



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

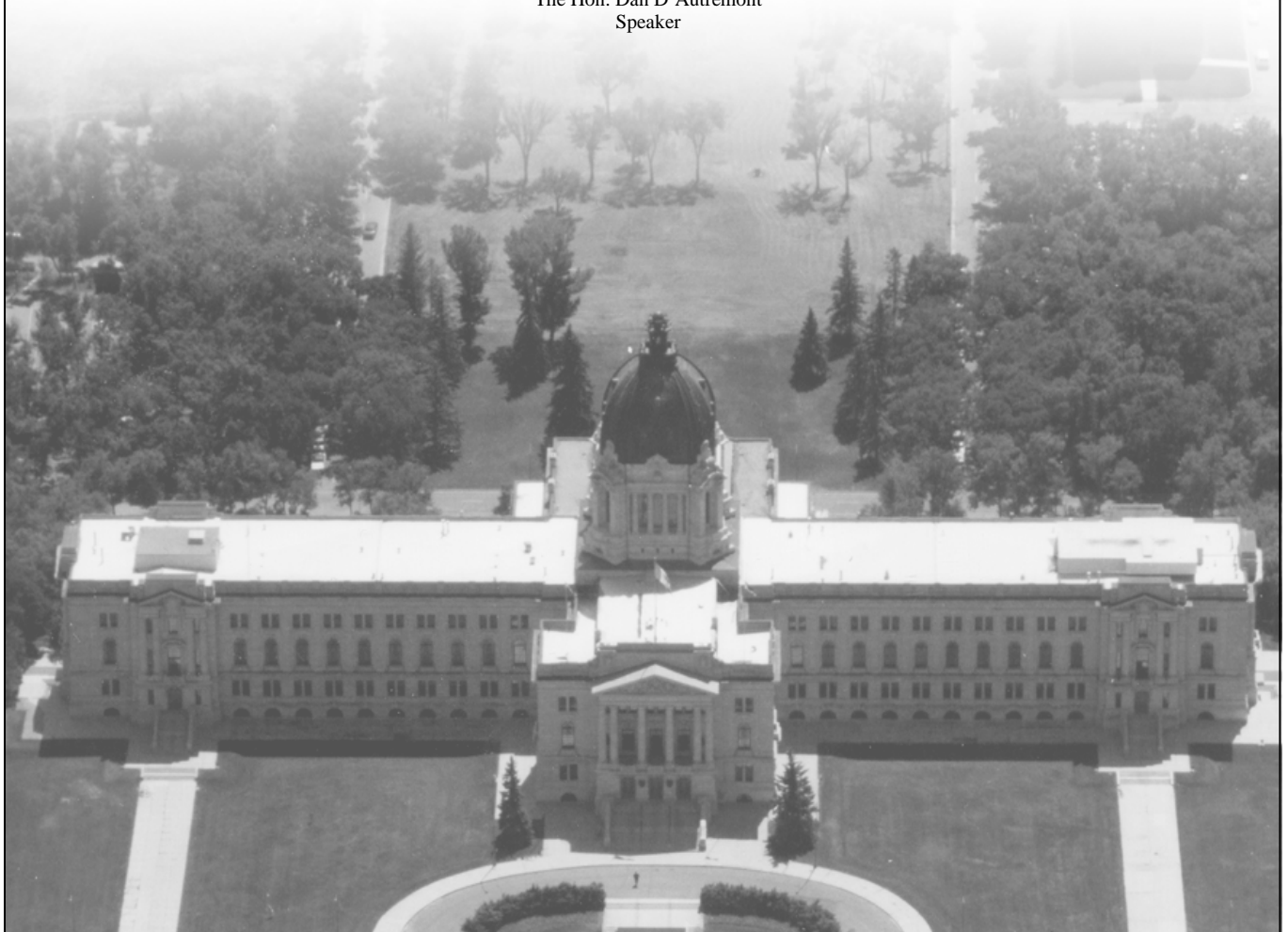
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Dan D'Autremont
Speaker



MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN

Speaker — Hon. Dan D’Autremont
 Premier — Hon. Brad Wall
 Leader of the Opposition — Cam Broten

Name of Member	Political Affiliation	Constituency
Belanger, Buckley	NDP	Athabasca
Bjornerud, Bob	SP	Melville-Saltcoats
Boyd, Hon. Bill	SP	Kindersley
Bradshaw, Fred	SP	Carrot River Valley
Brkich, Greg	SP	Arm River-Watrous
Broten, Cam	NDP	Saskatoon Massey Place
Campeau, Hon. Jennifer	SP	Saskatoon Fairview
Chartier, Danielle	NDP	Saskatoon Riversdale
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken	SP	Saskatoon Silver Springs
Cox, Hon. Herb	SP	The Battlefords
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Docherty, Hon. Mark	SP	Regina Coronation Park
Doherty, Hon. Kevin	SP	Regina Northeast
Doke, Larry	SP	Cut Knife-Turtleford
Draude, June	SP	Kelvington-Wadena
Duncan, Hon. Dustin	SP	Weyburn-Big Muddy
Eagles, Doreen	SP	Estevan
Elhard, Wayne	SP	Cypress Hills
Forbes, David	NDP	Saskatoon Centre
Harpauer, Hon. Donna	SP	Humboldt
Harrison, Hon. Jeremy	SP	Meadow Lake
Hart, Glen	SP	Last Mountain-Touchwood
Heppner, Hon. Nancy	SP	Martensville
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Huyghebaert, D.F. (Yogi)	SP	Wood River
Jurgens, Victoria	SP	Prince Albert Northcote
Kirsch, Delbert	SP	Batoche
Krawetz, Ken	SP	Canora-Pelly
Lawrence, Greg	SP	Moose Jaw Wakamow
Makowsky, Gene	SP	Regina Dewdney
Marchuk, Russ	SP	Regina Douglas Park
McCall, Warren	NDP	Regina Elphinstone-Centre
McMorris, Hon. Don	SP	Indian Head-Milestone
Merriman, Paul	SP	Saskatoon Sutherland
Michelson, Warren	SP	Moose Jaw North
Moe, Hon. Scott	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
Nilson, John	NDP	Regina Lakeview
Norris, Rob	SP	Saskatoon Greystone
Ottenbreit, Hon. Greg	SP	Yorkton
Parent, Roger	SP	Saskatoon Meewasin
Phillips, Kevin	SP	Melfort
Reiter, Hon. Jim	SP	Rosetown-Elrose
Ross, Laura	SP	Regina Qu’Appelle Valley
Sproule, Cathy	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
Steinley, Warren	SP	Regina Walsh Acres
Stewart, Hon. Lyle	SP	Thunder Creek
Tell, Hon. Christine	SP	Regina Wascana Plains
Tochor, Corey	SP	Saskatoon Eastview
Toth, Don	SP	Moosomin
Vermette, Doyle	NDP	Cumberland
Wall, Hon. Brad	SP	Swift Current
Weekes, Randy	SP	Biggar
Wilson, Hon. Nadine	SP	Saskatchewan Rivers
Wotherspoon, Trent	NDP	Regina Rosemont
Wyant, Hon. Gordon	SP	Saskatoon Northwest
Young, Colleen	SP	Lloydminster
Vacant		Prince Albert Carlton

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to the members of the Legislative Assembly, I'm pleased to introduce a number of guests that are seated scattered all throughout the west gallery — I believe, if I have my directions correct — and they are here from the Canadian Diabetes Association. I think members will know that we have an opportunity later today to spend time with representatives of the Canadian Diabetes Association as well as those that have been diagnosed with diabetes in our province and their family members.

So we have a large group. I'll quickly introduce them in the House. Warren Wagner, who is our regional director here for Saskatchewan, is joining us as well as Brie Hnetka, the manager of programs and partnerships. As well, Debra Jakubec, the regional director from Alberta, has also joined us.

