



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

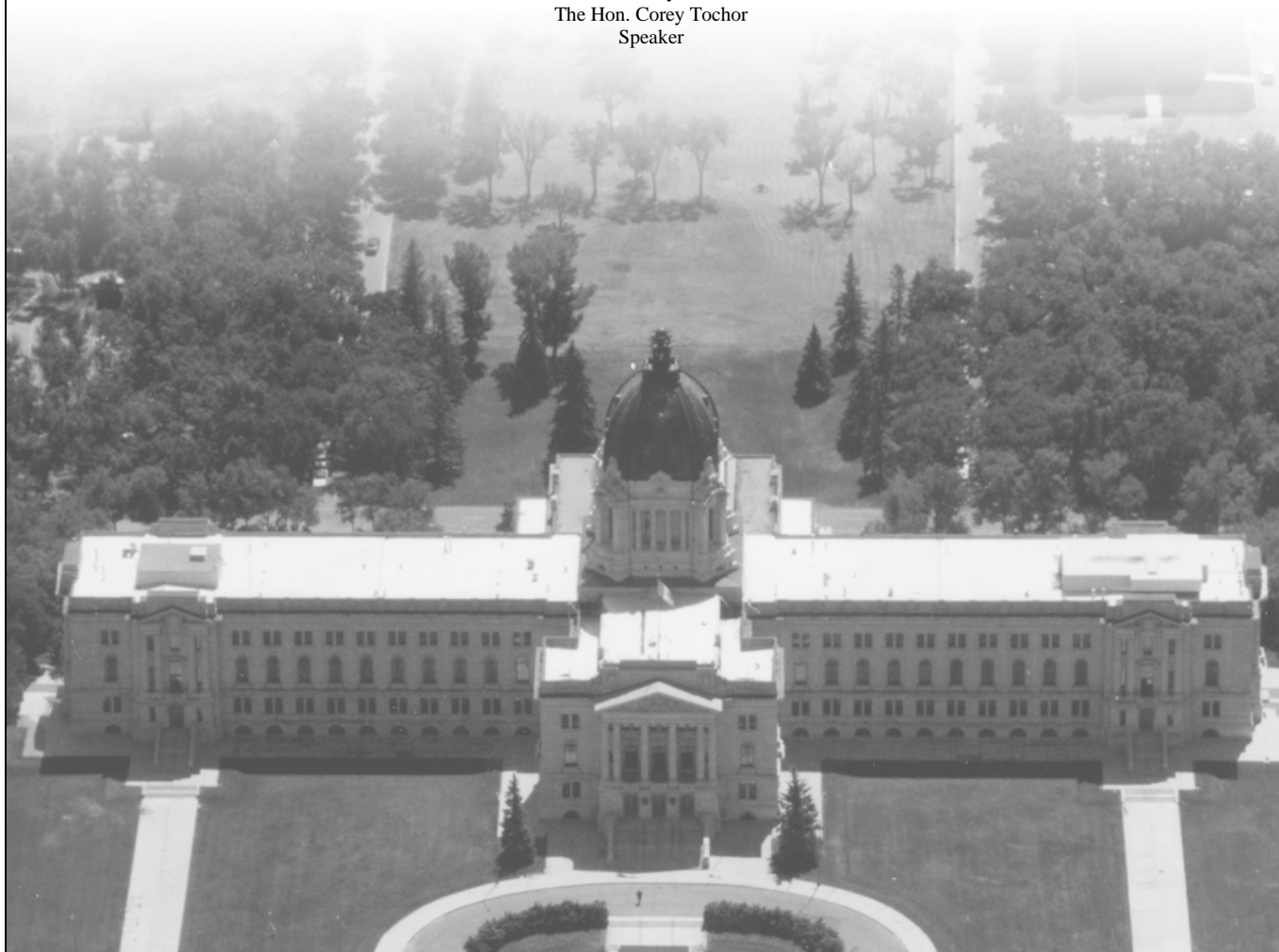
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Corey Tochor
Speaker



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2nd Session — 28th Legislature

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[The Assembly resumed at 19:00.]

EVENING SITTING

The Speaker: — It now being 7 p.m., I call this Assembly to order.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 90

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Makowsky that **Bill No. 90** — *The Heritage Property Amendment Act, 2017* be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As always, it's my pleasure to enter into the debate tonight on Bill 90, *The Heritage Property Amendment Act*, Mr. Speaker. This bill has a few jobs here that it changes that will impact the way the review process for heritage property designation works.

Mr. Speaker, I did a little walk down memory lane actually. I used to be the Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport critic when I first became an MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] in 2009. I think this is just important for context here. So we look at the funding for the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation, and in 2008-9 — and I was first elected in 2009 — the foundation actually received \$278,000 in provincial funding. To the government's credit, at the height of the money that the government had, when money was really rolling in, Mr. Speaker, we had \$289,000 in 2009-10. That stayed stable in 2010-11, and 2010-2011 it was 289,000.

And then in 2011-12 there was an increase, to this government's credit, to \$504,000, Mr. Speaker. I just might add that that's a positive increase. I'm a proponent of heritage and maintaining and fostering development of our heritage. It's good to know where we come from so we know where we are going, Mr. Speaker. But I just want to point out whenever the government talks about increasing budgets exponentially in the 10 years that they've been in office, it's important to point out that the revenues increased exponentially as well, Mr. Speaker.

So in 2011 and '12, the budget for the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation was \$504,000. That stayed the same until 2016-17 budget. Throughout those years — one, two, three, four, five, six years — half a million dollars to Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation received. And then in this last budget they saw a decrease back to \$300,000, Mr. Speaker. So basically we're, in 2017-18, when it comes to supporting heritage through the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation, we're back basically to levels in 2010 and '11, Mr. Speaker.

So I think that's important in the context here today as we're

talking about changes to *The Heritage Property Amendment Act* which will impact designation of provincial heritage facilities, Mr. Speaker. I know one of the things that I heard when I was the critic, from stakeholders one of the big concerns is that the heritage property foundation grants money to support both commercial interests and others in facilitating heritage property designation. They provide funding for municipal . . . There is the Built Heritage grant which provides funding for municipal or provincially designated properties to help with costs related to stabilization and restoration of those buildings, Mr. Speaker. There is no defined amount, but generally it's noted on their website that demand exceeds the resources, Mr. Speaker.

And they also have a one-time grant for non-designated commercial heritage properties: up to \$10,000 to assist non-designated properties with facade and stabilization in order to promote conservation and adaptive reuse of commercial heritage buildings and raise awareness of the benefits of that kind of work, Mr. Speaker.

It's important to keep in mind . . . I know the things that I heard from stakeholders at that point in time, Mr. Speaker, is that the amount that was often granted was a drop in the bucket. When you think about having to do a roof of a building or stabilize a building, there was a little money spread very thin, so it often did not allow properties or owners of properties to do the work that they'd really like to do to maintain their buildings, Mr. Speaker. Noting that the budget has gone down and basically back to the level when I was elected an MLA, which was eight years ago, to \$300,000, there undoubtedly is less money, even less money in that pot to support heritage.

But this particular bill, Bill No. 90, *The Heritage Property Amendment Act*, one of the things it does with respect to Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation, there is currently a review board, or some of the board members are the ones who review the designation or the appeal of properties. So what will happen with respect to this bill is there will be now a separate group; three people will be designated as the review board, who will have no other duties, to carry out review board duties.

So that makes sense. The minister has pointed out in his comments that that will be hiving off that, the review from the actual operational separation of the actual foundation and the granting will give a more transparent and fair hearing to those who come before the board.

Because the purpose of the Heritage Foundation is to maintain heritage properties, designate heritage properties, grant money, those kind of things, so to have the same board members review when they have an interest in maintaining heritage properties, he's arguing there's a conflict of interest. So they're separating those duties. And there will also be updating the rules for hearings before the review board, including a party's right to be heard and the ability to accept any evidence deemed relevant. There will be updates on how the board will notify the public of the time, date, location of a heritage property hearing. And there's also a section being added to allow for more efficient processes for amending existing provincial heritage property designations.

So I'm just pointing this out. I'm thinking from the vantage

point of a heritage property owner who perhaps really would like to keep and maintain his or her property and recognize the benefit and the value of a heritage designation for all kinds of reasons. But it's expensive. Any of us who've embarked upon a renovation of some of our homes, I've been there, Mr. Speaker, and it's not an inexpensive endeavour. So you think about the magnitude of maintaining the heritage of a home or a building becomes even more cost prohibitive. And so I think in some cases there's developers or there's folks who own these buildings who could use a little bit more support, and that support, it just isn't there. So they don't have a lot of options, Mr. Speaker. I think that that's a challenge. That was a challenge I heard eight years ago when I was the Culture critic, Mr. Speaker.

I know when you think about the environmental impact of maintaining a building, they say that it's so much more environmentally friendly to refurbish and renovate an existing building rather than tear down and build new, Mr. Speaker. So from an environmental perspective, restoring or rejuvenating a former property to its former glory is positive in that regard.

Knowing a bit of our history and seeing it tangibly in a building I think is a really good thing too. I have a daughter who lives in Montreal right now, and it's always so interesting. And I had the opportunity as a 19-year-old to spend some time in Switzerland doing a French immersion and travel a little bit at that point. And those are places that buildings are literally not just decades old but hundreds and hundreds of years old. And it's hard to wrap your head around, that events in history happened in these places and all the people. You think of the stories that have taken place in many of those buildings.

In Saskatchewan, who's a relatively new province to settlers, to Western Europeans — although we have a long history here in Saskatchewan, indigenous people going back thousands of years — but when it comes to built history of Western Europeans the things that we have are relatively new. And I know that I certainly appreciate when we've managed to maintain buildings.

There's, in my own constituency of Saskatoon Riversdale, King George Community School. The Saskatoon school board has done a particularly good job of maintaining and caring for its heritage buildings. They've invested in maintenance through the years. It's much cheaper to maintain a facility, too, rather than have to start all over, Mr. Speaker. But King George is a wonderful example of a building that is well over 100 years that has served the people of Saskatoon Riversdale very well.

I think about Victoria bridge in Saskatoon, and I was one of those people who was sad to see it torn down. I know there's a new bridge going up that looks very much like the old bridge, but I think we missed an opportunity to capitalize on tourism. I've never been to New York City, but I've heard tale of the Brooklyn bridge and what they've done around tourism and the ability to draw people in. I think would've been a great link to River Landing, Mr. Speaker.

There's no shortage of examples here in Saskatchewan of buildings. There's buildings that have been maintained, but we've lost many of those buildings from our earlier days, Mr. Speaker.

So just with respect to this bill I think, in the context of funding for the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation, it's important to note that there is a smaller and smaller pool of money available to people who want to restore and maintain their property, their heritage properties, Mr. Speaker. And I think that's a shame. I know often when budgets get tight, that is the one place where governments go. They cut culture.

I have to say reviewing old budgets just to pull these numbers was a bit of a walk down memory lane and made me kind of sad, Mr. Speaker. We go back to 2010-11 budget, I think it was, where SCN, the Saskatchewan Communications Network, got funded . . . used to be a treasury Crown here in Saskatchewan, and it was a really important part of the film industry.

And, you know, Mr. Speaker, just a few years later this government . . . Something else that I noticed in these under culture, it's hard not to recall the film tax credit, which was another pillar of the film industry here in Saskatchewan that supported employment, that fostered business, Mr. Speaker. And so it was a bit of a walk down memory lane and thinking about what we've lost here in Saskatchewan in terms of sharing who we are and our ability to share who we are.

But with respect to this particular bill around *The Heritage Property Act*, I think it's important to just flag the funding levels for the heritage property foundation, which although increased in 2011 and '12, they remained stagnant up until this year and then they were reduced basically to the levels of almost a decade ago.

So I know the minister had said in his comments that this bill strengthens our heritage designation process, but I'm not certain how that happens. I know that our critic will have an opportunity in committee to discuss this with the minister and ask some questions in greater detail as to how he anticipates that this will in fact strengthen the heritage property designation process. And perhaps he'll ask how he thinks funding impacts heritage property designation, or the lack thereof, of funding. But I will leave that to the critic when he has an opportunity when this bill moves to committee.

But in the meantime, I would like to move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 90, *The Heritage Property Amendment Act, 2017*.

The Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Riversdale has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 90. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 91

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hargrave that **Bill No. 91** — *The Snowmobile Amendment Act, 2017* be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured today to get up and speak a little bit with regards to the amendments to this bill, Bill 91, *The Snowmobile Amendment Act, 2017*. It's always an honour to be able to put your remarks about some changes to legislation that's going to be occurring. *The Snowmobile Amendment Act, 2017*, it seems like it has a lot of housekeeping aspects to it with regards to some of the changes. The Act is administered by the Saskatchewan Government Insurance, which I would refer to as SGI when I refer to it later with regards to my remarks.

[19:15]

Mr. Speaker, I have to admit I haven't had an opportunity before this time to have a look at this particular Act with *The Snowmobile Act*. And when I looked at the original Act, I was trying to find when it was actually implemented and when the last time there was some changes with regards to this particular Act, because it does look like there was some housekeeping aspects on some changes and legislation that was made that will implement the Act and that's why the housekeeping had to be done.

So I'm going to talk a little bit about what I see as some of the changes when the minister talked about, with regards with his remarks, about some of the changes that'll be happening with this amendment. So the changes here, they restrict the snowmobile trail to be used only by snowmobiles and trail maintenance equipment between December 1st and April 15th. And the reason why they decided to make some of those changes was to ensure that trails aren't damaged and keeping them safe for snowmobilers.

And, Mr. Speaker, I do want to talk a little bit of the safety of snowmobilers. I personally know some people who have lost their life and have had quite serious injuries with regards to snowmobile accidents. And it seems like every winter you're hearing about someone who's been really badly hurt or unfortunately the fatalities with regards to snowmobiles. I myself, as a little bit of a scaredy-cat . . . and I've only been on a snowmobile a few times because I'm a little bit scared of not having more protective iron around me.

And so I do worry about the safety aspect of snowmobiles, and I know times have changed and we do look at safety a lot more than we maybe previously have had. And so I wonder, when in this House we've been talking a lot about impaired driving, Mr. Speaker, and I wonder with regards to the enforcement of impaired driving with regards to snowmobilers, and what exactly our government is planning to do to ensure that anyone who is operating a vehicle, a motorized vehicle — and a snowmobile would be exactly that — isn't doing it under the influence of alcohol or drugs now that we are seeing that we're going to have more drugs being legalized in our province. And so how are we going to manage that, Mr. Speaker?

And I think we need to have that dialogue and that discussion here so that we can ensure their safety, also ensuring that people are wearing their safety equipment, helmets, when they're riding. And if they're not, how is that being enforced? And young drivers, what's the regulations with regards to allowing young drivers to drive snowmobiles? And that really concerns me, and so I would be concerned if there was a child driving a

snowmobile. Maybe there's certain training that they can have in safety. And how again are we going to ensure and regulate that? As a government we have a responsibility that people are safe when they're using motorized vehicles.

And so I was a little concerned about the lack of safety being recognized with regards to amendments of this bill. I think this is a really prime time when you're opening up legislation to have that discussion and maybe incorporate a little bit more enforcement and restrictions with regards to that.

So they indicate that they're going to restrict certain motorized vehicles going on snowmobile trails because they want to make sure that they're maintained properly and they're not damaged. And I wondered about safety vehicles when safety vehicles need to get to a point of emergency. I know a lot of RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] officers and police officers and EMS [emergency medical services] agents are using snowmobiles as a way to go to these remote areas to pick up people who may be injured as well. And so I'm hoping they have full access to that kind of stuff. But I'm wondering if they needed to get on there, I would assume that would be something that would be allowed, especially in an emergency.

Another change to this Act is transferring the authority from the Highway Traffic Board to SGI. Apparently from some information I was reading before, in January 2016 the Highway Traffic Board delegated a lot of these authorities to SGI. So again like I was saying before, some things were changed in previous years that now need to be put forward with regards to the amendments to this bill. And so they're stroking out a lot of references that it says "board" and putting SGI on there so that people have a clear idea of exactly who is responsible for that.

So some of these examples are that SGI sets the expiry date on certificates of registration and licences, not the Highway Traffic Board. And SGI prescribes the form on which accidents are to be reported, not the Highway Traffic Board anymore. And SGI receives accident reports, and that's not what the Highway Traffic Board is going to be responsible for. And also SGI has the authority to restrict or permit snowmobile use for safety concerns, and that's no longer the Highway Traffic Board's responsibility.

And so also previously for municipal bylaws, they needed to be approved by the Highway Traffic Board to become enforceable. So that would be if someone was looking for authorization to operate snowmobiles on any highway or portion of a highway, then that needed to be approached to the Highway Traffic Board. But now they're saying because of the changes within this Act, people will now need to contact SGI to get permission for that.

And so I'm wondering with regards to the changes of this, I know some of this has been happening for a while now and so it's been already fully implemented. But with regards to reducing the Highway Traffic Board duties, has that meant that there has been less staffing there, or have there been just a change of duties? I'm not quite sure what the consequences of that are. Or how much more is SGI needing to manage, and how are they adjusting to this change? And is this something that required to have more staff involved to manage, or has this had a financial implication? So I think those would be really

some good questions to ask once the critic gets an opportunity to sit down with the minister and talk about some of the consequences or possible effects of these changes.

So also there were some updates to definitions. So updates to definition of “snowmobile” and update to the definition of “licence plates.” And so “snowmobile,” apparently changing the definition in this Act will now conform with current standards of the definition of “snowmobile.” And so having to make that updated, that’s important. And then “licence plates” too. If people are getting a permit for their snowmobile, they don’t need to have their licence plate in view. They just need to ensure that they have their permit available.

And then also SGI has changed from instead of having your expiry sticker on your licence plate to indicate that it’s current and up-to-date, people no longer do that anymore, Mr. Speaker. And so again that’s another change that was needed to be made with regards to this Act just to get it back up to date to what our current policies are with regards to licensing our motorized vehicles.

And so again, Mr. Speaker, I believe that all the changes with regards to this Act are really housekeeping. There’s some, a lot, some questions that need to be asked by the critic, and I’m sure my colleagues will have a lot more that they want to add to the discussion with regards to changes to this bill. But for now I’m going to move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 91. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The member from Prince Albert Northcote has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 91. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 92

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hargrave that **Bill No. 92 — *The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Amendment Act, 2017*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’m pleased to enter adjourned debates on Bill 92, *The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Amendment Act, 2017*. I understand that this bill undertakes to increase the debt limit for SaskTel from \$1.3 billion to \$1.8 billion and that this is the only change being proposed in this bill.

When the minister gave his second reading on this bill, he talked about the fact that this amount has been unchanged since 1991, arguing that the current borrowing limit no longer allows the flexibility that SaskTel needs to grow and respond to future financial demands on their business activities and investments.

The minister went on to note that SaskTel is currently in the first year of a five-year capital investment plan. It calls for the corporation to invest 1.4 billion over four years; therefore the

predicted debt is scheduled to exceed the \$1.3 billion debt limit that is in current legislation. Some of these plans include increasing wireless capabilities, developing a 5G network, and other technological changes. The minister argues that SaskTel has a robust financial health that will allow it to support up to 1.8 billion of total debt and that authorizing this change is the prudent choice for this government.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague from Athabasca also had a chance to weigh in on the debates of this bill. He aptly pointed out that by passing this legislation we are allowing SaskTel to add another half billion dollars in debt. This questions their long-term viability, Mr. Speaker. I wonder about the exact investments of capital that are being made here, what these projects are, and what the impact of the extra debt will be to SaskTel.

I see a trend here, Mr. Speaker, where the province is going deeper into debt, and the Crown corporations and municipalities are going deeper into debt. People of this province are paying more for their provincial sales tax and are paying PST [provincial sales tax] on more things. Everyone is paying more, Mr. Speaker. And we can trace much of this back to the Sask Party’s mismanagement through a period of record revenue.

I think innovation and being leaders in the market is important, Mr. Speaker, and the work SaskTel is doing with fibre Internet is commendable, but we need to be concerned about the bottom line. The answer cannot keep being, let’s add more debt. That’s not sustainable. If we keep indebting our Crown corporations, it sets the Sask Party government up to say this Crown is not viable and to sell it off in the future. And we know what the consequences of that would be, Mr. Speaker.

SaskTel provides an important service to this province, bringing services across the province that for-profit business would not necessarily be investing in. It seems like it might be a small change to allow for existing capital projects, Mr. Speaker, but I think we need to be careful and diligent about the direction that these changes move us in.

When the minister proposing these changes is the same minister that was put in charge of scrapping STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company], that raises some questions about why these changes are being proposed, Mr. Speaker, and whether they protect the best interests of this cherished Crown.

This past summer when I was door knocking, I heard from person after person that they value SaskTel and the work it does for this province, bringing in revenue, providing good-quality, mortgage-paying jobs, and keeping rates low for our services. The people of this province are not interested in the full or partial sale of this Crown, so I suggest that if that is any part of a long-term goal, that the Sask Party reassess this plan. The people won’t stand for it. So, Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the minister proceeds with caution in adding more debt to this Crown.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 92, *The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Amendment Act, 2017*.

The Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Fairview has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 92. Is it the pleasure of the

Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

[19:30]

Bill No. 93

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hargrave that **Bill No. 93 — *The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Holding Corporation Amendment Act, 2017*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter into adjourned debates on Bill 93, *The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Holding Corporation Amendment Act, 2017*.

Identically to Bill 92, this bill proposes to increase the debt limit for SaskTel from \$1.3 billion to \$1.8 billion. Together these two bills refer to the aggregate borrowing limit between SaskTel and SaskTel Holdco's borrowing limit. So we are talking about amending both Acts here to reflect these changes.

In the minister's second reading of this bill, he cites that he is proposing this legislation for the same reasons he provided as justification in proposing Bill 92. He argues that these changes are essential to ensuring that SaskTel can continue to grow and maintain the flexibility it needs to adjust to the changing market conditions today and in the future.

Again, we would be interested in seeing some of these cost breakdowns, Mr. Speaker, knowing some of the details of these projects. And I think it's crucially important that we keep in mind the overall financial health of this Crown Corporation, ensuring its continued viability in the future. Adding a half billion dollars to SaskTel and SaskTel Holding Corporation's aggregate debt is a lot of money.

I think innovation and leadership are important, so I understand the necessity for capital investments. But I also think we need to be careful about adding more debt and this government's trend of adding more debt and hoping that will solve our problems. People of this province have been loud and clear in their statements that they do not want SaskTel sold off, so we need to keep ensuring this Crown is in good financial condition because selling it off is not an option. And it is a concern I have with these proposed changes, Mr. Speaker, that this is the direction we could be moving in, and that's what it points to.

We need to be cautious and keep SaskTel strong so we can keep these good-paying jobs in our province, keep servicing remote communities, keep these revenues coming into our provincial coffers, and to keep our rates low. We need to be cautious. With that, Mr. Speaker, I move to adjourn debate on Bill 93, *The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Holding Corporation Amendment Act, 2017*.

The Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Fairview has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 93. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 94

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Cox that **Bill No. 94 — *The Saskatchewan Advantage Grant for Education Savings (SAGES) 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 tonight on Bill No. 94 and rise to the debate on Bill No. 94, *An Act to suspend Grant Payments pursuant to The Saskatchewan Advantage Grant for Education Savings (SAGES) Act*. And its short title may be *The Saskatchewan Advantage Grant for Education Savings (SAGES) Amendment Act, 2017*.

I point that out just because of some of the people who were watching earlier when we were talking about some of the other legislation. We're starting to see now preambles and political titles and stuff. And this one just seems to be relatively straightforward. And it is one that is relatively straightforward because this is something that is a fallout of the 2017-18 budget where the Sask Party announced that their Saskatchewan advantage grant for education savings would be suspended January 1, 2018.

Now for the people at home, what that program was, it provided a grant that matched 10 per cent of the subscribers' RESP — registered education savings program or plan — contributions up to a maximum of \$250 per year. And then the Sask Party announced they would cut the grant and no longer will it be paid on contributions after December 31st in just a few weeks. So this Act allows for that grant program.

So we continue to see the fallout of the government's mismanagement, waste and scandal that continues and I'm sure it will continue and continue. You know, and I hear people muttering over there about how the debt is out of control. Well what can you do? What can you do? Clearly these folks are facing choices, but it's one that they have made themselves because of years of record revenue, record revenue, but bad, bad management that led to scandal and waste and mismanagement. And we've seen that over and over and over again.

We've seen the . . . Well you see members over there with their hands over their eyes. They don't want to be recognized. The galleries are not full. I don't know who they're hiding from. The camera doesn't pan over there unless they did want to get up and speak to this, and actually that would be very interesting. But this is one of the many cuts, one of the many cuts to Advanced Education that was seen in the Sask Party's budget.

