



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

of the

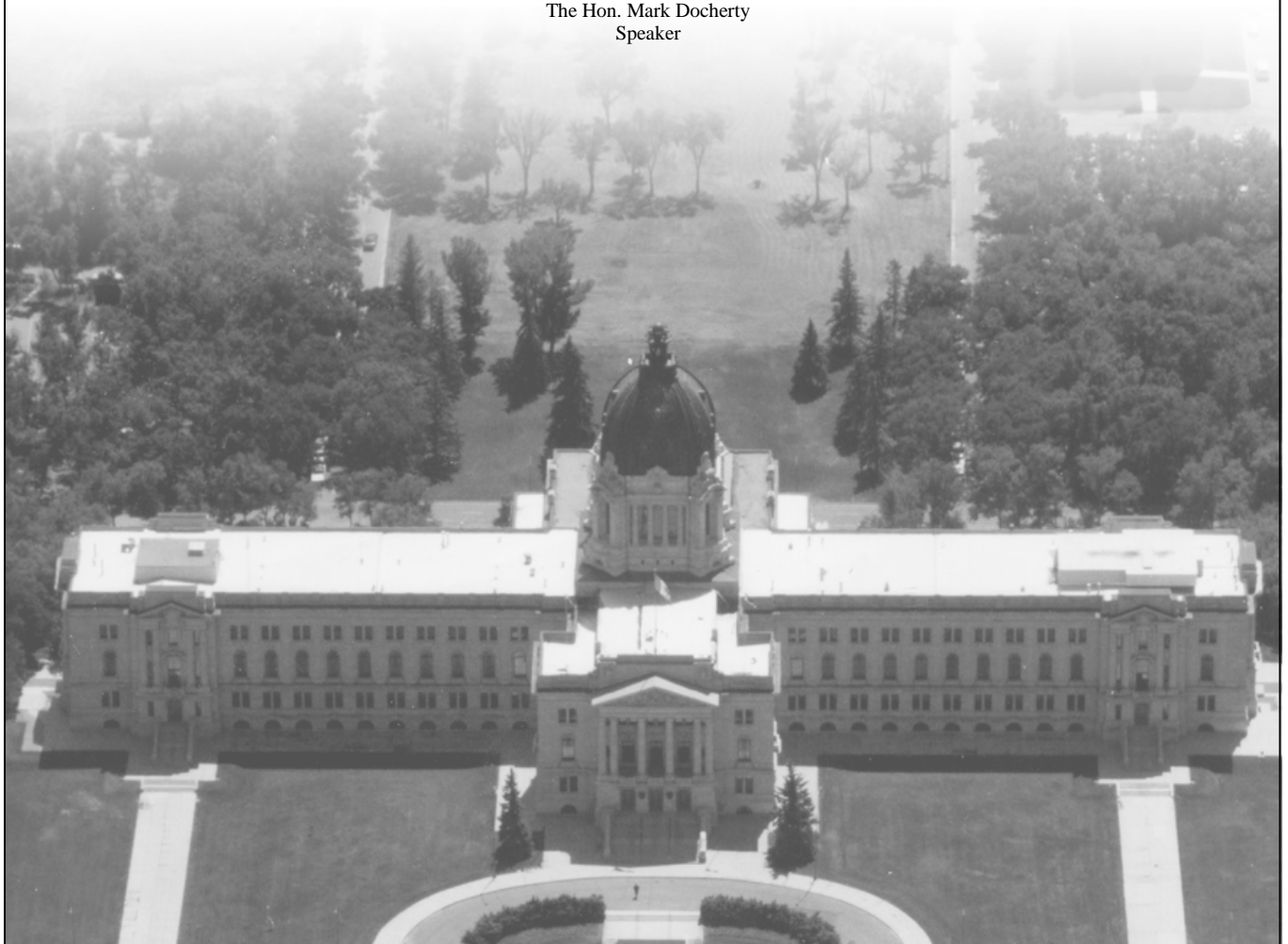
**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(HANSARD)  
Published under the  
authority of  
The Hon. Mark Docherty  
Speaker



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

**Speaker** — Hon. Mark Docherty  
**Premier** — Hon. Scott Moe  
**Leader of the Opposition** — Ryan Meili

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**Beck**, Carla — Regina Lakeview (NDP)  
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**Steinley**, Warren — Regina Walsh Acres (SP)  
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**Vermette**, Doyle — Cumberland (NDP)  
**Weekes**, Randy — Biggar-Sask Valley (SP)  
**Wilson**, Hon. Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (SP)  
**Wotherspoon**, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)  
**Wyant**, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)  
**Young**, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

Vacant — Regina Northeast

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

**Clerks-at-the-Table**

**Clerk** — Gregory A. Putz

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

**Principal Clerk** — Iris Lang

**Clerk Assistant** — Kathy Buriaynk

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, I would ask for leave for an extended introduction.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Thank you very much to my colleagues and thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my great pleasure to introduce to you and through you to all members of this Saskatchewan Assembly, some very special guests that are with us today. With us today, Mr. Speaker, is Ambassador David Wilkins, who has served as Saskatchewan's representative in Washington, DC [District of Columbia] for nearly a decade now. Welcome.

The ambassador is accompanied today by Christy Cox and Justin Meyers, who work alongside the ambassador in Washington, DC. Welcome to the Saskatchewan legislature. Our guests are in Regina for meetings with government officials.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's been said that effective diplomats should be analytical, good writers, verbally fluent, and willing to accept dangerous assignments. Well in 2005 Ambassador Wilkins was given the dangerous assignment of representing the United States in the great city of Ottawa, Mr. Speaker. He would later tell a reporter that being named Ambassador to Canada was the greatest honour of his life. He said, and I quote, "I woke up every morning thinking okay, big boy, you're representing the United States. Don't screw it up." Mr. Speaker, it reminds me of some comments of the member from Athabasca from time to time, Mr. Speaker.

Well, Mr. Speaker, he did not screw it up. Mr. Wilkins has done an excellent job as ambassador. It certainly helped that he brought long experience in government to that job. Mr. Wilkins served 25 years in the South Carolina House of Representatives, including 11 years as Speaker of the House. Mr. Speaker, you have a few years to go.

But also important was the fact that the ambassador possesses a genial disposition, an open mind, and a warm heart. Upon arriving in Ottawa, he launched a Southern charm offensive on the Canadians, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the ambassador travelled across this country building strong relations with provincial leaders, including our former premier of this province.

And I should point out that the ambassador was, and is, a steadfast supporter of our Armed Forces. He visited our troops on the front lines in Afghanistan, and we are grateful for the compassion that he showed Canadian women and men serving alongside Americans in the cause for freedom.

After his diplomatic service, Mr. Wilkins joined the law firm Nelson Mullins, where he was hired to serve as our representative in the US [United States] capital of Washington, DC. And, Mr. Speaker, the United States is our closest friend. They are our largest trading partner, and we need someone capable and knowledgeable to advance our relations with that trading partner in Washington, DC.

Unlike other provinces, including our neighbour to the west, Saskatchewan does not have a permanent trade office in Washington. We have something much better, Mr. Speaker. We have Ambassador Wilkins, and I think he has done a superb job in this role representing our province. He has provided excellent insight and advice to the Government of Saskatchewan, and the ambassador is a well-known and well-connected businessman in the US capital.

This was demonstrated on Premier Wall's most recent mission to Washington. The premier met with Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross, Energy Secretary Rick Perry, as well as EPA [Environmental Protection Agency] Director Scott Pruitt, among other senior officials. The ambassador helped secure those meetings, and we're thankful. We're very thankful for that effort.

Mr. Speaker, it's also important to note that Ambassador Wilkins is a huge football fan. His second-favourite team is the Saskatchewan Roughriders, and it's right after the Clemson Tigers. Mr. Speaker, I don't know whether the ambassador hums the "Tiger Rag" in his sleep, but it wouldn't surprise any of us. These last few years have been good years for the Tigers and we certainly wish them well in the season ahead. And we accept the reciprocal well wishes for our Saskatchewan Roughriders, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the people of this province have been well served by Ambassador Wilkins and his team, and we are pleased, our relationship with Nelson Mullins will continue for years to come.

I would ask all members of this Assembly to join me in welcoming our guests to this legislature today.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join the Premier in offering my words of welcome to the ambassador and his colleagues. I'm glad to see them here today and want to thank the ambassador for his service to the people of his nation and of ours as he has worked through the years to make sure that that relationship between our closest neighbour and friend, the United States of America and Canada, that that is a positive relationship working for the best of the people of both nations. Thank you, and ask the members to please join me in welcoming him to our Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Fiaz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all the members of the Assembly, I would like to introduce a long-time friend of mine, Raj Verma, seated in the west gallery, Mr. Speaker. He's a very good, successful businessman in Regina, visiting this Assembly with his younger brother Narinder Verma, who is from Chicago, here today.

I would like to ask all the members to join me in welcoming them in this Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly. Thanks.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, it's my honour to introduce guests that are seated in your legislature here today. I have my little sister, Shauna Weninger, that's here today. She's a mortgage broker, an amazing mom, gives me lots of good advice as well. She's joined by her husband, my brother-in-law Grant Weninger. He's a great fishing partner. We've been on many expeditions all through the North. He's a real moose on the portage, can carry his weight in cargo, Mr. Speaker. He's not much of a fisherman, but a really good guy.

And it's my honour to welcome a courageous young man, my nephew Nolan, eight-year-old Nolan, grade 2 over at St. Josaphat here in Regina. He's my hiking and hunting and fishing partner, a pretty cool little guy and a courageous little guy who lives with epilepsy, overcomes so many challenges. And I ask all members to welcome him to his Assembly here today on Purple Day, a day to recognize those living with epilepsy and to work for a better tomorrow. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise to present petitions on behalf of a very important heritage industry in Saskatchewan, that being trapping, as well as the trappers across our province who are certainly important to our province, incredible knowledge keepers of our land. And the prayer reads as follows:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call upon the Saskatchewan government to immediately show their support for Saskatchewan trappers and provide a trapping licence exemption for Saskatchewan residents over 65 years of age.

These petitions today are signed by citizens of Regina. I so submit.

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

**Mr. Steinley:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise once again today to present a petition from citizens who are opposed to this current Liberal federal government's carbon tax. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to read

the prayer:

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

Mr. Speaker, and the petition is signed by citizens of Glenbush and Medstead. I do so present.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling on the government to stop the cuts to our children's already strained classrooms. Those who have signed this petition today wish to draw our attention to the following: to the fact that despite taking in an additional \$67 million in education property tax, last year this government saw fit to cut \$54 million from our children's classrooms. Of course, Mr. Speaker, those type of cuts don't come without very difficult consequences, including cuts to busing for kindergarten students, as well as cuts to important preschool programs for children with special needs. Mr. Speaker, I'll read the prayer:

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

Mr. Speaker, those who have signed this petition today reside in Saskatoon and Strasbourg. I do so present.

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

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour for me to stand here today and present a petition for a second bridge for Prince Albert: that the Diefenbaker bridge in Prince Albert is the primary link that connects the southern part of the province to the North, and that the need for a second bridge for Prince Albert has never been clearer than it is today.

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

Mr. Speaker, I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan ask that the Saskatchewan Party government stop stalling, hiding behind rhetoric and refusing to listen to the people calling for action, and begin immediately to plan and then quickly

commence the construction of a second bridge for Prince Albert using federal and provincial dollars.

Mr. Speaker, the individuals signing these petitions come from the cities of Regina and Saskatoon. I do so present.

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

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for critical workplace supports for survivors of domestic violence. This is a very serious issue in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, as Saskatchewan has the highest rates of intimate partner violence amongst provinces in the country. Saskatchewan, as we know, must do much more to protect survivors of domestic violence.

And for many who experience domestic violence, the violence will follow them to their workplace. Employers need to take every reasonable precaution in the workplace to protect workers who are survivors of domestic violence. And that accounts for some of the measures that the government did take on after we suggested them in a private member's bill, Mr. Speaker, last session. However, one of the pieces that the government refused to pass, which is being called on by these petitioners, is a measure allowing for five days of paid leave be made available to workers who are survivors of intimate-partner violence.

Mr. Speaker, this is very important. It's been called on by those who are experts in this area, those who are working on the front lines in this area and see the importance of ensuring that we're doing everything we can to ensure that those who are fleeing domestic violence are able to retain and continue on with their employment while they're transitioning to a safer living situation.

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

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call upon the Saskatchewan Party government to pass legislation to ensure critical supports in the workplace, including reasonable accommodation and paid and unpaid leave for survivors of domestic violence.

And, Mr. Speaker, the individuals signing the petition today come from Regina and Strasbourg. I do so present.

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Saskatoon Regional Economic Development Authority

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Thursday, March 8th, I, along with several MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] and over 500 other people, attended the Saskatoon Regional Economic Development Authority's annual economic forum at TCU Place. It was an inspiring event, reminding everyone in attendance just how outstanding Saskatoon is in its commitment to innovative economic development. The conference covered a variety of sectors and topics, including

agriculture, technology, urban development, entrepreneurship, clean energy, Aboriginal economic development, research and innovation, and creative culture.

This forum is just one of many methods of the organization's community outreach. SREDA [Saskatoon Regional Economic Development Authority] sends a daily newsletter providing informative links to business and economic news relevant to Saskatoon and to the province at large. SREDA also recently released a video, *The Saskatoon I Know*. Based on a poem written by talented wordsmith and SREDA CEO [chief executive officer] Alex Fallon, the video details the advantages of living in a city as exceptional as Saskatoon.

[13:45]

And this is what makes SREDA such a valuable institution: its devotion to economic development has had a measurable impact that they're only committed to increasing. Their 2015 to 2018 strategy Growing, Together aims to make SREDA the best economic development agency in the country. Their goals for 2018 include a \$45 million impact from SREDA's programs and services and \$16 million in business and investment attractions. Saskatoon is fortunate to have such a competitive and passionate economic agency like SREDA at the helm. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations Youth Legislative Assembly

**Mr. Bonk:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last week the member from Melville-Saltcoats, along with the member from Meewasin and the mayor of Saskatoon, attended FSIN [Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations] Youth Legislative Assembly on Treaty 6 territory in Saskatoon.

The FSIN promotes the inclusion of youth voices and recognizes the strength and potential that youth have in our province. The youth assembly is one way to achieve this. During the assembly there was an election to appoint new male and female FSIN youth representatives. Darian Lonechild of the White Bear First Nations won the female youth representative position. She replaces Cheyenne Fineday of Witchekan Lake Cree Nation on Treaty 6. Rollin Baldhead of One Arrow First Nation won the male youth representative position. He replaces Andre Bear of Little Pine and Canoe Lake First Nations.

I want to take a moment to thank Cheyenne and Andre for the fine work as youth representatives and to congratulate Darian and Rollin on their election wins.

Mr. Speaker, around 300 students and youth attended the FSIN youth assembly this year. There were powerful and inspiring presentations from Erica Lee who talked about justice and promoting the ongoing resilience among indigenous peoples, members from the Aboriginal youth entrepreneurship program showcasing their products and services, and Fond-du-Lac crash survivor Lyman Fern.

Mr. Speaker, the FSIN youth assembly is a fantastic way to ensure youth are included in the important work FSIN does.

Our youth in the province are leaders of today. On behalf of everyone in this Assembly, I want to thank FSIN and everyone who helped make this event such a success. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Purple Day Increases Awareness of Epilepsy**

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the Assembly in recognition of Purple Day, the international day of awareness for epilepsy. Founded in 2008, Purple Day is an international grassroots effort dedicated to increasing awareness about epilepsy worldwide. On this date annually, people in countries around the globe are invited to wear purple and attend events in support of epilepsy awareness.

Mr. Speaker, there are more than 10,000 people in our province with epilepsy. My nephew Nolan is one of those 10,000 people. I'm incredibly proud of Nolan and the thousands of other Saskatchewan people and families who bravely face the challenges that epilepsy presents. As a province, we must do so much better for those living with epilepsy. We must act to ensure access to needed medications, medical professionals, and supports.

