



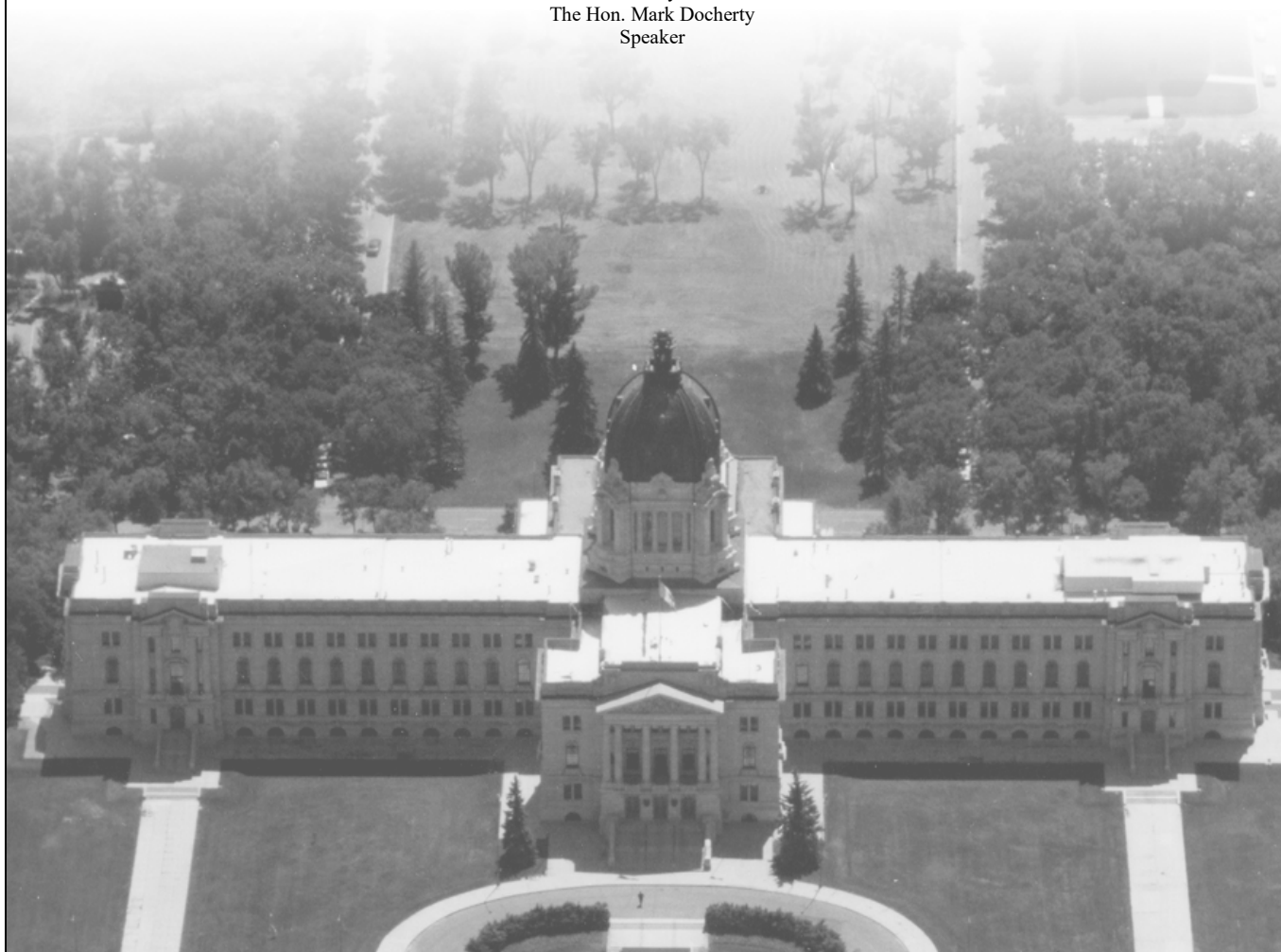
FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

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
4th Session — 28th Legislature

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

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Beck , Carla — Regina Lakeview (NDP)	Marit , Hon. David — Wood River (SP)
Belanger , Buckley — Athabasca (NDP)	McCall , Warren — Regina Elphinstone-Centre (NDP)
Bonk , Steven — Moosomin (SP)	McMorris , Don — Indian Head-Milestone (SP)
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Dennis , Terry — Canora-Pelly (SP)	Ottenbreit , Hon. Greg — Yorkton (SP)
Docherty , Hon. Mark — Regina Coronation Park (SP)	Pedersen , Yens — Regina Northeast (NDP)
Doke , Larry — Cut Knife-Turtleford (SP)	Rancourt , Nicole — Prince Albert Northcote (NDP)
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Forbes , David — Saskatoon Centre (NDP)	Sproule , Cathy — Saskatoon Nutana (NDP)
Francis , Ken — Kindersley (SP)	Steele , Doug — Cypress Hills (SP)
Goudy , Hon. Todd — Melfort (SP)	Stewart , Lyle — Lumsden-Morse (SP)
Hargrave , Hon. Joe — Prince Albert Carlton (SP)	Tell , Hon. Christine — Regina Wascana Plains (SP)
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Kaeding , Hon. Warren — Melville-Saltcoats (SP)	Young , Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)
Kirsch , Delbert — Batoche (SP)	Vacant — Regina Walsh Acres
Lambert , Lisa — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)	Vacant — Saskatoon Eastview
Lawrence , Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)	

Party Standings: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 46; New Democratic Party (NDP) — 13; Vacant — 2

Clerks-at-the-Table

Clerk — Gregory A. Putz

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

Principal Clerk — Iris Lang

Clerk Assistant — Kathy Burianyk

Sergeant-at-Arms — Terry Quinn

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Legislative Assembly are available
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<https://www.legassembly.sk.ca/Calendar>

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Marit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, seated in your gallery are four very good friends of mine from the RM [rural municipality] of Frenchman Butte. And I had the privilege a few years ago of meeting this council in my former ministry as minister of Highways on a partnership agreement, Mr. Speaker, that has finally come to fruition and has been signed. And I wanted to acknowledge to all members here of the collaboration between the municipality and the Ministry of Highways on this partnership agreement, and I want to recognize them here today, Mr. Speaker.

The reeve — and I'll just ask them to give a wave; they're seated in your gallery behind me — is Bonnie Mills-Midgley. She's the reeve. The councillor for division 1 is Leonard Larre, and the councillor for division 2 is Dan Hritzuk. And I have to give a little special mention to the councillor from division 5 if I could, Mr. Speaker. In our negotiations on the road project that we did, at one point she was ready to throw me off the bus. She probably should have, too. But anyway I do want to recognize Gay Noeth, and I want to thank them for their collaboration in working together. And I ask all members to recognize them and acknowledge them here in their Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too want to join in welcoming the folks from Frenchman Butte. And to the reeve and to his councillors as they lobby for highways improvement — and as the Highways critic, I most certainly keep abreast of what's going on throughout our province — remember the words that I speak to you today when I say, when they say your highway's on a list, always remember you can't travel on a list. So make sure that the highway's indeed made. And of course we support that effort, and we hope and wish you well in your discussions and negotiations for your area. Once again, welcome.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Lloydminster.

Ms. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too want to join in welcoming these folks who are constituents of mine from the RM of Frenchman Butte. And we had the opportunity to meet with the Premier just a week ago and tour the new lagoon system out there and have a conversation with regards to the new Highway 21 announcement and Frenchman Butte access. And it was a great opportunity for them to have that conversation and see the progress that we're making in this province. And it's been on the books for a long time and wasn't done before, and I'm so happy to say that it's going to happen now. So I ask everyone to welcome them to their legislature.

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

Mr. Pedersen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to welcome a former member of this Assembly, Walter Jess, who's seated here behind us. Walter was the member for Redberry Lake from 1991 to 1999 and served that constituency well. And as well, Mr. Speaker, his partner, Ellen Wood, is seated in the Speaker's gallery. So I'd like to ask all members to join with me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar-Sask Valley.

Mr. Weekes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd also like to join in welcoming Walter Jess to his Legislative Assembly, as Walter and I got to know each other quite well, especially in the 1999 election. And I would just like to say, Walter, you ran an honourable campaign in that election, and again welcome. If you stick around, I'd like to have a little chat with you later.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce two special guests in the east gallery. We have Deena Kapacila who works with the SFL [Saskatchewan Federation of Labour] and is quite active particularly around issues with young workers and making sure young workers get a fair shake and they're treated in a safe way.

As well, Kent Peterson is up there, no stranger to this House. And of course we all want to congratulate Kent on his election to secretary-treasurer of CUPE [Canadian Union of Public Employees] Sask, a very important labour organization here in Saskatchewan. So I'm sure we'll even hear more from Kent. So welcome to your legislature. We're glad you're here today. Thank you so much.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join the member opposite in welcoming these people to the legislature today. In particular, you know, we focus on young workers in our province. We're pleased that these people are joining the workforce and we want to do everything we can to ensure that we have a good, comprehensive program to make sure that workers are safe in our province. And to Kent Peterson, welcome and congratulations on his election.

With regard to CUPE, we noted that Tom Graham's retirement was announced earlier, and we would like to take advantage of this opportunity to try and wish Tom all the best in his retirement. This is somebody that was a tireless worker and strong advocate for workers in our province, and he will be missed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Highways.

Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to introduce an old, old, old school friend up in your gallery, Mr. Eddy Fisher, up in the west side there, Mr. Speaker. Eddy and I go back, way back to St. Al's school in Yorkton in the early '70s and we've known each other for a long time. He's a good, good friend. He actually helped me on my last election

campaign. Very strong Christian. Really appreciated his input and his foundation, Mr. Speaker.

But we were just having lunch and he informed me he's seeking nomination for the NDP [New Democratic Party] in Saskatoon Stonebridge. So you know, I think I appreciate his input. His Christian input's a real asset over there, Mr. Speaker, and he might have to offer that from the galleries even after the next election, Mr. Speaker. But I do appreciate his friendship and all he's been as a mentor to me over the years. And I ask all members to welcome him to his Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join the member opposite in welcoming Mr. Fisher to his legislature. We had a chance to chat on the weekend, met for the first time, and he informed me of his intention to seek the nomination. And I guess this is an experience that the members opposite will get used to. Your friends are still your friends, but they may be our supporters now.

And while I'm on my feet, I'd just like to add my welcome to Walter Jess and Ellen Wood. Walter has been someone I've got to know over the years and some of his wisdom has informed how I have approached politics. And I really appreciate the way that he has approached this business and his life afterwards as well.

And while I'm on my feet, I'll also acknowledge the folks who are in the gallery behind us from Unifor. Thank you very much for your work and all the work you do on behalf of Saskatchewan. Thanks so much.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Corrections and Policing.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the member opposite in introducing the members of Unifor. I'd like to express our thanks for your tireless work in our very valued oil and gas in the province of Saskatchewan. I ask all members to join me in welcoming them. Thank you.

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

Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You might know Derek Meyers, who's up in the Speaker's gallery from his years at Global Regina or as an MC [master of ceremonies] at numerous events over the years. He's funny, engaging, and loves sports. But what you might not know about Derek is that he was raised on a farm north of Midale, Saskatchewan and began his career as a geologist. His family has deep roots in the oil and gas sector where he worked for many years in that industry before transitioning over to media. He and his wife, Laurie, have three children: Teigha, Dayn, and Sebastian.

Mr. Speaker, Derek is our candidate in Regina Walsh Acres in the election this year, and I'm very much looking forward to having my friend on this side of the House. I would ask all members to join me in welcoming Derek Meyers to his Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's indeed a pleasure to rise today to introduce two very special people in the west gallery. Mr. Speaker, I have here today my constituency assistant, Susan Dunne, and Susan brought with her a very special young lady by the name of Angelica Finney. Angelica works at Futuristic Industries in Humboldt. She loves to be busy. She's a very social gal and she has a contagious smile, a positive attitude. She brings happiness to everyone she meets. And Angelica just came back from Special Olympics in Thunder Bay, Mr. Speaker, and she's donning her bronze medal for floor hockey. So congratulations, Angelica, and congratulations to your mom.

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

Mr. Steele: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, in the west gallery I'd like to welcome Mr. Sean Checkley, the mayor of Fox Valley, Saskatchewan, strong community leader and great supporter. And I'd like to welcome him to his Legislative Assembly today.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to join with the members opposite to welcome Sean Checkley to his Assembly. We've gotten to know Sean over the years as a strong voice for his community and for his region. As the critic for Municipal Affairs, it's my pleasure to welcome Sean to his Assembly, as well as the good folks who are here from the RM of Frenchman Butte. So on behalf of the official opposition and as Municipal Affairs critic, thank you so very much for joining us in your Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kindersley.

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

I'd like to read the prayer:

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by the good citizens of Biggar, Asquith, and Grandora. I do so present.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I rise once again today to present petitions on behalf of concerned people and communities, workers, and businesses from all across Saskatchewan as it relates to the PST [provincial sales tax] hike of the Sask Party — the billion-dollar expansion, the biggest hike in Saskatchewan's history, something that's hit households hard,

hit working families and people hard, Mr. Speaker. In fact the average household is now paying more than \$800 more per year in PST than they were just a few years ago, Mr. Speaker.

