



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

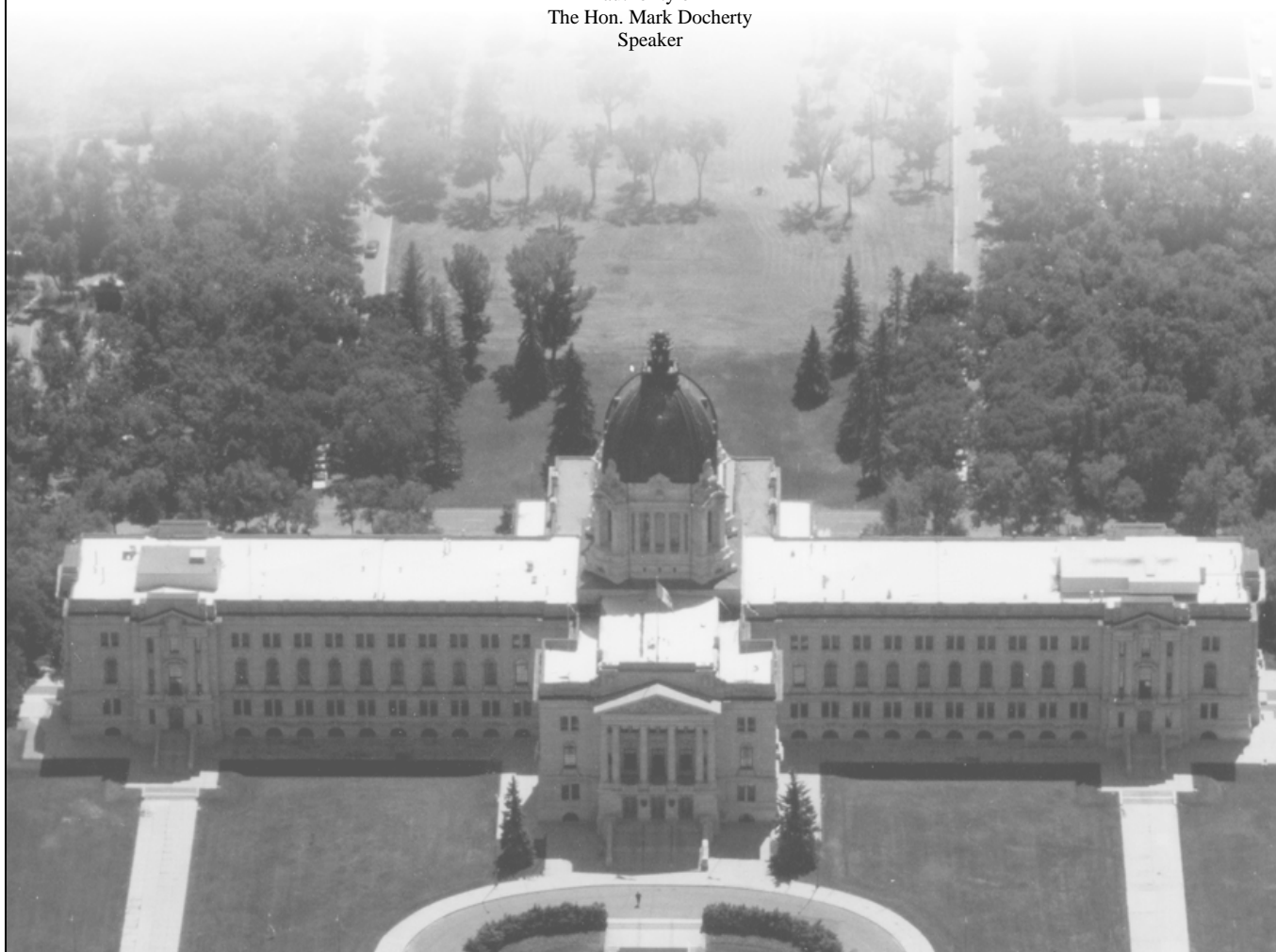
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Mark Docherty
Speaker



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

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Leader of the Opposition — Ryan Meili

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Wotherspoon, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)
Wyant, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)
Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

Vacant — Regina Northeast

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

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Mr. Speaker, I ask leave for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — Asked for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, today I rise to acknowledge one of our dedicated provincial public servants, a man who contributed more than 41 years to doing the people's work in Saskatchewan. I speak today of John Edwards, sitting in the Speaker's gallery, one of the province's professional career civil servants, joined today by his son Wesley and some of our GR [Government Relations] staff.

John is retiring, but it's fair to say that John's name and reputation will no doubt be known by many urban and rural municipal stakeholders and by many current and former ministers and MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly]. That's thanks to a career spanning more than four decades. During that time, he has professionally served various provincial governments of nearly all political stripes. He is also a man who's forgotten more about municipal legislation than many of us will ever know.

But John was not originally a prairie boy. He was born and raised in Ontario, where he studied at the University of Waterloo and later at the University of North Carolina. He also briefly worked for the Government of Canada in Ottawa for about two and a half years. Finally he saw the light and escaped, moving west to the land of living skies, and he tells me he has never regretted it.

He then began his career as a young public servant with the Government of Saskatchewan, back in the days of the Gestetner and Rolodex. Nearly all of his efforts for the provincial Crown have been working with the municipal sector, first for what was known as the province's urban development branch, then with stops along the way that included various policy and program positions. His tour of duty also included being an acting assistant deputy minister from time to time. His last post before retirement is executor director of the policy and program services branch at the Ministry of Government Relations, my ministry.

Throughout his career, John has also been involved in various special committees and projects. For example, last summer in Regina he was one of the chief architects of the annual meeting

of ministers responsible for local government. The meeting was an opportunity for my predecessor to discuss issues with our provincial counterparts and to show off a little bit of our great province to the country. John was instrumental in leading a team that helped pull off what was a flawless meeting. This was no doubt because of his vast experience having attended many of these annual meetings throughout his career and being Saskatchewan's representative on the provincial-territorial officials committee for ministers responsible for local government.

In 2016 he received a Deputy Minister's Award for Excellence as a member of the RM [rural municipality] of Sherwood inspection and inquiry team. He has received a Centennial Medal, presented by one of the former Lieutenant-Governors of Saskatchewan, the Hon. Lynda Haverstock, proving that he is close to the same age as dirt, carbon dating proving that he and the Minister of Justice are of the same vintage.

In 2005 and '06 he attended and was involved with IPAC [Institute of Public Administration of Canada] international programs for Sask-Namibia partnership work, including two trips to Namibia focused on property assessment and taxation. And one of his most notable achievements was John's leadership being key to updating *The Municipalities Act*, *The Cities Act*, and *The Northern Municipalities Act*. Literally, John has helped develop the municipal skeleton of this province. His work helped bring these three pieces of provincial legislation into the 21st century.

Other noteworthy projects include participating in the creation of the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency, known as SAMA, and the Saskatchewan Municipal Board, known as SMB. These are just a handful of highlights for a man who has attended thousands of meetings and briefings with stakeholders, other civil servants, and ministers alike.

And although John has been a very dedicated public servant for more than the 41 years, he does have other interests. My understanding is that he has a very green thumb when it comes to plants. He enjoys refurbishing antiques — I'll leave the Minister of Justice out of that one — and he likes to renovate, especially flooring.

But his office staff will tell you that it's very easy to know when John is around. All you need to do is look at the office's candy jar in the waiting area. Apparently it doesn't stay full for very long when Mr. Edwards is around. But John's staff will no longer have to watch that candy jar quite so closely because John's office door is closing for the last time and our public service is saying its final goodbye to a man who has served with great humility and professionalism since 1976. For the government this is our loss, but a gain for John's family. I'm not sure I have the budget, actually, to hire the four people that it's going to take to replace John, but I'm sure his wife of more than 40 years, and two children, will be happy to spend more time with him.

John is a positive example of dedication to the public service and its value to the people of Saskatchewan. We will miss him, and thank him for his service. John, we wish you all the best. Happy retirement. And I ask all members in welcoming John

and his son Wesley to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join the minister across and also welcome John and his son Wesley to the Assembly here. John, I appreciate all of the guidance and information you provided as the critic of Government Relations. Your expertise on taxation is amazing, and the way you can explain it has been so helpful. And so we know that 41 years in public service is very much appreciated, but the legacy that you have left is going to leave a long mark on government relations in Saskatchewan. I'm sure you've touched all of the members here, and we appreciate all of the hard work you have done. I hope you greatly appreciate your retirement, enjoy and spend a lot more time with your family, and enjoy your hobbies as well. So thank you for everything you've done. And thank you for the 41 years you've contributed to our province. So thank you.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce another guest in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, and that is my niece Elizabeth Pala. She is here on a job . . . well, for her class. They're doing a work placement and she chose to follow me for the week, Mr. Speaker. So it's going to be great to have Elizabeth with me.

Elizabeth is my oldest great-niece, Mr. Speaker. And so it's wonderful to be able to spend this time with her. Elizabeth is an amazing young lady. She does so well in school. She's thinking about a career in nursing when she graduates. She's in grade 10 right now and she's actively involved in her student council, Mr. Speaker. She is the class representative for her grade 10 class but she's also the secretary and treasurer. So she's really impressive. And she also has some art right now in the Mann Art Gallery in Prince Albert on display till the end of May, so she's also an impressive artist. So we're very proud of Elizabeth and I'm very happy to have her this week.

And I hope any members that come across her, introduce yourself to her. She's really excited. This is her first time in Regina and definitely her first time here. So I ask that all members of the Assembly welcome Elizabeth to her Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to this Assembly, I'd like to join with the Minister of Government Relations in welcoming John Edwards to his Legislative Assembly. I've known John for many, many years — my time in the municipal sector, before politics. There's not a time I didn't know that John was involved in municipal work in the province, Mr. Speaker.

I want to clear up a bit of an egregious comment that . . . The Minister of Government Relations took an unjustified shot at the Justice minister, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to point out that there is no truth to the rumour that John Edwards sat beside the Minister of Justice at the ribbon cutting to the Legislative Building, Mr. Speaker. That's not factual.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to point out, especially in my

time when I had the privilege to serve as minister of Government Relations and had an opportunity to work closely with John, his corporate knowledge is just outstanding, Mr. Speaker. I think we can't lose sight of that. I'm sure he's instilled that in some of the other staff but, Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to commend him for a lengthy career in municipal work and ask all members to please join me in welcoming him to his Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the Minister of Health, the Minister of Government Relations — I think — in welcoming and thanking John Edwards for a strong and illustrious career. I've been in government for, since the . . . for quite a few years, and he's been around through that entire period of time and has been a valuable stalwart of the legislature of the province. For that I thank him. And given the support that I've got from my colleagues on this side, I'm glad to see there's empty space on that side, should I want to consider a move.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to welcome Louise Schweitzer to her Legislative Assembly. Mr. Speaker, Louise is the executive director of the North East Outreach and Support Services in Melfort. Mr. Speaker, the northeast transition house was first opened in Saskatchewan since 1989.

Louise works hard every day to help survivors in her community. In particular she is here to day to raise awareness for the Walk a Mile in Her Shoes event that is held annually in Melfort to show support in ending domestic violence, sexual assault, and gender violence. This year's event is being held in memory of former member from Melfort, Kevin Phillips, who was an avid supporter and advocate for everything that they do at the North East Support Services.

Mr. Speaker, I also would like to thank Louise for the work that she's done following the Humboldt tragedy. She was very active in providing support services for people throughout that area and I want to thank her and the people that work with her for doing that. She raised important issues that the support that was required is not merely required on the day or the week of, that it's an ongoing obligation, and it's something we need to look down the road at and continue to do. So we've given that message to the various government agencies as well.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all MLAs, I want to thank Louise for the work that she's done. And I want to ask all members to join me in welcoming Louise to her Assembly today.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with the minister in welcoming Louise to her Assembly this afternoon. I understand she spent the morning with colleagues from both sides of the House taking photos and doing some recognition in honour of the event that is happening in Melfort on Thursday. And I want to wish you the best of luck, Louise, with that event. I'm sure it will be a great success. Louise, as you know, is from the northeast transition house.

I do want to take this opportunity while I'm on my feet to thank Louise and her staff for all of the work that they do in an area that's unfortunately so desperately needed, providing transition services and shelter services for individuals fleeing interpersonal violence. So thank you for all that you do. I'm so happy that colleagues on both sides of the House were able to support Louise and her event today in this Chamber or in this House. And I'd like all members to join me in welcoming her to her Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I'd also like to take the opportunity to welcome John and congratulate him on retirement but also your years of service. They were commendable. On behalf of the province, thank you. I'd also like to welcome Louise. I'll see you Thursday. Thanks so much for, not only the invitation but the ongoing work. You've done a marvellous job, so thank you for that.

And while I'm standing, I've got a couple of people that I used to . . . spent an awful lot of time working together: Tammy Kirkland and Cheri Kellington. I don't know how many . . . Everybody was throwing around the word "dirt." Well I'm probably as old as dirt, and we worked together at Social Services many years. But I'd like to take the opportunity to welcome everybody to their legislature. And with that . . .

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

[13:45]

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling on the Sask Party to stop their attacks on our already strained children's classrooms. Those who have signed this petition wish to draw our attention to a few things: that the Sask Party cut \$54 million from our kids' classrooms in the devastating 2017-18 budget; that the 2018-19 budget only restores a fraction of what was lost with that \$54 million cut; even though the Sask Party is making us all pay more, our kids are actually getting less; and these cuts have had a devastating impact on classrooms all around this province, from the loss of pre-K [pre-kindergarten] programs for children with special needs, including those who are hard of hearing, to the loss of buses for kindergartners.

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 fully restore 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.

Mr. Speaker, those who have signed the petition today reside in Regina and in Lumsden. I do so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cypress Hills.

Mr. Steele: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to present a petition from citizens who are opposed to the federal government's decision to impose a carbon tax on the

province of Saskatchewan.

I'd like to read the prayer:

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens of Flaxcombe, Marengo, and Alsask. I do so present.

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to stand in my place today to present a petition for a second bridge for Prince Albert. The individuals who signed this petition want to draw the following points to your attention: that the Diefenbaker bridge in Prince Albert is the primary link that connects the southern part of the province to the North; and that the need for a second bridge for Prince Albert has never been clearer than it is today; Prince Albert, communities north of Prince Albert, and businesses that send people and products through Prince Albert require a solution; that the Saskatchewan Party government refuses to stand up for Prince Albert in this critical infrastructure issue; and that the local municipal governments have limited resources and require a second bridge to be funded through federal and provincial governments and not a P3 [public-private partnership] model.

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, 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. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has the very dubious distinction of having the highest rates of intimate partner violence amongst all of the provinces, and we all must do much more to protect survivors of domestic violence.

Those who experience intimate partner violence, Mr. Speaker, for them the violence will often follow them to their workplace, which is why the signatories to this petition are calling for five days of paid leave and up to 17 weeks of unpaid leave be made available to workers who are survivors of domestic violence, and that critical workplace supports made available to survivors of domestic violence be also made available to workers living

with PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder] as a result of domestic violence.

Mr. Speaker, this is what those who are at the front line of this crisis are calling for, just to name a few, the YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association] of Regina and the Provincial Association of Transition Houses of Saskatchewan. This is what we've called for in our private member's bill, Bill No. 609, which is the fourth time we've tabled those provisions in this House in the last two years. It's time for the Sask Party to step up, do the right thing, and pass that legislation.

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 Sask Party to pass legislation to ensure critical supports in the workplace, including reasonable accommodation and paid and unpaid leave for survivors of domestic violence.

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

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Well-Known Author Receives Saskatchewan Order of Merit

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, on April the 13th, six Saskatchewan residents were awarded the Saskatchewan Order of Merit. Well-known Regina Lakeview resident Gail Bowen was one of those deserving recipients.

Bowen is an award-winning author who has thrilled many readers with her mysteries. She is perhaps best known as the author of the Joanne Kilbourn series, a series that now totals 18 books and counting. She has also penned the Charlie Dowhaniuk Rapid Reads novellas for reluctant readers.

In 2008 *Reader's Digest* named Bowen as Canada's Best Mystery Novelist. In 2009 she received the Derrick Murdoch Award for her contribution to Canadian crime writing from the Crime Writers of Canada. Her 18th Kilbourn novel, *The Winners' Circle*, has been shortlisted for the 2018 Arthur Ellis Awards.

