill is. We need to network with the people that are going to be impacted, so we have a lot of work ahead of us.

But as I said, do not trust the Government of Saskatchewan when it comes to sharing information willingly and openly, like many companies and organizations would under this bill,

because they have so far squandered every opportunity to be credible on that front by continuing to deny the people of Saskatchewan, and thus the opposition party of Saskatchewan, access to the Premier's email which is housed in their private Sask Party server. That information is needed by us. It's needed by many people and they simply refuse to hand it over, Mr. Speaker. And that's why I say accountability and transparency, which is identified in this bill, from their perspective is a sham. And despite making all those assurances, they still continue to not provide information, timely information, to the people of Saskatchewan and to the opposition on such matters such as the global transportation land scandal.

So on that note, Mr. Speaker, we have a lot more to add to Bill 87, and I move that we adjourn debate on *The Data Matching Agreements Act*.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 87, the data matching agreement, 2017. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Bill No. 88 — *The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2017***

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

**Hon. Mr. Hargrave:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to move second reading of *The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2017*. The Act administered by Saskatchewan Government Insurance outlines considerations with respect to people injured in vehicle collisions. There are a few minor amendments to this Act, Mr. Speaker.

SGI's [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] safe driver recognition program places all drivers on a safety rating scale based on their driving history. The program rewards safe drivers with a discount on their vehicle insurance, while drivers who display riskier behaviour are assessed financial penalties.

*The Automobile Accident Insurance Act* defines "chargeable incident" for the purposes of safety rating assessments under the safe driver recognition program. A part of the definition of "chargeable incident" is duplicated in regulations. The proposed change eliminates unnecessary duplication and will be more efficient when changes are required to the listed offences.

Mr. Speaker, when SGI changes a driver's safety rating as a result of a collision, the driver can appeal SGI's decision to the Highway Traffic Board. The procedure for appealing is set out in *The Automobile Accident Insurance Act*. The Act requires the driver to appeal within 30 days when the business practice is to allow 90 days. As well, the Act directs the board to contact the driver to schedule a hearing. In practice it is the driver who contacts the board. So amendments are being made to reflect what is actually happening.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. members may recall that in January 2017

two additional offences were added to the list of those that triggered payment of pain and suffering bereavement damages under the Act. Those offences are criminal negligence causing death and criminal negligence causing bodily harm. These offences do not have a corresponding statutory condition, which means SGI cannot seek recovery against the convicted driver. The proposed change means that if a Saskatchewan driver is convicted of these offences, SGI can recover any insurance money paid for pain and suffering, or bereavement damages from that driver's third party liability insurance. Basically, Mr. Speaker, the proposed change corrects an oversight at the time of the January 2017 amendments.

Mr. Speaker, in 2016 SGI made numerous changes to the safe driver recognition program, responding to customer feedback calling for bigger discounts for good drivers, and tougher consequences for risky drivers. This doubled the cost of financial penalties for riskier drivers. As a result, it can be challenging for some drivers to pay their amounts owing to SGI. Amendments to the Act will allow for monthly instalments, making payments easier for customers.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, a last change clarifies that counselling costs for family members of someone injured in a collision will be outlined in regulations.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of *The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2017*.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Crown Investments has moved second reading of Bill 88. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I want to, if the member from Arm River would let me talk about tires and tire safety during an automobile insurance Act proceeding, then I would very much make the connect for him, if you'd like, Mr. Speaker.

It's important to, as you look at this particular Act, Bill 88, *The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act*, Mr. Speaker, it's important to note that the automobile consists of many, many parts, and insurance consists of many, many aspects of which parts of the automobile are protected, Mr. Speaker. So it's important to note that there is an all-encompassing aspect when you talk about automobile insurance overall. And, Mr. Speaker, Bill 88 is something that we need to pay very, very close attention to as it pertains to changes that the minister may want to propose under this bill.

[15:00]

Now, Mr. Speaker, the definition of "chargeable incident" is moved to regulation as opposed to legislation. We need to know what is exactly is meant when the minister made reference to a chargeable incident. What kind of parameters will he be using? And how would the rules be established? Is there going to be a consult with the legal team, whether it be police officers or their own government lawyers, as to what the definition of a chargeable incident may mean? Mr. Speaker, it's very, very important for the drivers and the people that use SGI in the province of Saskatchewan to know what regulations will be changed as a result of some of the legislation around Bill 88.

Mr. Speaker, there is also appeals for drivers' safety ratings. The procedures, fees, and required documents for those were moved from legislation into regulations. Again, Mr. Speaker, I would point out to the people of Saskatchewan, it's very, very important to note there's a difference between legislative versus the whole notion around regulation because legislative usually has the scrutiny of this legislature and the opposition and any other group out there that may be impacted by any bill, that legislatively would have much more, much more light shone on any particular bill that has changes.

Now what'll happen is, obviously as we witness time and time again, is the Government of Saskatchewan, the Sask Party government, they'll move some of those rules and regulations from legislation where everybody can have a look at it, and they'll move them down to regulations where the minister and a few other people have the authority to change all kinds of rules and all kinds of regulations without oversight, Mr. Speaker.

And I would dare say that they make these rules up in the dark recesses of the Sask Party offices just simply to do one thing, Mr. Speaker, and that is to weaken SGI, frustrate the drivers, and drive up costs for SGI because at the end of the day as the customers become more and more unaware of what SGI is doing, Mr. Speaker, it makes it much easier for the Sask Party to try and do what they always want to do and that is sell off SGI.

So, Mr. Speaker, there is no question in my mind that the worry we have around Bill 88, Mr. Speaker, is that as the minister confers more power unto himself, there is less oversight on how some of these rules will affect SGI overall. Don't forget, Mr. Speaker, that SGI is a Crown corporation that has served Saskatchewan for many, many years, Mr. Speaker. And they have done a remarkable job in making sure that our rates stay low, that we manage great programs in the province, and that we have a great team at SGI. I want to point that out.

The challenges that SGI have is that when you have ministers that want to come along and arbitrarily make changes in rules, in rules that they think should be imposed on the people of Saskatchewan without oversight and, Mr. Speaker, many, many times without the professional opinion and support and advice of people that work within SGI.

And, Mr. Speaker, again I'd point out the actions of the Saskatchewan Party are much more pronounced when people hear some of their bills being proposed that, as I mentioned earlier about the private email account that the Premier uses so he doesn't have to report those conversations that he's had around the GTH, well, Mr. Speaker, this is the same minister, this is the same minister that sold off the Saskatchewan Transportation Company. And now he's coming along, he's coming along and he's saying well, well because I've sold off the STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company], Mr. Speaker, I want to start having the arbitrary right to make rules and regulation changes from within my office for SGI. So that's why, on this side of the Assembly, we simply don't trust that particular member, the member from Prince Albert Northcote who simply, who simply . . . his main job is to come here and have a wall-to-wall sale of our Crown corporations.

So as he comes along, as he comes along and says, I'm here to

sell everything under the sun, Mr. Speaker, this is the problem we have when you have a minister that is supposedly representing Saskatchewan people's interest instead represents Sask Party interest and confers great powers unto himself to decide which rules or regulations he likes and which ones he wants to change before breakfast, Mr. Speaker, with no oversight and certainly no study by this Assembly and by the people of Saskatchewan and, worst of all, Mr. Speaker, without very much input from the fine people at SGI.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have to understand that SGI is a valuable automobile insurer in the province of Saskatchewan. And I have had occasion to talk about insurance with a number of people from other provinces. And in my recent discussion with my older brother — my older brother lives in St. Albert — and he said, if we could enjoy the insurance rates that you guys in Saskatchewan enjoy as opposed to what we pay here in Alberta, you know, we would just be fine with that, Mr. Speaker. Like he was really impressed with some of the rates that we pay and he was really, really impressed with that. And I'm going to share with the members opposite, once we get some of that information from him, as to what Albertans are paying for their tax or for their premiums on automobile insurance. I can tell you, it's a heck of a lot more than what SGI's charging the people of Saskatchewan.

And what the Saskatchewan Party want to do is they want to say, oh my goodness, SGI's doing a good job and most people are dealing with SGI. And now they're doing so well, but we want to sell them because if we sell them, we sell SGI, then we can follow Alberta's lead in the dramatically higher costs for car insurance. That's what they want to do, Mr. Speaker. They want to sell off SGI. And they make these kinds of rules in this bill, really, really hurtful in the sense that they don't have the right consult with the customers and of course with the management team at SGI. And the minister confers great powers unto himself to decide what rule or what regulation he likes or doesn't like, Mr. Speaker. And that's a shame.

So I think it's really important for people in Saskatchewan to know that when you have a minister that has sold off our Liquor Board system. They have sold off Saskatchewan Transportation Company. They have sold off the land titles branch called Information Services Corporation. And now he's coming along saying, well now I'm meddling in with SGI's operations. I'm going to confer great powers unto myself as the minister to determine which regulations I like or don't like without any oversight. Well, Mr. Speaker, he's on par with the actions of his boss, the Premier of Saskatchewan, when it comes to accessing private emails that affect the people of Saskatchewan. They are actually, Mr. Speaker, they are actually hiding a lot of information, and that's a shame.

So what concerns me, Mr. Speaker, again on this bill is that the salesman of our Crown corporation is proposing these particular actions that give him more power. And I think many times they confer power amongst themselves without the advice, the guidance, and the support of many people within SGI. And, Mr. Speaker, you've got to be very, very careful when you don't begin to differentiate your role between a legislator and a manager of a corporation called SGI. And, Mr. Speaker, we're seeing those lines becoming blurred. We're seeing that the philosophy of the Saskatchewan Party is to sell everything

under the sun.

And the problem we have with that, Mr. Speaker, is they're telling people, well we have to sell. The people are saying, why should you sell our Crowns? Well because we broke the province, because we broke the province. Well the question you ask is, why did you break the province? Well because we had record revenue left behind by the NDP.

So how does that work? You've got record revenue left behind. You've had record revenue in the last 10 years. You're still in debt, and you're going to sell off the Crowns to cover that debt that you had because you had record revenue for 10 years. Like it confuses anybody, Mr. Speaker. That absolutely confuses everybody.