And we see how that plays out in weakening our economy as well, as it relates to the Sask Party's expansion of this tax onto construction labour. It's the epitome of a job-killing tax, Mr. Speaker. Very sadly the results speak for themselves. We've seen permits plummet all across Saskatchewan. We've seen important projects be shelved, Mr. Speaker, not go ahead. And we've seen thousands of hard-working tradespeople lose their jobs, Mr. Speaker. And many of those hard-working tradespeople have been forced out of Saskatchewan in the pursuit of employment. A loss for them and their family, a loss for our province most certainly, Mr. Speaker.

And the prayer reads as follows:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Sask Party government to stop saddling families and businesses with the costs of their mismanagement and immediately reinstate the PST exemption on construction and stop hurting Saskatchewan businesses and families.

[13:45]

These petitions are signed by concerned residents of Regina here today. I so submit.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for the government to restore public control over Wascana Park. Mr. Speaker, Wascana Park is a treasured urban park and conservation area that has been effectively and well managed over the past 50 years between an equal partnership between the city of Regina, the University of Regina, and the province.

Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party sought to scrap that equal partnership in 2017 when they gave themselves majority control of the board of the Provincial Capital Commission. Through that, we've seen many changes to the park, in particular growing commercialization and a sell-off of a portion of the park to Brandt, the Sask Party's largest corporate donor.

Mr. Speaker, the city of Regina and the University of Regina have both expressed an openness to return to a governance model based on equality. More and more people in Regina and across Saskatchewan are getting increasingly concerned with the growing commercialization of Wascana Park and want to see it stopped.

I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the government to restore the governance structure of the Wascana Centre Authority and end the commercialization of Wascana Park.

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

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to present a petition to the Assembly calling for a \$15 minimum wage. And the undersigned residents for the province of Saskatchewan want to bring to our attention the following: that Saskatchewan has the lowest minimum wage in Canada and that a minimum wage should never be a poverty wage; that you know, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people working full time at minimum wage jobs are living in poverty; that a \$15 wage will improve health and well-being and lift Saskatchewan workers out of poverty; and that a \$15 wage will benefit local businesses and support local economies by putting money in workers' pockets to spend in their community.

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

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Sask Party government to adopt a plan to raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour for all workers.

Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition come from the community of North Battleford. I do so present. Thank you.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a very timely petition calling on the Sask Party government to address the crisis in our children's classrooms. Those who have signed this petition wish to draw our attention to a number of points: that the Sask Party government's cuts mean falling per-student funding and fewer supports for students who need them; that the Sask Party government leaves educators without the resources that they need in order to support learning in their classrooms, Mr. Speaker, something I think we see the results of here with that government's lack of willingness to address those issues; that the Sask Party government is ignoring overcrowding in our classrooms by refusing to track and report on classroom sizes; and that the Sask Party government's failure to invest in our classrooms is having serious consequences, Mr. Speaker, not only today but will continue to into the future should they choose to not address these very real concerns.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call upon the Sask Party government to immediately fix the crisis in our classrooms by properly funding the most important investment that we can make, that is in the education of our children.

Mr. Speaker, those who have signed the petition today reside in Prince Albert. I do so present.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm rising today to present a petition calling for a moratorium on logging in the

Nesslin Lake area. The people who have signed the petition would like to bring to our attention the following: Nesslin Lake, Ness Lake, and Zig Zag Bay campgrounds bring thousands of tourists to the area annually, and it's also the prime recreational area for the residents for Big River and the surrounding area. The Ness Creek site brings thousands of tourists to the area through its numerous events and activities, resulting in an additional 25,000 visitor days annually.

Portions of the forest in the Nesslin Lake area are slated for logging as early as September 2020 which will negatively impact tourism, traditional and recreational use, and its untapped economic potential. A moratorium on logging in this area is critical as, if this logging proceeds, it will cause irreparable harm to the economic potential of the area for decades and, Mr. Speaker, local area residents and businesses need more time to ensure a more sustainable economic plan is put in place.

I'll read the prayer:

We, the undersigned, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Sask Party government to place a moratorium on all proposed logging in the area between Nesslin Lake and the Ness Creek site, as well as immediately north of Nesslin Lake.

And, Mr. Speaker, the folks signing this petition today are from the communities of Big River and Saskatoon. I so submit.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise again today to present a petition to end unacceptable emergency room wait times. These citizens wish to bring to our attention that despite the Sask Party government's promise to eliminate emergency room wait times in 2012, wait times in Saskatchewan's emergency rooms continue to grow; that instead of making smart investments to meet emergency room targets, the Sask Party government watered down targets to the point that they no longer exist; and that the Sask Party has cut funding to address emergency room wait times and has no meaningful strategy to get emergency room waits under control.

I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Sask Party government to fully fund and execute a plan, as they promised to do in 2012, to lower and eventually end ER wait times across Saskatchewan.

This petition today is signed by individuals from Regina, Mr. Speaker. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Saskatchewan Transportation Company

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, it's been almost three years since

this government announced its sell-off of STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company]. The Saskatchewan Transportation Company was a vital service, connecting nearly a million people in Saskatchewan, over 200 communities in every corner of this province.

The impacts of their short-sighted cut still hurt communities today. Seniors and people in rural areas tell us that the cancellation of STC has impacted their ability to go medical appointments, see specialists, and visit loved ones. STC helped people who were too sick to travel. It connected libraries. It delivered test results, cancer medications, and parts needed on the farm.

Just last week we learned that 600 women fleeing interpersonal violence are turned away from shelters each month. And without STC, many of these women are unable to leave their communities and find shelter somewhere safe.

This government likes to talk about STC like it's a business. But let's get this straight: it was a service. It speaks volumes of this government that STC, providing services to people with the greatest need, needs to turn a profit, but an investment fund managed by one of their biggest donors doesn't.

Access to safe, reliable transportation should be a right for the people of Saskatchewan, but this government simply doesn't care. It's time to bring back STC, Mr. Speaker, and if this government won't do it, an NDP government will.

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

A Successful Year for Kinsmen Kinettes Telemiracle

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This weekend Saskatchewan celebrated and tuned in to the 44th annual Kinsmen Kinettes Telemiracle fundraiser, and I'm happy to report to the House that this year Telemiracle raised over \$5.5 million.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to say that this Chamber was well represented at Telemiracle. And I'd like to thank my colleagues from both sides of the House for volunteering, including the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport; the member from Melfort; and yourself, Mr. Speaker. It was a busy morning as we were surrounded by talented artists, supporters of the fundraiser, as well as the families that these funds will directly impact.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to know that this weekend is not only about raising funds for mobility devices, communication aids, and medical trips for Saskatchewan people. It's about coming together to instill hope and give inspiration to so many around our province that, no matter what card you're dealt in life, your community is here and cares for you.

Being it was my first time working it, it was an amazing and rewarding experience, and I'm looking forward to doing it next year. I now invite all members of this Assembly to join me in congratulating the Kinsmen Kinettes Telemiracle Foundation on another successful year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Pedersen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This weekend, I and seven other members from both sides of this Assembly took part in a very unique experience, Mr. Speaker. As Telemiracle 44 asked the people of Saskatchewan to ring those phones, we were there to answer them.

Mr. Speaker, for decades this telethon has stood as a symbol of the talent and generosity of Saskatchewan people. For 44 years, talented performers, volunteers, and supporters have been showing up and helping ring those phones, and this year was no different. This year Telemiracle raised over five and a half million dollars.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, all that money goes to the Kinsmen Foundation for specialized medical and mobility assistance and travel. And like so many events, what viewers see on TV is just the tip of the iceberg. After we finished our shift answering phones, we got a behind-the-scenes tour of the operation. And at any given time there are hundreds of volunteers working behind the scenes to make sure that Telemiracle runs smoothly. Mr. Speaker, unlike the performers, those volunteers aren't in the spotlight. They don't get public recognition. They just do it from the generosity and the love in their hearts.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for your role in helping put this opportunity together, and I would now ask that all members join me in congratulating the Telemiracle board, all the Kinsmen and Kinettes, all the volunteers, and the people of Saskatchewan who donated to this year's Telemiracle for another outstanding demonstration of what we can do when we work together in this province.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Moosomin.

Impaired Driving Awareness Week

Mr. Bonk: — In 2018, 43 people were killed in Saskatchewan, and approximately 360 more were injured due to drug- or alcohol-impaired driving. While these numbers are lower than the 10-year average, they're still unacceptably high. To help educate Saskatchewan people about the dangers of driving impaired, our government has proclaimed this week as Impaired Driving Awareness Week.

Mr. Speaker, this month also marks the 10th anniversary of the report impaired drivers program. We know there are still some people who make the decision to drive impaired, and the report impaired drivers program is one way to help law enforcement catch those who haven't gotten the message. Residents are urged to continue to help make roads safer in the province by reporting suspected impaired drivers to 911.

Mr. Speaker, from 2010 to 2019, calls reporting impaired drivers resulted in 2,870 Criminal Code charges, 581 roadside suspensions, and 338 other charges. Having the eyes of the public watching for impaired drivers and sharing that information with police is saving lives. Every time an impaired driver is caught by law enforcement, our communities are made safer, our families are made safer, and Saskatchewan is made safer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Melville-Saltcoats.

Melville Volunteer Firefighter Betters His Community

Hon. Mr. Kaeding: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In 1969, man landed on the moon. The Beatles released their *Abbey Road* album. I was misbehaving in grade 1, and Norman Konechny began volunteering at the Melville fire department. Growing up, Norm was inspired watching the volunteer firefighters of Melville race to the fire hall when the siren signalled trouble. He followed his father and two uncles who were also volunteers in the Melville fire department. At the age of 21, Norm joined the department, making him their youngest member. After 50 years of dedicated service he is now their most experienced member. Mr. Speaker, over his many years of service, Norm rose up the ranks and recently retired from his position as deputy fire chief but remains in active service as a volunteer firefighter.

But, Mr. Speaker, volunteering with the fire department is far from his only public service. From 1977 to '97, Norm was also a volunteer paramedic in Melville, which meant saving the lives of countless Saskatchewan people. He retired from CN Rail in 2003. Mr. Speaker, in 1989 Norm was awarded the Fire Services Exemplary Medal, for which he has now received two bars, and in 2004 he was awarded the Saskatchewan Protective Services Medal. Just last month the city of Melville renamed one of our local parks, in honour of the city's longest active public servant, the Norman Konechny Park.

Mr. Speaker, a lifelong dedication to public service is one of the most noble pursuits known to mankind. I'm incredibly privileged to have gotten to know Norman Konechny and I thank him for the tremendous sacrifice that he's made to better the Melville community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Commonwealth Day

Ms. Lambert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is Commonwealth Day here in Saskatchewan. The Commonwealth of Nations, of which we are a part, found its origins 94 years ago at the Imperial Conference of the British Empire.

Mr. Speaker, in response to this declaration, Winston Churchill stated, and I quote, "The Age of Comprehension has begun," as loyalty to the Crown would be the foundation that hold this Commonwealth together.

[14:00]

This day is recognized annually and is an opportunity for us to learn about our constitutional monarchy. It's a day that is an important reminder that, although this Chamber is relatively young, our system of government is centuries old. The debates and proceedings we have here are part of a storied history dating back 800 years. To teach us more about our history, Government House will be opening a temporary resource library exhibit in partnership with the Monarchist League of Saskatchewan and United Empire Loyalists of Canada.

I look forward to attending the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association dinner this evening, along with many of my colleagues, and bringing greetings on behalf of the Government

of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all members of this House join with me in recognizing Commonwealth Day here in Saskatchewan. Thank you.

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

Announcement of Victoria Hospital Expansion

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Friday I had the great honour of joining the Premier, the Minister of Health, and a number of my colleagues in Prince Albert to announce an over \$300 million commitment for a new and expanded Prince Albert Victoria Hospital.

Mr. Speaker, this is an investment in growing our province: a new acute care tower; a larger emergency department; expanded medical imaging services, including an MRI [magnetic resonance imaging]; and renovations to the current hospital space. We look forward to seeing this facility develop, working alongside the city of Prince Albert, health care workers, our First Nations people, and other stakeholders.

But I think Grand Chief Hardlotte of the Prince Albert Grand Council simply said it: “This is reconciliation,” working together to build a culturally responsive centre for the needs of everyone. This is one of the ways we move forward, Mr. Speaker. This project is very important for Prince Albert but also very important for the North. And I think that all members, especially the members from Athabasca, Cumberland, and Prince Albert Northcote, can all agree on how important this project will be to our communities.

The Finance minister will table a budget next week with more details on this project, but it will be a balanced budget. I’m hopeful, Mr. Speaker, that those members, especially the member from Prince Albert Northcote, will support the budget and this new hospital for Prince Albert. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Management of Provincial Economy

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The world economy has experienced a massive shock in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and this has significant repercussions for Saskatchewan’s economy. Oil prices have crashed. Potash stocks are falling. Canola prices are falling. Saskatchewan people were already stretched and stressed because of this government’s choices. This will only make things worse.

Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party oversaw over a decade of some of the best economic times in the history of this province. They were fortunate enough to have record revenues. But they missed every opportunity to plan ahead, to save any money for the future, to diversify and make our economy more resilient, Mr. Speaker. Instead they wasted billions of dollars on pet projects making friends and donors rich, while the rest of us struggle.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier likes to point fingers. He likes to pass blame on to others. But does he recognize that his party had over a decade to create the conditions? They had the perfect conditions to protect families from shocks like these, but they failed to do so. They just weren’t interested, Mr. Speaker.

So my question for the Premier is this: does he accept that his government failed to make the most of boom times and that his choices, his party’s choices, have left the Saskatchewan economy and Saskatchewan families more vulnerable than ever?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Let me first say, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the last 12 years here in the province of Saskatchewan, we have had a very strong economy for the bulk of those years here in the province, Mr. Speaker. The provincial government has taken every opportunity to invest the strength of that economy into infrastructure and services across this province — \$30 billion in infrastructure, Mr. Speaker. Hospitals, schools, highways from corner to corner to corner in this province, Mr. Speaker, record investment in each of those categories. Record investment, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the people and the services that are being offered in each of our communities.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the broader challenge that we are faced with now, there are a number of things that we are unable to control with how coronavirus, for example, is impacting the global economy, Mr. Speaker. But there are a number of things that we are able to control and to provide stability for here in the province of Saskatchewan. One of those, one of those, Mr. Speaker, I would say has been occurring over the last few years where the Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker, and this government has been making decisions to shift our reliance away from resource revenues, the revenues of the province, Mr. Speaker.

We’ve been shifting away from a high of being reliant on resource revenues at 32 per cent, Mr. Speaker. This past year we had that decrease to about 11 per cent being reliant on resource revenues, Mr. Speaker. This provides us with (a) a good credit rating, Mr. Speaker; (2) it provides us with the resilience to go into a challenge that all of us around the world are going into, Mr. Speaker. And we are well poised to deal with it from an economic perspective.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government has failed to plan ahead, leaving already-struggling Saskatchewan families even more vulnerable. Now we know the budget was drawn up a couple of weeks ago, but the projections on which that budget was based, those are no longer valid, Mr. Speaker, in these new conditions.

Now with Saskatchewan people hearing this, they’re worried, because they know what they get when the Sask Party finds themselves in a difficult situation. They saw the last time this happened and prices fell, that the Sask Party cut deeply in health and education. They added a billion dollars to the PST, and they sold off Saskatchewan Crown Corporations, Mr. Speaker.

Has the Premier learned the lessons from 2017? Will he invest in people? Will he protect what keeps us strong, or will he go back

to the same old, tired Sask Party model of trying to balance the budget on the backs of Saskatchewan families?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, with respect to the budget that will be coming forward on behalf of the people of the province in just the next number of days, Mr. Speaker, I will not get into details of how we are going to invest in the people of this province. But I can say that we are going to continue to build Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We are going to continue to build the schools and hospitals and roads right across this province, Mr. Speaker. We are not going to determine the number of teachers, the number of nurses, the number of physicians in our communities on the price of a barrel of oil, Mr. Speaker.

This is why we have made the very necessary decisions that we did, starting a number of years ago, to shift our resource revenue reliance away from our natural resources. As I said, Mr. Speaker, it's peaked at 32 per cent a number of years ago, down to 11. Of that, less than 5 per cent of our provincial resources are reliant on the energy industry, Mr. Speaker. This was a very focused intent and effort on behalf of the people of this province so that we wouldn't have to make decisions with respect to the employment of the services in our communities, Mr. Speaker — the teachers, the nurses, the doctors. We don't need to hire and fire them based on the price of oil.

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

Date of Provincial Election

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You would think that a Premier who takes this situation as seriously as he should would take some responsibility for his own failure to plan.

Mr. Speaker, not long ago the Premier realized, with the help of the public and the press, that a coronavirus outbreak was not a smart reason to call a snap spring election. However all the evidence suggests he's still barrelling towards a March 19 writ drop, Mr. Speaker, which means he hasn't realized yet that a coronavirus outbreak is a smart reason not to send people door to door shaking hands, gathering in large crowds, going to the polls en masse.

Mr. Speaker, we have cases in Ontario. We have cases in Alberta. Today we learned of the first death from coronavirus — here in Saskatchewan — in British Columbia. It's a very serious situation, Mr. Speaker.

Today Dr. Anne Huang, a Saskatchewan-based public health physician, published an open letter expressing her deep concern that the Premier would even consider calling a snap spring election during a pandemic:

Containing #COVID19 requires a massive societal response, strong government leadership and social-distancing measures. Calling a snap election this spring has the potential to expose . . . [many more] people to the virus and will make a coordinated response in Saskatchewan more difficult.

Mr. Speaker, will the Premier today be clear about his election

intentions and explain why he thinks it's wise to send people to the polls during a pandemic?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, whether or not we would go have an election earlier rather than the October 26th set election date that we have in this province, Mr. Speaker, it would be for one reason and it would be for one reason only. And that would be to earn a mandate from the people of this province to govern on their behalf over the course of the next four years.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a decision that this government takes lightly. This is a very serious decision, Mr. Speaker, that we continue to have discussions about, as is how we deal with not only the health . . . Mr. Speaker, as serious is the outbreak of coronavirus across this nation, around the world, Mr. Speaker.

And although we do not have any cases here in the province yet, I can assure the people of this province that Ministry of Health officials, Saskatchewan Health Authority officials, the minister, Mr. Speaker, are in regular contact with their counterparts across the nation, providing input, receiving information to ensure that we are prepared from a health perspective, Mr. Speaker, and we are prepared from a financial perspective for what may come at us economy-wide, Mr. Speaker. With the decisions that we have made on behalf of the people to stabilize the provincial finances, Mr. Speaker, we are in a very stable place, Mr. Speaker, with some very serious decisions ahead of us.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier continues to play coy. This is a serious matter of public health. It's not a time for political games, Mr. Speaker. As Leader of the Opposition, I'm a politician. I don't think there's any time that's too soon to change to a government that will put people first. But as a physician, I'm deeply concerned. I'm deeply concerned about the implications of holding an election, of sending people to the polls in a way that could significantly disrupt not just Saskatchewan, but Canada's response to coronavirus.

It's a very serious issue, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan's emergency rooms are already under significant pressure. This would put a huge burden on emergency rooms, on our public health system. New York has declared a state of emergency. Community leaders around North America are cancelling public events like South by Southwest in Austin or the women's world hockey tournament in Nova Scotia, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan schools are cancelling international travel.

And in the midst of all these efforts at social distancing, the Premier is musing about calling a snap spring election that would increase social contact. It's backwards, Mr. Speaker. Public health officials like Dr. Huang warn, and I quote, "It is only a matter of time before Saskatchewan sees its first confirmed case."

Public trust is essential to limiting the spread of an epidemic. Calling an election now would undermine that public trust, Mr. Speaker. Again, once more, will the Premier give the public a straight answer? Will he tell us about his election intentions and why he thinks it would be wise to send people to the polls during

a pandemic?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, as I've said, any decisions with respect to election timing, that's a very serious conversation that the Saskatchewan Party has not come to a decision on, Mr. Speaker. And there is only one reason why that would occur, and that is to ensure that we have a mandate to represent the people of this province out over the course of the next four years, Mr. Speaker.

Just as serious a decision, Mr. Speaker, decisions are before us with respect to how we prepare ourselves when it comes to the outbreak of coronavirus. We have no cases here in Saskatchewan. It is likely that we will have cases as we move through the days and weeks ahead as most other places across Canada and North America have experienced cases, Mr. Speaker.

I, like the Minister of Health, Ministry of Health officials are taking our advice from the chief medical officer, Dr. Shahab, who I have had a multiple number of briefings with, Mr. Speaker, one as recent as this morning. We are being kept abreast, not only of the impact and opportunities that we have to manage this from a health care perspective here in the province, Mr. Speaker, but are also being kept abreast . . . The Minister of Health, myself, others in official and leadership roles within the ministry and the Saskatchewan Health Authority are being kept abreast of what is occurring across the nation as well, Mr. Speaker. And the people of this province can be reassured that we are dealing with this from a position of stability with the resources we have in the health sector as well as where we are placed with the economy, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Around the world people are cancelling public events. This Premier is talking about introducing new, unnecessary public events during a pandemic, during a pandemic. Why would he do this at this time, Mr. Speaker? There is no clear answer and no clear answer about what his real plans are. He might think it's cute to play coy. I think people deserve a straight answer in this province. What are your election intentions? And why would you send people to the polls during a pandemic?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

[14:15]

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, with respect to election timing, I'd say that's a very serious conversation that we have, Mr. Speaker. It's a very serious conversation with only one reason that we would go to the polls, is to earn that mandate and ask the people of this province for a mandate to govern.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite, at times, needs to pick a lane. A few months ago he was saying that this government should go early to the polls. Now he's saying we shouldn't go early to the polls. Mr. Speaker, we've seen this before from the Leader of the Opposition and the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to opposing pipelines until they realize what the actual consequences are, and then they say, oh we don't really oppose

pipelines right now, Mr. Speaker . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order, please. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, we see this inability to pick a lane with respect to Prime Minister Trudeau's federally imposed carbon tax, Mr. Speaker, where we see the member opposite say, we actually applaud the federal government's carbon tax. And when he actually sees the impacts to farmers and to the energy industry and to the manufacturing industry in this province and they come up to Regina to actually protest what some of these costs are having on their industry, their jobs, and their families, Mr. Speaker, he's nowhere to be found.

Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, there are some very serious decisions that are coming forward to this government, Mr. Speaker, myself and my colleagues. These are decisions around election timing, around how we deal with the outbreak of coronavirus across Canada, around the world, and ultimately in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And the people of this province can be proud because we're coming to those decisions from a position of stability, Mr. Speaker.

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

Negotiations With Teachers' Union

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's extremely disappointing to see such an immature response to such an important issue. This is a matter of public health. This is a matter of public health. It's a moment for honesty with the people of Saskatchewan about the true intentions of this government. It's a moment to be clear. It's a moment for leadership, Mr. Speaker.

But once again this Premier does what he always does. He puts politics before people. It's extremely disappointing, and it's no wonder. It's not surprising because that's exactly what he's done with education as well, Mr. Speaker.

In early February, more than 96 per cent of Saskatchewan teachers took part in a sanctions vote. Over 90 per cent of them voted in support of job actions, Mr. Speaker. We know that teachers care deeply about the future of our children, about providing the best education. But in the face of cuts to per-student funding, they're not able to do their job the way they know they could.

Mr. Speaker, our teachers today are not fighting for themselves. Our teachers are fighting for our kids. Today they announced they're taking that fight a little further. They're taking job actions, Mr. Speaker. How did the Premier let things get so bad in our classrooms?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, the people of this province can rest assured that this government is providing leadership when it comes to how we are dealing with the coronavirus outbreak from a health-quality perspective and a health-offering perspective. The people of this province can rest assured that they are being provided leadership from this government, Mr. Speaker, from a

financial perspective and the financial position of the government of Saskatchewan because of decisions that we have made, that we have transitioned away from our reliance on energy revenues here, Mr. Speaker. And we come at this from a position of stability in the economy and from the provincial finances.

Mr. Speaker, for the same reasons that we transitioned away from being reliant on our natural resources — in particular the price of a barrel of oil — was so that we would be able to offer our teachers, our educators, Mr. Speaker, our nurses, our doctors, Mr. Speaker, a fair deal here in the province so that they can continue to offer the services that we want them to offer in our communities and to that next generation, Mr. Speaker.

And we feel that we have done so, Mr. Speaker. And we would invite Pat Maze and the STF [Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation], the bargaining unit, back to the table, Mr. Speaker, where we have had an offer there, Mr. Speaker, that would provide them with 105 per cent of the Western Canadian average. It would put them in a position of strength relative to their colleagues, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of Education has lobbied, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that we are able to have a new mandate offered at that table, Mr. Speaker. And we'd invite Mr. Maze and the STF back to the table so that they can find out what precisely that mandate is.

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

Mr. Meili: — I want to register to *Hansard* something that the Deputy Premier, the Minister of Education, shouted in response to that question. He shouted that the teachers of Saskatchewan are walking away from our children, Mr. Speaker. This Premier and his cabinet are so focused on blaming others — they're dropping the ball on the things that matter to Saskatchewan families — that they can't recognize, they can't even hear it anymore, when our teachers are standing up and fighting for our kids, Mr. Speaker.

Responsibility for this job action lies directly at the feet of this Premier, the one Premier who failed to keep his promise for 400 new EAs [educational assistant], who has failed to address class size and complexities, who has left school divisions with deficits of \$78 million, Mr. Speaker. The Premier has no one to blame but himself. But that's never stopped him before, Mr. Speaker. He'll point fingers anywhere else any time he can.

We need to be helping teachers put kids first, not making their jobs harder. Mr. Speaker, 90 per cent of Saskatchewan teachers have made it 100 per cent clear that this Premier has failed that test.

Mr. Speaker, what is this Premier's plan to bring this dispute to a close, to address the crisis in our classrooms, and make sure that Saskatchewan kids have the supports they need to succeed?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, what we will not do is bargain the teachers' contract here on the floor of the Assembly. So what I would ask that we could all agree on in this Assembly, both members of government side and opposition, is that we could

agree on that there is a new mandate at the bargaining table, and we could agree on collectively asking Pat Maze and the STF to go back to the bargaining table to find out on behalf of his members what that mandate actually is, Mr. Speaker.