The Saskatchewan Order of Merit was established in 1985 and recognizes those who contribute to the social, cultural, and economic well-being of the province and its residents. Bowen has invited us to view our city and our province in a new light through her work, and she is a shining example of the abundance of talent in our province.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating Gail Bowen and the other winners and nominees. Thank you, Gail, for inviting us along on Joanne's adventures, and for your contribution to our province.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatchewan Rivers.

Missing Persons Week

Hon. Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This week marks Missing Persons Week in Saskatchewan. It is an opportunity to raise awareness and focus on what needs to be done to help prevent people from going missing.

Every year approximately 4,500 missing person reports are filed right here in the province. Fortunately the majority of these cases are solved within 48 hours, thanks to the hard work of family members, police, social service staff, community workers, and others. The combined work of all these individuals speaks to the heart of our theme this year entitled, We All Have a Role.

Mr. Speaker, there are still 126 long-term missing persons recorded on the Saskatchewan Association of Chiefs of Police website. The toll left on the lives of families and friends and on communities searching for answers is immense. Our province takes this issue seriously. That is why we established provincial partnership on missing persons just over a decade ago. The committee was first of its kind and has since become a model for Canada.

There is still work to be done, but we will continue our efforts to help bringing missing persons home and reduce the number of people who go missing. You are not forgotten. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Saskatchewan Book Awards

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, on April 28th, along with the Minister for Parks, Culture and Sport, I attended the 25th annual Saskatchewan Book Awards at the Conexus Arts Centre in Regina. Writers and publishers from across our province were recognized for their contributions to Saskatchewan's vibrant literary scene.

Ven Begamudré took home the Regina Public Library Book of the Year Award for his novel, *Extended Families: A Memoir of India*. Dawn Dumont, a columnist for the *Regina Leader-Post* and *Saskatoon StarPhoenix*, won the Muslims for Peace and Justice Fiction Award for *Glass Beads: Stories*. One book that won multiple awards was Trevor Herriot's *Islands of Grass*, which tells the history of our beloved prairie grasslands. This book won the University of Saskatchewan Non-Fiction Award and the City of Regina Book Award.

Mr. Speaker, another book that was recognized was by Beth Goobie. Her book, *breathing at dusk*, is a collection of poems that follows the story of a girl escaping her painful childhood memories. Goobie's book won the Saskatchewan Arts Board Poetry Award and the City of Saskatoon and Public Library of Saskatoon Book Award.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating the award winners and nominees and to thank them for telling our Saskatchewan story so well. I'd also ask all members to thank Léa Prpik, the Chair of the Book Awards, and all of the volunteers and staff who make this event a success every year.

Thank you.

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

Opening of Royal University Hospital's Mental Health Assessment Unit

Mr. Buckingham: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last Friday I had the pleasure of attending the grand opening of the Royal University Hospital's mental health assessment unit in Saskatoon, along with the Minister of Rural and Remote Health, the Minister of Education, the Minister of Central Services, and the member from Saskatoon University.

This unit will provide more appropriate and suitable space for patients seeking mental health emergency services, and for staff of the emergency department. Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of touring the unit, and it is a beautiful, quiet, and calming space, thoroughly designed to meet the needs of the patients. The grand opening was also a great opportunity to express gratitude to all involved.

Mr. Speaker, Les and Irene Dubé are well known in this province for their role in raising awareness and breaking down the stigma that surrounds mental health. Thanks to the Dubé family's incredibly generous \$1 million donation, this unit was able to be built. Mr. Speaker, this project also benefited greatly from the contributions made through the Royal University Hospital Foundation. We want to recognize the foundation for their tremendous work on this project, and of course thanks to the Saskatchewan Health Authority for their work.

Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes the need for appropriate and timely access to mental health care, and we will continue improving mental health services and supports for our residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Arm River.

Volunteer Receives Lieutenant Governor's Award

Hon. Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Proud to rise in the House today to speak about the great volunteerism from a constituent of mine, Bruce Elke. Bruce is a long-time member of the local community, having attended school at both Jansen and Lanigan. He went on to receive a diploma in agriculture at the University of Saskatchewan. Since then, Bruce has run their farming operation and has found time to sit as a reeve for the RM of Prairie Rose from 1999 to 2016. He has also been very involved as a volunteer to many community initiatives, sports teams, and organizations.

As a result of all Bruce's hard work as a volunteer, he was nominated for the Lieutenant Governor's Award for Outstanding Service to Rural Saskatchewan. This well-deserved award was presented to Bruce on March 14th, 2018 at the SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] convention in Regina.

Mr. Speaker, in one nomination letter it is noted his community contributions seemed endless. He has been a member of the Jansen & District Kinsmen Club for 30 years, along with the

Jansen community land project for 20 years, being crucial in organizing Jansen Lites Up the Nite! community events. His commitment to his community and the province of Saskatchewan is truly inspiring.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all members join me in congratulating Bruce on earning the Lieutenant Governor's Award for Outstanding Service to Rural Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Under-18 Women's Curling Team Recognized

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to congratulate Team Ackerman from Moose Jaw in placing second at this year's Canadian Under-18 Women's Curling Championship which was held in Saint Andrews, New Brunswick.

Before nationals, Team Ackerman successfully won the 2018 winter games with a 7 and 0 record. Though it was tough to come so close to taking home the gold, the team is very proud of their accomplishments and how much they have grown as athletes in the process. Mr. Speaker, Team Ackerman faced Nova Scotia for gold. The final score was 6-3, Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Chantel Hoag on being presented with the Fair Play Award by the Curling Canada officials as well as Coach Patrick Ackerman on taking home the Coach's Sportsmanship Award from nationals. I know that I speak on behalf of everyone in this Assembly when I say how proud I am to see our athletes recognized for their leadership and sportsmanship, both on and off the ice, as they have represented our province so well.

Mr. Speaker, I now ask that all members please join me in congratulating Team Saskatchewan — coach Patrick Ackerman, skip Skylar Ackerman, third Madison Johnson, second Chantel Hoag, and lead Samantha McLaren — on a great run at the nationals. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Saskatoon Willowgrove.

Tribute Concert Supports Humboldt Broncos and Their Families

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was billed as a night to heal, a night to love, and a night to live. What it turned out to be was a night that 12,000 people will never forget. Country Thunder's tribute concert in support of the families of the Humboldt Broncos bus tragedy was held at SaskTel Centre this past Friday night.

Country Thunder is an international entertainment and promotion company, and one of the largest in North America. It was founded by Saskatchewan-born Troy Vollhoffer, Bryan Andrews, Ted Gross, and Kim Blevins, and in true Saskatchewan nature, they always want to give back. They reached out to their friends Brett Kissel, Chad Brownlee, Hunter Brothers, Gord Bamford, Jess Moskaluke, and Dallas

Smith, as well as Kelly Chase and 38 current and former NHL [National Hockey League] players to help in this memorable night.

When Shaunavon's own Hunter Brothers performed "Amazing Grace," there wasn't a dry eye in the place. Hearts were pounding when Chad Brownlee performed Tom Cochrane's "Big League." Everyone was out of their chairs, encouraging Langenburg's Jess Moskaluke, and video messages came from Saskatchewan's Mark McMorris and others. You could hear a pin drop when our Premier passionately spoke about what this event meant to Saskatchewan. He was followed by thunderous chants of "Go, Broncos, go."

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Country Thunder and all the performers of this event. Almost \$1 million was raised. As Brett Kissel and his Saskatoon-based manager, Louis O'Reilly, always say, "Tough times don't last, but tough people do." We are all Humboldt Broncos, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

[14:00]

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Wage Rates in Saskatchewan

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question today for the Premier is, does he believe that someone who is working full-time hours in Saskatchewan should be earning enough that they don't need to count on supports like the food bank and other social services just to make ends meet?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, over the last decade it's been this government, a Saskatchewan Party government under Premier Wall, and all of the members and others on this side of the House that have consistently and repeatedly advocated for a stronger economy here in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, they have advocated for that to some success, I might put forward, with some 62,000-plus jobs here in the province of Saskatchewan, in communities right across this province, in communities where I live, in communities in the North and in all corners of the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

All the while, with those jobs and those careers that come, Mr. Speaker, we've invested in training to ensure that we can keep our best and brightest here in the province, to increase our standard of living. And I think, Mr. Speaker, when you look at our standards of living, our standards of earnings here in the province, Mr. Speaker, they rank very well. And we've always ensured that we've had every support, Mr. Speaker, for those that need it here in the province of Saskatchewan.

This is our growth agenda, Mr. Speaker. This is our plan for growth. This is the Saskatchewan advantage and this is the path that we'll continue on, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Fifteen per cent of those who use food banks in the province cite wages as their main source of income. Does the Premier believe that people working full time should be earning enough to have incomes that lift them over the poverty line?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, as I said, as we continue to advocate for a stronger economy here, wages continue to increase in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And in fact since February of 2007 our wages, average weekly earnings in this province are up some 38 per cent to \$730.24, Mr. Speaker. This ranks as the second-highest growth percentage in average weekly earnings compared to 2007, only behind, Mr. Speaker, I'd put the provinces of Newfoundland and Labrador.

So understanding there is always more to do in the way of advocating for jobs in this province, Mr. Speaker, and advocating for good, high-paying work for all the residents of the province of Saskatchewan, and ensuring that they have the education to achieve that and the supports, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that they're able to attend that education — we continue to remain committed to all of that on behalf of the people of this province, Mr. Speaker, in the past and the present and into the future.

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

Mr. Meili: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier claims that we rank well nationally in earnings, but in fact Saskatchewan has the dubious distinction of having the lowest minimum wage in the country. As a result we have many people working full time and still living in poverty. Fifteen per cent of food bank users have wages as their main source of income. Mr. Speaker, no one who's working full time should have to choose between paying their rent, feeding their family, or keeping the lights on.

Responsibility for this injustice, Mr. Speaker, rests with the Premier. It rests with his cabinet. They set the minimum wage and, after a decade in power, they've allowed workers in our province to fall further and further behind. Many are calling, Mr. Speaker, for the minimum wage to be raised to \$15 an hour. But at the rate we're going, Saskatchewan won't have a \$15-an-hour minimum wage for 17 more years, Mr. Speaker. This inaction hurts people and it stunts our economic growth.

The Premier has admitted there is more to do. Will the Premier commit to raising the minimum wage enough to lift hard-working Saskatchewan people out of poverty?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, since 2007 minimum wage in this province has been raised some 10 times, Mr. Speaker, up some 37 per cent in just over a decade, Mr. Speaker. We committed to a process a few years ago, Mr. Speaker. That process involved indexing our minimum wage to a formula that we put forward at that point in time and consulted on, that was weighted on the average increase of the consumer price index as well as the average hourly wage for Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker.

This has been the position of this government since we introduced that, Mr. Speaker. It was a formula that was put forward at that point in time. We stand by it, Mr. Speaker. And I guess my question to the members opposite: are they committed to a \$15 minimum wage here in the province of Saskatchewan? I think employers in this province would like to know.

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

Rail Transportation Issues

Mr. Meili: — Mr. Speaker, the lowest minimum wage in the country and more people looking for work. Last Friday over 600 workers at Nutrien, Saskatchewan's largest mining company, were laid off. These job losses have serious impact on workers and their families, on communities, on local businesses, and on our economy as a whole. For far too long, our underperforming rail transport system has been holding our economy back. The federal government has been asleep at the switch when it comes to making sure our exports arrive at market in a timely fashion. And the Sask Party has been missing in action.

What is the government doing to support these laid-off workers and their families? When will we finally see a rail transport system that actually works for farmers, miners, and manufacturers in Saskatchewan? And, Mr. Speaker, will this government ever be successful in advocating for Saskatchewan's interests?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, that is an amazing question considering the occurrences and happenings in the introductions of initiatives that were put forward in this House and in this city by this government on behalf of the residents, the hard-working residents in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And it will always be this government that advocates for the free flow of our goods to port and advocates with our federal government and our provincial counterparts to ensure that we can continue to transport our products, Mr. Speaker, our agricultural, mined, energy, manufactured goods, our forested goods, to port over rail lines, through pipelines, Mr. Speaker — the most safe and efficient method to transport those products, Mr. Speaker.

And we advocated for that last week with the introduction of *The Energy Export Act*, Mr. Speaker, as well as we'll advocate for the port capacity and the free trade agreement so that we can continue to grow our economy, Mr. Speaker, grow our jobs, grow our population on behalf of the people of this province, Mr. Speaker. What's the member opposite say?

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

Highway Intersection Safety Review

Mr. Meili: — It would be lovely to see some changes in our rail transport system, but we don't see any successful advocacy from that side of the House whatsoever. We also don't see a lot of success taking action on the recommendations that have been

given by experts, experts that they have consulted.

In 2016 a project team consisting of the Saskatchewan Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure, Associated Engineering, and a group of research advisers and stakeholders delivered a report called *Safety Countermeasures for Saskatchewan Highways*. The report concluded that converting two-way stop-controlled intersections to roundabouts would reduce total collisions at those intersections by 67 per cent and would reduce injuries and fatal injuries by 87 per cent. The report recommended that roundabouts should be considered first in place of two-way stop-controlled intersections.

So to the Premier: has any action been undertaken by this government since they received this report in 2016 to identify high-risk intersections that should be converted to roundabouts?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, I'll let the minister speak specific to the actions taken with respect and considerations with respect to the report, Mr. Speaker. But I think it is important that we speak to this topic of intersection safety in the province of Saskatchewan given the last number of weeks' events here, Mr. Speaker, and what is quite likely one of the most tragic incidents that we have experienced in this province, and that is with our Humboldt Broncos' bus crash.

We're continuing to work through the Ministry of Highways, Mr. Speaker, on the policies that we already have to ensure they're being enacted across the province, Mr. Speaker, ensuring that we have visibility at our intersections across the province. And we will be out this spring, Mr. Speaker, ensuring that our right-of-ways are clear across this province as well as working with the Ministry of Highways and others to ensure that we are taking every opportunity that we can to ensure the safety of our intersections in the province of Saskatchewan on behalf of Saskatchewan people.

And I would say that I have talked with members of the family, Mr. Speaker, this weekend, with respect to their thoughts on what we can do here in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And this is a conversation that will be ongoing on behalf of the people of the province.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When asked about roundabouts week before last, the Minister of Highways and Infrastructure responded, "I won't rule it out . . . at this time, [but] we haven't really looked at them." Now that was an odd statement, given the fact that the ministry had studied and reported on these life-saving measures back in 2016.

Mr. Speaker, Alberta's transportation minister has recently called for a review of all highway intersections and anticipates that roundabouts will replace many dangerous intersections in that province. Well-designed roundabouts are increasingly the go-to around the world for their proven safety record.

Will the Premier commit to a similar review of dangerous intersections in Saskatchewan to determine where replacing stop-controlled intersections with roundabouts is likely to save

lives?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways.

Hon. Mr. Marit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Highways has safety as a priority for us in everything we do in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We review our highway intersections ongoing on a three- and a four-year rotation, Mr. Speaker, and we look at everything. We look at safety. We look at traffic patterns. We look at intersections. A good example is we do have a roundabout in the province of Saskatchewan out on the bypass out at Balgonie working very well, Mr. Speaker.

We have looked at intersections, Mr. Speaker. We've actually done some speed reductions at some major intersections in the province, Mr. Speaker. So we have a commitment to improving safety at our intersections. We actually have a budget-allocated amount of money, Mr. Speaker, that we do that.

We do that internally with our Highways officials, and we look at program safety improvements to enhance either signage or pavement markings or whatever the case may be. Forty-three of the 59 projects we did, Mr. Speaker, this year were at highway intersections.

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

Funding Capital Infrastructure in the Education Sector

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, those were roundabout questions, but we were hoping for direct answers as to why no action has been taken since 2016.

Saskatchewan teachers have also been getting the roundabout from this government. At the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation] council last week, President Pat Maze said that it's time for government to step up and reinstate the full funding that was cut in last year's budget. Teachers know that cutting 54 million then giving back 30 is still a \$24 million cut. Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure why the government has such a hard time with this math. Maze noted that kids are in larger class sizes with fewer supports, and even restoring the \$54 million cut won't keep pace with inflation or with growth.

