



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

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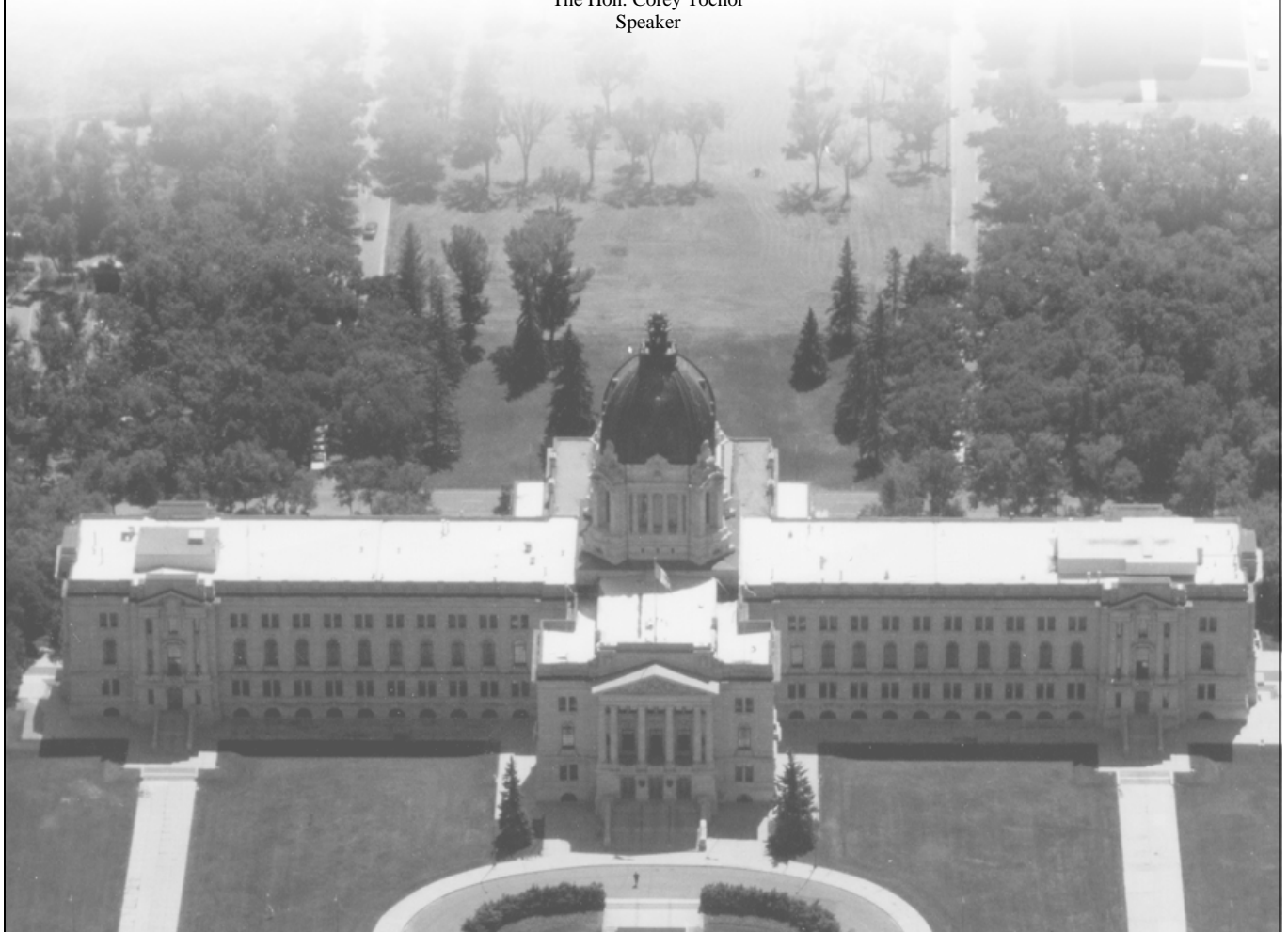
**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

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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

<b>Beaudry-Mellor</b> , Tina — Regina University (SP)	<b>McCall</b> , Warren — Regina Elphinstone-Centre (NDP)
<b>Beck</b> , Carla — Regina Lakeview (NDP)	<b>McMorris</b> , Don — Indian Head-Milestone (SP)
<b>Belanger</b> , Buckley — Athabasca (NDP)	<b>Meili</b> , Ryan — Saskatoon Meewasin (NDP)
<b>Bonk</b> , Hon. Steven — Moosomin (SP)	<b>Merriman</b> , Hon. Paul — Saskatoon Silverspring-Sutherland (SP)
<b>Bradshaw</b> , Fred — Carrot River Valley (SP)	<b>Michelson</b> , Warren — Moose Jaw North (SP)
<b>Brkich</b> , Hon. Greg — Arm River (SP)	<b>Moe</b> , Scott — Rosthern-Shellbrook (SP)
<b>Buckingham</b> , David — Saskatoon Westview (SP)	<b>Morgan</b> , Hon. Don — Saskatoon Southeast (SP)
<b>Carr</b> , Lori — Estevan (SP)	<b>Mowat</b> , Vicki — Saskatoon Fairview (NDP)
<b>Chartier</b> , Danielle — Saskatoon Riversdale (NDP)	<b>Nerlien</b> , Hugh — Kelvington-Wadena (SP)
<b>Cheveldayoff</b> , Ken — Saskatoon Willowgrove (SP)	<b>Olauson</b> , Eric — Saskatoon University (SP)
<b>Cox</b> , Hon. Herb — The Battlefords (SP)	<b>Ottenbreit</b> , Hon. Greg — Yorkton (SP)
<b>D'Autremont</b> , Dan — Cannington (SP)	<b>Rancourt</b> , Nicole — Prince Albert Northcote (NDP)
<b>Dennis</b> , Terry — Canora-Pelly (SP)	<b>Reiter</b> , Hon. Jim — Rosetown-Elrose (SP)
<b>Docherty</b> , Mark — Regina Coronation Park (SP)	<b>Ross</b> , Laura — Regina Rochdale (SP)
<b>Doherty</b> , Kevin — Regina Northeast (SP)	<b>Sarauer</b> , Nicole — Regina Douglas Park (NDP)
<b>Doke</b> , Hon. Larry — Cut Knife-Turtleford (SP)	<b>Sproule</b> , Cathy — Saskatoon Nutana (NDP)
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<b>Eyre</b> , Hon. Bronwyn — Saskatoon Stonebridge-Dakota (SP)	<b>Steinley</b> , Warren — Regina Walsh Acres (SP)
<b>Fiaz</b> , Muhammad — Regina Pasqua (SP)	<b>Stewart</b> , Hon. Lyle — Lumsden-Morse (SP)
<b>Forbes</b> , David — Saskatoon Centre (NDP)	<b>Tell</b> , Hon. Christine — Regina Wascana Plains (SP)
<b>Hargrave</b> , Hon. Joe — Prince Albert Carlton (SP)	<b>Tochor</b> , Hon. Corey — Saskatoon Eastview (SP)
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<b>Harrison</b> , Jeremy — Meadow Lake (SP)	<b>Wall</b> , Hon. Brad — Swift Current (SP)
<b>Hart</b> , Glen — Last Mountain-Touchwood (SP)	<b>Weekes</b> , Randy — Biggar-Sask Valley (SP)
<b>Heppner</b> , Hon. Nancy — Martensville-Warman (SP)	<b>Wilson</b> , Hon. Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (SP)
<b>Kaeding</b> , Warren — Melville-Saltcoats (SP)	<b>Wotherspoon</b> , Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)
<b>Kirsch</b> , Delbert — Batoche (SP)	<b>Wyant</b> , Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)
<b>Lambert</b> , Lisa — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)	<b>Young</b> , Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)
<b>Lawrence</b> , Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)	
<b>Makowsky</b> , Hon. Gene — Regina Gardiner Park (SP)	
<b>Marit</b> , Hon. David — Wood River (SP)	Vacancies — Kindersley, Melfort

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**Party Standings:** Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 47; New Democratic Party (NDP) — 12; Vacant — 2

**Clerks-at-the-Table**

**Clerk** — Gregory A. Putz  
**Law Clerk & Parliamentary Counsel** — Kenneth S. Ring, Q.C.  
**Principal Clerk** — Iris Lang  
**Clerk Assistant** — Kathy Burianyak  
**Sergeant-at-Arms** — Terry Quinn

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Ms. Beaudry-Mellor:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my great pleasure to welcome a group sitting up in the west gallery today. I have a group from the Regina Christian School which is in my constituency. They're accompanied by Ms. Jane Robertson, who's been here a couple of times, Mr. Bernard Krogsgaard, and educational assistants Lisa Fogerty and Ms. Jennifer Alcantara. I'm really looking forward to the opportunity to spend some time with these young people later today. Please join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Fiaz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you, through you and to all the members of this House, I would like to introduce my son, Kashif, who is here today. Kashif is a 12-year-old and goes to École Massey in grade 7, and not very busy these days, since the garage got cold, in the many projects, Mr. Speaker. He was with me this season in hunting.

Mr. Speaker, this morning I picked him up from school after he hit the steel staircase while he was sledding, and we went to the hospital, had two staples. He is okay now. And I ask all the members to welcome him in the legislative. Thank you very much.

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for critical supports for survivors of domestic violence. Those who signed this petition wish to bring to our attention the following: Saskatchewan has the highest rate of domestic violence amongst all of the provinces in Canada. Employers should be obligated to reasonably accommodate survivors of domestic violence in the workplace. Employees who are survivors of domestic violence should be able to take a leave of absence from their employment without penalty, and Saskatchewan must do much more to protect survivors of domestic violence. I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Legislative Assembly to pass legislation providing critical support for survivors of domestic violence.

Mr. Speaker, this is what we've called for in our private member's bill, Bill No. 605. I'm very hopeful that government members — and in particular, the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Labour who right now is the same person — will

support this bill and will pass it this session.

Those who signed this petition today come from Moose Jaw and Regina. I do so present.

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

**Ms. Beaudry-Mellor:** — 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 submit the Legislative Assembly take the following action: to cause the Government of Saskatchewan to take the necessary steps to stop the federal government from imposing a carbon tax on the province.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens of Weekes, Porcupine Plain, Humboldt, and Chelan. I do so present.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm rising today to present a petition to end the unfair Sask Party tax hikes for Saskatchewan families and businesses. The people who have signed this petition would like to bring to our attention the following: the Sask Party hiked taxes on Saskatchewan families and businesses by \$1 billion in their most recent budget, and because of that increase, Saskatchewan has become the only province in the country, the only province in the country where people are charged PST [provincial sales tax] on life and health insurance premiums.

We know that this new tax on insurance is also on crop insurance. It's a devastating hit on producers, Mr. Speaker. Small and medium-sized businesses, including those in the restaurant, tourism, and construction industries, will be hit hard by the Sask Party tax hikes, and these businesses will be forced to pass the rising costs on to their customers. So I'll read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

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

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

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again I stand in my place on behalf of the residents of Balgonie, Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, the petition I'm presenting on their behalf today concerns the permanent closure of Main Street access to Highway No. 1 in the town of Balgonie. And, Mr. Speaker, the prayer reads as follows:

Take the necessary steps and actions to leave the west-in,

west-out driving access for vehicles into and out of Balgonie at the intersection of Highway No. 1 and Main Street.

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

Now, Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed the many, many, many pages of petitions to support the community of Balgonie are from all around the area and all throughout Saskatchewan. We present these pages each and every day. And on this particular day, the page that I'm about to present, the people that have signed this petition are primarily from Balgonie. And I so present.

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

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to stand in my place to provide a petition for a second bridge for Prince Albert. The individuals that signed this petition would like to draw these following points to your attention: that the Diefenbaker bridge in Prince Albert is the primary link that connects the southern part of the province to the North; and that the need for a second bridge for Prince Albert has never been clearer than it is today.

Prince Albert, communities north of Prince Albert, and businesses that send people and products through Prince Albert require a solution; that local municipal governments have limited resources and require a second bridge to be funded through federal and provincial governments and not a P3 [public-private partnership] model; and that the Saskatchewan Party government refuses to stand up for Prince Albert in this critical infrastructure issue.

I'll read the prayer:

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

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

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition calling for the reopening of the Buffalo Narrows Correctional Centre. Mr. Speaker, the petitioners point out that the closure of the Buffalo Narrows Correctional Centre left 15 people out of work, and financial impact on their

families and the local businesses was certainly significant. They point out that the closure hurt elders within the community who'd received the help of inmates doing odd jobs.

They point out that the closure of the BNCC [Buffalo Narrows Correctional Centre] hurt the families of the inmates while learning new skills working with skilled employees to obtain employment upon release. They point out that the closure of the centre took inmates far away from their families, which makes visitation difficult or non-existent at all, Mr. Speaker. And they point out that the closure of the centre took away inmates from treatment possibilities and the opportunities to get training that of course is so critical in the fight against reoffending, Mr. Speaker.

In the prayer that reads as follows, the petitioners:

Respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan immediately reopen the Buffalo Narrows Correctional Centre to better our community for future generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, this particular petition is signed by citizens from the region, in particular in Dillon. I 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 government to stop cuts to our kids' classrooms. Those who 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 hiked education taxes by 67 million but cut total government funding for education by \$121 million; even though the Sask Party is making us all pay more, our kids are actually getting less; and that the Sask Party cuts mean that students will lose much needed supports in their classroom, including funding for busing for kindergartners and for programs to help children with special needs.

I'll read the prayer:

We, the undersigned, call upon the government to reverse the senseless cuts to our kids' classrooms and stop making families, teachers, and everyone who works to support education pay the price for the Sask Party's mismanagement, scandal, and waste.

Those who have signed this petition today reside in the city of Regina. I do so present.

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, I would ask leave of the House to return to introduction of guests.

**The Speaker:** — Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

## INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I note in your gallery someone who will be no stranger to many members in the House, who certainly deserves and warrants recognition. Mike Couros has joined us in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. He's a resident of Saskatoon, a business person, originally I think from Humboldt, Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, he's also well known as a commentator. He's a pretty good stand-up comic, actually. Sometimes when he's trying to be, he's a good stand-up comic, Mr. Speaker, and he's also a very good friend.

Many members on this side of the House have known him for some time. Some of them are fellow bike enthusiasts. I've been told by the Deputy Premier that Mike was once devoted to Harley-Davidson but had some issues with the company and has now decided on another bike. I think he rides an Indian now.

I would also note that he's in the insurance business and so given, you know, his willingness to switch brands, we're going to work very hard to continue to earn Mike's support into the future. But he has contributed much to his home city of Saskatoon and to the province, and I would just ask all members to welcome Mike Couros to his Legislative Assembly today.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll join with the Premier to welcome Mr. . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . With leave to introduce a guest.

**The Speaker:** — Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — I'd like to join with the Premier to welcome Mr. Couros to his Assembly. I enjoy much of what he adds to the public sphere and to debate. I know we might not always be on the same side of the issue. We certainly are on the insurance piece there.

But I welcome Mike to his Assembly and I would like to say I get along a lot better with his two brothers, Mr. Speaker, but it's nice to have Mike Couros here today.

## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

### Walk to Raise Awareness of Suicide

**Mr. Vermette:** — On August 25th, 2017 a group of family and friends of lost loved ones walked along Highway No. 2 between Prince Albert and La Ronge. They were walking to raise awareness about the suicide epidemic in northern Saskatchewan.

Linda and Michael Roberts from La Ronge helped organize the walk after they lost their 14-year-old daughter, Jadene Irving, to suicide in 2016. Their vehicle was plastered with photos of their beautiful daughter. They were joined by Sally Ratt from Stanley Mission, who also lost her 14-year-old daughter, Ariana Roberts, to suicide. In October of 2016 there were six young girls who took their lives.

The walkers were from Prince Albert, Little Red River, Montreal Lake, Sturgeon Lake, Stanley Mission, and other communities which have been impacted by suicides. It has been a rough road, and a hard road. They were walking to heal wounds and find positives in life. These parents who walked want to send a message to all people, including all governments, that suicide in our communities is a real problem. The issue of youth suicide takes us back to the calls of action in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and we must act upon them now before one more young life is lost.

[13:45]

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

### Partnership Receives Premier's Board of Education Award

**Ms. Lambert:** — Mr. Speaker, last week I had the pleasure of awarding the 2017 Premier's Board of Education Award for innovation and excellence in education. This award was established in 1999 and is sponsored by Xerox Canada. It recognizes educational innovations that focus on improving student learning outcomes leading to greater achievement.