And then you have the salesman for the Crown Investments Corporation, the minister, dressed up as a minister, coming along saying, I want to sell everything under the sun. And anything I can do to decrease the affordability of insurance and really begin to reduce SGI's independence from politics, then I'm going to confer great power, such as changing regulations, as opposed to going through the Assembly and changing legislative pieces in front of everyone. I'm going to do it the back door way so I can weaken SGI. And the net effect is the people of Saskatchewan will be paying a heck of a lot more for insurance in the future if the Sask Party gets their way by weakening SGI through bills of this sort and, Mr. Speaker, ultimately doing what they want to do. And they want to sell SGI. They want to sell SGI, Mr. Speaker. That's the bottom line.

And the unfortunate part of this, Mr. Speaker, is that once they're sold, once these Crown corporations are sold, then they're gone forever. There's nobody could bring back these Crown corporations. And then what'll happen, Mr. Speaker, is 90 per cent of that bench over there, they'll also be gone. They won't be around anymore to be held accountable for their actions of weakening our Crowns through bills of this sort, Mr. Speaker, and selling off whatever they can sell off because they're so broke. They're so broke. And this is after a decade of record revenue and money left behind to the tune of \$2.3 billion by the previous NDP administration.

And what really gets me, Mr. Speaker, what really gets me is that conservative party over there, they talk about wanting less government. That's what they talk about, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I caution the member to only use parties that are representative here today in the Assembly. I recognize the member from Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to point out that for a party that simply wants less government, why do they always want to be government, Mr. Speaker? Because first of all they (a) don't know how to govern; and (b) by the time they leave the province; which they've done in the past, they've left the province in financial ruin, Mr. Speaker, and other people had to come up and clean up their miserable mess.

And that's one of the problems, Mr. Speaker, we have. When it comes to the Crown corporations and bills of this sort, the

opposition is going to be very, very, very vigilant in ensuring that there isn't anything that they can pass through the Assembly without our scrutiny, without our involvement, and therefore advising the people of Saskatchewan what changes they have.

So what they do? They change the legislation. The member from Melfort is chirping from his seat. You go back to Melfort, and you be very proud on the stage and tell the people of Melfort that you want to sell off the Crowns. And I bet you, Mr. Speaker, that the member from Melfort will not do that. He will not do that. What he'll do is he'll stand up and he'll applaud the effort by the member from Prince Albert Northcote by changing rules, as opposed to legislation, in the backroom of their offices so people of Saskatchewan can avoid scrutiny.

And I challenge any member of the Sask Party to go to a public meeting and say very loudly and clearly, we want to sell off the Crowns. They won't do it, Mr. Speaker. They refuse to do it. They refuse to do it, yet they want to do it. And that's why the people of Saskatchewan need not trust the Saskatchewan Party right from the Premier to the minister to the salesmen within that organization, Mr. Speaker, because they don't have our interests. They do not have our interests.

And that's why it's important, Mr. Speaker, as you see some of these bills come forward, when they talk, when they talk about changing the process, when they talk about changing the process and they use the word "efficiency," Mr. Speaker. It's not efficiency. They want to avoid scrutiny. So they move certain parts of the automobile insurance Act right from legislation to regulations, where they can change the rules on their own, Mr. Speaker. And this is why I tell the people of Saskatchewan, if they were serious about protecting the Crowns they would stop undertaking actions such as that under bills such as Bill 88 because, Mr. Speaker, that really is a disservice to the people of Saskatchewan. And I say shame on them.

The bottom line is SGI has provided great service. We've had a great team, and all they got from the Saskatchewan Party is a lot of deregulation. All they got from the Saskatchewan Party is nothing but grief, Mr. Speaker. All they got from the Saskatchewan Party is political interference, Mr. Speaker. And they got nothing but non-confidence by the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker.

And how can some of our Crowns survive under that kind of atmosphere, Mr. Speaker? Well that is what's happening in the Assembly today. We've witnessed that time and time and time again and bit by bit. As I said at the outset, they're having a wall-to-wall sale. Liquor stores are now gone. Where's that profit going? Down east, Mr. Speaker. We had the land titles branch, Mr. Speaker, called Information Services Corporation, Information Services Corporation, that was generating \$14 million a year profit for the people of Saskatchewan. That's gone, Mr. Speaker. Where've those profits gone to? And now they shuttered and sold off the Saskatchewan Transportation Company, Mr. Speaker.

And the Premier's talking about income tax. I want to thank the Premier for bringing up income tax. This is the architect behind a billion-dollar tax increase this year alone. That must be a record. A billion-dollar tax increase by the architect of

Saskatchewan called the Premier, Mr. Speaker.

You know, and this is what . . . And, Mr. Speaker, they laugh from their seats, but I'll tell the people of Saskatchewan this: you're going to be paying more for everything, from your power bill to your licence to your telephone, Mr. Speaker, to every aspect of who we are as people. And this is going to affect every household in the province of Saskatchewan. As a result of Sask Party scandal, mismanagement, and waste, we are all going to be paying for years and years and years to come.

[15:15]

And that is a shame, Mr. Speaker. It is an absolute shame because, as I said at the outset, when the NDP left government the Crowns were very strong. They were robust. They were intelligent. They were independent, and they were giving us some money, Mr. Speaker. There was money in the bank, Mr. Speaker. And guess what? The economy was just humming along really good and the population was growing and money was starting to roll in and everything was going great, Mr. Speaker.

And then what happened was they let the Saskatchewan Party have control. So where we are 10 years later, where we are 10 years later: a billion-dollar tax hike, sale of three Crowns. Oh, we've got \$23 billion in debt. The member from Moose Jaw talks about new schools. Guess what? You can't hang anything on the walls on that new school. You can't open the window. And heaven forbid you want to have a nomination meeting in one of those schools. You wouldn't be able to do that. You don't own that asset. The people of Saskatchewan don't own that asset. We rent those assets. We rent those assets, and that's what the member from Moose Jaw doesn't understand.

What happened with P3s [public-private partnership], Mr. Speaker, is you punted that debt down the road. So as you and the member from Martensville are gone somewhere, to a warm climate somewhere, we're stuck here paying your tax bill for years and years to come. And that's from a right wing government, Mr. Speaker. So your tax philosophy doesn't work. Your defence of Crown doesn't work. You guys have ripped this province apart. You have destroyed the confidence in our Crowns. You have put us deep in debt for years to come, and if that wasn't enough, you throw in a whole bunch of P3s to make sure we never see sunlight for years to come.

Mr. Speaker, that's exactly the reason why the people of Saskatchewan should not trust the Saskatchewan Party or any member of the Saskatchewan Party with the future growth and stability and ability of our Crown corporations such as the one being identified here in Bill 88. The people of Saskatchewan are really becoming aware of how bad this government is. They're becoming aware of how poorly they have protected the Crowns, and they're also becoming aware of how they have thwarted the rules and they have avoided scrutiny in this Assembly, as identified in Bill 88. Because now as opposed to legislation to make some changes, the minister can decide how to make those changes on their own.

And I say to the people of Saskatchewan, it's time to get rid of this tired, old government, Mr. Speaker, who's had no interest in protecting the people of Saskatchewan's future. They have

no interest. Their interest really, Mr. Speaker, is bound to their philosophical belief that we should have less government. That's what they believe. Well why does a party want to be government if you want less government? And then, you're very bad at becoming government to begin with. And this is an example of how you haven't thought things through.

People in Saskatchewan want a modern, forward-looking government that is accountable, that is dynamic, and can live within its means and provide as much support and provide as much leadership and direction and common sense as they possibly can, right from rural Saskatchewan to the North to our cities to our fields. They want a common sense government that will reflect what they need. As a government, it has to be compassionate, caring, and considerate but, Mr. Speaker, also become good managers. And good managers don't sell off money-making opportunities. Good managers do not do that. Good managers do not sell off interests that give you money each and every year, that create jobs. Good managers do not all of a sudden, boom, put a billion-dollar tax hike on the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And good managers don't sell off valuable things like the Crown corporations.

And on every front, every front, Mr. Speaker, on every front the Sask Party has failed miserably. The Sask Party has failed miserably. And I can tell them today that we're going to come for them in 2020, Mr. Speaker. We are going to come for them, Mr. Speaker, and we're going to show the people that they are a tired, old government. They are a tired, old government that is broke. They are broke, Mr. Speaker, and they have a deficit of ideas and ideals. And this is why the people of Saskatchewan need to change.

And I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that it's going to be parties that are supportive of our Crown corporations, parties that are supportive of inviting free enterprise to our province and making sure that we're a province that is conducive to investment, Mr. Speaker . . .

And they can smile all they want, but I'll tell you what, Mr. Speaker. They are still following Lorne Calvert's royalty regime that he established in 2007. And the reason why they're following that, Mr. Speaker, because it took a New Democratic premier to teach the so-called Saskatchewan Party how to attract investment and business to the community of Ile-a-la-Crosse. Lorne Calvert brought the oil and gas industry here, Mr. Speaker, and the future leader of the NDP is going to keep them here for years to come. And we're going to form and forge a powerful relationship with the oil and gas sector.

And, Mr. Speaker, guess what? When the oil and gas sector come here, they look at utilizing our Crowns. They look at utilizing our Crowns, Mr. Speaker. They look at all the opportunity that the Crowns provide, whether it's SaskPower or whether it's SaskTel. And there may be instances where SGI, as identified in Bill 88, there may be instances where the companies would use some of these opportunities in Saskatchewan. So when companies come here, it's important to provide them with a good investment climate. It's important to provide them with good, solid labour force needs, Mr. Speaker, good to make sure that they're comfortable here and that they create those mortgage-paying jobs. We understand that on this side of the Assembly.

But what really amazes me, Mr. Speaker, is how poorly the Saskatchewan Party has managed the great, robust finances of this province when they took over. Right from day one, Mr. Speaker, right from day one they have failed this province miserably, and now it's all catching up. And just to add insult to injury, as I mentioned, the Crown corporations are under attack by them, Mr. Speaker. They put us in deficit: 23 billion by the year 2020. And how could a million people sustain that kind of debt?