If the minister wants to repair relationships, here's a tip: it starts with returning the 24 million to kids' classrooms. When can divisions, teachers, and students expect this funding?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last week I attended the spring council as well, and spoke to the STF and members of their council. And I've stood in this House on many occasions since this session started, Mr. Speaker, talking about the \$30 million commitment that we made in this budget, which followed up on the seven and a half million dollar commitment, the in-year funding that we committed, Mr. Speaker.

And I've talked in this House, Mr. Speaker, about the efficiencies the school divisions found as a result of what happened last year, Mr. Speaker. But I can also tell the member

— and I've said this before — that we're going to be looking at the fall enrolment projections, Mr. Speaker, and we're going to give some consideration to that.

But at all times, Mr. Speaker, ensuring that we provide the right services and the right supports to the classroom is a priority of this government. And the \$30 million commitment that's been made in this budget is a good indication of this government's commitment to public education, and we'll continue to do that. We'll continue to have dialogue with teachers and school trustees, Mr. Speaker, and parents, to make sure that we do just that.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, boards have been asking for years for transparency and for predictability, and I'm not sure that they're looking for more dialogue. They're looking for the money.

Last week I asked the minister why the Sask Party has become less transparent in the way that they allocate education capital funding. He got his facts mixed up. There isn't \$179 million in PMR [preventative maintenance and renewal] funding this year; it's 49. But I digress, because the minister still has not answered the question.

Up until 2013, this government used to post their capital prioritization lists. As recently as last budget, they posted approved capital project lists. Now this year, school divisions have nothing but an unordered top 10 school wish list. This is a huge step backwards in terms of transparency and leaves divisions in the dark about what to expect in terms of funding to replace crumbling schools like St. Pius, Imperial, and St. Mary's.

Why is the government moving this process backward and making the job of keeping kids safe in schools so much harder?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, here's some interesting numbers, Mr. Speaker. Preventative maintenance and renewal record under the New Democrats — nothing, Mr. Speaker. Emergent funding under the New Democrats — nothing, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, last year this government completed the largest capital infrastructure build in the province's history, Mr. Speaker. We are very proud of that, Mr. Speaker. We're going to continue to look to see what the emergent needs are with respect to capital builds within the divisions, Mr. Speaker, across the province.

We know there's more work to do, Mr. Speaker. There's no question about that. And, Mr. Speaker, we're going to be diligent about that. We're going to be diligent about making sure that we commit the right resources where they need to be resourced, Mr. Speaker. All in the context, Mr. Speaker, of bringing our budget back into balance by next year.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, predictably the minister goes back to what did or didn't happen in the '90s. I'm afraid that those who are sitting in schools and whose children are in schools where the ceiling tiles are falling on their heads want more of an answer from that minister. He's missing the point.

Divisions are saying that they're forced to use the lion's share of their PMR funding to keep these crumbling schools in one piece. This diverts funding from other schools, which will also deteriorate as a result.

Moose Jaw divisions are in a bind. Should they invest the money to fix a caving roof, or should they hope and pray that the next budget will include the funding that they have requested to amalgamate? This budget announced no new schools, and there's only 36 million pegged for school capital next year. That looks like money for maybe one school or maybe two, but a far cry from what is needed.

When will divisions get some clarity around school capital so they can have the information that they need to make informed choices to keep our kids safe?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, we continue, Mr. Speaker, we continue to have ongoing conversations with school divisions with respect to their capital needs. Fifteen per cent increase in preventative maintenance and renewal, Mr. Speaker. More money for emergent funding, Mr. Speaker. These funds are intended to ensure that the schools that our children go to, Mr. Speaker, are safe — safe not only for students but for teachers as well.

And, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that our commitment to capital in this sector, Mr. Speaker, over the years that we've been in government, is second to none — 40 new schools, Mr. Speaker; 25 major renovations across the 10 years that we've been in government.

We're going to continue to make sure that we address the needs of teachers and of students in the classrooms, Mr. Speaker, by continuing to make the commitments that need to be made, and we'll do that through ongoing dialogue, Mr. Speaker. The member can expect to hear more from us when it comes to more capital funding, Mr. Speaker, and we're going to continue to have that conversation.

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

Rental Housing Supplement

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, this year's budget, just like the last one, cuts supports for the most vulnerable within our communities. Cutting the rental housing supplement for families and people living with disabilities on the edge of homelessness is not only unfair, it's indecent. This support keeps families off the streets and with a roof over their heads. We've heard from those on the front lines in the fight against poverty that this cut will do serious harm to many across Saskatchewan. Will the Sask Party do the right thing and scrap this indecent cut to the rental housing supplement before it devastates families and people all across our province?

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

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I need to clarify again for the record, the opposition seems to be leading the public down a path. Nobody that's on this program, Mr. Speaker, is going to be off this program. Everybody that is currently on the rental housing supplement program will continue, Mr. Speaker. And I would very much appreciate them not creating a fear factor out there in the general public.

Mr. Speaker, what we have done is new intakes on the program as of July 1st will no longer be receiving the rental supplement, Mr. Speaker, because of . . . the market has dictated. We notice that there is a 9 per cent vacancy. We have a huge amount of Sask Housing — over 700 in our two major cities, Mr. Speaker — that aren't currently being used, Mr. Speaker, and we want to make sure that we're utilizing the assets of this government to its maximum potential. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, this is a \$5 million cut. The decision to cut the rental housing supplement will only hurt Saskatchewan families who are already struggling, people living with disabilities, families with children living on the tightest of budgets on the margins, Mr. Speaker.

The minister tells us here again today that they're grandfathering people that are on the program. He suggests that that shows some sort of decency. But, Mr. Speaker, we've seen this pledge before in that when we witnessed this, when they've said they're going to grandfather supports, that only meant if they didn't have any change in circumstances. That means if they move so often or have a change in their family situation, those supports were taken away.

The Sask Party's completely unclear on this cut. People deserve the straight goods. To the minister: under his plan, will people who depend on the rental housing supplement have their rental housing supplement cut if they experience a change in circumstance? But most importantly, why won't he scrap this cut that will devastate people and families all across our province?

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

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And again I'll clarify and get this on the record, Mr. Speaker. Nobody that is on the program right now will change if their eligibility isn't going to change, Mr. Speaker. If they move and their eligibility stays the same, Mr. Speaker, they will remain on this program. So again I have said this in the media, Mr. Speaker. We have done that in our news releases. And I'd like to be able to put that again on the record, Mr. Speaker, that as long as their eligibility is there, Mr. Speaker, and it doesn't change, then nothing will change on the program, Mr. Speaker.

But what I will talk about, Mr. Speaker, if I can, is some of the great investments that we did do in Social Services here, Mr. Speaker, about the \$10.4 million that we put into our community-based organizations, Mr. Speaker, to help out those most vulnerable. So when the member talks about those most vulnerable in our community, we are making that investment in

those most vulnerable, Mr. Speaker, and we will continue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Administrative Segregation in Correctional Facilities

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, we know an internal government report was undertaken to assess whether Saskatchewan correctional centres were meeting international standards for solitary confinement. This report shows that administrative segregation is overused, often outside of legislated criteria. This report was never made public, presumably because it paints a worrying picture of confinement practices in Saskatchewan's jails.

Of the segregated inmates in this study, 86 per cent were indigenous. At Saskatoon Correctional, 46 per cent had identified mental health issues, while at Pine Grove, 70 per cent of the women had a mental health diagnosis. This is shocking, Mr. Speaker. Why was this report never released and what has been done to address this practice?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Corrections.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The safety and security of our staff and inmates is always a primary consideration when it comes to decisions regarding administrative segregation. Our government is committed to the policies and practices that adhere to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and that are enshrined in Canadian law.

Since June of 2013 inmates can only be segregated if they are jeopardizing the safety of other inmates, their own safety, or the safety and security of the staff or the facility itself, Mr. Speaker. The review process, when an inmate is on administrative segregation, includes visits by nurses after a certain duration period and a review by the segregation review panel established by the directors.

Administrative segregation is a policy, Mr. Speaker, of last resort and is only used when the facility manager is satisfied that there is no reasonable alternative. Mr. Speaker, we follow policies and procedures with respect to administrative segregation. As I said earlier, it's a policy and an action of last resort.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, if the minister would have read her ministry's own report, she would know that the policy she just quoted is not being followed. The conditions in Saskatchewan correctional centres have been under the spotlight for years, and the minister should have a handle on this issue. The reports says, "Our counts continue to present as the strongest barrier for reducing our counts in Administrative Segregation Areas."

Overcrowding is not a new issue, but it is a persistent one, even during the minister's first crack at the can. It doesn't just lead to missing international norms; it is a costly problem. Last year

Justice had to provide an additional \$10 million in mid-year funding to pay for extra inmates, and Justice and Corrections' overtime is more than double any other ministry, more than \$17 million in a single year. Despite this growing problem, why does the minister continue to cut funding to programs in the jails designed to ensure inmates will not reoffend?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Corrections.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure what the member is . . . what question she's asking and what question she's wanting to have answered. Either we're talking about administrative segregation or the population in our correctional facilities, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to stick with administrative segregation.

Our most recent review, which focused on addressing issues that emerged during the 2014 review, Mr. Speaker, is currently in its final stages. So as a government, we do undertake the fact that policies and procedures must be reviewed on a regular basis because circumstances change. That's what we're doing, Mr. Speaker.

The issues of the most recent review that we are looking at includes ensuring appropriate use; limits respecting the length of stay in administrative segregation; the possibility of independent oversight — we're considering this, Mr. Speaker; and exploration of reasonable alternatives in general, Mr. Speaker. This is part of a review, Mr. Speaker. We're wanting to do the right thing, given the circumstances that we're facing in our facilities. Thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 129 — *The Saskatchewan Technology Start-up Incentive Act*

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

Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 129, *The Saskatchewan Technology Start-up Incentive Act* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved the Minister of Advanced Education that Bill No. 129, *The Saskatchewan Technology Start-up Incentive Act* be now introduced and read a first time.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — When shall this bill be read a second time?

Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor: — Next sitting of the Assembly.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 121

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the 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 Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To join on Bill 121, *The Cannabis Control (Saskatchewan) Act* I would just want to, I guess, some comments and . . . What's interesting, Mr. Speaker, with this bill, the government itself I think preparing for the legislation that this government's introducing and the bill, Bill 121, it's kind of interesting.

And I've listened to some of my colleagues talk about this. I listened to some of the leaders, the public talk about it. And the government, I believe, the federal government said in one of its campaign promises in 2015 it was going to be moving ahead with legalizing cannabis. So the government's moved ahead with that. It's coming ahead.

The government of, you know, of the day, and the Sask Party government provincially, had the opportunity and should have gone out and done its homework and should have made sure that at the last minute we're not rushing to make sure of certain things. And I want to talk a little bit about that because I think it's important to talk about being ready.

We know that there is a large number of individuals or organizations, companies, that have applied for a permit, business licence to operate cannabis sales and be in the retail and selling of cannabis. Now I know the government has hired an agency to assist them with selecting those. But, I guess, when you look at many of the rules and how this is going to play out, they're asking for clarification. And I think individuals and those leaders in our communities — I think school divisions, schools — may have questions wondering exactly what location will these be granted from a school. Will they be some in a certain distance that they have to stay away from a school? So there's a lot of questions people are going to be asking.

[14:30]

And I know from my colleagues, you know, doing the work that they're going to have to do and we're asked to do, there's a lot of questions about possession. And I think about it, I realize some of the rules, some of them the government has made it, has put it into and will put into legislation and part of the regulations and rules. And I want to talk a little bit about that.

Government has selected to use the age of 19. To possess, to buy, purchase, to consume cannabis, you must be 19 years of

age. If not, there's a possibly . . . If you're somebody who's, well I guess that's found under the age of 19 with cannabis in your possession, you can be fined up to, I believe the fine will be somewhere around \$2,000, could be to a max of \$2,000.

There's also some of the questions people have about age, you know, and concerns. And I think I've heard different people, if I'm correct, talk about the concerns that they had when it comes to at a certain age, developing of individuals and, I mean, they have had concerns from individuals raised about it. They're just not sure. And I guess people are wondering, whether it's parents, I guess there might be lots of different areas and professionals who are wondering what impacts will that have on young people. And will there be impacts?

Like I don't know; I'm no expert on it. I'm just going to go through this as an individual, and we're going to watch how this is going to roll out. And of course we will have those experts. Those individuals who have the knowledge hopefully will come forward and will provide that to the government of the day who's making the rules and regulations. And again this could have been done, and I give that this could have been done with more input.

And I know they also have done some surveys, and I've seen different parts of that and people talking about that. And some of my colleagues have referred to some of the survey they did. Whether or not, Mr. Speaker, that's going to provide enough information as to where we go from here, again I think the government could have taken the time, could have done this the way it needed to be done to ensure rules, regulations.

Those businesses that were going to be granted, and I'll go back into that, Mr. Speaker, there's been a company hired, from my understanding if I have my facts straight, to accompany the government on selecting who will be awarded the licence or who will be given a permit. And apparently, I don't know . . . From what I'm getting, there has been a great interest in people applying for the licence or, I think somewhere, you know, the number, like really high, but in the end I believe it's about 41. Fifteen hundred might be even a number I've heard. And that's good and, you know, we'll see.

But at the end of the day, at the end of the day, I'm just going on what I believe, you know, information shared with me. Now having said that, I guess in committee we'll know for sure the numbers when we get a chance to talk to the minister and officials. But having said that, we know that there's a small group that will be selected to set up operation of selling cannabis and some . . . I know there's been an interest because I've been in some of the meetings listening to the leadership talk. In my community I have two municipalities and a First Nations community that will be looking at it. And I guess they will have an opportunity to say whether they're going to go ahead with it, what they're going to do.

Now I don't know what say they will have in the legislation on the rules and how this business will operate as far as selling cannabis in the community, if it meets the business licence, if the community approves it. I don't have all those details. And I guess we'll find out as things roll out, and those municipalities will find out who is going to get . . . How they're going to do it and what role they will play in this rolling out the business.

And I mean there's different ones that have applied for it, as I said that. But having said that, I guess at the end of the day we're going to have to move forward because we know we're going ahead with it. So there's a short window of opportunity here, and government could have, like I've said, could have taken the time to do this right, not at the last minute, just rush and try to get this done, because I think even those individuals who will find at the end of the day that they will be given a licence or a permit to sell cannabis.

What are the rules going to be like? Like there's many questions I don't think people have, you know, been given the questions and they're waiting for government at the last minute to give them before. So here we are; we're going to be opening up and the government's going to be saying, well we're going ahead with this, but here you go and here's your licence.

Now I'm concerned and I think people should be concerned, you know, whether it's for my grandkids, I want to make sure that we have done our due diligence. And we have to do our due diligence to make sure the rules, regulations, and whatever is required and needed to make sure this process has rules and regulations just like it does. I mean, there are those that may not follow the age limit, may have possession of more than, I believe it's 30 grams that they're allowed to have in your personal possession. It's 30 grams you're allowed to have in your possession. So there may be issues about that, I guess.

One of the ones I've really been thinking of for enforcement, and I think about the enforcement as far as officers that are going to have to deal with this, how this will roll out and their role in it. And my understanding from the legislation that's being introduced, the person will go into one of the facilities that have been granted a permit or licence. They will buy their cannabis. They will now have to transport that cannabis home. They can't go anywhere else. They've got to go from the place of purchase to their place of residence where they will consume and use the cannabis, as long as they're at the proper age. So there's that factor that plays into it.

You know, and I say this: it goes back to the rules, the rules, Mr. Speaker, of how this is going to be sold and the rules and regulations. And who will be doing enforcement on and making sure that there is compliance to making sure that those 19 years of age are only the ones that get to purchase this or will be allowed to purchase it? How are they going to ensure . . . And what role . . . I haven't seen that and maybe there will be a process. I'm not sure who's going to be enforcing, checking on, regulating them. Is it Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming? I'm not sure who will be doing that, as they do with alcohol. I know our restaurants and establishments, they may do that. So it's going to be interesting to see how they're going to deal with that.

The other area, I guess I would say when we talk about enforcement, how is that going to be done? And I don't know; I'm curious to see. And it's going to be interesting to see as a law and our police and law authority and those individuals who will pull you over. As you know we're understanding it, you cannot be using marijuana in a vehicle. You should not have it, be consuming it in a vehicle and be driving. It's going to have the same . . . And I don't know about the rules if you're caught under the influence of cannabis. We're not sure.