Mr. Speaker, this year's recipients were Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools, the Saskatoon Tribal Council, and the University of Saskatchewan's Indian Teacher Education Program. This award went to these three partners thanks to their exceptional work building an indigenous language pathway to improve student learning outcomes at St. Frances Cree bilingual school in Saskatoon.

The program embraces indigenous language, culture, identity, and community. It provides the foundation for students to achieve their full potential and offers opportunities for innovations in indigenizing the curriculum and improving First Nations and Métis student learning outcomes.

Mr. Speaker, I was a trustee with the Greater Saskatoon Catholic school board in 2007 when this program was implemented, and I was so pleased to be part of this inspiring journey. It's very rewarding to see all of the success this program has achieved.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all members of this Assembly, I'd like to congratulate these worthy recipients of this prestigious award and thank them for all their innovative work improving our education system. Thank you.

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

### **Regina Teachers Receive Governor General's History Award**

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the incredible work of two Regina teachers, their students, and First Nations educators. Yesterday in Ottawa, Naomi Fortier-Fréçon and Leia Laing received the 2017 Governor General's History Award for excellence in teaching. These amazing and deserving educators collaborated with about 25 education colleagues, including Elder Noel Starblanket and retired Aboriginal education coordinator Calvin Racette, to establish a program that makes treaty education more relatable for students.

Mr. Speaker, the principal aim of the Treaty4Project is for students to understand their generation's relationship with Treaty 4 in Saskatchewan, both today and into the future. Through the participation of elders, indigenous artists, university professors, activists, and education students, the project provides students with a chance to engage with community members and gain the fundamental knowledge they need to tackle the very complex issues that face our province.

The project was first implemented in 2015 with the support of the Saskatchewan Arts Board, and now has two main components. The first is a youth conference for high school students at the First Nations University of Canada, which features workshops, group discussions, and reflections on treaty history and education. As a new component in 2016, elementary students collaborate with local artists on a project that explores the concept of reconciliation.

Mr. Speaker, Ms. Fortier-Fréçon and Ms. Laing are enthusiastic and dedicated to the teaching of Canadian history, and the Treaty4Project serves as a shining example of how educators can incorporate meaningful acts of reconciliation in their classrooms. And I would ask all members to join me in honouring the participants of the Treaty4Project, recipients of the 2017 Governor General's Award.

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

### **Knights of Columbus Dinner Benefits Children's Hospital**

**Mr. Oluson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Another piece of great news for our children's hospital which will be opening in less than two years. The Knights of Columbus Council 8215 held their fourth annual Celebrity Dinner, presented by Les and Irene Dubé, on October 27th. I was proud to attend with members from Saskatoon Westview and Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood.

The funds raised this year will go towards the construction and furnishing of a state-of-the-art maternal room at the new Jim Pattison Children's Hospital in Saskatoon. This room will be one of many that will allow mothers, families, and children to stay together through the whole experience of childbirth.

Former Riders coach Ken Miller was the keynote speaker, and he shared with all of us his story of leadership, faith, and family. Unified head of pediatrics, Dr. Givelichian, spoke passionately about how the children's hospital is progressing.

Mr. Speaker, this year's event raised over \$90,000. An integral part of this year's fundraising efforts was Knights of Columbus Landis Council 5549 presented a cheque for \$23,000.

This was the fourth gala these tireless volunteers have presented, raising to date over \$250,000. We are just two years away from seeing the efforts of events such as this bring the children's hospital to reality, opening its doors and providing world-class care for our mothers and children. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members, please join me in thanking the Knights of Columbus Council 8215 as well as the many sponsors for their commitment to the Jim Pattison Children's Hospital. Thank you.

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

### **Queen City Marathon Raises Funds for Charity**

**Mr. Fiaz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier this fall I had the pleasure of participating in the Queen City Marathon, running a full half-marathon. Established in 2001, the Queen City Marathon has grown into an important event in our city of Regina. Last year the event hosted over 6,000 participants from all across the world.

Mr. Speaker, the marathon was not established as a fundraising event. It was simply organized to offer local members a chance to participate in a local marathon. But over the years, the marathon became a partner with charities and brought in opportunities for participants to donate.

In true Saskatchewan fashion, participants jumped onto this opportunity. This year over \$20,000 was raised by the participants, making total donations up to approximately \$50,000. This year's charity partners were Raise a Reader, YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association], KidSport, Hospitals of Regina Foundation, Regina Food Bank, North Central Family Centre, and Special Olympics.

Mr. Speaker, the Queen City Marathon has grown into an impressive event reflecting the generous nature of people of our province. I do like to congratulate the marathon for all of their success this year and thank all of those who participated and donated into it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Caroncrest Farms Celebrates 50 Years**

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to share with you a local success story. This October, Caroncrest Farms celebrated its 50th year of dairy production. Located just off Highway 1 near Caronport, Caroncrest Farms has been a staple of the community since it was first started producing milk in 1967.

Current owner Blaine McLeod was eight years old when his father and uncle bought the existing dairy farm. It has remained family owned and operated to this day, run by Blaine and his two sons, Michael and Marc. Although ownership has remained steady, production has grown immensely since the farm was first started.

Caroncrest milks over 300 cattle twice a day, producing millions of gallons of milk annually. Approximately 21 000 litres of milk are shipped from the farm every two days. And, Mr. Speaker, as Caroncrest's productions grew, they expanded their partnerships within the community. They now provide milk for Coteau Hills Creamery, a local producer of artisan cheese, located in Moose Jaw.

Mr. Speaker, the story of Caroncrest Farms is a familiar one across Saskatchewan. They're a local farm that has created an incredible product with international demand. Saskatchewan truly does feed the world.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of this entire Assembly, I'd like to congratulate Caroncrest Farms on their 50th year of production, and wish them the best in 50 more. Thank you.

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

### Joint-Use School Opens in Saskatoon

**Mr. Buckingham:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is encouraging to see and hear about so many successful P3 schools opening this fall on time — on time and on budget. Students and teachers across Saskatchewan deserve the best facilities and services possible, and it is a shame that the members opposite took so many of those resources away, as they closed 176 schools in their time in government.

Mr. Speaker, today I would like to highlight two schools that are now open in Saskatoon, Ernest Lindner School and St. Lorenzo Ruiz Catholic School, which are part of this government's nine joint school openings this fall.

Ernest Lindner, named after an artist, has encouraged teachers and staff to explore more into visual arts and incorporate it into their curriculums, now that they have the proper resources and the space to do so.

Mr. Speaker, the principal from St. Lorenzo Ruiz, François Rivard, is very excited to see this school open, stating, "Hampton Village is such a great community, and it's an honour to be a part of its growth and maturation as an educator."

Thanks to the P3 schools built, Saskatchewan residents are saving millions of dollars, and this school will also play host to a child care centre. Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to please join me in congratulating Ernest Lindner School and St. Lorenzo Ruiz on opening their new spaces. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### QUESTION PERIOD

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

#### Details of Land Acquisitions

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party still isn't doing anything to help make public information readily accessible to the public. The government spent over \$100 million buying land for the Regina bypass and GTH [Global Transportation

Hub] and, knowing what we already know about the Sask Party's GTH scandal, I think most reasonable people would agree that these land purchases need a second look.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to the land that was bought or expropriated and the millions in penalties and fees that were paid, there are a number of lawsuits on the go and some that have already been settled. We don't know anything about how much they were settled for. It's millions, certainly, but how many? All we know for certain is that this is Saskatchewan people's money.

So will the Premier show us that most open and accountable government in the history of the province that he promised a decade ago? And will he let the people of Saskatchewan know how much of their money was spent on this GTH and bypass land and how much is being spent on lawsuits?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, the amounts were provided to the member for Nutana, who asked the questions. In fact the member for Nutana received a significant amount of information from the Information Services Corporation. She received . . . Well, Mr. Speaker, they asked a question. They don't want to hear the answer. They asked a question of ISC [Information Services Corporation], and she received all the Crown titles with the Ministry of Highways address in Excel format, a detailed map with the parcel numbers for the Regina bypass area, which greatly reduces the work for individual searches, Mr. Speaker. The amounts would be known, Mr. Speaker, as well.

These rules, by the way, that we're operating under, these rules of transparency are the rules that were implemented by the NDP [New Democratic Party] in 2006 . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well just a modicum of self-awareness over on the other side might be welcomed by the people of the province of Saskatchewan. So I guess their argument is they weren't open and accountable in 2006, Mr. Speaker. And I would say that when it came to the registrar and land information, there is information available.

Now the member opposite from Nutana, she wants more information. She wants certain records available from ISC, which are available to her for \$10 a record. There's a cost to preparing these things. I think \$10 a record is a pretty reasonable amount of money. It's under 2,000. I don't know; there's ways to raise money. There's GoFundMe. There's mass texting. Maybe they can figure out a way to raise \$1,900.

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

### Crown Corporations and Intent of Bill 40

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Mr. Speaker, despite all that flourish we just heard from the Premier, we haven't received any information with respect to the lawsuits, which is what the question was actually about.

The secrecy and private deals that make corporations and their supporters rich, like their GTH scandal and the Regina bypass, are simply the beginning. The Sask Party promised not to sell

off our Crowns, but they scrapped and are selling off STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company]. The Premier said he heard Saskatchewan people and said they'd repeal Bill 40. But instead of repealing all of it, they kept the part they used on STC.

Now, Mr. Speaker, their latest move is to move SaskEnergy's exclusive rights to distribute gas from the protection of legislation into regulations that they can change at any time, behind closed doors, at the stroke of a pen.

Mr. Speaker, they tried selling off our Crowns through the front door and Saskatchewan people said no. They tried the back door with Bill 40 and Saskatchewan people said no. So why are they now trying to sell off SaskEnergy through — I don't know — the window, the cellar? They're really running out of doors here. Mr. Speaker, why won't the Sask Party stop the manoeuvring, keep their promise, and stop selling off our Crowns?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, once again there is so much wrong with what's explicitly in the member's preamble and what's inferred in the member's preamble. This is about fearmongering. I mean, Mr. Speaker, we have an NDP opposition that after a very, very difficult budget brought in by the NDP, after some admitted challenges that we've faced in government, they're still 15 points behind in the polls. So they're struggling, Mr. Speaker, to make up issues that don't exist.

Let me share with members opposite the explanation which I got into a little bit with the media with respect to Bill 40. We need to keep the . . . There's an element. There's some judicial opinion within government that says we need to preserve the wind-down provision in Bill 40 to complete the wind-down of STC, obviously something we don't agree on.

[14:00]

Well now the Leader of the Opposition is asking more questions from her seat. I'll just finish this one and then she'll have the chance to ask more questions. Mr. Speaker, when the wind-down's complete, there is no need to have the wind-down provision in Bill 40 and the whole bill can change. The whole bill can change, Mr. Speaker. And I expect, I expect — and I'm not going to be around for it — but I expect that'll be exactly what happens.

With respect to SaskEnergy, what she's trying to . . . What I would say what she's torquing about the change in SaskEnergy is simply removing a lot of the red tape around allowing the transportation of liquefied natural gas. So that if somebody, the trucking company wants to move liquefied natural gas, the process, the approval can be regulatory. It can't be legislative. Well the member for Nutana doesn't support that, Mr. Speaker. Those are the changes.

Mr. Speaker, SaskEnergy is listed in the Crown protection Act, something what we voted for, something that members opposite voted for. Mr. Speaker, our commitment on those Crown corporations, that they remain publicly owned, stands.

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

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Mr. Speaker, regulations can be changed with the stroke of a pen, and there's no reason for this change unless the Sask Party have a plan to sell off those rights. Mr. Speaker, it was just a few weeks ago that the Premier sent a message into the homes of Saskatchewan people and said, we heard you. But apparently he heard wrong because, instead of keeping their promise, the Sask Party are leaving the door open to scrap any of our Crowns the same way they did STC. And the Premier, I hope is committing to what he just said in the last answer. And now they're opening the door to hive off SaskEnergy too.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier said he understood that Saskatchewan people know that selling off any part, any part at all, of a Crown is privatization. That goes for STC. And yet, the routes, depots and buses are all being sold. That also goes for SaskEnergy. And yet, they want to sell off the rights to deliver gas. And that goes for every other Crown.

Mr. Speaker, is SaskTel next? How can Saskatchewan people have any faith any Crown is safe while the Sask Party fire sale goes on?

**The Speaker:** — Members will respectfully listen to the question, and now will respectfully listen to the response from the Premier. I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, there is just so much nonsense in that question. There really is. Mr. Speaker, there is not a way . . . There's not a reasonable person in the province who would think that we wouldn't undertake the change with respect to Bill 40 that we have taken if we weren't completely, completely serious about the long-term ownership of the Crown corporations remaining with the people of the province of Saskatchewan. That's the bottom line, Mr. Speaker, here in this Legislative Assembly debate, in question period today.

What she has, what she's sort of pulling out of thin air is a provision that we're going to change so that trucking of liquid natural gases is allowed for without a lot of red tape, Mr. Speaker. That's the kind of transportation that's always happened. The Crown corporation itself, SaskEnergy, is still in the Crown protection Act. It's still in the Crown protection Act.

And I know it frustrates members opposite. The members opposite look at the very difficult budget we brought down, look at some of the difficult political circumstances, and they're frustrated because they're 15 points behind. They're absolutely disconnected from Saskatchewan people. So, Mr. Speaker, and they have an uninspiring leadership race from the back bench, Mr. Speaker. We know that.

And so what do they do? They torque issues. They try to make up issues. Well I remember they tried to do that for years prior to 2007. They tried it again in 2011. They tried it again in 2016. And each time they tried it, their numbers got smaller and smaller and smaller, Mr. Speaker. The people of the province see through those kinds of tactics. We support the Crown protection Act, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.



### Access to Bus Services

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, we're talking about our Crown corporations. We're talking about a promise that was made by that Premier and every one of those Sask Party MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] over there. And we're talking about trust, Mr. Speaker. They promised they wouldn't sell off our Crowns, but then they passed Bill 40, put SaskTel on the chopping block, scrapped STC. And, Mr. Speaker, according to the minister's own numbers, just last year STC was serving 253 communities, connecting 253 communities, with 1,005,753 people living in those communities. Families, students, grandparents, seniors, people living with disabilities — our province's most vulnerable were all abandoned by the Sask Party when they scrapped STC.

Mr. Speaker, why did the Premier break his promise? Why won't he stop his desperate sell-off of STC?

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

**Hon. Mr. Hargrave:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it was a very difficult decision to wind down STC, Mr. Speaker. There was no sell-off of it. It was a wind-down, Mr. Speaker. It was a very tough decision, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, ridership had declined: 18,000 people or 18,000 rides in just the last year, Mr. Speaker. It continued to decline. That subsidy, Mr. Speaker, of \$85, almost \$100 per ride, Mr. Speaker, was unacceptable. And I know the members opposite, when it was \$5, when it was \$5 a subsidy per ride, Mr. Speaker, they considered, they considered closing routes and winding STC down. In fact they did wind down 13 routes, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, when the subsidy was \$85 and going up to \$17 million and \$100 million over the next five years, Mr. Speaker, it was reasonable and a business decision that we had to make. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, the question was to the Premier. STC was a service that Saskatchewan people relied on, Mr. Speaker, that connected 253 communities all across our province and over a million people.

Lenore McTaggart was one of those people. Ms. McTaggart lives in Lloyd and is currently living with mobility challenges. Lloydminster still gets a bus service through another company, so Ms. McTaggart is luckier than most Saskatchewan people. Still she had a terrible experience trying to get home on the bus from Saskatoon recently.

Mr. Speaker, this is our province's largest city, and the bus station is in the corner of a private business. It's poorly advertised. Passengers can't see when the buses are coming and going, and it's an expensive taxi ride to go to and from this makeshift bus stop.

Mr. Speaker, can the Premier tell Ms. McTaggart and all Saskatchewan people why they changed the definition so they

could break their promise and scrap STC, why they rushed the sell-off without having a plan in place? And will he finally do the right thing and scrap this desperate sell-off?

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

**Hon. Mr. Hargrave:** — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank the member opposite for that question. Mr. Speaker, as I've said many, many times before in this House, Mr. Speaker, it was a very difficult decision to scrap STC, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, more than . . .

[Interjections]

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

**Hon. Mr. Hargrave:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker . . .

[Interjections]

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

**Hon. Mr. Hargrave:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, you know, more than half of the communities in the province were not served by STC, Mr. Speaker. What about those people, Mr. Speaker? I mean those were . . . and lots of routes, Mr. Speaker, that members opposite, members opposite closed those routes, Mr. Speaker, when they were in power, Mr. Speaker. But now they think that it's not right.