Because the previous mandate, Mr. Speaker, would place our educators, our valuable educators in this province at 105 percent of the Western Canadian average. So what are we doing, Mr. Speaker? There is an offer of millions of dollars on the table as well, Mr. Speaker, over the next number of years to start to deal with some of the composition challenges that we have in our classrooms. That, Mr. Speaker, is a commitment that has been made by this Minister of Education as we move forward.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to classroom size, the way to increase our opportunities to lower our classroom size in this province is not to legislate or have policies. The way to do it is to build classrooms, build schools, Mr. Speaker. That's what we've been doing, and next Wednesday you're going to see a further commitment to just that.

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

Provincial Budget

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people deserve so much better than the arrogant and flippant disregard that we see, important question after important question. Last week the Finance minister told the media that the budget documents were put to bed on Friday. That's Friday, February 28th, more than a week ago, Mr. Speaker. In that time, oil prices have collapsed and global markets are taking a beating for fear of COVID-19.

Mr. Speaker, on Friday, February 28th, WTI [West Texas Intermediate] was \$47.09. Today it's barely above \$30. Saskatchewan people are watching their hard-earned pensions and savings take a serious hit, Mr. Speaker, and they're stressed. The foundation this budget was built upon is falling apart before our eyes — oil assumptions and economic assumptions. Why won't the Finance minister respond to the reality we're facing and table a budget that can actually be trusted?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Finance minister.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And the member opposite just demonstrated why the people of Saskatchewan have no confidence in him having the opportunity to write a budget. You can't just knee-jerk react by the oil prices each and every day. There is a number of conservative estimates that we will have in our budget, and he just needs to wait a few more sleeps and he will see what is in the budget, Mr. Speaker.

But what I can say is this: the difficult decisions that we made with the last downturn in oil prices and our shift away from our reliance on oil and resource revenues has stabilized the budget so that we're better positioned today than we were a decade ago in order to weather some of these situations. We're of course hoping, and I'm hoping the members opposite also are hoping, that the downturn, the extreme downturn that we're experiencing right now does not go forward for several months. And right now, Mr. Speaker, we are still operating in this fiscal year.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the Finance minister said they put to rest the budget over a week ago, and in the meantime oil prices have collapsed. Markets are plunging, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan people deserve so much better than that. But the Sask Party's budget record speaks for itself. It's a record that can't be trusted. They're a government that didn't save a dime during the boom days, leaving Saskatchewan people, our public finances, and our economy vulnerable and exposed when times tightened up. They failed to invest in people and they failed to diversify our economy. They squandered the boom, mismanaged public project after public project, and they left hard-working Saskatchewan people to pay the price.

Budgets are supposed to be about putting Saskatchewan people first, but again we see the Sask Party government putting their own party first, Mr. Speaker. Setting aside this miserable record, Saskatchewan people deserve a budget they can trust with a foundation based on reality. Why won't the Finance minister and that Premier do the right thing and review and adjust the budget numbers that were already out of date before they sent it to the printers?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Finance minister.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, you know who has trusted our budgets, Mr. Speaker, is the Provincial Auditor has trusted our budgets and given us a clean audit, Mr. Speaker, and said it was a balanced budget. And our last budget, Mr. Speaker, you know who else trusted our budget was the credit rating agencies who gave us AAA credit rating. And that is who has trusted our budget, Mr. Speaker, as much as the gloom-and-doom group of people across the floor don't want to hear any of that, Mr. Speaker.

They say we didn't invest in people. I don't know, Mr. Speaker. Of all the schools that we've built — which is also an economic stimulus for the economy, Mr. Speaker — I think they're filled with people. They're filled with children. They're filled with teachers, more teachers than what was there before. Mr. Speaker, the hospitals that we've built, Mr. Speaker, has been filled with people. It has been filled with nurses, with doctors. And we've increased those in our budgets. Those are people and those are services that the citizens of our province want to see us build, and it is a stimulus for the economy, Mr. Speaker.

You know what the members opposite did whenever they had tough times? They closed hospitals. They closed schools. They fired teachers and they fired nurses.

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

Management of Government Program Fund

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, we've been asking questions about the First Nations and Métis Fund for months, and even though the minister says that he has all the answers, it's clear that he doesn't. He can't tell us how many jobs were created by the fund. He can't tell us how companies were selected to receive the funds. He can't tell us what exactly Westcap did to earn millions of taxpayers' dollars, and he can't tell us how Westcap is delivering on the engagement that he said this fund is committed

to. But, Mr. Speaker, there is someone who can answer those questions and these questions are piling up. Will the Minister for CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan] bring Grant Kook to this legislature to provide those answers?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Crown Investments.

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I've said before, this fund was about investing in First Nations and Métis people, Mr. Speaker, about giving them access to capital, Mr. Speaker. So I have said before in this House, Mr. Speaker, this fund was developed by the NDP. The commitments and the management and set-up were all developed by the NDP. Mr. Speaker, we respected that program because it was about investing in strengthening Aboriginal participation in Saskatchewan's economy.

And, Mr. Speaker, maybe the NDP should be talking about a few of the success stories, like the File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council, you know, with their drilling rig. That's been a very big success. Maybe they should talk about the Sturgeon Lake First Nation and their success with the farm equipment company, Mr. Speaker, or the Birch Narrows Dene Developments Corporation, Mr. Speaker, and their success story about Saskatoon FastPrint, Mr. Speaker.

[14:30]

MESSAGE FROM HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

The Speaker: — Could everyone please rise.

Commonwealth Day message from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, head of the Commonwealth and patron of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association:

On Commonwealth occasions, it is always inspiring to be reminded of the diversity of the people and countries that make up our worldwide family. We are made aware of the many associations and influences that combine through Commonwealth connection, helping us to imagine and deliver a common future. This is particularly striking when we see people from nations large and small gathering for the Commonwealth Games, for meetings of Commonwealth governments, and on Commonwealth Day.

Such a blend of traditions serves to make us stronger, individually and collectively, by providing the ingredients needed for social, political, and economic resilience. Throughout my life I've had the opportunity to see and hear how membership of the Commonwealth family means so much to those living in all parts of the world, often in places that are quite remote. Advances in technology and modern media have now enabled many more people to witness and enjoy with remarkable immediacy this experience of Commonwealth connection in areas such as education, medicine, and conservation.

Looking to the future, this connectivity means we are also aware, perhaps as never before, that wherever we live, our choices and actions affect the well-being of people and

communities living far away and in very different circumstances. For many this awareness awakens a desire to employ our planet's natural resources with greater care, and it is encouraging to see how the countries of the Commonwealth continue to devise new ways of working together to achieve prosperity whilst protecting our planet.

As members of this very special community on this Commonwealth Day, I hope that the people and countries of the Commonwealth will be inspired by all that we share and move forward with fresh resolve to enhance the Commonwealth's influence for good in our world.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 194

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Carr that **Bill No. 194 — *The Miscellaneous Municipal Statutes Amendment Act, 2019*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased today to join in adding my remarks to adjourned debates, and today I have the opportunity to talk a little bit about Bill No. 194, *The Miscellaneous Municipal Statutes Amendment Act*.

Mr. Speaker, this particular piece of legislation is very important because it helps manage all the municipalities that we have in our province. And there are many of them so they rely on the information that's within this piece of legislation to help guide them when they're doing their duties and if they have to make any changes. My understanding is that when this bill is passed, it's going to amend three Acts that govern municipalities. They are *The Cities Act*, *The Municipalities Act*, and *The Northern Municipalities Act*.

Because this is extremely important, these pieces of legislation should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are meeting the needs and making sure that municipalities have that information. We know we will be going into election year this year with regards to municipalities.

And I know the previous election year there was quite a bit of transition with different municipalities and there was a lot of new members, which is wonderful when you want to get new people engaged and involved. But some of the municipalities were having a bit of a struggle with being able to know exactly what their roles and responsibilities were, because oftentimes when you're going onto councils or you become an administrator, there isn't a whole lot of background that you get before you go into these roles.

And so when I was the critic for municipalities I was talking a lot

with agencies like SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] and SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association], who help provide that networking for municipalities that help make sure that they know what they need to know when they are making these decisions. And I know the learning curve it took for myself going into this new role as well. I can imagine that there would be a big learning curve when you are taking on the responsibility of a role in the municipalities.

And I believe some of these changes are to help also to make those roles a bit easier but also to strengthen up the language a bit more, so that they're accountable for their decisions and making sure that information is provided to the government so the government can have some oversight on what's going on in municipalities before something maybe gets to be too much, before it becomes a problem.

So one of the first changes here that I'm going to talk about is there is going to be more protection for workers who are reporting wrongdoing. And, Mr. Speaker, I guess this was something that workers that worked under municipalities were asking for because they sometimes don't have the proper provisions when they need to make a complaint about harassment or about maybe wrongdoings of the municipality and council. Mayor and council weren't seen as being employers, so they weren't well handled by the employment Act. So that was one piece of legislation that was changed so that we could protect workers a bit more, which is important.

Another change is administrative efficiencies for municipalities. As our technologies advance and expand, we've got to be mindful too that the legislation reflects that. I think some of these pieces of legislation weren't amended since 2010. And if you think back 10 years, a lot has changed within those 10 years and how we use our technology. And so I think there'll be some changes that will close the gap with regards to that and how reporting is dealt with.

Also there'll be some strengthening and improving local government. So I believe this is going to help when the expenditures of council are needing to be provided and documentation of such. And we know that's really important because taxpayers have a right and an ability to see then how their taxpayers' dollars are being spent. And so that's really important that that's accountable.

I believe from when I was at the SUMA convention, the minister there, when she was making her remarks, indicated that there's going to be some consequences if municipalities don't follow through with what the recommendations, or I guess what the requirements are — I should say, would be a better term for that — of municipalities submitting their financial reports to the ministry. Because I believe that was an issue in some municipalities, that maybe they were not reporting on a regular fashion that they should have been. And I don't believe that . . . Maybe the ministry didn't feel that they had the ability to do some provisions there, if they didn't respond. So I believe some of the terminology she said was that municipal revenue sharing may be impacted if they don't follow through on what the requirements would be. So that'll be some interesting questions to ask in committee and what exactly they were planning. And I believe if there is going to be consequences, they should be consistent for all municipalities and they should be followed

through. So that would be some good questions to ask the minister in committee.

And I guess another amendment would be to propose in this bill that they respond to stakeholder requests for improvements to the legislation. So I don't know if that was necessarily a problem before, making sure that legislation is exactly updated to what stakeholders would want or require. That's important.

I think some of the changes also in this legislation is to allow that councils of a city can merge with other councils of another city to form municipal districts. I know some municipalities have already been doing that; they've been gathering with other municipalities and coming up with their own municipal district. And that's helped them with some different things, such as if they were ordering supplies, they can order them more so in bulk because they would have more people that could access it and that would save money in the long run. And I think, you know, Saskatchewan is a province that we all work together and some of this is very important and so it'll be good to see municipalities working together collaboratively.

So also this allows a municipal wards commission to authorize the use of population data other than the latest census taken pursuant to the *Statistics Act* to determine ward boundaries. So when they're making up the ward system within their municipalities that they have more access to gain that information.

There'll be changes to rules regarding suspension of full-time city solicitors. So that gives them some more flexibility with regards to that.

There is increases to the protection of city employees and it will provide for fines for offences. So I believe there'll be a fine for \$10,000 for an individual and 25,000 for a corporation. So I think more details of that is going to be very important. That's high fines to have so we'll have to make sure that whatever the offence is kind of meets that.

So the changes to the rules for preserving public documents, that's extremely important, Mr. Speaker. We want to make sure our municipalities have maybe somewhat of a consistent way of preserving their public documents because, like I said, taxpayers have a right to know what's going on with regards to their taxpaying dollars.

The changes to the rules for the inspection of municipal documents, the changes to the rules for disqualification of members of council, and I don't know if these will provide the minister more authority. That is going to be something that'll need to be reviewed and why that decision would be made.

So there'll be some changes to the rules for the assessment notices and I believe that . . . I know in my local paper, the *Prince Albert Daily Herald*, and I would assume that this probably went to . . . It was brought by the Saskatchewan Weekly Newspapers Association. There was a notice put in here about how Bill 194 makes local government less open, Mr. Speaker. So when I was reading my paper, that caught my eye because you don't see oftentimes that pieces of legislation that's going through this Chamber that would be also discussed in the paper.

So it's talking about how changes within this piece of legislation will make it so that municipalities don't necessarily need to, I believe, do some advertising positions or changes or upcoming elections in the newspaper. There's a lot of worry that then a lot of people will not get that information. And there's an important role of ensuring that this information is made public. And when we say "made public," how are we going to ensure all the public is aware of it?

So I know, like I said, our technologies and things are changing within our day and age and through the years, but changing that piece in this legislation will make it so that the public is unaware of what's going on in their municipalities. So how are we going to ensure that they're informed?