Like I know people are going to have to have training and they're going to say, like many of us . . . And I think people are going to watch how is this going to roll out. And you know, I'm not no Mr. Expert on it, but I'm sure, like everything else, people maybe consume cannabis and think they're good to go to drive, and they go and drive. Like I'm just saying I have no proof of that, but I'm just saying if people consume, I don't know how much they consume, then they drive, it's going to be interesting to see how our law enforcement will act on that, and how this is all going to play out. There's so many questions that are left undone, you know. And I don't know, I know people are going to be wanting some of those answers. And maybe some of our law enforcement, maybe they're weighing in on it and giving their suggestions. And I think there's maybe concerns raised all over the place, from families, from employers, you know. There's going to be many issues as this rolls out and it's legalized.

But the government again of the day had an obligation and had time because they knew since 2015 but now, at the last minute, we're just pushing ahead and trying to go with this. And I don't know if this is really doing the justice that they should've done in the sense of the rules, the laws around possession of cannabis and the use, when the government knew this day was coming and it was coming fairly quick.

So having said that, I know my colleagues, some of them, you know, have shared their views and their concerns. And I think many groups, leaders, some people are watching closely to see how this will play out. And you know, the government of the day is the leader. You are supposed to be leading on this file. So I think many are going to be watching.

But I think right now, a lot of people are confused. They're not sure how this is all going to roll out. How is this going to play? How are the rules . . . Like, they're going to be opening up shop and just, I don't know. Like how are they going to be trained and everything else?

So I mean, there's so many more questions, and this government has not given the answers and should've given the answers, Mr. Speaker, and should've provided the leadership that one wants a government, especially when we're going into, you know, the sale of cannabis. And they had the time; they knew it was coming. They could've done their due diligence, made sure we did this right, as best they can. There's no perfect way, but the government could've consulted a lot. They could've talked to law enforcement. They could've done many things if they wanted to do that.

So really at this point, Mr. Speaker, I've kind of went over some of the areas and points I wanted to make. I have very, you know, little information on it. And we'll see. I know we're going to have lots of questions in committee, and my colleagues will have lots of questions.

So at this point on, you know, just having an opportunity to make a few points on Bill 121, I'm prepared and, I know for myself and my colleagues, we're prepared to see this go to, it's ready to go to committee and do the work that my critics and some of us will have, asking information of the minister and the minister's officials as to rules and regulations, how this will proceed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the minister that Bill No. 121, *The Cannabis Control (Saskatchewan) Act* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

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

Hon. Mr. Brkich: — I designate that Bill No. 121, *The Cannabis Control (Saskatchewan) Act* be committed to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

The Speaker: — This bill stands committed to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

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 Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to join in and have, you know, adjourned debates on Bill 122, I guess the consequential amendments. And this bill actually will make the consequential amendments to other pieces of legislation so that they're in line with Bill 121. Having said that, they're consequential amendments, and they will make the adjustments that are needed by those individuals that do the good work for the Assembly.

So at this point I'm prepared to just allow this to go to committee and do the work that committee needs to do. So with that, I have no more comments on Bill 122. Thank you.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the minister that Bill No. 122, *The Cannabis Control (Saskatchewan) Consequential Amendments Act, 2018* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

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

Hon. Mr. Brkich: — I designate that Bill No. 122, *The Cannabis Control (Saskatchewan) Consequential Amendments Act, 2018* be committed to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

The Speaker: — This bill stands committed to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Bill No. 126

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Eyre that **Bill No. 126 — *The Energy Export 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 honour this afternoon to rise to speak to Bill No. 126, *The Energy Export Act*. Mr. Speaker, it appears that there is some lasting confusion on the part of some members opposite with regard to our position with regard to this pipeline. So I will be concise and unambiguous and hopefully with my remarks can clear up some of that confusion.

The position of the Saskatchewan NDP [New Democratic Party] for many years has been very clear. This is a federal project that is in Saskatchewan's interest that needs to go forward, Mr. Speaker. The Saskatchewan NDP also supports a triple bottom-line process that ensures social, economic, and environmental assessment of risks and benefits. And it is also our assertion that the Trudeau Liberals need to show leadership so that this project gets built. Of course this is a project that they have approved, that is in their jurisdiction. And, Mr. Speaker, I don't know that we can be more clear about that.

It is also clear that we support the 1,100 workers at Evraz, Mr. Speaker, here in Regina, who will be supplying some 75 per cent of the steel for this project. And I don't think that there can be any confusion about that or our support for those workers at Evraz, Mr. Speaker.

Another thing though that we do have an issue with, and this I don't think is a surprise to anyone, Mr. Speaker, is the Sask Party's failure to address climate change or have any credibility on the environment which, Mr. Speaker, makes it harder to get projects like this built and garner the support that's needed. Just to recap: they failed to lay an inch of pipeline to tidewater over their decade in power, Mr. Speaker. They've cut funding for the climate change and green energy fund, including, Mr. Speaker, an additional 18 per cent just with the most recent budget. So that lacks some credibility, Mr. Speaker. They also have no credible plan, with the emphasis on "credible," to reduce greenhouse gases.

So, Mr. Speaker, again the Sask NDP's position has been clear

for years, that this is a federal project that is in Saskatchewan's interest and that needs to go forward. And we call on the Trudeau Liberals to show the leadership that's needed to ensure that this project gets built.

Mr. Speaker, with that I'm sure that other of my colleagues will have other comments which will be equally clear and unambiguous. But with that, I will move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 126.

The Speaker: — The member for Lakeview has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 126. Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 127

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Harpauer that **Bill No. 127 — *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2018*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise in the Assembly today to enter into adjourned debates on Bill No. 127, which is *The Income Tax Amendment Act* of 2018. Overall this bill deals with the Sask Party's walk-backs on their income tax plan to change the tax rates back to where they were before. The explanation that was provided by the minister in the second reading speech talks about the fact that this legislation temporarily suspends the tax rate reduction plan which we know, Mr. Speaker, means that the promises of lowering the personal income tax are not being followed through here, Mr. Speaker.

This was something that was heralded in the 2017-2018 budget as to provide some sort of solace to individuals who were dealing with tax increases in many different areas. So individuals who were dealing with PST [provincial sales tax] now being applied in new areas where they hadn't seen PST applied, so adding PST 6 per cent onto restaurant meals, onto children's clothing, onto the construction industry — which we're starting to see the impacts on now, Mr. Speaker — increasing the PST overall and adding PST to these new areas.

One of the presumed bright spots in the budget was the fact that the personal income tax was going to be lowered, Mr. Speaker. And right now we have before us a bill that shows that that plan is being put on hold now, Mr. Speaker. So we see this in the explanatory notes quite quickly in the first provision:

An amendment to section 5 is required to ensure that the appropriate percentage . . . is updated to include tax rate changes announced in the 2018-19 Budget. This means [that] certain references are no longer required.

Now if you don't speak legalese, Mr. Speaker, or if folks have looked this up at home and haven't followed what's going on,

we're here to provide some clarification in that this is a walk-back on the promises that were made last year, Mr. Speaker. Overall this demonstrates a government that does not have a long-term plan.

And I have asked before. We've seen this flip-flopping before of, well we'll make one change and we'll see how that works, and we'll make a change over here and we'll see how that works, and flip-flop around. That's not vision and that's not long-term planning, Mr. Speaker. And I've asked the Minister of Immigration and Career Training for long-term plans in terms of jobs when I had a chance to speak with him in committee, Mr. Speaker, and we saw the same thing on that front — no long-term plan.

And this is disconcerting for the people of this province, that we have a government in place that doesn't have that type of vision and isn't able to carry us forward consistently, on a year-to-year basis so that we know what to expect from our government in this province. So these are some of the concerns that I'm hearing, Mr. Speaker.

And we've seen this trying to tinker with personal income tax, all while our debt is increasing. We have record debt. We have the highest net debt per capita that we have ever had in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and that is reflective of how the population has moved as well. So when we're talking about per capita, it does in fact reflect that the population has increased. And so we're seeing all of this sort of tinkering around while people's lives are being impacted.

And the PST increase has significantly hurt folks and I know that this will be another piece that will impact them as well. It was supposed to be the shining light of last year's budget, Mr. Speaker, which we know there was a ton of opposition to — people out protesting in the streets due to a number of decisions that were made in that budget that directly impacted them on a personal level and on a family level.

This income tax change, this reduction was supposed to be the shining light of last year's budget and now of course, we're seeing that it's being put on hold. So it begs the question of, what do folks have to look forward to in this province and how is our province being run? What is the long-term plan? If we're going to see this flip-flopping, what the long-term plan is overall for this province. And folks want to be able to expect that. It impacts their overall standard of living and cost of living. And I know it is something we're going to have a lot more questions about, and more of my colleagues will have questions about and of course, the critic will have questions about as we move into committee, Mr. Speaker.

So overall I want to say that this particular piece of legislation demonstrates a lack of long-term planning on behalf of the government and really a loss of what was supposed to be the bright spot of last year's budget being a lost year with life getting less affordable for everyday people. And with that I will move that we adjourn debate on Bill 127, *An Act to amend The Income Tax Act* for today, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Fairview has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 127, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2018*. Is it the pleasure of the

Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 128

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Harpauer that **Bill No. 128 — *The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2018*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's always a pleasure to enter into debate with regards to our bill debates. On Bill No. 128, *The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act* is the remarks that I'm going to put forward. Mr. Deputy Speaker, changes within this Act are due to the fact that there was a lot of changes within the 2018-19 provincial budget with regards to provincial sales tax initiatives. And so a lot of the amendments within this bill will reflect that.

First of all, one that is a very contentious issue right now that I've been hearing a lot about, and I'm sure many members of this legislature have also heard complaints about, is the fact of the removal of the PST exemption for used light vehicles. Mr. Deputy Speaker, a lot of people will be impacted on that. Businesses are really unhappy and customers are as well, and I would say that it impacts a majority of the families within the province.

And so this was also a promise, an election promise that this government made in 2007 when they formed government. And they indicated that this was something that was really important, and they felt that it was not a smart tax. Well actually the previous leader of the Saskatchewan Party, previous premier was quoted as saying, "In my view, government should avoid doing dumb things, and charging the PST on the same vehicle over and over again seems pretty dumb." And so, I have to agree with that. Not often do I necessarily agree with Mr. Wall, but I agree with that. And apparently once he is no longer here in office, this government has been doing some dumb things.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one example that was brought to my attention was the fact that you could purchase a vehicle for a certain price, but you're going to be charged the PST on what they call the red book value, so what the book value of the car is according to SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance]. And that's not necessarily what you can sell the car for. It's a value that they have in their book. It doesn't include the mileage or a lot of the other stuff.

But an individual indicated that they bought a car for \$6,200. It was an agreed price with the seller and the buyer, and they felt that that was a fair price. But because it was over \$5,000 then he needed to pay the PST on that. So when he went to register his vehicle, the individual said, you have to pay the PST on the book value which the book value for that car was over \$9,800. So that's quite substantially . . . That's over 3,000 more than

what he actually paid for that car, but he has to pay the PST on what the book value is. So he ended up paying almost \$600 in taxes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because he had to pay on that almost \$10,000 price when he only paid \$6,000 for his car.

So I don't know why you would pay PST on a value that you didn't even purchase for your car. You're paying more on that, which doesn't seem very fair, and I think that's something that this government really needs to look at. We're making people pay more taxes on even something that wasn't even the purchase price. So he indicated, if he was in an accident today, the day that he bought the car, would he get that \$9,800 price for that car? And SGI said not necessarily. So that seems to be very unfair that we're penalizing individuals. We're making them pay PST on things that already have been paid on. And it's just a tax grab. But we know that this government isn't afraid to be taxing our taxpayers within the province. They continuously show that.

I'm going to talk about some of the increases, but right now I'm going to highlight some of the exemptions of PST that were included in this budget, which . . . This one I'm really happy to see, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's the exemption of PST on naloxone and other non-prescription drugs that are used to treat life-threatening conditions. So I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's really important. We need to recognize that some medication that individuals use, that they need to use for their conditions, aren't necessarily prescription medication and allowing them to have an exemption of PST on those is really important.

[15:00]

The exemption of PST on prepared food and beverages sold by charitable or non-profit organizations at concessions, that's going to help a lot of people when they do their fundraising, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I know a lot of community groups have concession stands and they use that to help provide for funding for other things. And even in schools and such, they do that. So having that exemption is really important.

Then also within this bill there is a little bit of housekeeping, which is really important, especially when you're reviewing bills. I think that's something that needs to be done on a regular basis. So the housekeeping is to strengthen and modernize the legislation. One of the changes was a definition change to "lease." It's to clarify that a lease also includes a supply of equipment or tools with an operator. And the clarification that the application of PST on equipment based on use or consumption using a prescribed formula, that will help determine how much PST the individual will maybe get back.

There's also definition changes, so a definition change of "vendor" to provide additional clarity around the retail sales, which includes retail sales of taxable services. That's something that's . . . And then an amendment to clarify that engineering services that are included in the retail sale of real property services will include an exemption of PST. So that's another amendment. There's a new section, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that will help clarify the process around refunds for overpayments of tax.

I always say that taxation is sometimes a complicated process

and individuals who dedicate their time in discovering these formulas and finding a way to make it a more simpler process is wonderful. And we had a civil servant that was here today that's retiring, 41 years of service — John Edwards — and like I said before, he had a way to be able to explain taxation in an easy format which takes some skill sets and knowledge. And we appreciate the individuals who do that. And so in this legislation here, they're going to have a new section that will help with that process. So that's wonderful, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Also some amendments are being made to clarify the security requirements and the responsibility of contractors and principals in regard to the real property service contracts. So there is quite a bit of change within this legislation that I know our critic will do their due diligence with regards to talking with stakeholders. It's real important that we get their opinions on some of the changes of this legislation and hear from them directly. So I know the critic will do that.

I think though it's also important, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to also indicate how there was some other PST exemptions that were eliminated from this budget, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and one of them being the energy-efficient appliances. I think this is a completely backwards approach from this government to be doing this, to be reversing this exemption because we should be encouraging people to have energy-efficient appliances and potentially even expanding that into having more green available options and encouraging people to go that direction.

Also we've got to be mindful, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the last budget had a lot of changes to the PST as well and a lot of them were harmful for residents of Saskatchewan. I think about the PST exemption on children's clothing being eliminated. That's impacted many families and especially families who are struggling the most because now they're paying even more for children's clothing. And we need to be making sure that children are being well cared for. I often say that when you're raising your children, most families, you're struggling day to day and paycheque to paycheque, and you're wondering how to make ends meet. And so those are the individuals that we shouldn't be penalizing even further.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, also the PST exemption that was eliminated last budget with regards to restaurant meals, I know a lot of restaurant owners indicating that that's created a reduction of customers coming in. People are maybe, instead of eating out, you know, twice a week, they're only eating out once a week, and that's shown to be a reduction there. And that's not going to help our economy when we know that these business owners are losing out of that valuable services.

And also the PST exemption that was eliminated on construction materials, and we know how that's impacted our construction companies and those good jobs that individuals have had, like that are now no longer available because of companies that are struggling.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I could go on and on about provincial sales tax. It's not a popular tax. People don't like it. They prefer not to have one. And so it's often one that we will hear regularly on the doorsteps when we're talking to residents of Saskatchewan.

So like I said, I know my colleagues are going to have a lot more that they'll want to say with regards to this piece of legislation. And I know the critic will do their due diligence with talking to the stakeholders and will present a lot of questions when she has an opportunity to at committee.

So at this time though, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm going to adjourn debate for Bill No. 128. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Prince Albert Northcote has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 128, *The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2018*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 124

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Duncan that **Bill No. 124 — *The Environmental Management and Protection (Environmental Handling Charges) Amendment Act, 2018*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my honour to rise in the House today and enter some thoughts into the debate around Bill No. 124, *The Environmental Management and Protection (Environmental Handling Charges) Amendment Act*. Mr. Speaker, this is a relatively small bill but it does have some important consequences to a family's pocketbooks that I think is important and we think is important for us to talk about today.

So this bill, what it does is it increases the fees for environmental handling charges for all beverage containers by 2 cents, and it is also making the fee change retroactive to April 1st, 2018. Mr. Speaker, this means all beverage containers, anything that you can think of that has an environmental handling charge, Mr. Speaker. And I think it's important that we remember that, Mr. Speaker, when we're discussing this bill.