Mr. Speaker, it was a very tough decision, but \$100 million over the next five years could be more better placed, Mr. Speaker, in social services, in education, and in health care, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

### Global Transportation Hub and Drainage Issues in the Regina Area

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, yesterday when I asked the minister about the drainage problems at the GTH that are causing headaches for local landowners, including James Farley who has lost over 40 acres, with Mr. Farley in the Chamber the minister offered to help. Then when speaking with the media, the minister said this is on the city of Regina and said they should form a watershed association.

Mr. Speaker, does anyone over there understand anything about accountability? This has been going on for years, and the minister needs to understand that pointing fingers isn't helping our producers. In 2014 the city told Mr. Farley that it was the GTH that is responsible. In 2016 the Water Security Agency said they couldn't do anything until the GTH and the city get together and stop fighting over who is responsible.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister commit to Mr. Farley that he will stop the finger pointing, take responsibility, and take care of at least this part of the mess at GTH?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, so just to be clear, there is a section of this drainage project that is on Global Transportation Hub land. They are responsible for that. The remainder of the drainage project is licensed to the city of Regina. And until that changes, until perhaps hopefully a watershed association is formed including the city of Regina, including the Global Transportation Hub, including the RM [rural municipality] of Sherwood and other interested stakeholders, at this point the city of Regina holds the permit for the drainage project.

We would expect that all individuals or organizations that hold permits on drainage projects would take responsibility for their project, Mr. Speaker. So we are working with the city of Regina to bring a long-term solution that will involve all of the stakeholders in this matter.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, the water is backing up and flooding the fields, but the flames of the GTH dumpster fire are still burning strong. It was the Sask Party that ditched the GTH footprint, built that drainage for their GTH customers, and dumped the water onto Mr. Farley's land. They also spent who knows how many tens of millions of dollars making sure that the bypass went by the GTH. And, Mr. Speaker, they spent over 7 million taxpayer dollars to move the power lines so that they could make the GTH site work — again for the GTH customers including, if you trust the Sask Party website, the mysterious Brad company. But it wasn't those GTH customers who paid for the power line to move. It wasn't even the GTH. It was SaskPower — rather, all Saskatchewan ratepayers.

Now, Mr. Speaker, how can the Sask Party justify spending \$7 million for SaskPower, and that was passed on to the people of Saskatchewan and small businesses?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, you'll have to forgive me. There was about five or six different questions in that one question. I'll try to address them all, Mr. Speaker. I doubt in a minute I'll have an opportunity. But I just want to be clear because oftentimes that same member will come into the House or across the way and be calling on the government to close all the drainage projects in the province. And now this is one that she wants the government to step in and institute a cleanup of a drainage project that isn't the Global Transportation Hub's project.

Now there is the ability to form a watershed association. That's what the Water Security Agency would like to do, Mr. Speaker. And hopefully that will alleviate the drainage problems that Mr. Farley has experienced, which I believe he admitted long before the Global Transportation Hub was ever created. But we are working towards finding a solution that will involve the city of Regina, who currently hold the permit on that portion of it, as well as the other stakeholders in the area. And I think that is certainly reasonable to do.

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

Lakeview.

### Staff Numbers in the Education System

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago I asked the Education minister to take some responsibility for the fact that there were fewer teachers in our kids' classrooms than last year. It turns out that on the number of teachers, I was wrong. And unlike the minister, I'm willing to apologize and take full responsibility for that.

Mr. Speaker, the government finally released their numbers today, and they show that there are actually 188 fewer teachers in kids' schools this year, even higher than originally thought. The minister denied the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation] numbers, but her own numbers show that there are fewer teachers and fewer support staff in our kids' classroom than even the STF had calculated. So will the minister finally take some responsibility and admit that there are fewer teachers in the classroom this year because of her government's deep cuts?

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

**Hon. Ms. Eyre:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in a challenging year, and we know it's been a challenging year, the newly posted numbers bear out pretty well: slight decline in teachers due almost exclusively to attrition and retirement, but an increase since '13-14, '14-15, and the same as '16-17. And some divisions, Mr. Speaker, such as Saskatoon Public and Regina Catholic, large urbans, have actually seen an increase this year.

[14:15]

Since '07 the number of regular teachers has increased by 9 per cent. The number of all school-based educators has increased by a thousand full-time employees or 8 per cent. The number of counsellors, psychologists, occupational therapists, medical facilitators, speech pathologists has all increased: counsellors by 68.5 per cent, speech paths by 46 per cent, Mr. Speaker. We are meeting the challenge. We are building and growing, all for the future.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — That's interesting that the minister characterizes the cuts as slight. But whether it's her comments calling on indigenous education into question that drew equivalencies between Western Europeans and indigenous people or compared indigenous education to Bolshevism, or her non-apology that accused people of misinterpreting her words, or her refusal to admit that her government's cuts to education are having serious impacts on our kids' classrooms, it is clear that this minister is in over her head.

Mr. Speaker, the minister disputed the STF's numbers that showed that there were fewer teachers in classrooms this year, but her own numbers show that there are even fewer teachers and supports than originally thought. So will this minister do the simple math, Mr. Speaker, and admit that her government's cuts have led to fewer teachers and needed supports in our kids'

classrooms?

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

**Hon. Ms. Eyre:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'll let the STF speak for the STF in the way STF calculates its numbers. It's different than the way the Ministry of Education calculates its numbers.

Mr. Speaker, we wish to continually acknowledge the work school divisions have done to minimize the impact to the classrooms and to educators in the classrooms. Divisions have been honourable stewards in that. They have looked at administration and cut back in some cases. They've collaborated in important ways with joint fuel procurement, joint busing, which means money goes straight back into front-line classrooms.

Bottom line, Mr. Speaker: total education funding has increased by over 1 billion, 114 per cent since '07. We all have to remember that. Overall operating has increased from 1.41 billion to 1.86 billion, an increase of 32 per cent — increase. Total per-student funding in '07 under the NDP, 8,634; total per-student funding now, \$10,210, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Compensation for Teachers

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, I would submit that it's not quite as rosy as the minister would suggest. And when it comes to her own words or the government's record, that minister refuses to take any responsibility. It doesn't matter what numbers that minister is spouting. The reality is, is that there are fewer teachers in classrooms but 4,500 more kids, Mr. Speaker.

Teachers are being asked to get by with fewer and fewer supports. And now that minister and that government are asking teachers to take a 3.7 per cent pay cut, even higher than the 3.5 per cent that they're asking everyone else to take. It could not be more clear, Mr. Speaker, that the Sask Party and that minister have zero respect for teachers and the work that they do.

Can the minister please explain why she thinks that, on top of all of the cuts that her government have applied to education, that teachers should take any cuts, let alone one higher than they are asking others to take?

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

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, there is beyond a doubt very difficult decisions that have been made in this budget and that's because of a significant shortfall in resource revenues. And it's interesting that the members opposite keep wanting to have increased spending, but they don't want to take any measures to address how they're going to find the money to address the spending.

There's a number of ways in which savings within compensation to employees can be accomplished. It does not necessarily mean a straight-out wage cut, Mr. Speaker. But we

need to be very mindful and very respectful that negotiations need to be between employers and employees, and those negotiations need to take place at the collective bargaining tables. I would think the members opposite would respect that as well.

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

#### Disposal of Scrap Tires

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Scrap Tire Corporation's Black Gold Rush program served 227 rural municipalities. It didn't just help municipalities clean up piles of discarded tires that are a growing problem in our province, it also helped local groups and even the municipalities themselves raise money for their own projects, from small gatherings to rinks and community centres.

Mr. Speaker, that program was eliminated and 69 communities were never given the opportunity to benefit from it. Improperly disposed of tires can be a significant fire risk, and can lead to other health concerns like West Nile virus. This program addressed those serious concerns and helped communities raise money. So why won't this government ensure there's funding to reinstate this program?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first of all I would point out that this is not a government program. The government doesn't provide funding for these programs. It's a stewardship-run program. And so when people purchase tires, those dollars, a portion of those dollars goes into the stewardship program.

Mr. Speaker, there has been a change to the organization that is running that stewardship program. Certainly they understand the value of a program like the Black Gold Rush program, and I would expect that the new organization will carry on with a program like that.

But we have other concerns as well, for example several large piles that need to be dealt with in an effective manner. And so the new stewardship program that has begun operating at the beginning of September will be looking to address that program, as well as ensuring that municipal piles are dealt with, as they have in the past. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — Ministerial statements. Introduction of bills . . . Oh, why is the Premier on his feet?

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — To return to ministerial statements, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Okay. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

#### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

### New Naming Policy of Geographic Features and Buildings Honours Former Premiers

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. A number of years ago, the Government of Saskatchewan commissioned a review of the naming policy for government buildings and structures and geographic features designated under *The Heritage Property Act*. The review was undertaken by Dr. Gordon Barnhart, who was of course well qualified to carry on the work, Mr. Speaker, as a former lieutenant governor for the province, a former Clerk of this Legislative Assembly, and a respected historian.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Barnhart produced a report with several recommendations intended to ensure the naming of buildings and geographic features is carried out in a consistent, transparent, and fair manner. Important among those recommendations was the suggestion that every former premier of Saskatchewan be honoured through the naming policy. In his report, Dr. Barnhart said:

Every Premier has his detractors and thus naming a building or geographic feature after a Premier will always stir up some controversy. Yet the service given by each of these individuals should be marked and that part of our history should be remembered.

Today the government is acting on the recommendations of Dr. Barnhart. We have developed a new policy for naming buildings and other provincial landmarks after former premiers. And acting in accordance with this policy, I am pleased to announce the dedication of three provincial landmarks in honour of former premiers.

From this day on, the main building at the Moose Jaw campus of Saskatchewan Polytechnic will be named the W. Ross Thatcher Building in honour of Ross Thatcher, who served as premier from 1964 to 1971. The previously unnamed reservoir and dam near Alameda will now bear the name of Grant Devine Lake and Grant Devine dam in honour of Grant Devine, premier from 1982 to 1991. And finally, the Saskatchewan Provincial Lab in Regina will henceforth be known as the Roy Romanow Provincial Laboratory in honour of Roy Romanow, premier from 1991 to 2001.

The naming policy will extend as well, Mr. Speaker, to partnerships and co-operation in respect to the naming of buildings and geographic features that are within the purview of other levels of government. I would therefore like to highlight an important dedication that took place last month under the auspices of the same policy. The former Wascana School in Regina and the temporary location of École Connaught Community School was officially renamed the Allan Blakeney Adult Campus in honour of the former premier who served from 1971 to 1982.

Mr. Speaker, there is an important proviso in the new policy: the stipulation that a current premier shall not name a building or landmark after his immediate predecessor. It was felt, Mr. Speaker, that some separation would be appropriate. And so the government will look for a building or landmark to name after former Premier Lorne Calvert in the new year after I leave office.

Mr. Speaker, from the very beginning, Saskatchewan has been blessed with political leadership, women and men who would come forward to offer servant leadership at the provincial level. The premiers we acknowledge today are examples of that leadership and service. Their influence was felt within Saskatchewan and abroad, and today we honour their legacy. We recognize their contributions and accomplishments, and we say thank you for their many years of service to Saskatchewan.

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

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to thank the Premier for these dedications. I would also like to repeat the words of Dr. Barnhart that were quoted by the Premier. I think that they bear repeating:

Every premier has his [and I would like to add “or her”] detractors and thus naming a building or geographic feature after a premier will always stir up some controversy. Yet the service given by each of these individuals should be marked and that part of our history should be remembered.

Mr. Speaker, these are wise words. Even as we stand here today, you can still hear the echoes of debates in this place; some of them may even be from earlier today, Mr. Speaker. And those statements themselves echoed the sentiments of Saskatchewan people. But, Mr. Speaker, whatever your political stripe, we can all agree that serving this province is a great honour. And for those who served as premier, it is an honour that also deserves this recognition.

On behalf of all New Democrats, I want to thank them for their service and their leadership. Thank you.

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### Bill No. 100 — *The Agrologists Amendment Act, 2017*

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

**Hon. Mr. Stewart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 100, *The Agrologists Amendment Act, 2017* be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Agriculture that Bill No. 100 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. Stewart:** — Next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

**Bill No. 101 — *The Agricultural Implements Amendment Act, 2017***

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

**Hon. Mr. Stewart:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 101, *The Agricultural Implements Amendment Act, 2017* be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Agriculture has moved first reading of Bill 101, 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. Stewart:** — Next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

**Bill No. 102 — *The Agri-Food Amendment Act, 2017***

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

**Hon. Mr. Stewart:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I move that Bill No. 102, *The Agri-Food Amendment Act, 2017* be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Minister of Agriculture has moved that Bill No. 102, *The Agri-Food Amendment Act, 2017* be introduced and read for a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** — When shall the bill be read a second time? I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

**Hon. Mr. Stewart:** — Next sitting, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Next sitting.

**Bill No. 107 — *The Provincial Emblems and Honours Amendment Act, 2017***

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

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill 107, *The Provincial Emblems and Honours Amendment*

*Act, 2017* be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport has moved that Bill No. 107, *The Provincial Emblems and Honours Amendment Act, 2017* be now introduced and read for a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

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

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

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — Mr. Speaker, with leave, I'd like to do it right now.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The minister has requested leave to move to second reading. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**Some Hon. Members:** — No.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Leave is not granted. I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** — With leave to make a motion to regard sitting days in the spring.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Government House Leader has asked for leave to move a motion. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Government House Leader may proceed.

## MOTIONS

### Legislature Sitting Days

[14:30]

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker:

That when this Assembly adjourns at the end of the sitting day on December 7, 2017, notwithstanding rule 3(3), it shall stand adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday, March 12, 2018, for a spring period of 40 sitting days as follows:

1. May 28, 2018, shall constitute the completion day of the spring period of sittings, provided that there are no fewer than 28 sitting days between the proposal of the budget motion, moved pursuant to rule 31, or;
2. If the budget motion is moved at any time within the interval of 29 sitting days prior to May 28, 2018, the completion day shall be postponed to the 29th sitting day

after the budget motion is moved; and,

3. The rules of the parliamentary calendar for the procedures to dispose of any remaining budgetary estimates, budget-related bills, and the final appropriation bill shall be applied in accordance with the revised completion day established by this order; and,

4. The rules of the parliamentary calendar for the procedures to dispose of any remaining government bills that are not budget related introduced during the fall period in accordance with rule 34, shall be subject to the conditions set out in rule 35 and 36 for the disposal in accordance with the revised completion day established by this order; and further,

That if the Assembly is earlier recalled by Mr. Speaker upon the request of the government, the provisions of this sessional order shall not apply; and if recalled, Mr. Speaker shall give each member seven days clear notice, if possible, of such time and date.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Government House Leader has moved a motion dealing with sitting days. It is my hope that the members will take the motion as read. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** — By leave to move three motions dealing with committee changes.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Government House Leader has asked for leave. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Leave is granted. The member may proceed.

### Committee Membership

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you.

That the name of Kevin Doherty be submitted for the name of Herb Cox on the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Government House Leader has moved:

That the name Kevin Doherty be substituted for the name of Herb Cox on the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** —

That the name of Warren Kaeding be added to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Government House Leader has moved:

That the name Warren Kaeding be added to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Is the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** —

That the name of Lori Carr be added to the Standing Committee on House Services.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Government House Leader has moved:

That the name of Lori Carr be added to the Standing Committee on House Services.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek leave for a motion for an address to Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor regarding an appointment under *The Expropriation Procedure Act*.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Deputy Premier has asked for leave to move a motion from Her Honour. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

### Appointment to the Public and Private Rights Board

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, it's my privilege to move:

That a humble address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor recommending that Murray Walker be appointed as a member of the Public and Private Rights Board for a term of five years, pursuant to section 6 of *The Expropriation Procedure Act*.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Deputy Premier has moved:

That a humble address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor recommending that Murray Walker be appointed as a member of the Public and Private Rights Board for a term of five years, pursuant to section 6 of the expropriation procurement Act.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — That's carried.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### SECOND READINGS

**Bill No. 99 — *The Interpretation Amendment Act, 2017* (No. 2)/Loi modificative n°2 de 2017 sur l'interprétation**

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of *The Interpretation Amendment Act, 2017* (No. 2).

Mr. Speaker, this government has always been of the view that our Crown corporations support economic growth and quality of life in Saskatchewan. Members of this Assembly will be aware that last session, Bill 40 was passed allowing for partial minority equity position in a Crown corporation to be sold or otherwise dealt with. The term "privatize" was defined in a manner that would allow for the sale of up to 49 per cent of a Crown corporation. This legislation would have enabled a Crown corporation to enter into a partnership beneficial to the province, while ensuring the government would remain the majority owner of that corporation.