But to add insult to injury, Mr. Speaker, they created the P3 accounts where we will be paying interest and penalties and payments to out-of-country companies for years and years and years and years and years to come. And the worst part is, Mr. Speaker, the worst part is that 90 per cent of them will be gone when those bills come due. But I think the people of Saskatchewan will remember the Saskatchewan Party with disdain because they had the opportunity and they really, quite frankly, squandered, squandered that opportunity to build a brave, new future for our province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would point out there was a mention of Bill 40. There was a mention of Bill 40 where Bill 40 talked about selling off the Crowns such as SGI. Forty-nine per cent they wanted to sell, you know. And imagine, Mr. Speaker. I understand that a few members were car dealership owners before and imagine you telling a guy, give us a price for this car; you'll own 49 per cent. I wonder how many cars they would have sold in their time, Mr. Speaker. That's the sad realities. Bill 40 was flawed in its intent. It was flawed even to meet their own philosophical beliefs, Mr. Speaker, and yet they all spoke up. They all spoke up, Mr. Speaker . . .

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

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** — Make a point of order.

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

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** — You've made a previous ruling on speeches on second readings that the bill should be, that's on the order paper should be discussed. This is the time to discuss that bill, not to make a leadership race speech.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've been listening closely to the member's speech and although there have been diversions, I think that his comments have been pertinent to the bill that is before us. And there's some latitude with regard to his comments and where his thoughts go. So I would submit that to the Speaker for consideration.

**The Speaker:** — I also was listening carefully to the speech from the member from Athabasca. I do not take the point of order well taken, but I do caution the member once again that it needs to . . . Your narrative has to tie somewhat back to the bill in the end. Our tradition in this Assembly is to give a fair bit of latitude, but today has been stretched very, very thin. So could you please continue on with your speech with due diligence to tie it back to the bill under debate. I recognize the member from

Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I will try and keep my comments directed and pointed at Bill 88, and I thank you for your tolerance for the member from Athabasca, Mr. Speaker.

I think it's important to note that when you talk about a Crown corporation of this sort, Crowns are very valuable and very important to our province of Saskatchewan. People love the Saskatchewan Crowns, and SGI is a great Crown. It's one of the Crowns that is what people would make reference to as a jewel in the family of Crowns owned by the people of Saskatchewan. And these were Crowns that were built through hard work and, Mr. Speaker, over time they have served Saskatchewan very, very, very well. And this is the reason why I think it's important to draw the connect between how the bill impacts a certain Crown, and generally overall how the other Crowns may be impacted by the actions of the current shareholder in trust called the Saskatchewan Party government, Mr. Speaker.

So I appreciate that there is a lot of latitude given and afforded in this particular Assembly, but as it pertains to the Crowns, as this bill talks about the Crowns, it's important to, as best as I possibly can, to try and draw the reference to all our Crowns and how they have been attacked by the current government and how they have been weakened by the current government and how they have changed their position from day to day. And, Mr. Speaker, it really, really to me . . . I think the connection that the confidence in how the Saskatchewan Party is handling our Crowns is something that is deep in question throughout the province and that there is reference to how the Crowns are impacted, in my statements, as it pertains to Bill 88.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think if we look at some of the issues around SGI itself, there's a robust amount of people that are working within SGI at one time. We're seeing further cuts to the Saskatchewan Government Insurance service, Mr. Speaker, and we're also seeing a weakening of some of the aggressive and necessary steps that SGI was taking. Mr. Speaker, as you can recall many years ago, the Saskatchewan Party while they were in opposition, they talked about Sask first, Mr. Speaker. They talked about Sask first, and they started getting SGI and other opportunities that the Crowns had.

The Crowns were going to expand. They had other options they were looking at to try and build a stronger, country-wide base, Mr. Speaker. And along come the Saskatchewan Party saying, oh how about Saskatchewan first. That was their philosophy, Mr. Speaker. But they indicated that they are supposed to be a great business-minded party. Well, Mr. Speaker, if a business doesn't expand their services and seek other markets aggressively, it really becomes problematic for these Crowns. And that's exactly what the Sask Party did with our Crowns. They confined them within the province of Saskatchewan. They divested all kinds of opportunities. And they made money to boot, Mr. Speaker. They divested a lot of opportunities that we were investing in and sharing in. And some of the examples I would use would be in Atlantic Canada, Mr. Speaker, where actually our expertise was necessary there and our services and our style.

And the Crowns were really moving in the right direction, Mr.

Speaker, but along came the Saskatchewan Party. Even though they're expanding, creating jobs, making money, doing the right thing for the people of Saskatchewan and paying us dividends every year, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party still philosophically didn't like them, and they tried to sell them. And the first thing they did was to obviously constrain their opportunity to build a different or a bigger and broader customer base. And that's when they come along and they put this whole Saskatchewan-first concept in front of people of the province.

And, Mr. Speaker, they played on the fact that Saskatchewan was investing in other areas when we needed services at home, Mr. Speaker. They did not tell the people of Saskatchewan the reason why the Crowns were allowed to expand is that it builds a broader base of customers, and it retains control by SaskTel, SaskPower, SaskEnergy, Mr. Speaker, here in the city and here in the province. And there was a lot of good thought behind how you would invest from the Crown perspective, how you would invest in other areas of the province to strengthen our Crowns here at home, to generate more revenues so you're not counting on tax dollars from the people of Saskatchewan to sustain operations within government.

But the Sask Party continued doing what they are doing. They are using the argument Saskatchewan first, and some people thought they're doing the right thing, Mr. Speaker. But years later they're finding out that here all the time, the Saskatchewan Party philosophically — no matter what kind of sense the ownership of the Crowns made to the people of Saskatchewan — philosophically the Saskatchewan Party did not believe in them, and that's why they began dismantling them. They sold off three so far, and now they're looking at others.

[15:30]

And, Mr. Speaker, Bill 40 was just a small foray into what they want to do. They'll be back with the full intent of selling our Crowns, and we got to stop them, Mr. Speaker. Every man, woman, and child in this province can do so. Every voter can do so by going to that polling station and sending the Sask Party a very resounding message that no, our Crowns are not for sale. They're not for sale. And we didn't elect you to confer great powers on you to avoid legislator's oversight on some of these bills and begin to make rules and regulations in the backrooms of your offices. All this must come to the light of the people of Saskatchewan because it impacts farmers. It impacts the ranchers. It impacts rural Saskatchewan. It impacts the tax base that many of our agricultural communities have contributed to over the years. It impacts northern Saskatchewan. It impacts urban Saskatchewan. So all the impacts are profound.

But I'll tell you what, Mr. Speaker, entities like SGI, the Crown corporations we enjoy, they serve Saskatchewan in every corner. And it's a shame that the Saskatchewan Party constricted and confined the growth of our Crown corporations to expand in other sectors, in other provinces in our country, Mr. Speaker, because had they been allowed to do so, I think our Crowns would have been very strong and position ourselves very well because we have professional, professional and dedicated employees within these Crowns, and they would have made sure that the Crowns were successful in other areas as well.

But like I said, it goes back to the philosophical position of the Sask Party. They don't like the Crowns. So we do not trust them one little bit on any legislation that they propose when it comes to the Crown corporations, and especially, Mr. Speaker, what Bill 88, where the minister confers great power unto himself to make changes in regulation that avoids scrutiny of the Assembly. And that's why I think, as par for the course, the Minister of SGI can do this to avoid scrutiny the same way the Premier has used his private emails to avoid scrutiny of those emails, Mr. Speaker.

I would tell the people of Saskatchewan that the trust in the Sask Party has long been gone, and it's time to change. So on that note, I move that we adjourn debate of Bill 88, *The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2017*.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Athabasca has adjourned debate on Bill 88. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

## ADJOURNED DEBATES

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 84

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Harpauer that **Bill No. 84 — *The Income Tax (Business Income) Amendment Act, 2017*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Ms. Mowat:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter into adjourned debates on Bill No. 84, *The Income Tax (Business Income) Amendment Act, 2017*. I understand this bill proposes to increase the general corporate income tax rate by a half point to 12 per cent in January 2018 and also cancels a previous change to decrease the rate to 11 per cent in July 2019.

Mr. Speaker, one of the rationales provided in the Throne Speech for making this change was that BC [British Columbia] had changed their tax rate and therefore the Sask Party decided to cancel their previous change.

Mr. Speaker, surely this can't be the only reason the Sask Party are making this change. I know, because I was on doorsteps with residents in Fairview this summer, residents who were quite upset to learn that the PST increases occurred alongside these tax breaks to the wealthy. To say that folks were frustrated to hear this news is an understatement. People were irate. They were ready to march in the streets, and as we know, some of them did.

You see, Mr. Speaker, citizens of Saskatoon Fairview were already upset with this government's mismanagement. We had just come out of a boom, so where had all this money gone? But, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people are strong and willing

to do their part, especially those in the middle class. Many of them said, well you know, we all have to pay our fair share. So you can imagine that the changes to the corporate income tax rate were of interest to these people.

Mr. Speaker, the public were not onside with these changes, and that is the reason for this cancellation. Make no mistake. People are frustrated, Mr. Speaker, that they are being forced to pay for this government's mismanagement. PST has been added to kids' clothes, restaurant meals, and even insurance. We are the only province charging PST on health and life insurance, Mr. Speaker. Seniors on a fixed income cannot afford this. Where is that money supposed to come from?

Mr. Speaker, this bill also proposes to change the small business threshold from \$500,000 to \$600,000 as of January 2018. Mr. Speaker, this will be beneficial to some small businesses, I'm sure, but there are so many small businesses that are not making \$500,000. What is this government going to do to help these businesses? How is this provision creating jobs? \$500,000 is a lot of money. I know so many small businesses that have not seen this type of profit. And as the minister indicated, small business is so vital to the health of the economy.

I'm sure my colleagues will have much more to say about this bill, but with that, Mr. Speaker, I move to adjourn debates on Bill 84, *The Income Tax (Business Income) Amendment Act*.

**The Deputy Chair of Committees:** — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Chair of Committees:** — Carried.