You know, and we have seen this over and over again, the cuts to advanced education and how that is really short-sighted, that it's one of those things, you know, where we saw last year or last spring in the budget, where we saw tax cuts for the wealthy and for business. Now we're dealing with the fallout of that because we're actually walking part of that back. But this will make it harder for families to save for their children's education while at the same time they've cut over 5 per cent from the post-secondary institutions who are now facing cutting services for students and increasing fees.

Then, Mr. Speaker, this is what's interesting with this cut. Now they're cutting a grant that was matching up to \$250 per child per year. But the minister does talk about how the Ministry of Advanced Education will continue to pay annual administration costs of between 400,000 and \$600,000 to the Canada education savings program to cover transactions that will continue, during the suspension, as the education assistance programs.

You know, it's one of those things that when you do these, you set up these programs, there is infrastructure and you just can't walk away from it. But really, when we're seeing what they are walking away from in post-secondary, it is shameful. And it's not what people thought in that last election where this government would not put forward a budget, would not come clean in terms of what the actual state of affairs were. And they said trust me, everything will be fine. And we saw that, in fact, it was not fine and they knew that. They knew that.

And so one of the hits was the SAGES [Saskatchewan advantage grant for education savings] program. The SAGES program, which I remember a few years ago, they were keen to get passed before the December 31st deadline. And we were willing to work with them, I think, to make sure it worked because we knew families were wanting to make that contribution if they could before December 31st. It was one of those examples where we do work together. But here we have a situation where they have made some choices and here are the kids and the families, the parents paying the price for their wasting and mismanagement.

And again, as I said, this is one that's hard to see. And as my colleague, who just recently won her by-election in Fairview, people would be talking about the budget and what the impact of that was. And every little bit helps. Every little bit helps so that people can save for their children's education. And I know this will be sorely missed, but unfortunately it won't be a thing that they will have a choice over, because this program now is suspended. And probably it will be a hard time, it will be a hard thing to see it coming back.

And so, Mr. Speaker, with that, this is an unfortunate fallout of a budget, one of the worst in Saskatchewan's history, but it is what it is. And so we'll have lots of questions in committee on this, but tonight I'm going to move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 94, *The Saskatchewan Advantage Grant for Education Savings (SAGES) Amendment Act, 2017*. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The member for Saskatoon Centre has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 94. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 95

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 95 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal and Amendment Act, 2017*** be now read a second time.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I've been looking forward to this one all day — Bill 95, *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal and Amendment Act*. Well it's certainly miscellaneous, Mr. Speaker, but statuesque, I'm not so sure about that.

In terms of the meat of this legislation, as is, you know, as is sometimes the case with legislation brought forward by members opposite, there's a bit of the good; there's a bit of the bad, and there's some of the ugly, Mr. Speaker.

Some of the good, you know, it's housekeeping. The housekeeping in the legislature, when it comes to legislation, comes in the fall, Mr. Speaker, and then, you know, gets wrapped up come the spring. But, you know, so there are some things in here that are straightforward and fair enough and what you'd expect in a miscellaneous statutes repeal and amendment Act. But there's certainly some, you know, good in that.

The bad, of course, Mr. Speaker, is that, you know, that far too often this government comes forward with . . . Housekeeping is a centrepiece or is a thematic part of their legislative agenda.

The bad verging on the ugly though, Mr. Speaker, is where in section 6 they repeal *The Enterprise Saskatchewan Act — The Enterprise Saskatchewan Act*. Now I haven't been around this House forever, Mr. Speaker, though some days it certainly feels like it. But in terms of *The Enterprise Saskatchewan Act*, I think this was . . . If you'll cast your mind back, it's sort of a nostalgia piece, Mr. Speaker. It's like throwback Thursday comes early.

I don't know if this is like the capstone on the Premier's legacy or what they're looking to do here, but certainly, Mr. Speaker, I've been around long enough to have been there for what was colloquially referred to as the wallpaper. I should probably apologize and withdraw that, Mr. Speaker.

But certainly when the member from Swift Current, you know, was a shiny new Opposition Leader and came forward with his blueprint for growth or plan for growth or whatever, I don't know, and you know, there was some interesting ideas in it for sure, Mr. Speaker. But I forget precisely how this got put, but it was something like the North Star of this growth plan, or the centrepiece that we'll be nailing to our masthead for economic liberation or something far-flown like that, Mr. Speaker, was Enterprise Saskatchewan.

And Enterprise Saskatchewan was going to take over the entirety of economic development in this province. It was going to get government out of the business of picking winners and losers. Enterprise Saskatchewan, being what it was, you know,

we thought, well maybe there will be some nifty uniforms that come along with it. I've always been more of a *Star Wars* watcher, Mr. Speaker, but you know, it does beg the mind if there is a bit of a *Star Trek* theme going on there.

But in terms of *The Enterprise Saskatchewan Act*, like, oh boy. You know, after the 2007 election there was the 100 promises made and 100 promises kept. That was like right near the top, Mr. Speaker. I don't know if it was the top five or how that worked but, you know, Enterprise Saskatchewan, there it was. It was this whole new way of doing economic development in Saskatchewan. It was going to set us all free, Mr. Speaker. Just send your box tops in or something.

Anyway, Enterprise Saskatchewan, you know, one of the sad things about Enterprise Saskatchewan was that there was some very good work being done out across the province in terms of the regional economic development authorities. Or I recall the good work being done on the part of the Labour Market Commission. But no, no, let's roll that all into this shiny new venture called *The Enterprise Saskatchewan Act*.

[19:45]

Again, Mr. Speaker, I would look back through the years, Mr. Speaker. I'd look back 10 years. And you know, so much time has flown past, that the individual that I'm about to quote has since gone on to have been awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce for business journalism, Mr. Speaker. I'm talking about Mr. Bruce Johnstone. Does that ring any bells? There we go. And well it should you know — smart guy, had a lot on the ball.

But in 2007 Bruce Johnstone wrote for the *Leader-Post* stating, "Enterprise Saskatchewan Premier-elect Brad Wall's vision of how to manage the province's economic development could be the biggest achievement of his administration, or it could be his biggest flop."

I don't know, Mr. Speaker. They say history's a hanging judge. But I'm not sure who's up on the docket for that one because, well it's not even . . . It didn't take 10 years to get to the point where they wrapped up Enterprise Saskatchewan in fact. But you know here we are cleaning up the last of it, putting the enterprise into dry dock or whatever they're going to chop it down for parts.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, *The Enterprise Saskatchewan Act* is one of the things up for repeal in this. And certainly I think that'd probably count for both the bad and the ugly, you know, both those categories all at once, Mr. Speaker, a bit of a double threat. But again, Mr. Speaker, what they go sliding into a miscellaneous statutes piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, always interesting to see.

But it does, it does serve as a good reminder that there is a lot of sizzle being sold, Mr. Speaker, 10 years ago. And where's that sizzle today? It's getting repealed, Mr. Speaker. It's getting repealed. And don't just take my word for it. You're losing, yes, section no. 6, part 1, Bill 95, I don't know if it's the night they drove old Dixie down, that amendment in this legislation, Mr. Speaker, or what the deal is. But there it goes, Enterprise Saskatchewan. It was but a comet, you know, driving through

the nighttime sky, Mr. Speaker, and it came and went, but too quickly.

Anyway they spent a bunch of time and a bunch of people's effort and a bunch of people's money, you know, screwing up some things that were . . . You know as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was wont to say, Mr. Speaker, you know you got a lot of good things going here in this province; just don't screw it up. And you know arguably, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the misadventure and the colossal waste of time and energy that Enterprise Saskatchewan was when there were some perfectly great things going on in the sector in terms of economic development and the regional economic development authorities and certainly through the Labour Market Commission, Mr. Speaker, they didn't miss the mark by an inch, they missed it by a country mile on that one. And here we are 10 years on.

So I'd be interested in . . . I don't think Bruce Johnstone addressed it in his Lifetime Achievement Award at the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce in terms of, you know, his demonstrating his powers of prognostication. But was it the Premier's greatest achievement or was it his greatest flop? Well I think the jury's out on the other side of that equation as well. There are some other flops flopping along, Mr. Speaker, so we'll see where those come out at. So it's early days for that kind of assessment, but in terms of a flop, Mr. Speaker, pretty plain, pretty plain what category this one rolls into.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, there are certainly some other bills up for repeal. And again the Deputy Premier, in introducing this legislation, talked about the stamp Act. And you know, I don't know if that was contemporaneous with the Boston Tea Party or whatever, so the jokes that like to get told about the reign of the Deputy Premier, but that one certainly goes back, back a ways, Mr. Speaker. The Lord's day repeal Act, I mean, again, fair ball. Oh there it is, *The Trading Stamp Act*, you know, yet another blow struck for legislative excellence I guess. I don't know how you would say that in lean talk I'd add parenthetically, but I'm sure there's a way to, you know, talk about the muda.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I think the point is clear. In terms of some of the bills up for repeal under this legislation, fair enough. But you know, I'm often struck by the notion that there's never any shortage of irony in politics. And in terms of here we are 10 years on after all this sort of, you know, hype and parade that went into the rolling out of Enterprise Saskatchewan, and again, you know, where the enterprise come to rest, Mr. Speaker, I don't know, but there's a scrapyard out there some place for sure that's getting a new rocket thruster off that sucker, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of other legislation or other aspects of this piece of legislation, it does bring to mind some other aspects of the various deeds and misdeeds of this government. But certainly there's a section, in section 22 that deals with *The Film Employment Tax Credit Act* and an amendment there too. And again, Mr. Speaker, in terms of some of the more spiteful and senseless work on the part of this government, Mr. Speaker, for something that was working well for the people of Saskatchewan that added value, that diversified our economy, Mr. Speaker, that gave a tremendous opportunity for a lot of

very talented people to tell stories in Saskatchewan, of Saskatchewan, to Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, and then get set up in some kind of phony-baloney equivalency in terms of, oh well, you've got to have the . . . either be doing this, or it's got to be, or we can't afford Creative Saskatchewan. Well you know, fiddlesticks to that, I say, Mr. Speaker. Baloney.

So again in terms of *The Film Employment Tax Credit Act*, you know, I live in hope that one of the . . . You know, they're sort of doing a salvage job on certain aspects of, you know, the record that it's gone before in terms of their leadership, Mr. Speaker.

And one of the things that's interesting, the member from Saskatoon Northwest has hit upon this idea to sue the federal government for fair treatment of our resource revenues. And again, you know, we saw a bit of a song and dance earlier from the Premier in terms of that and, you know, what we got from the Conservative government was really so much better than . . . You know, it's like listening to somebody come home and describe their pile of magic beans they got. You know, it's like, these certainly are some fine magic beans that I got in return for swapping the lawsuit, or that all these other things that he was listing off, Mr. Speaker, somehow wouldn't happen in the province of Saskatchewan but for us dropping the lawsuit and standing up for fairness and for fair treatment of the resources of this province, Mr. Speaker. You know, it's kind of rich.

But you know, so they're salvaging that aspect of what's gone before so, you know, I do live in hope that maybe someone would pick this up as an idea that, you know, when they talk about diversifying Saskatchewan's economy, when they talk about adding value, when they talk about the importance of the Saskatchewan story, you know, here's an idea: film employment tax credit.

You know, like Abbie Hoffman used to have a little something called, or a book entitled *Steal This Book*. So you know, feel free to take this idea, Mr. Speaker. Make it happen because it worked well. It's working well in other jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker, adding value and diversifying their economies. And again, that decision was made, you know, never made sense in terms of just the, you know . . . You got beyond the spite. You got beyond the senselessness. There wasn't much to wrap your head around in terms of that decision, Mr. Speaker. So you know, we live in hope, Mr. Speaker, that this government might own up to some of the things they got wrong and make it right.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I could go on at even greater length, you know. I wouldn't have to give stardate or anything like that. But you sort of feel kind of humbled in your place in the universe when you happen upon a debate like this, where something that was given such a hype job and given such a promotional, you know, tour de force, unbelievable the amount of effort that the Premier put into it, and again it was going to be nailed to the masthead of this government and on and on. And here it is headed for the scrap heap, Mr. Speaker.

So to that we say, you know, good riddance. Would but that we hadn't had the government waste so much time, effort and resource in the way that they'd gone after that bill in the first place, and instead worked with the things that were succeeding out across the province, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the great work

being done in our regional economic development authorities and again in the Labour Market Commission. What a shame in some ways, Mr. Speaker. What a shame.