Currently the Royal University Hospital, along with the Saskatchewan epilepsy program, is leading an important initiative to ensure equipment that is required during brain surgery that will ensure much better outcomes for patients. This is very important, but frankly this should be funded publicly, not left to charity.

And so I ask members to join with me in recognizing Purple Day and committing to action to ensure those living with epilepsy have the highest quality of life possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Gender Diversity Week**

**Mr. Lawrence:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this week marks Gender Diversity Week here in Saskatchewan. It's a great opportunity to inspire, inform, and educate the people of Saskatchewan on the challenges faced by members of the sex- and gender-diverse community, and to celebrate the accomplishments and the diversity of the people living and contributing to this province.

Mr. Speaker, hosted by the TransSask Support Services, the genderqueer flag will be raised tomorrow at Regina City Hall in its honour. TransSask has an incredible lineup of events and workshops this week, including co-hosting a makeup and chill event with the U of R [University of Regina] Pride Centre on Wednesday. This group is so important to our growing and diverse society, and their courage and continued efforts are being felt all over Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, it is a reminder that we must continue our efforts to promote equality for all, as there is absolutely no place for discrimination in our province. I encourage all members in this

Assembly to attend the events that will be held by TransSask Support Services this week throughout the city and throughout the province.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members please join me in continuing to stand up for the rights of all individuals in Saskatchewan and wish the TransSask Support Services well on a great week of awareness and education.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month**

**Mr. Buckingham:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, and I want to remind members of the importance of early detection for the second-most commonly diagnosed form of cancer for Saskatchewan men, and the third-most common for women.

This disease has greatly affected my family, as my mother lost her battle with cancer at a very early age and my brother is currently fighting this disease. I am certain that almost everyone in this Assembly knows someone that has been affected by cancer in their communities and understand the importance of prevention. In any given year, more than 800 new cases are diagnosed in this province. When detected early, colorectal cancer can be successfully prevented or treated in 90 per cent of cases.

Mr. Speaker, building on the success of other screening programs, the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency launched the screening program for colorectal cancer in 2009 and has since expanded across this province. The Saskatchewan Cancer Agency asks that men or women between 50 and 74 years old contact the agency if they have not received a testing kit within the past two years.

Our government is pleased to continue funding the Cancer Agency to ensure that life-saving services like this screening program are available for all Saskatchewan people. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Cut Knife-Turtleford.

### **First Nation Opens New Band Office**

**Mr. Doke:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last month the community of Little Pine First Nation came together to celebrate the opening of a brand new band office. Little Pine is situated about 20 miles north of Cut Knife in the constituency of Cut Knife-Turtleford where they have a great MLA.

Songs, food, and remarks from a number of noted dignitaries from Little Pine and surrounding area were all part of the opening celebration. The event was emceed by Gavin Baptiste, and Little Pine Chief Wayne Semaganis and Councillor Serinda Baptiste both spoke about the project.

Mr. Speaker, the previous building had burned down in 2009.

The opening of the new office symbolizes the fruition of years of hard work from all people across the First Nation. In a simple but significant acknowledgement of the past, photos of previous Little Pine elders were held up during the ribbon-cutting ceremony, recognizing those who had laid the groundwork for the new facility today.

This ceremony was also used to introduce a new initiative run by the First Nation: the Little Pine security team. The security team was established in conjunction with the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] and is in the first phase of a process to introduce a self-administered policing force for Little Pine First Nation.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of everyone in the Assembly, I'd like to congratulate Chief Wayne Semaganis and everyone who was involved in the construction of the new band office and his forward thinking for policing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Swift Current.

#### **A Busy Weekend in Swift Current**

**Mr. Hindley:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was a busy weekend in Swift Current. Mr. Speaker, on Friday morning I was invited to bring greetings at the opening of a new restaurant. Flavorii is a combination East Indian/Mexican food restaurant opened by Mr. Chirag Shah and his family. Chirag immigrated to Canada in 2001 and recently moved to Swift Current, where he's been investing in a number of business ventures. And I congratulate him on the opening of that new restaurant.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, on Friday afternoon I had the chance to speak at the under-18 provincial curling championships kickoff luncheon. We had 22 teams from eight different regions around the province competing for a chance to represent Saskatchewan at the nationals taking place in April. Thank you to the teams and the organizers led by chairperson Karen Biese of the Swift Current Curling Club.

Friday evening, Mr. Speaker, I had the chance to attend the Swift Current Chamber of Commerce fourth annual farmer appreciation banquet where I had brought greetings on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture. It was an opportunity to recognize the major impact that agriculture has on the local and provincial economy. The guest speaker was Murad Al-Katib of AGT Foods, who is truly a champion of our industry.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, on Saturday night I had a chance to attend the Swift Current branch of the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation annual fundraising banquet. It was their 27th annual banquet. Local President Clark Schultz and his team of volunteers and organizers have done a great job of advocating for conservation and enhancement of wildlife habitat.

I'd ask all members to join me in congratulating and thanking all of these Swift Current businesses and organizations for the great work they do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### **QUESTION PERIOD**

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

#### **Global Transportation Hub and Government Transparency**

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With less than half of the land sold and sales having ground to a halt, the GTH [Global Transportation Hub] has added \$37 million to our ballooning public debt. This project can't move forward under its current cloud of scandal and suspicion, Mr. Speaker. In the interest of good public fiscal management, will the Premier commit to the public inquiry that his Deputy Premier asked for in September?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take the question on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, we are certainly working hard; the GTH board and management is working hard to ensure that the Global Transportation Hub is a success moving forward, Mr. Speaker.

Certainly the board and management are well aware of slower industrial development, not just that is impacting the Global Transportation Hub but really all across Western Canada. As a result, anticipated land sales have been lower, Mr. Speaker. I would say that the members opposite's public negativity on the matter hasn't certainly helped the matter as well, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, certainly I think the members opposite will recognize that within a very short number of years, nearly 1,000 full-time jobs have been created. Over 1,800 construction jobs have been created. There is work going on as we speak out at the Global Transportation Hub, Mr. Speaker, and the province is benefiting from additional tax revenue as well, Mr. Speaker.

So we'd invite the members opposite to perhaps change their tune a little bit and become a little bit more positive on the potential of the Global Transportation Hub.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Mr. Speaker, it would be easier for us to change our tune if this government would face the music. The question was whether or not he would have a public inquiry, Mr. Speaker. Given the huge hole the GTH is leaving in our province's budget, if the Premier won't call a public inquiry, will he at least commit to revamping the conflict of interest Act, just as was proposed by the member from Meadow Lake and the Deputy Premier?

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

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Mr. Speaker, certainly the members opposite will know that the government, this government on this side of the House, took a much different approach when concerns were raised than the members opposite did when they were the Government of Saskatchewan when concerns were raised about particular business deals, such as getting into the potato industry, which the members opposite wanted to get the government involved in.

Mr. Speaker, the only amount of accountability that we underwent in this province in that respect was to have the

hand-picked deputy minister to the premier — then Lorne Calvert was the premier from the members opposite — who did an investigation, Mr. Speaker. And you know, we all know the story: Eldon Lautermilch got moved over, but there was no problems, nothing to see here.

Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we took concerns very seriously. That's why this side of the House, the government, asked the Provincial Auditor to look into the matter to raise, bring forward recommendations. The government has accepted all of those recommendations, brought them forward, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there is further work being done on this matter, and we'll wait to see how that concludes, Mr. Speaker. But in the meantime, Mr. Speaker, this is an entity that has grown private investment, private sector investment, to the tune of nearly half a billion dollars in just the first couple of years of its creation.

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

#### Government's Fiscal Management

**Mr. Meili:** — Mr. Speaker, as is obvious in the public discourse and the fact that these units aren't selling, there remain significant questions. Having a public inquiry, having changes to the conflict of interest Act, will allow us to both find out what mistakes were made and prevent future mistakes.

Speaking about mistakes, we heard Brad Wall on his way out of the premier's office say that there were mistakes made in last year's budget. And the government ended up spending quite a bit of time last year having to walk back some of the ill-considered and unpopular choices that were made: cuts to libraries, cuts to funerals for people who died while on social services, cuts to various services that should never have been touched in the first place.

So my question, Mr. Speaker, is: this year, has the Premier done his homework? Will he be able to show us that he's made the right choices, that he's done the work, that he can actually stick with his choices throughout the year? Or are we going to see more and more choices walked back in another ill-considered and hasty budget?

[14:00]

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And as was announced shortly after I became Premier, Mr. Speaker, is we would have a budget coming forthwith on April the 10th, Mr. Speaker — a small delay but I think a fair delay in light of a new leader on both sides of the House, Mr. Speaker, a new cabinet. And, Mr. Speaker, we'll bring that budget forward on behalf of the people of the province as soon as possible.

We've been busy, Mr. Speaker, all cabinet ministers, consulting with our stakeholders and those that are impacted by any budget here in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and looking for opportunities to ensure that we are investing in precisely those core services, Mr. Speaker, those services that the people

across this province expect their provincial government to invest in, Mr. Speaker. We heard, and I'm sure members in the leadership campaign across . . . We were across this province and heard from people in the province on what those core services are, Mr. Speaker, and what they expect in health care and in education and in taxation, Mr. Speaker — what is acceptable and what may not be.

We've made changes, Mr. Speaker. We've made changes with respect to the PST [provincial sales tax] on agricultural insurance as well as life and health insurance. And we've made changes, Mr. Speaker, investing in our next generation, investing in our classrooms, directly in our classrooms. And we've moved those changes up, gave the quarterly amount for the last quarter this year, Mr. Speaker. We will always, always, Mr. Speaker, ensure that we invest on behalf of the people of the province, invest wisely, and always stand with our jobs, our communities, and every individual across the province of Saskatchewan.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've seen seven deficit budgets from this government during their tenure. We're likely to see another. Despite years of record revenue, this government has left us 11 years older and deeper in debt. And, Mr. Speaker, that debt is projected to reach \$22 billion by 2020, the highest in the history of this province. Despite those spending habits, the Saskatchewan people face higher fees and cuts to core services, Mr. Speaker. We're paying more and we're getting less.

In the budget ahead, Mr. Speaker, what assurances can the Premier offer that in this budget, the people of Saskatchewan won't be asked to pay yet again for the Sask Party's decade of fiscal mismanagement with higher fees and cuts to services?

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I think it's fair to give the assurance of the record of this government, Mr. Speaker, over the last decade — the record of our investment, Mr. Speaker, in communities; a record of our investment in health care, Mr. Speaker; in health care, education, and social services.

Our investment in those portfolios, Mr. Speaker, which is the lion's share of the budget each and every year, is up 72 per cent in just 10 years, Mr. Speaker. That's money that is invested in our communities across the province of Saskatchewan, invested in those that needed it, and invested in those core services that the people of this province expect their provincial government to provide, Mr. Speaker.

What this government will not do, Mr. Speaker, is put forward a two-and-a-half-billion-dollar spending spree, Mr. Speaker, with absolutely no plan, no plan whatsoever, to fill that gap, Mr. Speaker. Not even a \$4 billion carbon tax over five years, Mr. Speaker, which those members support, on industries and jobs and communities right across this province would pay for that deficit, Mr. Speaker.

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



### Funding for Education

**Ms. Beck:** — The minister talks a good game when it comes to supporting children in the classroom, Mr. Speaker, but actions speak louder than words. Reversing \$7.5 million of the funding cuts in last year's budget is still a cut. In fact, it's a \$46.5 million cut from the 2016 levels, and that doesn't even account for contractual obligations, inflation, thousands of new students, or the PST and power rate hikes that this government has foisted upon divisions.

The minister says that the \$30 million promised on the campaign trail is a start. Mr. Speaker, that doesn't even get us to the starting line from last year. Will the Minister of Education show that he stands not only by the Premier's commitment but also his own, and commit to reinstating at least the full \$54 million that they cut last year?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, Mr. Speaker, it wasn't six weeks ago — and I've mentioned this in the House on a number of occasions — when I stood with the Premier, and the Premier stood in the rotunda of this building, Mr. Speaker, and committed to seven and a half million dollars in mid-year funding, Mr. Speaker, which annualizes to \$30 million, Mr. Speaker. We know there's more work to do, Mr. Speaker, but we're committed to supporting children in the classroom, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the overall education budget since we took power in 2007 is up 114 per cent, Mr. Speaker. Operating funding to school divisions is up over 32 per cent, Mr. Speaker. This government, Mr. Speaker, in the commitments that have recently been made by this government, is showing commitment to the classroom, Mr. Speaker.

We acknowledge there's more work to do, Mr. Speaker, and we're going to continue to do that work. We're going to do that in consultation with teachers and with school divisions, Mr. Speaker. We're going to do it in consultation with parents to make sure that we're properly supporting children in the classroom, Mr. Speaker. As I say, there's more work to do, Mr. Speaker. We're committed to doing that.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, the minister acts like the \$7.5 million is extra money, but it's not. It's a fraction of what was taken from our classrooms last year, leading to hundreds of job losses and cuts to very much needed programs.

A real commitment to education would start with a full reversal of the \$55 million cut, followed by getting to the table with school divisions, boards, educators, and others to figure out stable, predictable funding that accounts for growth, inflation, and other pressures that have flowed from this Sask Party's decisions.

Again, will the minister reverse the cuts in full and get to the table and make sure that there are no further cuts to our children's classrooms?

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

**Hon. Mr. Wyant:** — Mr. Speaker, the opposition can wait for the budget which is going to be delivered in just two short weeks, Mr. Speaker. But I'll tell you this, Mr. Speaker: we're committed to having these ongoing conversations, Mr. Speaker. I met with a number of school divisions since I became the Minister of Education, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to continue to meet with school divisions. I'm going to continue to meet with teachers, continue to meet with their organizations that represent them, Mr. Speaker, so we can understand properly what the needs in the classrooms are, what they need to ensure that we provide proper education to the children in the classroom, Mr. Speaker.

We're committed to these dialogues. We're committed to this conversation, Mr. Speaker. And I did that through the campaign, Mr. Speaker, talking about how important it was to have those meaningful conversations, those respectful conversations — and we're having those, Mr. Speaker. But the opposition can wait for the budget, Mr. Speaker. It will be delivered in two short weeks, Mr. Speaker, and they can see our commitment to education then.

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

### Fee Increases

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, cutting funding for education just doesn't make sense. And it makes even less sense when you think about how much more money the Sask Party is now taking out of the pockets of Saskatchewan families.

This year's fee increases add up to more than \$18 million. Now listen, that is more than \$5 million more than the last four years of rate increases combined. They're making everything more expensive, from cottages out at the lake, traffic tickets, to kids' juice boxes, Mr. Speaker.

Now last weekend we heard about turkey sales. What's up this weekend, a bottle drive to keep us afloat? How can the Sask Party justify reaching further into the pockets of Saskatchewan people when they're wasting money hand over fist at the GTH, cutting health care, education, and supports for the vulnerable?

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

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's a number of reasons. Of course it's diverse what the fee increases are. There's a number of reasons behind the fee increases. Some are cost recovery because the cost of the program has increased. Some are deterrents for behaviour, such as speeding tickets. So I suppose the member opposite thinks that all families are speeding and therefore it's going to affect all families. I don't believe that's true, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker.

When she talks about the 2 cents on recycling charges, Mr. Speaker, she knows that that money goes into environmental initiatives. You would think she would be supportive of that. Considering that she will support a carbon tax for environment purposes, why wouldn't she support a 2 cents recyclable fee, Mr. Speaker? That's kind of . . . What she says on one hand

isn't what she thinks on the other. So she's got to get her message straight. Does she support it or not?

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, these backdoor tax hikes are totally unacceptable. Now last week I had the chance to go door knocking with our team in the last Finance minister's constituency. And I'm sure the people of Regina Northeast will be very interested in hearing about this latest round of backdoor tax hikes: 10.2 million more for apple juice boxes; six point . . . million more for traffic tickets; more than a quarter million in courthouse fees, as if lawsuits aren't expensive enough already; and more than half a million dollars from farmers working the land.