And, Mr. Speaker, from the Canadian Diabetes advocacy volunteers and their guests, we have a number of guests and I will just briefly introduce them: Tristan Banyay, Peter Dickinson, Lynne Eikel, Bob and Evelyn Gawley, Bill Gowen, Melissa and Tim Johnson and their two children Emma and Salem who have been our guests here at the legislature in the past, Georgia Joorisity, Robert Lydiate, Renee Mochnacz, Annie Quesnel, Peter Quesnel, Dagan Viala, Ken Zech, Don Henriksen, and Ashley Stone. And I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

As well, Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet, we do have guests that are joining us seated in your gallery. Members from the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association have been to the legislature today to meet with members of the government side of the House and the Human Services Committee. And I don't believe that all of them perhaps are still here, but I know that Shirley McKay, Linda Wasko-Lacey, who is seated in the gallery; Joanne Petersen; Joanna Alexander; Lynne Eikel — either there are two Lynne Eikels here at the legislature on the exact same day, but I believe actually it is the same individual who is wearing two different hats today; Noreen Reed; and Warren Koch. And I would ask members to join with me in welcoming members of the SRNA [Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association] and thanking them for the important work that they do each and every day in our province for patient safety. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Broten: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the member opposite in welcoming these two large groups that are here at the Assembly today. It's always a privilege for us as MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] when people come to the Assembly to share their experiences, to share their

insight, to provide good advice, Mr. Speaker.

And I'd like to welcome all the folks from the Canadian Diabetes Association and the advocates. I see a few folks who have spoken to us at receptions in years past and spoken about their personal situations. So thank you so much for sharing and thank you for the advocacy that you do around the year for your own families, but of course for all Saskatchewan families that are touched and living with diabetes, Mr. Speaker. So thank you very much to the Canadian Diabetes Association for joining us today.

And, Mr. Speaker, I too would like to welcome the individuals here from the SRNA, Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association. I thank them for their presence here today and we look forward to the meeting tomorrow to hear issues of concern and to have a good discussion, Mr. Speaker. So thank you so much for joining us also. Thank you.

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

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of this Legislative Assembly, I'd like to join with the Minister of Health and the Leader of the Official Opposition to welcome those members from the SRNA here today.

I'd like to make special mention of Noreen Reed from the community of Shell Lake. Noreen has had a multiple, a number of positions, if you will, at a number of different of the facilities within the Prince Albert Parkland Health Region in a number of different communities. And she's always been a great advocate not only for her designation but also for the access to quality health care in the region, but also in the province of Saskatchewan.

So I know she continues this work as she's now working with the University of Saskatchewan at the Prince Albert campus in training new registered nurses for the province of Saskatchewan. So, Mr. Speaker, to all members of this Assembly, I would like you to join me in welcoming Noreen to her Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the legislature, 13 grade 6 and 7 students who are sitting up in the east gallery. They're from Prairie Sky School in Regina Lakeview and they're accompanied by Ms. Nicola D'Agnone and Ms. Carla Wilson. So I ask all members to give them a warm welcome.

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

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and to all members of the legislature, I'd like to introduce a fine young man seated in the west gallery, Mr. Brady Peter. He spent the last six, eight weeks out in Moose Jaw going to school for his welding, his journeyman welding ticket, and has a keen interest in provincial and federal politics,

decided to take one of his days off and come and watch the proceedings at the House. So I'd like to ask all members to welcome him to his legislature.

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

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Legislative Assembly, I'd like to introduce a good friend of mine, Mr. Jerry Sherman, who is visiting our legislature and our city from the capital of Ottawa. Jerry and I go back a long time. I think we were friends as a result of close inter-family connections. I think our friendship dates back more than 60 years, when we got calculating it.

You know, the sign of a good friendship, Mr. Speaker, is if you've been separated over a long period of time and then come together suddenly, it's just like time hasn't passed at all; you pick up right where you left off. And that's the kind of relationship that Jerry and I have experienced. Our paths have crossed intermittently over those 60 years and many times more recently.