But with that, I know that other of my colleagues will certainly have more to add to this debate. So, Mr. Speaker, I move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 95, *An Act to repeal and amend miscellaneous Statutes and make consequential amendments to certain Statutes*.

The Speaker: — The Opposition House Leader has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 95. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 96

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 96 — *The Choice of Court Agreements (Hague Convention Implementation) Act/Loi sur les accords d'élection de for (mise en œuvre de la Convention de La Haye)*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise tonight to enter into debate on Bill No. 96, *An Act respecting the Application to Saskatchewan of the Hague Convention on Choice of Court Agreements*. And we see before it the table of contents, and then it's actually a fairly short piece of legislation. And the title, the short title, is the Act may be cited as *The Choice of Court Agreements (Hague Convention Implementation) Act*. And the minister gave some description about this, talking about how this is part of the uniform law work that's been done. And actually it seems like a reasonable piece of legislation in terms of the fact that we are an exporting province and we do import some materials as well, and so it's critical that we do have uniform legal frameworks out there. And this is just one of the pieces to make it so. And it seems to be odd that we haven't had this before.

It was designed to offer greater certainty for those involved in business contracts and international litigation. And of course that is something you find yourself more and more involved in because if you do business around the world there is the possibility, the possibility increases that you will, in fact, find yourself in litigation. And Ontario apparently has this rule already. A similar law was passed in March 2017. So I assume that it will be coming more and more commonplace throughout the country and throughout the world.

And so I'll take a minute and just reflect on the minister's comments that he made. And that was back just a few short days . . . In fact it looks like less than a week ago, last Tuesday. And he was talking about how this provides for an implementation of the Convention on Choice of Court Agreements which is really, really important, and provides support for choices of court provisions in international contracts which will help prevent litigation in multiple jurisdictions. And this often can

happen where, you know, you're using different partners. You're selling to one country from our province so you may be using an international shipper, and even the ports of entry might be in a different country. So there is an opportunity for many, many jurisdictions to be involved. And so it's very important to get this set up.

So I'll just sort of highlight this for the folks at home who may be watching, the key provisions of the Hague Convention. This is what the minister was talking about last week, and I quote:

Firstly, a choice of court agreement must be respected by the courts of a contracting state unless the contract in dispute is null and void under the laws of that contracting state. That is article no. 5.

[20:00]

So that makes sense because some states don't recognize others and that's important. You have to have, you know, a court system, a judicial system that is respected and has credibility around the world and is seen to be subscribing to the basic tenets of the rule of law.

Secondly, any court not chosen must decline to hear the case or suspend or dismiss proceedings unless limited exceptions apply, which is [then] found in article 6.

So in that it sounds relatively . . . What's the point of that? Well you might find yourself . . . You know, it's interesting. While we're in a time where emails fly around the world in seconds, sometimes things can happen at a much slower pace. And you find yourself that actually court proceedings have already started in a country that you thought, well what does that have . . . Why is that happening? And so it's really important that this Hague Convention says where it's going to happen and that means where it's not going to happen. And so this does make a lot of sense.

Thirdly, any judgment made by a designated court must be recognized and enforced in other contracting states except in very limited circumstances . . .

And there's always those exceptions to the rule. But of course what they're really saying is that it must be a recognized court and be enforced in other contracting states. So, you know, you could get a court in one country where other countries simply just don't recognize it, and that's not helpful at all.

Fourthly, the parties to the contract retain contractual freedom regarding the application of the convention to their contract.

And so that seems to make sense. And he talks about how the Government of Ontario has implemented a similar legislation, and the federal government is recommending the passage to other provinces to facilitate Canada's accession to the convention, which is really important.

So this is important. The minister goes on, says this ". . . aims to save time and expenses, both at the outset of proceedings, when jurisdictional disputes . . . [often] arise, and after a judgment is given, when parties seek to enforce a judgment abroad." And I

assume that this will be something where you have appeals as well.

And so this is critical, as we become more and more of an exporting province, that we find ourselves a partner on the world stage. And I think I've talked a little bit about how Myanmar is a good example in terms of the human rights, that a few short years ago they weren't even allowed by Canadian federal law to be trade partners, but now they are and we find that we are selling a lot of peas there.

And our people are pretty . . . I won't say . . . well aggressive in a good way, assertive, that they're out there looking for markets. Because that's what you do when you're out selling the good products of Saskatchewan. You want to make sure if there's markets developing, let's get known there.

But first of all let's make sure that we're setting up a good framework so that our base here in Saskatchewan, whether it be farmers who are growing peas or others who are in the implement industry, manufacturing industry, all can rest assured that agreements that they have signed with countries or states around the world, that there are processes and protocols in place, which means first of all the Hague Convention which is an important convention. And that will solve a lot of problems along the way. And our business community, our agriculture community can do what they do best, and that is grow and raise the products they do, manufacture the products they do.

And our export experts with the Ministry of Justice can provide the strong advice that they rely on, that they count on, about what would happen when things might go wrong. And of course we know in business that does happen. Unfortunately it happens too much, and when it happens internationally it has huge implications for everyone. And we just don't want to see that. We want to see that we can be well prepared, that contracts are solid, that they are enforceable, that if they need to go to court, that that court will be respected by other states and be enforceable, and that people won't be caught, won't be caught off guard. And ignorance in this case is not an excuse.

So I think that there's a lot of positives that we can . . . in this piece of legislation, especially when we talk about uniform law reform. We've seen many pieces of legislation come forward because of that, and I think that's a good thing that we have standardized many of the straightforward pieces of law or legislation across Canada so that there is not unusual, unique circumstances. Sometimes there has to be because of the province, of the federal situation. We understand that. If there is a unique circumstance, we have to provide for that. But if not, let's put the best minds across Canada together and make our laws as uniform as possible so that there is an ease of doing business across Canada.

We see exceptions to that. I mean I think about the housing, the situation in housing between Toronto, Ontario, BC [British Columbia], and Vancouver, the international pressures there, where it's very different than Saskatchewan. So we have different kind of laws that deal with that. But where there are similarities, let's look for that common ground so that we can have a better and stronger legislative regime for our exporting companies, for our business companies, for our farmers so they can do as well as they can.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, there probably will be many questions in committee on this, I'm sure. It's always interesting to find out maybe what the implications are, if there is any specific piece of . . . if there was a court case that caused this to come forward or maybe not. Maybe it's just another uniform piece of legislation that we're dealing with. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would move adjournment of Bill 96, *The Choice of Court Agreements (Hague Convention Implementation) Act*. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Centre has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 96. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 97

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 97 — *The Arbitration (Family Dispute Resolution) Amendment Act, 2017*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my privilege once again to wade into debate tonight, this time on Bill 97, *An Act to amend The Arbitration Act, 1992*. This bill, by and large, has to do with family disputes or the breakdown of marriage, those kinds of things, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This Act actually amends multiple Acts. It accompanies the bilingual miscellaneous statutes Act, family dispute resolution amendment, which I will speak to after this bill. But by and large, it sets out the definition for a family arbitrator and family law dispute.

So when we think about an arbitrator, an arbitrator is in an independent person or a body that's officially appointed to settle a dispute. And I understand that this option isn't expressly laid out to permit arbitrators in family disputes, and it doesn't include revisions to facilitate arbitration in family disputes. It isn't very often, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I'm in 100 per cent agreement with the members opposite but I think on the face of this is a very positive thing.

I know in our offices and just in life, you have a large number of marriages that come to an end and there are various different ways of dealing with that process, some of them more forgiving both to the dissolving couple and to children. And court is never the best option for anybody, Mr. Speaker, I would argue or it's rarely the best option. There are cases, obviously if there is abuse or difficulty for couples to even sit in the same room. But creating a process by which arbitration is laid out in law is an option, I think is a positive thing, Mr. Speaker.

So what this bill does, as I said, it sets out a definition for a family arbitrator and family law dispute in the legislation. So an arbitrator includes an umpire or a family arbitrator. And a family arbitrator in this legislation, it means a person who is recognized by the minister as meeting the requirements

prescribed in the regulations for family arbitrators. I'm curious, I don't know if the regulations have already been drafted for this or what that definition will look like in the regulations. That will be interesting to find out in committee.

But by and large, I think this is a good direction to go and I know this has been a trend. We've had legislation before us making mediation and collaborative law easier, Mr. Speaker. So any legislation that is good for families, even families at their very worst moment when the dynamic is changing, trying to make that process easier for everybody involved I think is positive.

There's a section that will be added in or that is added in this bill that allows for arbitration for family disputes, and there's several acts involved that could involve parts of *The Children's Law Act*, *The Family Maintenance Act*, *The Family Property Act*, or the *Divorce Act*. And as the minister pointed out, there's a trend to divert family disputes to arbitration which is, by and large I think, positive. But I know the critic who is responsible for this area will have some questions when we get to committee. But with that, I would like to move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 97, the arbitration amendment Act, 2017.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Riversdale has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 97, *The Arbitration (Family Dispute Resolution) Amendment Act, 2017*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 98

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 98 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Family Dispute Resolution) Amendment Act, 2017/Loi modificative diverse (résolution des conflits familiaux) de 2017*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Again I'm pleased to enter the debate, this time for Bill No. 98, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Family Dispute Resolution) Amendment Act, 2017* which goes along nicely with the previous Act, *The Arbitration Act*, Mr. Speaker.

Again I had said in the previous bill that there's not very often where I agree wholeheartedly with the minister, but looking at his second reading comments he says:

In some cases an out-of-court or early dispute resolution mechanism may be more appropriate in resolving family disputes, as they can achieve a fast result, be more cost effective, and have less of an emotional toll on the parties.

I will give the minister credit. I'm in 100 per cent agreement with him on that statement. Generally speaking when it comes to court, the only people who usually benefit when something goes to court, particularly family law, are the lawyers, Mr.

Speaker. It can be long and drawn out and painful for everybody involved and often difficult to get to the solution.

And ultimately when you go to court, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the person, the judge making the decision for you only knows so much about you and your family dynamic that a lawyer is able to present on both sides. It's a person who obviously is trying to make the best decision with the information available, but the judge, he or she doesn't know you or your family or your children the best. So in a perfect world . . . putting in place those measures to help support families through this process is a good thing.

So this particular bill allows for a larger role. There's multiple Acts that need to be amended here. It's a miscellaneous statutes amendment Act. It amends *The Children's Law Act*, *The Family Maintenance Act*, *The Family Property Act*, and *The Queen's Bench Act* to add provisions to recognize and promote early dispute resolution.

[20:15]

One of the things . . . I did notice that the minister pointed out that:

Unlike in regular civil actions before the court, parties to a family law dispute are not required to participate in mandatory mediation. This new process will require the parties participate instead in a form of dispute resolution . . . [It might] include mediation [he points out], but could also be satisfied by using the services of a collaborative lawyer, having attempted arbitration, or other forms of out-of-court resolution that will be prescribed in the regulations.

I'd like to know a little bit more about what will be in those regulations. But I just want to flag as a concern that I appreciate that there's multiple forms of dispute resolution. But the reality is sometimes when relationships break down, that the couples aren't always in a position to even to sit in the same room as each other. Sometimes there is abuse, both or either physical or emotional abuse, that makes sitting down and coming to a consensus very difficult. So I just want to flag that as a concern because you never want to force someone into a situation that isn't tenable for them and can be even more traumatic. So I just want to flag that as a concern.

But by and large, I think trying to help put in place processes that help people through this difficult time is important. And again the only people who benefit, generally speaking, from court action, especially in divorce, it's usually the lawyers. As I said, families are the experts in their own experiences, and where they can add their knowledge and work together the best they can to come up with a solution with supportive parties, whether it's a collaborative lawyer or a mediator or an arbitrator, an independent person who has heard all sides of the story, that is a positive thing.

This particular bill adds definitions for "family arbitrator" and "mediator." So those definitions are in the bill, Mr. Speaker. And it outlines the role of the mediator, and evidence . . . This is something I didn't realize actually. I've been through the mediation process on a couple occasions, Mr. Deputy Speaker,

the first time a little bit more effectively than the second time. But I didn't realize . . . I know in signing an agreement when you enter into mediation, you're told — I suppose it depends on the mediator — but I was told that none of what goes on in that mediation can be used in court. But apparently it cannot be used in court proceedings without consent from all parties being given.