#### Bill No. 76

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Makowsky that **Bill No. 76 — *The Parks Amendment Act, 2017*** be now read a second time.]

**The Deputy Chair of Committees:** — I recognize the member from Regina Fairview.

**Ms. Mowat:** — Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise today to enter into the adjourned debates on Bill 76, *The Parks Amendment Act*. I have fond memories of my visits to Pike Lake and Blackstrap provincial parks which are both close enough to Saskatoon to accommodate day trips.

And I was born in Alberta. My grandparents are ranchers in the Southwest so we made many trips from Pincher Creek to Saskatoon growing up, and we would always stop at Sask Landing Provincial Park as a rest stop along the way. It's a beautiful place to stretch your legs and have a sandwich that might be a little warm out of the car.

Many of my memories growing up are tied to parks in this province, and I imagine the same is true for other members in this Assembly. And my partner Grayson and I had an elaborate driving trip planned for this summer where we wanted to take in more of the parks in this province and across Western Canada,

but we ended up in a by-election so that trip had to be cancelled or, I guess, postponed unfortunately.

We know that our parks are important to Saskatchewan people, so introducing a new park is often something we get very excited about. As someone who enjoys the scenery and the outdoors, I can say that when I heard about the prospect of a new park in our province, I was excited. However, Mr. Speaker, the folks in this Chamber have a significant responsibility that is associated with this new park, and we need to take that seriously before we start celebrating.

Mr. Speaker, I understand there are a number of housekeeping matters in this bill that definitely make sense to me. Creating gender-neutral language in a bill is logical, as is making the language consistent with definitions provided in *The Forest Resources Management Act*, amending cross-referenced sections of the Act, and clarifying the intent behind phrasing. These housekeeping changes seem prudent.

Both my colleagues from Athabasca and Saskatoon Centre have had an opportunity to engage in some discussions about this bill and both have identified a concern with the government's duty to consult as it relates to designating new parklands. I intend to highlight these concerns as well.

Mr. Speaker, on Monday when the minister was delivering second reading on this bill, he described five existing recreational sites that would be included in the new park, including the Woody River block and the McBride Lake block of the proposed new park located in the Porcupine Hills area of Saskatchewan. And from the pictures I have seen of these sites, Mr. Speaker, they look like gorgeous places.

I appreciate that the minister identified that some traditional activities on the land will continue, including hunting and snowmobiling.

In my view, Mr. Speaker, it is essentially important that we keep First Nations traditions alive in the park and not limit access to the park. We should be careful that we are setting up a system where we're not infringing on hunting and fishing rights of indigenous peoples. And I would like to hear more from the minister on how access and hunting rights will be monitored.

The minister also talked about how this new bill proposes to add a statute of limitations on prosecutions within the Act. Currently it is six months, and I understand the argument is that that's too short to investigate. This proposed amendment allows up to two years. I understand the minister was acting on advice of the Justice minister in this case, but it seems curious, Mr. Speaker, that in one breath the minister is saying the access to traditional activities will be granted, and on the other hand we are reading an amendment about prosecutions, Mr. Speaker.

The minister also discussed changing the park boundary descriptions for several areas, proposing minor exclusions to parks, including Candle Lake and Douglas Provincial Park. Now, this appears to be a housekeeping-type amendment where we know it would be more costly and time-consuming to survey all the parks so we are addressing known inconsistencies to park boundaries. That sounds logical provided it does not have unintended consequences.

Yesterday my colleague from Saskatoon Centre raised some quite valid concerns about the assumptions of this bill, and I would like to highlight and have a chance to reflect on some of them. There is certainly an important role that the parks play in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, we are talking about an area of Saskatchewan that is traditionally used by indigenous peoples in our province, and I understand for herb gathering, and there's a burial site included on the land as well.

Considering the rich history of indigenous peoples in this particular park, there is cause for some concern here. We need to respect as many stakeholders as possible and have engagement from all parties. As my colleague from Athabasca identified, the indigenous peoples living in these areas are just as important as anyone else in this province. The fact that this has to be said in 2017 is disappointing to me, Mr. Speaker.

According to a CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] article from seven days ago, Key First Nation has concerns with this new provincial park and have called for the protection of graves, traplines, and medicinal plants. Mr. Speaker, our government should not be pushing First Nations into believing that it's going to happen anyway. Members from Key First Nation have expressed concerns about how park designation will change use of the land, leading to an influx of tourists. It's disappointing that this interview happened right out in the rotunda on the day when our visitors from Key First Nations were present in the gallery when this bill was being introduced. When they were introduced, Mr. Speaker, it left me with the impression that the representatives from Key were on board with this decision. But that does not seem to be the case.

And it's easy for the minister to say that consultations will continue with community leaders, but if they haven't come to an agreement after starting out consultations in 2011, that leaves me a little suspect that this is going to occur now, Mr. Speaker. It's one thing to say consultations have been ongoing for six years, Mr. Speaker, but I'm curious about how many meetings took place during that time.

There's a bill in second reading right now, Mr. Speaker. This is a bill we are debating on. That doesn't exactly send the message that the Sask Party is willing to go back to the drawing board on this. We saw evidence of the government failing to adequately consult with local indigenous groups when the Great Blue Heron Park was formed.

It's important that we move past this and on to a new opportunity for our indigenous peoples to feel heard. We have an opportunity here to turn that around and to set a meaningful precedent. In light of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, we need to actively seek out and engage in opportunities for reconciliation. According to the TRC [Truth and Reconciliation Commission], section 43 under "Reconciliation," it states:

We call upon federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to fully adopt and implement the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* as the framework for reconciliation.

In section 47, Mr. Speaker, it states:



We call upon [all] federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments to repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous peoples and lands, such as the Doctrine of Discovery and *terra nullius*, and to reform those laws, government policies, and litigation strategies that continue to rely on such concepts.

Under UNDRIP [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples], Mr. Speaker, it declares that First Peoples must grant “free, prior, and informed consent” for any development in their territory — free, prior, and informed.

[15:45]

Mr. Speaker, it strikes me that certainly the “prior” portion of this has not been honoured, given the timing of these consultations and where we are at in debating this bill. As my colleague from Saskatoon Centre identified, I understand there’s been some consultation with indigenous groups in the region over the past six years, and that’s a great start. But if we have even the slightest inkling that we do not have full support of indigenous people in the area, and I think we do, we should be going back and engaging in meaningful consultations with these groups.

Again I say, Mr. Speaker, we have an opportunity to get this right. We need to think carefully through this and fully engage in the duty to consult. If we are to implement UNDRIP as a framework for reconciliation as the TRC suggests, then I would argue, this is the time and this is the place. We have an opportunity to improve on our past and we have a responsibility, we have a call to action to do better this time around. In the days of the TRC calls to action, we have a responsibility to engage in meaningful action toward reconciliation — meaningful.

I understand this park will have a temporary name. It is my hope that indigenous groups in the area should play an active role in the naming of this park. I know that it will have a temporary name but as my colleague from Saskatoon Centre pointed out, its permanent name should be an indigenous one.

My colleague also identified the lost educational opportunities and I’d like to speak to this a little bit, and how the minister did not take the opportunity to talk about how this park provides an educational opportunity as well. This is a critical component, and we need to invest in education and look for ways and find opportunities to teach.

As a former educator myself and having a partner who is a teacher, there is nothing like using the environment around you and around your students as a teaching tool. And these are the future guardians of this province, Mr. Speaker. It’s a chance for them to learn about the history of our province but also the ecosystems that are all around us. And it is aligned with how we actually learn as human beings and internalize information. Teaching our kids and grandkids about this province is essential and this is certainly a learning opportunity, and that should be acknowledged.

I appreciate having the opportunity to weigh in on this important bill. Like I said, Mr. Speaker, a new park is a great opportunity for us to put meaningful action toward

reconciliation and we should not take our responsibilities toward reconciliation lightly. I know that my fellow colleagues will have more to say about Bill 76. With that, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 76.

**The Deputy Chair of Committees:** — The member from Saskatoon Fairview has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 76. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Chair of Committees:** — Carried.

### Bill No. 77

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Harpauer that **Bill No. 77 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Superannuation Plans) Amendment Act, 2017*** be now read a second time.]

**The Deputy Chair of Committees:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Riversdale.

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am pleased to enter the discussion, the debate on Bill No. 77, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Superannuation Plans) Amendment Act, 2017*.

I’ll start actually by just pointing to the minister’s second reading speech, Mr. Speaker, as she points out that the bill is:

The first amendment proposed in this bill 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 [as she refers to it] the commission. The commission [itself] is responsible [she points out] for the administration of the Liquor Board superannuation plan . . . while the day-to-day administration of the plan is delegated to the Public Employees Benefits Agency, PEBA, Ministry of Finance.

She points out that the plan’s been closed to new members since 1977, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And recent numbers, just as of March 2017: “the Liquor Board superannuation plan has [only] two active members, both of whom have exceeded [their] 35 years of service and are eligible to retire,” Mr. Speaker. So it isn’t a . . . And as of December 31st, 2016, there were 177 retired employees in the plan, Mr. Speaker.

The minister points out . . . It’s always important when we look at legislation, who was consulted? With whom did the government do a review of the legislation? Those are always questions that we draw attention to here in the House, and when legislation moves into committee, that’s where that’s asked.

The minister in her second reading speech points out that it was reviewed, that in 2012 a third party was engaged to review the governance of both the Liquor Board and the public service superannuation plans because of their decline in active membership and the associated work for administering the plans. And she points out, the minister in her second reading comments points out that the primary function of the plan currently is to pay pensions.

The review of 2012, its key recommendation, which “. . . 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.” And she points out that “The minister will be supported in this role by PEBA, who will continue to provide administrative services to the pension plan.”

The second amendment:

. . . amend *The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Act* to allow the restricted retirement option . . . 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.

The minister points out that:

Proceeding with the amendment does not commit the Government . . . to a future course of action. The RRO provision has been extended annually by an order in council since December 31st . . . [and this] amendment eliminates the need for an annual order in council.