[14:45]

So there's information about that. They encourage people to call and write their MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] and the minister responsible to talk about how they want to be informed, be heard, and be part of the process. So I think that's important to know about as well. People are concerned about that.

And there's also going to be some changes to the rules for property tax and procedures of taxations. And like I said, it amends the three different Acts and it allows a rural municipality to review the division boundaries of the rural municipality in the manner set forth in the Act. So that will be some interesting discussion around that as well.

There looks like there's quite a bit of changes here: a new system through which a municipality can recover money owed on a parcel of land by entering into an agreement with the owner where unpaid amounts will be added to the tax roll and the interest based on the agreement registered in the land titles registry. So that is a big piece of legislation that will be changed and should be reviewed as well.

And also, you know, it authorizes the council to establish a program designed to encourage energy-efficient, renewable energy, and other environmental improvements for properties in a municipality. That exactly falls under line with our platform with Renew Saskatchewan, where we want to provide municipalities, corporations, businesses, everyday folks that own their homes the opportunity to invest in renewable ways of energy so that we can not only look out for our environment but save a little bit of money. And we want to help people do that. It looks like we also want to encourage our municipal leaders to look at renewable ways of providing energy so that they can have an environmental impact. So that's important to have on the table, the discussion table at all times.

So we know there's been a lot of controversial issues that have been happening with municipalities over the years here, and there's been some sticky situations that municipal governments have been put under. And as a provincial government we need to make sure that these individuals weren't put in those positions because of the fact that our legislation is not beneficial or helpful for them.

We have an obligation also to provide services to these municipalities so that they have the supports that they need when

they need it and the information that they'll need when making decisions and having to fulfill the requirements that the ministry requires them to. Like I said, Mr. Speaker, oftentimes we enter these roles with not the background that is necessary to fulfill the role, and so as much as what we could provide, this government could provide to support municipalities would be very important.

I know the critic will have a lot of discussion with regards to changes to this piece of legislation, and I know my colleagues will have a lot more they want to add to this discussion. So with this, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to adjourn debate on Bill No. 194.

The Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 195

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 195 — *The Lobbyists Amendment Act, 2019*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Good to take my feet this afternoon and join debate on Bill No. 195, *The Lobbyists Amendment Act, 2019*.

Mr. Speaker, this one of course is an interesting piece of legislation from a number of perspectives, but one where the kind of quick-response function of government is not exactly on display, or rather perhaps tells a few things about things that the government deems important and acts on them faster than you can shake a stick at it, Mr. Speaker, or the things that they want to slow walk.

And I think I'm probably not alone amongst the members of this Legislative Assembly who can remember not long after the 2011 election where there was prominent federal conservative legal minds — primarily operates on the federal level, but in Ontario as well — came out and called Saskatchewan's lobbying regime the wild west of lobbyist regimes throughout the whole of Canada. And again, Mr. Speaker, this wasn't from Duff Conacher of Democracy Watch, and I'll get to quoting him soon enough, Mr. Speaker. I imagine you're a long-time subscriber to the works and policies of Mr. Conacher, Mr. Speaker. But certainly in terms of the way that the regime was measured by various of their federal cousins, Mr. Speaker, and found to be wanting, you know, was quite telling.

So you know, 2011, the word comes out that we've got the wild west regime of lobbyists in all of Canada. And the government to their credit, and then being spearheaded by the Government House Leader, the member for Meadow Lake as the Government House Leader of the day, what did they do, Mr. Speaker, but they put a committee on the job. They put a committee on the job. And there were special hearings conducted.

I think there was a road trip out to Ottawa. I think they might

have gone to, I don't know . . . I don't know if they got to Schwartz's or Nate's or anything like that for smoked meat or what, Mr. Speaker, but they went out to investigate what was happening with the feds. And certainly for our part we were well represented by the then new member for Nutana, and did a fine job, good legal mind. And you know, I think made a good contribution to that committee's work.

The committee reported out. There was a minority opinion registered at the time. This of course was in 2012 so, you know, watching the days go by here, Mr. Speaker. 2011, the whistle gets blown on the wild west nature of Saskatchewan and lobbyists. 2012, the committee gets under way. 2012, the report comes out. And not too long after that, the office of the Registrar of Lobbyists set up and with the support of, I think, all members of the Assembly with certain exceptions being registered, Mr. Speaker, dating back to this committee report and the fine work of the member for Nutana as the opposition representative on that committee.

And again, Mr. Speaker, it had to deal with, you know, registering lobbyists. That's a good thing. We want to know who's exerting influence, who's meeting on a frequent basis with the decision makers to find out the context of different decisions that are being made on the part of the government, Mr. Speaker. And of course, you know, this was all part and parcel of a government that, going way back to the year 2007, promised that it would be one of the most open and accountable governments in the history of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. It's almost Trumpian in its sweep of claim, Mr. Speaker, in terms of what they were setting out to do.

So you know, most open and accountable government in the history of Saskatchewan sends in the committee, sets up the regime, and then leaves the people of Saskatchewan with a lobbyist registrar with a big old loophole right in the middle of it. And this was back in 2012, Mr. Speaker. It was called out at the time by the member from Nutana in terms of, you know, it's good to have the lobbyist regime, but if it's not really going to be catching the vast majority of the lobbying activity in the province, Mr. Speaker, then it's more of a light in the window and something that conveys the appearance of action instead of real action for the people of Saskatchewan. Which again is something that's been promised by the government, something that they've made repeated sort of claims that they're looking to follow through on, Mr. Speaker.

But you know, in terms of the light in the window versus something that generates real heat and warmth, Mr. Speaker, let alone illumination, there are different points on the road where this government has been more interested in proclaiming something, more interested in the communications exercise of something than in something that actually makes a difference. So you know, great, you set up a lobbyist registry. You join the rest of Canadian jurisdictions. Well done. We tack that on to the work of the Privacy Commissioner, who has done an admirable job, Mr. Speaker, but you leave the legislation with a big fat loophole in the middle of it.

So is the registrar that effective? The years then start to go by some more. And as time goes by it's not just the opposition that's saying that there's a problem with this. Eventually we're joined by the registrar himself who issues a report and says, you know,

guess what? This isn't cutting it. This isn't doing the job that we said it's going to do for the people of Saskatchewan, in terms of the people of Saskatchewan having a reasonable expectation of knowing who's lobbying their government, Mr. Speaker, and what's the broader context of different decisions that are made on the part of government, well let alone what goes on the electoral finance side of the equation.

But, Mr. Speaker, the time goes on. Finally the registrar weighs in on this and puts out a report. And certainly I think the response, not to paraphrase, but I think the response from the official opposition was, hallelujah. We agree, Mr. Speaker. We should do in these loopholes. And you know, then the time continues to go on with the government, and they figure it out and they get around to it. And finally, finally, Mr. Speaker, we get to the action on the part of the government on the loophole. You know, I think this was something where even you had leadership candidates over there weighing in on it, saying what a great idea it was.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, 2011, the reports and the committee under way; 2012 and the registrar gets set up. The time goes by. The wild west, you know, still pretty wild. The loophole still pretty loopy, pretty holey. But you know, the time goes by and then finally the registrar weighs in and says, you know, this is not cutting it. So the government, again gets with the action and brings in legislation this past fall. And that's what, you know, now that we're all up to speed, Mr. Speaker, that's what we're here to discuss this very day, Bill No. 195, *The Lobbyists Amendment Act, 2019*.

But in terms of the different things where they followed up on the advice provided by the registrar and various other commentators throughout the land, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that remains a problem and will carry on forward here on out, Mr. Speaker, wherein . . . Oh, how was it, it was nicely put by my colleague, the member from Saskatoon Centre, our ethics and democracy critic for the official opposition, Mr. Speaker. Let me get to the direct quote here, Mr. Speaker. I don't want to make a hash of his eloquently stated point in my usual fashion, Mr. Speaker.

But I believe what my colleague — and seatmate, I'm honoured to point out, Mr. Speaker — what he pointed out was that "You can't do a bunch of window dressing when you've got a broken window, and the broken window is the threshold. The 30 hours doesn't cut it." So what my colleague was referring to is that in order to register for the lobbyist registry, Mr. Speaker, you need to have 30 now. It had been 100 hours, Mr. Speaker. And in that 100 hours you could include preparation for meetings. You could include travel. You could include any number of things. But the upshot of it was that, you know, effectively it got very little of the lobbyist activity that this government is engaged in and subject to.

[15:00]

So, Mr. Speaker, instead of 100 hours they've now reduced the threshold to 30 hours. And in defence of that, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice, who I think I'm on record in this Assembly as saying is quite often a funny guy, what did he have to say? He said, and this is a quote from a *Leader-Post* article, Mr. Speaker, so you know, please know that I'm not doing intentional damage

to the rules, but "Morgan said lobbyists mentioned the example of running into an MLA in a grocery store and asking a question or two. It's difficult to determine whether that's lobbying or casual conversation, Morgan pointed out."

Mr. Speaker, I'd point out that it's neither. I'd point out that that's a red herring. I'd point out that that's a straw man, Mr. Speaker. I'd point out that that's kind of ridiculous. You know, I don't know. It takes me a while to get through my shopping sometimes, Lord knows, Lord knows, but 30 hours — never clocked it at 30 hours, Mr. Speaker, even when I got all those impulse buys to, you know, round up at the end. You know pistachios alone, that'll run you every time.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, there's still a big, old hole in the middle of the lobbyist registry and this government in typical fashion has proclaimed urgency and action and, you know, the response still leaves a big problem. So, Mr. Speaker, we live in hope, we live in hope. That's, you know, that's where we get our mail over here in the opposition, from the land of hope, that someday the government will be good to their word, take it seriously, and provide the people of Saskatchewan with a lobbyist registry worthy of its name, that provides that openness and transparency that that government promised to those many years ago in 2007.

So, Mr. Speaker, with that I would conclude my remarks on Bill No. 195 and move to adjourn debate on the same.

The Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 196

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 196 — *The Members' Conflict of Interest Amendment Act, 2019*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to weigh in briefly this afternoon with respect to Bill No. 196, *The Members' Conflict of Interest Amendment Act*, Mr. Speaker. Of course this speaks to the Act that governs us as MLAs, Mr. Speaker, and governs things like what we disclose to the Conflict of Interest Commissioner, what's required on that front. And its intentions should all be about ensuring integrity of the service of MLAs in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, transparency and trust for the public as well.

Certainly there's a few changes that have been brought forward that are changes that are positive, but there's so much further we should be going on this front, Mr. Speaker. Because the aims of ensuring members' service, Mr. Speaker, is with integrity and that there's an accountability and transparency to that is very important, Mr. Speaker. That trust relationship that we hold in the democratic process and with the people of Saskatchewan is very important.

This bill changes things like the definition of a gift or personal benefit, Mr. Speaker. I know that on my list, when I detail my gift registry, Mr. Speaker, it's not a real long list, but you know, it'll . . . I include every last item that I have there, Mr. Speaker, including, I think, a couple years ago I had some incredible caribou meat that I disclosed there. Just a small bag of dried caribou meat, but amazing, from my visit to Wollaston Lake, Mr. Speaker. And I see some members that are here today as well, it also will include a Unifor toque, Mr. Speaker. A nice-looking toque, Mr. Speaker, and one that I'm proud to wear as well, Mr. Speaker.

The other changes will require that a description of the assets of any private company be controlled by a member of a . . . will be disclosed of a controlling interest by a member or a member's family, requires former members to file a disclosure statement with the commissioner within 60 days of ceasing their service, Mr. Speaker.

I wonder if that timeline is sufficient, Mr. Speaker. If our question is, what might change in the financial position of a member who's departed, Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering if 60 days is sufficient. I wonder if it would be worthwhile to go take a look at the affairs a little bit after that, Mr. Speaker, and to have the transactions that may have occurred during that time recorded. Just a question, Mr. Speaker.

I know that where this bill doesn't go, it doesn't require a disclosure of the interests that might be held in a holding company, Mr. Speaker. So various members might have a holding company with various investments and interests in it, Mr. Speaker, many that might be within Saskatchewan. But this bill doesn't change any of the transparency on that front to the public, doesn't require disclosure of what those holdings or what those investments or what those businesses are to the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And I think that any time we can put a spotlight and be transparent, I think that builds trust with the public. And I think it also ensures accountability, Mr. Speaker.

And I guess just in closing here, Mr. Speaker, and in direct connection to this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, we need to continue the push to get big money out of Saskatchewan politics. We're the wild west of electoral finances, Mr. Speaker. Dollars flow from all across Canada. Large corporate, out-of-province interests fill the coffers, Mr. Speaker, of the party opposite, Mr. Speaker — the Sask Party — which has picked up in fact millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker, from large corporate interests outside of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And I don't know if you're like me on this one, Mr. Speaker, but I think our democratic process should be for Saskatchewan people. Saskatchewan people are the voters. Saskatchewan people are who should be served, and there should never be a question on that front, Mr. Speaker. So we've long pushed to get big money out of Saskatchewan politics, to ban the out-of-province money, the large corporate donations, Mr. Speaker. To cap the individual donations as well, Mr. Speaker, to build trust with Saskatchewan people about who we're serving, Mr. Speaker.