So my question for the Finance minister is, in addition to the \$18 million backdoor tax increase, are there any other increases in the upcoming budget?

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

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, this was so backdoor we put out a press release and we gave, you know, quite a detailed description of what these fees are. That's how backdoor we were, Mr. Speaker. These are fees that already exist, they're so backdoor, and there was just some increases to different fees. And as I said, it was for different purposes, Mr. Speaker.

But what we won't be doing is a carbon tax, which is going to affect absolutely every individual in this province. It's going to hurt every family and it's going to hurt every business and it's going to stagnate growth within our province. That's what we're not going to do. So can she explain how a carbon tax is a better idea?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

#### Film Industry and Government-Owned Buildings

**Mr. McCall:** — Mr. Speaker, the swarm of fees referenced by my colleague from Nutana is not the only damaging fiscal move made by the Saskatchewan Party government. Back in 2012, the Sask Party scrapped the film employment tax credit and put our province's once-thriving film industry on life-support. They bowled ahead with this wrong-headed cut despite the protests of the film industry, Saskatchewan people, and even the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce, who in their analysis said that for over \$1 million a year, this tax credit created \$44 million in economic activity right across the province.

Mr. Speaker, the film industry makes us proud. It made the people of Saskatchewan millions and it created hundreds of jobs. In the upcoming provincial budget, will the Sask Party do the right thing and restore the film employment tax credit?

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

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We appreciate the good work the film industry does and

continues to do in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We have Creative Saskatchewan that has been around since 2012. It helps all the creative sectors, Mr. Speaker. And this is a program that over \$2 million a year is spent in the film production business, Mr. Speaker, and you know, it's working well. I have a list here, if I have subsequent questions, of all the films that take place in our province, Mr. Speaker.

And with the changing media sector, Mr. Speaker, we've seen some changes from Creative Saskatchewan in order to hit the digital interactive area, Mr. Speaker, the micro-budget film feature, and the web series as well. So film entrepreneurs do a great work in our province. There's been the Filmpool around for many decades. You know, they're doing great work, Mr. Speaker, and that will continue with the support from Creative Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and again that work will continue with grants from Creative Saskatchewan. And again I'm very proud of the film industry here in our province.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

**Mr. McCall:** — Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Sound Stage is a state-of-the-art facility where our once-thriving film industry is making its last stand. Last week, after putting out a call for anyone interested in buying up a government building, the Minister of Central Services puts what is left of the industry on edge. This facility is critical infrastructure for the film industry, and the Sask Party knows that if they privatize the sound stage it will be nearly impossible for the film industry to recover.

They've already done enough damage to the film industry, Mr. Speaker, and you can see that looking right across this nation. Will the Minister of Central Services or perhaps the Minister Responsible for Creative Saskatchewan stand in the Assembly today and reassure the people of Saskatchewan that the Saskatchewan-Canada Sound Stage will not be sold off?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Central Services.

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. What we are committed to is to ensure that each one of the 660 buildings that are owned by the Government of Saskatchewan are used to their highest potential, to make sure that the occupancy rates are as high as possible, Mr. Speaker, and to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to occupy those buildings. So again, we're committed to ensuring that each and every taxpayer's dollar is used in a most prudent way, and that includes those 660 buildings.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite want to talk about a number of buildings. I'll talk to them about a number of buildings. How about the 176 schools that they closed under their watch, Mr. Speaker? How about the 52 hospitals that they closed under their watch, Mr. Speaker? And how about the 1,200 long-term care beds that they ensured were closed under their watch? Mr. Speaker, we will take no lessons from the members opposite about how to operate government buildings.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

[14:15]

**Mr. McCall:** — Mr. Speaker, the minister talks about how he's put 660 Saskatchewan-government-owned buildings on some kind of a review. Well I can tell you what, Mr. Speaker: there's already been a review conducted as regards to the future of the sound stage, and that review came back with the recommendation to the government that they should get the film industry going again, Mr. Speaker.

So if that minister is interested in proper use of public assets, maybe he could look at the review that was conducted in the Ministry of Culture when that minister was responsible for the portfolio, Mr. Speaker, and follow the advice of his own ministry in terms of what it's going to take to get our industry in the film sector back on its feet again, competing, and doing well like it is in other jurisdictions across this country, Mr. Speaker.

So again they're looking to that minister for a reassurance that the sound stage is not going to be sold off for pennies on the dollar, Mr. Speaker. Can he give the people of Saskatchewan that assurance here today?

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

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — Yes, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We continue to support the film industry, Mr. Speaker. There was tough decisions that had to be made in 2012. We have to make sure we can have our expenses taken care of, Mr. Speaker, and we don't have an unlimited amount of money.

So, Mr. Speaker, you know, I point to the members opposite. They want to spend two and a half billion dollars that's not been costed. So, Mr. Speaker, I think that they have several million dollars, part of that in the leader's platform, Mr. Speaker.

So like I said, we, our entrepreneurs, do good work. I was at the independent film awards earlier this year, Mr. Speaker, and we saw great Saskatchewan stories being told through our grant program, Mr. Speaker. I mentioned if I got up again I'd show you several of these programs that are going towards film within our province. And there's many more outside of Creative Saskatchewan: *SuperGrid*; *A.R.C.H.I.E. 2*; *The Other Side*; *First Response*, the series — there's 11 of those; *The Other Side*; *Sonny's World*; *Canadian Newcomers*; *Brotherhood*; *Searching for Caribou*; *Bot Shop*, Mr. Speaker. There's several in the media development grant, the web series grant. There's many more here, Mr. Speaker. Creative Saskatchewan continues to do great work here in our province, and our filmmakers do as well.

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

#### Reporting on Pipeline Safety

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Such confusion over there. But we'll try another question here.

Saskatchewan people need to be able to trust that the government is going to ensure that pipelines are safe and properly regulated. That trust is key to protecting our environment and key to creating public support needed to get new projects approved. But once again, the Saskatchewan

Party's failure with the Husky oil spill has broken that trust. They are claiming that they can't release the inspection records, even though the independent Information and Privacy Commissioner said, and I quote:

Good investigators will not be swayed by publicity, but will base their conclusion on facts. Further, I am not persuaded that this would lead to an unfair trial.

Nothing in those reports could compromise the investigation or any charges, so why won't the Minister of Energy and Resources table those reports today?

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

**Hon. Ms. Eyre:** — Mr. Speaker, it's significant that this is the first time that an investigation under the pipeline amendment Act has been referred to public prosecutions, and that includes for spills under their watch, Mr. Speaker. As the member opposite knows, a thorough investigation was undertaken by the then Ministry of the Economy following the accident in 2016, and the findings were referred to the Ministry of Justice. Immediate action was taken. The cleanup was completed last summer. 1.1 million has been reimbursed to the government, and Husky has worked with officials, compensated municipalities and the First Nations that were affected.

And, Mr. Speaker, we have learned from this accident. We've made significant amendments to *The Pipelines Act* that will strengthen pipeline regulations, will strengthen regulatory oversight, and will address all outstanding recommendations from the auditor's 2012 report on pipeline regulations, Mr. Speaker. That's our commitment.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's sure nice to see that the Saskatchewan Party has let the Energy and Resources minister out of their ministerial protection program and finally answer a question. But she should be able to give a real answer for this government's failure to come clean on the Husky oil spill. Their failure to release the records and their failure to show accountability undermines their credibility. It erodes public trust in our network of pipeline infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, this is bad for our environment. It's also bad for our economy as well. So will the Minister of Energy and Resources answer this time very clearly: when will the public get to see the Husky inspection reports?

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

**Hon. Ms. Eyre:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Interesting on the public trust issue, Mr. Speaker, because we put reports online every week and we notify the public if there are any risks to public safety. And we're reviewing our notification system to determine if any further enhancements need to be made. We don't stick notification reports in storage as they did, so anyone actually wanting to read them had to manually sort through boxes, Mr. Speaker. We couldn't find any media advisories or releases about the spills or leaks under their watch, Mr.

Speaker, when the member for Athabasca was the minister of the Environment or the member for Saskatoon Centre was the minister of the Environment. We've got the cubes spilled right here, Mr. Speaker.

In contrast, major changes to the pipeline amendment Act under our watch include licensing of flowlines to enhance regulatory oversight of pipelines, auditing the integrity management programs of pipeline auditors, expanding the legal framework for an online pipeline licensing system, more inspection, more investigation, more compliance audit powers for ministry staff, and on and on and on, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — Why is the member on his feet?

**Mr. Meili:** — Asking leave to return to introduction of guests, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — The Leader of the Opposition has asked leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Some of the members in the House might have noticed in the east gallery a young man who's now hiding and has been looking disapprovingly upon our proceedings during question period. I don't know if that's because of our behaviour or because of the quality of the puns in the questions, Mr. Speaker. But this young man is Abraham Meili. He's my son. He's six years old, and he has over the last few months accompanied me across the province — as far north as La Loche, down to Swift Current, all over the place. And we had a great time.

I've been a little worried that maybe he paid a bit too much attention to politics. However he was asked the other day whether . . . Someone said to him, well your dad wants to be premier; are you going to be prime minister some day? And he said, you know, I can't really see myself ever going federal.

So I'm glad he takes such an interest in this process and in our province, and ask the members to join me in welcoming him and his grandparents to their legislature.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### Membership of the Board of Internal Economy

**The Speaker:** — Before orders of the day, I would like to inform the Assembly that I received a message from His Honour the Lieutenant Governor outlining the membership of the Board of Internal Economy effective March 15th, 2018. Those members are Hon. Mark Docherty, Hon. Jeremy Harrison, Hon. Paul Merriman, Hon. Greg Brkich, Dan D'Autremont, David Forbes, and Nicole Sarauer.

### TABLING OF COMMUNICATION

**The Speaker:** — I would also like to table a letter from the

Chief Electoral Officer that Ken Francis, Todd Goudy, and Everett Hindley were duly elected in the constituencies of Kindersley, Melfort, and Swift Current.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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

**Mr. Lawrence:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answers to questions 178 through 181.

**The Speaker:** — Question no. 178 to 181 is ordered.

### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### ADJOURNED DEBATES

#### SECOND READINGS

##### Bill No. 121

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 121 — *The Cannabis Control (Saskatchewan) Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure this afternoon to rise and enter into debate on Bill No. 121, the cannabis controls Act. Mr. Speaker, of course this is a piece of legislation that has seen a great deal of scrutiny, of interest not only in this province but right across the country.

Of course the need for this bill came out of the federal government's intention to legalize cannabis in this province with Bill C-45, Mr. Speaker, something that was made no secret of in their federal platform in 2015, and so reasonable, I think, that provinces would have been ready for this legislation and expect that it was coming. And, Mr. Speaker, it was so well concealed that they put it in their platform and put it at the head of communications. So, Mr. Speaker, my point is this. We were the last jurisdiction, the last province to introduce legislation with regard to the legalization of cannabis, and there are some concerns there, Mr. Speaker.

We are in a position now where legalization will happen this summer, as early as July, and here we sit with not a great deal of time to scrutinize this bill and make sure that we get it right here. Of course this is not a unique position, but a position where this is an area that is not only a federal jurisdiction but there are a number of points that will be left up to the provinces to deal with. I'm just looking for my notes here, Mr. Speaker.

So some of the areas that are a federal responsibility: possession limits, we see both a federal and provincial responsibility there. Advertising and packaging and trafficking fall under federal responsibility. Both the federal government and provincial government have responsibility around impaired driving. It's a federal issue, the use of medical cannabis is a . . . the jurisdiction lies with the federal government there.

Some of the other areas that this Assembly is being asked to contemplate, areas of provincial jurisdiction include age limit, Mr. Speaker. And I know that there has been a lot of debate about what is the right age for cannabis, the legal age. What's been proposed with this legislation is levelling with the age for alcohol consumption, which is 19 in the province, Mr. Speaker. And that is something that we don't have an issue with on this side of the Assembly.

Of course public education falls both to the federal and provincial governments, as does public health, Mr. Speaker. And that's something that we've seen scant detail on at this point with regard to how those pieces will roll out.

Another piece that we've seen scant detail on is with regard to taxation, Mr. Speaker. And of course it's not only the province, this Assembly, that has a keen interest in how this legislation will roll out. Also the municipalities, Mr. Speaker, they have been asking for a long time for details, to be consulted on this bill and the legislation that we knew would be coming. But I'm not sure that that has been met satisfactorily, nor have those answers been particularly forthcoming. So there's still, despite being a few short months away from legalized cannabis in this country, there are a lot of questions that remain on the table, Mr. Speaker.

[14:30]

Some of the other points that fall under provincial jurisdiction include home cultivation — both a federal and provincial issue, Mr. Speaker. Some that fall entirely to the provinces include distribution and wholesaling, which I will return to many if not all of these points as I proceed here, Mr. Speaker. The retail model is left with the provinces, as is the retail location and rules. And regulatory compliance falls under both federal and provincial jurisdiction.

Public consumption is also left to the provinces to come up with legislation, Mr. Speaker. And land use and zoning, that's something that falls to the municipalities and has been something that's been very difficult for them to get ahead of, with the lack of timeliness with regard to how this government intended to deal with the implications of Bill C-45, Mr. Speaker.

One of the things that was done, and of note, Mr. Speaker, was an online framework and . . . the survey results, rather, Mr. Speaker. There was a fairly extensive survey. I think that there were some concerns raised about the methodology with this particular survey — just ensuring that those respondents were from the province of Saskatchewan — and I'll leave that to others to discern if that was the case or not. But regardless, there were almost 35,000 respondents and, of that number, well just over 26,000 completed the full survey. And I understand that that's the highest response rate of any Saskatchewan survey, Mr. Speaker, so there is that. I think that speaks to the level of engagement and the number of questions that people of Saskatchewan have about this legislation.

And certainly there is a great deal of concern out there, questions about exactly how this will roll out in the province, Mr. Speaker. Issues around public smoking of cannabis, we've heard that a lot, Mr. Speaker, and that is something in this

proposed legislation that would be prohibited.

I heard a lot of concerns as Education critic about the use of pot around schools, the regulation . . . If the age for pot was too low, that you would have students who were still in school who would be legally able to smoke pot and attend school. I think that we avoid some of that by proposing the age limit of 19, Mr. Speaker.

And also one of the lingering concerns that we hear about is enforceability. Of course we have measures, roadside blood alcohol tests, that do with some precision, I understand, Mr. Speaker, are able to detect blood alcohol levels, and then follow-up tests to those roadside tests. But I'm not sure that there is a device or a method to as accurately measure impairment by cannabis. So that leads to a bit of an enforceability issue, and it's something that I'm sure that our critic will have more questions in committee about with regard to what is the latest evidence, what are the latest methods with regard to law enforcement around impairment.

And I understand that there has been indication of zero tolerance for cannabis while driving, Mr. Speaker. There are some differences — I remember from my time as a social worker in the hospital — some difference about how cannabis and alcohol are metabolized in the body. And alcohol is not fat soluble and leaves the body in a fairly quick manner, Mr. Speaker, but cannabis is fat soluble, so it does show up in the body for a longer period of time.

So I don't have the answer to that one, Mr. Speaker, but I do think it's a question worth asking. If we put something in legislation as zero tolerance, I think it is reasonable that we have measures around enforceability of those measures. And I think that those are some questions that remain with regard to this legislation.

I'll just go through some of what we do know, Mr. Speaker. As I have said, there are still some question marks here. What we do know about this bill is that it creates the regulatory framework for legalized cannabis. And key elements of that include, the fact is, as I've mentioned, consuming cannabis in public spaces is prohibited. Of course not unlike alcohol, Mr. Speaker, I suppose more like smoking cigarettes, which we do have bans on at the municipal level, it . . . Well I'll just put it plainly. It doesn't smell very good, Mr. Speaker, so I understand the concerns around that.