So the second reading speeches are always helpful in providing us with a sense of where the government is going. You look at the bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In reviewing it, you talk to stakeholders, you see what the minister’s interpretation of the bill is, and you have an opportunity later on to move into committee and ask questions.

And I know that I have colleagues who are critics for this area who will ask some very thoughtful and insightful questions, and I know I’ll have colleagues who will weigh into the debate on this. But for now that is all that I have to say with respect to Bill No. 77, and I would like to move to adjourn debate.

**The Deputy Chair of Committees:** — The member from Saskatoon Riversdale has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 77. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Chair of Committees:** — Carried.

### Bill No. 78

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Harpauer that **Bill No. 78** — *The Municipal Employees’ Pension Amendment Act, 2017* be now read a second time.]

**The Deputy Chair of Committees:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Riversdale.

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We’ll have a little run on me here for the next few minutes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we talk about pensions and continue to talk about pensions in the next few bills. This particular bill, Mr. Speaker, does a number of things. I think some of the more mundane

things are updates to language to ensure that it’s gender-neutral and modern language.

I’ve said this before in the House, but I think language is really important and moving to gender-neutral languages is something that we should do in all our legislation. And there’s been many Acts before us in my time here where we’ve made that move. I know that when I used to be a reporter that . . . That was many, many, many years ago, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but when I first started out as a reporter I actually, when I was a much younger individual I never thought gender-neutral language was important. But as I grew older and in my education, you learn about how language sends a message about who is reflected, or who matters, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Not around gender-neutral language, but something that really jumps out at me about my own lived experience is I was an at-home mom. I was at home with my oldest daughter for the first few years of her life, and everyone . . . You’d tell someone you were an at-home mom and they’d say oh, you don’t work, or you’re a working . . . If you worked outside of the house you were considered a working mom, and if you were not in paid employment you weren’t considered a working mom. So I think when we talk about language, whether it’s gender neutrality or other parts of language, the way we use language matters, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So moving to gender-neutral language is important.

Another area, this is something very simple in this bill. The word “dependent” is being changed in this, when it’s being used, the spelling of it, to reflect it as a noun. That is being corrected, Mr. Speaker. I was a copy editor back in the day as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so those things really matter to me as well. I think all of those things are important. And some of the more mundane things that carry on here is changes of . . . Other statutes that are named in the bill have changed their names over the years, so that’s being amended. And different organizations which are referred to in this bill, there is some of that as well.

But a little bit more in terms of more of the meat of the bill. This is *The Municipal Employees’ Pension Amendment Act, 2017*. So the municipal employees’ pension plan, which we commonly refer to M-E-P-P, or MEPP, I suppose, 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 employees. I’m sure we all know . . . have friends and family who are members of this plan, Mr. Speaker.

As of March 31st, the minister points out that there were close to 25,000 plan members in MEPP and 737 employers participating in the pension plan. The Municipal Employees’ Pension Plan Commission wants to continue, according to the minister, the financial sustainability of MEPP. And she talks about MEPP, the commission being in consultation with its actuary and plan stakeholders. The commission is seeking approval of the legislature to amend the plan.

So again, as per my previous remarks, it’s always important in legislation to find out why changes are being made, who’s asked for them, who benefits, think about the unintended

consequences — all those kinds of things. So it sounds like this recommendation is coming from the MEPP commission, but those are all things that, as we go along in the debate and discussion of these bills, the respective critic will reach out to stakeholders and find out if there's any problems or difficulties with these changes, or negative impacts, Mr. Speaker.

But just in terms of the changes that are being made here, “. . . it proposes to eliminate the portability of the pension benefit for members eligible for pension upon termination of employment.” The minister points out that “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 [its] members in retirement.”

The minister points out that “This amendment causes the option of a temporary pension to transferring members to become redundant.” She points out that:

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.

She goes on to say that this will in turn “maintain the value of the pension benefit for members.”

So again there'll be some consultation just to make sure that folks are in agreement with this. She points out that “. . . 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.” And then once this bill is passed, “. . . 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.”

That just made me think about a debate that's going on right now. We have Sears entering bankruptcy and closing all its stores, Mr. Speaker, and I know that there are many employees across Canada who, in many occasions, have committed years to Sears and put their own money, their deferred payments aside into pensions, Mr. Speaker, and may lose access to these.

There's a debate, I know, at the national level around . . . The CARP or Canadian Association of Retired Persons is advocating making sure that those who have a pension, who've paid into pensions, are the first on the list when it comes to bankruptcies and any money that is regained from the sale of those assets.

[16:00]

It is a debate, because obviously there are businesses that are impacted as well, and one of the arguments I've heard is that some of the . . . Yes, businesses, particularly small businesses. You're always concerned about the mom-and-pop shops or people who might be supplying to companies having outstanding balances that aren't going to get paid.

But I know one of the advocates I heard speak about pensions point out that, at best or at most, likely those outstanding accounts might be for a year, Mr. Speaker, where in fact you've got pensioners or people who've been counting on these pensions their whole life. They might have put in 20 or 25 years with Sears and have been counting . . . And Sears is just one example. We've got Nortel a few years ago as well. You may have put in your time and made plans based on your pension from Sears and now you may not have access to it anymore, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I would argue in the case of Sears . . . And I could be wrong; I've not looked at the numbers on this in terms of gender of employees. But this would be a policy on which you could perhaps put a gendered lens and see how it impacts men and women differently.

Anecdotally I'm just thinking of folks that I know, or growing up going through Sears, and many of the staff have been women. But I'm not sure; I don't have any numbers to quantify that. But it's always good to put a gendered lens on policy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to see . . . because policy impacts men and women differently in many cases, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So that piece around eliminating any unforeseen liability resulting from the increased pension reminded me of that, Mr. Speaker.

The minister also pointed out that there's amendments of a more administrative nature in this bill as well. She points out again that the employee pension Act requires a review of the composition of the commission every five years. She points out that a review was conducted in 2015 and a report was submitted to the then minister of Finance in 2016 and that minister accepted and agreed to follow through on the recommendation contained in the report. And one of those recommendations was 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 was also recommended, one of the other recommendations is 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 the Saskatchewan locals of the Canadian Union of Public Employees that represent MEPP [municipal employees' pension plan] members. I think always making sure that you've got a broad range of representation is a good thing, Mr. Speaker, but I know that the critic will be reaching out to folks to find out more in terms of the feeling in the community about these changes.

The minister points out that 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. She also points out that the bill contains amendments to enhance the administration of the plan. One amendment is intended, she says, to clarify the definition of full-time hours for all members of the plan. She points out that besides facilitating consistent interpretation of full-time hours, salary, and service for members, this particular amendment also serves to simplify reporting to the plan for employers.

And another amendment requires all employers to remit contributions to MEPP within 15 days after the end of a pay period, and she points out that this will provide a more

equitable basis for the timely remittance of contributions by all employers.

So again, Mr. Speaker, with respect to Bill No. 78, *The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act*, as I said there is 25,000 plan members, 737 employers participating, so it does affect a good chunk of folks, Mr. Speaker. And so it'll be important to have those conversations and find out how those impacted by these changes feel, whether or not this is a good thing or a bad thing. And we'll also have an opportunity to chat about this in committee.

But with that, for the moment, I would like to move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 78, *The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2017*.

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

#### Bill No. 79

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Harpauer that **Bill No. 79 — *The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2017*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's me again. I'm pleased again to enter into the debate, this time on Bill No. 79, *The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2017*. There are six amendments in this bill, Mr. Speaker, so I guess it's important to talk a little bit about the public employees pension plan, also known as PEPP, which we're all members in . . . of which we're all members here in the House, Mr. Speaker. But there are many other people who are as well.

The plan was established in 1977 and it provides a means of saving for retirement and a means of receiving a retirement income for its membership. And included in its membership, as I said, are members of the Legislative Assembly, but the employees of executive government, government agencies, Crown corporations, and other employers. And recent numbers, Mr. Speaker, point out that there are close to 65,000 members of PEPP and 146 employers.

And there are six amendments here that . . . Right now, Mr. Speaker, currently members must wait one year to become vested in PEPP, so locking in. When a member locks in that means that the member's account balance must be used to provide a retirement income. Currently locking in happens at one year, but this particular amendment will mean that you're vested and locked in when you are first enrolled in PEPP.

There are other amendments here. One that provides that the spouse of PEPP members with . . . It provides the spouse of PEPP members with additional rights. If a member happens to

die, the amendment clarifies that the spouse of a deceased member may keep any amount left to him or her in PEPP. And with respect to the amount the spouse, with this amendment, would have the same rights as any other non-working member of PEPP. And in case of a breakdown in a spousal relationship, the amendment also permits 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 of PEPP.

Just having been someone who has been on . . . who has had a divorce, Mr. Speaker, and has been in that position of negotiating pensions, I think that that . . . I'd like to have conversations with other folks about that for sure, but I know from my own experience, I had to . . . My previous husband had to withdraw money from his pension and I had to put it with a financial adviser into something. And I can see the benefits of being able to stay in the same pension plan and be part of a body that has 65,000 members, Mr. Deputy . . . Mr. Speaker. Sorry. There's been a few of you in the Chair here today. So that, I think, sounds like some positive amendments there but I know our critic will be reaching out and talking to folks.

Another amendment proposes removing a 15-day waiting period for the unlocking of voluntary contributions on termination of employment. And the minister points out 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 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.

As I've talked about in the other bills, and usually do in this House, that you always want to know who is recommending changes and why they're being recommended and who they impact and what those people who are impacted, how they feel about them. The minister in her second reading speech says that these amendments have been proposed on the recommendation of the Public Employees Pension Board. So that's positive, Mr. Speaker, but it's always good to talk to as many people as possible who are impacted to find out how folks feel about particular legislation and what the impacts might be.

A final amendment the minister points out is a purely administrative amendment and updates the Act to reflect the new name of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union, or CEP, which is now known as Unifor. Unifor is one of the organizations that appoints a member to the board.

So, Mr. Speaker, that is all the comments that I have for now. I know when eventually this bill moves to committee, the critic will have some questions, and I know that I'll have colleagues who have lots of comments on this bill as well. So with that I'd like to move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 79.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon Riversdale has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 79. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Bill No. 80**

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Harpauer that **Bill No. 80** — *The Municipal Financing Corporation Amendment Act, 2017* be now read a second time.]