It's because of his role in Ottawa. Since 1996, Jerry has worked among the diplomatic community in our nation's capital, first with Christian Embassy and more recently with Embassy Connections. In 1998 Jerry started arranging tours for ambassadors primarily to Western Canada to showcase our great part of the nation, introducing his distinguished guests to local businesses, to manufacturers, and political leaders. And to date, Mr. Speaker, Jerry has hosted more than 200 ambassadors from 91 nations to various parts of our country.

Jerry also oversees trips for MPs [Member of Parliament] and MLAs to foreign nations on reciprocal visits, and he has met just about every ambassador that's been in the nation's capital over these last 20 years. He's got a lot of interesting stories to tell and he'd introduce any one of those ambassadors to us on a first-name basis.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like all of our colleagues to welcome Jerry to our legislature and to offer him good wishes in his work.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Kelvington-Wadena.

Ms. Draude: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to everyone in the Assembly, I'd like to introduce a very special friend of mine. I want you to listen carefully. Her name is June Draude — the other June Draude. Mr. Speaker, I've known this lady for over 40 years. Our visiting patterns have changed with families over the last 20 years. We don't play as much kaiser and canasta. Hopefully we'll be able to do that again in the near future.

Between the two of us, we have enough children to have a ball team. I know you often say that you can't choose your relatives; you can choose your friends. But I have both in this friend of mine. So I ask everyone to welcome the other June Draude to the legislature.

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

Hon. Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce, sitting in the west gallery, 16 grade 8 students from Mother Teresa Middle School, a school in my constituency. Mother Teresa Middle School . . . Yes, go ahead and wave. They're awesome. Mother Teresa Middle School is an outstanding school and it's doing outstanding work. It truly is a game-changer for future leaders, and they're developing a number of future leaders. And I'm so proud of them. They're amazing.

Accompanying the students today, Mr. Speaker, are teacher Jane Brundige; Cindy Kobayashi, who is the director of development; and we've got two student nurses with them, Rebecca Balan and Molly Findlay. They're a few years . . . maybe a year left before their RN [registered nurse], so proud of them for doing their student internship with Mother Teresa. I'm at the school quite a bit, it seems all the time, Mr. Speaker. And I hope they're not getting sick of me, but it's certainly a possibility. But I'm certainly happy to be a part of it, looking forward to meeting the students and the staff coming up here and getting stumped, as per usual, with their questions, but that's okay, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to ask all members to join me in welcoming these students, future leaders to their legislature.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present petitions calling for greater support for GSAs [gender and sexuality alliance] in Saskatchewan schools. And we know this government's not doing enough to create safe spaces in our schools for sexually diverse students or students bullied because of their sexual identity or sexual orientation. And we know that GSAs offer opportunities to improve attendance, retention rates, and generate meaningful relationships at schools, and reduce homophobic and transphobic bullying. I'd like to read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on this government to take immediate and meaningful action to pass *The Respect for Diversity — Student Bill of Rights Act* and enshrine in legislation the right of Saskatchewan students to form GSAs within their schools in order to foster caring, accepting, inclusive environments and deliver equal opportunities for all students to reach their full potential.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people signing the petition are from Moose Jaw. Thank you so much.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition asking for this government to support a new long-term care facility for Creighton and Denare Beach. And, Mr. Speaker, seniors have done their part to build this province, and northern Saskatchewan is no exception. According to the 2009 Croft report, long-term care stats of our health region is at a code red level. Seniors from northern Saskatchewan need immediate

attention from this government, and many residents cannot afford private care. The prayer reads:

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray that your honourable Legislative Assembly may be pleased to cause the Saskatchewan government to treat northern Saskatchewan's senior citizens with respect and dignity and immediately invest in a new long-term care facility for Creighton and Denare Beach and area.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Signed by many good people of Creighton, Denare Beach. I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I also rise to present a petition on cellphone coverage. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

To cause the provincial government to improve cell service coverage for northern communities like St. George's Hill, Dillon, Michel Village, Dore Lake, Michel Point, and Sled Lake to provide similar quality of cell coverage as enjoyed by southern communities. And this would provide support to our northern industries as well as mitigate safety concerns for those people living in the remote North.