I'm not sure about the prohibitions around rental spaces or shared spaces and what that looks like. I know I have heard those concerns; if you choose not to smoke but your neighbour does, what implications that has for your living space. Possession of more than 30 grams and more than four plants is prohibited, so it does allow for personal growth of four plants. And 30 grams, I'm not sure what . . . I have to admit to not being too up on how much that allows for, Mr. Speaker, but I assume that homework has been done there and this is in line . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Someone tells me that is a lot. My mother is watching. I do not know how much that is, Mr. Speaker.

People under 19, as I've stated, are prohibited from possessing or consuming cannabis. This is punishable by a fine of up to

\$2,000, Mr. Speaker. And I think this is one that there is some question about, just again in terms of enforceability.

Possession of cannabis in a vehicle is prohibited except when transporting it from the place it was obtained to the place where it will be consumed, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure how we know how long the cannabis has been in the car, or where it was purchased, or what the destination point is, so I think that perhaps those who are made to enforce this legislation might have some questions about that, and I hope that the minister is able to respond to those.

Also here we have rules for retail stores selling cannabis established, and I'll get back to that in a second, Mr. Speaker, just with regard to the RFPs [request for proposal] that have been put out for those retail establishments.

But just to enter into with some of the concerns again, Mr. Speaker. And the overarching concern here is this: is that here we are in a position in March of 2018, three years after that we ought have reasonably known that this legislation was coming in, playing hurry-up offence, or defence I suppose, Mr. Speaker, here trying to get this legislation passed before the end of session. And I'm not sure that we always get the best oversight and the best legislation when we're playing catch-up. So that is an overarching concern and certainly a theme that we've seen through a number of pieces of legislation and areas, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker. And this province has had a tendency or a history in the past of being leaders, being on the forefront of issues, and being visionary. And here we see again, unfortunately, us trying to play catch-up with the rest of Canada. And I think that that is unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, and it's well below our capabilities in this province.

I would also say, I indicate our support as I have with the minimum age being 19. I think with given what we already have in place for alcohol consumption and rules around alcohol, that maybe that that does make sense. I know there is some evidence that, you know, brains are still growing well into the 20s, Mr. Speaker. But that, coupled with public education about the impact of cannabis on brains, and particularly for young people, I think is important. And I hope that details will be forthcoming soon and some resources made available to ensure that we do have good education about the impact of cannabis, whether it's legal or not. I mean, I guess the parallel with alcohol, we do know that alcohol is legal for those 19 and over in this province but is not without impact with regard to impairment of course, Mr. Speaker, around driving, but also without impact on health and on brain development, Mr. Speaker.

So I think that we'll be looking very carefully with regard to how those resources will roll out and who will be undertaking that work to ensure that we are getting the best information, that we're getting factual information out into the hands of those who are making a decision about cannabis use.

Mr. Speaker, there is, I mentioned earlier, the RFP process and that has been also an area of interest. People . . . Municipalities of course do have the option of opting out and there have been a number of communities — Biggar, Kindersley, Pilot Butte, Shellbrook, and White City — who were initially eligible but opted out during the allocation of retail permits. I believe there

were 60 that were offered, and in addition Estevan was eligible for two permits but chose to offer one permit.

So that RFP process is still ongoing right now I understand, up until April the 10th. I don't have a lot of details about that RFP process, but I do note that a character reference is one part of the RFP process as well as a financial stress test, Mr. Speaker. So I'm not sure what the details are around that financial stress test. I hope that there is a bit of a level playing field in terms of smaller retailers and larger retailers, and that it's not so onerous, Mr. Speaker, that it pushes a lot of people out of the running for eligibility.

Of course the initial screening for financial capacity and inventory and sales reporting is only the first phase of this RFP process. The second is a random draw or a lottery for proponents who qualify during phase one. So that will be, I suppose, a big day for those potential retailers in the province. And I'm not sure what the timeline is on that but it is certainly . . . I'm not certain if it's novel, but a new-to-me way of going through the RFP process, Mr. Speaker.

Some of the things that we know about operating details, that these stores must be stand-alone, selling only cannabis and accessories. We do know that edibles are not part of this legislation. I think we have an indication from the federal government that edibles will be addressed a year from the implementation of C-45. Those who have a retail operation will also be able to sell online, Mr. Speaker. So I would hope that there are some parameters around that. I can understand when someone is coming into the store how you can . . . there are some measures in place to ensure the age of the person purchasing the cannabis. I'm not sure what the measures will be around the online sales, so I think that that's something that we will be looking for more detail in in committee on this bill.

The retailers must purchase the product from a wholesaler licensed by SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority]. This is something, Mr. Speaker, that goes against . . . For the most part, a lot of what came forth in this legislation was in keeping with recommendations of those who were surveyed, Mr. Speaker, but around the wholesaling piece, that is something that went against the wish of or the recommendation of the majority of those who took the survey.

[14:45]

In fact 45 per cent of those who took the survey thought that it should be run through a provincial wholesale similar to SLGA government wholesale, and that recommendation was not heeded, Mr. Speaker. And given the history with regard to SLGA, I guess I am not surprised that that was not heeded by this government, Mr. Speaker. But I do think that is not in line with what is happening in other provinces and I would be very curious, and I'm sure that the critic is, with regard to why they disregarded that best practice with regard to the wholesaling of cannabis in the province, Mr. Speaker.

Again this remains a piece of legislation that many column inches have been written on in this province and across the country. A lot of details that still need to be forthcoming and a lot of questions that need to be answered. Some of that I hope, Mr. Speaker, well I hope all of it will be forthcoming when the

critic sits down with the minister and his officials in committee. But I think that I have exhausted my questions and comments on the issue to this point, and with that will move to adjourn debate on Bill 121.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Regina Lakeview has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 121, *The Cannabis Control (Saskatchewan) Act*.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

### Bill No. 122

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 122 — *The Cannabis Control (Saskatchewan) Consequential Amendments Act, 2018/Loi de 2018 corrélative de la loi intitulée The Cannabis Control (Saskatchewan) Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned, I think last week, often we get to stand up and speak to legislation that is noteworthy, that is timely, that has a great deal of public interest. And then the other side of that, Mr. Speaker, is the very important but a little less exciting duty to stand up and to talk about consequential amendments.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, when we are looking at a new piece of legislation, which this is — this is not replacing any existing bill — there's need not only for scrutiny there, but there's also need for the necessary consequential amendments, Mr. Speaker. And so of course this piece of legislation is very important to align with the changes being made. It's important that we align any changes being made in Bill 121, that they are paralleled in Bill 122.

Mr. Speaker, with so much yet to be answered with regard to Bill 121, of course we will need to make sure that we're making any necessary changes in all of the regulatory framework to be put forth in Bill 122. But again this perhaps is not the best place — well certainly for this member — to get into the nitty gritty of the consequential amendments. I will leave it to the capable hands of the critic to ensure that these consequential amendments are in good alignment with what is set out in Bill 121. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I will move to adjourn debate on Bill 122.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Regina Lakeview has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 122, *The Cannabis Control (Saskatchewan) Consequential Amendments Act, 2018*.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

### Bill No. 115

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 115 — *The Residential Tenancies 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 rise today to enter into adjourned debates. This time we're talking about Bill 115, *The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act of 2017*.

We're sort of continuing on with our theme in talking about cannabis, as my colleague from Regina Lakeview has been doing already. And of course with the changes that are coming forward in Bills 121 and 122, there are other Acts that require amendment as well, and one of those is the bill that is before us today, Bill No. 115.

So there's a couple of things that I want to talk about here in relation to these proposed changes, Mr. Speaker. And one of them is the intent behind this piece of legislation. As you know, we're talking about an Act that's about 60 pages long, that has been set up to help us strike a balance between the different parties that are involved in residential tenancies. So the idea here is that there will be a balance between renters and landlords, and that the legislation is supposed to protect that balance and to ensure that both parties involved know what their obligations are in the agreement.

It also provides rules for tenancy agreements — so what can and cannot be included in tenancy agreements — and some guidelines. So if anyone's watching at home and they're thinking about renting out their space, it's best to consult this piece of legislation so that you know what rules you can and cannot create. It also identifies some rules surrounding ending a tenancy, and several other legal matters that are associated with renting. So we refer back to this piece of legislation quite frequently, and of course the Office of Residential Tenancies is constantly interpreting it and holding hearings and providing rulings on this Act as well. So a lot of important pieces here that impact the people of Saskatchewan quite greatly.

So I did take some time to speak to some members of my constituency and some members of our community, and I'll be talking about some of the feedback that they provided to me as well. A lot of people were pretty enthusiastic to speak about the changes in this bill, Mr. Speaker, so I would like to be able to do them justice and make sure that their voices are heard in this as well.

So this bill that we have in front of us aims to do four main things. So it gives landlords powers to make rules, and these are new powers that are "... prohibiting the possession, use, selling or distribution of cannabis or the growing and possession of cannabis plants ..." It gives the ORT hearing officers new powers to refuse to allow an application from a tenant who's in contravention of an ORT order. It forces tenants to continue to pay their rent for the duration of the appeal process when appealing the ORT's decision to grant the landlord possession

of a rental unit for rent arrears. And it allows landlords to dispose of property worth less than \$1,500 without an order from the ORT when a tenancy ends or property is abandoned. So there's a number of different changes, but those are some of the big ones that are being proposed, Mr. Speaker.

When the minister gave his second reading speech on this piece of legislation, he again emphasized that:

... the goal of the government with *The Residential Tenancies Act, 2006* is to provide balance and neutrality between the rights and obligations of landlords and the rights and obligations of tenants.

He was arguing, "These amendments will make adjustments to bring the legislation to balance between rights of tenants and rights of landlords," so again talking about this balance. And at the end he also says, "Mr. Speaker, we feel that these amendments will help make the process fair and equitable for both landlords and tenants." So he really was emphasizing the balance that he believes this strikes, and that's something that I'm going to examine a little bit today as well, Mr. Speaker.

So some of the specific amendments that he took time to speak to ... He took time to speak to most of the amendments. One of them that we'll be looking at is ensuring the landlords "establish reasonable rules prohibiting the possession, use, selling or distribution of cannabis or the growing and possession of cannabis plants in the rental unit."

We have to establish these rules and we have to establish these lines, of course, Mr. Speaker, but I'm a little bit concerned about the phrase "prohibiting the possession," that simply possessing cannabis in a rental property is something that a landlord can create a rule about. So this is a big question that I have. And also with the fact as it relates to medicinal use, Mr. Speaker, because there's no exemption for medicinal use that has been written into the cannabis control Act.

So it's an interesting dynamic that we're having to strike here, and I'm concerned about landlords establishing rules where renters are not able to simply possess a legal amount of cannabis in a rental property, even if they're using it, because the question of what damage does that potentially ... What way does that damage the rental property if they're not even considering smoking it in the rental property, but it's just on their person? That is a question, Mr. Speaker.

The minister also talks about section 85 dealing with the personal property abandoned by tenants when they leave a tenancy situation. Currently landlords cannot sell or destroy that property without an ORT hearing. So what this legislation aims to do is to change that so that a hearing is not required or a ruling is not required. And I understand that there are cases where landlords lose out in rental income because of delays. These hearings do happen fairly swiftly, but I understand that when you're looking at tenancy on a month-to-month basis, that can be lost income.

So I understand that there's a balance here in terms of the landlords missing out on profits, but there's also a concern on the other side from renters, Mr. Speaker, that if a landlord claims to have made reasonable attempts to get in contact with

the tenant after they have abandoned the property but has no way of reaching them, there's concerns that this may in fact incentivize landlords selling the property as long as they only collect up to \$1,500 worth of money, say on Kijiji, when they're selling that furniture off. So there's concerns about incentivizing landlords to collect this money as well. So those are some of the first issues that I wanted to identify.

I did mention that I took some time to consult with some groups, Mr. Speaker, so I'll speak to that briefly as well. I spoke to some renters in Saskatoon. I spoke to some landlords. And I also spoke to some lawyers, and they had a look at the pieces of legislation as well, and individuals who are involved in the ORT hearings, have been involved in some way in ORT hearings. So I was trying to get as fulsome of a consultative group as possible.

So I just want to identify some of the concerns that came from these individuals. From the landlords' perspective there certainly is a concern with regards to smoking cannabis. I certainly heard about that. You know, there's concerns about damage to the property.

And there's obviously concerns about growing hydroponics and all the moisture that can be associated, but I didn't hear many concerns about growing plants in the traditional form of growing plants, Mr. Speaker. So I wonder about the inclusion of that in this piece of legislation. You know, how different is it from a nice marigold that you have planted? You're putting water in, it's photosynthesizing, and it goes through the same process of growing a physical plant. So I didn't really hear direct concerns about that, Mr. Speaker.

I also didn't hear concerns simply about possession. So I think the main concerns I heard were surrounding smoking and that that should be included, and additionally heard concerns about the exemption for medicinal marijuana, Mr. Speaker, and how there's no specific exemption for these types of users.

[15:00]

So the question is about the framing of, if you choose to rent you have to find a landlord that's going to be friendly toward cannabis. And I want to point out the fact that in many cases renters are some of the most vulnerable populations that we have, that renting is not always a choice, Mr. Speaker. And sometimes people are in quite dire situations and don't have the opportunity to choose one landlord over another, maybe just because of their physical proximity and the availability of rental units, but also because they are limited in their financial means. And there are only so many options if you are required to rent because of your income. So buying is not an option for everyone, especially with the market we've seen in the past, you know, 10, 15 years, Mr. Speaker. So the argument that you can simply choose a landlord that is friendly to cannabis is questionable.

There's also a question about the reasonable efforts to determine the whereabouts of the tenants, which I referred to a little bit earlier. What are reasonable efforts? You know, if a landlord has a phone number and that phone number is disconnected, you know, has that been a reasonable attempt to contact the individual? And questions about what motivations



will be created for landlords.

And I've also heard concerns about this legislation from a rights-based perspective, Mr. Speaker. You know, the charter of Europe includes a provision that people have a right to adequate housing. Lots of housing conversations and forums . . . I'm the critic for housing, Mr. Speaker. Lots of housing conversations and forums right now talk about the way forward as housing is a human right. So I've heard a lot of this way of framing housing over the past six months or so. And I also have a letter here and I just want to read some parts of it into the record, Mr. Speaker. It's published on the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission's website as a news release on December 21, 2017. And it's a "Follow up to the open letter regarding discrimination in tenancy: next steps." So I'll just provide some selective quotes here, Mr. Speaker.

Two years today, the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission [SHRC] and the Office of Residential Tenancies [ORT] issued a joint open letter about rental housing. At that time, and with near-zero percent vacancies in many communities, people receiving social assistance reported consistent difficulty in finding safe and affordable housing, and encountering discrimination when trying to secure accommodations.

When that letter was published, the Commission began a public consultation process, with the City of Saskatoon serving as a focal point. People looking for lodging, stakeholders, and service providers came forward with their stories, expertise, and insights.

The feedback and preliminary findings corroborate many housing-related issues faced by people receiving public assistance. This includes:

Lack of affordable housing . . . despite increasing vacancy rates,

Receipt of public assistance being used to deny housing, and

Disability, race, and mental health compounding access to accommodation.

Further ahead in the letter, Mr. Speaker, it says:

To that end, and over the coming months, the Commission will meet again with those who have been involved to discuss the interim findings and clarify any issues that are identified. Following that, the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission and the Office of Residential Tenancies will determine stakeholder interest in pursuing systemic solutions that can be used to assist, guide, and support the housing rights of people in our province.

So there's quite a bit of discussion about this frame of housing is a human right. I'm not sure how it interacts with the proposed changes that are involved in this legislation, Mr. Speaker. You know, we have heard some movement toward this idea of housing is a human right, but it will be interesting to see how this impacts us in the future as we start to look to maintaining and striking that balance because, as I'm sure you can

appreciate, a rights-based perspective changes this conversation quite a bit, Mr. Speaker.

So some final notes that I want to provide just to summarize what some of my concerns are here in this legislation. I think, first of all, it's important that we're striking a right balance between the rights of the tenant and the powers of the landlord. A lot of what we're hearing in these changes seems to benefit the landlord and to balance, tip things toward their favour. And of course I spoke to people from all sides and understand the balance that is required there, Mr. Speaker.