I'm just moving over to the definition portion of *The Environmental Management and Protection Act*, Mr. Speaker, because the definition in section 39 of that Act:

“**beverage container**” means a container that is within a category of prescribed containers [Mr. Speaker].

So you have to move to the regulations to see the exact list of what is in the regulations. But it is quite lengthy, Mr. Speaker, and because it's in the regulations it's easy for the government to add to that list, Mr. Speaker. But one of those beverage containers that will be subject to this increase is juice boxes, Mr. Speaker. So it's important for us to remember the impacts of the decisions that are made on families by members of this House, Mr. Speaker.

And I think our Finance critic has talked about this very eloquently, Mr. Speaker, about how this hike in fee is yet another burden to families on top of all of the other fees we've seen, on top of the increase to PST, on top of the expansion to things such as restaurant food and children's clothes, Mr. Speaker, and diapers at one point, which the government thankfully rolled back but weren't going to and had every intention of expanding PST onto such a necessary item as diapers, Mr. Speaker.

So it's important for us to remember what's happened to families over the past year as a result of this government's failure to properly save, their failure to properly spend, and the utter mismanagement that we've seen from this government, Mr. Speaker, and how that's rolled down to the pocketbooks of everyday families. And we're seeing it again today, Mr. Speaker, in this bill with the increase to the environmental handling fee, Mr. Speaker.

This increase will add, from what I understand, \$18 million to the GRF [General Revenue Fund] in 2018-2019, which includes the \$10.2 million from upping the deposit on recyclable beverage containers by 2 cents. So I guess the \$18 million includes some other initiatives as well, but the \$10.2 million is what they're anticipating they'll receive into the GRF from this, Mr. Speaker.

And when we've seen the Minister of Finance and other folks on the government side talk about this increase, they talk about Sarcen and what great work Sarcen does. And frankly we couldn't agree more, Mr. Speaker. It's a very important program. Recycling is a very important service, and Sarcen does a very good job of that. They also employ many folks across the province, and some of the folks that they employ are folks that are a bit harder to employ in other sectors, Mr. Speaker. So they do really good work.

But the problem with this bill, Mr. Speaker, is that although the Finance minister is saying that this is necessary to ensure that Sarcen remains viable into the future, this money is not being earmarked for Sarcen and this money is not flowing directly into Sarcen. In fact this money is flowing into the government's General Revenue Fund, Mr. Speaker. It's something that we would . . . If it was flowing directly and it was targeted funding for a program, for a recycling program, for something like Sarcen, it's possible that we would be taking a less critical stance on this increase. But in fact it's just a money grab from the Sask Party, yet another money grab that's going to impact Saskatchewan families' pocketbooks.

And forgive us if we have some concerns when some money flows directly, money like this flows directly to the GRF. We've seen some movement of funds that were originally, and were once and rightly so, targeted funds, Mr. Speaker. For example the education property tax, Mr. Speaker, was a targeted fund, so that the government couldn't take that money and use it for other things, anything other than education. Now that money flows directly into the GRF, and what we saw last year was more money come in for education property tax than was provided to education, Mr. Speaker. So yet another way the government makes Saskatchewan people pay for their mismanagement. Mr. Speaker, another example of this was in Justice when you saw some money that was targeted for Justice

programs . . . Now that flows through the GRF as well, which is always very concerning.

So when the government likes to tout Sarcen and hide behind Sarcen, when they talk about this price increase, what they fail to mention is that this money isn't being targeted for Sarcen; this money isn't flowing directly to Sarcen. This money is going to the General Revenue Fund. And they expect us to just trust them that this increase in money received by government through this environmental handling charge will result in an increase of money to Sarcen. So they'll see if that happens. And it'll be interesting if that actually happens because based on what we've seen is that at least half of that money will be going directly into the GRF, Mr. Speaker. So it's quite concerning, Mr. Speaker.

There's some other interesting things with respect to this bill that I want to read into the record. So although the bill is a bit small, Mr. Speaker, it's still important that we really take a look at the bill and see what it says.

[15:15]

So what it does in this bill, Mr. Speaker, is it's repealing section 40(2) of the original legislation and replacing it with a new 40(2). So in 40(2), it's detailing the environmental handling charge that's going to be required to be remitted to the minister. And like I said, it's a 2 cent increase across the board, but it's important to look at all of them. So it says that:

with respect to a designated container that is a metal can, [the environmental handling charge will be] 7 ¢;
with respect to a designated container that is a plastic bottle, [the environmental handling charge will be] 8 ¢;
with respect to a designated container that is a non-refillable glass bottle, [the environmental handling charge will be] 9 ¢;
with respect to a designated container that is a multi-material, shelf stable container, [the environmental handling charge will be] 5 ¢; [and]
with respect to a designated container that is a paper-based polycoat gable top container, [the environmental handling charge will be] 5 ¢.

Mr. Speaker, I don't know . . . I'm not an expert in this area, so I don't really know what examples of all of those are, but there's a multitude of examples that would fit under all of those definitions. Mr. Speaker, I know the critic has a bit of a better understanding of what all of those mean than I do.

And then included in this bill, Mr. Speaker, is some transitional provisions where it describes what the Crown is, what the Crown agent is, talks about some terms and expressions. And they want to ensure that there's continual meaning in the terms of expressions in the original Act as well as in the parent Act, which is what they describe as *The Environmental Management and Protection Act, 2010*.

And then it also talks about how it's retroactive. So that's something that I already mentioned, but I think it's important to read it into the record. So this is something that's already had an impact on families and it was having an impact on families . . . It's going to have an impact on families even prior to when the

budget was announced at the beginning . . . or April 10th, I think it was. So in the bill it says, under section 4(3), which is a transitional provision, it states that:

a person who, on or after April 1, 2018 and before the day on which this Act is assented to, paid or remitted to the Crown money as an environmental handling charge in the amounts imposed pursuant to the new provisions is not entitled to a refund from the general revenue fund of the money so paid.

And then it says:

A consumer from whom, on or after April 1st, 2018 and before the day on which this Act is assented to, an environmental handling charge was recovered in the amounts imposed pursuant to the new provisions is not entitled to a refund from the general revenue fund of the money so paid.

And then in subsection (c) it says, “All money mentioned in [those two clauses I just mentioned] is deemed to have been properly remitted or recovered.”

And then as we often see in legislation, there’s an immunity — I think probably the best way to describe it — is an immunity clause that’s in subsection (4), Mr. Speaker, and it says that:

No action or proceeding lies or shall be instituted or continued against the Crown, a Crown agent or any other person who is obligated to remit an environmental handling charge to the Crown to recover moneys mentioned in subsection (3), and no action or proceeding lies or shall be instituted or continued against the Crown or a Crown agent based on any cause of action arising from, resulting from, or incidental to the enactment or application of this Act.

Mr. Speaker, so it’s important that we fully understand the bill. Again, like I said, this is yet another example of the Sask Party’s mismanagement moving to the backs and the pocketbooks of everyday families, Mr. Speaker.

I know I have other colleagues who are eager to enter into the debate on this bill, so at this time I am prepared to adjourn debate on Bill No. 124, *The Environmental Management and Protection (Environmental Handling Charges) Amendment Act*. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Regina Douglas Park has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 124. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 125

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Harrison that **Bill No. 125 — *The Saskatchewan Value-added Agriculture Incentive Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It’s my pleasure to enter into discussion here this afternoon as it relates to Bill No. 125, *The Saskatchewan Value-added Agriculture Incentive Act*. Certainly adding value to agriculture within Saskatchewan is something that really provides opportunity and strength for today and for the future. So positive initiatives on this front are something that we’ve been calling for, something that we will certainly embrace and support. But we want to make sure that the measure that’s being brought forward in this bill is as effective as it can be in driving the important investment that’s needed across our province. The opportunity that exists to create jobs all across our province is real, but it requires a government that’s willing to step up to the plate.

Mr. Speaker, as I read this bill here, and of course we’ll go through greater scrutiny at committee and certainly be in full conversation with agricultural stakeholders throughout our province to make sure that this bill addresses the needs and opportunities that exist across our province. But when I look here, it would appear that the bill creates a 15 per cent non-refundable tax credit for value-added agriculture facilities on new capital investment. And it will also, I understand, then have a certificate that a company would then apply for and receive from government which would allow them to exercise that tax credit over a number of years, sort of a graduated staged process to make that happen.

We want to make sure that the way that that’s being organized is in line with the realities of the types of investment, the types of projects that are a real opportunity across our province, and so that’s the important work that we’ll engage in as we move forward.

Certainly we’re a province that is very proud of not just our agricultural history, but what we have to offer the future of our province, but the world. The world is demanding the high-quality agricultural products that we can provide. They’re demanding and wanting the high-quality plant-based proteins, the high-quality livestock proteins, that Saskatchewan producers produce year after year.

And we have a tremendous opportunity as well to respond to our growing world and a growing demand and a growing population with feeding that world, Mr. Speaker. And in so doing creating greater investment, greater value within our province, and adding jobs. You know we have, we only have . . . We have a lot of land in our province, Mr. Speaker, great agricultural land, but that’s limited. So what we should be looking at is every opportunity to add value to the land that we have and the creation of jobs, Mr. Speaker, in communities across our province.

In so many cases those are going to be rural communities, smaller communities, Mr. Speaker, but they’ll also be located in our cities as well and at our university. We have a culture in our province of innovation when it comes to agriculture. We have the finest producers in the world, Mr. Speaker, who have always been willing to certainly do the hard work that comes with an agricultural operation, but also to innovate and to provide a leading practice that changes practice around the

world. And we have a real cluster of innovation within this province as well.

And I think through our universities and through our agribusiness that exists, we've got something that's unique to the world and something that we're definitely world leaders in, and that's agriculture. We have certainly an opportunity through things like through pea processing and fractionation, Mr. Speaker, to create a greater number of jobs within our province, to grow our economic activity, and to then share these products with the world.

As I've said, what we produce — incredibly high-quality, plant-based proteins, livestock proteins — are in demand to the world. And we have the ability to not just ship that raw product to the world, but to ship it what it needs and wants when it comes to fibre and protein and starches, as well as having the by-products of energy, Mr. Speaker, maximizing value for producers, maximizing value for entrepreneurs across our province, and creating some much needed jobs within our province.

Certainly we see many pea processing operations that are being developed across the province. We see the Cameron project, which is a fairly large one; Verdient's project, Mr. Speaker, which will create a lot of jobs and will be a leader on this front. But we see this happening in Clavet; we see it happening in Moose Jaw.

But the potential is so much more than what we see right now, so we need to make sure that government understands the opportunity that exists when it comes to value-added agriculture in Saskatchewan, and that this policy that's being brought forward, that it'll be as effective as it should be in maximizing that investment and creating the important jobs in value-added agriculture.

I also want to recognize that there are so many leaders within our province that have been pioneers on this front and innovators for so long, Mr. Speaker. And I want to thank those individuals that have been involved in the supercluster funding project over the last couple years, Mr. Speaker, this successful project that has landed our province and the prairies the opportunity to really leverage those dollars and grow investment within our province.

So I'm thankful to all the players that were involved in that project and I'm encouraged by the engagement of so many throughout our province from our universities, through our agribusiness, through to producer operations, and producers across our province who are ready to chart that really bright course forward for agriculture within our province.

Importantly as we grow our exports, as we grow our . . . add value to our products that we're going to ship to the world, we need to be able to get those products to the world. So it's one thing to bring forward a tax credit, and we'll certainly make sure that this system, this credit, is as effective as it should be to stimulate the investment and the jobs that we need across our province to support the value-adding to agriculture across our province, but we need to make sure that we can get that product to market. And that's going to be pretty critical when we're looking to recruit capital to these projects and to ensure that

there's confidence in our entrepreneurs and in our business operations across the province. They're going to be looking for certainty that they're going to be able to get that product to the world.

And it's a concern to me and I know a concern to many across our province, a concern to this official opposition, that we continue to have an underperforming rail system at the same time as we have a provincial government who seems disinterested in leaning into this very important issue, time and time again dealing with those rail companies, that duopoly, with kid gloves at a time where we need to give these companies a push and make our rail system actually perform.

We have a time right now where we have a refinery that wasn't operating at full capacity because they couldn't get that product to market because of the underperforming rail system. We have a time right now where we have over 1,000 workers being laid off in our potash sector, Mr. Speaker, because they can't get their product to market. We have a time right now where producers across Saskatchewan have done their part and put an incredible crop into the bin but can't get that product to market. And while vessels sit out off the coast of British Columbia, Mr. Speaker, it's producers that are paying the bill. It's producers that are paying the demurrage, Mr. Speaker.

And we have, you know, backbench members heckle from the government side, Mr. Speaker, but it's the Sask Party who have failed to make the system perform. And it should be a concern to all within our province that at a time where our economy is not as strong as it should be, where we don't have the kind of product that we should be getting to market from so many industries, that this system can't even support our exports today.

[15:30]

This is the time to fix our rail system. This would be the message that would go very well along with measures around tax credits for value-added agriculture, to say to the world and say to people across Saskatchewan that, we need you and want you to invest in our province. And it gives them the kind of certainty that they need and deserve, to look at making that investment.

It can't be just a one-off sort of announcement as we see far too often with this government, grandstanding with this government. We have a broken transportation system within Saskatchewan and the costs are something that we all feel. But many within this province who are subjected to layoffs and job loss, they know the cost better than most, Mr. Speaker. Or a producer who has a fine crop in the bin but can't get that product to market and is paying demurrage because of the failure of the rail companies to perform, they know those costs all too well, Mr. Speaker.

So it's time for this government to, you know, toughen up with their position on the rail companies. It's time to push for things like a full costing review. It's time to make sure that we have interswitching actually enforced across the province. It's time where we push to make sure that we can actually put some competition onto those railbeds by way of joint running rights, Mr. Speaker, because it's simply wrong and not right. And it's not fair that we have Saskatchewan people, businesses, farmers,

producers, exporters across the province stymied by a broken rail system. So if we want an economy that will thrive in the future, if we want to grow our exports as I hope we do, if we want value-added agriculture to grow within our province, we need to make our rail system actually perform.

And of course we need to get pipelines, well-regulated, well-managed pipelines established as well, built to tidewater, Mr. Speaker. These things certainly are important and go hand and hand.

So as I say, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan New Democrats have always and long championed value-added agriculture in Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan producers and agri-business and academics through the College of Agriculture have been leaders on this front for many, many years. And we have a tremendous opportunity that exists in the here and now for our province to provide to the world what they want, to serve the world that's growing and the demand that's growing for those exceptionally high-quality plant-based proteins and livestock proteins that we can produce, Mr. Speaker.

To do that, we need effective measures when it comes to incentives around value-added agriculture, but we need a rail system that's going to perform for the people of our province, Mr. Speaker.

I see they've brought forward this measure here, Mr. Speaker, a credit. I find it interesting though that they continue to sit on their hands and not fix the damage that they caused a few years ago when they eliminated the film industry in Saskatchewan, when they attacked the investment and the jobs that exist within our film industry, where they took a world-class sound stage that's just across the lake, Mr. Speaker, and at the time was demanded and wanted by producers and filmmakers from around the world, and have left it not nearly as active as it should be.

So while we're on the topic of credits that would incent economic activity, create growth, give us something that we can all be proud of, I think it's incumbent on this government, this Sask Party government to fix the damage that they did just a few years ago to the film industry and to reinstate the film tax credit and build back that industry. Send a message to the people all across North America that Saskatchewan is open for business, that we want their investment, that we want them to come and to film here, and that we will be a partner to work together in the creation of jobs and that important industry that of course didn't just make us proud but made us millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker.

So far too often what we see with this government is, you know, sort of the grandstanding and the bits of an announcement but not the substantive actions that will allow our province to realize its full potential. And we see that once again with this measure here. And we're strong advocates of enabling value-added agriculture across Saskatchewan, inviting that capital, supporting entrepreneurs across our province, supporting our world-class producers on this front in recognition that the world wants what we produce and in recognition that we have the ability to create so many more jobs on this front.

But what the Sask Party is missing on this front is that if those making those investments, if producers across Saskatchewan, if companies that are looking to make this investment don't have certainty that they can get their product to market, that weakens our pitch, Mr. Speaker. It weakens our economy, and it prevents rural communities across our province from maximizing the economic opportunity that exists with value-added agriculture.

At this point in time I don't have a whole lot more to say on this bill. Certainly we look forward to continued consultation with agricultural stakeholders across the province, an incredible community of stakeholders. And to all those leaders within agriculture throughout our province, I say thank you. Keep leading. We need your support.