So I don't know if that is a good thing. It opens up the opportunity to be free with your concerns and your . . . I think, without prejudice, being able to speak openly and hash it out in mediation without prejudice is a good thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Again anything that makes a difficult time in people's lives, particularly children, but when parents aren't doing well, you always have to remember children live in the context of their family and it's not just about children struggling. If parents are struggling, children are usually struggling and experiencing the trauma and the sadness and all the various emotions that can come with the breakup of a relationship, Mr. Speaker.

So I appreciate this government's efforts in making some of these changes to ensure that mediation, arbitration, all those alternate dispute mechanisms can be more easily utilized. But again just flagging that there can be concerns at times where couples because of abuse can't always use that, so I guess that's the reason we have courts, Mr. Speaker. But I look forward to hearing a little bit more in committee around what some of those regulations will look like. But with that I will leave that up to the critic, and for the moment I would like to move to adjourn debate to Bill No. 98, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Family Dispute Resolution) Amendment Act, 2017*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Riversdale has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 98. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 99

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 99 — *The Interpretation Amendment Act, 2017 (No. 2)/Loi modificative n°2 de 2017 sur l'interprétation*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter into Bill No. 99, *An Act to amend The Interpretation Act, 1995* this debate. And it's an odd one; it's a very short one, just one page with three sections.

It came in with a lot of fanfare before the Throne Speech. And I think it was a tweet that the Premier had . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Well Facebook Live, talking about how the Premier had heard from the people of Saskatchewan over the summer and heard them loud and clear about privatization and how they were going to take a step back from Bill 40. And it

was really interesting because a lot of people had placed a lot of hope in that comment, that announcement that we were going to see something quite amazing, that maybe, maybe the Sask Party had seen the light of day truly. And truly they had not.

But this had been yet another one of the Premier's trademark grandstand events where he would say one thing but mean something entirely different. And a lot of people really had high hopes for that because we had seen a summer . . . And particularly with STC, where that was the first victim. Well it wasn't the first victim because we've seen ISC [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan]. We've seen other privatization that was done, but not to the extent that this government had really all of a sudden changed its tune, its signal with Bill 40 when they said that they would sell off . . . privatization would allow them to sell up to 49 per cent of the shares.

And it was interesting, as we found out in committee, that this was some definition they had taken from the World Bank after the collapse of the Soviet Union and how they were dealing with many of the Soviet crowns, if you could call them that, the Soviet publicly owned enterprises. And clearly a different kind of world than we were living in.

And why this was all . . . Bill 40, why was it needed? It caused a lot of people a lot of concern. They were very, very worried about that. And the public rose up, and rightfully so. They were deeply, deeply concerned about what the government was really saying.

They felt betrayed by this government in the election of April 2016 where this government refused, refused to share the actual state of affairs of the finances of this province. Could've run on a budget. Could've run on, you know, what the actual state of affairs were, but chose not to. Chose not to, and in fact preferred to duck any tough questions about that, saying simply that it was too difficult for them to get a handle on the situation, the financial situation here in Saskatchewan, and that people would just have to trust them.

And boy, did people feel betrayed by this government, by this Premier who clearly, who clearly knew the state of affairs, and clearly had another plan of how they were going to approach solving this problem that they themselves had created by waste and mismanagement and scandal.

And while some over there think it's a kind of a funny joke, it really isn't. People are paying for it in the schools, in their schools. Today we had questions about how each child in our school has seen their funding cut by over \$600 because of what this government has done. And so how are they going to do about this? And of course one of the things that they were going to do, in one of their sly ways, was to take a look at the Crowns and what can they do about that.

Now it was interesting that the minister in charge of STC, who has — I mean it's ironic because we've talked about the fox guarding the henhouse — himself, who actually has, you know, quite a unique approach to transportation. He's a car salesman, and he thinks that's probably a good way to get around, and I understand that.

But STC meant an awful lot to a lot of people, and particularly as we head into these winter months and as Christmas is coming up and people who used to be able to go home for Christmas or travel to see their grandchildren or their children won't have that luxury this Christmas. Christmas will be very different for many people here in Saskatchewan. And we worried about the impact of that, and many people did.

And so this bill, this Bill 99 that we have before us, many people felt was going to help remedy that, that truly maybe this government had actually heard the people. But clearly they didn't hear the people because to them STC was as much a privatization as anything else because, at the end of the day, we see companies picking up the routes. We see other companies picking up the buses. And we see companies . . . We see the city of Regina actually picking up, I think, the bus depot here. I don't know if that was in the news. But I'm not sure what's happening in Saskatoon and Prince Albert.

You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we talk about privatization and we see that this government in committee last year tried to be as cute as possible on the answer about, did they need to have this winding up and dissolution remain. And it's interesting because they cut the other six parts of what privatization means:

- a public share offering;
- a sale of shares through a negotiated or competitive bid;
- a sale of the assets and business of the Crown corporation as a going concern [I suppose they would say that STC wasn't a going concern];
- a management or employee buyout of the Crown corporation;
- a lease or management contract;
- any other method prescribed in the regulations.

But they kept the next one, and that is privatization “. . . does not include a winding-up and dissolution of the Crown corporation . . .”

And you know, Mr. Speaker, we asked in committee, and I asked several times about this in committee, about why they needed that to be there if they felt that it wasn't privatization, that that was the point. What were they trying to shield themselves from in this legislation? Because if they were so sure that a winding up of any corporation was not privatization, why did they have to articulate it to make that point? What were they protecting themselves from and, you know, what was the point? And they could not really answer.

And so I'm going to read some of the comments from April 25th, 2017 where I asked, and I quote, this is on page . . . I can't tell you the page right off. This would be page 222 where I asked, “Did you need Bill 40 to pass? It seems the members on the committee, some members feel from the government side that [it] has to pass . . . for the windup of STC.”

And Mr. Kosloski couldn't give a straight answer. And he goes

on, “So there are provisions in *The Crown Corporations Act* to wind down and dissolve . . . presently. This provision certainly clarifies that with respect to the position of STC.”

And I say, “Can you tell me which section specifically speaks to winding up? The language is up, not down, and so winding up . . . [constitutions].”

And Mr. Kosloski says, “Section 13.”

Okay, “And that’s not *The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Act* . . . Okay, so it’s a different one. But that Act has been passed, right? So this is a clarification.” So we’ve been talking a lot but “There’s nothing in that Act that is a barrier to STC being wound up.”

Mr. Kosloski says, “That’s correct.”

So I say, “That’s correct. So this Bill 40 . . .” This is my third try. “So this Bill 40 does not need to pass for the government of the day to wind up STC. Is that right? Am I understanding you? Is that correct?”

[20:30]

Well Mr. Kosloski says, “Well it certainly provides clarity with respect to STC and the provision that a privatization does not include a windup. It certainly clarifies any doubts about that.”

And I asked him, “In what section are you referring to?” And Mr. Kosloski says, “I’m sorry?”

And I try again. This is my fifth, fifth try: “What section of *The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Act* are you referring to that needs clarification?”

“It’s the definition of privatization that’s being clarified.”

“My question was, what section of *The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Act* are you referring to?”

And he goes, well, it’s throughout the Act.

So I go on to my seventh try: “I’m asking for a clarification around winding up in *The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Act* that has been passed . . . I’m asking you to be more clear . . .”

And Mr. Kosloski says, “I didn’t say there was a barrier. I said this provides additional clarity.”

So my eighth try, my eighth try: “And where is that problem in *The Crown Corporations Public Ownership Act*?”

“Definition of privatization.”

“I’m asking you to give me the section and number that causes the problem.”

So he really couldn’t really talk about winding up. He would always go back to privatization. Ten times I tried to get a straight answer from that guy. Now I’m concerned that we’re still in the same place, that these folks are still working this

through, that they’ll wind things up. I mean, isn’t that a cute way of doing it? They don’t have to say it’s a going concern. They just say, hey we’re shutting it down and we’re selling it off; that’s not privatization. It is. It is, and everybody knows it is. And that’s what they were concerned about and the people over there refuse to understand that. They refuse to understand that.

What was once STC is now a series of different buses driving around. Well that’s privatization. The people know that. They know that it used to be a public service and now it’s a private one. It used to be one that we could count on in the government, and now we can’t. Now they had a cute way of going through, oh we wound it up, and it wasn’t . . . And so therefore it was done and we can sell off the remains. It was dead. Well it wasn’t dead. It wasn’t dead. STC wasn’t dead, and we’re worried about what this means for the other Crowns. So people are not resting easy.

And this Premier is certainly, as we get into the final days, the final days . . . We just had our . . . I have to say the discussion about Enterprise Saskatchewan was a very interesting one because as we get into the final days of this Premier, he’s changing his tune on Bill 40, but not really. To me it’s the same sort of thing.

And we saw Enterprise Saskatchewan; the only thing I would add is about the disappearing ink that we’ve seen. He’s got folks . . . [inaudible] . . . have not resolved in terms of their emails. We still have a lot of issues about what will happen when this government actually goes, and all these records have all of a sudden disappeared because of faulty tapes. It just seems like in this day and age, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, it has.

And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have a lot of concerns. And while this bill may seem to be very small, it has loaded . . . It is fraught, fraught with meaning. And when we get back into committee, if it’s the same legal team that we had before us on April 25th, 2017, they can expect a lot of questions about why winding up is still part of the record, and why the whole thing wasn’t repealed, and why we aren’t going back and . . .

You know, I mean, it’s interesting. This government will often say, we will recognize when we make a mistake and we will set the record straight and we’ll do the right thing. But boy with STC, that was not the case. And the film tax credit, that was not the case, you know. And Enterprise Saskatchewan, you just let that fade, you know.

This will be the interesting thing, as my colleague talked about, you know, the flops that have happened by this government, the flops that have happened. And we’ve really seen a change in this province. And which will be the number . . . You know, how we rank them from the worst impact, I tell you STC is going to be one that we remember.

And we’ll see, we’ll see what the new leadership over there says and what they mean and what their beliefs are around privatization of the Crowns, and is this just another way to get around the legislation. But unfortunately, I think people are on to them. They really blew through the social trust account in the last election where they really didn’t come clean with the

people of Saskatchewan with the state of affairs. They could not tell the people what was the actual state of affairs, or they refused to tell the people. It wasn't that they couldn't tell; they refused to tell the people what actually was the state of affairs here in Saskatchewan. And I think people are sorry that that happened. We are getting emails to that effect. People who never belonged to a political party are now signing up because of what has happened in the last few months.

And whether you take the Regina bypass that grew from \$400 million — and the Premier will say it's a billion, but it's actually 2 billion — and of course the whole GTH [Global Transportation Hub] scandal that continues to fester and we get no answers, not even in terms of the lawsuits, which I think is a basic . . . We don't need to know the individual settlements at this point — but at some point, probably — but even just an overall global number of how much are they spending on lawsuits to defend the GTH and the Regina bypass? This is something is concerning.

So this bill does not cut it even though people had high hopes leading into the Throne Speech. And here we are in the dying weeks of the fall session, and people had expected so much, so much more, and this is what they've got. And so with that, I would move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 99, *An Act to amend The Interpretation Act, 1995*. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Centre has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 99, *The Interpretation Amendment Act, 2017 (No. 2)*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 103

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 103** — *The Land Contracts (Actions) 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. Well it's certainly a pleasure to join debate tonight on the second reading of *The Land Contracts (Actions) Act, 2017*.

Mr. Speaker, you know, I'm not a lawyer. I should confess that right off the bat. But you know, I've got some very good friends who are lawyers, and one of the things that they say is that one of the most thrilling and engaging classes that they take on the way to their law degree is contract law. And you know, Mr. Speaker, you know, that sort of sets you up with some high expectations in terms of the thrill-a-minute ride that a piece of legislation like Bill No. 103 might be. And I was not disappointed in this regard, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

First off, it's got the seal of *Good Housekeeping* when it comes to legislation in Saskatchewan as having come from the recommendations contained in the 2014 Law Reform Commission of Saskatchewan report titled *Reform of The Land*

Contracts (Actions) Act, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I'm sure you've got that one on your nightstand just like me, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But certainly, all joking aside . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I thought I could hear somebody saying, "It's not a scandal" over there, whatever the heck that is. And maybe, maybe if the land contract legislation was more clear, Mr. Speaker, maybe we'd have a little less cause for people shouting things like "It's not a scandal" in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

But certainly, building as it does on the 2014 Law Reform Commission of Saskatchewan report, *The Land Contracts (Actions) Act* does a number of things. First, it's ". . . consumer protection legislation put in place to protect borrowers by requiring lenders to obtain leave of the court before starting a foreclosure proceeding." And I'm referring in this case, Mr. Speaker, to the second reading speech from the Minister of Justice.