And, Mr. Speaker, the petition has been signed from people from all throughout Saskatchewan, and on this particular page they are primarily from Meadow Lake and Hague. And I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition from citizens in the province of Saskatchewan who are concerned about the high cost of post-secondary education. In the prayer that reads as follows:

The petitioners respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the provincial government to immediately increase the funding for post-secondary education in this province, with a legislated provision that this increase in funding be used to lower tuition fees.

Mr. Speaker, this particular petition is signed by citizens from Regina. I so submit.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Provision of Medical Coverage

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Kot family came to the legislature to get coverage for the treatment their son desperately needs. It's sad that their family is still waiting for an answer and that their son Kayden is still caught up in this government's red tape. The Kot family was told by the Health

minister that the denial of desperately needed therapy for Kayden would be reviewed, but they still haven't heard back from the government, even though the Saskatoon Health Region agrees that Kayden's needs cannot be met here in our province. The Kot family deserve so much better and little Kayden needs so much more.

[13:45]

After years of record revenues, it's shocking that this government can't find the money to meet the health care needs of vulnerable children. We've heard the Premier and the Health minister offer their concern and their sympathy, and I'm sure that it was sincerely offered, but what the Kot family needs is action.

We heard earlier today that the government will be providing the treatment that the Akhter family so desperately needs, and that's a good thing. We're hoping to hear the same good news is in store for the Kot family as well. Every day spent waiting is another day that Kayden goes without treatment, and it's our hope that he won't have to wait any longer for the care that he needs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Batoche.

Diabetes Awareness Month

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to announce that November is Diabetes Awareness Month. Today 93,000 people in Saskatchewan are living with type 1 or type 2 diabetes. The number is expected to increase to 129,000 by 2025.

Mr. Speaker, the risks associated with diabetes can be very serious. Today diabetes is the cause of 40 per cent of heart attacks, 50 per cent of kidney failure requiring dialysis, 70 per cent of non-traumatic limb amputations, and a leading cause of blindness.

Mr. Speaker, our government is helping those living with diabetes by working with groups such the Canadian Diabetes Association. As an advocate for those living with diabetes, the Canadian Diabetes Association is "leading the fight against diabetes, while we wait for a cure."

I would ask all members to join me in commemorating National Diabetes Awareness Month and World Diabetes Day on November 14th by joining the Canadian Diabetes Association's online awareness campaign, Take 2 Minutes, and taking the online diabetes risk test at take2minutes.ca. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise in the House also to recognize Diabetes Awareness Month. Nearly 100 years ago, two remarkable Canadian doctors developed insulin, the first effective treatment for diabetes.

The work of Dr. Frederick Banting and Dr. Charles Best has helped millions of diabetics around the world live longer and

healthier lives. Unfortunately, even after a century of progress from their Nobel Prize winning discovery, there is still no cure for diabetes. Ninety thousand people in Saskatchewan are currently living with diabetes, and the number of new cases is growing each year. The problem is growing fastest in our most vulnerable communities — people living in poverty, Aboriginal communities, and those with limited access to healthy food options. And we all know that a healthy diet and exercise are critical for reducing the risk of diabetes, but we also know that for many people who work multiple jobs and struggle to put whatever food they can get on the table, that just isn't feasible.

The explosion of type 2 diabetes in our province is a symptom of the greater problems of inequality and poverty, and the only way that we can truly make progress in affecting the growth of diabetes in Saskatchewan is to address these underlying issues, these social determinants of health.

I myself was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes four years ago, and so I ask all members to join me in recognizing this November as Diabetes Month. And I hope that we can all be mindful of the need to address this public health crisis through meaningful action. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Dresses for Haiti

Hon. Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the House today to tell the story of a special group of women from the Candle Lake Community Church. Ann Graff and a group of 15 dedicated volunteers have spearheaded a project to send homemade dresses and shorts to Haiti. Mr. Speaker, as the Haitian community continues to rebuild after a powerful earthquake four years ago, they are still in desperate need of relief efforts.