Also to make sure that we'll be reaching out, but for an invitation for anyone to reach out to us and share how we could strengthen this legislation right here to make sure that we maximize the value of the value-added agricultural opportunity that exists for our province.

And then very importantly, just to all the people of the province — the workers who have been subjected to layoffs, the companies who have been shut out because of an underperforming rail system, producers who haven't been able to get their fine crops to market and are stuck with the demurrage cost — I want those folks to know that we're there to work with them to build a rail system and transportation system that actually works for the people of the province.

And we've pressed this government to of course look at putting competition actually onto those railbeds, Mr. Speaker, to enforce interswitching, to do a full costing review, but also to do things like making sure that it's the rail companies themselves who are subjected to the demurrage cost when a vessel's sitting at port or out at sea off the coast of BC [British Columbia] awaiting shipment, Mr. Speaker. It's not right and it's not fair that it's producers across Saskatchewan, farmers across Saskatchewan who are paying that bill, Mr. Speaker. And there's no incentive for the underperforming rail companies, the duopoly, when those fees are simply paid by producers across Saskatchewan.

So if the members opposite really took this issue seriously, the opportunity that exists in value-added agriculture, then they would step up to the plate and stop treating the rail companies with the kid gloves that they do time and time again. Make that rail system actually perform and build on the incredible opportunity that exists within our province.

Mr. Speaker, we look forward to time in committee. And at this point in time for Bill No. 125, *The Saskatchewan Value-added Agriculture Incentive Act*, I'll adjourn debate.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Regina Rosemont has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 125, *The Saskatchewan Value-added Agriculture Incentive Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 83

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

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's an honour to stand here today to add my remarks with regards to Bill No. 83, *The Environmental Management and Protection Amendment Act*.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this piece of legislation I believe was tabled at the last session. So that was last year, and so we've had some opportunity to take advantage of time to review it a little bit closer. So there's a lot of information that's being presented within the amendments of this Act. Some of it is housekeeping in nature, and there's some legal clarity also with regards to this piece of legislation.

And the minister, when he was giving his remarks, indicated that some of the changes here were to ensure environmental resources are sustainable and the environment remains protected. He wants it to become "... consistent with other provincial resource management legislation ..." I think sometimes when we're reviewing these legislations, we realize that there's other pieces that might have areas that need to be adjusted as well and include those in the one that you're looking through. And we need to regularly look through them.

He wants it to be in line with environmental regulations and so there was a lot of different changes that were put forward in order to go along with some of those expectations. So one area, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was to "... expand the definition of 'person' to allow the ministry to issue permits to certain associations and organizations ..." And in order to do that, they had to add that definition of what a person is, and so that was a piece that was changed.

Also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the changes within this legislation allows the minister to appoint the new members to the Saskatchewan Environmental Code advisory committee instead of having them appointed by an order in council. So this provides a lot more power to the minister in order to do those changes. He indicated in his remarks that the members frequently change due to organizations and associations having a change as well. And so this was to be able to make that in a more quickly manner.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, also in his remarks he indicated that since the committee has been formed in 2015, they have met a total of six times. So in the three years they haven't met very often. And I don't know exactly the reasoning for that or when meetings are determined or who calls those meetings.

And also I'm hoping when there maybe are some changes ... I noticed with the current members there was nobody north of Saskatoon, and I think having a whole half of a province not being represented is unfortunate because we know the environmental concerns of the northern part of the province

should be acknowledged as well.

I have concerns, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when the minister receives this level of power how this will potentially decrease accountability. We know through orders in council everybody gets a chance to review those, and if this is going to be done on the side then ... And how will the accountability be allowed? So I hope those are things that'll be considered.

They're hoping that by having this committee then, having the ability to change the members more quickly and having regular members on the board, that this will allow members to be able to move forward with the recommendations in a more timely manner. So that was some of the rationale of this.

Another portion of this bill, Mr. Speaker, includes the ability to enforce legislation around out-of-province beverage containers that are being inappropriately brought into the province, and indicating that individuals are taking advantage of the recycling program. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm not quite sure if maybe this is an issue. Maybe it's been some of our border communities? I could see that could be a confusing time.

I know I've gone on vacation to Alberta or Manitoba and oftentimes you buy pop or water from there too and then you come home and realize, oh, I can't bring these bottles to our recycling program. But usually I put them in a separate one and just let them know because it would be nice to have them recycled. That's the whole purpose. Oftentimes it's not needing to get that recycling money back because you know you hadn't paid it when you went there, but being able to recycle those products is important too. So I hope there's an ability to do that as well.

[15:45]

I didn't realize that there was supposed to be an enforcement aspect to it. I guess there was challenges before. I would think that this would be a really hard thing to enforce and potentially timely as well. And I don't know what the enforcement looks like. It would probably take some reviewing that, but I'm sure the critic will do that.

And where there is maybe potentially more of an issue, maybe those areas could have more of an enforcement aspect to it because I do realize that we don't want people to be collecting a refund when they hadn't paid the Saskatchewan tax, and that that's the purpose of why we get that refund. But we also don't want to add more pressure and responsibilities that we won't be able to actually enforce on employees that are doing a really good job.

And I have to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that Sarcan, who is our primary recycling organization in Saskatchewan, they do an excellent job. I went to an event the other day ... well it feels like the other day, but it was probably quite a few months ago, actually. But it was the grand opening of the Sarcan depot in Prince Albert, and they have a new facility. And it's way bigger than what the other one was, and it has a much better atmosphere there. And they have so many different new programs that are being implemented there which are really exciting. And there's the drop-off program. And I know my partner used it the other day when he just dropped off our cans

and bottles, and then they put the funds right into our bank account, which is . . . We don't have to stand in line or do any of that work, and it's wonderful. So for people who have unpredictable work schedules like we do, that's kind of a nice option to have as well.

And so they say that they're getting 80 per cent of the returns coming back in. And I think that's wonderful, like that's an incredible return on recyclables. And they're doing a lot of advertising, especially since the last budget. There was some changes to recyclables. Now you can recycle your milk jugs and everything like that. And so they've been providing a lot of advertisements so that individuals are aware of the benefits that they can get with regards to recycling. And we know that they do such an excellent job with not only protecting our environment, but providing employment and supporting the economy. And they sometimes hire individuals that might not be receiving employment in other agencies, but they're incredible employees and they do such a wonderful job. So I have to give a shout-out to Sarcan.

So like I said before, I hope that we're not creating any legislation that is going to be difficult for them to manage and not very able to enforce because it just makes things much more confusing.

Another change within this legislation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the changes here will allow . . . It provides the authority so that the minister . . . to operate a product stewardship program. So this is for them to have the ability to appoint a program operator for waste stewardship programs. And I'm not quite sure who is currently running these programs or how they're being managed. That was a question I had when I was reviewing this.

So I guess the purpose of doing this is — to have the authority to the minister — it would be to be able to have these programs updated and take over when the stewardship program is not meeting its goal. So then the ministry has a little bit more authority to be able to manage that. So that could be some good questions to ask within committee about how is it currently being run and what is the purpose of this.

Another change in here is with regards to the water advisories. And they also wanted to add "human health," so then they need to have a term of reference for "human health" when referring to the adverse effects from water supplied by a waterworks. So they're changing that terminology so that "human health" and "environment" will be included.

We know there's been, it seems like, a lot more water advisories. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know it seems like there's always water advisories going forward, but I know that it's also because there was a change of legislation with regards to how to make that go forward. And when talking to some municipal leaders they say, like, if the power goes out even for a short period of time they have to have a water advisory because they can't guarantee the water safety, even though the chances of the water being safe is probably great. But they can't take their chances. So that's why there's oftentimes quite a bit of water advisories, is because there's different things like that. We'd rather err on the side of caution than otherwise. So that is good. So I think that's really positive to add the human health aspect because I think there would be a huge human health aspect to

that.

Also there's the abandonment of waste. There's some language changes to help with enforcement with that, so the health enforcement officers to be able to determine that. There's some amendments and clarity with regard to language for audits and inspections and investigations to ensure that environment officers have the appropriate powers to carry out their duties. So the clarity for when judges may have to issue a warrant or when environment officers may seize items. So there was some changes with regards to that. That's really important to ensure that environment officers have the authority so that they can conduct inspections and audits. So that's an important aspect.

Also there is a possibility to extend the five-year confidentiality window of environmental records that are of commercial, financial, scientific, or technical nature. So the amendment would also add an appeal process should the minister deny a request to keep information confidential. So I guess there'll be a lot of questions with regards to the purposes of needing to keep that information confidential and what examples that would be.

And then there is also some amendments to further clarify what activities require permits for water and sewage works, so that's also being considered here as well. And so like I said before, a lot of it is housekeeping items, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and a lot of it is ensuring better enforcement abilities.

It's really important that we need to ensure that we have a sustainable environmental management and a commitment to protect our environment. So a lot of the changes within this piece of legislation are very important. We've got to ensure that we have a strong piece of legislation in order to protect our environment, and that's very important. We want to ensure that's available for our grandkids, our great-grandkids, and everybody coming forward after us. So there's a huge responsibility for us to ensure that that's being kept.

So with saying that, we have an obligation also to work with some stakeholders and ensure that we get their opinion on some of the changes with regards to this and see what their opinions of what we need to have forward to have an environmental legislative framework.

I know our critic will do the due diligence that he'll need to do to ensure that this piece of legislation is going to protect our environment like it should, and I know I have other colleagues that would love to add some of their remarks with regard to this bill. So with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am going to adjourn debate on Bill No. 83.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Prince Albert Northcote has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 83, *The Environmental Management and Protection Act*, 2017. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 107

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed

motion by the Hon. Mr. Makowsky that **Bill No. 107 — *The Provincial Emblems and Honours Amendment Act, 2017*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise this afternoon to enter into the debate around Bill No. 107, *An Act to amend The Provincial Emblems and Honours Act*. I know several of my colleagues have already had the opportunity to speak about this bill. I know they've really enjoyed having the opportunity to speak about this bill. I have been looking forward to having the opportunity to speak about this bill simply because my colleagues have really told me how exciting it was and what a great time they had.

I know in light of some of the introductions we heard prior to question period today, there is a lot of jokes that I could make about this bill and about, you know, the provincial fossil and fossils in the House and fossils in Saskatchewan and that sort of thing. But I'm not going to do that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think several of my colleagues have already talked about that and colleagues on the other side have talked a lot about, you know, who's older than dirt and who is a fossil. But I'll leave that for everyone else to make those sorts of references, and I'll encourage anyone who's reviewing this to ensure that they take a look at some of the introductions that we saw today because they were quite humorous, Mr. Speaker.

So this bill is naming our provincial fossil, which I believe is going to be ... or the emblem, the fossil emblem of Saskatchewan, which I did not realize we had a fossil emblem of Saskatchewan. And now it's going to be the Tyrannosaurus rex, but they're also making sure in this ... And I thank the drafters for making sure that they also put in the shortened version of Tyrannosaurus rex in the bill as T. rex, just in case, you know, we don't want to say tyrannosaurus and we want to make sure everyone still knows who we're talking about.

And I was talking to my colleague from Regina Elphinstone prior to standing up because I forgot the name of the lovable Regina fossil. No, I'm not talking about, you know, insert joke here that I don't feel like saying right now, but I'm talking about Scotty, everyone's lovable Regina T. rex who you can often find roaming around the ... well he's not roaming too much, but he's around ... [inaudible interjection] ... yes, Megamunch. It's the same one, isn't it?

An Hon. Member: — It's Megamunch at the RSM [Royal Saskatchewan Museum], Scotty down at ...

Ms. Sarauer: — Oh geez. Oh I was also thinking about Megamunch. Actually I was thinking about Megamunch when I was talking to my colleague about this. Now I'm not sure. Now I don't even know what to think anymore. I didn't realize that there were two Regina honourable T. rexes to discuss. So Megamunch was the one that I was thinking about who I quite ... I'm always excited to bump into when I'm hanging out at the Royal Saskatchewan Museum, Mr. Deputy Speaker. He's often found hiding in the bush around the theatre area, sometimes decorated in appropriate costume of the day, whatever holiday is closest.

My member sitting next to me wants to know if perhaps the minister responsible for this bill and Megamunch have ever had some sort of, you know, celebrity duel. Some sort of celebrity cage match. Or as I spent my Sunday afternoon listening to the podcast that the minister was on, "On the Ledge," I believe it's called. The minister at the time suggested some sort of a football-related matchup between the minister of the file and a member opposite.

So I think if we can't tag in Megamunch ... because I think if Megamunch is anything, he's probably a New Democrat. If not, then I'm thinking maybe the member from Regina Elphinstone is actually quite actively volunteering himself for the role and he's quite excited about that opportunity.

Mr. Speaker ... [inaudible interjection] ... Oh yes, and so I think there's a few different ... The other Regina stalwart that is also a T. rex is Scotty? So Scotty and Megamunch are two different ... [inaudible interjection] ... Yes. Okay. Interesting ...

An Hon. Member: — Scotty's Eastend.

Ms. Sarauer: — Scotty's Eastend. Okay. Megamunch was the one that I was thinking about. I blame my colleague from Regina Elphinstone for giving me inaccurate information, but I now know that Megamunch was the one that I was thinking about.

[16:00]

Megamunch also, back when I was younger, was making a guest appearance at the airport, which was always exciting. When we'd roll into the airport, you'd wait for the baggage carousel to start up. And then when the baggage carousel would start up, then Megamunch would give a little roar and then your baggage would come out. That was always a really enjoyable experience.

It's actually too bad that Megamunch couldn't still make guest appearances at the Regina airport every now and then, although it is great to see him at the museum whenever you stop by. But I always like a little excitement when you're waiting for your luggage. And sometimes it takes a while, and you want to ... The Megamunch roar was always an exciting thing to see, Mr. Speaker.

Now, I understand from colleagues opposite there were several options, and I'm trying to find them. I understand that there are some interesting things around this bill, and this Act. I frankly didn't know that *The Provincial Emblems and Honours Act* existed prior to having the opportunity to debate this in the House, Mr. Speaker. But I do know now that there are several interesting things that are provided for in this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker.

Some of the other emblems that exist for Saskatchewan, I think we should also, you know, pay them mention. I don't want them to feel left out because we're so focused on the T. rex and how fun talking about a T. rex is. There's also the saskatoon berry, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which is Saskatchewan's fruit emblem. I had no idea that we had a fruit emblem, but I'm happy to hear that it is the saskatoon berry. I think that makes

sense.

Saskatchewan's fish emblem is the walleye. And if anybody is . . . In particular, I would say that the northern walleye is probably the best freshwater fish you'll eat. And the member from Cumberland knows this, I think, better than anybody else. And I encourage anyone who thinks differently to have a conversation with him about that.

Although we catch fish at the lake in the summer — we go fishing as often as we can — unfortunately we get a lot of jack, which aren't quite as good as walleye. And my dad always says, stop catching slimy jack because he hates gutting them. He hates filleting them, Mr. Speaker. I tend to not . . . I don't do the filleting. I do the fishing. I do the catching. And I am quite comfortable getting the fish off the hook, but everything after that is not my cup of tea, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So I will echo his sentiment though that walleye is much tastier than a slimy jack, as my dad would say.

Sylvite, well potash is also, I believe, is the provincial mineral, Mr. Speaker, which makes sense again for Saskatchewan, considering how much potash we have in the province and how important it is to our economy.

The white-tailed deer is not only Saskatchewan's most popular game animal, or one of Saskatchewan's most popular game animals, it's also another provincial emblem that we have, Mr. Speaker. Another emblem we have, which I think most folks already know, is our provincial floral emblem, the western red lily. I did know about that, but I did not know about all of the other emblems.

So the nice thing about entering into these adjourned debates is it allows you the opportunity to learn more about your province than you did prior to standing up. Again it's exciting to see that we're adding a fossil as our provincial emblem. And I think with that I'm going to adjourn debate on Bill No. 107.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Regina Douglas Park and other members have moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 107. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 111

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Doke that **Bill No. 111 — *The Municipal Tax Sharing (Potash) Amendment Act, 2017*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to join in on Bill No. 111, the municipal tax sharing potash amendment, 2017. I guess they're amending some of the legislation. The Act was first introduced in 1968, I believe, is what they refer to when it came in. And at some point it was because of the potash companies. It was for municipalities to share in, I guess, some

of the benefits of having the potash mine around certain municipalities.