I don't know if he's slipping or if, you know, he's not keeping up to his predecessor as the minister of Justice in terms of the kind of thrilling oratory and rhetoric that you'd expect to be brought to bear in a speech like this. But I've got to say, not one of his better speeches, not one of his better speeches, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And he can give some good ones; I wouldn't take that away from him. But I'm not sure what happened on this day. Maybe he'd had a bad sleep. Maybe he had, maybe he had got in a fight in caucus. That can happen, lord knows. Here we are in the legislature; sometimes politics breaks out. But maybe he was worried about the kind of blistering pace set by his predecessor, the member from Saskatoon Northwest. It's hard to say what happened with this particular piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker.

But in terms of the land contracts . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And now of course, this being such a great debate, Mr. Speaker, the member from Moose Jaw North wants to get in. He's taken a break from hollering over that "It's not a scandal," what happened with the GTH, and saying something else. And you know, I guess it's nice that he's mixing it up. This is a member that's well known for, "What are you talking about?" I think is one of his catch phrases. And now of course he's added, "It's not a scandal" to the repertoire. And again, Mr. Speaker, we disagree. We couldn't disagree more. Yes, it's sort of like the Education minister earlier today, you know. One of the school boards said it's not a total disaster, what's happening out in education land. Well you know, I guess you take your solace where you can find it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I guess is how that goes.

But certainly in terms of what's happening with Bill No. 103, *The Land Contracts (Actions) Act* being over 70 years old and having first been enacted in 1943, Mr. Speaker, in all seriousness this is legislation that comes out of the different things that happened with foreclosure and the different sort of moves that were made on people's property in the '30s and different of the lessons that we tried to learn as a province out of that time. And of course, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there comes a time where you need to modernize, where you need to do some housekeeping and, you know, yes, respond to the Law Reform Commission of Saskatchewan's report of 2014 in terms of straightening out process, in terms of modernizing, and in terms of, in this case as well, repealing *The Home Owners' Protection*

Act in terms of again the minister provides a rationale for that, or *The Agreements of Sale Cancellation Act*.

Again, Mr. Speaker, we'll certainly be doing our due diligence to ensure that it aligns with the fine work done by the Law Reform Commission and that perhaps it will straighten out process such to the point that the member from Moose Jaw North no longer has to protest too much in this House, Mr. Speaker, hollering out things like "It's not a scandal," when plainly something like the GTH is a scandal . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Scandal, scandal, as some might say. Some might say scandal, could be a scandal. You say tomato, I say tomato, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but the fact of the matter of course, not a laughing matter.

[20:45]

Anyway with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've got colleagues more learned than I on this score that I'm sure I'll be looking forward to their intervention on this front. I hear the former attorney general urging that it be sent to committee. I think it needs to marinate a while longer, I'd caution that member. Certainly I do look forward to the interventions of those of my colleagues much more learned on these matters than I, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But with that I'd move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 103, *The Land Contracts (Actions) Act, 2017*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Opposition House Leader has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 103. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 104

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 104** — *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, 2017/Code des droits de la personne de la Saskatchewan de 2017* be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm pleased to enter into adjourned debates today on Bill 104, *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, 2017*. I understand that this bill makes the Human Rights Code bilingual and makes several changes to the language throughout the Act without changing the content of the code. These are changes like changing the word "if" to "where" and changing "shall enjoy the right to" to "has the right to."

The Human Rights Code guarantees each of us dignity and equality. Because human rights are so important, this code takes precedence over other provincial laws. The code protects us against discrimination, which we know is any unfair action taken against others because they belong to a certain group. It can mean denying people benefits or opportunities that are necessary for a decent life such as jobs or housing.

This Act is certainly important, so changes should be carefully considered. Section 3 states that:

3 The objects of this Act are:

- (a) to promote recognition of the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family;
- (b) to further public policy in Saskatchewan that every person is free and equal in dignity and rights and to discourage and eliminate discrimination.

The Act outlines our Bill of Rights, the prohibition of certain discriminatory practices, administration of the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, complaints, remedies, and enforcement.

I think the changes to make this bill bilingual make good sense. I had a chance to review the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission's annual report for 2016-2017. With respect to bilingualism, I note that their vision statement is, "To have all Saskatchewan residents understand human rights, value diversity, engage in the responsibilities of their citizenship, and respect the human rights of others."

So in terms of being able to understand, I think bilingualism is a good step in that direction. So in understanding and public education, adding our second official language to the legislation makes it more accessible. It helps individuals whose first language is not English.

The annual report also cites that 7.8 per cent of total complaints relate to other ancestry besides Aboriginals, meaning the grounds for the complaint were colour, nationality, place of origin, race, and perceived race. They don't have a breakdown for first language on this chart, but it seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that a language barrier could exist in some of these complaints. One concern that I highlighted in this report was that there were 444 new complaints to the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission in 2016-2017.

If you look at the trend of files opened and closed located in table 2 on page 35 of the annual report, you will see that there is a concerning trend of more complaints coming to the commission. For example, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in 2011-2012 there were 218 files opened and 214 closed, so the cases have over doubled since then.

In *An Environmental Scan* prepared by the office of my colleague from Saskatoon Centre, they looked at emerging issues for human rights in Saskatchewan. The goal was to provide an environmental scan outlining the current major human rights issues in Saskatchewan or those affecting Saskatchewan, from human rights in employment to the human rights of the GLBTQ [gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning], First Nations and Métis, and new Canadian communities.

It identifies some current major issues with regard to human rights, including that a vast majority of human rights complaints occur in the category of employment. And a recent human rights issue relating to employment and immigration is the

temporary foreign workers program where individuals are being paid less than minimum wage, sometimes charged excessive rent prices, and being taken advantage of.

The report also identifies the human rights trends with regards to First Nations and Métis rights nationally: the Truth and Reconciliation and the 94 calls to action; the impact of the Sixties Scoop; missing and murdered indigenous women — and we had the inquiry in Saskatoon starting last week — Cindy Blackstock's work which my colleague from Elphinstone-Centre was referring to earlier; voter suppression and the *Fair Elections Act*.

Under gender identification and expression there was discussion about the 2014 amendment of the Human Rights Code to include gender identity as a prohibited ground. With regards to new Canadians, it notes the increase in immigration in Western Canada in the last few years, an increase of visible minorities.

And I'll just quote the report here with regards to new Canadians:

Of the Western provinces, Saskatchewan has seen the largest jump in immigrant-related complaints, from a consistent 13% of complaints before 2008 to almost 30% in 2008-2009. This number stayed up at approximately 24% until 2011-2012 when it dropped back down to 11%.

The Human Rights Commission commented on this jump in complaints in their 2010-2011 annual report "Complaints from new Canadians accounted for one third of all complaints filed this year . . . The Commission has identified racism in employment as a growing area of concern for complaint processing and as a topic on which to focus public awareness."

The report also looked at individuals with disabilities, privacy issues, issues around sexual orientation, women's issues, and external human rights initiatives. It concludes that Canada has changed, and this has implications for human rights in our country.

It also concludes by indicating that Saskatchewan has a long history of leadership in human rights, and I think this is important to note, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Saskatchewan Bill of Rights was passed in 1947. That was a year before the UN [United Nations] adopted the United Nations declaration of human rights, and it was the first of its kind in North America.

Despite this history, human rights issues are not a thing of the past. New concerns continue to emerge daily, Mr. Speaker, and we need to remain vigilant. And the people of Saskatchewan have already seen evidence of the Sask Party not acting in the best interests of working people in this province, so we need to be careful.

In January of 2015, a Supreme Court of Canada ruling decided that the right to strike is a fundamental right in Canada. This ruling came about because of the Saskatchewan case that was brought forward by public sector unions challenging a law that was passed in 2008 by this government that limited the right to strike by workers deemed by government to be essential services. We saw the direction this government tried to take our

human rights, and folks remain skeptical as a result.

So I provide details in this report to read them into the record and to highlight how crucial it is to get these issues right. We are talking about the people of this province, and our rights-based framework has been an important driver in shaping our framework for how we view society around us.

Mr. Speaker, when the minister gave his second reading speech, he spoke about the purpose of the Act and how this bill will repeal and replace the existing Act with bilingual legislation. He cited the fact that over the last 30 years, the Government of Saskatchewan has enacted 58 bilingual Acts designed to meet the needs of Saskatchewan's francophone community.

My colleague from Athabasca also entered into this debate. He spoke about the importance of this Act, the increasing number of complaints coming forward that have increased under the Sask Party's watch. I'll echo my colleague from Athabasca's concerns about the growing number of complaints over time and the growing number of complaints that are dismissed. These are concerning trends, and we will certainly continue to work with the commissioner and remain engaged in the incredibly important issues of human rights in this province. I know my colleagues will have more to say on this bill, but with that I would like to move to adjourn debate on Bill 104, *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, 2017*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Fairview 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 Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 105** — *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Consequential Amendment Act, 2017* be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter into adjourned debates on Bill 105, *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Consequential Amendment Act, 2017*. This bill proposes to amend *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* as a result of Bill 104, which we just spoke about, the Human Rights Code, 2017. The sections of the employment Act that refer to *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* will now say the Human Rights Code, 2017.

When the minister gave second reading on this bill, he identified that it accompanies *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, 2017* and makes consequential amendments to the Saskatchewan employment code as a result. Since *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* is being replaced by a bilingual Act, references to the old Act will be updated here as well. The minister also states that there is no change to the

substance of this Act.

Mr. Speaker, I think we can again talk about ensuring the human rights of people in our province to make sure they are protected. With regards to Bill 104, I identify that there are a number of current concerns that exist within our province: the growing number of complaints and the unresolved complaints to the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission; and the changing nature of Canadian society and the changing human rights environment, with implications for employment, First Nations and Métis women, gender identity and expression, new Canadians, individuals with disability, privacy issues, issues around sexual orientation, and external human rights initiatives.

And we know that we have to be cautious when we talk about human rights and careful to any changes that we propose. We have a proud history of human rights in this province and, being leaders, we know that many do not trust the Sask Party with our human rights, especially when we talk about employment and their attempt at essential services legislation, Mr. Speaker.

I know my colleagues will have more to say about this particular piece of legislation, but with that I move to adjourn debate on Bill 105, *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Consequential Amendment Act, 2017*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Fairview 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 Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 106 — *The Missing Persons and Presumption of Death Amendment Act, 2017*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As always it's a privilege to wade into discussion on bills and right now I will be talking about Bill No. 106, *The Missing Persons and Presumption of Death Amendment Act, 2017*.

When looking at a bill and determining what it's about, there's the bill itself, but it's always good to look at the minister's second reading comments to see from where the ministry is coming at with respect to a bill. It doesn't always . . . There's more work that always needs to be done to reach out to stakeholders and talk to folks, but it's usually a good starting place to get a sense of what the bill is about, Mr. Speaker.

The minister points out that the new provisions “. . . expand the ability of law enforcement agencies to access information and obtain search orders in a missing person investigation.” He points out, Mr. Speaker, that when a person is reported missing and law enforcement starts an investigation, sometimes there's no reason to suspect a crime, so law enforcement can't rely on

the Criminal Code, the federal Criminal Code, to obtain an order to compel the release of information about a missing person. So that can delay a missing person investigation and sometimes time is of the essence, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

He points out that “In 2009 Saskatchewan was the first jurisdiction to [adopt or] incorporate access-to-records provisions into its missing persons legislation.” And the current legislation actually, at this point in time, which will be amended:

. . . 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 . . . [including] financial information, telephone and communications records, health information, and identification information including a photograph.

Which can be very helpful in trying to track someone down, Mr. Speaker. There's actually rarely a day or a week that goes by without something coming across our Twitter feeds, I suspect, where not just children but folks are reported missing, and a picture or a photograph can be a very useful thing.

But this particular bill, Bill No. 106, will be amended to, if it passes, to add additional types of information that can be accessed with a court order, including electronic information like cell phone records and text messages, global positioning system tracking records, employment information, records from school including attendance, and travel and accommodation records. In this day and age where most people have a cell phone, I can see how that could be extremely beneficial, Mr. Speaker.