Ann and her group are contributing by providing clothes which will be delivered to Les Cayes, Haiti by a Canadian missionary from Kamloops. Mr. Speaker, this group has experienced strong support for the project from the Candle Lake community. Not only are people stepping up to volunteer in any way they can. The materials needed to make the dresses, such as fabric, sewing machines, and thread have all been donated. At present, 700 dresses have been made. These dresses are scheduled to be delivered next November, leaving the group more time to continue making dresses and raising funds.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in recognizing this amazing group of women from Candle Lake. Their dedication to humanitarian efforts in Haiti is a beautiful representation of the community spirit we all share in our province. Thank you.

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

Bursary Honours the Memory of Three Young Sons

Mr. Elhard: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Out of two great tragedies in the Ravenscrag community, the Arnal Boys Memorial Bursary for Young Farmers was created to honour the memory of three young sons.

In 2008, 14-year-old Blake Arnal died in a farm-related ATV [all-terrain vehicle] accident. In July 2014, 16-year-old Sean and 10-year-old Lyndon Arnal lost their lives in a tractor accident near the family farm.

In reference to the bursary, Olivia Arnal, a sister of the three brothers, said, "If we could do something in memory of them that would be of help to anybody at all, then it would be of greater good than just sulking about it."

Mr. Speaker, the original plan for the bursary was to award \$3,000 to a student of the Chinook School Division, aged 8 to 18, that had an agricultural project in which they would like to invest. I'm pleased to say, Mr. Speaker, that the bursary funding has grown to an amazing \$120,000 and, because of this growth, 15 out of the 29 applicants were awarded funds totalling over \$45,000 this past June.

Friends, family, and members of the community have rallied to raise these funds, and this collective effort helps honour the lives of the Arnal brothers. This bursary helps recognize young leaders in the community who are passionate about agriculture, just as were Blake, Sean, and Lyndon. I ask all members to join me in recognizing the effort of many southwest communities in honouring the Arnal brothers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Community Living Association of Saskatoon 60th Anniversary

Mr. Tochor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On October 28th, the Community Living Association of Saskatoon Inc., otherwise known as CLASI, celebrated their 60th anniversary. CLASI is a non-profit charitable organization operated by a volunteer board of directors. Founded in 1955 by parents and professionals who were concerned by the lack of services for children and adults with special needs, this organization has continued to grow and now provides a number of services for those who need them.

Two services in particular include assistance for families in educational, residential, and employment placements, and helping with transition planning for family members with special needs. From September to June, they also provide recreational clubs for kids, teens, young adults living with special needs. Of course, Mr. Speaker, these are only two of the many great services that CLASI provides. I would like to congratulate CLASI on their 60 years, and I wish them best of luck in the years ahead.

We are proud to help support both CLASI and 15 other agencies in Saskatoon that provide services for those with special needs. It is the hard work and dedication of the many volunteers that make these organizations successful.

I'd like to thank the Community Living Association of Saskatoon for all of their hard work and many years of service that they have given to those with special needs in Saskatoon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

National Down Syndrome Awareness Week

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise in the House today to proclaim National Down Syndrome Awareness Week here in Saskatchewan, in recognition of the contributions that people with Down syndrome provide to our communities.

Mr. Speaker, our province's disability strategy will make Saskatchewan more welcoming, responsive, innovative, and inclusive for people with different abilities.

Along with developing a disability strategy, our government has funded \$2.7 billion since 2007 to help those with different abilities. Recognizing this week is just one of the ways we can all work together to make inclusion and acceptance a reality in our province. Mr. Speaker, Ability in Me, or AIM, is just one of those great programs that is working towards the full and equal inclusion of people with Down syndrome in this province.