Putting some restrictions on cannabis in rental units certainly makes sense. We want to protect the space that belongs to the landlords. And we'll continue to consult as the official opposition to make sure that this legislation does in fact balance and make sure that the amendments do make sense.

And finally, you know, I think, it's fine when government wants to look at closing loopholes that may be abused by some people in extreme cases. But considering the rarity of these cases, one thing we'll be asking about committee is what impact these changes have on some of the most vulnerable populations, people who can't speak for themselves, Mr. Speaker.

When it comes to disposing property that belonged to a tenant, we should make sure that landlords are reaching out to tenants. I'd be very interested to see what "reasonable attempts to contact" is going to be defined as, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that those possessions are not simply being disposed of at the first opportunity.

So I know that the critic on this file is going to have a lot more to say about this piece of legislation, but with that, Mr. Speaker, I would move to adjourn debates on Bill 115, *The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act* of 2017. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon Fairview has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 115, *The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, 2017*. 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 Cumberland.

**Mr. Vermette:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to join in on the debate on Bill No. 94, *The Saskatchewan Advantage Grant for Education Savings (SAGES) Amendment Act, 2017*. Abbreviated of course in these comments, they're going to use SAGES [Saskatchewan Advantage Grant for Education Savings]. So as far they're using that, SAGES is the abbreviation they're using.

But having talked about, I want to talk a little bit about the grant and maybe what it did for some families, and we want to get into that. We know in the province, the government, because of their own problems that they've created, the Sask Party government has created many challenges for Saskatchewan families, for young people, for many people.

And you know, we've heard on this side of the House and we've heard from people out on the doorsteps, wherever you go, coffee shops, wherever you go, people saying, you know, they're expecting us to pay more, more, and more and we're getting less, less, less from this government. And some people are not happy. Some people are struggling to make ends meet. They truly are. They are. I'm telling you, I've talked to seniors; I've talked to families who are struggling.

The government put more PST in collecting, tried to collect just about a billion dollars from a so-called, oh we're not raising taxes is what the . . . On one hand they make that sound like it's so great. We're not raising taxes, okay? But on the other hand, the PST on so many things, and they've moved it to 5 per cent. And they put more struggle on many Saskatchewan residents and I guess at the end of the day on families who maybe were putting away a little bit of money for education for their kids. Maybe it's grandparents putting away a little bit of money, helping out. And everyone's trying to do their part to help the kids, you know, get a good education, hopefully get a good-paying job.

But we're seeing the numbers and we're seeing what's going on in this government. And I think the government needs to be held accountable at the end of the day for years of record revenue, for years, you know. And you have many people saying the way they handled the mismanagement, some of the scandals and waste, people are not happy. And I've said this before, and I think many people in this province, Mr. Speaker, saying we understand. We're willing to pay our share of taxes. People and residents have done that. They're willing to help out.

So having said that, Mr. Speaker, how is it that the government, after all they've done by burdening Saskatchewan residents, can they go to them and say, well not only did we cheerlead that we're not raising taxes, and we made it sound . . . pat ourselves on the back, but in the last budget we have seen the PST on children's clothing go from 5 to 6 per cent. My colleagues and myself, we have articulated that well, how families are struggling out there, many families, to cover medications, rent.

And you know, we have question period. We have also brought up about, you know, if you're looking on foreclosures and stuff. And if you look at it, I believe it was 7-point-something the leader quoted. So if at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, there's more and more struggles, the struggles are getting harder for families to make ends meet. And we know we're going to have another budget coming up, April the 10th. And of course it's always, oh just wait and see. Like I hope for Saskatchewan residents, for the seniors, those that have been impacted mostly, the most vulnerable. We've seen some of the reversals that this government has done because of the backlash. And my colleagues have articulated it well. We have brought it forward. We have shared the frustration, whether it was petitions going after this government saying, your budget is damaging and

hurting many families, many people. It's not helping with jobs.

So when you look at the industry, restaurants, you look at restaurants, you look at all the areas where PST has hurt, where they want to brag and they want to pat themselves on the back about the great job they're doing as a government: oh, we're no taxes. But if you look at the end of the day how they're impacting so many families, Mr. Speaker, how they're impacting so many families with the added cost just to survive, to provide food, shelter, clothing, rent, just to provide utilities . . . We look at the power rates. We look at all those rates. These are the individuals, you know. And many of them I think will be impacted.

Now as I was talking about it, and I want to get back to Bill 94. Talking about people saving a little bit. Well this government is going off and digging into everybody — a little more out of everybody's pocket — just keep taking it, just a little more, a little more. We'll charge you a little more. You know, they used to say 5 and 10 cents, you know. You know the old story, you know, yes, it's going to cost you five . . . Well now, as we see today, they're even going after their kids' school juice boxes. They want to get two pennies or whatever it is for juice boxes. Like they're going after kids' juice boxes.

So it just goes to show you where this government is willing to go, and the burden that they're putting on so many families. Now I don't know why, at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, they expect Saskatchewan residents to sit and take it and just allow the tax after tax after tax affecting them in their pockets. I don't know how they expect the Saskatchewan . . . And they talk about that.

And in this one, it says "advantage," the Saskatchewan advantage grant for education savings. Mr. Speaker, they expect the public to accept this. They expect this. You see the waste that this government has made. Their priorities . . . You have seen the priorities that this government says well, you know what? At the end of the day, this is our priority.

Well I don't think the people of this good province who are doing the work, whether it's our seniors, whether it's working families who are struggling to make ends meet and whether that's power rate, utility increases, taxes that they didn't have to have, the government could have done and made the decisions. The government at the end of the day is the government that decides what's going to get taxed, where the cuts are coming, and they're doing it. And the people of this province are not happy with the way they're being treated. And this just . . . Taking away this grant.

So like I said, whether it's families, whether it's grandparents putting away money for education for their grandkids or their kids . . . And then the government gave 10 per cent. To a max, they'd give you \$250. But \$250 to a family who maybe is just barely making ends meet and is trying to help their family, their kids, and then the government that matches 250 to a max at 10 per cent, so if they put 200 away, well you know, we realize that. But if you decided to put away \$2,500 for your child or your grandchild, you would get the max at \$250 — \$250. Maybe some of them couldn't because, you know, the government was taking away from that 2,500 that they were putting away because of the taxes on clothing, on kids'

clothing, on all the different areas where this government has put more taxes and has raised the PST.

And it is, it is. We talked about, you know, a tax that's coming on Saskatchewan residents every time they move. The thing about it at the end of the day, they're asked, Saskatchewan residents, the government is saying to them, you will pay more because that's how it's going to be, but you will get less services. How do you like that?

[15:15]

Well I'll tell you: people are not happy. They keep seeing it, less and less. Cuts everywhere and this government has, you know . . . If you look at the list of cuts, whether it comes to different ministries, programs, I mean the list goes on. I couldn't even list off everything that they have cut, but yet they want us to pay more. The want all of us to pay more and get less services. And that isn't right. That's not how it works.

So I guess the good people of this province are saying, if you would manage the economy well, if you would manage the resources that we've given you . . . And I've said this before. The good people of our province have allowed the government to be the government of the day. And I remind them, you will be judged come re-election. And I know they like doing the old heckles and they like laughing that oh, they'll never elect any government but us; we're the only one.

I can't wait to see what the people truly will say at the end of the day to this government if they continue dealing with the way they are dealing. And, Mr. Speaker, the way they are dealing with the people of this province's dollars, and those hard-earned dollars that the people are paying in on taxes everywhere, how this government will deal with.

So at the end of the day this government will have to wear it and they will have to answer to it and I hope the good people of this province hold them accountable because we will do on this side all we can to hold them accountable. And we will do all we can for those residents. So at that point, Mr. Speaker, I'm prepared to adjourn on Bill No. 94. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Cumberland has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 94, *The Saskatchewan Advantage Grant for Education Savings (SAGES) Amendment Act, 2017*. 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 member from Prince Albert Northcote.

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's always an

honour to join in with debate on bills, and today I'm going to be talking about Bill No. 95, *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal and Amendment Act*. And, Mr. Speaker, when I was reviewing the minister's remarks with regards to the changes to this legislation, he indicated that this "will repeal legislation that has become outdated or obsolete." So he must have been really talking about *The Enterprise Saskatchewan Act*. I believe that's very outdated and obsolete.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know if you remember, but in 2007 that was one of the first pieces of legislation that the previous premier was so proud to present because he indicated that that was going to change business, the way we did business in the province. And it was going to have wonderful results within how we encourage business within our province. And in the end it hasn't been shown to be as successful as they I think originally were hoping. And I know it had a big impact on especially some smaller communities where it wasn't as successful. And that's where we really need to try to encourage some business as well, as we can't forget about those smaller communities. And so, Mr. Speaker, some of the changes within this bill will be repealing that Act in itself.

And so I think, Mr. Speaker, it is important to make sure that laws remain modernized and up to date. And it is important to take that opportunity to look into some of our bills and such. And so some of the legislation that's going to be impacted here, the repeal and amendment of the legislation, is *The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 2003*. And I believe that is due to the fact that there was some changes to that Act in the not so . . . the more recent years. And so I'm not sure if it was due to some of the changes to that bill that just happened last year, but this is going to impact that.

*The Closing-out Sales Act*, Mr. Speaker: there's some of these Acts that I didn't even know existed. So there'll be some changes to that because of changes that were done before. *The Community Bonds Act* will have some . . . is going to be repealed. *The Enforcement of Money Judgments Act* is going to be repealed. And *The Forest Resources Management Amendment Act* will be repealed. And *The Home Energy Loan Act* is repealed. *The Income Tax Act* is repealed. *The Lord's Day (Saskatchewan) Act*, again, Mr. Speaker, I don't know exactly what is entailed in that Act. It looks like it was in 1978, was the last time that one was looked into.

*The Marriage Settlement Act* will be repealed. *The Parents' Maintenance Act* is one that will be repealed. *The Penalties and Forfeitures Act* will be repealed. And then section 15 of *The Power Corporation Amendment Act* will be also one of those areas that will be repealed. *The Rural Electrification Act* is repealed.

Some are amended. So one of the ones that will be amended is *The Social Workers Amendment Act*, and some of that Act will be repealed. Section 5 will be repealed out of *The Social Workers Amendment Act*, and section 6 will also be amended by repealing a portion of that as well. *The Telephones Act* is repealed.

*The Ticket Sales Act* will be amended, and so section 4 of that Act actually will be repealed. And so they're going to be making some adjustments to subsection 9 with regards to

amending and striking out “4,” and the subsection 10 is amended in the portion and striking out “4.” Subsection 10(2) is amended by striking out “4.” So there’s some reason why the number 4 is being taken out of that one.

*The Trading Stamp Act* is repealed, Mr. Speaker. I had no clue there was an Act with regards to trading stamps, and actually — fun fact — my brother and my mom, they have quite the stamp collection. And so my mom . . . Like apparently sometimes stamps are worth a little bit more if they are actually mailed, so she would send us birthday cards and she would be like, keep the stamps. So we always made sure we were getting letters from our mom because she had to get those stamps back. And so she had quite the stamp collection, and they would admire each other’s collections. And it was something to really look at because I don’t think we take appreciation of that.

Whenever I go buy stamps, I know I make sure to buy whatever is new and exciting because they don’t cost any more, so why not have some exciting stamps instead of the boring, regular ones we normally have? So sometimes, like they’ll have the Roughrider ones. I love sending cards to my siblings in BC [British Columbia] and have that Roughrider stamp on there.

Or you know, there was a time when they had one about the St. Louis phantom light, and that was a really neat stamp because it showed a train going through the bridge. And so the phantom light is something that makes St. Louis really famous, and it’s kind of controversial unless you’re talking to a resident of St. Louis. We all know the phantom light is real, and people who tried to say that that isn’t real, they don’t know the facts and they don’t know the history. And we used to always bring guests to . . . Whoever would come and visit us in St. Louis, we’d bring them to go see the phantom light and it really was something else, you know. And when the train tracks were there, the phantom light was really bright but once they took the tracks out . . . The light is still there, Mr. Speaker, but sometimes it’s a little bit lighter.

And so it was on *Unsolved Mysteries*, it’s in books, and we would have people come and interview us all the time. In fact one time we had Radio-Canada come to St. Louis, and they wanted someone to give them an interview, and I was the person who did the French interview back then when my French was a lot better than it is now. So that was pretty exciting. So a lot of my uncles and aunts had an opportunity to hear me provide that interview, which was really exciting.

So that’s a claim to fame for St. Louis, is the phantom light. And so if anyone’s ever interested in going to check that out, it’s always something fun that we do. And right now the landowner doesn’t like people trespassing on the land to go see it, which is understandable, and so you have to be a little bit of a distance away and be on the road, because we know it’s just wrong not to listen to the trespassing laws. And so we make sure that we stay on the road. But we could still see it.

And there was a lot of scientists that came and tested it out and they believe it’s potentially some of the gases that are in the ground. And I know in BC a lot of places where they have train tracks, people will identify that they see phantom lights. So it’s not something that’s completely uncommon and so it might be something to do with the chemicals, but there is a story that of

course has come about and the story is, is that the train conductor . . . There was a train accident and the train conductor deceased and it’s him looking for other pieces of the train or whatever the story is — it depends who’s telling it — and that’s what the light is, is the train conductor’s lantern. Because back in the day, Mr. Speaker, they used to have lanterns on the trains and that’s how they would see where they were going and such. And it’s not as technology based as it is now. And so that was the fun fact for that.

And so the other areas . . . I kind of regressed there a little bit. But they’re going to be doing a repeal of sections 8 and 11 in *The Vehicle Administration Amendment Act* and they’re also doing a repeal of sections 11, 16, and 24 of *The Vehicle Administration Amendment Act* also, so there’s going to be a lot of significant changes.

And so like I was saying, with regards to all of these repeals and amendments of legislation, they’re in all different areas of the ministries within here, Mr. Speaker. And so this is going to take a bit of time to kind of go through all of these Acts and legislation to ensure that the changes that’ll be happening aren’t going to have major impacts to this legislation later on. And so there’s going to be a fair amount of consultation that’s going to be needed with regards to the changes to this legislation. And I know some of it is basically housekeeping in nature, which tends to happen when you’re working at updating legislation.

And so I know the stakeholders too, with regards to these different legislation, are going to want to have a little bit of input with these changes. And so I am well aware that the critic that will be responsible for this will do the due diligence and consult with the stakeholders and assure that the changes are something that they’re okay with.

And other than that, Mr. Speaker, I think that’s about all the information that I want to contribute with debate with this bill. I know my colleagues will have a lot more they’ll want to say, and I’m sure they’ll get into it with Enterprise Saskatchewan like they have before too; they have a lot more knowledge about the history of that. And they should really think about the legislation that they’re going to put forward and supporting it as well. But with that, Mr. Speaker, I will move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 95. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Prince Albert Northcote has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No 95, *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal and Amendment Act, 2017*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

[15:30]

### 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 Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I was going to throw to my colleague, the member from Arm River, but he threw it back and here we are. Good to join debate this afternoon on Bill No. 97, *The Arbitration (Family Dispute Resolution) Amendment Act, 2017*.

Again, Mr. Speaker, sometimes you get the sneaking suspicion that, fixated as we are in this place with the writing of laws and the, you know, legislating here at the Legislative Assembly — go figure, Mr. Speaker — that you get the feeling that some folks out there, say in the Justice ministry, may be very interested in sort of building out the books, building out the legislative processes that are at our disposal in this province. And so not too surprising, this one comes from the Minister of Justice and again refines different aspects of the arbitration regime in this province.

And, Mr. Speaker, you know, it's fair enough and, as sometimes happens in caucuses, we're very much blessed to have a couple of great legal minds in our caucus on whom we, you know, we count on the counsel. I'm not going to hide around that; I state it plainly, Mr. Speaker. But certainly in terms of going through this and looking at what is to come in committee, which I'm sure will be most interesting, Bill 97, the arbitration amendment Act, 2017 seems to be pretty straightforward.