[21:00]

The minister, as I had said, pointed out that Saskatchewan was the first jurisdiction to incorporate these access-to-records provisions in 2009. But the Uniform Law Conference of Canada has adopted uniform legislation which creates the basis of the proposed bill and has been adopted in five jurisdictions. So the Uniform Law Conference of Canada is an organization. It was founded in 1918 to harmonize the laws of the provinces and territories, and where appropriate, the federal laws as well. The Uniform Law Conference of Canada makes recommendations for changes to federal criminal legislation based on identified deficiencies, defects, or gaps in the existing law or based on problems created by judicial interpretation of existing law. So hence the reason some of these changes are being proposed here, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

It's interesting to me, this is, in reading some of the background notes for all the bills that come before us, the uniform . . . I think the government must be doing some review of bills. The Uniform Law Conference of Canada is mentioned here, but it's mentioned in another bill. I know my colleague from Elphinstone mentioned the Law Reform Commission of Saskatchewan making recommendations in a bill being adopted. There's been other pieces, well private members' legislation that have come forward based on Law Reform Commission of Saskatchewan recommendations. I'm thinking about a bill that I had around long-term care and minimum quality-of-care standards, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I would have liked . . . I'm glad to see this government adopting some best practices and keeping up with other legislation across Canada and elsewhere, but there's places where . . . And organizations like the Uniform Law Conference of Canada or the Law Reform Commission of Saskatchewan are very helpful in seeing where we could be going with legislation. And it's unfortunate that they adopt and move in some direction but not in all cases. As I said, I had a private members' bill on minimum quality-of-care standards, which came out of a report by the Law Reform Commission of Saskatchewan, that this government twice voted down, Mr. Speaker.

In thinking about this particular bill, *The Missing Persons and Presumption of Death Amendment Act, 2017*, it's hard not to — especially with the missing and murdered indigenous women's inquiry that just came through Saskatchewan on its lone Saskatchewan stop in Saskatoon last week — it's hard not to think about the many, many women who've gone missing or have lost their lives, Mr. Speaker. I know the number that's been cited in the past. I think since about 1980, the RCMP has pegged the number at about 1,200 missing and murdered indigenous women, although our current national minister of indigenous and northern affairs, Carolyn Bennett, thinks that number . . . She admits it wasn't using data, but around evidence and speaking with families about their own experiences, that that number is quite likely higher, Mr. Speaker.

I think about the challenges that indigenous people face, sometimes with policing and sometimes with getting their . . . The reality is, is racism, structural racism, is a reality here in Saskatchewan. I represent a constituency where people experience it every day, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I know our Saskatoon Police Service, of which I'm very proud . . . My dad was a police officer for 30 years, and times have certainly changed since his time on the beat. And the former, recently retired Chief Weighill has done a great deal of work to try to improve relations between the indigenous communities and the Saskatoon Police Service. It sort of . . . It didn't sort of. It culminated in an inquiry after 17-year-old Neil Stonechild was dropped off in 1990 and froze to death on the outskirts of the city. Ultimately an inquiry took place. Two police officers went to jail, and there was an apology from the chief of police to Mr. Stonechild's mother. And there's been some really good work done, but we have a long way to go, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I also think about the time when I was a new reporter in the early '90s, and John Crawford, who is a serial killer here in Saskatchewan, he killed three First Nations women — Eva Taysup, Shelley Napope, and Calinda Waterhen. And earlier actually in his life, he had also spent 10 years in jail for manslaughter. He had also sexually assaulted an indigenous woman. But at that time I was a reporter and my boss actually, Warren Goulding, ended up writing a book on this particular topic. It was called *Just Another Indian: A Serial Killer and Canada's Indifference*.

And that was 20 years ago, which is hard to believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I think we've made great progress, but I think we still have a long way to come. We think about truth and reconciliation. You can't have reconciliation until you have truth, and I have some concerns that not everybody is interested in the truth piece, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We need to get truth,

and we need to all be committed to reconciliation and putting in place . . . actualizing the calls to action, doing what we can in our respective roles.

So it's very hard to not . . . to talk about a missing persons and presumption of death amendment Act without raising that we have a lot of work to do. And indigenous people still pay a huge price for being indigenous, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that in 2017 is unacceptable.

But there are some positive changes in this bill. There's a few housekeeping amendments, and I appreciate that the minister is keeping up with recommendations by the Uniform Law Conference of Canada. So with that, I know that our critic responsible for this bill will have many questions in committee. But with that, I'd like to move to adjourn debate.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Riversdale has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 106, *The Missing Persons and Presumption of Death Amendment Act, 2017*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 76

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

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's an honour and a pleasure to stand here today to talk about the amendments to *The Parks Act*, Bill No. 76.

So I guess I'll first start talking about how our provincial parks are wonderful for our province. When I go to other provinces, people tell me about how they love coming to Saskatchewan because our parks just have such natural beauties. And it's really an honour to be able to have people come from other provinces just to utilize our parks. So I'm happy to see that we prioritize our parks and we make sure that they're well kept. And I hope we continue to do that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, my understanding with regards to this bill, it contains several housekeeping amendments, which I think a lot of bills that we will be examining do. Because when we get an opportunity to open up a bill and take a look at it, that gives us a good opportunity to make some of those amendments with regards to housekeeping, because language changes and you want to make them applicable to other bills that might be pertaining to them. And there's also a large focus on creating gender-neutral language with regards to the bill, which I think is also very important that we acknowledge.

But I think the big, main part of this bill is the fact that there's going to be a new provincial park established within our province, and my understanding that the process of establishing this provincial park has been happening for quite so many years

and it's been long standing. And it has actually at times been a real contentious issue with regards to some individuals having concerns with regards to where the provincial park is going to be located.

And there's some First Nations people who live and use the area to do a lot of their traditional healings, to do a lot of their traditional ceremonies. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, some of them were here on the day that this bill was established or brought forward in the Assembly here, and I know that they spoke to the media and they talked about how they have some concerns with regards to this being implemented.

There was a gentleman, his name is Vern Friday. He's the lands manager at Key First Nation, and he's been involved with a lot of the discussions that have been happening from the beginning. And he said, "People have historically met in the area for traditional ceremonies and other activities." He says, "Some of them will not be happy about the park, because of the potential influx of tourists" as well. He says, and I quote, "It has always been there for them for healing and spiritual help and hunting."

That's what Mr. Friday says. And his brother Randy Friday, who also works at Key First Nation, said there have been concerns about how the park designation will affect life in the community. And he says, "We love our traditional lands that are ours. There's graves there, there's traditional medicine, there's trap lines, so we'd still like to maintain that." And according to Randy Friday, the bands rushed in to give input on the decision because they felt the province wasn't going to back down. He says, "It was going to happen anyways. It was on the table, so here we are," he says.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I find that quite troubling when individuals say openly that they feel that the province is going to go ahead without really addressing their concerns or looking into them. I don't like knowing that that's what people in our province think our government is about.

And I think if there's concerns, I don't understand what the rush is. I know this has been something that's been on the books for a while. What's a little bit more time to sit and have these discussions and ensure that everyone is comfortable with this? I don't think that's unreasonable, and I think, and I hope that the minister could potentially change his mind and have more discussion with regards to some of the stakeholders that are there. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that is my biggest concern with regards to this bill. And I think it needs to be talked about a lot, is about the fact that there needs to be consulting with everybody, hearing everybody's concerns. And we need to ensure that everyone feels that they're included with regards to this decision.

One of the other things that I found interesting, and the minister says in here, that the new provincial park will be named Great Blue . . . Porcupine Hills provincial park. But that's just simply a temporary name, that a permanent name will be established later. And again, that makes me wonder why. What's the hurry? Why can't everything be established together? What's the rush of doing these things if people are feeling that they're not being heard, if you don't even have a permanent name because you want to consult with people a little bit longer, a little bit more? Then do that consultation. There shouldn't be a rush for this. Or

what is the reason for the rush?

[21:15]

And if we implement the park now with the temporary name . . . I've worked for government for a while and I've seen departments have name changes and I've seen the costs of that also, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I think it's just flushing money down the toilet when we decide to change a logo or change the department name from department to ministry, ministry to department, and change all of our letterheads and change all of our name tags and change . . . You think about the monetary context of that, and then we think about how, you know, we're in a financial crunch here. Well maybe that's not the best plan, and maybe we should have the whole plan established before we go forward.

I wanted to highlight some of the parks that we do have, and I'm going to talk a little bit about them. One is called the Athabasca Sand Dunes Provincial Park. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have always wanted to go to this provincial park . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And same with my colleague . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Oh, nice. Yes. So they will have to make a trip up there because I hear that's like one of the most amazing places to see in Canada, you know.

And so that's right in our northern part of our province, and it stretches 100 kilometres along the south shore of Lake Athabasca. The Athabasca sand dunes is the largest active sand surface in Canada. The largest active sand surface in Canada, with outstanding scenery, dunes as high as 30 metres, and a unique ecosystem that's rich in rare . . . and has only some specific plants. And scientists love going there as well. And it sounds like it might be a good place to go canoeing as well.

And then there's the Blackstrap Provincial Park. It's home to one of the rarest geographical formations in Canada. The Blackstrap Provincial Park takes its name after the man-made mountain that rises 45 metres above the surrounding prairies. A 40-minute drive south of Saskatoon, this park is the perfect place to enjoy a wide range of summer activities. And I drive by that oftentimes when I'm coming here for my duties. It's a beautiful place.

The Bronson Forest recreation site, so this one has sandy beaches and multi-day-use areas for the whole family. It's the perfect place to enjoy your summer days. It's secluded in Saskatchewan's wooded North. Bronson is home to several well-stocked lakes with good populations.

The Buffalo Pound Provincial Park. It's located 20 minutes northeast of Moose Jaw. Buffalo Pound Provincial Park offers a balanced blend of nature and recreational opportunities. And it was once used by First Nations people with regards to corral bison. The park maintains a captive herd in a paddock that's situated along the area's scenic rolling hills. So that sounds beautiful as well.

Candle Lake Provincial Park. That's close to my home and I go there quite often. And so it's really well known for its sandy beaches and clear water and the surrounding forests. And if you haven't been there, I really suggest that you take an opportunity to get up there. It has lots of walleye, and it's a beautiful place

to bring your family.

The Clarence-Steepbank Lakes Provincial Park. This is a quiet wilderness park. It's within Saskatchewan's boreal forests. It says it has the rustic amenities so I probably won't go to that one very often because when I go camping, I don't like rustic. But there's lots of options for both, for all people of all their interests.

The Clearwater River Provincial Park. It's a beautiful place for skilled canoeists. They really enjoy going to that. It also has a spectacular waterfall. And the wilderness park is pack-in, pack-out so it's recommended for experienced or non-experienced hikers.

Crooked Lake Provincial Park. That's nestled in the scenic Qu'Appelle Valley right close, I believe, to where your home is, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And so I'm sure you know exactly where Crooked Lake Provincial Park is. And it has stunning valley views and a beautiful lake, and that sounds really beautiful as well.

Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park. So the Cypress Hills offers something for every visitor. It has the lush forest. It has breathtaking views. And so it has a campground and lots of wilderness there.

Danielson Provincial Park. It's the perfect place to enjoy your summer with the sandy beaches, excellent fishing opportunities, and large campsites. It provides a variety of opportunities to fill your days with outdoor activities.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, today was an actual really nice day here in our . . . I don't know if we're still fall or if we've headed into winter yet, but when we're in the winter days, we can think of our provincial parks. And I think it starts that you could start booking them in February or something, so like figure out which provincial parks you want to go to and starting booking them.

The Douglas Provincial Park is named after the late Saskatchewan premier, Tommy Douglas. This provincial park is situated on the southeast end of Lake Diefenbaker, and that also features some sandy shorelines and wooded campsites and massive inland sand dunes.

Then there's the Duck Lake, or the Duck Mountain Provincial Park. Duck Lake doesn't have a provincial park yet, but maybe that might be on the list. But this is Duck Mountain Provincial Park, and it's known for its rolling hills, well-stocked lakes, and boreal forest settings, with accommodations ranging from wilderness camping to electric campsites, which I would like, or modern cabins. So that might be one I might go check out.

The Echo Valley Provincial Park, and that's situated in the legendary Qu'Appelle Valley again. So it sounds like the Qu'Appelle Valley has a lot of options for provincial parks, so that's wonderful. You get to enjoy the valleys and the lakes — beautiful.