I'm no expert on this. I know my colleague . . . And as I was going through some of the information just to try to understand, there are the benefits. It's a sharing of, I guess, the revenue generated, municipal revenue generated from the potash mine for certain municipalities that are impacted, is what my understanding of what it was initially to share.

Having said that, I guess we have a number of potash companies. And I guess there's other communities where the mining industry has . . . there's impact to communities. Sometimes there's agreements signed in different areas. In this one here, it talks strictly about the municipal taxes that are shared about municipalities, coming in from the potash.

But I think about some of the mining industry and the deals that are there, and I just want to reflect on it because sometimes some of the northern communities and other communities that are impacted by the mining industry, there are incentives. There are agreements that are signed with the mining companies to support certain impacted communities. And it might be employment opportunities that a municipality or a northern community has an opportunity. When I think about up north, the criteria there is making sure your percentage, I believe it's 50 per cent northern people are employed in that industry. They try to achieve that mark with the industry, and there's ways that it's monitored and, you know, they try to make sure people are there.

So that's just one incentive. That's an incentive. But when I go back to this, I just wanted to show that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as an example of different agreements. This one here deals strictly with the sharing of revenue collected from the potash mine, which they generate. And actually, I don't know what kind of dollars those would be. I don't have a potash . . . up north we don't have a potash company, so I wouldn't know it. But I'm curious and probably some of that information will come. I don't know how much revenue that it generates for those municipalities that are impacted. And it talks about that, and I'm going to go a little bit into this. They're making some changes to some areas and giving certain changes.

And here's one area where it was interesting. There used to be, from my understanding, a board, might have been three board members, but they're now moving it to the area to five. And in that now includes representatives from SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] and the potash industry. So it gives them a chance to have some input in developing. And I guess at the end of the day it's to try to work together to how they're going to share those taxes, the municipal taxes, that are collected from the potash with certain impact communities.

But that's interesting. And I know some impact communities, some they talk about, I believe it's 20 kilometres or 20 miles and they're changing it to 20 kilometres. Like it's back and forth. And I know as we go through this, we're going to ask the minister and the officials to clarify. And we will get that clarified, exactly understanding the changes, and there must be a reason why.

But overall I guess what they're trying to do is they're coming

up with, I guess, a mill rate and a formula that will work for those communities impacted. But when I think about that and I think about some . . . My colleagues referred to this in some of the cities. We know the cities, I believe some of them do not take part and share in the potash if they're not in the kilometres of 20 or whatever it is. And I think about some of the people and residents that live in a community like Humboldt. I think Yorkton is another one, that that community is being impacted in the sense of they have people who provide service to those individuals who work at the potash company. So they might reside there. So there are some of that.

And I'm not sure how they're going to work that out when you say impacted, if it's strictly on that or is it where the residents reside. And of course there's a lot of spinoff. And you think about jobs, when it comes to jobs, and it comes to supplying supplies to potash. I realize this talks about the mill rate and setting a mill rate and setting a formula and having a board that shares and splits those dollars. And again I'm no expert on it, but I'm curious when I start seeing this. It's like, you know, they're taking part of sharing of revenue.

And that's interesting because, like I said, there's different companies out there and different mining companies that have a different way of doing this. This is just one more example of what our province does and some of the agreements that we're willing to do as a province and some of the agreements that we've had since, like this one, like I said, was 1968 where it originally came from. It was to, as the potash came in, to share some of that resource with those impacted.

So having said that, going through this, you know, there will be, I guess, those communities that are impacted and will get . . . And I don't know how that determines on what kind of services, like, and I don't know some of those examples of those communities and what kind of . . . Does that change the mill rate on what they collect from residents? Because like, I don't know what type of dollars we're talking about, revenue that would come in from a potash mine, as far as to some of those municipalities.

So it's more questions, I guess, for myself and I'm just curious. It's interesting when you talk about it. I know we're going to get a chance to ask some of this stuff in committee. But exactly which communities get impacted by a potash, and how is the formula figured out? And is that, those dollars, are they inject dollars where they have, you know, they're getting quite a bit of revenue coming in with that sharing of those resources? So is it bringing quite a bit of income into the municipality? Or is it strictly . . . But like, I am curious. So it's going to be seen. And maybe some of them are doing really well with the potash there, and I don't know what they're collecting. But I know in committee we can ask some of that and maybe there's that information. Some of the ministry officials will have some of that information.

And maybe, I guess, just reaching out to some of the municipalities, and maybe there's a way to find out, when you do a little bit of research, that here's what the revenue is. And you know, maybe some communities do well and they're providing much better services for their residents which is a good thing. I mean, if you're an impacted community and you share, you know, you share in that. And like I said, they've set

up . . . they have made some changes in here for a reason.

And I think it's a good thing to put the potash industry at the table, to put the, you know, SUMA at the table, to give some input and direction which . . . These are changes that were probably requested and those individuals within different areas probably have said it's time for some changes. And if you're going to change legislation, maybe these . . . And maybe there was some work done and ideas brought forward to change it, and that could be why it is.

And I guess the other thing is with municipalities. They've got to be able to plan their budgets, and so this may help them with the formula, seeing what kind of dollars are coming in and help them, you know, better predict what revenue is coming in and what they can do as far as planning for residents, to provide a better service. So that could be overall could be in there.

You know, it also talks about that board will set a mill rate for the year. So there are certain powers that that board will have the power. Now I don't really understand exactly how that will work, and I know my colleagues in committee will ask the minister and the officials again to clarify that, how that actually will work. And we'll get to go through some of that.

[16:15]

So you know, again I talked about some of those cities that aren't impacted right now and don't get it. And I said Yorkton, Humboldt, Saskatoon. I don't believe there is the bigger cities are involved in that. And maybe at some point, even though like I said, some of the employees live in that community, so it is . . . In some ways some might say, well it should be looked at differently. I don't know, you know, if that's the case or not because, if it is about the 20 kilometres, then I guess they meet the criteria that is. I don't know if they're proposing any changes. And I know we'll have a chance to ask some of those questions, get clarification on this, and see where we go from here.

So really, thinking about overall the work that needs to be done and continue to be done, and I guess ourselves as our critics and our role to ask the ministry, its officials, exactly who requested this. And maybe it's, like I said, maybe it's a good reason why it's been requested, but to understand it.

And I know my colleague will get a chance to ask the minister and officials and clarify many of the areas we're unsure of. And maybe we have to do a little bit of research to get that information.

So really, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at this point I have no further comments and I'm prepared to adjourn debate on Bill 111.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Cumberland has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 111, *The Municipal Tax Sharing (Potash) Amendment Act, 2017*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 112

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hargrave that **Bill No. 112 — *The Miscellaneous Vehicle and Driving Statutes (Cannabis Legislation) Amendment Act, 2017*** be now read a second time.]

The Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Good to rise in my place and join debate this afternoon on Bill No. 112, *The Miscellaneous Vehicle and Driving Statutes (Cannabis Legislation) Amendment Act, 2017*.

Now one of the things that is often a bit of a challenge in opposition, considering various of the pieces of legislation and various of the initiatives brought forward by members opposite, is trying to determine what the balance is between what appears to be a communications exercise on the part of the government, and you know, there are communications that attach to any political initiative. And certainly governments are well expected to communicate with the citizen, Mr. Speaker, to let them know what the priorities are, let them know what the details of legislation, of policies are and how they affect their particular life.

And in terms of the . . . So on the one hand, communications. That's part and parcel of the life in a provincial government anywhere, Mr. Speaker. But as regards to this particular government, Mr. Speaker, it's oftentimes interesting to try and measure up what is being communicated and the desired effect of those communications, and the policy that is being offered on the other side of the coin.

And, Mr. Speaker, in terms of this government's desire, you know . . . And if you'll cast your mind back, the second reading speech of the minister introducing this legislation was delivered on November 29th, 2017. It was in the midst of a leadership contest on the part of members opposite. It was in the midst of the ongoing and evolving debate around cannabis legalization in the country, Mr. Speaker, and the different federal-provincial jurisdictional questions that that raises. And then to add further complexity to the situation, you have the matter of the Sask Party leadership contest into the bargain, Mr. Speaker, and you had different sort of postures on the part of various of those camps.

Some of them wanted to communicate that they were very, very tough on all these things, and you know, were contemplating ages of majority for being able to consume cannabis, Mr. Speaker, of, I think 25 was being contemplated by one contestant over there; others that said, you know, 19 is what it is for alcohol and that's what it should be for cannabis. And again, that's fair enough. But there was a fair amount of mediating and navigating and negotiating these differences over there.

And again you see this more typically in federal politics, Mr. Speaker, as regards the Conservative Party and the sort of tensions that exist between the libertarian branch of the federal Conservative Party and the social conservative branch of the federal Conservative Party. But I would submit that this

particular issue is caught up in some of those kind of posturings and the way that different camps approached this issue, Mr. Chair of Committees, in terms of how the different camps were putting forward their position.

But above all of that . . . So that's one of the things that that required was a lot of time, Mr. Speaker, and time in absence of a full decision made on the part of the government. So they needed to get something in the window in the meantime, Mr. Speaker. Because as regards impaired driving more broadly construed, Saskatchewan is terribly well known, has a big problem when it comes to impaired driving. And the desire of imputing the situation around cannabis or other controlled substances alongside that of alcohol, Mr. Speaker, and the discussion that we've been having as a province . . . And the different sort of initiatives and engagement exercises that have gone along with that as well as some heartbreaking and terrible places where this has gone horribly wrong, and Saskatchewan has earned this standing, this terrible standing as one that leads the nation in terms of impaired driving.

So there's a desire in that circumstance on the part of government . . . And certainly one of the things that the Wall government was well known for was a pretty ready and capable communications machine. And in terms of looking to get out something to the broader public around zero tolerance on impaired driving as that extends to cannabis, in absence of all these other decisions that were yet to be made on the part of the government, but to have something to say in the interim as all these other jurisdictions were making their decisions, this was something that the government wanted to apparently get out on the public record that the main message received that when it came to impaired driving as related to cannabis that there would be zero tolerance.

And again, Mr. Speaker, between that headline and then in terms of how this comes down to the street level, how this will be enforced on the street, again one of those interesting things to consider in terms of laws being proposed, legislation being proposed, one of the critical questions always to be asked is, what is the enforcement regime? And again, Mr. Speaker, as you know, they're looking to get the zero-tolerance message out there. Fair enough. That's certainly within the government's purview. But the question of how you're going to enforce zero tolerance, Mr. Speaker, is one that remains and one that is not convincingly answered in this particular piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, and again is as different from . . .

You know, once you get beyond a field sobriety test and the particulars of that, I'm sure we'll be interested to further investigate in committee, Mr. Speaker, and how that regime is being changed in light of one that promotes zero tolerance as regards having any cannabis in your system, Mr. Speaker, you know, or the way that the definitions of drugs have been changed under the piece of legislation. There are a number of questions that arise that demand an answer if this is indeed going to be something that moves beyond a communications exercise and provides meaningful gains in terms of public safety for the people of Saskatchewan on our highways and byways, Mr. Speaker.

So in terms of what can be contemplated under the changes of definitions to drugs in the legislation, Mr. Speaker, you know,

where does that leave something like Sudafed? Where does that leave . . . One of my colleagues has got a great head cold going on and I know is taking different medication for that, over-the-counter provided medication, Mr. Speaker. I know I'm doing my best not to catch that selfsame cold, Mr. Speaker. But in terms of that individual, if they are pulled over for whatever reason by a duly authorized police force, what happens then? And if the pseudoephedrine or whatever that is there in trace elements, if there is indeed to be zero tolerance, then what you're taking in a two-pill format from, I don't know, Dimetapp or NyQuil or whatever the prescribed amount is, Mr. Speaker, where does that leave you under the law? So that's one question we have, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of the field sobriety test and again in terms of a Breathalyzer, which ascertains very precisely how much blood alcohol you have, in terms of the way that THC [tetrahydrocannabinol] or cannabinoids are processed by your system, Mr. Speaker, you know, you don't have to be Ross Rebagliati to know that if you're in a room and you happen to inhale — someone's smoking marijuana in the same room — and then it's going to show up in your blood. It's going to take you a while to get that out of your system, Mr. Speaker. And it doesn't have to have anything to do with impairment levels, it has to do whether or not it's present in your blood — as different from alcohol, Mr. Speaker. So is that an appropriate test to ascertain sobriety or impairment levels, Mr. Speaker? It is not.

And if you talk to the police, Mr. Speaker, one of the things they are mightily interested in is this very aspect of it, of this change in legislation, Mr. Speaker, is how do they enforce the law? How do they enforce the law if the tests that are there in ready supply for alcohol don't work on a comparable basis as regards cannabis, Mr. Speaker? And you know, that's a pretty critical aspect of this legislation, Mr. Speaker, and one that needs a firm answer before something like this can go forward.

So I get that, you know, there was a moment when this legislation was brought forward at the end of November 2017 where the government wanted to have something to say about what they thought was the right way to go on cannabis, as they themselves were in a fair amount of indecision and conflict around what the go-forward plan would be for cannabis in the province, Mr. Speaker. I know that they wanted to be able to say, we're going to be zero tolerance on drugs, Mr. Speaker.

And again though, how you are going to enforce that legislation, Mr. Speaker . . . It's one thing to change the terms in the legislation. So how do you enforce that? What is the test? What is the test when, you know, what I understand of how cannabis is processed or the impairing qualities of cannabis are processed by the human body, Mr. Speaker, that it's in terms of what is fat soluble versus, you know, impairs you through your blood system? You know, what are the differences that are accounted for there, Mr. Speaker?

[16:30]

And you know, I have read the minister's second reading speech as I am wont to do, and again there's no good answer to that. There's some talk about, you know, upping capacity in terms of training. But in terms of what that test is, Mr. Speaker,

there are more questions than solid answers. So I would submit that that's something, you know, regardless the federal-provincial jurisdictional complexity of this particular policy issue, Mr. Speaker, that's something that needs to be sorted out. Otherwise it's bad law.

And in terms of how this gets enforced on the streets of Regina or, you know, pick your place in the province, Mr. Speaker, you're going to be setting for our men and women in blue, Mr. Speaker, a very difficult challenge.

And in terms of how that then in turn comes to the, you know . . . Is this yet another issue that's going to get sorted out by the courts because the desire to proceed on a communications basis outweighed the ability to put forward solid law? Is that what's going to happen yet again in this case, Mr. Chair of Committees?

So we have a lot of questions about the legislation. We have a lot of questions about the enforcement aspect of it. And certainly, Mr. Speaker, we'll be looking for answers to those questions in the days and weeks ahead. But for the time being, I would move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 112, *The Miscellaneous Vehicle and Driving Statutes (Cannabis Legislation) Amendment Act, 2017*.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — The member from Regina Elphinstone has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 112, *The Miscellaneous Vehicle and Driving Statutes (Cannabis Legislation) Amendment Act*. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — Carried. I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — I'm requesting leave to introduce guests.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — Carried.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce a couple of friends, a couple of guests that are in your gallery here today, Mr. Speaker. Gloria Patrick is here today and Jennifer Morin is here today.

Gloria Patrick has served as the constituency assistant in our office in Regina Rosemont since 2011 and has provided an incredible service to so many throughout our community, has provided me with incredible support, Mr. Speaker, and I'm so thankful for her service. She dealt with people at times of crisis with such a responsiveness, but also care and common sense. She comes by that in a very natural way, Mr. Speaker. I've known Gloria through most of her life, more than half of her life. She's a remarkable woman. She's also recently concluded her master's degree in Social Work and she's taken on really valuable employment, supporting families at risk within our community. I know she'll be an incredible asset to those

families.

But to Gloria I say, thank you so much for the service to our constituents. Thank you for the friendship. I will miss her. She's been my personal counsellor for a good seven years, Mr. Speaker. I'm hopeful that she'll continue to offer me those counselling sessions, maybe not at the office now, but maybe over at Juliana's or somewhere else in the riding, Mr. Speaker. But to Gloria I say thank you, as well to her family, her daughter Kaitlyn who's an incredible young woman, a student leader as well, who's been fully involved in Gloria's service.

I also want to introduce and welcome to her legislature Jennifer Morin who has started her first day, officially, in the constituency office here today as the constituency assistant. I'm so pleased that Jennifer has taken on this important work. She's been working for many years in justice, working with those that are dealing with domestic violence. She's somebody who brings a lot of skills and a lot of compassion to her work.