Mr. Speaker, over the last few months my government has heard from many Saskatchewan people concerned about this legislation, and a potential sale of even a small stake in a Crown corporation. We have listened to the people, and we are now acting. Consequently this government will repeal the provisions implemented by Bill 40 that allow for the sale of a partial equity

position of a Crown corporation. With this bill, *The Interpretation Act, 1995* is being amended to repeal the recently added definition of "privatize" and to repeal the ability to add additional methods of transfer of control that would constitute privatization by regulation.

Instead the term "privatize" will simply be defined to confirm that it does not include a winding up or dissolution of a Crown corporation. We have said from the beginning that when we make a mistake, we will admit the mistake and take action to correct it.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of *The Interpretation Amendment Act, 2017* (No. 2).

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Minister of Justice has moved that Bill No. 99, *The Interpretation Amendment Act, 2017* (No. 2) be now been read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to enter into the initial debate on behalf of the official opposition on Bill 99, *The Interpretation Amendment Act, 2017*.

Mr. Speaker, I want to point out to the people of Saskatchewan that it is not more than a year ago, we heard every member of the Saskatchewan Party get up and defend and extol the virtues of Bill 40, and the fact that they didn't have . . . The people of Saskatchewan ought not to be alarmed as to the contents of Bill 40 or sorry, the definition as it's explained in Bill 99, that it pertains to Bill 40.

But, Mr. Speaker, what the bill does, it defines what the word "privatize" means. And it repeals the definition of "privatize" and it does not include a winding up or dissolution of a Crown corporation. So, Mr. Speaker, I want to recap for the people of Saskatchewan's history as to how the Saskatchewan Party have governed this province.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, they inherited a booming economy. They inherited \$2.3 billion in the bank. They inherited a growing population and they inherited an optimistic moving forward and certainly a positive province in 2007, Mr. Speaker. A scant eight years later, Mr. Speaker, we're now looking at record debts, saddled in the future with things such as P3s and some of the other dubious financial promises that they made that would ensure that Saskatchewan's future is also mortgaged, Mr. Speaker.

So as you look at the track record of the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Speaker, whether we have probably one of the shortest reigns of a Finance minister in the history of Saskatchewan because the former Finance minister could not, could not gain the confidence of the caucus . . . Every second day they were changing their mind on something. And, Mr. Speaker, the previous Finance minister saw that he never enjoyed the confidence of that caucus so what he did was he stepped down. He went to a different portfolio and they made a shift, a change in ministerial responsibility. And this goes to my point on the Bill 40, Mr. Speaker, on Bill No. 99 as it pertains to Bill 40. This government has done a complete about-face on a number of important fronts.

And this is also talking about the finances of our province, Mr. Speaker. It talks about the intent behind the Crowns. And this is why it goes down to the fundamental issue of trust, Mr. Speaker. The people of Saskatchewan have seen time and time again how this government has lost faith and trust from the people of Saskatchewan. They have seen this on numerous fronts. And I wanted to point out, Mr. Speaker, some of the biggest fronts that we see, you know, from this end, includes the finances of our province. It also includes the Crown corporations.

So on finances, Mr. Speaker, they had a minister that quit. Everybody in this Assembly knows that the minister lost confidence of his caucus because every second week he was changing his mind on what the budget should look like. And clearly he lost confidence from the caucus, so he got removed from Finance and now we have the new Minister of Finance taking his place. And that's only probably three or four months that he served as minister of Finance and he lost the confidence of his caucus.

Now we go back to this Bill 99 as it pertains to Bill 40. Last year everyone, every member of the Saskatchewan Party caucus was talking about how they thought Bill 40 was the greatest thing since sliced bread, and it was not meant to offend the people of Saskatchewan. Every single one of them got up and said that. And again, Mr. Speaker, whether it's the Finance minister quitting on them because they had no confidence in his budget, or whether it is changing their mind wholeheartedly, a complete flip-flop on Bill 40, Mr. Speaker, this is why the people of Saskatchewan simply have no faith and no confidence in this government. It is quite clear, Mr. Speaker, that they simply feel betrayed and it all comes down to an issue in the matter of trust.

And I tell the people of Saskatchewan this, that when we talk about the Crown corporations as an opposition, Mr. Speaker, we are talking about trusting the government to take care of our Crowns. We didn't ask the Premier or the Sask Party caucus to play with the wording associated with Bill 40. Mr. Speaker, all this bill does, Bill 99, it simply repeals the definition of "privatize" from Bill 40. That's all it does. It does not include winding down or winding up or the dissolution of any Crown corporation. So the Sask Party, what they aren't able to do through the front door for the full scrutiny of the people of Saskatchewan, they're trying to do this through the back door, Mr. Speaker, by being fancy and pretty with wording that doesn't fool the opposition. And I say to the Sask Party caucus, it doesn't fool the people of Saskatchewan either.

In three separate elections, Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party promised they wouldn't sell off our Crowns. And yet they sold off land titles. They scrapped STC. They sold off our liquor stores, Mr. Speaker. They brought in Bill 40. And now they're selling all of our Crowns piece by piece. That's still being allowed by Bill 40. But they still say to us, to the people of Saskatchewan, it's different because it was a wind-down.

Well, Mr. Speaker, there is no question. There is no question that the Premier got up and he was told by many people within a lot of the Sask Party ridings that shutting down libraries, shutting down STC, selling off our Crowns is not something that the Saskatchewan people want. And I think the Sask Party

were told and warned that they better not be proceeding down this path because the voter, after all, is the boss, Mr. Speaker.

So the Premier got up and said, "We've heard you." But on October 24th he took to Facebook and promised, and I quote, "Our government is repealing Bill 40." And just two days later — two days, two sleeps — he said again that he doesn't think that the wind-down of a Crown corporation counts. And I say shame on that Premier. Shame on that Sask Party caucus. Because they're keeping that part of Bill 40, Mr. Speaker, because they'll never let their agenda go of trying to privatize and weaken and harm our Crown corporations. As long as they're government they will continue doing that, Mr. Speaker.

[14:45]

So what happens when the Premier gets up and says that they're repealing Bill 40? He wasn't specific, Mr. Speaker. He was very general when he said, we are repealing Bill 40. Well, Mr. Speaker, instead of repealing all of Bill 40, they kept the part that they want to use or they used in the past, to scrap STC. And, Mr. Speaker, I dare say that they're going to keep that part of Bill 40 to ensure that if they do sell off a Crown, they can either use it under a wind-down, Mr. Speaker, or a dissolution of a Crown.

And again, that's the backdoor way of trying to sell off our Crowns bit by bit. And, Mr. Speaker, for the Premier to get up and tell the people of Saskatchewan that they're repealing Bill 40, he didn't say, oh, only parts of it. He said that they would repeal Bill 40, and the people of Saskatchewan trusted that message. And here, Mr. Speaker, we find out once again that not only have they changed their mind on selling off our Crown corporations like the liquor stores and like, Mr. Speaker, the land titles branch, and shutting down STC. They have once again betrayed the trust of the people of Saskatchewan around Bill 40 and they're simply saying, we're not going to cancel all of it, just the parts of it that we could use to wind down Crowns in the future.

So, Mr. Speaker, again we are talking about trust. And the people of Saskatchewan, I say to them, trust is an important thing when it comes to the Crown corporations and the policies of each of the parties. As we have said time and time again, when it comes to the Crown corporations the Saskatchewan NDP will protect our Crowns and use them as a valuable tool for building the economy of Saskatchewan.

Given the fact that this is a landlocked province, Mr. Speaker, we are far from ports in which we can haul the great resources that we have. Whether it's potash or wheat or oil and gas, Mr. Speaker, we've got to be able, Mr. Speaker, to have the vehicles in which we can move all those resources, and the Crowns help us do that as a province.

So not only do they help us diminish reliance on income tax payers, Mr. Speaker, the taxpayers of the province, but they also create jobs, they provide service in the province, and, Mr. Speaker, they add a huge amount to our provincial economy.

So what part of that picture doesn't the Saskatchewan Party get? Why are they being cute with terminologies in their language, and why would the Premier say that they're repealing



Bill 40 when his intent all along was to only repeal certain sections of Bill 40? Why didn't he have the courage to say that then, Mr. Speaker?

And this goes back to their past actions and their past activity, that they'll only say things in certain words that allow them to continue their agenda while thinking that they have fooled the people of Saskatchewan. And, Mr. Speaker, they have not fooled the opposition nor the people of Saskatchewan one bit.

They are still on their agenda and it comes down to the issue, Mr. Speaker, of who do you trust when it comes to the protection of the Crown corporations, a party that has sold three or four of them off already, a party that's using wording to sell even more, Mr. Speaker, or simply us saying that we will not, in any way, shape, or form, and be very clear in our commitment to protect, enhance, and embrace the roles of Crown corporations within the province of Saskatchewan?

And certainly, Mr. Speaker, they're a valuable tool in moving the agenda forward. Whether it is a regional strategy or a country-wide strategy, the Crowns can indeed do great things for the province of Saskatchewan. And we just can't understand why the Saskatchewan Party can't get that particular argument.

So, Mr. Speaker, again they promised they wouldn't sell off the Crowns. They have. They promised that Bill 40 was something that was going to be new to protect the Crowns. Well now they are repealing Bill 40 because their agenda didn't get through. The people of Saskatchewan caught on very quickly.

But, Mr. Speaker, we also know they scrapped STC. We know that they put SaskTel on a chopping block, and the list goes on and on and on.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I don't know how many more ways we can say it, how many more days we can say it. The bottom line is the people of Saskatchewan want their Crowns protected. And I tell them this: the choice is very clear. You can trust the Saskatchewan Party who have so many, on so many occasions betrayed your trust. They betrayed your trust. They've sold off the Crowns. And I don't think that trust is deserving to the Saskatchewan Party anymore.

And I think from our perspective, we're quite clear. In any way, shape, or form that we're able to protect the Crowns, we shall as the official opposition do that. It is part of our province. It is part of who we are as a party, Mr. Speaker. And I've continued to extol the virtues of our Crown corporations and it is clear. In the future, the people of Saskatchewan have to make the determination that if you want the Crowns protected, you cannot trust the Saskatchewan Party anymore. They have betrayed that trust. They've shown that.

And what's equally concerning, Mr. Speaker, is you look at Bill 40, and now we look at Bill 99 where they're repealing certain parts of it. Well, Mr. Speaker, it leads me to the conclusion that they don't know what they are doing over there. It is very clear from this side of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker. I've always maintained that the conservatives don't know how to govern, whether it's in Saskatchewan or whether it's in Alberta. And, Mr. Speaker, thank goodness that we have resource-rich economies that actually drive the whole success of our two

provinces. And we see, Mr. Speaker, the great facade is finally being exposed. The conservatives or right wing governments, whether it's in Saskatchewan or Alberta, they simply don't know how to govern.

And I think the people of Saskatchewan and Alberta, I would dare say are beginning to understand that this is the course of action that the conservatives are guilty of. We see this in spades on all occasions. And again, Bill 99 is simply meant to assert to people that they have no intention to privatize. But, Mr. Speaker, they're keeping big parts of Bill 99.

So I would say to the Saskatchewan Party, it is an issue of trust. It is an issue of trust and they got caught with their hand in the cookie jar, Mr. Speaker, but they're still keeping that cookie jar lid open. And that's a real shame because the people of Saskatchewan have one single message to the Sask Party — we don't want our Crowns sold, period.

So I would say to the Saskatchewan Party, it is an issue of trust. It is an issue of trust, and they got caught with their hand in the cookie jar, Mr. Speaker, but they're still keeping that cookie jar lid open. And that's a real shame because the people of Saskatchewan have one single message to the Sask Party: we don't want our Crowns sold, period.

So I'm sure my caucus colleagues will have a lot of things that you want to add to this particular bill, but I'll say to the people of Saskatchewan, whether it is their finance management of our province, whether it's their past practices of selling off Crowns, Mr. Speaker, or whether it's this Bill 40 that they all stood up to a year ago and now they're repealing only certain parts of it despite saying they were going to get rid of all of Bill 40, well this bill that's being proposed today only talks about certain parts of repealing Bill 40. Well, Mr. Speaker, I rest my case with the people of Saskatchewan.

The Saskatchewan Party cannot be trusted anymore, any longer, not only with our finances, not only with our education, not only with our health care but, Mr. Speaker, with our Crowns. It is time to get rid of them, and let's do it sooner than later, Mr. Speaker, for the sake of our Crowns.

And that's why, Mr. Speaker, all of my caucus colleagues will have a lot more to offer on this bill as we begin the process of dissecting this bill, attacking the Saskatchewan Party, and telling the people to take a very close look at the betrayal of the Saskatchewan Party to them when it comes to our Crowns. And, Mr. Speaker, our caucus will do a job explaining that — a darn good job, I might add — of explaining that to the people of Saskatchewan.

So we have a lot more on this bill, so on that note I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 99, *The Interpretation Amendment Act, 2017*.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 99. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

**Bill No. 103 — *The Land Contracts (Actions) Act, 2017***

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of *The Land Contracts (Actions) Act, 2017*. Mr. Speaker, this bill will modernize *The Land Contracts (Actions) Act*, and will build on recommendations contained in the 2014 Law Reform Commission of Saskatchewan report titled “Reform of *The Land Contracts (Actions) Act*.”

*The Land Contracts (Actions) Act* is consumer protection legislation in place to protect borrowers by requiring lenders to obtain leave of the court before starting a foreclosure proceeding. The protection is provided as time: time to bring the mortgage up to date; refinance or sell the property before foreclosure or judicial sale; or if that is not possible, time to find alternative accommodation. The Act does not apply to farm land.

*The Land Contracts (Actions) Act* is over 70 years old, having been enacted in 1943. The commission’s final report considered the steps required by *The Land Contracts (Actions) Act* for non-farm land mortgages and recommended reforms to better protect borrowers in current conditions.

Mr. Speaker, the new Act will maintain the time and notice provided by the current Act while reducing the cost to those involved in the process. Saskatchewan is the only province that requires any pre-action process for foreclosure. The current Act requires a number of steps before the application for leave to commence an action. This does not serve the interests of borrowers or lenders. The many steps may confuse borrowers and cause unnecessary expense to the lender that may be passed on to the borrower.

As recommended in the report, the first step in the new Act for foreclosure proceedings will be a plain-language notice of application for leave to commence an action. The notice will be first in legislated form and secondly served on the borrower and the Provincial Mediation Board at least 60 days before the hearing date.

The new process will eliminate two steps, which will make it much clearer for the borrower. The 60-day time period between the notice and the hearing will be retained. It will allow the borrower to negotiate a payment plan with the lender and put the land up for sale or, alternately, to prepare to appear in court.

The new process will ensure both the borrower and the courts have the most up-to-date information before an application for leave to commence a foreclosure action is heard. It will require their copy of the mortgage or agreement for sale of the land as reasonable evidence of the value of the land . . . and reasonable evidence of the value of the land be served with the notice. It will also require updated arrears information to be served on the borrower and filed with the court prior to the hearing date.

Mr. Speaker, the court will continue to be limited to eight months of adjournments on an application for leave to commence a foreclosure action. This provides certainty to the process for both parties. The bill will not apply to properties used for commercial purposes at the time of default. This is

consumer protection legislation that is not intended to apply to purely commercial transactions.

Mr. Speaker, the bill will repeal *The Home Owners’ Protection Act*. This Act was meant to apply to a specific situation between 1981 and ’82. Given the time period has passed, this Act is no longer necessary. *The Agreements of Sale Cancellation Act* will be repealed, and its requirement for an application to court in all cases for a cancellation of an agreement for sale will be moved into this Act.

Mr. Speaker, I’m pleased to move second reading of *The Land Contracts (Actions) Act, 2017*.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Minister of Justice has moved that Bill No. 103, *The Land Contracts (Actions) Act, 2017* be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I’m pleased once again to stand on behalf of the official opposition to give the Bill No. 103 a first look at, and certainly our first response as it pertains to all the different Acts that are combining in this particular bill.

Mr. Speaker, the content of this legislation and bill primarily deal with how land purchases and mortgages go through. As we know, Mr. Speaker, there has been a lot of discussion around the Canadian banking system, of how mortgages are generally handled throughout the province of course of Saskatchewan, but more so throughout the country of Canada. So it’s important to pay attention to different legislation as it pertains to mortgages and land protection and certainly transactions overall.

I think the fact that the bill, while some of it is housekeeping in nature, there are provisions of *The Agreements of Sale Cancellation Act*, *The Home Owners’ Protection Act*, and *The Land Contracts (Actions) Act* and combines them into one particular bill. Then it repeals all of the existing bills. Well, Mr. Speaker, this bill, really it talks about five or six components of homeowners and of course the agreement of sale cancellation, as I mentioned.