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to be part of the debate today on Bill No. 80, *The Municipal Financing Corporation Amendment Act, 2017*. There are a few changes in this Act, Mr. Speaker. This is *An Act to amend The Municipal Financing Corporation Act*. That is a mouthful.

The changes are important, the minister argues, "... to a growing province with growing municipalities in need of key infrastructure ...". Definitely municipalities need support and need to address infrastructure issues.

I remember a few years ago when our caucus sat down with folks in P.A. [Prince Albert], it's quite shocking ... Actually I think lots of people don't realize the state ... We drive on roads, and I think we get a sense of that, but we don't always know what's going on with some of the other infrastructure. I was shocked to hear when we were in P.A. that some of the pipes, actually the only way they're staying intact and not closing in on themselves is because of water pressure, Mr. Speaker.

And I know across Canada and here in Saskatchewan that infrastructure is a huge issue, and the pressures ... Having spoken to municipal leaders in the past, I know that they really would look forward to having a specific fund on capital infrastructure, Mr. Speaker, which there is none. It is a huge issue, Mr. Speaker.

One of the changes, the first change in the Act, it "... repeals the Municipal Financing Corporation of Saskatchewan's 30-year borrowing limit which is a provision [the minister points out] that dates back to the 1970s." She goes on to say that:

Capital markets have evolved since then to permit borrowing for the 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*.

So I know that our critic responsible for municipal issues will be reaching out to all the folks that she knows and has relationships with to find out if this borrowing from ... moving the bar from 30-year borrowing to 40-year is what municipalities want and need, and what other concerns they may have.

The second change is to increase the Municipal Financing Corporation's debt limit from 350 million to 500 million. So that's a 150 million increase. It was set at 250 million in the '70s, and it was raised to 350 million in 2010. So that was just

seven years ago that we raised that limit. So I think that we need to think about the pressures to bear on our municipalities, as I mentioned a little bit earlier. So we're creating a ceiling where they can take on more debt, and obviously they have some serious infrastructure needs, but I would argue that perhaps we should be looking to the province to better support some of those infrastructure needs.

The minister argues that "It is prudent to increase the limit once again to ensure that this demand continues to be met and no one is turned away." But I'm not sure. And this will be all part of the consultation process with the municipal leaders, if that is the best way to go or if they prefer to have a capital fund from the province, Mr. Speaker. But I do know that there will be questions in committee with respect to Bill No. 80, *The Municipal Financing Corporation Amendment Act*, and our critic will do her due diligence in reaching out to folks, as will other members.

But with that for the moment, I would like to move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 80.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon Riversdale has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 80. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

**Bill No. 81**

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hargrave that **Bill No. 81** — *The Traffic Safety (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act, 2017* be now read a second time.]

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And as always, it's a pleasure to enter into debate on these bills as they're introduced in the House. This is my first time wading into debate this fall in this part of the session, and feeling a little bit rusty. But we'll see how it goes, Mr. Speaker, and hopefully we'll be able to put something on the record that is of some assistance maybe. We'll see.

[16:15]

Anyways the minister introduced the bill here a couple days ago and, as he indicated in his comments in the second reading speech, there are a number of changes to *The Traffic Safety Act*. And the large part of his speech deals with the changes of the blood alcohol content rules and vehicle suspension rules as well. The penalties are being increased quite significantly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I think that's in line with recommendations made a couple years ago when we had a special committee set up to look at this issue.

I think about drinking and driving in Saskatchewan and the fact that we have such a significant number of fatalities associated with drinking and driving, and certainly at least one of, if not

the highest rate in Canada. And obviously drinking and driving is a concern and gives rise for legislative intervention so that these horrible fatalities don't occur again and again.

I think back and I was reading some information, thanks to the library staff, just before I came into the House here about the trends. And certainly impaired driving trends, I think, are starting to shift downward across Canada. Sadly, not here in Saskatchewan, and you have to think about why that is. And I reflected a little bit on my growing up in a small town in Saskatchewan and, you know, living on the farms the vehicle is your licence to freedom. I got my driver's licence the day after I turned 16 just because they didn't have any tests on the day I turned 16. So I had to wait one day before I got my driver's licence, and that was freedom.

And certainly for anyone growing up in small towns in my generation, in the '70s and early '80s, there was a culture of acceptance that if you wanted to get home from a party, you had to drive. And the idea of a designated driver certainly never came into the parlance when I was a teenager. And it was years later, I think, when we started seeing concerted efforts to encourage that shift in the culture.

And I think what brings me hope, Mr. Speaker, is that I have a 21-year-old son who takes the whole concept of DD, or designated driver, very, very seriously. And his friends, when they plan an evening out, he very consciously makes the decision if he's going to be the designated driver or not. And they are always very definite about making sure somebody has that role for the evening. So I'm kind of proud of his generation and the fact that they have learned, and there is a culture within his peer group that a DD is an important part of any evening out where alcohol is involved.

So I know that there's a lot of work to be done, but I do have hope that younger generations really understand that and appreciate the role that a DD plays. Now he's a city kid; I was a farm kid. So I don't know if the reality is the same in smaller communities or farming communities and would defer to people in my hometown to find out whether that's still the case or not.

But I think of the times when . . . I remember one time getting into a vehicle at the end of a night — a party in Gravelbourg, had to get home to Lafleche — and the only ride was someone who was incredibly inebriated. And, Mr. Speaker, I've never prayed so hard as I did that night and very easily could not have made it home. And I still think of that night often when I think about the situations you get into when you don't have a DD or somebody that's not inebriated.

I think of the number of people I know who were killed in drunk driving accidents. When I grew up, it was kind of a theme almost at grad, where there would be these grad parties and then someone would end up in a serious accident, often a fatal accident. So that started the whole idea of a safe grad.

So we have seen changes, and I think the proposals that are in this bill really move that along a little bit, increasing the severity of the consequences if you are apprehended while under the influence. And I think those changes will send that message and further reinforce the message of how dangerous

drunk driving is, how dangerous it is not only for the people driving the car of course, but for the people that they could injure and kill when they are drunk and in control . . . or driving a vehicle I'd say, not necessarily in control of it.

So I know a lot of my colleagues will want to speak to this as well and these aspects of the bill. There is one part of this bill I find really fascinating and a little bit concerning, Mr. Speaker, and that is the removal or elimination of the operating authority certificates that are issued by the Highway Traffic Board. Now the reason that's concerning is because the minister seems to suggest that these were simply rubber-stamp processes. So I just want to review a little bit what these certificates are, and then maybe it may cause some concern for the public and certainly, I think, for members if we take away the requirement for these certificates.

Now what the minister said was that "Operating authority certificates are required for transporting passengers for hire . . ." Now as you know, Mr. Speaker, this government just recently privatized STC, and part of that means that there are now private companies . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . They get all wound up about winding down, Mr. Speaker, but the truth is they sold it off and there are private companies taking its place. So it sounds like, looks like, smells like privatization no matter how you characterize it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So I'm going to comfortably use the term privatization when it comes to STC.

So they go on to say that "Operating authority certificates are required for transporting passengers for hire, for example, by limos and chartered buses." And certainly it's for more than that when you look at the actual certificate.

He goes on to tell us that taxis don't require these certificates because they are regulated by a municipality. So already we have the responsibility for safety and insurance and all those things being covered through the municipalities for taxis. "Operating authority certificates [he goes on to say] were intended to outline specific requirements of the certificate holder regarding routes, insurance, rates, background checks, and more."

Now that sounds like pretty important stuff, Mr. Speaker, when you think about it. If someone's going to be operating a vehicle, carrying passengers for hire, you kind of think that maybe routes, insurance, rates, background checks are kind of important things when the members of the public are getting into these vehicles, Mr. Speaker.

Now what he tells us, and this is something that came out very clearly in June of this year, "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." So rather than making sure the Highway Traffic Board takes these processes seriously, what does he do? Well this is what he says, Mr. Speaker: "Thus it makes sense to deregulate this process."

Well that is an interesting solution to a problem, Mr. Speaker, when we're obviously opening up to privatization public transportation of passengers. And what is he doing? He's deregulating these certificates that were required for these entities to be able to carry the public. And I think this just highlights for us a number of the concerns that have been

raised, not only on this side of the House, but by many, many people in the public about what's going to replace STC and fulfill the role that STC played here in the province.

Now I think it's important for us to take a little look here at what does this certificate look like, so I printed one off. There's a fairly lengthy application form, and so I just want to go through that a little bit with you, Mr. Speaker, because this is what's not going to be happening now.

And he says that "SGI will strengthen other regulations as required to ensure there is sufficient oversight regarding safety requirements." He has given us no idea what SGI is going to be doing here, and without that kind of reassurance I think we have a very serious public policy gap here, Mr. Speaker, and I think it's cause for alarm.

So if you look at the application for Saskatchewan operating authority certificate, who should apply? That's the very first question on the form: "Who should apply for a Saskatchewan operating authority certificate?" The answer is:

All persons operating commercial or business use vehicles:

Based in Saskatchewan . . . for the purposes of transporting passengers for-hire within or outside of Saskatchewan.

So obviously anyone who's transporting people should be getting one of these certificates. I think that's pretty straightforward. There's a fee and there's some other requirements.

So here's the application itself. You fill it out. There's a form. Here's who you mail it to. You put down your name and address, your corporate information, and then we get into some of the requirements that you need. So first of all you need to provide a certificate of incorporation. That is a good thing I think, Mr. Speaker, to know that people who are driving people for hire actually are incorporated because that provides us protections under the corporations Act.

There's other things that they have to have, things like there's information for sales and motor fuel tax, single-trip registration permits, pro-rate registration, which I don't even know what that is but there's some sort of pro-rate registration through SGI. But this is something I think that's really, really important for us as we set foot into these privatized buses, and that is insurance. In order to get the certificate you need to have insurance.

Saskatchewan regulations require all operating authority holders to maintain a minimum of insurance coverage as outlined in the Motor Carriage Conditions of Carriage Regulations.