Now in terms of different of the things that are accomplished, it sets out a definition for a "family arbitrator" and for a "family law dispute," putting a legal fence around what's allowed for in those regards. It reaffirms the definition of arbitrator and arbitration agreement as remaining the same, and there's a section added which allows for arbitration for family disputes. Family disputes could involve parts of *The Children's Law Act*, *The Family Maintenance Act*, *The Family Property Act*, or the *Divorce Act*. Myself, Mr. Speaker, I've only got a more involved understanding of one of those Acts, and I'll not tip my hand as to which one that might be, but anyway I'm a lifelong improvement process, Mr. Speaker.

There's also a trend to divert more family disputes to arbitration, and certainly, Mr. Speaker, in all seriousness, one of the more sort of heart-wrenching, frustrating aspects of the adversarial nature of the legal system, the way that that can, when overlaid on top of a dispute in a marriage breaking down, and when there are kids involved. And, you know, there's one family I knew growing up where the judge threw them out of court in terms of the dispute that was going on between the mother and father, and how that related to the kids and on. And, Mr. Speaker, I always think of that in terms of like benchmarks around what are some of the ways not to go, particularly when there are kids involved, particularly when we should be able to sort these things out.

And the more dispute resolution, the more arbitration, the more mediation of these matters that can take place in the legal system, I think the better off we'll be as a society. Because I know, certainly in that case, the kids that were involved in that particular imbroglio were not . . . you know, it's something that will stick with them for the rest of their lives. But, Mr. Speaker,

in terms of that movement towards a greater involvement of arbitration, mediation, dispute resolution, I think is a positive development. And all joking aside about legal counsels in various departments, but particularly in the Ministry of Justice, looking to write ever more legislation, I think that's a good way to go.

Mr. Speaker, we'll have some access to Justice and access to arbitration and arbitrator questions, and we'll certainly be looking to the minister for a greater explanation on the matter of implementation of this new aspect of the regime. But those are matters better pursued at committee, and again we'll be looking to the wise thoughts from our Justice critic, the member from Regina Douglas Park, in that juncture. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I'd move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 97, the arbitration amendment Act, 2017.

**The Speaker:** — The member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre 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 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 Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Fairview.

**Ms. Mowat:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise again today to enter into adjourned debates on Bill No. 98, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Family Dispute Resolution) Amendment Act, 2017*. Quite the mouthful. I'm not sure whether many of my other colleagues have been able to say all of that in one breath, but I had to take another one.

So I'm pleased to enter into this debate. I did enter into debate on Bill 97, which my colleague from Regina Elphinstone-Centre was just speaking about. So I do have some familiarity with how these pieces are linked and how they come together and will be speaking to some of my comments on Bill 97 as well, so that I can read those comments into the record because I think that many of them apply here as well.

So this bill, Bill No. 98, in particular the primary focus of this bill is to allow for a larger role for family mediators in dispute resolution. It adds definitions for "family arbitrator" and "family mediator." It outlines the role of a mediator and it provides that evidence in a mediation session cannot be used in court proceedings without consent from all parties being given.

So in Bill 97 we talked about the fact that family arbitrators were identified and that it provided a process for that to take place, and that one of the options is mediation. So Bill No. 98 sort of decides what some of those rules and regulations are

going to be and what this is actually going to look like, Mr. Speaker, at the everyday level. So this is definitely something worth speaking about. There's going to be a lot of repercussions for families that are involved and a number of different pieces that are up for amendment here today.

So usually I find it useful to go through explanatory notes when we're talking about amendments to legislation because if you just go through the Act itself, I find that it takes a trained eye to be able to figure out what the first clause was and what it's being replaced with. So actually I sort of read all three of them in concert. I have the existing legislation, the explanatory notes, and the new bill, and looking at all three of those together you can really get an understanding of what has happened. But sometimes it's useful to look at the explanatory notes to see what the changes are that are being proposed here.

So a few different pieces of legislation, we're talking about changing *The Children's Law Act, 1997*, *The Family Maintenance Act, 1997*, *The Family Property Act*, and *The Queen's Bench Act, 1998*. So I'll just go through and talk about what some of the changes are that are being proposed in each of these Acts.

So for *The Children's Law Act, 1997*, an explanation of those changes: section 2 is being amended to revise the definition of "agreement" and add definitions of "family arbitrator" and "family mediator." Section 10 is amended to replace "mediator" wherever it appears with "family mediator." There's no changes in substance, these are housekeeping. Section 10.1 is added to expressly allow for arbitration in a matter to which this Act applies.

There's a new part that adds provisions respecting parenting coordinators:

Section 21.1 adds definitions.

Section 21.2 permits the court to make a parenting coordination order directing parties to use a parenting coordinator and specify the amount of a parenting coordinator's fees and expenses and which party should pay those fees and expenses [which we know is always something that comes up. Who's paying the bill?]

Section 21.3 sets out when and how a parenting coordinator may provide his or her services.

Section 21.4 requires a party to provide the parenting coordinator with any information requested.

Section 21.5 sets out the matters a parenting coordinator may assist with.

And the rest of these changes are in line with parenting coordinator and mediator as well.

*The Family Maintenance Act, 1997*, there's some explanation provided of the changes here, amending definitions of "family arbitrator" and "family mediator," replacing "mediator" with "family mediator." So again, housekeeping changes. And "Section 15.1 is added to expressly allow for arbitration in a matter to which this Act applies."

*The Family Property Act* is also amended:

Section 2 is amended to add a definition for "family mediator."

Clause 10(3)(a) is amended to reflect that the form is not prescribed but provided by the Land Titles Registry or the Personal Property Registry.

Section 44.01 is added to expressly allow for arbitration in a matter to which this Act applies.

*The Queen's Bench Act, 1998* is the last Act that is being amended with this miscellaneous statutes amendment Act here, Mr. Speaker. And the sections that are amended there, 44.01 is added to require that parties to an application participate in family dispute resolution. It adds definitions for "family dispute resolution," "family mediator," and "minister." It sets out the applications to which this section applies, prohibits a party who fails to participate in family dispute resolution from taking any further step in the proceeding, sets out the powers of the court if a party fails to participate in family dispute resolution, creates exemptions from the requirement to participate, requires that where an exemption is provided by someone other than the court, the person completing a certificate of exemption needs to file with the court.

So we're talking about establishing some of these definitions, Mr. Speaker, and providing for them in these pieces of legislation.

In the minister's second reading speech on this legislation he talks about the different Acts that are being amended and the provisions that are being provided there. And he says, "The Government of Saskatchewan is committed to encouraging early dispute resolution methods in family law matters for the timely and cost-effective resolution of family disputes," saying that it might "... be more appropriate in resolving family disputes ... [might] be more cost effective, and have less of an emotional toll on the parties."

[15:45]

And as my colleague has already pointed out, sometimes these can be very heated sides. The legal process necessarily creates sides so, you know, taking families out of a courtroom for that conversation can have a positive impact on the parties involved, the family members but also on the children, because this can be quite divisive for children as well.

The proposed amendments to *The Queen's Bench Act* are particularly interesting. So this is where it:

... will require parties in certain family law proceedings to make efforts to resolve disputes through an approved dispute resolution process before proceeding with the court process.

And this is interesting, Mr. Speaker. If they're involved in certain disputes, they need to make an attempt to resolve those disputes before going into the process. If there has been a history of violence, a child has been abducted, a restraining order is in place, one party may be able to seek an exemption or

an exception to this.

But it is interesting to see that we're going down this path, that we're moving forward on this trend toward dispute resolution. As someone with experience in alternate dispute resolution, I think it is wise. We are always told in conflict resolution to try to solve things at the lowest level. In some of these cases we've seen that they escalate very quickly, and then suddenly families are in court and it can become a quite divisive process.

So there's definitely I think a role for things like mediation to play in being able to not only cut the cost because I know a lot of families in family law disputes will be representing themselves because of the sheer cost of it. They won't be able to afford to have representation. And you know, taking on this weight . . . One of my colleagues has identified especially now that the government is raising fees, they will not be able to always afford legal representation. So they're ending up in these disputes in court, representing themselves, and this is perhaps a way forward that can help to solve some of that.

So the minister says, "This suite of family law amendments will assist to promote alternate dispute resolution methods in family law matters for the timely and cost-effective resolution of family law disputes."

So we certainly hope, Mr. Speaker, that that will be the result of this legislation but, as usual, we think it's worth taking a close look at the legislation to determine whether that will in fact be the case.

And as my colleague from Regina Elphinstone-Centre identified when he was giving second reading to Bill 98, there are some questions about consultation and what consultation has taken place here. We did not hear the minister in his second reading speech discussing what these consultations are. These are widespread changes that we're talking about across Saskatchewan, so I think it's important to know. And we'll be certainly asking in committee what consultations have taken place with respect to this legislation and these proposed changes that are coming forward here, Mr. Speaker.

We know that this is obviously a developing field and there's certainly some promise that it shows, but we need to make sure that we are diligent about what the impacts will be on families in this province.

I also mentioned that I had the opportunity to speak to Bill 97 and that some of this legislation applies in similar ways, so I want to reiterate some of those thoughts so that they are read into the record on Bill 98 as well. So I'm reviewing *Hansard* here from March 19th, Mr. Speaker. So some of the concerns that I identified, I talked about the fact that arbitration is still a quite formalized process. Even though it sounds less formalized, there are still a number of rules that are set up to dictate how it takes place.

I already spoke about the option for settling disputes outside of court and how this can be beneficial, and it can create an opportunity for families, where often emotions are running quite high in these situations. So it can be an opportunity to resolve things in a little bit more cordial manner. I know we probably have all seen some of these family disputes go awry

and some of the terrible situations that have resulted from that as well. So I think any time we can avoid that and make sure that our relationships are positive, we're creating a better society for everyone.

One of the concerns that I identified with regards to Bill 97, and I'll echo here, is the concern that for someone to be qualified as a family arbitrator, they have to have experience. The minister referred to the fact that they have to have experience in family law in particular. And I think this raises some concerns for access. So we'll certainly be interested in finding out whether there are limitations in access to family arbitrators in rural and remote communities and who those folks are going to be. Because it is great to create opportunities for people across this province, but we don't want to find that people in larger urban municipalities have access to the resources but in smaller rural areas they do not. So we'll certainly be watching to see.

And I think this is particularly an area where consultation is important, to find out if these conversations have taken place, an initial scan of the environment has taken place to see whether these folks are indeed available to help out, especially if it's going to be dictated in some particular processes. So I wouldn't want to see that, you know, something that's intended to be very good for families end up being quite cumbersome, require extensive travel, and lead to delays, where this is supposed to be a process that does not entail those pieces that we would normally associate with going through our formalized . . . our court system.

So those were the main concerns I wanted to identify with this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker. And I just also want to say that overall, you know, we know that there's a trend to divert family disputes to arbitration. We know that it can be beneficial. But we were going to have more questions on this bill, what it means for mediation of family disputes, what that mediation actually looks like, and what access will look like for the folks who are involved.

Overall it can be . . . it has promise to be something that's going to be very beneficial for families, but we would like to be able to ask those questions. So I know that the critic will have more questions as well, and I look forward to my colleagues' remarks on this bill. I would like to, with that, move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 98, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Family Dispute Resolution) Amendment Act, 2017*.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon Fairview has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 98, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Family Dispute Resolution) Amendment Act, 2017*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like I said before, it's always an honour to stand here and enter into debate. But, Mr. Speaker, this particular bill, it is an extreme honour to be able to stand up and provide my thoughts with regards to this debate because I know there's many people that would also have liked to have an opportunity, the same opportunity I have to be able to enter in some remarks with regards to this.

Mr. Speaker, the major changes with regards to this bill is because of Bill 40, a bill that was put forward last year and was for . . . I believe the pure intention was to get rid of STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company] from our province, which was very shameful.

And so the Premier said that he heard the Saskatchewan people. People came out in droves and rallies and were wanting to make sure that this government understood that they were really unhappy with the fact that this government put forward Bill 40. And so the Premier said that, you know, we've heard you, in a Facebook message that he put out to the province on October 24th and quoted, "Our government is repealing Bill 40."

Well, Mr. Speaker, just two days after that, he said again that he didn't think wind-down counted, so they're going to keep that part of Bill 40. Well, Mr. Speaker, the people of Saskatchewan were upset with Bill 40 because of the fact that it was a privatization bill. They claimed when they put Bill 40 in that they needed to do this because they needed to define what privatization is.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I think everybody else in the province knows exactly what privatization is, and they didn't need that to be defined, you know. But if that is the rationale to the reason for putting forward Bill 40 . . . And now they're putting forward Bill No. 99, which to me is in essence the same as Bill 40. And they're changing a little bit of what the definition of privatization is in here, and indicating that a wind-up is not included in the definition of privatization.

Where are they getting this definition of privatization? Like, I don't understand where they're coming up with this. And they're not fooling anyone. The people in Saskatchewan know it's just so that they have a piece of legislation in place so that they could eliminate more of our Crown corporations, and that's exactly what this is.

So, Mr. Speaker, just the fact that this kind of legislation is coming forward, I find this very troubling and I think a lot of people in this province do. And people in the province want the government to go to them if we're planning on selling their businesses, which all of our Crown corporations are the taxpayer of Saskatchewan's businesses, you know. And we need to ask them for permission in order to make changes to that.

And so when they eliminated STC, they did that without consent of the people of Saskatchewan, which resulted in many jobs lost and a lot of adjustment to services. STC provided a lot of services to the government which now is going to cost us in all these other areas. It's going to be hard to track, but it's going

to, in the end, cost more.

I know in Justice I've been hearing a lot of the costs for salary for staff with overtime for them to transport inmates here and there, or like when they need to go home, having to contract out services so that they can make sure that inmates get home to their home communities. That's just been a complete nightmare, Mr. Speaker.

For Health there's been a lot of costs. Like I know with regards to transporting different, say medications, like they might need to transport chemo meds from Saskatoon to P.A. [Prince Albert] or from Saskatoon to another location. And they used to do that through STC. They had trained individuals that could do that, and it takes specific people who are able to transport that kind of stuff. And so now they need specialized people to do that, and it will all be privatized. And the costs, I'm not quite sure what that'll look like.

Also I know, with my past of working in the health care system, that oftentimes we would send, say, acquired brain injury clients back home, which might be in Northern Saskatchewan, for a visit. And so send them on an STC bus. They would have a worker that would place them on the bus, that you knew that they were going to get home safely. And then their family members would put them back on the bus and bring them back to P.A. And we'd have a worker there to pick them up, because we have an obligation to ensure that these individuals are able to go visit their family in a safe manner.

But now, now, Mr. Speaker, they're hiring. They have staff that are being paid overtime and meals and mileage, and they're having to drive them up to Buffalo Narrows or all different areas of this province. And then they have to hire people to go back up there and pick them up and bring them back home, you know. And so there's extreme costs there, too.

With regards to Social Services they oftentimes had, you know, maybe people going for visits and Social Services would provide that funding. Or if a person is escaping an abusive relationship from La Ronge and needing to come to Saskatoon, P.A., Regina, to a women's shelter, that would be provided before, but now that service isn't available. So I don't know exactly how that is being provided now, if in fact it's a contract or not. I haven't been hearing a lot of details from this government of how they're doing that and what the costs are now. But that is also an issue.

And then when we have the forest fires up in the North, Mr. Speaker, oftentimes they would utilize the services of STC to get people to the other communities. And now that's not even going to be available. And I don't think all of those things were placed as factors of cost-saving measures that was there for this government before, that now is going to be a hindrance on the government.

But also talking to municipal leaders, they were really put in a tough position when they have to send their water samples, and the water samples have to get to the next location within 24 hours or else the sample is no longer valid, and being from Creighton and needing to get the water sample down to, I believe it's Saskatoon. And before, they'd put it on the bus and get it down there; it would get there by the 24-hour limit. But



now then they had to make arrangements to find different ways to be able to get that water sample done, and I believe they made a deal with Manitoba so that they could get it sent there. So how much more is that costing, and that agreement?