I'm lucky to know the family very well. Her boys, Jax and Ethan, skate at the Rosemont Outdoor Hockey League as well. They're two fine skaters, which is good because, you know, their dad, Trevor, is a terrible hockey player, Mr. Speaker. So it's an honour to introduce Jennifer to her Assembly, to thank her in advance for the service that she'll provide, and ask all members to join with me in welcoming and thanking Jennifer Morin and Gloria Patrick to their Assembly. Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 113

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Doke that **Bill No. 113 — *The Planning and Development Amendment Act, 2017*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I want to rise today to enter into adjourned debates on Bill No. 113, *The Planning and Development Amendment Act, 2017*. It's a pleasure to be up again today in adjourned debates. And I'll be looking at some of the recommended changes in this particular Act, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as well as some considerations, as we move forward, to add to the discussion here.

In the minister's second reading speech for Bill No. 113, he talked about the fact that:

The Planning and Development Act . . . provides the legislative framework for municipalities to manage and facilitate development of their communities. This framework supports municipalities with the tools to achieve economic growth, environmental stewardship, and social and cultural well-being for their communities.

And we certainly hope this is the case and that all changes that

are being made to this piece of legislation do reflect that intended purpose, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The minister goes on to say:

This bill will incrementally improve Saskatchewan's land use planning framework and save [Saskatchewan] taxpayers money. The bill strengthens existing legislation to help municipalities plan regionally, support opportunities for municipal and provincial infrastructure to service department, clarify a planning process for the use of municipal reserves for school purposes, and address miscellaneous items.

The minister talks about the fact that the ministry has consulted with a number of internal and external stakeholders in preparing this bill and the amendments within. Some of these organizations that they identify are SARM, SUMA, the cities of Saskatoon and Regina, Saskatoon & Region Home Builders' Association and the Regina & Region Home Builders' Association, public and Catholic school divisions, the ministries of Highways and Infrastructure, Education, and Agriculture.

Some of the changes that are being made in this bill are that regional partnerships can exist a little bit more easily to help municipalities grow and partner with other municipalities in the future. To ensure clarity for all stakeholders in involving and planning future schools, and is something that I will speak more about in a little bit, Mr. Speaker. But the minister is talking about the fact that "The bill supports collaboration between municipalities, school divisions, and the Ministry of Education . . . [in order to] develop policies to ensure municipal reserve lands are available for school purposes." So there's definitely some questions that we have here around transparency in public-private partnerships, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

What this piece of legislation does, there are some amendments that ensure that conflict of interest provisions apply to members of a district development appeals board and members of any regional planning authorities, which certainly seems prudent if these folks are involved in the planning process, that they should be subject to the conflict of interest provisions.

Currently 10 cities in Saskatchewan have been granted approving authority status. An amendment allows the minister to modify the terms of an order granting authority status to achieve a provincial interest, for example in land use for P3 schools. And any order a minister issues under this new section must be published in the *Gazette*.

So we have some concern about the ability of the ministry to impose what could be a potentially very politically motivated agenda on municipalities as it relates to this, in particular with the location of public-private partnership schools and the ability of the ministry to impose that on municipalities. That is a question that we have here, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Currently the ability to apply policies for site plan control is limited to commercial and industrial land, and it now expands to include institutional and mixed-use development. Municipal planning bylaws are now submitted to the director of community planning instead of the Minister of Government Relations. The minister's had and still continues to have the

ability to require municipalities to amend their official community plan to achieve consistency with provincial interest.

A new section adds some flexibility for timelines that the municipalities have to abide by in the minister's orders. A new section requires "... municipalities to develop their school site policies collaboratively with the Minister of Education, any local school divisions, and any municipality(s) that the Ministry of Education determines is necessary ..."

So again this makes sense on paper, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but when you start to think about what this actually means for folks that are looking at developing new schools, the good people who are working in municipalities, many of them have been working away for several years, have a lot of experience with development at the municipal level, and I would want to ensure that those folks are being valued and heard in the development process. So it's a little bit concerning when there's these mandates being put forward about who they need to be working with and what that looks like.

There are many changes throughout the bill that will impact municipalities, how they can plan, develop, and address regional issues. We've also heard some concerns already from developers about this bill. We'll certainly be having discussions with municipalities and our other stakeholders about how this bill will impact them and following up with the minister in committee. Overall we definitely appreciate the consultations that have taken place, want to ensure that those consultations were meaningful consultations. Sometimes there can be fear within organizations that you don't want to bite the hand that feeds you. So we'll definitely be following up as well with some of those groups to see what their input was and whether their input was considered in the creation of these amendments, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And then there are some concerns about how municipalities plan and how, whether they will be given the authority to plan moving forward. There's questions we have about the transparency of the P3 process, whether municipalities are going to be sort of hooped into some of these schools. And we'll have concerns about what that looks like long term, the abilities of municipalities to shape their own plan, and the apparent grip of the ministry on these plans to be able to impose a political agenda and influence. Presumably a lot of the folks who represent municipalities would want to go on a cost-benefit analysis and make sure that these are the smartest decisions for them to be involved in. And I'm not sure that we've seen that level of transparency.

So these are questions we'll continue to ask, and certainly hoping that there has been meaningful consultation and that these changes will have a positive effect. But we'll have more to question as we go forward into committee. And I know my colleagues will have more that they'll want to say about this particular bill as well, but with that, I will move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 113, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

[16:45]

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Fairview has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 113, *The Planning and Development Amendment Act, 2017*. Is it the

pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 114

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hargrave that **Bill No. 114 — *The Vehicles for Hire Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise this afternoon to join in on the debate on Bill No. 114, *The Vehicles for Hire Act*. Now this bill is an interesting bill. It will allow for municipalities to license and create bylaws for what might be a new industry. But ultimately, Mr. Speaker, it will be up to the provinces to ensure the safety of communities, consumers, and drivers.

And when we speak to bills, it's important that we present some of the concerns that we've been hearing from people in the province with respect to legislative changes. So one of the main concerns we've been hearing with respect to Bill 114 is around proper regulations. So we want to ensure that when we're creating a new industry in the province, in particular this new industry, we want to ensure that the province is doing its duty to ensure that safety of communities, drivers, and consumers, Mr. Speaker, are protected. So it'll be up to the province to wear that mandate, and we'll be watching closely to ensure that they do live up to that need, Mr. Speaker.

So to summarize a bit about this bill, the transportation network companies will require a licence, which will be issued by the municipality. Municipalities can make bylaws then around licensing standards, fees, and records that are required. So I believe that if my understanding of the bill is correct, it will be up to municipalities — including Lloydminster, I see; Lloydminster's also included as a municipality — can decide if they want to allow for this type of licence issuing, Mr. Speaker.

So I think section 3 of the bill is pertinent. I'm going to read it into the record. So it says:

Subject to section 5, a transportation network company may only operate or provide vehicle-for-hire services in a municipality if it holds a valid and subsisting licence issued by the municipality.

And then the further section, of section 4, provides for the bylaw making authority and grants that authority, Mr. Speaker, to municipalities. It's also allowing for municipalities to determine "... the manner in which licences ... [will] be allocated to transportation network companies, including limiting the ... number of licences that are to be issued." So it'll allow for municipalities to determine how many licences they feel are appropriate for their community.

It also provides municipalities with the power to prohibit, control, or limit the transfer of licences and allows for:

authorizing the conditions or requirements for obtaining, holding or renewing a licence or a class of licences to operate a transportation network company . . . [which also includes] the character and fitness of an applicant or licence holder.

It provides for the duration of . . . It allows for municipalities to provide for the duration of licences, and also allows municipalities to have the power to suspend or cancel licences for failing to comply with a term or condition of the bylaws that the municipalities now, with this legislation, have the authority to enact, Mr. Speaker. It also gives municipalities the authority to regulate the manner in which vehicle-for-hire services from a transportation network company may be obtained or purchased by the public, and also allows for authorizing conditions to be imposed at any time during the term of a licence as a requirement of continuing to hold a licence, Mr. Speaker.

So another thing that this bill talks about is what happens when there are trips between municipalities. So based on the bill, to my understanding, the bylaws of the municipality in which the trip originated in will apply for the duration of the entire trip unless municipalities have agreed otherwise, Mr. Speaker. So I suppose the instance would be if someone was asking for a ride from, or is in Regina, they hired a service to take them to Moose Jaw as an example, then the bylaws in Regina would apply in that particular instance, Mr. Speaker.

But there's also a requirement in the bill that the drivers must have a driver's licence. Makes logical sense, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Also requires that the vehicles that are used must also be registered as required to by *The Traffic Safety Act*, Mr. Speaker.

The transportation network company that will be subject to these provisions must also prove that they have adequate insurance, Mr. Speaker. I think we should read "transportation network" and "transportation network company" into the record because it is being defined in the bill as it should be defined, or it's being defined as it definitely needs to be defined, Mr. Speaker.

So the "transportation network company," as defined in the bill, it means, "a person or other prescribed entity that operates a transportation network." And then "transportation network" which also needs to be read into the record as the definition for that serves the definition that I just spoke about:

"transportation network" means, subject to the regulations, an online enabled application, a digital platform, a software program, a website or other system or technology platform offered, used or operated by a transportation network company to enable a person to obtain a vehicle using its vehicle-for-hire service."

Mr. Speaker, so it's left pretty open, but we do know that this is talking about, just from hearing from the minister and seeing some of the stakeholders that have been paraded into the Chamber throughout this session and last session, Mr. Speaker, that we are talking about Uber and companies like Uber, Mr. Speaker. But it is important to note that the definition in the bill does leave it open for many different types of companies to enter into this type of service.

The information that is to be provided to the insurance includes things like name and place of business, name and address of drivers, list of vehicles providing service, geographic area for service, and proof of licence, that they have the licence they need to be able to operate the service, Mr. Speaker.

Government will have the power to suspend or cancel a registration permit to a transportation network company if they fail to comply with the Act or the regulations that correspond, Mr. Speaker. Again that ties into what I've already said earlier, is the government's mandate and responsibility pursuant to this legislation, to this change. And also what we've been hearing as a concern from stakeholders is that an assurance is needed for ensuring that there is proper safety and regulations so that we're ensuring protection for consumers and employees, Mr. Speaker, those who will be driving these vehicles, Mr. Speaker.

And in that light, government will also have regulating powers on defining what vehicles are, prescribing the classes of drivers' licences, prescribing a special feature indicating that a vehicle may be used for vehicle-for-hire services, prescribing insurance premiums, and procedures for suspending or cancelling a licence, Mr. Speaker.

And like I said already, it is the municipalities that will have the power to license and create the bylaws for this industry, but ultimately it will be up to the province to ensure the safety of communities, consumers, and drivers.

I know we are taking the bill to committee, and our critic will be doing a fantastic job looking for further clarification from the minister, as well as asking questions around consultation, what sort of consultation has gone on with respect to this bill. We're seeking, and I know the critic has been doing a very good job seeking input from all stakeholders that are involved.

We also want to ensure that the regulations are in place that have been regulating taxi companies for a very long time, for decades, Mr. Speaker, and that are there to ensure safety for those who use that service, as well as for the employees. So regulations that are there to protect both the public and the drivers are also being utilized for, or similarly, at least in some similar form, are being utilized for this new service, Mr. Speaker, because safety should be the number one thing that we're ensuring. We need to ensure that both consumers are safe, the customers are safe, as well as the employees, Mr. Speaker. We need to ensure that the regulations are in place that will ensure safety of consumers and drivers, and then again, that is the role of the provincial government, Mr. Speaker.

I also think it's impertinent to look a little bit further into some of the provisions in this bill because it will be something that's new for Saskatchewan. We're seeing how the ride-sharing program, the ride-sharing companies, expand into other locations. I know you can find them in Ontario, BC, and Alberta, just to name a few, Mr. Deputy Speaker, not to count all the other locations around the world, but there has been some mixed reaction depending on where the location is. Some steps backwards, Mr. Speaker, I suppose is one way of describing it.

We also want to ensure that when we're looking at this as an alternative, or as a prevention to address the problem we have

in Saskatchewan of our high rates of driving while impaired, Mr. Speaker, that we are not just using this as a solution, that there are other solutions we need to be looking into as well, Mr. Speaker. This can't be the only thing that we're doing, that we are addressing it in many other ways, including education campaigns in the schools and wider education campaigns, Mr. Speaker, just to name a few.

Also there is, like I said, there's a few other provisions that are a bit interesting in the bill that I know that the critic is going to have the opportunity to ask questions about at committee. Like I said, she's been doing some pretty good work on this file, as she does in all of her files, reaching out to stakeholders, speaking with stakeholders and community leaders about their respective thoughts on the bill, positive or negative, Mr. Speaker.

So I know she's going to have a lot to ask for the minister at committee, Mr. Speaker. But I do know, prior to that, that I do have other colleagues who are interested in joining in on the debate around this bill. So I know, although I know that the critic is quite eager to enter into committee on the bill, I do know, like I said, that there are other colleagues who are interested in joining the debate.

So I'm prepared at this time to move Bill No. 114, *The Vehicles for Hire Act*, move adjournment on that debate.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Regina Douglas Park has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 114, *The Vehicles for Hire Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, so the committees may sit tonight, I do now adjourn the House.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Kaeding	4087
Rancourt	4088
Reiter	4088
Morgan	4088
Sarauer	4088
The Speaker	4089
Wotherspoon	4113

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Beck	4089
Steele	4089
Rancourt	4089
Sarauer	4089

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Well-Known Author Receives Saskatchewan Order of Merit

Beck	4090
------------	------

Missing Persons Week

Wilson	4090
--------------	------

Saskatchewan Book Awards

Sarauer	4090
---------------	------

Opening of Royal University Hospital's Mental Health Assessment Unit

Buckingham	4091
------------------	------

Volunteer Receives Lieutenant Governor's Award

Brkich	4091
--------------	------

Under-18 Women's Curling Team Recognized

Lawrence	4091
----------------	------

Tribute Concert Supports Humboldt Broncos and Their Families

Cheveldayoff	4091
--------------------	------

QUESTION PERIOD

Wage Rates in Saskatchewan

Meili	4092
Moe	4092

Rail Transportation Issues

Meili	4093
Moe	4093

Highway Intersection Safety Review

Meili	4093
Moe	4093
Marit	4094

Funding Capital Infrastructure in the Education Sector

Beck	4094
Wyant	4094

Rental Housing Supplement

Wotherspoon	4095
Merriman	4095

Administrative Segregation in Correctional Facilities

Sarauer	4096
Tell	4096

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 129 — *The Saskatchewan Technology Start-up Incentive Act*

Beaudry-Mellor	4096
----------------------	------

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 121 — *The Cannabis Control (Saskatchewan) Act*

Vermette	4097
Brkich (referral to Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice Committee)	4099

Bill No. 122 — *The Cannabis Control (Saskatchewan) Consequential Amendments Act, 2018*

Loi de 2018 corrélative de la loi intitulée The Cannabis Control (Saskatchewan) Act

Vermette	4099
Brkich (referral to Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice Committee)	4099

Bill No. 126 — <i>The Energy Export Act</i>	
Beck	4099
Bill No. 127 — <i>The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2018</i>	
Mowat	4100
Bill No. 128 — <i>The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2018</i>	
Rancourt	4101
Bill No. 124 — <i>The Environmental Management and Protection</i>	
(<i>Environmental Handling Charges</i>) Amendment Act, 2018	
Sarauer	4102
Bill No. 125 — <i>The Saskatchewan Value-added Agriculture Incentive Act</i>	
Wotherspoon	4104
Bill No. 83 — <i>The Environmental Management and Protection Amendment Act, 2017</i>	
Rancourt	4107
Bill No. 107 — <i>The Provincial Emblems and Honours Amendment Act, 2017</i>	
Sarauer	4109
Bill No. 111 — <i>The Municipal Tax Sharing (Potash) Amendment Act, 2017</i>	
Vermette	4110
Bill No. 112 — <i>The Miscellaneous Vehicle and Driving Statutes (Cannabis Legislation) Amendment Act, 2017</i>	
McCall	4112
Bill No. 113 — <i>The Planning and Development Amendment Act, 2017</i>	
Mowat	4114
Bill No. 114 — <i>The Vehicles for Hire Act</i>	
Sarauer	4115

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