And it's not just a problem as to who the parties are funded by, Mr. Speaker, in the case of the Sask Party heavily funded by large out-of-province corporations, Mr. Speaker. The question is, what

influence does that have potentially on a member? What questions does the public have on that front?

And we know in the case of the former premier, Brad Wall, Mr. Speaker, we know that he received close to \$500,000, half a million dollars, Mr. Speaker, directly from his party on top of the dollars that he's paid for to be the premier of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And so if you trace those dollars — these are the large out-of-province corporate donations flowing in from interests outside Saskatchewan flowing directly into the bank account and pockets of the former premier, Mr. Speaker — there's reason why the public would want to see change on this front, reason to question who is one serving, Mr. Speaker.

But as it relates to this piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, I think there's opportunities to improve this piece of legislation. Certainly that will be our aim as we engage in the process in the days ahead in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, and as we go through committee. I think there's space for amendments.

We've been clear that we are committed to getting big money out of Saskatchewan politics. We've aimed to do that in this Assembly. We've brought forward legislation. The Sask Party has resisted or rejected that every step of the way. That's a clear commitment going into the next election, Mr. Speaker.

With that being said, I'll adjourn debate with respect to Bill No. 196, *The Members' Conflict of Interest Amendment Act, 2019*.

The Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 197

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hargrave that **Bill No. 197 — *The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2019*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise today and enter into the debate around Bill No. 197, *The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act*. This bill makes a few changes that I'm going to be speaking fairly briefly about. Firstly, there are several housekeeping changes in this piece of legislation that I don't think necessarily need me to mention in any further detail, but there are a few other changes that I think deserve a more robust mention.

The first one is that it clarifies that essentially violation of any laws of any jurisdiction restricting weight use, hours of operation, territory, number of passengers, and transportation of goods will essentially, I believe, negate the insurance and that it's a condition of both first-party property damage insurance and third-party liability insurance. I'm not sure . . . I'm not very knowledgeable in this area. I think that's likely what was standard before, but in any event it's going to be clarified in

legislation which is probably more appropriate.

Mr. Speaker, it also clarifies that any sort of suspension or surrender of someone's licence in another jurisdiction will also automatically suspend or revoke or cancel their licence in Saskatchewan as well.

Perhaps a more detailed change in this legislation would be around the removal of the automatic right of appeal. Prior to this bill, there is an automatic right of appeal to the Court of Appeal for a decision of the Court of Queen's Bench or the Injury Appeal Commission. Mr. Speaker, this change will require that an individual must first have leave of the Court of Appeal before appealing the decision. So for those who don't know, that's an extra step that would have to occur. It's an extra application essentially. So before you are deemed to be allowed to appeal a decision in law to the Court of Appeal, you first have to seek leave and have that approved, which has its own set of tests and standards, Mr. Speaker.

From what I understand from reading the minister's remarks, this was a request made by the Court of Appeal. Likely they were seeing a lot of decisions or appeals coming their way that perhaps they felt were . . . and had decided through their adjudication that these appeals were without merit and determined that a leave to appeal must be sought before a full panel of Court of Appeal justices would hear the substance of the appeal, Mr. Speaker.

There are many different areas where a leave to appeal is sought and required to be sought, both either written in statute or in common law, Mr. Speaker. This will be a change that will add decisions that come from this administrative body to also require a leave, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure whether or not this is a good step forward or not, but I'll leave it to the critic to do the appropriate consultation work to make that determination.

But in any event, it's a balance of access to justice when we're talking about ensuring that we're not inundating the courts with applications that may or may not be with merit, but ensuring at the same time that those who do have applications have access to the court system to be able to present those arguments. For an individual who has merit, who wants to make an appeal of a decision of the AIC to the Court of Appeal, we'll have an extra step, which will frankly cost more to that applicant in terms of a lawyer's time, Mr. Speaker.

[15:15]

So all of these factors need to be weighed when making these decisions to ensure that the appropriate balance is set. Like I said, Mr. Speaker, I don't know what the particular correct balance is in this particular instance, but there are many people out there who would know better than me and it is something that needs to be considered. And I'm sure the critic will be asking questions about that at committee. At this point in time I am prepared to adjourn debate on Bill No. 197.

The Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 198

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hargrave that **Bill No. 198 — *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2019*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to rise this afternoon and enter into debate on this Bill No. 198, *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act* of 2019.

I'm going to start my remarks by saying, Mr. Speaker, we live in interesting times. We are just ahead of a provincial budget, potentially a provincial election, and I'm sitting, having to follow some of the very eloquent speakers on this side who may not, depending on when that election is called, be on this side much longer. And I think of course of my friend from Regina Elphinstone-Centre who just gave a very fine speech and quoting another fine speech from my friend from Saskatoon Centre, Mr. Speaker.

And I do think that sometimes people wonder about, you know, what exactly it is when we stand up and talk about bills here. And there are some very fine speeches that are given and perhaps some that are still trying to meet that bar of being a very fine speech. But it is the work of the opposition to ensure that we have oversight and we have a chance to have these bills see the light of day, have some scrutiny before they are passed into legislation, Mr. Speaker. Of course all of these parts working together in order hopefully to bring us to the best place that we can be with regard to our democracy and how things are run in this province.

And you know, speaking of some of the best ways that things are run, I think of some of the work that is done in committee and I think of my colleague from Riversdale who . . . You know, reading through this bill and many of the changes we've seen to traffic safety in this province, I think that she and my colleague from Cumberland can count themselves very proud of the work that they did. It maybe took a little bit of time to see those changes come forward but, you know, your hands are all over this legislation. And I think when we are being the best that we can be in this place, we can work together and look at ways to, you know, take head-on those challenges that face our province. And certainly distracted and drunk driving in our province are challenges that we face and unfortunately have hit home for all too many families, both in this Assembly and outside of this Assembly.

So I want to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues, to thank those on all sides who really do take that work of looking at the challenges in front of us and looking for meaningful and effective legislation and policy that would help us address that. And that is sincerely meant, Mr. Speaker.

With regard to this bill, this is one of many bills that we have seen in recent years around traffic safety. We've seen some escalating penalties and changes to legislation to address some of the problems that we have. And it is evident that we still have quite a bit of work to do.

I know last year in May, Mr. Speaker, there was a distracted and

impaired driving week, or a crackdown on those charges in the province. And unfortunately it appears that some people are not getting the message. During that week in May of 2019 we saw 3,000 charges laid in this province with regard to either distracted or impaired driving, Mr. Speaker.

This is not a simple lapse in judgment, and this is not, you know, a meaningless offence. These are choices that people are making that are having tragic consequences, not only to those who are making those choices but are having drastic consequences to other families as well.

I think of the tragic story of the young woman from Weyburn whose mom has very bravely gone on to be a part of SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] commercials talking about just what that means to families to lose a loved one because, you know, they made that decision for a split second to look at their screen. And you know, there's no coming back from those kinds of consequences when a car with a young 17-year-old girl meets a train, Mr. Speaker. So we think of young Kailynn and her mom, Sandra LaRose, who is left to deal with the consequences.

And as a parent of teenagers . . . and many of us here have children or grandchildren who are that age. You know, you send them out on the roads and you hope that you've given them good information and you hope that you have, you know, instilled in them just the importance of leaving that phone in the back seat or getting a designated driver or staying where you are rather than making the choice to drive. But really once they leave that front door, their fate is . . . You know, you have to trust that they're going to do the right thing.

But you also have to trust that others are going to do the right thing, Mr. Speaker, and that is very difficult. And it makes me very nervous when I hear that, you know, 3,000 charges in May. I think there was some increased enforcement there, of course, but you know, people continue to make these choices and put their lives and the lives of others at risk. And I think that, you know, measures that move towards effectively curbing that, be that on the enforcement side or the penalty side, are something that we need to look at and measure for how effective they are and continually keep going back to the table to ensure that we get those measures right.

So in this piece of legislation, Bill No. 198, there are a number of measures. Some are changes to existing measures and some new measures. There are also some housekeeping pieces here. But I'll just briefly go through some of what is being proposed with this legislation.

One of the first pieces aims to ensure consistency between the two similar charges of driving while using or holding a cellphone and the other charge is driving without due care and consideration. So right now there is an imbalance of the penalties. One, suspension of licence after two offences, Mr. Speaker, and the other, suspension or . . . it's not suspension; it's impoundment, rather, after three offences. So this would make it so, should this bill pass, that the impoundment would happen on the second offence for both of those offences. So that, I think, is rather straightforward.

There are some more changes around ignition interlock devices,

and here I will take some issue with the comments of the minister, noting that in his second reading speech here on November the 27th of last year the minister noted that, "These devices are a deterrent to impaired driving." Well they are a device that's used after impaired driving has already occurred, Mr. Speaker, so while there may be some deterrent to further offences, this is a measure that happens after the conviction or the violation has already happened. So you know, a bit of an issue there, and we really do have to look at both preventative and punitive measures with regard to drinking and driving. Of course the more we can prevent, I think, the more harm that we prevent as well when people make those choices.

There is another change, Mr. Speaker, moving away from the drinking and impaired and distracted driving, around the training for class 1 vehicles — of course semi, large tractor-trailer units. And of course this also stems from a very, very tragic incident that none of us in this province will ever forget, and that of course is the Humboldt bus tragedy. When something like that happens, I think that it is reasonable and has been the case that you look for measures that would ensure that no one ever has to go through something like that again.

And there were certainly concerns raised about the level of training that class 1 drivers had in this province — I know that there were some changes a number of years back to that training program, Mr. Speaker — but also changes or concerns about those who might have training or licensing from other jurisdictions who do drive through Saskatchewan. And that level of requirement was not strong enough and was less than the standards that we have here.

So that's what these changes are looking at addressing. One of the notes that the minister made was around the fact that they changed some of the class 1 specifications through regulations, but were not able to do so through regulations for non-residents. So that's why we have a legislative change here. They've brought this back to deal with those who might have licences in other jurisdictions. It also notes that there will be a phased-in, mandatory training for the agriculture sector coming in March of this year, and that is something of course that was subsequent to the original legislation. So that is another piece with this bill.

Another one of the amendments in this bill is with regard to the transportation of children in taxis and Uber. I do remember — and I think I might have made these comments in the House before — being surprised when I was a mom with young children who still needed car seats, phoning a cab and asking about what the requirements were for a cab, and being told oh no, don't worry about it; that's not an issue. So we know that those car seats do have a huge impact, a safety measure for children involved in car accidents, and it doesn't mean you have to be on the highway. Even within cities, children not being in proper restraints can have very serious impacts.

So what this does, this part of the legislation, is it puts the requirement . . . It makes parents and guardians accompanying the child to be responsible for that. I'm not sure and I'm not trying to make light of it, Mr. Speaker, but I'm thinking of, you know, how difficult that might be to get into . . . I know how hard it was to move car seats from our cars back and forth between one car and another. You'd almost, you'd take whatever was going on in that other vehicle just so you didn't have to move the

car seats. But I guess that, you know, putting children's safety is very important here. And I guess that we'll see how this works, if parents are able to get those car seats out and get them into the taxi or the Uber because it really is important to have those children properly restrained.

There's a smaller piece within this bill and that is around allowing law enforcement to lay a charge for intentionally obscured licence plates, not just those that are muddy from driving up and down the No. 11 that some of us might have experienced at different times but someone who's actually intentionally obscured those licence plates. So that's a bit of a change, Mr. Speaker. And of course that becomes more important with the use of the automatic licence plate readers that we see in the province now.

There's also a change — and this is something that we actually heard about in our office as well — where drivers are being charged for an unregistered vehicle when they didn't know. Like perhaps it was a company vehicle or someone at a garage moving one of their customer's vehicles, and there was no mechanism to charge the owner of the vehicle. It was only the driver. So that is what is being looked at here with another one of the points within this bill. I think those reasons seem to be straightforward.

[15:30]

And there is another change here with regard to autonomous vehicles, Mr. Speaker. I prefaced my remarks by saying we live in interesting times, a rapidly changing landscape. You know, I don't think they were anticipating even 10 years ago legislation around a distracted driving for handheld devices and now we're talking about autonomous vehicles. It is an interesting time to be alive indeed, and this is something that we're likely to see more and more regulations around, but we've got the start of that here with Bill 198.

And there's one final piece that I will mention as the minister did in November of last year, and that is around SGI treating provincial driving-while-qualified offence similar to how it treats Criminal Code offences. And with that both were treated with an automatic licence suspension for a minimum of one year. And there aren't a lot of details here in the second reading remarks, but it does appear that SGI will be not treating those two the same. So we look forward to oversight by my very capable colleague from Northcote in committee digging a little more deeply into what exactly that means and what the reason is behind, not only this change, but all of the change that we see in this proposed bill.

So with that I segue to the end of my remarks and I would like to move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 198.

The Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 199

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed

motion by the Hon. Mr. Reiter that **Bill No. 199 — *The Opioid Damages and Health Care Costs Recovery Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter into debate today, this time on Bill No. 199, *The Opioid Damages and Health Care Costs Recovery Act* of 2019. There are a number of amendments that this bill proposes, but primarily they centre around allowing the government to take direct action against opioid manufacturers and wholesalers to recover health care costs. So specifically we're talking about our ability to support participation in BC's [British Columbia] class action lawsuit against opioid manufacturers and distributors.