So if we get rid of the certificate, how are we going to know? How does the public have the assurance that their privatized bus service is in fact insured properly? And there's all kinds of requirements here on this insurance.

An owner of a commercial vehicle shall not engage in the transportation of passengers unless that person maintains,

on each commercial vehicle in respect of any one accident, insurance against liability resulting from bodily injury to, or the death of one or more persons and loss of, or damage to the property of others, other than cargo, in the amount of at least:

\$1,000,000 in the case of a vehicle with a seating capacity of 15 or less used to transport passengers for compensation.

\$3,000,000 in the case of a vehicle with a seating capacity of 16 or more used to transport passengers for compensation.

And there's a form. "The Saskatchewan insurance certificate form C1-1, must be completed by your insurer(s) and filed with the Highway Traffic Board prior to an operating authority certificate being issued."

Mr. Speaker, when I think of all the people who are now turning to these private companies for their transportation requirements — these are people with cancer; these are seniors going to visit their grandchildren; these are people with all kinds of medical issues that need to get to the city to see their doctor. And I think in most cases from Regina to Saskatoon because there certainly aren't a lot of routes that have been approved. They can know when they get on that vehicle that there's insurance and that somebody in the government, somebody has taken the regulatory oversight to ensure that those people — anyone, somebody, anyone has ensured that the insurance is in place.

Kind of important, Mr. Speaker. And I think unless the minister has ways to make sure that these private buses are being overseen, I don't know what on earth the Highway Traffic Board is supposed to be doing. Unless they just like showing up for meetings or something. I don't know, Mr. Speaker. What is the role of the Highway Traffic Board if it isn't to ensure that public carriers are properly insured?

What else do we have in this form, Mr. Speaker? All kinds of things: safety fitness rating, so they have to fill out these sections if they plan to have drivers other than themselves. Qualified driver selection. I kind of like that. It's kind of a good idea to have drivers that are qualified.

And how do we find out how they've been selected? Well you have to answer these questions: did you get a driver abstract? Did you examine the driver's licence for the class and restrictions? Did you road-test the driver before hiring? Did you contact their previous employer? Mr. Speaker, these are all important aspects of ensuring that the drivers, these private bus, the privatized buses have in place. And I would think that is something in a public safety issue that we would want to ensure.

Next question: driver performance. So we want to know:

Do you have a system to obtain and review driver abstracts on an annual basis?

Do you have a system for ensuring compliance with Hours of Service Regulations?

You don't want your bus driver to put in a 16-hour day, and you're the one that's getting on the bus at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker.

Do you have a system for ensuring compliance with Trip Inspection Regulation?

... Do you systematically review accidents, moving violation, and criminal code offenses reported by your drivers?

I think those are important.

Now, Mr. Speaker, here's something that maybe we don't need, but vehicle safety, I think it's kind of important.

Do you have a vehicle preventative maintenance program?

Do you have a system for ensuring compliance with mandatory Periodic Vehicle Inspection Regulation ...

Which program best describes your mandatory vehicle inspection program — self-certifying, improved inspection, or other?

[16:30]

Other things they have to fill out, Mr. Speaker. Operational safety: do you provide training to your drivers for hours of service, trip inspection, first aid, air brakes?

Safety compliance:

If you have a company representative responsible for promoting safety, please provide ... [their name].

Do you have a ... method for self-evaluating compliance with all the standards in the National Safety Code?

I feel like if somebody filled this out, that I would have confidence in them if they had all these things in place, Mr. Speaker.

Equipment and safety: you have to provide a list of all the vehicles in your fleet, where will they be stored; what's the drivers' names; give your drivers' names and their PIC numbers. Description of service: if it's a charter service, where are you going to pick people up; if it's a scheduled service, what routes do you plan to operate?

And number 9 it's: include a current copy of your business plan, financial documentation, and operating plan. Again this gives us the assurance that these are reliable companies that aren't fly by night, that aren't going to put people at risk, that will have the proper training to know what happens with safety, with health emergencies — they'll have first aid training — all of those things that reassure the public that this is a company that's been properly vetted by the Highway Traffic Board.

And then finally there is a certification, and this is where the owner of this company has to commit in writing "to meet safety fitness requirements under the laws of Canada and the Province of Saskatchewan; to comply with highway safety laws; and to

know required safety standards, practices, and procedures in each jurisdiction to which my company or I will operate." And they put their name there, they put it in print, and they sign and they assure us that this is what they are committed to.

So I don't know, Mr. Speaker, what happened, but somehow along the line the Highway Traffic Board apparently was rubber-stamping these applications. Now I don't think, with the presence of a public transportation company like the STC, that there were a lot of people making applications for these operating certificates. But we do know that once STC was privatized, there was actually a number of hearings and a number of businesses that applied for these certificates.

Even in June there were some stories on the CBC about 11 businesses had applied for these certificates and there were hearings. And the people who were concerned about the demise of the STC and the privatization of STC actually attended and wanted to understand the process and understand who were these businesses that were going to be taking the place of our public transportation system, one that we had confidence in, one that we relied on, one that we knew the drivers would be trained properly and all those things that are in this business operating authority certificate.

So there were several that applied, I think 11. Of those, I believe only two were Saskatchewan companies. The rest were from out of province. And only two of those were offering similar services as the STC, so it really makes you wonder how again this government could have seen fit to get rid of our public transportation company in the way it did.

And some of the concerns that were raised is one of the companies that applied for this operating certificate was a flooring company, and there was concerns raised that if the board gives a transportation licence to a flooring company, that almost makes a joke of the Highway Traffic Board. That was one of the concerns raised by some members of the public.

Concerns that were raised about some of these people applying for the operating certificates, safety — major concern — cost of service and accommodation for vulnerable passengers including cancer patients and people with disabilities. STC buses were equipped with cameras and a Zonar safety system which allowed drivers to easily connect with ground transportation, and police tracked the speed of the bus, the hours the driver spent behind the wheel, and maintenance issues. And also STC drivers were trained to de-escalate dangerous situations and they had exemplary safety standards.

And the call was that these new companies should have the same standards. And other people pointed out that the law under our public transportation system looked after all of those things. And now with these new companies coming in, there's no way of knowing how they're going to take care of all those things, and how. And certainly, I think it's reasonable for members of the public to ask for more information. Of course they were denied. They weren't able to see the business plans of these applicants because they were deemed to be confidential. And unfortunately because they couldn't see them, then a lot of their concerns were not able to be addressed at the hearing, Mr. Speaker.



So it's just really puzzling and disappointing that, rather than beefing this up for companies and ensuring that the public is protected, that our minister is now deciding just to dispose of the requirement for an operating authority certificate. I think this is something that raises a lot of flags and perhaps a few alarms, Mr. Speaker. He provided no explanation in his second reading speech as to how the Highway Traffic Board or other authorities are going to look after these new applications.

And I think, you know, with the introduction of bills to introduce ride-share programs, again, how are the safety of the public going to be ensured when we license those kinds of programs as well? And we'll have more opportunity to talk about that when we get to that bill, Mr. Speaker.

But I think the role of the Highway Traffic Board is being diminished here in a significant way. I think it's of great concern to the public. It was established for a reason. These operating authority certificates just didn't sort of appear out of thin air, Mr. Speaker. Obviously a lot of thought and concern went into them. And if the Highway Traffic Board is rubber-stamping, then I think the problem is with the Highway Traffic Board, Mr. Speaker, and not with the requirement for a certificate. So I think this is something that is going to cause a lot of debate and I think the public is going to have significant concerns about this. And as we go further into debates here in the House, I think others are going to be raising concerns as well.

So obviously the two parts of the bill, the first part being the increase in penalties on people who are driving well under the influence of alcohol, absolutely important and critical in the culture that we have now where we see prominent people getting charged with drinking and driving and sort of this culture of it's okay to go out for a hockey night or a sports night and have a couple beer afterwards. That was also highlighted in some of the material that I read, is that generally healthy lifestyle people aren't the ones that get charged with drinking and driving, except for sports teams. And there is just a culture of . . . And I mean I've seen it in any teams I've been involved with where you go out afterwards and celebrate or drown in your tears for your win or your loss. So that is very much part of who we are.

And until we get that system of designated drivers or making sure that you give your keys to a friend if you know you're going to be drinking, or better yet, where there is public transport, take public transport. I mean there's all sorts of programs out there. Obviously MADD is very involved, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, and teens that are using that knowledge to create safe grads for their fellow classmates.

And, you know, there's a role for parents. There's a role for all of us in society when it comes to drinking and driving. And I guess we have to support people. And I think my colleague from Riversdale, Saskatoon Riversdale, talked about that because often there are other issues. When people repeatedly use alcohol or self-medicate, there are often mental health issues that are behind that, and we don't talk about those issues, Mr. Speaker. We don't go behind the veil of the alcohol or drug habits to find out is there something else that we can do to encourage this person to look after their mental health or seek help. And maybe, you know, using alcohol or drugs as a

cover-up is just too common in our society, and I think we all know people who struggle with that. So it's a serious problem and I think it's one that we all need to be vigilant for.

When my 21-year-old goes out at night, I worry. I mean I think all of us as parents do. Either, you know, whether he might drink to excess or his friends will, and he gets in that car. I mean that's a terrible thing. And certainly I know my mother did for us six kids, and with good reason actually. And that's a scary part of the culture of drinking and driving that we have here in Saskatchewan. So I think these changes will make some sense and maybe scare people into the proper behaviour, and we can only hope so.

But I think the elimination of the operating authority certificate, that's the second part of this bill . . . There are of course a number of other things too, Mr. Speaker, but I think we really need to look carefully and find out from the minister how it is we can get rid of these certificates and still be assured, as members of the public, that the people that we're getting into their vehicle with are safe. Are we safe? And I look to the minister to provide more explanation, or I would suggest that this bill needs serious amendment.