So there’s quite a bit of information and how it affects the issue of home ownership and land ownership overall. So it’s important that we pay attention to all those bills and see exactly what is being changed, what is being altered in any way, shape, or form. I think it’s important that we look at those particular bills and make sure that some of the bills — as I mentioned, whether it’s *The Home Owners’ Protection Act* — that certain key parts of that particular Act are not ignored as they amalgamate all these Acts into one. That’s one of the processes that we undertake in the Assembly.

So, Mr. Speaker, again as I mentioned, the bill is housekeeping in nature and talks about four or five other components from some of the other Acts and combines them into one existing bill. And, Mr. Speaker, again this bill deals with how land purchases and mortgages go through. So we’re going to pay very close attention to this as it deals with the fundamental issue of homes and housing for people in the province of Saskatchewan.

So we will take our time to research what changes are made, how the transition from all these Acts go into this particular Act, then make sure no protection for consumers are lost. That is our role as the opposition, and we'll certainly do so.

So on that note, I move that we adjourn Bill No. 103, *The Land Contracts (Actions) Act, 2017*.

[15:00]

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Athabasca has moved that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 103, *The Land Contracts (Actions) Act, 2017*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

**Bill No. 104 — *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, 2017*  
*Code des droits de la personne de la Saskatchewan de 2017***

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — I rise today to move second reading of *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, 2017*. *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* is essential legislation that promotes and protects individual dignity and equality rights. The code prohibits discrimination based on grounds set out in the code and also includes a bill of rights, making it illegal for someone to violate another person's fundamental rights and freedoms.

This bill will repeal and replace *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* with a new bilingual Act. There are no changes in substance to the code, thereby ensuring that the protections offered continue to operate.

In 1988 the Supreme Court of Canada released its decision in *R. v. Mercure*, and over the last 30 years the Government of Saskatchewan has enacted approximately 58 bilingual Acts. The translation program is designed to meet the needs of Saskatchewan's francophone community. Mr. Speaker, we agree with the Assemblée communautaire fransaskoise and L'Association des juristes d'expression française who identified the code as a priority for translation.

We are pleased to introduce a bilingual code that will provide improved access by Saskatchewan's French-language community. A consequential English-only bill accompanies this Act to amend one Act that references the current Act.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, 2017*.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Minister of Justice has moved that Bill No. 104, *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, 2017* be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This is a very important bill for the people of Saskatchewan to pay very close attention to, the Bill No. 104, *The Saskatchewan Human*

*Rights Code*.

As we all know, the human rights Act itself and the intent to protect human rights in the province of Saskatchewan, well that dream became a real possibility for Saskatchewan when the former premier — I think it was '47 — introduced *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* in the sense of saying that as human beings we have a right to live in dignity without any fear of a number of threats due to us as human beings. And, Mr. Speaker, I think it was in the early '70s where another former premier, NDP Premier Blakeney, established the Human Rights Commission.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this particular bill that we're speaking about, there's a lot of changes to the Human Rights Code, and these are something that we have to pay attention to. Again when it's the Saskatchewan Party bringing forward any kind of changes to human rights, Mr. Speaker, automatically I think New Democrats across the province pay extra close attention. They're very defensive of the history, the history behind the establishment not only of the Human Rights Code, but the Human Rights Commission as well.

There are many changes to the language throughout the bill. While we appreciate some of the changes are housekeeping in nature, you've got to be very careful with the wording, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the Saskatchewan Party because some minor changes to the wording could have some negative, drastic, long-term effects. We need to figure out what changes are . . . what wording has been changed and make sure that the intent of whatever they're changing doesn't take away from some of the earlier work to protect those people that may have some concerns as they're being dealt with under *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code*.

Mr. Speaker, there's no question that the number of complaints coming forward to the Human Rights Commission, they have been increasing over time under the Sask Party's watch. We are also sharing the concern that many members of . . . or a growing number of human rights complaints are being dismissed by this commission. And these are very troubling trends, Mr. Speaker. So that's why I think this is a very important bill.

I spoke briefly of the history of this particular bill and certainly the champions that brought forward the Human Rights Commission and the Human Rights Code. These are people that I think we over time have all grown to admire. And, Mr. Speaker, we must protect the spirit and intent of these architects of the Human Rights Code and the architects of the Human Rights Commission by ensuring that we stay . . . keep the politics out of it.

But it's obvious that the Saskatchewan Party don't care about that particular process because they have loaded up the Human Rights Commission with some of their own membership, their own ideas as to what the Human Rights Code should look like. And again, Mr. Speaker, the end result is today, 2017, we are seeing a growing number of human rights that have been increasing over time, complaints of infringement on human rights that have been growing over time, increasing over time. Mr. Speaker, the unfortunate result is many of those concerns are also being dismissed and, Mr. Speaker, we need to make

sure that these troubling trends don't continue.

So there's a lot more on the history and the practice and the policies and certainly the modernization of our Human Rights Code. We have to be very careful to watch that, and we intend to do so. So on that note, I know my caucus colleagues will have much more to say on this particular bill. So I move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 104.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 104, *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, 2017*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

**Bill No. 105 — *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Consequential Amendment Act, 2017***

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Consequential Amendment Act, 2017*. This Act accompanies *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, 2017* and makes consequential amendments to the Saskatchewan employment code. *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* is being repealed and replaced with a new bilingual statute, and references to the name of the old Act in the Saskatchewan employment code will be updated to reference in the new Act. There is no change in substance to the Saskatchewan employment code.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Consequential Amendment Act, 2017*.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Minister of Justice has moved second reading of Bill No. 105, *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Consequential Amendment Act, 2017*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased once again to give the first initial comments on Bill 105, *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Consequential Amendment Act, 2017*. And as the minister alluded to, Mr. Speaker, this bill makes consequential amendments to *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* as a result of Bill 104, the Human Rights Code, 2017.

Mr. Speaker, the sections of the employment Act that refer to *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* will now say Human Rights Code, 2017. So it's important to note that while this is a consequential piece to the earlier bill I spoke about, Mr. Speaker, it really ... Again it just simply makes the employment Act or sections of the employment Act now simply say the Human Rights Code as opposed to *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code*. And there are a few minor other changes that we want to pay attention to in the original bill, and I think it's important that we attach the two bills as we have this discussion.

So there's not much to add on this particular bill. The real

challenge, Mr. Speaker, is to make sure that the human rights of the people of Saskatchewan are protected as best we can, and I think that's where we'll be focusing a lot of our time and energy. And since this is a consequential bill to the earlier bill, I think we'll have a lot more comments to say on both bills as time proceeds. So on that note, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 105.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 105. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

**Bill No. 106 — *The Missing Persons and Presumption of Death Amendment Act, 2017***

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of *The Missing Persons and Presumption of Death Amendment Act, 2017*. The bill amends *The Missing Persons and Presumption of Death Act* to add new provisions that will expand the ability of law enforcement agencies to access information and obtain search orders in a missing person investigation.

Mr. Speaker, when a person is reported missing and law enforcement begins an investigation, there may be no reason to suspect a crime has taken place. And as such, law enforcement cannot rely on the Criminal Code to obtain a production order to compel the release of information about a missing person. This can stall a missing persons investigation.

In 2009 Saskatchewan was the first jurisdiction to incorporate access-to-records provisions into its missing persons legislation. The current provision permits both family members and law enforcement agencies to apply to the court for an order permitting access to information with respect to the missing person such as financial information, telephone and communication records, health information, and identification information, including a photograph. Since 2009 other provinces have passed legislation giving law enforcement broader access and search powers in the course of a missing persons investigation.

Mr. Speaker, the Uniform Law Conference of Canada has also adopted uniform legislation which forms the basis of the proposed bill and has been adopted in five jurisdictions. The Uniform Law Conference of Canada is an annual meeting of delegates representing federal, provincial, and territorial governments as well as the Canadian Bar Association and law reform agencies from across the country. This bill will expand the authority of law enforcement agencies to obtain information respecting persons that have been reported missing. The bill will also establish an application to the Court of Queen's Bench to obtain an order for access to records from any person with respect to a missing person. The bill will also permit access to records for a third party who is believed to be in the company of a missing minor or a missing vulnerable person.

The additional types of information that may be accessed with a court order include: electronic information, including cellphone records and text message; global positioning system tracking records; employment information; records from school, including attendance; and travel and accommodation records. This bill will also permit law enforcement to apply for a search order to enter a building or residence where it is believed the person who is reported missing and also a minor or vulnerable person is inside.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, the bill will authorize law enforcement to make emergency demands for records without a court order where certain criteria are met. Demands made without a court order will be limited in time to no earlier than one week before the alleged disappearance. Further, officers who make emergency demands will be required to comply with reporting requirements to ensure that there is transparency.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of *The Missing Persons and Presumption of Death Amendment Act, 2017*.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Minister of Justice has moved second reading of Bill No. 106, *The Missing Persons and Presumption of Death Amendment Act, 2017*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased again to stand in my place to present initial comments as it pertains to Bill No. 106. Now, Mr. Speaker, *The Missing Persons and Presumption of Death Amendment Act, 2017*, the bill itself makes a few housekeeping amendments, Mr. Speaker, and the rest of the bill really talks about giving the police more powers to do more quicker responses to the presumption of somebody missing or the presumption of death. And, Mr. Speaker, it gives them a bit more powers to be able to search records, as the minister spoke about — school records, attendance records, telephone records.

Obviously this is something that the people of Saskatchewan in general, when you do have somebody that's missing or somebody that's presumed dead, that the sooner you get answers and the quicker, you know, of a relief the person hasn't passed away, or at least you have closure in the event that the tragic event happens in which somebody's life is lost, Mr. Speaker, we have to try and find some swift support to get answers for many families going through this.

Today I can say that this bill is perhaps a day late and a dollar short, Mr. Speaker, because today we're hearing . . . We understand that there's hearings for the missing and murdered indigenous women and that the commission is in Saskatoon today. And we obviously are hearing parts of the stories of many families that have been ripped apart by people that have been murdered or missing for a long time. And, Mr. Speaker, it's important to note to the people of Saskatchewan that this is exactly what we mean when we talk about greater response, quicker response, and certainly to tell the people that are going to this commission hearing that the pain that you're feeling we can only, we can only guess at how difficult it is.

[15:15]

Now, Mr. Speaker, there's no question from my experience . . .

We've had several members of my family have gone missing at times and thank goodness we find them, but there's other people that, as I mentioned, I made reference to a cousin of mine who was murdered, and there's actually a couple of them. And, Mr. Speaker, we haven't heard an update from the police as to what has occurred in their particular deaths. And it's very, very important that people share these stories.

And it's also important that we do all we can to give the tools to the people that would respond to this crisis, whether it's the police service or whether it's the courts, that we can do all we can to ensure that there's resolution to finding out if somebody is not only missing but murdered, because obviously they have the challenge of young people running away from home as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you the panic and the incredible distress that people and families have. I've had on occasions, with my own three daughters when they were much smaller, where you lose them in a mall for a few minutes. And the whole world kind of spins out of control and you're just absolutely beside yourself. You just don't know what to do, and then you find them in the candy store, and the flood of relief. You know, even if it's only 15, 20 minutes, it is a horrible feeling. And if you can for a minute, just to try and imagine how that is for families that have to go through that for days and weeks and months, if not years. It must be an incredible strain. When you lose a child for a few minutes it's awful, and you lose them for a long period of time, that strain and pressure must be incredibly tough to bear. And again we can only imagine how difficult it is, Mr. Speaker.

So as we look at some of these bills and how we can improve the system, it's important to note a couple of things. First I would say yes, the tools are important to provide to police services to search orders and access records when you're conducting an investigation into a missing person. There is that opportunity with this particular bill.

Mr. Speaker, we should also look at the emergency demand for records could come from commanding officers or chief of police where they believe a person is at risk of imminent harm. Again a good example would be an amber alert when a child goes missing.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would say, the point I would make is that yes, it's important to give the police the tools to do their job. But it's also important to do two other things, Mr. Speaker, is give them the resources to use those tools properly. It's nice to have an Act that would give them the access to records that could help them in their investigation of whether it's a murdered or a missing person but, Mr. Speaker, they also have to have the boots on the ground and the resources to be able to do this.

And, Mr. Speaker, there has been progress made, but we also must ensure that the people that we employ and we trust to protect citizens and to certainly hand out justice where it's appropriate, that all people are considered important, Mr. Speaker, that all people are considered important.

And I look at the notion around BC [British Columbia] where we had a number of street workers, if you will, Mr. Speaker, that were murdered. And there wasn't the attention garnered

because a lot of people viewed them as simple street workers. And, Mr. Speaker, these were daughters and sons of families from across the country.

So while it's important to have the proper tools, it's important to make sure that the resources are there. It is equally important that every single person, no matter their background, no matter what issues they're facing, and no matter how tough their situation may be or how desperate and poor they may be, Mr. Speaker, that every single life matters when it comes to making sure that our people are protected and that there are some serious changes when it comes to the attitudes of many people. When it comes to people that may be street workers or people of Aboriginal ancestry or people of Chinese ethnicity, Mr. Speaker, we're all equal.

So it's important that when we have this challenge, the resources and the effort go into searching for everyone that might be missing or might be murdered. Mr. Speaker, it's very important that we correct that premise that some people have that perhaps some of these people are less important than others. That is not the case. That is not the case, Mr. Speaker. People have got to get that issue raised to ensure that every single person's life is valued, Mr. Speaker.

And I can tell you that from my own experience. I've had two of my cousins that were murdered, Mr. Speaker. They were my first cousins. They left Ile-a-la-Crosse at a young age. And for the record, their names were Bernadette Ahenakew and Laura Ahenakew. And, Mr. Speaker, it's been years since we've heard any progress on the investigation concerning their deaths. And all we can do, Mr. Speaker, is pray for them and understand that this has an effect right across the country. There is no jurisdiction, there's no community, there's no people that are immune to this issue. It is right across the board.

And I am thankful that the commission has the focus . . . As an Aboriginal person, indigenous person, I'm glad that the commission are focusing on the indigenous murdered women and men and missing women, in particular. I'm glad they're working on that effort as part of their recourse and part of their effort to deal with the indigenous women, Mr. Speaker, who are primarily the victims. But our hearts, our hearts and minds and prayers go to all families of all backgrounds of all races, that if you have a missing or murdered member of your family, it doesn't make it any less important to us. We are all equal in this effort.

And that's why, when you have bills of this sort, it really brings home a lot of points. And I would add that it's important to note that while giving the police more powers to do emergency demand for records, Mr. Speaker, we must give them the right resources. We must ensure that they all know everyone is equal, and everyone deserves to have as much support and as much of the police's assistance on these matters as possible, Mr. Speaker. We must be fair and conscientious of that issue all the time.

And that's one of the reasons why I want to pay special reference to the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women panel that are having hearings today in Saskatoon. And I wish them well. And I offer our support and prayers to them, and I also offer courage to those families that are speaking out about

this particular matter, because, Mr. Speaker, it is, like I said, it's a very traumatic experience losing your own child for 15 minutes. You get quite, quite alarmed and you become very panicked, and it is a very, very scary feeling. And I've gone through it too many times as a parent, Mr. Speaker, and I can tell you that it is tough. So as parents we all know how it is to lose a child for a few minutes, and can you imagine those that have lost a child for life? The pain must be unbearable. Like we said, we pray for them, we honour them, and we recognize their incredible struggle.

So on that note, I know we have a lot more to say about how we can protect our children better, how we can authorize and empower the police to do their job better, how we can change society's views of those that may be viewed lesser than others. I think that's a lesson that we all need to learn and continue to learn, Mr. Speaker, because that's not who we are as people.

So on that note I move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 106, *The Missing Persons and Presumption of Death Amendment Act, 2017*.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 106. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

## ADJOURNED DEBATES

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill No. 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 Deputy Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As always, it's an honour to be able to rise in the House and speak to these bills. I do want to commend my colleague from Athabasca for his sensitive comments just now on the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women hearings that are taking place in Saskatoon.

And I, too, have a friend whose granddaughter testified yesterday, as did she. I remember when the little girl was three and her mother went missing, and it was four years afterwards when they found her body. So the tragedy of that experience is one that is profound, and again my thoughts and prayers go to all the families who go through this and all the families who are still waiting to find out where their loved ones are, Mr. Speaker.

So moving into the bill in front of me, *The Income Tax (Business Income) Amendment Act, 2017*. This bill is fairly straightforward when you look at it. I mean there's a couple things that are happening. We see some changes to taxation

rates in section 32 of *The Income Tax Act* and section 56 of *The Income Tax Act*. And then there are some changes to the ceiling for small business tax. And those are definitely the substance of the bill, is the changes to the small business income tax rates.