[16:00]

And so there was a lot of impacts with regards to the closure of STC. And then also when I went to chamber meetings, I heard the impact that this was having on smaller businesses because we oftentimes forget about the fact that STC was a carrier process too, you know. And they were reasonably priced and it was real convenient if someone bought something, say in Prince Albert, and they had no intentions of driving over to Prince Albert to pick up the item, the business owner would be like, well I'll throw it on the bus and it'll get to you, you know, and that used to work.

And I know we dabble in a lot of — we being Darren, because I don't — but dabbles in a lot of fixing cars and doing that kind of stuff. So sometimes he would need a car part and it'd be in Saskatoon and he'd just phone the car place: can you drop it off at STC, send it to P.A.? We'd get it. Now we have to figure out who's going to Saskatoon; when are we going to Saskatoon. It's very inconvenient, you know. And so then we think well maybe we won't buy it from there. Maybe we'll just do without. Like, it has been a real struggle for even my family. And I haven't realized how much I used the STC services until it was gone as well, you know.

And it also provided independence for residents. It provided them the opportunity if they wanted to go visit family but travelling might not be an option, or even in wintertime here, when we've had some of these, you know, wintery days that a lot of people don't feel comfortable driving in that kind of weather, Mr. Speaker. But you knew if you hopped onto the bus and you'd get there, and you'd get there safely, and you could still be there and visit your family.

And also though, Mr. Speaker, what I found was most troubling when I was riding the bus and talking to people who were passengers was the people who used it to travel for medical appointments, it provided them the independence to do that, Mr. Speaker. And I think this has been a real detriment with providing residents in Saskatchewan independence.

So, Mr. Speaker, this Bill No. 99 I find is still really troubling because the fact that they're including the winding up and allowing to just eliminate a Crown corporation. I wonder what else is on the block because we know that they've been slowly selling government buildings and trying to make them look like they're not useful anymore. But, you know, taking business out of there instead of trying to put more business in there, and put, like, government other . . . I know there's a lot of, in Prince Albert for example, there's a lot of government services that are in private buildings paying rent. I don't know how much that's costing, but if they moved those services to these government buildings, that would cost the government less I would think. I would think that would be a good problem-solving activity.

But then you also see how with the changes to affordable housing, and now they've made it more difficult for people to be in affordable housing. And then now they're using that as an

opportunity to say, well we don't need this, let's sell it. Like, let's just sell everything. The whole province is up for sale basically, even this building apparently, because it's one of the 660 buildings that are being re-evaluated. So maybe it's not being used enough, so maybe will we come back to work and there'll be a for sale sign — sold — and we have no Legislative Building anymore. Who knows? We don't know, Mr. Speaker.

So also, like trying to privatize services that were once offered by the Crowns, and slowly just piecing everything away. And I know with SaskTel, like now oftentimes . . . I'm an avid user of SaskTel and when I'd have issues with my services the people who would come were SaskTel employees. I knew them. They live in P.A. I know a lot of them. But now when I got the high-speed Internet put into the house, it was an Alberta company coming in and doing the work, you know.

And with SaskPower, I know there's been a lot of contracting to the private agencies there too, to do services where our linesmen and our other people that worked there used to do that kind of work. And SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance], you could see that it's being privatized just slowly. Like now when you could go anywhere to get your car . . . have it evaluated after an accident . . . Or I heard that when you phone to see what the adjustment would be, oftentimes it's out of the province. I heard that that's happening too.

So there's a lot of things happening and we're hearing about it, that's slowly piecing away from our Crown corporations and privatizing this work, and oftentimes it's out-of-province or out-of-country privatization, which is even more troubling.

And then of course, the privatization of health care. We hear more and more about this and that being done here and there. And I know when I talk to health care workers, they're really concerned about their jobs because they keep hearing that, you know, a lot of different aspects of their jobs are going to be privatized. And we know already they privatized laundry services which now has been at times quite the nightmare. Like you need more of this particular item and you used to be able to call the laundry downstairs, "do you have this ready" and they'd send it back up. But now because you're waiting for it to come from Alberta or wherever it's coming from — Medicine Hat — that if you're out of bedsheets, well, you're out of bedsheets, you know. So it's really disturbing that we had a process that worked well, employed Saskatchewan people, and provided those local jobs and now they privatized that.

Food services, we know food services in the jails were privatized and they claimed, well, if you don't like the food, don't go to jail. But now food services are going to be privatized even in this building and food services are . . . There's a lot of word on the street that food services could be privatized in the health care system. So what if you don't like the food, don't get sick? Like, Mr. Speaker, this is getting ridiculous. The food services was an appropriate service that . . . Especially in the correctional centres, now they're seeing a lot of issues with regards to the privatization of the food services, and not only the quality of the food or the quantity of food but the fact that the employees there are not trained to the same calibre as they were when they were correctional workers.

When they were employed by the correctional services, they

learned about the manipulating factors of inmates, you know, and that was a really important factor. And now more and more contraband is being brought into the centres, and what's the difference? The privatizing of the food services. So there's been a lot of concern with regards to that.

Privatization of custodial services — we had individuals right here in this building providing wonderful custodial services. Everything was always pristine and clean and amazing. And they weren't the highest paid individuals, Mr. Speaker. Like, they had a wage that might have been a bit over minimum wage but basically a living wage, you know. And then now they privatized it, asked the same people to reapply for their jobs with less pay. Mr. Speaker, that was a slap in the face, and that was so incredibly irresponsible.

And we know they're expanding on this as well with the different privatization of all the services. But yet they add three more MLAs. They have more ministers than before. They don't mind spending money on that. No, that's not a problem at all. But like, gosh, if we provide someone with a living wage in this province . . .

So, Mr. Speaker, there was three separate elections, but the Sask Party promised they wouldn't sell off our Crowns. But yet, then they scrapped STC, and they did all the things that I've been talking about here and they're selling everything piece by piece. But that's different because it's a wind-down.

So, Mr. Speaker, they're not fooling anyone. Everybody knows that that's privatization and that's eliminating services within our province. The taxpayers deserve to have a say in what services are provided here. And if you're going to sell one of their businesses or wind them down, you should be talking to them first and asking them, and get a mandate from the public.

So we're talking about trust, Mr. Speaker. You know, and how can the people of Saskatchewan trust a government who says that they prioritize these services, but even the minister himself in his remarks, the opening remarks when he was presenting this bill, said, "... Crown corporations support economic growth and quality of life in Saskatchewan."

How are people supposed to trust that that's something that is a priority for this government, when they promise they won't sell off our Crowns but then they passed Bill 40? And then they put SaskTel on the chopping block and they scrap STC. And then they said they were going to eliminate Bill 40 and everybody was like yes, you know, maybe they are listening to us. And then two days later the premier said, well maybe just a bit of Bill 40. You know, so this was a promise that the premier went to Facebook and gave to the people of Saskatchewan, was to completely eliminate Bill 40. And I think if they are someone that the . . . if they are a man of their word like they say, then they should eliminate Bill No. 99 as well, Mr. Speaker. And just eliminate that and go to the people of Saskatchewan when you have . . . and ask them for a mandate to do any more of your privatization schemes.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I know the critic with regards to this bill will have a lot to discuss. They will contact the stakeholders and have consultation with them. And I know my colleagues have a lot more to say about, with regards to this bill. And at

this I am going to adjourn debate on Bill No. 99. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Prince Albert Northcote has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 99, *The Interpretation Amendment Act, 2017 (No. 2)*. Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise and enter into the debate on Bill No. 103, *An Act respecting Actions based on Certain Contracts affecting Land, making consequential amendments to certain Acts and repealing certain Acts*. It's quite the historic piece of legislation that we have before us today. And I might later on take us down a bit of a historic review of that from the Law Reform Commission because it is quite interesting when it talks about something that is so fundamental to quality of life here in Saskatchewan, and that is our housing, our land, and how that is protected.

And of course this is why we have good government, to make sure those fundamentals are treated in a fair, respectful way, particularly when it comes to contracts. And I think that if any of us have watched that Christmas movie about the land . . . I'm going to draw a blank. I'll come back to it. Anyways, about how important housing is for everybody and . . . Okay, drawing a blank. I'll have to . . . By the end of it I'll remember what movie I'm talking about, but anyways, I'll close with that.

But right now I want to take a minute and talk about what the minister said about this Act. He was talking about how, and it's interesting because it is how . . . At the speed of which this government can operate here. The 2014 Law Reform Commission of Saskatchewan had a report and it was entitled *Reform of the Land Contracts (Actions) Act*. And this piece of legislation was based on that.

[16:15]

And of course this piece of legislation is a consumer protection Act, but of course in many ways we think of it as much more than just a straight consumer . . . Because this is a basic fundamental of how we live: our houses, and when we buy our homes, how do we have protection from foreclosure when we hit rough times? And sometimes those rough times come without any reason or any kind of cause that's due to the homeowner.

We think of the . . . You know, and times sure have been booming and people have been able to buy houses and do well, and then we start to see that time slip away from us. In fact, I

think that there's a stat out there, I was talking to my colleague about it, that in Saskatchewan we have three times the national mortgage rate in arrears, a stat that we have now. We are at three times the national average of what other provinces have in terms of mortgages in arrears.

So this piece of legislation is very timely because we have seen a boom time, and we've seen a time now where we see taxes are going up. The cost of living is going up in Saskatchewan. This government here seems not too concerned about that, in terms of the number of taxes.

And we saw this on Friday where, the end of the week when the news cycle is down a bit, they released their new fees that they're going to be charging, some \$10 million in new types of fees. While they will rationalize it as the fines haven't gone up in a while or the juice boxes are . . . We need to see more money go to Sarcan. And all of that on one hand is fair, but I particularly went around when I was watching the news on Friday night about the juice boxes, and found it interesting that actually the money goes to the GRF [General Revenue Fund]. And then from the GRF, it goes to Sarcan, that in fact there will be a delay for that money. So this is something that we need to take a look at and make sure we have a way of protecting our citizens.

So the minister talks about it being a consumer protection legislation to protect borrowers by requiring lenders to obtain leave of the court before starting a foreclosure procedure. And we'll talk a little bit about the stats of that and how high they were in the '30s and '40s and how that causes kind of legislation move. And we'll go through that.

But he talks about now that we need to modernize it and make sure that "The protection is provided as time: time to bring the mortgage up to date; refinance or sell the property before foreclosure or judicial sale; or if that is not possible, time to find alternative accommodation." And that's really important, that we don't see people put out on the street. We just don't want to see that happening. And as I said, people may be finding themselves in tough times through no fault of their own, but this is really something that we need to pay attention to.

Now this Act currently doesn't apply to farm land. In its original state it did apply to farm land, and I can go through the history of that a little bit, about what caused the change in 1971. And then in the '80s, the farm security Act came along and dealt with the farm land aspect of this. But this was about homes.

And so he talks about the new Act would ". . . maintain the time and notice provided by the current Act while reducing the costs to those involved in the process." And we're the only province that requires any pre-action process for foreclosure.

And I have to say that the Provincial Mediation Board, from my experience as an MLA, and referring people to them . . . I actually thought that they weren't operating anymore, but they are apparently operating. And so the Provincial Mediation Board, they had really decreased their presence in the consumer protection world. They're a great organization actually, in the work they do to help people find their way forward by avoiding foreclosures and other bankruptcy procedures, but helping to

find solutions. I know the people in my riding really appreciated the very good work that they did. And so I was pleasantly surprised to see that they're still in operation and that they're still actively involved.

So it talks about plain-language notice of application, which is good, for leave to commence an action. And then there's 60 days before the hearing date, a very definite timeline, and this is really, really good.

And so "The new process will ensure both the borrower and the courts have the most up-to-date information before an application for leave to commence a foreclosure action is heard." So this is very, very important, and so I think this will be something that we'll have some questions on. But I do want to talk a little bit about the history here because I think, you know, we go through all these pieces of legislation; we don't really understand where they come from.

And this first was brought into effect back on May 15th, 1943, following closely on the heels of the dirty thirties and the Great Depression and of course World War II. And these were at least as severe as anywhere else, the effects anywhere else in North America. The Depression resulted in a total collapse of the market, both for commodities and land. And so they needed a way of delay, suspend, adjust, compromise, or postpone the rights of lenders and creditors, to keep people in their homes and on their farms. And so this was a response, a legislative response, to give some sort of relief to the debt-oppressed farmers.

And so we're all pretty familiar with that and what happened in that time and how there needed to be some action right across Canada, right across North America because of what happened in the dirty thirties, and the impact on farming and the farming practices of the time, and really, really caused the turmoil that we've all heard about from our parents or our grandparents, and the fact that it was very, very tough.

And so this was part of a legislative program that was brought in for Saskatchewan's debt adjustment Act, and apparently this bill was part of a series of six bills considered by the legislature in April 1943. And the other ones were *The Provincial Mediation Board Act*, to replace the creditor-debtor negotiation role; a bill to amend *The Limitation of Civil Rights Act*, giving district court judges the power to vary their own orders and grant further extensions of time for payments on seizures under lien agreements. And a few others: the King's Bench, *The District Court Act* and *The Moratorium Act*. And so it was quite interesting.

So the LCAA [*The Land Contracts (Actions) Act*] was amended 20 times over its 70-year history. And probably one of the most significant times was with the farm Act when we took out the farm land and then it went into the farm security Act in the '80s. So that's what it leaves us with now.

But I do want to just for a moment just talk on these stats. Now again this report is from 2014 and hopefully now that we're in 2018 we can have some more up-to-date stats here. But the Law Reform Commission, their consultation paper notes that they couldn't really make comparisons on foreclosures in 1943 because their stats weren't available. But if you go back using

the notices of intention received by the Provincial Mediation Board from 1977 to 2012, the number of notices peaked from the mid-1980s through the early 1990s, reaching a height of 1,921 in 1990-91.

So, Mr. Speaker, we'll remember quite clearly who was in power at that time and what was happening in Saskatchewan at that time. And these guys, and even the minister who's looking out to sell 660 buildings, I believe it is, was talking about schools and closing schools. Well here we have 1,900 homes that were being foreclosed in 1990-91. And so that is not a record to be proud of at all.

Now interestingly here, this is the good news — and I see some of them paying attention to this — the low happened in 2008-2009 with only 428 notices of intention for foreclosure. Now that's really a significant drop. So it went from . . . [inaudible] . . . and steadily declined to a low of 428. It didn't all of a sudden drop. It wasn't going along 1,900, 1,900 and then whoosh, as sometimes these guys like to believe happened in 2007. It was a steady decline to 428.

But the other thing here is this is where I think we have a lot of questions. In fact, we'll be asking some questions about this. In 2011-2012, 688 notices of intention were filed with the Provincial Mediation Board. That's the notice for foreclosing. So my quick math: 428 to 688 is 260 more. That's almost . . . That's got to be a third if not 25 per cent increase in just four years. That's alarming. And so we need to know what's going on here. And I'll need to know, has that trend continued or is that a one-time only? I'd very much like to know how many notices of intention were filed with the Provincial Mediation Board in the last few years because, as I said earlier, we see that there's a stat out there saying that we are three times, three times the national average in terms of people in arrears in their mortgage payments which obviously means that they're just on the brink of foreclosure or getting a notice of foreclosure.

And so this legislation is very, very timely and we'll have lots of questions about what this really means for families who are facing some very dire times. And particularly when we saw the housing market that we had in Saskatchewan from 2007, 2006 to 2012-14 — very hot housing markets — and people were excited on the one hand if you could sell your house at that price but not so excited if you had to buy a house at that price. And so the impact now is that we're seeing this kind of situation.

And the other issue I would really like to know more about now that I'm thinking about it is the impact on condos and particularly first-time homeowner condos who bought into condos. And are they finding themselves caught in a market where they can't move on to their second home? You know, you can't move on to your second home . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, well it's more than just the market because we've been working with this for 70 years.