This is an important step, Mr. Speaker, but the action is long overdue. We're in the midst of a crisis that has been long overlooked. The government hasn't recognized the growing crisis and taken measures to tackle that crisis head on.

We know about these issues very well in this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. Many people in this Assembly have been affected personally by the opioid crisis, but we've certainly heard from so many folks who have come to this place to tell their story. And I know that my colleague from Saskatoon Riversdale has done a great amount of advocacy in helping to give a voice to these individuals who are dealing with these issues first-hand in a very real way with the deaths of their family members, Mr. Speaker. And there is so much work that needs to be done to tackle the opioid crisis, and that also comes with resources.

So we need a strategy to address this crisis. You know, this is an important step but so much more needs to be done. We need to tackle over-prescribing so we can, you know, deal directly with pharmacists, make sure that they're empowered to have those conversations, also physicians and other prescribers so that they know what tools are available and what some of the dangers are for addiction to opioids as well.

We also need to look at how we manage pain in our province so that opioids are not the go-to option for pain management. You know, we have all of these different members of our health care team that also help to manage pain. So you know, I'm thinking about registered massage therapists, physiotherapists, and the role that they can play in helping to eliminate pain. Chiropractors, Mr. Speaker. You know, we need to look at this crisis and look at the whole health system and how we can work to make sure that we can make a difference here.

I do want to highlight some of the remarks that the Provincial Auditor has made in regards to these issues. We know that in the 2019 report volume 1, the Provincial Auditor examined opioid prescribing and dispensing practices in Saskatchewan. And I'm looking at a press release from the Provincial Auditor's office that came out on June 6th, 2019 and I just want to make note of a couple of quotes for the record here. So it says:

For the six most prescribed opioids, Saskatchewan's prescribing stands well above national averages. Physicians prescribe 95% of prescribed opioids with dentists and nurse practitioners prescribing nearly the remaining 5%. Opioid

poisonings resulted in an average of 16 hospitalizations daily in Canada in 2016-17.

And then it goes on to quote the Provincial Auditor:

“Because the Ministry does not monitor all opioids prescribed in the province or actively monitor the Program,” said Ferguson, “it does not know whether the Program helps reduce prescribed opioid misuse.”

So in talking about the prescription review program, those were her comments, Mr. Speaker. There’s a tremendous amount of work to do in Saskatchewan to make sure that we are actively putting the people of this province first, and that starts with a strategy that takes these issues into consideration.

I know that our critic is going to have a lot more to weigh in on, but with that I would move to adjourn debate on this bill for today.

The Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 201

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Makowsky that **Bill No. 201 — *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2019/Loi modificative de 2019 sur la réglementation des boissons alcoolisées et des jeux de hasard*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It’s a pleasure to enter into this debate today. It is interesting that we’re debating Bill No. 201, *An Act to amend The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Act, 1997*. Today we had a member’s statement, I believe from the other side, recognizing today as the beginning of Impaired Driving Awareness Week. And so here we are debating a bill about alcohol and access to it.

And this is something that’s a terrible responsibility that’s placed on the government and rightly so on the government: how do you balance that freedom of demand and choice, but also access? You know, we have communities in our province that are wrestling with issues around too much alcohol in their communities and the fact that maybe we’ve gone too far that way. And they ask us to retract that, find that right balance of access and choice and responsibility where people can use it responsibly and not cause the kind of mayhem we see and the tragedy you see when we have drunk drivers that ruin families. And we know that when we see and we read the papers, and families all have been touched by that. And it’s a worthwhile thing this week to take time and reflect on the impact of impaired driving in Saskatchewan.

And I think we should, as the lawmakers in this province, also reflect on our awesome or awful responsibility. And I use that in the truest sense that we have a huge responsibility to make sure our choices of how we govern the use of alcohol in our province

is done appropriately and not with pressures that may have some self interests. Here this is probably a bill that’s so laden with the potential for unintended consequences that we really do have to make sure that we take it carefully.

You know, Mr. Speaker, we know that in 2014 we have data that shows that in Saskatchewan we have alcohol sales that generated about \$391 million in revenue. And that’s quite a sum of money — \$391 million. You’d think that would help solve a lot of the problems. But in fact the costs that we could see that the province had to pay that can be directly related to alcohol and its impact on society was close to 563 million — not merely even. We were in the hole about 150 million. It was the costs to health care, social services, corrections and policing. And we all know that, we all know that, that in this world we have issues about addictions, appropriate use, drunk driving. And the costs are huge, are simply huge.

And so we have a situation today where it seems that this is a relatively straightforward bill that the minister would like us to believe, but we have a couple of points that I would like to say and get on record here. You know, he talks about, and I quote, and this was from December 2nd, 2019, and I quote:

The specialty warehouse model is intended to complement SLGA’s distribution centre, not replace it. SLGA’s distribution centre will focus on its strength of efficiently and effectively distributing popular high-volume products that comprise the majority of the market.

So why don’t we go further with that? Why can’t we go further with that and make it the warehouse of choice in terms of some of these specialty markets? What is holding us back from, you know, even expanding that high efficiency of the SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority]? Is it ideology? And clearly it is.

We’ve seen this with the privatization of alcohol sales in Saskatchewan. What has that meant to the people of Saskatchewan? As I said, it’s lost income and even more so, even more so it’s a loss of well-paying jobs in Saskatchewan — I wouldn’t say high paying, but well-paying jobs, union jobs in SLGA and other places.

Here we have today when we’ve talked about this, when we’ve talked about the economy, and we have a government that has put over a billion dollars of PST on the backs of the people of Saskatchewan. And they brag about it. They brag about it because they say, well, we’ve diversified. Yes, I love how they diversified. They’ve walked away from oil revenue and what they’ve said, that’s what they’ve got to do. Where do they find the money that they can’t make up? On the backs of the people of Saskatchewan, through more PST, paying more PST than ever, and they’re paying on things that we really hadn’t been used to. Restaurant meals, restaurants now are having to cut back.

I mean it’s so ironic that they say, you know, and they talk about their job creation numbers way back in 2007 and ’08 and ’09 and ’10 when they had a boom and they could have saved money and they could have put money away for things that are happening today. But in fact we see that we are having a tougher time. In fact, the wage growth in this province has declined and it’s through things like, you know, the privatization of liquor sales in

this province.

Mr. Speaker, I have to say that I think I will look towards SLGA for their expertise on warehousing and doing the right thing. Now the other thing that I would say and point out, you know, it's not a big bill that we have before us but the bill's other . . . [inaudible] . . . they don't have a definition of what a warehouse is.

So this is very interesting. And I mean they have quite an extensive list of definitions so we all know what the terminology . . . when we're speaking about one particular term we're all on the same page. But the definition of "warehouse is" omitted. And here we have a bill that's all about warehousing and yet we don't know precisely what you mean by warehousing.

Now interestingly, and, Mr. Speaker, you might remember this. I don't know if you ever collected beer bottles when you were a younger kid. Many of us in rural Saskatchewan would go and collect beer bottles, right? And this is the time before we had Sarcan and you could take it to Sarcan, right? So you took it to the beer . . . well they call it the distribution centre, but we all knew where it was. I knew where it was in Moose Jaw. I knew where the distribution centre was in Regina because you took your beer bottles back to the place where they got the beer from, right? And you didn't have Sarcan.

[15:45]

Now I have to say Sarcan does a wonderful job. But a lot of people don't know, actually if you take your beer bottles back to the distribution centre, you get a higher return. You get a penny more on the bottle if you take it back directly to the warehouse as opposed to Sarcan. But, Mr. Speaker, we all knew about that.

So I'm wondering about these warehouses — the one thing he hasn't talked about, the minister hasn't talked about. So you get all these specialty bottles into the province; where do you take them back to? Now maybe it's going to go back to Sarcan. But I sure hope they don't end up in the garbage. You know what's happening in recycling — I don't know about Regina, but we see this in Saskatoon — more and more things you can't put into the green bin because they don't have a place to go.

So I don't know if you remember, back in my beer bottle-picking days, there were certain beer bottles that you couldn't take back to the warehouse because they weren't uniform, they weren't the uniform shape. And so, Mr. Speaker, I am worried — and maybe it's because of my role and my interest in the environment — what's going to happen with all these new bottles that are coming into the province. Is there a recycling plan built into that? So I would say that there are some questions about this that we might have when we get into the House, into the committee.

I really want to emphasize that we need to think about the unintended consequences of this bill, particularly in a week like this week when we're talking about Impaired Driving Awareness Week. Are we doing all we can to make sure that people are safe when they're driving? And we really understand, you know, we understand choice, but we understand responsibility and access, and we've seen it go way out of control. And communities, the leadership in communities are saying, hey, maybe we don't need to have access to alcohol really into the wee hours of the morning. That's just too much. Or drive-ins to pick up liquor,

that's way too much; that's way too easy. So I have questions about this.

I have questions about what do they really mean about what is a warehouse. I have questions about recycling of bottles. Like, what's going to happen with these warehouses? Are they going to be responsible to take those bottles back? Who's responsible to take them back, and who will make sure that they get back to the original producers of the liquor? We have a system in place, and the minister spoke about that, particularly around beer. I'm not sure about Sleemans. I haven't taken bottles back to Sleemans. It's not that I don't like Sleemans, but I haven't collected enough of them to make it worthwhile.

But anyways, Mr. Speaker, this is a very important bill. And again I have to say that when you have the opportunity, when we have an opportunity to do the right thing and create good-paying jobs in this province, I would invest in SLGA and make sure they're expanding their business. They are, as the minister said, very good at their work. Well why don't we give them more work to do?

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would adjourn debate on Bill No. 201. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 203

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 203 — *The Financial Planners and Financial Advisors Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Pedersen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to participate in the debate on this bill today. This is a very important topic. You know, no matter which walk of life you're from, your savings and financial security are a tremendously important topic. And you know, it doesn't matter whether you are a farmer or a small businessman or the Unifor workers up in the gallery behind us with their pensions and savings plans, financial security is very important to us and it's important to us all. It gives us just a little bit of buffer against the uncertainty of the future.

And, Mr. Speaker, this has long been an area in which I had an interest. I have to say that over the years I had far, far too many clients coming into my office because that financial security had been taken away from them. And, Mr. Speaker, the number of times that I had the unfortunate circumstance of a client, a farmer or small business owner, coming in and their business had become insolvent and they were on the verge of losing everything or had lost everything. And you know, being in their 50s, the problem is time is not on your side when you're in your 50s or your 60s, losing everything. You just don't have the time to recoup those losses that you might have had or might have felt

that you had when you were in your 30s.

And over the years, I unfortunately had circumstances where people came into my office where they'd had a good chunk of their life savings lost, not because their own business was going under, but because a business that they had invested in was going under. And, Mr. Speaker, that's just as heartbreaking when, you know, whether it's somebody in their 60s or 70s and they've lost a good chunk of their life savings, and with it their standard of living and their quality of life, because of a financial loss. It's heartbreaking, Mr. Speaker.

And over the course of many years reflecting on the problems that led to this, basically I identified three big problems when it came to — if I can use the loose term — the finance industry, it's this. And the first is that frankly there's just a real problem with the way the whole industry is managed and regulated. There are so many different types of products out there. We've got mutual funds. We've got stocks. We've got insurance products. We've got exempt products. And they might even be regulated differently, depending on who it is that's selling them. And the problem is, is that some of them are regulated by government, some of them are self-regulated by the industry, and some of them just aren't regulated at all.

And the problem is, or has been, that people unfortunately put their trust in names that it turns out really aren't worth much. It turned out, you know, anybody could call themselves a financial planner — not you, Mr. Speaker — but anybody could call themselves a financial planner. And you know, their customer or their client might think that that was the case, might think that they had some sort of training or regulation or credentials behind them, and it turned out that really they didn't. And that's a problem. Mr. Speaker, that's the one problem is that we've had a real mishmash, a real shortcoming in the way the whole industry is regulated.

The second big problem, Mr. Speaker, is that in probably 99 per cent of the cases, the advisor is also the seller, and they're in an inherent conflict of interest. They're making recommendations to their client, telling their client what they should invest in based on not only what they might feel is best for the client, but also what is best for themselves. There's many good ones out there. I have many good friends who are in this industry, Mr. Speaker, and the good ones are worth their weight in gold. But unfortunately it's very difficult for consumers to know whether they are dealing with a good one or a bad one.

The third problem, Mr. Speaker, of course is why we are here, which is that consumers and investors just don't have the education and the knowledge and the experience to be able to separate the wheat from the chaff in terms of what is a good investment. What's a bad investment? Who's a good advisor? Who's not a good advisor? The majority of people just are not equipped to be making that decision. And so they make decisions not based on the knowledge and the credentials or the regulation behind them. They make their decision based on whether this person is nice to them, whether they offer good customer service. And that unfortunately is no indicator of whether the products that they are investing in are going to be any good, whether the product mix that they are investing in is right for their situation. That's a problem, Mr. Speaker.