When the minister introduced it, she talked a lot about small business and its vitality and how vital it is to the health of our economy. Mr. Speaker, I couldn't agree more. I think small businesses really need to be celebrated for what they're doing, not only for the economy but for communities, for hiring people within their communities, for supporting families within their communities and making sure that our communities are healthy and vital, that we're all . . . You know, we should shop local. We should make sure these local businesses are supported and these small businesses are supported.

So what the announcement is in the introduction of this bill is the idea of raising the small business income threshold from \$500,000 to \$600,000. This is of course after-tax, I believe, income. And the highest threshold, now this would be the highest threshold in Canada. So that's kind of the main comment that she had.

There are some other small changes. I just want to make sure I cover those. Personal income tax rates, the legislation will “. . . return Saskatchewan's general corporate income tax rate to 12 per cent, the same as other Western provinces.” Now you'll recall, Mr. Speaker, when the budget was introduced, that was going to be lowered. In fact it was lowered, but now it's being put up again.

And the general corporate income tax rate changes will also be changed. She explained it and it's there in the bill, but basically they're going to raise it:

. . . by half a point . . . January 1st, 2018, from 11.5 to 12 per cent, and . . . [they'll] repeal the legislated tax rate reduction, from 11.5 to 11 per cent, that was scheduled to take effect on July 1st, 2019. Once implemented . . . [the] 12 per cent general corporate income tax rate will continue to be competitive . . .

And we've heard much about the competitiveness of those rates.

We have a number of questions though in relation to this bill, and certainly want to be able to speak with the officials in committee about how this is exactly going to work and how these decisions are being made.

Of course my first question is, who's asking for this? Because I looked at the comments from the CFIB [Canadian Federation of Independent Business] at the time that the budget came forward and there was no mention of increasing the small business tax rate cap by the CFIB when the budget came down. That would be a first question of course, is who is asking for these changes and what prompted the minister to make these changes at the same time that she's changing what was in the budget in terms of the general corporate income tax rate.

Some of the questions we have to ask, Mr. Speaker, when we're in committee is, was this planned when the budget came down? What is the analysis that the Finance officials were able to do to

determine that this was an appropriate vehicle to go forward? Was it booked in estimates? Like, where does this show up on the balance sheet? Where is this going to affect . . . How much money is it going to mean that we're not taking in in income tax, Mr. Speaker? The definition of “small” — how do you define what a small business is? How many businesses is this going to benefit? Is this a hundred businesses? Is it 10? Is it 2,000?

I mean those kinds of questions I think are important for the public to understand in order to determine whether or not this out-of-the-blue change that didn't come at budget time, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . This is typically what a government would bring forward as part of a budget, but because there's been so much confusion and back and forth on the budget, this is just adding, I think, more to the confusion of what was presented in March. So again, why is this being brought forward now? Why was it not thought of when the actual budget itself was brought in?

[15:30]

And I think what this really highlights is a lot of the confusion that this government has caused by its mishandling of the budget since March of this year. And you'll recall, Mr. Speaker, we weren't sure when the budget came down whether diapers were being taxed the PST or not, and there was some confusion there. We didn't know if the corporate tax was going up or down, because when the budget was announced the corporate tax rate was being decreased, but now it's being put back up again, so that's kind of confusing.

We know that they announced cuts to funeral subsidies for people that couldn't afford funerals, but they sort of kind of changed that a little bit, and so that's changed. Cuts to libraries, Mr. Speaker, was then reversed. We have things like the grants-in-lieu, where they announced cuts to the grants-in-lieu and then they gave some communities grants-in-lieu back, but not the full amount.

Mr. Speaker, the confusion that this government has caused with changing their mind on all kinds of budget decisions, it's one that the people of, I think, of Saskatchewan must be reeling from. So we have to ask those questions. We have to ask why the CFIB, when they commented on the budget when it was introduced, they said things like . . . Here's a quote from the press release: “While pleased the budget takes one step forward on spending restraint, we are disappointed to see taxes increase by \$908 million, which will further erode business confidence.” So this is, that's a quote from Marilyn Braun-Pollon who is the head of the CFIB.

So obviously the government hasn't taken that into account and they haven't heard the concerns of small businesses when it comes to raising the PST by a point. We know that's affected small businesses — not only with their sales, and they're also being now asked to collect that PST without any remuneration whatsoever. They're doing the work of the tax department without any kind of recognition. They have to collect more. Restaurants are now being asked to collect PST. It's caused a lot of confusion and a problem for people that are now responsible for remitting those taxes, Mr. Speaker.

And there's been all kinds of problems with things like the tax on life insurance or health plans. And the confusion doesn't only come from the budget itself. It's on the implementation of these new PST rules, which I've had one company call me with some . . . They have a private health plan and it's a pretty straightforward deal, but the way the PST is being applied means that they are paying way more, way more tax on their health plan than a public health plan would be paying. So it's unfair as well, Mr. Speaker. It's confusing, but it's also unfair.

At any rate, someone in the government came up with the big idea of increasing this tax rate for small businesses, raising it from 500,000 to \$600,000 effective January 1st, 2018. If they would have had their act together, Mr. Speaker, this should have been introduced in March and then the timing of this change for January 1st, 2018. They could have passed the bill in the spring as is the normal course. But they didn't have their act together. They're introducing an income tax Act bill in the fall, which is highly unusual and out of the ordinary in many ways. So I think the CFIB folks figured, oh this is going to cause problems, because if it's going to be in effect January 1st, 2018 but the bill has to go all the way through the legislative cycle, it won't be passed until after the tax deadline.

So CFIB quickly realized that's there a serious problem with the bill as it's currently written, if indeed it is to take effect on January 1st, 2018. So, Mr. Speaker, the CFIB has requested that we move the debate on this bill forward to have committee look at it at a sooner time. And, Mr. Speaker, I can see why the CFIB would be asking that, because otherwise this bill won't work. And they introduced it too late, so now we have a problem.

So we are going to have a number of questions that we do want to go to committee with. And, Mr. Speaker, I think that's something that we'll have lots of questions, and we want to be sure that the answers are available. But at this point I think we'll wait and see what committee has to say. So that's all my comments on this bill.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister of Finance that Bill No. 84, the income tax (business taxation) amendment Act, 2017 be now read the second time.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — Carried.

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

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

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** — I designate that Bill No. 84, *The Income Tax (Business Income) Amendment Act, 2017* be committed to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — This bill stands committed to the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I'm pleased today to rise and enter into debate on Bill No. 76, *The Parks Amendment Act, 2017*.

Mr. Speaker, we'll recall when the Minister for Parks, Culture and Sport rose to introduce this bill, he had some explanations in this Assembly, and we also had a delegation from the community, The Key First Nation, including Chief Brass and some of the councillors there, Mr. Speaker. And they were here, of course, with great interest regarding one part of this bill, which was the establishment of a new provincial park, the Porcupine Hills Provincial Park, Mr. Speaker. And with some reason, of course.

It's an exciting thing to talk about potentially a new provincial park. I know that many members on both sides of this Assembly have expressed a love, or at least a propensity for camping, if not a love for camping, and some fond memories around camping. And that's certainly something that, as I said, members on both sides of this House would share.

There is also however, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a lot that's in play when we are looking at use of Crown lands in this province. One of the main things that we should be considering is a duty to consult and duty to consult when we're talking about the use of Crown lands, Crown lands that have been traditionally used by First Nations going back for centuries, Mr. Speaker.

And that is not something to be entered into lightly. Certainly in this era of truth and reconciliation, we understand that this is something that has not always been done well, and that would be a very, very large understatement, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the negotiation of lands with First Nations people. And it's one of the ways that we can move forward and ensure that we are fully respecting the duty to consult and fully involving in a respectful way, in a good way those First Nations who are impacted potentially, by this new provincial park.

And I know that there have been some consultations. The minister noted that there have been consultations going back to 2011 here. There's also been some admission that this is perhaps not universally . . . There are some concerns, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that have been expressed, and certainly we've seen mixed reviews in some ways around that duty to consult.

I'm just going to read some of the comments. I don't want to speak for people, so I will read some of the comments into the record perhaps that have been there. There are comments . . . This is from an article from November the 6th of this year and a quote attributed to Mr. Vern Friday, a lands manager at Key First Nation, who states that he was part of the discussion since the beginning. He notes the historical interest, the historical value of this particular area to members of his First Nation. He said people have historically met in the area for traditional



ceremonies and other activities and notes that some have not been happy about the park because of the potential influx of tourists, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I think that that's something that we ought to listen to. And I think in the second reading comments, the minister noted that there was a unique nine-step consultation plan that the government was confident would surpass the duty to consult. And I think when we get to committee, we'll just have some conversations about what that unique . . .

[Interjections]

**The Deputy Speaker:** — There seems to be quite a few conversations happening, private conversations. I would ask the members to either do them more quietly or perhaps take them outside of the House. I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As I was saying, I have some interest and I know members of our caucus, the critic as well, will have questions just around what exactly that nine-point consultation plan involved and how the government feels that this will surpass the duty to consult. And I think those are questions that we should enter into with earnest and a real desire to get a process better than what we have traditionally been able to do historically in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

As I state, I think that there will be other questions with regard to that and there are other elements of this bill that I haven't even touched on here, but I think I will leave those questions and those comments to my colleagues. And with that I will conclude my remarks and move to adjourn debate.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Regina Lakeview has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 76, *The Parks Amendment Act, 2017*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Good to join debate today on Bill No. 77, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Superannuation Plans) Amendment Act, 2017*. Mr. Speaker, this is first in a series of housekeeping measures around pension legislation and in terms of both updating practice and updating language around what is gender specific, not gender specific, where the different entities have changed their proper title, or in the case of this bill in particular, where they've now got the Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan

Liquor and Gaming as the, as I understand it, the sole member of the commission managing the superannuation plan for the Liquor Board employees. Previously the commission had been composed of three members appointed by an order in council, one of which needed to be an employee of the Liquor Board. And again, Mr. Speaker, excluding the employees from the administration or the governance of the pension plan, we don't think is a great way to go. We think, you know, in terms of involving the employees in their pension plan, that's something that should be a given. But in the case of this, Mr. Speaker, it's perhaps diminished, where the numbers in the old plan, over which this body has oversight, lessens the severity of that dynamic.

Anyway this deals with the old plan, Mr. Speaker, which of course for fans of public pensions in Saskatchewan, they'll know that the old plan's been closed to new members since October 1st, 1977, where there are, as we understand it in the explanatory notes, there are two active members still in the employ of government, subject to the plan, but that as of December 31, 2016, there were 177 retirees in the plan overall.

So the other amendments in the plan or in the legislation contained in Bill No. 77 where amendments are allowing for the restricted retirement option, i.e. early retirement, to continue without needing an order in council each year to renew it. Again, Mr. Speaker, there are certainly improvements to be made to the functioning of government, and this would certainly seem to be one, not earth shaking, but certainly not requiring an order in council every time someone applies for early retirement would seem to be an improvement on the functioning of the plan.

[15:45]

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I know that others of my colleagues will have, I'm sure, much wiser and more insightful things to say on this particular piece of legislation than I. And in aid of bringing that moment forward, I would move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 77, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Superannuation Plans) Amendment Act, 2017*.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Opposition House Leader has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 77. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Hello again, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Again good to join debate on Bill No. 78, *The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2017* of course moved by the Minister

of Finance on November 6th, 2017.

Now there are a number of changes in this particular piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker. But in terms of improving the governance of the legislation . . . But also, as I discussed earlier with the miscellaneous statutes legislation, updates the language, ensuring that it's gender neutral, that there's modern language being utilized. It also points out that the existing board requirements, that those be sustained and modernized and that there also be a provision allowing for an employee to transfer their existing pension plan from another employer to the municipal plan, providing it does not cause undue hardship on the solvency of the previous plan.

Mr. Speaker, again that would seem to be a fair measure to be taking, and again this is something where we have seen some concern in the recent past around the solvency and the adequacy of the municipal pension plans going forward. We know that there's been a fair amount of work done between the representatives of the employees, management, the province working alongside that. And of course, Mr. Speaker, we'll be examining this closely to ensure that this does in fact build upon the reviews and the reports that have been conducted in the recent past, again which we understand arrived at a fair position of consensus.

But we'll be interested to see how the contentions made in the minister's second reading speech line up with the parties affected out in the sector, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But in aid of doing that work . . . And certainly again, I'm sure that there will be other of my colleagues that have some wise things to say on this piece of legislation. But again to enable that work going forward, I'd move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 78, *The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2017*.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Opposition House Leader has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 78, *The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2017*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Hello again, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Again good to be joining the debate on Bill No. 79, *The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2017*. Again in terms of, you know, usually there's a lot of spring cleaning goes on, but given our legislative schedule, Mr. Speaker, the housekeeping often comes in the fall.

And this would certainly be part of that dynamic, the measures in Bill No. 79 again ensuring that the public employees pension

plan are up to date with the membership of the committee. So for example, previously there had been a reference to the members of the Communications, Energy, and Paperworkers Union. That entity of course had amalgamated with the Canadian Auto Workers to become Unifor. So language has changed to reflect that development.

There are changes made allowing board members to reside outside of Saskatchewan after their employment. Again, Mr. Speaker, it's not an uncommon feature of other governance entities to allow that out-of-province representation, and certainly is reflective of the fact that folks often as not retire outside of the province. And that doesn't mean that they haven't got something to bring to the boards that may be worth the while. So in terms of that, not terribly shocking. And in terms of allowing changes that have been in the legislation allowing spouses to stay opted-in should their partner leave, again, Mr. Speaker, these changes are fairly straightforward. And again there are others that I could go further into, but where would the fun be in that for other of my colleagues to get more deep into those details, Mr. Speaker?

But again this is important legislation in terms of the livelihoods of pensioners that have been, you know, good public servants, and it's important that we make sure that the terms of that pension plan are as up to date and as current with best practice as possible. But on that score, Mr. Speaker, I know other of my colleagues will have more to say on this score and, in aid of that, I would move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 79, *The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2017*.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Opposition House Leader has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 79. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Mr. McCall:** — Mr. Deputy Speaker, thank you very much. You'll be thinking that my colleagues must be hazing me to have me up this much in the debate, or perhaps everybody else, but not so. Just the way the cookie crumbles. And it's, as ever, good to take my place, stand in this Assembly, and join debate on Bill No. 80, *The Municipal Financing Corporation Amendment Act, 2017*.

Again, Mr. Speaker, there are two main changes that this Act represents. One is moving from a 30-year borrowing limit, and again in the minister's second reading speech references the fact that that dates back to the 1970s, again . . . And I'll have more to say about that presently, but moving from that 30-year limit and up to a 40-year limit, bringing it in line with changes in

most of the other Crown corporations in *The Crown Corporations Act*, Mr. Speaker.

Now the second change is the increase of the MFC [Municipal Financing Corporation of Saskatchewan] debt limit from \$350 million to \$500 million. And again this is one that bears some caution, some watching, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the fact that again, you know, the debt limit, imagine the timeline. The debt limit was set at \$250 million for the Municipal Financing Corporation, which I might add is a hugely useful entity when it comes to providing capital to the municipal sector and all of their various and sundry projects eligible under the Act. But, Mr. Speaker, it's a useful tool on the part of government. It's a fairly cost-effective tool. It's not on the operating side of the debt accrual on the part of government, but it is certainly part of the net debt position of government.

But in terms of having been \$250 million that was the limit set in the 1970s, that was raised to \$350 million in 2010. So again, Mr. Speaker, 1970s, 250 million; 2010, going up to 350; and now here, seven years later, we're going up another pretty significant leap, Mr. Speaker, to \$500 million is what is anticipated in this legislation.

And in terms of the overall finances of the province, Mr. Speaker, it's part of a picture that gives many cause for concern in terms of how a number of reasonable instruments, entities associated with the government have been taken and stretched in terms of their capacity, Mr. Speaker, by this government and the way that other entities are made to pay the price for bad decisions that have been made on the part of this government.

And so in terms of what's brought forward and represented as a matter of course, as a modernization exercise, gives us cause for concern when again we note that it's gone from a debt limit of 250 million set in the '70s to 350 million in 2010 to 500 million anticipated in this legislation, and what that does to the overall fiscal capacity of the province, Mr. Speaker, and who pays the shot for that. And then you add into the fact that you're moving from a 30-year limit to a 40-year limit and the kind of responsibility that we bear as the current generation to generations yet to come, Mr. Speaker. It bears, it certainly bears watching. It bears caution.