I'd like to say this bill was introduced by Tommy Douglas but I don't actually think it was. I think '43 would be in the dying days of the last conservative government who finally saw the light, who read the writing on the wall: they'd better get with it. But I think it was the conservative government who brought it in first, which is interesting because the conservative

government realized that they had to do something because the housing market and the land market was collapsing, and if people were going to come home from the war and expect to continue farming or continue to have their home that they left their parents in or their relatives, it was going to be an issue.

And so, Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of questions we have with this. It's a very timely piece of legislation and particularly with the budget coming up. Will there be any relief for people facing the kind of charges that we've had before us or will it be, as some holler over, that we will just let the market have its way?

With that, Mr. Speaker, I am wanting to let us move on to the next bill and so I would move adjournment of Bill 103, the land contract Act. Thank you.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

[16:30]

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

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to join in with regards to debate of Bill No. 104, *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, 2017*. Mr. Speaker, this is a very important piece of legislation that we have before us. This legislation is essential because it promotes and protects individual dignity and equality rights, and so it's a very important piece of legislation.

My understanding is that the reason why this bill comes forward to us right now is there's a little bit of housekeeping aspect with regards to it. But the biggest change here is that this bill repeals and replaces the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code with a new bilingual Act, Mr. Speaker, and that is very important. I believe it was something that was brought forward from the Charter of Rights, that pieces of legislation such as this that really have an impact on each and every one of us in our province become a bilingual Act because this will meet the needs of the Saskatchewan francophone community and improve access for them.

And we know how very important that is in our province. We have a large francophone community within Saskatchewan and right across the province here, and it's really important that we ensure that we have legislation that will meet their needs as well. So, Mr. Speaker, the Human Rights Code is so important

because it prohibits discrimination within our province and it includes a bill of rights and it makes it illegal for someone to violate another person's fundamental rights and freedom. And so, Mr. Speaker, we know that we've got to ensure that everyone in our province feels that they're respected and they could be who they feel that they are, you know, and be able to express themselves of who they are.

And, Mr. Speaker, I was looking through the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, their annual report of 2016-2017, Mr. Speaker, and it's very interesting information that they provide here. They talk about the numbers of complaints that they've been receiving in their office. And they play a huge role with ensuring equality and rights within our province. And so they indicated that there was 444 new complaints in 2016-2017.

So the complaints have been increasing and the number of complaints have, well like I said before, have been increasing. And so there was 444 new complaints and 141 formalized complaints. So, Mr. Speaker, I don't know if the increase is due to the fact that individuals are now knowing the process of how to access services when they're feeling that their rights and freedom have been, their human rights have been affected, or if this is something that's increasing across the board, that people's human rights are not being respected. I like to think that maybe more people are knowing the services that are available for them, because I would think with our day and age that we would hope that that is decreasing within our society with more education and more information that is provided and that there would be more people who would have deep levels of respect for others.

But, Mr. Speaker, there was also a breakdown with regards to the grounds and category of these complaints. The number one complaint is with regards to disabilities and access to services. And I think that's really troubling, Mr. Speaker, because we need to be more mindful when we're looking at our buildings and such to make sure that they're readily accessible for individuals, you know. And so it looks like the majority of those complaints were with regards to employment and not having accessibility within their employment. And so I would guess that that would maybe limit potential employment for people that have disabilities, which I think is a real detriment. And we need to be a little bit mindful when we talk to employers about ensuring that their facilities are appropriate.

The number two was sexual harassment, and again I find that very troubling again because you would think that there would be much more gender equality, you know. And that's unfortunate that that's still an issue with regards to sexual harassment in the workplace, because workplace looked like it was the highest one too. And the third one was sex and pregnancy, which was the third highest amount of complaints, and again that was within employment. And so it looks like we have a lot more work to do to ensure that employers within our province are looking out for people's human rights.

And so when we look at where most people are having maybe some issues with regards to their human rights, like I said before, employment was number one and then public services is number two, Mr. Speaker. So we have an obligation as members of this legislature to ensure that the public services we have in our province are accessible to individuals as well. And

it looks like again disabilities was the first one and then ancestry and sexual harassment was tied for number two for the most complaints with regards to our public services, which is very disturbing.

And then education was number three with again regards to disability being number one . . . oh, no, family status being number one and then disabilities and a few other ones tied for third. So education again is a big part of what we do here in ensuring that there's human rights there and making sure that people feel included and that they have all the services that they need.

So, Mr. Speaker, like I said before, this bill will make . . . This bill allows for us to have a bilingual aspect to it, and it changes a lot of the language throughout the Act, but a lot of that language doesn't necessarily change the content of it so the content is the same as the previous one.

Some areas that we have concern would be like the number of complaints coming forward and the fact that there's been an increase in complaints. Another area is the growing number of human rights complaints that are dismissed. And I don't understand exactly the reasons why they're being dismissed, but I think there will be definitely some good questions to ask within committee, what's going on with that. And so some of these troubling trends, we'll certainly continue to work with the commissioner and remain engaged in the incredibly important issues of the human rights.

And so I know the critic that's responsible for this bill will do due diligence and consult with all the stakeholders, and I know I have other colleagues who will have a lot of information that they'll want to add with regards to this piece of legislation. And so with that, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 104. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — The member for Prince Albert Northcote 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 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 Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Centre.

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today to enter into the debate on this topic, *An Act to make consequential amendments to The Saskatchewan Employment Act resulting from the enactment of The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, 2017*. Now I've already spoken to the main bill, but I do want to come back and talk just a bit about the consequential amendments and some of the opportunities here for us to correct some errors that the government has made,

even though they may seem small.

I was delighted to hear this afternoon the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow get on his feet and make a member's statement about transgender week and celebrating that, and that's a very good thing. He's been out to many of those things and I appreciate that. So in the spirit of that and in the spirit that we're here . . . And we're about, I think, to raise a flag in just a few short minutes, and as I talked about then, we still have this mistake that we have with pronouns in our legislation. And so I was just googling it, and not that I'm any kind of pronoun nerd, but it is interesting when you get into singular versus plural, first person, second person, third person. I can only remember this because I read it five minutes ago.

But it is interesting because we have overlooked the idea that pronouns are gender based. And particularly when it comes to human rights, we could really lead the way, and this would be the perfect bill to correct those errors because clearly there are unintended consequences when you fix legislation. And as my colleague from Prince Albert said, that this is just a bill to . . . They just want to translate into French and collect some housekeeping, but you know, Mr. Speaker, when you do that you really open the opportunity to say, so what does that mean? What does that all entail?

It should mean just the easy stuff, particularly when it comes to the Human Rights Code. This is a time when we could take out the hes and the shes and replace it with the theys and theirs, and that would not be a problem. Language evolves. We all know that. We all know that. And I think that as we become much more sensitive to others in our society that aren't identifying what their pronouns are . . . And, Mr. Speaker, I would bet you've been in situations where you've had meetings where people go around the circle first, introduce themselves, and actually give the pronoun with which they identify, whether they like to be identified with a he or a she, so all of that can be cleared up right at the front.

And so why not this week, this week that we're celebrating Transgender Day of Visibility, that we make this a little mission of ours to say, hey, let's clean this up? Let's clean this up. We can do that. That's what our job is. It's not going to change any of the legislation, but it's going to make it look a lot better. Especially when people know — and here you have the marker — 2017.

Mr. Speaker, you and I and everyone here knows that the transgender issues have been on the forefront for several years, several years. It hasn't just come up last week. So this is a time to get it right. You're having a little marker — Human Rights Code, 2017 — with the asterisk. We couldn't get it right on the pronouns. We stumbled before we got to the finish line. That's really unfortunate. We could really get over that finish line and do a piece of legislation that we could all say, hey, this is cutting edge. This is how you write legislation in the modern day and not in the old archaic way, the binary way. And I think that we need to talk about it.

Now when I was googling on my phone, of course you do get into the old purists of grammar who say, no, they're only singular and it's either he or she and that's just the way it is; move on. No, it's not time to move on. It's time to get it right.

And that's what we do here. This is why we have second reading speeches like this. And I think, while it is interesting, we're having this piece of legislation because of four digits — a two and a zero and a one and a seven — that's what this bill is all about, really, if I looked at it. Because it's changing from "Human Rights Code" to "Human Rights Code, 2017." That's what we're doing.

[16:45]

So here we have . . . If we can make a big deal about four digits, then certainly we can make a big deal about pronouns. And so, Mr. Speaker, I don't know why this would be a problem. And I think it would be even considered a friendly amendment because it doesn't change the intent in any way, shape, or form. And not that we want to go back to a process where we were in the other one where it took us four years or five years to get a report back from the Law Reform Commission, the good work that they do. I'm not really interested in hearing a historical review of the pronoun — singular, plural, or and/or possessive, or not. I think that we should just do the right thing here.

So I don't want to get into the other things I talked about with the Human Rights Code because I know we have a couple of more bills to do. We have an opportunity to get it right here. And so with that, Mr. Speaker, I think that . . . And I am very serious about this because I do think that the members over there . . . And I know some of them are listening very carefully and some of them are lawyers and some of them know that this is the time to do the right thing and make sure that when we do the human rights consequential amendment Act, 2017, that it is the best kind of work.

You know, you don't want to have unintended consequences. And who knows, who knows? We might; we might. People have very strong feelings about this and rightly they should. If they feel that the binary system isn't working for them and they identify differently, then this bill here doesn't speak to them. And we know, and in the words of the Human Rights Commissioner, Judge Arnot, "words matter." And they do matter. So let's get this one right.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I know others will want to speak on this issue, so I will move adjournment on *An Act to make consequential amendments to The Saskatchewan Employment Act resulting from the enactment of The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, 2017*. I do so move adjournment.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon Centre has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 105, *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Consequential Amendment Act, 2017*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again I'm proud to stand here today and add my remarks with regards to Bill No. 106, *The Missing Persons and Presumption of Death Amendment Act*.

Mr. Speaker, I was happy to see this piece of legislation come forward. I have to be honest. Not because . . . I don't really know a lot of the details that are being implemented in here and I know the critic will have a lot more to say about that. But the reason why I was happy to see this come forward is because we really need to have these discussions about the missing people that we have in our province. And we have a growing number of missing people in our province and it's really troubling.

I participate in the missing and murdered women and men walk in Prince Albert as often as I can. It happens every year and I try to make it out. And I think it's really important to show an alliance with regards to that because like I said, it is troubling that we have so many people who are missing in our province. And oftentimes these people, they come from lifestyles that . . . They lead more dangerous lifestyles, you know, but it doesn't make it right for them to be missing and perhaps murdered.

And so some people come to mind when I think about this. One person that comes to mind is Happy Charles. She's an individual that's from La Ronge and she became missing in Prince Albert. The last time that she was seen was on April 3rd, 2017. And, Mr. Speaker, I went to a vigil on October 5th of last year. I was invited by the family. The whole community was invited and went to that. And it took place at the last place that Happy was seen, which was outside of a high school in Prince Albert. And in attendance of that vigil was her mom and dad and her three daughters and her grandchildren. She had five children and two grandchildren.

And just listening to the stories from her family and her friends was very moving, Mr. Speaker. And if anyone here gets an opportunity to attend a vigil like that, I really strongly encourage them to because it really puts the fire in your belly when it comes to having to find out the reasons why individuals become missing like this. And Happy hasn't been found yet. And it hurts me to think how much it bothers her mother, Regina, and her children. And her daughter has talked about, you know, the one daughter was pregnant and knowing that her mom will never see her soon-to-be-born grandchild.

And not too long before that vigil, I lost my mother. And, Mr. Speaker, it made me really . . . it put my life into perspective as well. My mom was 82 and I had her for 42 years of my life, you know. And so for these young ladies not to have their mother in their life, it's very sad, and it really makes you realize the importance of making sure we have services for individuals who are potentially at risk, you know.

And so when we talk about cuts to mobile crisis in Prince Albert, knowing that they don't have the daytime services there, that puts people more at risk as well too. And we've got to be mindful of that, Mr. Speaker.

And another person that this piece of legislation reminds me of

is Timothy Charlette. He went missing October 8th of 2014, Mr. Speaker. He's been missing for almost four years now, and his family have been searching non-stop. And I can't even imagine how that is, to be searching for a loved one for four years. And I went to school with his sister, Colleen Whitdeer, and every year she makes sure that people are paying attention about the fact that we have missing Aboriginal men as well, you know, in our province. And that's important as well.

He went missing with his girlfriend, Beatrice Adam, and they found Beatrice's body, but they haven't found Timothy's yet either. And I can't even imagine not knowing where your loved one's remains are. And his mother is a constituent of mine, Elizabeth, and I've chatted with her about the pain for a mother to not know where your child is, you know. And even though Timothy . . . I believe he was in his 40s, but still that would still be really troubling.

And then I think about Danielle Nyland. She was a 22-year-old lady from Prince Albert. I know her mother Lori. We come from the same small community, St. Louis. And so Danielle was missing for a long period of time, but they did find her body. But they haven't found the person who was responsible for murdering Danielle. And at 22 years old, to lose your daughter . . . And we know Danielle might have been with the wrong type of people, but it still would hurt. And they say that when a parent loses a child, they never get over that, you know, and that's lifelong. Especially to know that that hasn't been put to rest is very troubling.

And so I see all these family members at the walks that I attend and other family members of other missing and murdered Aboriginal people. Usually it's Aboriginal people that we are talking about. Danielle was Métis but we also have people from all walks of life that are missing and murdered within our province here, Mr. Speaker. And it's really important that we be mindful of that and we look at legislation such as this one that will have a great impact in regards to allowing our police officers the ability to maybe search for them.

And so when I look at some of the changes with regards to this bill, I know a lot of the changes are housekeeping in nature and updating this piece of legislation, which is important, but it also adds a new section that allows police services search orders and access to records when conducting an investigation into a missing person.

And so like I said before, I don't . . . I'm very fortunate that I have colleagues who have law degrees and they have a better ability to look over this legislation and be able to evaluate it. And so I know they'll do their due diligence and consult stakeholders and such with regards to the changes.

But I know there was an incident in Prince Albert not too long ago that . . . There was a missing woman and she was actually in her home, but the police couldn't have access to her home because of some issues with regards to not being able to be able to get that search warrant. And so when I sit there and think about that, I wonder if this had been in effect if that would've helped with that process. But we also have to ensure that if people are, their records are secure, you know, and we can't just allow . . . all records be allowed to be investigated. But if there is due diligence and a reason then that's really important.

And there also seems to be an emergency demand for records that could come from the chiefs of police or commanding officers in cases where they believe a person is at risk of imminent harm. So I can't think of potential situations like that. I guess maybe in the case of an Amber Alert where the child goes missing, then that would be really important to be able to search more records in order to determine if they are at risk or at harm. And so I think that might be something that will change.

So it looks like they're giving a little bit more power and flexibility for law enforcement officers to be able to do their investigations. And as long as it still is not infringing on people's rights or if it's used in the proper context, I think we need to make sure that people are safe. Because from what I hear, Mr. Speaker, those first few hours are the most crucial hours in order to find a missing person. And I know like with Happy, now she went missing in spring of last year, so the family was searching and searching. And now with winter and all the snow that we've had, it's pretty hard to be doing active searches now.

So we've got to be mindful of the fact that every minute counts when you're searching for a missing person. And I know we've had some Amber Alerts as well in my community and having to search for missing children, you know, and so we want to make sure that if anyone's at risk that we get to them as soon as possible.

So like I said before, Mr. Speaker, I know the critic will do their due diligence and ask the appropriate questions in committee. And I know my fellow colleagues will have a lot more to add with regards to discussion with this bill, and so with that I'm going to move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 106. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — The member for Prince Albert Northcote has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 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 Speaker:** — Carried. I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** — Mr. Speaker, so that the committee can sit tonight, I move that this House do now adjourn.

**The Speaker:** — It's been moved by the Government House Leader that the Assembly be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried. This Assembly now stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30.

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.]





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