So I know other of my colleagues are going to want to have comments on this as well, and at this point I would move that we adjourn the debate on Bill No. 81, *An Act to amend The Traffic Safety Act*.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon Nutana has adjourned debate on Bill No. 81. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

### Bill No. 82

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hargrave that **Bill No. 82 — *The SaskEnergy Amendment Act, 2017*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to enter into debate on Bill No. 82, *An Act to amend The SaskEnergy Act*. Mr. Speaker, I know that there were some comments on second reading of this bill by the minister. It is a rather lengthy bill that seems to have a few focuses, one of them being housekeeping. But there are other two rather significant areas of consequence in this bill. In giving his second reading comments on November the 6th, the minister didn't have a whole lot to say by way of explanation with regard to again this rather lengthy bill. But there were some words that certainly stood out and caught my attention in his remarks.

The minister noted that these changes came about due to the changing needs of customers, sector business opportunities, and to support growth and competitiveness. Well I mean certainly, Mr. Speaker, that all sounds good.

But there were some other words, modernizing the Act. I believe that that's a word that we've heard before here. We heard some need for modernization around definitions within *The Interpretation Act*, Mr. Speaker, which was of course the bill that allowed for the sale of 49 per cent of any one of our Crown corporations without the say-so of the people of Saskatchewan as had previously been provided for under the Crown protection Act.

So perhaps with some reason, and I'd suggest that there's good reason, we on this side of the Assembly are a little bit guarded. We have perhaps some trust issues around this when we hear about this government looking to modernize, to increase efficiencies, and particularly with regard to Crown corporations as of course SaskEnergy is and enjoys protection under the Crown protection Act, Mr. Speaker.

It is not without reason that we have these concerns when we hear about tinkering with legislation with regard to our Crown corporations. Perhaps we do get our antennas up when we hear words as I've noted. Other words in the minister's remarks that I would note again, efficiency; enhanced safety. Of course that's another one of those buzzwords that you hear, and it's sort of an apple pie statement that no one here is going to be against, enhancing safety of course. But allowing flexibility is another one of those words that sets your ear toward that, wondering exactly what it is. And again, as I noted, the minister had scant detail about what the intention really was behind some of these proposed changes to the Act.

He did note that it's been some time since there was an update of this legislation. I believe it was 1992, so that's probably further back than most of us would be willing to acknowledge or believe perhaps, Mr. Speaker. So it has been some time, I'll give him that.

And there are some housekeeping issues that are noted in section 16, sections 34, 35, and 45 ensuring that the Act is current with recent case law and corporate policies. So that certainly is understandable and is not where I'm going to spend the bulk of my comments.

One of the first provisions is a new provision that outlines corporate liability in tort, but not liable in nuisance actions while carrying out its duty as a public utility. And certainly that is something that is understandable, Mr. Speaker. The need to keep insurance premiums at a reasonable level for the corporation I think is reasonable. It's interesting, we've seen many other changes to legislation over the last year and a half—my time in this Assembly—and we saw some more today around the government protecting itself from legal action. That is not exactly what we're seeing here. So I just make comment on that.

[16:45]

One of the other changes that was necessary was around the closure of customer services to pedestrian traffic, and perhaps this didn't impact everyone. There are many people in the province who pay their bills online, but we did hear from people that this did provide hardship to those who were accustomed to being able to pay their bills in person. Particularly I think of elderly folks who did have that option

who no longer have that option. But again they don't and that's necessitated changes to the legislation.

But I will spend some time here and it's around section 60(1), which is moving the definition of, a number of definitions out of the Act and into the regulations. And I'm going to highlight this. And I think we should always pay attention any time that we are moving sections out of the Act and putting them into the regulation. It's a completely different level of oversight, Mr. Speaker, as members here are well aware.

We saw, and I'll use an important reference point in my time here, we saw changes with Bill 63, with *The Education Act* where we had whole wholesale sections of *The Education Act* pulled out, not only just pulled out, put in as a budget bill, Mr. Speaker. So it only had five hours of oversight. Still that is more hours of oversight, that's way more oversight than the regulations. When a bill is presented—and this I'm sure all members here are aware, but perhaps those who are listening at home or elsewhere may be interested in this—when legislation is passed here we have hours of oversight that we are able to ask questions and bring forth concerns of our constituents with regard to those proposed amendments.

So about 20 hours which, you know, provides a good deal of oversight. It allowed, for example, with the passage of the debate around Bill 40, a lot of people in the province to become aware of those proposed changes, to contact their member of this Assembly, to contact the government. And after passage interestingly, the Premier did note that because of that oversight, because of that scrutiny, that they had cause to rethink that legislation.

So that scrutiny is important and that is afforded to legislation that comes to this Assembly. However if it's pulled out of the Act and it's put into the regulations, we lose that oversight. That means that changes can be made to the regulations by an order in council in the middle of the night, in the middle of the summer, if that were the whim of those making the decision, Mr. Speaker. And that's a totally different, totally different thing than having 20 hours of public scrutiny on any proposed changes.

And I think that that . . . So any time that I see that there's a proposal for something to be moved from the Act into the regulations, it gets your attention. I think that there probably are reasonable grounds to do that. Maybe there's something that requires some changing now and then, but it is interesting to have whole definitions pulled out of the Act and put into the regulations.

So in this case, around section 60, it is around the parameters of the distribution franchise into the regulations and also the definition of the "distribution of gas," "metering point," "oilfield facility system," and supply stream wholly from the Act into the regulations.

So I think when we're looking at wholesale removal from the Act, we should probably have a look at what's being proposed here. So section . . . My old eyes are failing me here. Section 60 . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I should've brought my glasses. Section 60 refers to, as I noted, the distribution of gas. So these are all with regard to the exclusive right to distribute gas under

the energy Act, *The SaskEnergy Act*. So as it stands, the “distribution of gas” is defined as:

means the movement of gas, by means of all gas pipeline facilities, that is:

- (i) downstream of the outlet of the shut-off valves [with] . . . gas transmission pipelines at stations where pressure reduction first occurs; and
- (ii) upstream of the outlet of a metering point at the location where the gas is delivered to a person for consumption.

It proposed to also take “metering point” definition, currently defined as:

. . . means the point at which gas is measured and physical possession of gas is transferred to a person for consumption.

As well as “oilfield facility system,” currently meaning:

. . . all the piping, process equipment, auxiliary devices and associated buildings involved with the extraction of oil from below the surface of the ground and with production processing before delivery to an oil transmission pipeline.

And also with regard to “supply system,” again pulling this definition out of the Act and putting it into the regulations:

. . . means a piping system and associated control devices, other than a gas gathering and processing system as defined in clause 60(1) . . . [above], through which gas is moved from the outlet of a metering point or, where there is no metering point, from a well where gas is produced, to equipment or appliances for consumption.

So certainly thorough definitions, Mr. Speaker. And as I noted, again, I’ll note again the minister was rather scant in the second reading as to why these particular changes are necessary. And that’s a question that I think others of my colleagues and perhaps members of the public will have: why we are moving this from the level of scrutiny of this Assembly and into the regulations. And, I mean, perhaps there is a perfectly reasonable answer, Mr. Speaker, but I think it’s important that we do hear, when we’re proposing changes like this, why exactly that is.

Again as I noted, not only the definition . . . It removes the parameters of distribution franchise into the regulations. And that is certainly a significant change and something that I would be interested — I think many people would be interested — in the reasons why that is necessary and that is advantageous to the people of Saskatchewan.

I think that’s probably a good standard to all legislation, that we should be able to answer those questions in an honest and transparent way with proper scrutiny and, you know, not trying to . . . trying to or not removing scrutiny in favour of more secrecy and executive actions without scrutiny. Just as a general rule, I would suggest humbly from this place, that that is not a bad standard for us to have for all legislation.

There are also some amendments here, amendments “. . . to clarify the corporation’s right to enter premises and lands where . . . [they have] pipelines, but gas service is not active.” So that’s interesting. And this addresses a recent court decision around “. . . the section’s non-applicability to customers whose service has been discontinued.” So I have to admit that I’m not familiar with that particular court decision but, as we see in the explanatory notes, that was a recent decision that has necessitated this particular change. So that’s interesting, Mr. Speaker, and perhaps there will be others on this side who will have more to say about that, with more knowledge of that particular court decision.

Again as I noted, and is often the case, the Act not being updated since 1992, it’s reasonable that there would be some housekeeping amendments for language and also the new corporate fiscal year, which is interesting. I guess this didn’t get caught up last year when a lot of the other corporations changed their Act to accommodate the new fiscal year, so that certainly is reasonable.

There’s also a new provision that allows for the transport of gas via third party-owned trucks subject with conditions. And here even an OC [order in council] is no longer needed for each trucking firm to engage in this business, which is interesting. It’s a paring down of oversight. Again if there are good reasons for that I think it’s reasonable that the people of Saskatchewan understand why that is the case, why that’s necessary. I think we should always take seriously when we’re pulling back regulations or oversight, and be prepared to answer why that change is necessary.

The final change in this legislation that I will note is around the movement of gas over parcel boundaries now prohibited, with the exception of enhanced oil recovery operations. So that’s interesting, Mr. Speaker. I know there’ll be a lot of people who will be interested in the changes and what it is about enhanced oil recovery operations that requires a special provision there. It’s an opportunity for all of us to learn about that process and about why these changes are necessary within *The SaskEnergy Amendment Act*.

So I do hope that people have a chance to ask these questions of the minister and have those questions answered. Again I think any time that we’re tinkering with our Crown corporations and pulling away oversight, people reasonably have had an erosion of trust with regard to intentions, with regard of these very important public assets. And I think that we should afford every level of scrutiny that this Assembly can provide.

Again it made a difference, that scrutiny, with the passage and then notice to repeal Bill 40. And I think it is important that, of course, we as the official opposition pay attention to that, but also that this government hear from people across the province if there are concerns or questions that they do have. So I would encourage people to continue with that level of engagement with the business of this Assembly and with the business of their province and these public funds and public assets.

I am sure that there are many of my colleagues who will have further comments with regard to this legislation. But I think I’ve come to the end of my remarks, and with that I will move to adjourn.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Regina Lakeview has moved to adjourn the debate on Bill 82. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried. It now being near 5 p.m., this Assembly stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 . . . oh sorry, sorry. No, that's a little bit late. Let's make it 10 a.m. tomorrow morning. We stand adjourned.

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.]



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