So this, combined with other of the decisions on the part of this government where we see the net debt of Saskatchewan going up north of 21 billion I think it is, by 2020, there's cause for concern here.

So again, in and of itself, the Municipal Financing Corporation, a valuable tool for the provincial government and for the municipal sector, but there's a lot of responsibility that goes with the stewardship of that tool, Mr. Speaker. And if you're going to damage or ruin a tool when you've borrowed it from the generations to come, it's not a great way to operate, to say the least.

Anyway, as far as the context for this and the way that this comes forward as part of a Throne Speech, we'll be interested to see what sort of stresses are placed on this measure come the budget, you know, anticipating that this will ultimately be passed. But again, Mr. Speaker, it's part of a broader, bigger picture in terms of the way that this government approaches the

finances of the people of Saskatchewan that gives the official opposition cause for concern.

I know that other of my colleagues will have more to say on this debate, and certainly we'll be reaching out to the involved partners in the sector for further insight. But, Mr. Speaker, I think the cautions, the concerns that I've noted stand and we'll certainly . . . This is part of a broader work of watching, guarding against the, in some cases, the disastrous decisions of this government in the way that the cost for that is being passed on to the people of Saskatchewan, and indeed to future generations.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I'd move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 80, *The Municipal Financing Corporation Amendment Act, 2017*.

[16:00]

**The Speaker:** — The Opposition House Leader has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 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 Opposition House Leader.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Good to join debate again, in this case on Bill No. 81, *The Traffic Safety (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act, 2017*. As has been pointed out in different ways and different, you know, in different measures, Mr. Speaker, some of them horrible to behold, Saskatchewan's got a significant number of problems when it comes to safety on our roads and on our highways.

And, Mr. Speaker, there have been different efforts on the part of government, and certainly I know that we as the official opposition have co-operated with different of those efforts through committees. I think of the Traffic Safety Committee that was chaired by the then member from Prince Albert Northcote, and for which the member from Saskatoon Riversdale was Deputy Chair, and did a tremendous amount of good work with that committee, alongside the member from Cumberland. Again two individuals that are not strangers to some of the worst aspects of what can and does too often go wrong on the highways and roads of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

There was certainly some good work put in by those members, and I'd submit by the entire committee, and some of that did not ultimately make it into the legislative agenda of the government at the time. But there's some of that that we certainly see reflected here today in aspects of this legislation.

So in terms of moving to a regime where a driver with a blood alcohol content of .04 or higher who transports children under the age of 16 facing longer licence suspensions and longer vehicle seizures, that's as it should be, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of the looking-back period being extended from 5 years to 10 years, allowing for tougher penalties for repeat offenders, again that is as it should be, Mr. Speaker.

Where law enforcement can offer an indefinite administration suspension, making roadside consequences for those charged with impaired driving under the Criminal Code consistent with those charged with exceeding .08 blood alcohol content or refusing to comply with a demand for a test, again, Mr. Speaker, these are changes that, you know, given the situation in Saskatchewan, are certainly warranted.

Again different changes have been made over the years, and you can see them. I was driving with some colleagues down the highway last week, seeing the blue lights on the snowplow coming along. You know, we were all here as part of making that change happen. And again that was brought about in response to a terrible tragedy. And I compliment the member from Melville-Saltcoats for his part in that and certainly the Minister of SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance], CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan], the member from Prince Albert Northcote . . . or the minister for making that happen. And certainly we as the official opposition were proud to do our part.

And I've been here long enough, Mr. Speaker, to recall the deaths with highway workers that, you know, dangerous workplaces being what they are, it shouldn't mean that . . . We as a society have got to figure out how we can put the safeguards in place where the likelihood of you getting home at the end of the day isn't a give-and-take thing. It should be a . . . You know, you should look forward to seeing that loved one come home at night.

There are some horrible tragedies that have taken place over the years. And again one of the hopeful things about that is that there has been co-operation on both sides of the House to make a better response to those situations. And certainly the slowing to 60 kilometres an hour when snowplows are stopped on the side of the road, when passing other vehicles providing assistance, or in the orange zone, those are changes that hold a lot of merit and we are glad to see coming forward.

Now as good as some of the measures are in the legislation, we have certainly some questions that attach to other measures in the legislation, and we'll certainly be looking to gain better understanding of those measures both in the research that we do as an official opposition and certainly at the committee stage, Mr. Speaker. But where the bill is repealing the requirements for operation authority certificates, meaning that those operating a vehicle on the highway for the purpose of transporting passengers no longer need an operating certificate, it gets a number of questions, Mr. Speaker.

We've seen changes made on the part of this government, drastic changes, unanticipated changes where of course the Saskatchewan Transportation Company has existed as a service for the people of Saskatchewan since the '40s, Mr. Speaker.

And in terms of the different elections that this government has been party to, I cannot recall them coming forward and saying, you know what we're going to do? We're going to scrap STC. This is a problem that needs to be addressed and we're going to wrap that corporation up.

They never said that, Mr. Speaker. They never said that. And what they did say instead was . . . I think of the now departed, then member for Saskatoon Fairview, Jennifer Campeau, who, as minister responsible for STC, presided over the last of the annual reports before the move was made to scrap STC where she said it was an essential public service, Mr. Speaker, and where she, as a young mother, had special insight and appreciation for the safe, reliable, affordable transportation that that provided. And in a province where one of the biggest barriers we have to different services and different situations, Mr. Speaker, is geography — and it's often said we have no shortage of geography in the province of Saskatchewan — again her comments made entirely good sense.

So it was with some shock that of course we go through another election where it's not referenced in terms of the plan of that government, but they come forward to wholesale shut down STC, and go through any number of panegyrics to try and get that, to establish their legal authority by which to do it. And we've seen some more of that here today, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the ongoing gymnastics on the part of this government.

We've also seen the members opposite where they'll talk about different lines that have been closed over the years under NDP governments where the passenger load didn't warrant going forward. I would submit that that has been a hugely different circumstance, Mr. Speaker. That's always been subject to oversight by the highway traffic safety board, and it's also not been the entire shutdown of STC altogether. And you know, sometimes you see some funny arguments deployed in service of trying to distract or to misdirect people's attention when it comes to some very serious matters. And there's a huge public safety component to this government's decision to close STC.

And as I believe it was my colleague, the member from Riversdale, had made the argument around even with the health care system alone, the way that they had no plan. It was, you know, shoot first and ask questions later, Mr. Speaker, or cut first and measure after. And, Mr. Speaker, that doesn't work. That's not responsible government. That's hugely reckless.

And again, Mr. Speaker, it's in some cases a terrible way that this government is making other people pay the price for their mistakes, for their bad choices, and again for which they have no mandate, Mr. Speaker, in terms of what they went to the people of Saskatchewan with in terms of their plans.

So when it comes to the provision in this particular legislation, Bill No. 81, around repealing the requirement for operation authority certificates, is this a case where they're lessening the safety, lessening the appropriate regulatory oversight of transportation on our highways and roads, Mr. Speaker, to make up for the fact that they've gone ahead with this reckless decision that they don't have a mandate for? It will be a interesting discussion I'm sure in committee with that minister.

And again, Mr. Speaker, I don't know . . . We'll see how that

discussion holds up because I was there for the discussion in committee around Bill No. 40, where we tried to get out of the then Justice minister what the point was for Bill 40. And you know, the way that this government flip-flops from one day to the next, it's sometimes kind of hard to keep track of the floor show over there, Mr. Speaker. So we'll see if this measure survives to a committee stage or hopefully this government comes to its senses, realizes that it doesn't have a mandate for something like scrapping STC, and gets with the program that . . . you know, realizes they've got responsibilities to the people of Saskatchewan to do much better than that, Mr. Speaker.

Well, Mr. Speaker, there's more that I could say about Bill No. 81, but for the time being, I know that other of my colleagues will have insightful and wise comments to bring to bear on this particular piece of legislation. We know that the consultation that we're undertaking on this is ongoing, and I'm picking up some pretty interesting things in terms of the practices of this government. But, Mr. Speaker, so that other of my colleagues might soon — and very soon — join debate, I would move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 81, *The Traffic Safety (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act, 2017*.

**The Speaker:** — The Opposition House Leader has moved to adjourn 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 Saskatoon Riversdale.

**Ms. Chartier:** — Hi. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That minister is very distracting here today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. He's such a troublemaker, Mr. Speaker.

Anyway it's my pleasure here to wade into the debate on Bill 82, *The SaskEnergy Amendment Act*, Mr. Speaker. And there are many different provisions in this bill, but I'd like to focus on one actually that was raised today here in question period.

But I want to point first to the minister's remarks. Often in second reading it gives us and gives the people a sense of what a bill is going to be about, and in the minister's second reading speech, he actually kept his remarks remarkably short, explaining the changes. In fact the bill barely includes five paragraphs. And as my colleague from Saskatoon Centre had mentioned, it's often not what is said but what isn't said, Mr. Speaker.

[16:15]

But the minister actually did in his second reading comments make this statement. He said, "These updates will allow the

corporation to better serve private sector business opportunities to support growth and competitiveness."

That statement unto itself, Mr. Speaker, nothing wrong with supporting growth opportunities and competitiveness, but ultimately our Crown corporations exist for the benefit of people here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. They provide services. They can provide services at a lower rate and create competitiveness, as we see with SaskTel, to ensure rates are down a little bit from other jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker. They provide dividends to the General Revenue Fund to provide things like health care, education, highways, social services, all those kinds of things, and they create mortgage-paying jobs. There's all kinds of things that Crown corporations do. They provide top-notch services to people here in Saskatchewan.

So the one part of the bill that — this is striking — is the piece around the distribution of natural gas being moved into the regulations, Mr. Speaker. So there's many different levels of oversight here in this legislature. Legislation, having something in legislation provides the highest level of oversight because it has to come before the legislature for change. We see this actually with Bill 40. So this was the government's bill that was going to see the ability to privatize a Crown up to 49 per cent, and that bill is actually being repealed in part here today. We saw that bill, second reading of that bill here today, Mr. Speaker.

So the highest level of oversight is in fact in legislation, and then you can move things into regulation where government has the opportunity at the stroke of a pen to change things. And at this moment in time, before this bill passes, distribution of natural gas is in fact in the exclusive domain of SaskEnergy, Mr. Speaker, but this will allow the minister and the ministry to do things differently, Mr. Speaker.

We heard with Bill 40 over the last year that people do not want to see our Crown corporations privatized. People said this loud and clear, and still this government plowed ahead with Bill 40. It was interesting, initially when Bill 40 was introduced, the members on the opposite side basically said, nothing to see here. This is a simple amendment. This is just about clarifying a definition. But in fact people in Saskatchewan saw through that, Mr. Speaker, that this is a government that was doing something through the back door through which they could not do through the front because of the Crown protection Act.

But I would argue much as the Leader of the Opposition said today. This seems to be an effort to . . . This government has seen that they can't do things through the front door. They can't. People in Saskatchewan are wise enough to see that they're trying to go through the back door, so this particular change appears to be the government now trying to slide something through a basement door or a basement window, pardon me, Mr. Speaker, which is a huge issue.

When we think about our Crown corporations, we think about the minister's comments where he says, again the updates in this bill ". . . will allow the corporation to better serve private sector business opportunities to support growth and competitiveness."

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think that would have been their argument

about shuttering STC, Mr. Speaker. They're creating business opportunities, but they certainly aren't creating better service for people in Saskatchewan. There was some great outrage when we asked questions about this around routes being closed in previous administrations. But the fact of the matter is this government hasn't just closed routes. They've shuttered the entire company, which means that people in Saskatchewan don't have services to get to medical appointments, services to get between communities to visit loved ones, to get to and from school in the larger centres, to transport goods and services in a timely fashion.

I know that I was surprised. I had spoken with a lot of people about STC, but there were some communities in my constituency where people I didn't expect to be quite as upset about STC, but they were, because we all have connections in rural Saskatchewan or people who use that service.

So again, having better private-sector business opportunities to support growth and competitiveness are good, but ultimately our Crown corporations are here to serve the good of people. It's making a profit. And generating that profit, and putting it back into the GRF [General Revenue Fund] is really important, into the General Revenue Fund, but ultimately it's also about public service.

So there is some huge concern around what appears to be this government's privatizing the distribution, or creating the ability for the government to privatize the distribution of natural gas, Mr. Speaker.

But I do know I have many colleagues who will be wading into this debate, the critic responsible and many others. But with that, I think I'd like to leave my comments there, and I move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 82.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon Riversdale has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 82. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

### Bill No. 83

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Duncan that **Bill No. 83 — *The Environmental Management and Protection Amendment Act, 2017*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise this afternoon to enter into this debate on Bill No. 83, *An Act to amend The Environmental Management and Protection Act, 2010*. This kind of legislation is interesting. As all legislation, it's hugely, hugely important. But this one is particularly important when we talk about protecting our lands, our waters, our air.

The responsibility of the Ministry of Environment is huge when

it comes to our province, particularly when so much of what we do in this province which has had a significant land base . . . We often talk about the 100,000 lakes that we have. The impact of what we do as humans cannot be underestimated, cannot be dismissed. And so we constantly have to have vigilance that we are in fact stewards of our environment, that we are in fact leaving it better for the next generation than we had found it ourselves.

This is something that really is one of the cornerstones of what we expect from our government and we expect from the Minister of Environment. And I can talk a bit about this, even though it's been several years now since I was the minister of Environment, but we keep having that brought up, that there's two former ministers of Environment. And I look back at those years with a source of pride because it's one that when you are asked to take a role in protecting our environment, it's one that cannot be taken lightly. It's a huge responsibility.

And I think about, particularly as we're instructed and I assume it's still the same case, that sometimes you have to step outside the role of Executive Council and hold the rest of the members of Executive Council to a standard that you will be enforcing as Minister of Environment, and that they don't get a bye just because he's happened to be sitting beside you, that whether you're the Minister of the Economy, Minister of Agriculture, all of those and all of the ministries — Parks, Culture, Recreation particularly — all of them have a huge responsibility in making sure our province and its air, its water, its land, its forestry, all of the natural elements are in better condition than we had found it. And that is a good rule of thumb to live by because if we do that, I think that we can expect good things for our children and our grandchildren.

And quite often we say that in a cliché way, but it's not at all a cliché that we do want to leave this planet, the planet Earth in a better condition. Because we just simply have to. We simply have to, and it's not one that can be taken lightly. And I reflect on my colleague from Athabasca, also a former minister of Environment, and he was saying he could instruct the current minister who has come back for his second tour of duty on this, about the ABC's of environmental protection. And of course the issue that he talked about was the balance between economic growth and protection and how that's so, so very critical to our province, you know.

And we see that right across Canada, right across the world. As we experience in this world . . . In many ways people are saying the world's getting smaller because whether it's the ability to travel more or see more or we're getting to know more. And it's interesting. As we have people who come to our country, they're bringing with them a world view that we can all appreciate. It makes us want to actually travel the world even more when we see people who have come here to become new Canadians.

And I just think about the people in the gallery here as well and welcome them to our legislature. And I just want to take a moment to recognize there are visitors in our gallery, and we welcome them as we are into second debate, second round speeches on legislation that we're talking about today. And today we talk about environmental protection and the plans that the minister has brought forward to us. So welcome to your

legislature. We appreciate that you're here.

But as I was saying, the world is getting smaller, and it seems much more precious because of that. And so it's a big deal when we have a piece of legislation like this in front of us today, and so, Mr. Speaker, this is something that . . . When this government took power in 2007, they brought in a new approach. They brought forward an Environmental Code that had a lot of promise. And this will be interesting now that we have a piece of legislation before us that will cast a bit of light and refocus us back on that code.

There was some real challenges with that code, and I know I'll have to go back and take a look and see how well that code is doing and if it's filled out the chapters that were missing. There were several chapters that were missing when it was first brought in and the promise was that those chapters would be soon coming and they needed to get on with that. I'm not sure where the state of affairs are with the code. You know, it's an important document.

We shifted away from a previous approach. It was called demand and control. And that was where the government of the day would set expectations, certain expectations of the population and of business and economic growth, about what the expectations were along the way and what the impact it would have on the environment. People felt that it was too onerous, that it was missing the point. In fact that we really should be facing . . . focusing on the outcomes not the processes. And there's always been and there will be an ongoing debate on that because . . .

And I guess the biggest example of this is the Husky oil spill that we had just two short summers ago in the summer of 2016, in July, where we had a major oil spill. And we had a conflict of interest in the sense of we had the Minister of Economy, who happens now to be Minister of Environment, at the time really overseeing a lot of the environmental questions of the day, and it didn't seem to be as arm's-length as it might have been. And so there were questions about credibility because here was really in many ways the first major test of the new approach, of the new approach of having an environmental code. And of course we are still . . . I'm not sure if the report or the final reports are all delivered on that, if we're all fully aware of that spill and the impact it had on Prince Albert and Melfort. And we know the First Nations along the way had major, major concerns.