The Good Spirit Lake Provincial Park. This was named by *Maclean's* magazine as home to one of the top 10 beaches in Canada. So that's a wonderful thing to add to our repertoire

because sometimes we don't necessarily get the good news stories in Saskatchewan with Prince Albert and North Battleford being some of the most dangerous cities to live in and the highest rates of suicides and addictions. But we really need to promote the beautiful things in Saskatchewan as well, and the reasons why we continue to stay here because we know it's so prosperous and there's so much . . . wonderful things in Saskatchewan. And so one of these, like the top 10 beaches in Canada, that should be something we brag about all the time. So that's Good Spirit Lake Provincial Park, and that's just 30 minutes northwest of Yorkton.

So the Great Blue Heron Provincial Park. That is adjacent to the Prince Albert National Park. So yes, I haven't ever checked out that one, but it looks like it's close to where I go oftentimes, the Prince Albert National Park which is also beautiful. And this year since it was Canada 150, we were able to go to all the national parks for free and check them out and check some new ones, and I hope everybody was able to take advantage of that.

The Greenwater Lake Provincial Park. My kids used go there oftentimes with their dad because he lives around that area, and they would always talk about it. And I know some members here also have property there or go there and check it out. And I hear it's just beautiful. And it says here it's stunning year round and it is a wonderful place to go for fishing and water sports and so with the beautiful beaches.

I think I got the members over there thinking about beaches and wonderful days at the lake. And I remember the member from Moose Jaw North was sharing a story about how a former member for Melfort had a wonderful idea of turning a garage into an area that looked like a beach so that they could enjoy a winter day in a nice summery location. And just great creativity we have in our winter days on how we could celebrate some warm time.

We also have the La Ronge provincial park. We have so many more provincial parks, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I could highlight. We have Meadow Lake Provincial Park, that's in the northern part of our province. And then Moose Mountain, which was one of Saskatchewan's first provincial parks, if I may add, yes, which I wonder how long ago that was established. I'm not quite sure but that would be really wonderful to learn the history of that also. And so we got the Narrow Hills and Pike Lake. And so we got quite a few provincial parks here — Regina Beach.

And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I guess why I've been talking about all these provincial parks that we have across this whole province and just the wide variety of them is because I want to highlight that. You know, I think it's a great opportunity to have provincial parks in our province and we need to highlight them and we need to support them, and it's a wonderful opportunity. But I also want again stress the fact that we don't need to rush into this decision. We can take more time to consult with the stakeholders. We can take more time to think of a permanent name, you know, instead of having the temporary name.

But going on with some of the aspects of this bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's the park boundary descriptions that are in here. They're talking about some of the things that they're going to need to do in order to establish this park, so roadway widening

and canal expansion, and descriptions for corrections and future planning. So there's a lot of that logistics that is within there.

There's also the forestry terminology amendment. So this is another big aspect in this bill, and I think sometimes it kind of gets hidden or forgotten within the bill because a lot of people focus on the new provincial park that'll be established, which is important but not the whole aspect of this bill. The forestry terminology is a big aspect as well, and so timber harvesting can be authorized under *The Forest Resources Management Act* and *The Parks Act*, so depending on the type of project. So they'll look at what the project is and determine which Act that particular project will fall under. And I hope that doesn't provide some confusion to people who are applying for timber harvesting and . . . or the people who are the ones that are administering what is needed to be able to apply for the timber harvesting. So I hope it doesn't provide some confusion. I hope it simplifies things, and I guess that's something that we'll have to look into by talking to some of the stakeholders, the people that'll be affected by this, and see if this is something that they're wanting or if this is something that it could be potentially more confusing for individuals.

The other aspect for this bill is the authority to evict for alcohol-related offences. So I know that there was some advice from counsel with proposed minor adjustments to close the gap to support an enforcement officer's ability to carry out the annual alcohol ban because, like you are well aware, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on May long weekends in our provincial parks we have an alcohol ban.

[21:30]

And so it sounds like with regards to some of the minister's comments that some officers, enforcement officers felt that they didn't have enough legislation or ability to be able to evict people who weren't obeying by this ban. And so changes to this legislation would help provide the ability to evict individuals breaching the contravention of the alcohol ban. And of course this would be the last option. Officers would use other forms of providing warnings and tickets before they would think of evicting people.

And I've spent many May long weekends in provincial parks and I've seen enforcement officers do a really good job with establishing enforcement but not being, like taking their abilities to the full extent that they could, you know. And they're very respectful and they do a good job with ensuring safety for everybody who's there. And as a parent and now a grandparent, it's really nice to know that I could go to these locations and be in an environment that alcohol isn't something that's surrounded by my children, you know. And so I appreciate that and I appreciate the fact that this would be enforced well.

And like I said before, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a lot of the other things that are in this bill, the amendments, it's housekeeping. It's improving the language. It's clarity in its gender . . . clarity with regards to the gender referencing.

So I know the critic that's responsible for this bill will talk to the appropriate stakeholders and ensure that he does his due diligence with regards to making sure that there's consultation

with regards to our part. And I know I have other colleagues who would really like to participate with regards to . . . information with regards to this debate. So with that, I would like to move to adjourn debate with regards to Bill 76.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Prince Albert Northcote has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 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 member from Prince Albert Northcote.

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Again it's an honour to be able to stand here today and enter into debate with regards to Bill No. 77, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Superannuation Plans) Amendment Act, 2017*. That's a big mouthful.

And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a bill that was put forward by the Minister of Finance and she's had a lot of bills that have been put forward. And the Minister of Finance used to be the Minister of Social Services and the Minister of Municipal Relations, and I had the opportunity to be the critic for both of those so we've had a good time to get to know each other. But now with her being the Minister of Finance, it's not my area so we get to see each other in the hallway and get to chat there, but that has nothing to do with the bill that I'm talking right now.

And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this bill serves to amend both *The Liquor Board Superannuation Act* and *The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Act*. And so those are two big Acts and both of them are being amended in this particular bill. So one of the main amendments and purposes for this bill is the change to amend *The Liquor Board Superannuation Act*, and that is to designate the minister the full responsible for the Act as the sole member of the Liquor Board Superannuation Commission.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the commission previously had three members and they were appointed by order of council, and one member needed to be an employee of the Liquor Board. And so I think that's really important to have employees involved with a program that definitely has to do with employees. And now moving this to have the minister as the sole member of the commission, for myself I find that concerning.

The commission is responsible for the admission of the Liquor Board superannuation plan, and I'm going to refer to the goals and objectives of this plan which was from the Saskatchewan Liquor Board Superannuation Commission annual report. This was in the 2016 one.

And on this 2016 report here, it says the goals and objectives of the commission is to:

... set operational goals and objectives for the administration of the Plan.

Annually, a report is made to the Commission with regards to the accomplishment of the objectives.

The Operational Goals and Objectives is comprised of three goals:

1. Financial Management

The Commission provides sound financial management of the Plan.

2. Service Delivery and Communications

The Commission provides excellent service to the members of the Liquor Board Superannuation Plan.

3. Performance Measurement

The Commission evaluates the performance of the Plan's service providers.

So those are important goals and objectives, and they serve a purpose. And so the reason the minister has given for the changes to this Act is the fact that the plan has been closed to new members since October 1st, 1977.

And so this makes me think, when I first started with the government everyone would say, are you under the old plan or the new plan? And I didn't understand what they were talking about. But I'm wondering if this maybe has something to do with it. Maybe this was the old plan. And it was a big deal whether you were under the old plan or the new plan. And my understanding, the old plan was the really good plan, if it is. Anyway, this one was closed to new members since October 1st, 1977. I would have been only three. I was under the new plan when I started, so didn't start that early.

So the reason why the minister said was why they did these changes was because ... She indicated that there's two active members in the plan right now because the majority of the members are retired, with having 177 retired employees in the plan. And so one thing I don't understand, and I know it's just a matter of numbers, but in the report that was given, it said there was three active employees and 177 retired. But anyway, regardless of if there's two or three active employees ... And she indicated that these employees had close to 35 years, if not that many years, and so they would be close to retirement. And that is why they were making these changes to just have the minister be responsible.

But my question would be, what is the rush? Obviously these people will be retiring soonish. And so if that's the case, what's a year or two, three, four, five, just to make sure that everybody has the same accountability, the same treatment as other people had with regards to any issues that they might have with the commission.

And so I think it's really important that we think about how this will provide the accountability and the transparency. And again it troubles me that there'd be no staff engagement because there obviously was a really important reason why they decided to have a staff person part of the committee to begin with. And so if it moves to just the minister responsible, I find that kind of concerning. But I know the critic will ask plenty of questions, and she'll contact the stakeholders and ensure that she does her due diligence with regards to getting all the information when she gets an opportunity to speak to the minister about that herself.

The second proposed amendment serves to amend *The Superannuation (Supplementary Provisions) Act* to allow the restricted retirement option, which is oftentimes referred to as RRO. So I'll refer to it as RRO in my context here. So the amendment serves to have the RRO to continue. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the RRO provides a means for executive government and the Crown Investments Corporation to offer early retirement to eligible employees in corporate downsizing or restructuring. So I know there's times when employers will offer their employees early retirement options, and that's what the RRO provision is for.

My understanding is that the original legislation was set to expire in 1995. And so every time it was needed ... an order in council is a good way and a good format to ensure that everybody knows what is happening and what's going on with regards to government decisions. But the minister's reasoning for having this within this Act is to ensure that they don't need to have these order in councils put in whenever they want to incorporate these RROs.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I think about that, I think about, is there a reason or a purpose that the minister's wanting to ensure that these RROs are available and not needing to go through the process of having an order in council? Does that provide the transparency? How are people going to know, through government, that this is being implemented? And if it's something that agencies are just allowed to do, we're not going to be sure which of these agencies are providing these options to their employees so that they can downsize their staffing complement. And so I'm concerned about the transparency and I'm concerned about any motives that this potential government might have because we've known from other bills that have passed through that decisions were made that had negative consequences. I hope this one doesn't as well.

But like I said, I know the critic is going to analyze this and do her due diligence and she'll ensure that she asks the right questions. And I know my other colleagues have a lot of input that they would like to also put forward with regards to this debate, so with that I move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 77.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Prince Albert Northcote has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 77, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Superannuation Plans) Amendment Act, 2017*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 78

[The 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 member from Prince Albert Northcote.

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm proud again to stand today and give my remarks with regards to Bill No. 78, *The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2017*. And again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, oftentimes the municipal employees' pension is referred to as MEPP [municipal employees' pension plan] and so I may refer to it in that aspect. So it's the same thing that I'm talking about.

The MEPP is a defined benefit pension plan administered by the Municipal Employees' Pension Commission for employees of schools, rural municipalities, cities, towns, colleges, villages, libraries, and a variety of other municipal-level employers. Apparently there's 25,000 MEPP plan members — that's quite a few people — and there's 737 employers, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

[21:45]

So when the Minister of Finance gave her remarks, she indicated that one of the main purposes would be "... to eliminate the portability of the pension benefit ... upon termination of employment." The other amendments are more administrative in nature. They change from a yearly election of Chair and Vice-Chair to every two years. So the Chair and Vice-Chair could stay on for a couple of years which might provide a little bit more continuity.

They plan to increase the commission by two members. And so they would be adding one member appointed by employers who employ firefighters and police officers. And when I look at the amended bill here, it says that that person would be from the cities of Estevan, North Battleford, Prince Albert, Swift Current, or Yorkton because those are areas that have firefighters or police officers under their mandate.

And then another person would be appointed by the Canadian Union of Public Employees, which we call CUPE. And so that person would be appointed also to sit on here. So it'll move from a 10-person commission that originally had five employers and five employees to a 12-person commission that now will have six employers represented, and six employees. So that's one of the amendments with regards to this Act. And I'm not quite sure why they decided to add those two members, but I'm sure there'll be a lot more discussion when the critic talks to the minister with regards to that.

And then there's amendment to clarify the definition of full-time hours and things that they are going to be changing within the Act that will simplify reporting to the plan for the employers, so make it an easier process for them.

And another amendment will be, within the bill, would be to require all employers to remit contributions to MEPP within 15 days after the end of a pay period. So they're wanting to have a consistent period of time where they'll get the contributions in, to provide some consistency is my understanding.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think when you're talking about pensions, you always have to take into account the control of the person who owns the pension, the beneficiary, with regards to their options, make sure that their options are appropriate and won't be extremely restricting for them when they retire or if they terminate their position, what their options are. And also you want to make sure that the benefits to the recipient, or to the beneficiaries if that's the case, are going to be available in an easy and timely fashion.

And so again I know the critic with regards to this portfolio will contact the stakeholders and she'll do her due diligence with regards to that. And I know my colleagues will have a lot more that they would like to add to this debate. So with that, I move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 78. Thank you.

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

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 21:49.]

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