And so we have these three fundamental problems that really leave consumers and investors at a real, real disadvantage in the marketplace. And, Mr. Speaker, in my view, from a quick look at this bill, this bill is a step in the right direction. But what this bill primarily does is it basically says that if you want to hold yourself out and call yourself a financial planner or a financial advisor, that you will now be subject to regulation. And there will be regulation and credentials behind who can use those terms. So that, Mr. Speaker, is a step in the right direction.

But unfortunately it's not going to end or it doesn't really deal in a big way with the problems, the three fundamental problems that I indicated, which are that consumers aren't going to be any better educated than they have been in the past or any more knowledgeable. It's not going to take away the conflict of interest that many advisors or sales people find themselves in.

And, Mr. Speaker, we're still left in that unfortunate situation that there's still going to be a mishmash of different industries and advisors and products that are regulated in different ways. And the consumer doesn't know whether they are dealing with an advisor who is in a regulated industry or whether they are dealing with an advisor who's merely selling their particular financial institution's products or whether they're dealing with an advisor who isn't regulated at all and is really just selling exempt investments and exempt products and they're not regulated at all. And so, Mr. Speaker, while this bill is a small step in the right direction, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, we are still not going to see the end of bad advice, negligent advice, in some cases grossly negligent advice, and we're not going to see the end of investment fraud.

And, Mr. Speaker, we need to do a better job, not only in this province but in this country, of regulating financial products that people buy as investments. The problem, Mr. Speaker, is with those three fundamental problems it's still far too easy for the scoundrels to escape justice. It's too easy for them to simply declare bankruptcy in some cases or to simply move jurisdictions and move to a different province, move to a different state, move to a different country and avoid justice. It's far too easy, Mr. Speaker.

It's far too easy for someone who has caused the loss of somebody's life savings or caused the loss of their financial security to simply avoid justice by moving jurisdictions and having another provincial regulator, who doesn't know anything about it and is understaffed and stretched too thin, say, well you know, this happened in Saskatchewan or this happened in BC so it's not our problem. Mr. Speaker, we need to do a better job in this province, in this country, in protecting people and their financial security.

Mr. Speaker, one of the ways that it has occurred to me over the past few years, one of the ways that we could help people, help people protect their financial security and their life savings, is by offering basically a public group RRSP [registered retirement savings plan] or some sort of similar product like that.

So instead of consumers being at the mercy of the financial industry — who are all well paid, who understand the big terms that they throw around; they provide disclosure but it's in a 60-page prospectus that's filled with legal fine print and complicated terms, so it's not really disclosure of any real kind

— we could do a better job if we simply said, we're going to have a public investment product that is backed by the Government of Saskatchewan or the Government of Canada that everybody can invest in. And you know that you'll get low management fees. You know that you'll get trustworthy advice. And you know that your investment, that it will not be subject to somebody being a scoundrel and making off with your money. Mr. Speaker, it's just tragic when someone comes into your office and, you know, in their 70s and they've lost a couple hundred thousand dollars. Or like I said, when somebody is in their 50s when they've lost, you know, all their RRSPs and tax-free savings accounts.

[16:00]

One of the pieces of advice I've been giving small business owners and farmers for the last probably 15 years now, Mr. Speaker, is that when they have the opportunity, they should maximize what they put into their RRSPs. Because one of the good things in this province at least, Mr. Speaker, is that your RRSPs are creditor exempt. So even if your business fails, even if for whatever reason life throws a curveball at you, at least you can walk away with your retirement savings or your pension plan being exempt. So you'll have some iota of financial security in your retirement.

And that, Mr. Speaker, is actually . . . That was something that the previous NDP government did back at, you know, after I think it was about 2003 if memory serves me correct, was to make RRSPs creditor exempt. And that was an important step in protecting the retirement savings of small business owners and farmers.

Mr. Speaker, as you'll know, there are not a lot of financial perks to this job in the province. We're not like our federal counterparts who get, you know, a guaranteed pension after being in office for eight years. We just have a money purchase pension plan that is like basically any other provincial public servant. But one of the perks for me, Mr. Speaker, as a lawyer and as someone who's never worked in the public service before, was that as an MLA I got to be a member of the public employees pension plan. And the public employees pension plan has a long track record of investment success and low management fees. And so frankly, Mr. Speaker, I was quite excited to be able to belong to the public employees pension plan because that is a way that I can, of course, protect some of my financial security for retirement whenever that might happen.

It's our job as legislators to try to make sure that we are helping the public, helping everyone in the province achieve that financial security, that financial well-being, not just in their retirement but throughout their life. And so I hope this bill, I think this bill is a step in the right direction but I hope we can do more in this building to protect all of the residents of Saskatchewan, because this is . . . it's so key to health and happiness, is actually taking away the financial stress and worry of being insecure.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to wrap up my comments and move that we adjourn debate on this bill.

The Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 204

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 204 — *The Jury Amendment Act, 2019/Loi modificative de 2019 sur le jury*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As always it's a privilege to weigh into the debate and the discussion on the bills before us, and today I'll be speaking about Bill No. 204, *The Jury Amendment Act, 2019*.

It's always good to take a look at the minister's second reading speech to see where . . . We can look at the bill but it's good to take a look at the minister's second reading speech to get a sense of where the government is coming from on a particular bill and whether or not consultation has taken place, some of those kinds of things as we prepare to go into committee on these bills.

This is a bill that hasn't been amended since 1998, so a good chunk of time has passed. And certainly the world looks like it's a very different place here in 2020 compared to 1998, Mr. Speaker. And we've seen challenges that have come up around jury selection. And just looking at the Colten Boushie, the Gerald Stanley trial and the results of that ended up raising some big flags around jury selection and who gets to be in and who is out of those kinds of discussions, Mr. Speaker.

But referring to the Justice minister's comments, he talks about the amendments are a result of a multi-year review of the jury management system. I'm just curious actually; I'm going back to a CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] story in 2018 when the former federal Justice minister, Jody Wilson-Raybould, had mentioned that the National Judicial Institute was looking at ways to increase the complement of Indigenous jurors. I'm wondering if that work at all informed any of this particular review. The minister doesn't touch on that at all, but I know that that'll be something that'll come up in committee.

And so some of the things that this particular bill will do, as the minister points out, is that he talks about making the juries as representative as possible. And I'm on the record many times in here, Mr. Speaker, speaking of the importance of decision-making bodies being reflective of the people that they represent or will have to judge. It's important that we have more women in decision-making bodies, Indigenous people . . . Indigenous people in Saskatchewan make up about 16 per cent of our population at the last, I believe in 2016, the last census. We need to see a greater diversity of newcomers in our elected bodies but on our juries as well.

What that does is it brings multiple voices, multiple perspectives, multiple lived experiences to those decisions, Mr. Speaker. I think sometimes when we have a monoculture of decision makers that we end up with a monoculture of decisions, and decisions that don't always take all the necessary information and experiences into account. And we see this in terms of our juries and how this all plays out.

So the minister points out that the current two-draw process will be replaced with one targeted draw. So I'm not a lawyer and I've not had any experience around this but I understand that there's going to now be a geographical range or area from which the jurors can be summoned for a particular trial. And one of the goals here is that will allow people to take travel time into account.

I've been asked to participate on juries twice. Once when my then husband was a police officer and I had a brand new breastfeeding baby. And I'm glad to do my civic duty, but I wasn't quite sure how I could wrap my head around jury duty with a nursing child, and how a three-month-old . . . and how I could possibly be away from her at all. So I was glad at that point in time to be away. And then as I've been an MLA I've been invited to be on jury duty, and we're exempt from that as well. But with just referencing being a mother of a baby, and you think about those barriers that can be in place for people to participate.

My sister, last year, sat in on a coroner's inquest, and it was a pretty big case actually that had some major recommendations. But when she was first invited to participate . . . My dad had passed away in the fall, had been in long-term care, and my sister was his main caregiver. Yes, he was in long-term care but my sister was still providing him personal care every day, like literally changing incontinence products, those kinds of things, and making sure he was eating, all those kinds of things that you think will be attended to in long-term care. But my dad was a special guy and was not an easy dementia patient. So my sister was torn because she really believed in her civic duty and importance to participate but wasn't quite sure. She was worried about getting sequestered because you don't know, when you get called for jury duty, you don't actually know how that's going to end for you, if you're going to be on a case where you might get sequestered at some point. And she was worried about how that would look for my dad. But as it turned out, it was manageable and she was glad that she participated and was able to participate.

But I know that some of the evidence . . . This actually, this whole bill brings into question some of issues around jurors and what they experience as jurors. Sometimes PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder] actually is a very real possibility, or psychological injury when you're sitting day after day seeing some of the things that some jurors end up seeing, Mr. Speaker. So I'm curious if there was any discussion in this particular review on the well-being of jurors because right now at this point in time in Canada in general and I'm sure in Saskatchewan as well, that they're left on their own and there's no body with whom you can connect. So I'm curious if any of that came up at all in this particular review that the minister said was a multi-year review.

But back to the specific bill where this particular bill will ensure that jurors from a specific area will be targeted to try to allow less travel time, for example. The amendments also revise the grounds for exclusions from jury service, which I talked about. As a police officer's wife, I was excluded at that point of time. But we're changing that here. In this particular bill, chiefs and council members of Indian bands will now be excluded from jury service as similar to the current exclusion for municipal council members. But right now, when certain persons are excluded from jury service, their spouses are excluded as well, as I had mentioned.

So just to put on the record here, some of the folks who are excluded from serving as jurors, we've got:

members of the Privy Council, the Senate and the House of Commons of Canada;

members and officers of the Legislative Assembly;

persons who are or have been:

judges;

lawyers whether or not in actual practice;

members of any police service; or

justices of the peace;

other persons who are engaged in the administration of justice, including:

officials or employees of the Ministry of Justice; [and]

officials or employees of the Department of Justice . . .

spouses of persons mentioned in clauses (a) to (d);

chiefs and council members [now] of Indian Bands;

reeves, councillors and mayors;

members of:

boards of education . . .

the conseil scolaire . . .

persons who are or have been coroners;

persons who are exempt from jury service pursuant to section 268 of the *National Defence Act* . . .

persons who are legally confined in an institution.

So that's a lot of people who are excluded but now spouses . . . I wouldn't have had the same pass if my daughter was a nursing baby now. And anyway it's interesting.

So the goal there is recognizing that some communities are rather small and the pool of jurors is smaller, so when you are excluding all the spouses of these individuals that you're making that pool even smaller. But I'm wondering if, are there any unintended consequences of perhaps now excluding those whose spouses are like a police officer, for example? I know that when you are serving on jury duty you're not supposed to come home and speak of the case at all, and I trust that that doesn't happen, but we are again clouded sometimes by our experiences. So I am not sure about that provision to exclude spouses. I'd like to just know a little bit more from the Minister of Justice around some of the rationale and if they thought about any of the potential consequences. I also understand that by excluding all those people, you do have a smaller pool which might be a challenge in a community that has a lower population.

The amendments also provide increased protection of the personal information of jurors. It will no longer be part of the public record but, as the minister points out, it will now be available to parties to a proceeding and under any terms and conditions imposed by the courts.

And actually part of this bill, there will be a new jury empanelling process, the possibility to be able to do it electronically. This I didn't know, Mr. Speaker, which is interesting. So when it comes to empanelling the jury at trial, we still do it manually. I just would like to put on the record for people how this currently occurs here in 2020. So:

“Empanelling the jury at trial

The sheriff shall:

put on a separate card or paper the name, address and juror number of each qualified person summoned to attend as juror who has not been excluded or released from jury service;

place the cards or papers prepared in accordance with clause (a) in a container provided for that purpose; and

deliver the container described in clause (b) to the local registrar.

Whereas:

If a jury is required for a trial or for the assessment of damages, the local registrar shall, in open court:

shake the container provided pursuant to clause (1)(c) so as to ensure that the cards or papers are mixed; [and]

draw cards or papers from the container, shaking the container after drawing each card or paper, until a sufficient number of jurors have been drawn who are:

present; and

not subject to a successful challenge;

swear in the jurors selected pursuant to [the] clause . . . and

return to the container provided pursuant to clause (1)(c) the cards or papers drawn of those persons not sworn in as jurors.

[16:15]

So really we do it manually — like very manually, Mr. Speaker, which is interesting. I did not realize that. So this bill is not changing that, but it will set the provisions that we will be able to do it electronically in the regulations at some point. But that is interesting that we are still doing that.

And that pretty much sums up the . . . There are some other amendments, housekeeping amendments in this bill as well. There's a number of amendments being made to the French versions, only to improve the translation. So as being a juror is a

very important civic duty, these changes are good, but I know in committee that there a few things, I believe, that the critic responsible will dig into, just to see if some of that legwork has been done, as much as possible is done to ensure that our juries are as representative as they should be.

But with that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 204, *The Jury Amendment Act, 2019*.

The Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

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

The Speaker: — It has been moved that the Assembly now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt that motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:17.]

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Premier

President of the Executive Council

Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Tina Beaudry-Mellor

Minister of Advanced Education

Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

Minister Responsible for Innovation

Hon. Lori Carr

Minister of Government Relations

Minister Responsible for First Nations, Métis
and Northern Affairs

Minister Responsible for the Provincial
Capital Commission

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff

Minister of Central Services

Minister Responsible for Public Service Commission

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Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Power Corporation

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Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated

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Water Corporation

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