[16:30]

And so this is an issue of confidence in many ways because people right away think that it should be the Ministry of Environment who should be in charge of this. They are the ones who should be making sure it's happening. And in many ways that's not the case, that in fact the Economy had to play a major role, and sometimes it's as simple and . . . You know, people would often use the metaphor or the old cliché of the fox guarding the henhouse. But we have been convinced that in fact the fox has the credibility, the honesty, the wherewithal to do the work needed to make sure the hens in the house are actually safe. Sometimes we really have some questions about that, and the Husky oil spill was a question that we would have about it.

In fact we had a situation where the auditor really stepped in, particularly around pipelines, and had written extensively about the lack of oversight regarding the pipelines within the province and the lack of progress of taking care that the state of affairs of those pipelines were sufficient.

So this is an interesting piece before us, and I think that there will be lots of people who have a lot of interest in this piece of legislation because of what happened in the past 10 years and where we have the questions about environmental protection.

Another example would be the pasture lands that have been sold and the wildlife habitat protection lands, the WHPA [*The Wildlife Habitat Protection Act*] lands that they were often referred to. It's a bit of a passive environmental protection thing because there is no calamity, no disaster, no point in time that you can point at and said things changed after this particular day. Like when we can talk about that day in July of 2016 when we had in many ways our first major oil spill in Saskatchewan, and it really woke us up to what happens then. What happens then?

And clearly these kind of things can happen to any government, but I think it's critical that when we look back over the past 10 years about some of the challenges this government has had in terms of environmental protection and the credibility gap that they do suffer from is one that we have a lot of questions too. And I know the public has a lot of questions. So it takes a lot of work. It takes a lot of work to develop that reputation, that confidence in the public that in fact you set a high value for our lands and our waters. And this government has set that back, has set that back in terms of the work it's done around the two particular issues that I've raised.

And I'm sure that there has been others that we can find out about, but I know that this is an issue that is one that will have a lot of questions. And I think as we prepare for this one in committee that this is the kind of thing when we've talked about okay, let's not focus this on demand and control. We don't want to focus on the processes. We want a new type of process, a new type of way of doing things, and focus on outcomes. And here we have two particular outcomes.

And I'm not even talking about . . . And what'll be very interesting, the minister yesterday talked about, we are waiting to see their climate change plan that deals with CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. I am very interested in seeing that. I don't know whether we'll see it before or we'll have a chance to debate it in the House. But regardless, we will have a chance to debate it at some point. And we hope that we will be able to have a full and thorough discussion about that and that the different groups and the public have a chance to have some input into that.

Now when I talk about inputting, consultation will be interesting. And I think this is an important consideration the government should have around consultation, that they should be willing to go out and meet with people face to face. They should be willing to meet with groups. I mean, there are groups who have specialization who have a strong interest in this. And of course they're the stakeholders who really have thought a lot about what does it mean in terms of the climate challenges that we have before us, and some would call it, and I think rightfully so, the climate crisis that we have before us.

I would say from my own experience, this government, when they were looking for changes on the labour legislation, they only took mail-in responses. They only took in mail-in responses and thought that was quite sufficient, even though we know that there was one stakeholder who really lobbied hard and, in fact, in many ways could have skewed the results. Could have skewed the results.

Now with the marijuana legislation legalization process and the survey they had with that and asked for mail-in feedback for that, they were complaining because some groups actually were able to send in significant numbers of responses. And they really didn't like what they were hearing, and so they questioned that kind of response.

So this government hasn't really stepped out of the safety zone and have not been willing to talk to people in their own places. And I remember this used to be a real hallmark of the public service. You know, I would go along to some of the consultations. But the public service were very good at doing their job and saying, I really want, we really want to hear from the people of the province and so we're going to go to the places where people work and live and hear them, about their concerns. And this government has not been able to, as I say, get out of that safety zone. They've been doing more mail-in consultations. And so this has been a real challenge for this government to do that, and so when we're talking about environmental management and protection they really do need to get out of their safety zone for that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there's several parts to this bill that deserve some discussion and I want to go through that. And one of them is that . . . I'll reflect a bit on what the minister has said in his speech. And he introduced this . . . The second reading was in November 6th, 2017, but he talked about, you know, how this is a results-based approach to environmental regulation and how they want to expand the definition of "person" to allow the ministry to issue permits to certain associations or organizations, that are carried out.

And that's really, I mean, it's been interesting in our discussion around how over the course of years, the definition of "person" and what that means. We've kind of allowed the . . . And I'm not a lawyer or a legal expert in the idea of person, but it is interesting that we've come to expand that definition from just what we would think as human to in fact a legal body in allowing a corporation to have certain rights that a human would have or an individual would have.

One of the things that he talked about was, in addition, members of the Saskatchewan Environmental Code advisory committee, and he was concerned that they change frequently due to changes within the organizations and associations. The amendments will transfer powers from the Lieutenant Governor in Council to the minister, allowing for more timely appointments of new and replacement members of the committee.

I would say that's an interesting issue that the minister's putting before us, one that allows a real shift in control here from cabinet and what we see in the orders in council — which are publicly made — to a simple choice of the minister. And this is one I think my member from Fairview really flagged this in her

points when she was discussing this, that there's some real concerns about such a shift in power when you have an advisory committee.

And you know, it's a bit of a groupthink where you have an advisory committee but you get to have, you get to choose who's on your advisory committee and you don't have to answer to anybody. People may not know who it is. Will it be public? Will these people . . . In some ways it will be public because they'll meet and they'll have discussions and they'll find out who's on it. But will it be on a website? Will we be able to search and find out who's actually on the advisory committee, who's being appointed, why they're being appointed, that type of thing? Is this something that's going to be quietly done?

We have seen this government . . . And I think about the fact this came up with a constituent just yesterday about the landlords' association and how that group, and this government actually in their legislation, that the list of names is not public. You cannot find out who is on that public group, even though they have a member from the public. Many of these groups or advisory committees will have members from the public serving and their names are published, whether on the website or whatever. But that group, we do not know who's on the landlords' group.

So will this be another type of thing where you have such responsibility in Saskatchewan and you will not, as an individual citizen, be able to access that? Now I don't know whether that's the case or not. They're not being very clear about that. But they're bringing this in towards the realm of the minister, and I think this is really, really something questionable.

And I hear the members over there saying, trust me. Trust me; there would be no problem. Well I think that we talk to the environment . . . We need to have a much more rigorous approach to all of this. And just to simply say, trust the Minister of Environment, which particularly, which I find interesting over there now that I . . . I don't know how many Environment ministers they've gone through in the 10 years. They're now recycling them. There are three Rs: reuse, recycle, and ridiculous.

And so here we have a real issue. I don't think it's quite as much as the members on the advisory committee that are changing so much as the ministers are changing, you know. So this is really an issue for this government to consider, the length of time that the ministers change, and they might like a certain crowd around them in their advisory group, you know, and they get their six people. And then somebody else comes in six months later and don't quite belong to the same groupthink and say, you guys are all out of here; I want another six. And so it might be a real problem with turnover, but not the turnover of the advisory members but in fact the minister who seems to be in a revolving door or chair or ejector seat or whatever you might say.

**An Hon. Member:** — Shark tank.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Shark tank. You know, it's a hard seat to keep for more than just a bit. I think that, you know, whether they get



the . . . Maybe they have term contracts, I don't know, or what they have. This is part of . . . But at any rate, it's a situation where this government has a real credibility issue in terms of environmental protection and what they're going to do about that.

So this kind of thing when they say, well they want to have people be allowed to be picked by the minister and not go through even a somewhat public process of order in council, this is a real, real challenge. And so the . . . You know, and it is interesting. The minister talks about the code is already . . . talking about the environmental protection code. And he talks about how it was the first in its kind in Canada and, as I said, talked about results-based approach. But really, as I said, that there's some real concerns about really what has happened.

He goes on, talks about "The code reduces government red tape by replacing some permits with notifications and allows timely authorization . . ." and that type of thing, and spill reporting. Of course, I'm not sure . . . I think he's talking about the oil spills. But whether that was a recommendation that came out of the Husky Oil spill, that there was too much red tape and that was the cause that they were dealing with and the reasons why that we had such confusion particularly in the first week or two. And I think overnight it was a bit of an issue, whether or not there was an oil spill. And we had the member from Wood River just a few weeks prior to that, talking about how, you know, the technology of pipelines was such that you could know right away whether there was an oil spill. And clearly there were some real questions that was happening with the Husky Oil spill.

[16:45]

So he talks about the code and it's improving red tape. And I'm not sure . . . You know, we always want to make sure things are as straightforward as possible, and I do understand the red tape philosophy, cutting red tape, that particularly CFIB is keen on. But there are points in time where you say, listen, we really, truly do need to keep track of what is happening, what truly is happening.

And I can just think of the red tape around the email situation right now that we have. We have a situation where the Premier has his emails go out for two weeks, two weeks, and there is no trail. There's no trail of what actually happened over in Central Services. And it seems, Mr. Speaker, that in their zest to cut red tape, they actually don't know whether the government emails were out for two weeks in September. The Premier says that was the case. The Minister for Central Services said — and she said twice in the House — that she didn't care. She didn't care. There was no trail.

And here we have a situation like that. Is that carrying over into the world of environmental management and protection? And that's a question that many people ask. It's about credibility. And what you do in one part of your house, you probably do in another part of your house. That's the way you approach housekeeping. And so when they don't know what's happening with the left hand or the right hand . . . the far-right hand, the far-left hand. I don't know. And we have some real issues about this.

So the minister is talking about that they're moving forward with new code chapters and committees to develop the technical content. So it'll be interesting to see what those chapters are. I do want to see and I should have . . . And I hope that the minister will bring this forward in terms of whether or not they actually did get their assignments all done in the first go-round, whether all the chapters are now complete, and what the outline are for the new chapters. Don't believe the minister talked about that, and whether it's just the issue of environmental management and protection.

We have some real questions about the work ahead and how long that will take. I mean this government has been in place for now 10 long years and we're not seeing the kind of results, particularly in the environmental world, around what should have been, what could have been, and particularly during those boom years where we were having record revenues. Record revenues, and we could have really invested into environmental protection and could have been world leaders.

And when they talk about being the first in Canada to have this code . . . But it didn't feel really like being first in Canada. People were wondering, so what's there to show? And of course the black mark, of course, was the Husky oil spill.

And so we have some real concerns about this bill before us, and what does it really, really mean. And the member, you know, it is interesting when he talks about housekeeping, pieces of housekeeping amendments. And that to us is a flag. That's a flag that something's bigger than that; when they talk about housekeeping legislation, that really something, something must be up.

And so not only is the revolving door of the minister a reality over there, but it's also the issue around the advisory committee members. And it would be really important for us to make sure that we have some sense of who these people are and their contributions.

Now I do want to take a minute to talk about the issues around the product stewardship programs. And in fact actually we had a question in the House today about recycling tires and what's happening with the black gold program. And the minister seems to be pretty familiar with that. So clearly there is something happening inside the House environment around the environmental stewardship programs.

This is something that we are pretty proud of here in Saskatchewan and the good work, the very good work that Sarcan over the course of years has done. And I would say that, Mr. Speaker, that we have accomplished a lot in this province around environmental stewardship and the leadership that we have seen from the different groups who've really led the way with that. And you know, I think about the tires or whether it was the electronic works, that we have really stepped it up. And I've been very proud of the good work that we were able to initiate and continue on, and of course the good work that these companies have really been able to do.

And I do think about Sarcan who, not only has this produced meaningful work and good work, but this is really one that has developed a real sense of expertise. And I hope the department, the ministry is turning to the folks there because there is a lot of

expertise out in the NGO [non-governmental organization] world or the CBO world, the community-based organizations who really have, over the course of time, really developed a strong ethic of environmental stewardship, and whether it's Sarcan or some of the others that have really understood the need for sound stewardship. And so we will really want to talk to those folks about what does this bill mean for them. Are there any concerns? And I haven't even talked, I haven't really stopped to talk about the unintended consequence is if we haven't done this appropriately, if we haven't done this in a well-thought-out way, what are the outcomes.

We have a situation today where we raised questions in question period about the tire recycling initiatives and some of those initiatives, and what are the futures for that, and how some of the communities in the province are really looking forward to their opportunity to participate, but that's been changed. And so what is the future for that?

And I'm sure, I'm sure, Mr. Speaker, that those folks on the other side have heard from their people about this issue that in fact. And you know, I remember this very well. It's been a few years since I was in a leadership role in this, but the people in rural Saskatchewan were so proud of their recycling facilities and their . . . And I particularly . . . And I'll give a shout out to the mayor of Outlook. I just happened to run into him at an event about a few months ago and I was saying, well Outlook was doing so good.

And I think, even in the city of Lloydminster, I remember touring the city of Lloydminster, who had, one of the first communities to have a recycling program, a pick-up recycling program which was very sustainable, and they had a system that worked. And they had thought it through. And other communities now, we see the city of Saskatoon picking up on it and now Regina. But we saw just a few short years ago, thinking that it was an impossibility, couldn't be done, but actually very much can be done. Very much can be done.

And so we have a lot of questions. And the other one that I know we will have questions about, and the minister will be well aware of, is the Great Sand Hills, Great Sand Hills. And so when we talk about that, it's near and dear to my heart because we've done, I think, some good work. Hopefully that has continued on. And whereabouts is that? Whereabouts is that issue at now?

I try every year to go out there and to see how things are out there. And of course it's a beautiful part of our province and one that we can take a lot of pride in. You know, Mr. Speaker, I was out there this fall and I saw licence plates from six different places. There was four or five different provinces and a couple of states. There is a parking lot out there, and we were just amazed that the people were coming out on a Sunday afternoon, a Sunday afternoon.

And we ran into somebody out on the hills. He was a councillor from, I think from The Battlefords. And we had a little political conversation on top of a great sand hill, which was really very interesting. We actually didn't have a lot of time, but he really had some things to say to us about the shifting sands of Saskatchewan and the concerns they had about the situation here in this province.

And so, Mr. Speaker, you know we can go through the long list of areas that have their challenges, but I think about the Great Sand Hills and how the local RMs through their planning processes and the Great Sand Hills commission really work together to say, hey we can have economic development, but we can also have the environmental protection that we need in this area.

Now interestingly, the Great Sand Hills isn't quite having the pressures that they did 10, 15 years ago. The price of natural gas is not quite as high as it once was, so there's not those pressures. And it was just a few weeks after we were out there, of course the great fires burned through that area. And they're facing a whole new different issue, environmental issue, about what they are going to be doing about keeping a very fragile ecosystem with the grasses being burned and not much there to keep the grasses happening, and what the cover will be next spring and whether there's snow. What will happen? And so this will be a real challenge for us, Mr. Speaker.

So this piece of legislation before us is one that deserves a lot of attention, deserves a lot of attention. And as we start thinking about this over the past 10 years and, you know, it's sort of the situation when you kick the dog and it barks. And all of a sudden you realize you got something happening here.

So we're really looking forward to the conversation around the Environmental Code, what it means and what the minister on his second tour is going to be saying, you know. I think this is going to be a real interesting time in committee because we will have lots of questions. And of course those questions, when we get to that point, will be post-plan, when he will have presented his plan. He talks about in a couple of weeks. And so all of that will be part of this discussion, and is that part of the code that he is talking about?

And so, Mr. Speaker, this will be more than housekeeping. This will be very much more than housekeeping. We've had a couple of real, real experiences. The Husky Oil spill will be very much a lens through which we'll be talking about this issue, very much a lens; the wildlife, the Crown pastures, the community pasture sales, how that all played out with protecting our environment, those types of things.

The issue around water drainage will also be a lens of which we'll be talking about because I mean we've even had questions about that continue. You know, we think about the big, you know, when we have . . . And it's not necessarily the size of . . . You know, we have something just outside the city here where we have an issue, and passing the buck about who's really in charge of the licence to drain, and all of that, and who is and who isn't. And passing the buck, it's just not solving the issue. The water will just accumulate, and we see that in rural Saskatchewan. We see that in rural Saskatchewan. Many of us will have, know of particular circumstances where it is very much, very much changed circumstance from before.

So, Mr. Speaker, there will be lots to say on this issue, lots to say. And I know . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . No, I don't want to. I want to just talk next time. And so, Mr. Speaker . . .

**The Speaker:** — It now being 5 p.m., this Assembly stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 10 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.]

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