Their goal is for all individuals with Down syndrome to have the opportunity to reach their full potential and have a true sense of belonging and becoming contributing members of our society. Through AIM, several families are being provided with the support and services they need, including teachers for speech-language services within classrooms.

On behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, I want to thank AIM for all the work they do to help make Saskatchewan the best place in Canada for people with different abilities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Carbon Capture and Storage Project

Mr. Broten: — An international energy expert who has visited Boundary dam says the project is clearly plagued by “fundamental, operationally crippling problems.” Fundamental, operationally crippling problems, Mr. Speaker, that's a mouthful, but it's exactly how industry insiders are describing this government's \$1.5 billion carbon capture project now that the truth has finally leaked out. What does the Premier have to say about this?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are many, many more quotes advocating for the technology, supporting Saskatchewan's leadership position with respect to carbon capture and sequestration, Mr. Speaker. Though I'd like to return to yesterday on the same issue, if I can, when the Leader of the Opposition was holding out a chart he said was a secret chart that actually had been on the Internet for a couple of months, misinterpreted the information on the chart, as we later learned from officials in the rotunda, and then worse, went out to the rotunda, Mr. Speaker, and insulted the integrity of SaskPower's CEO [chief executive officer] who was that day celebrating his 24th year with the company, spanning two different governments. He wrote off his explanation by saying it was “explanation by SaskPower at Mr. Wall's request just to

save his bacon.” Then he went on to say, the Leader of the Opposition went on to say that this was really disgusting.

Mr. Speaker, as I've already mentioned, Mr. Marsh has been with the Crown corporation for 24 years. The executive team at SaskPower deserves more respect from this Assembly, from that member than they were accorded.

Now I get it; I know he's at 32 per cent in the polls, same level as Mr. Lingenfelter. I get that there must be a level of desperation. But what there ought not to be, Mr. Speaker, is a fundamental disregard and disrespect for the integrity of long-serving Crown corporation executives, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, if there is one thing, if there is one thing, Mr. Speaker, that undermines our Crown corporations, if there is one thing, Mr. Speaker, that is offensive to the hard-working Crown employees in this province, if there is one thing, Mr. Speaker, that's offensive to the hard-working people of Saskatchewan who have built our Crowns over generations, it is the actions of a government, Mr. Speaker, that is not coming clean with what it knows, Mr. Speaker. The actions of a government, Mr. Speaker, that are not providing answers about what they knew and how they knew it, Mr. Speaker, the actions of a government, Mr. Speaker, that refuses to be open and transparent with the people of this province on a \$1.5 billion project — that is what is offensive to the people of SaskPower, Mr. Speaker.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the Premier does not want to pay any attention to what international experts are saying about the recent leaks of information that we've seen come out slowly, Mr. Speaker, from this government. Dr. Gail Reitenbach is the editor of world's leading publication about electricity generation. And this is what she says:

Although some fine-tuning is to be expected with any first-of-a-kind technology, the problems at the Boundary Dam site appear to be more substantial than anyone outside the company was aware of.

So industry insiders are clear, and they contradict what the Premier, what the minister, what they've been saying, Mr. Speaker. This is not just some fine tuning. Industry insiders say this \$1.5 billion project is clearly plagued, Mr. Speaker, by problems that are operationally crippling.

Mr. Speaker, is the Premier going to dispute industry insiders and stick with his story that this is just some fine tuning, or will he finally admit that there are huge problems with this \$1.5 billion project?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, we gave the Leader of the Opposition the opportunity to take to his feet and perhaps retract what he had to say about officials at SaskPower.

He can say whatever he wants about the government. He just has. That's fair game. That's part of political debate. I get that; that's fine. To target members on this side of the House and ask

them pointed questions is his job.

[14:00]

What is not his job though, Mr. Speaker, is then to go out to the rotunda and call it disgusting, call the answers from the CEO of SaskPower disgusting, to allege that the CEO and people at SaskPower would change their stories because the government told them to. That was what he alleged. Mr. Speaker, that is actually what is disgusting in all of this.

And there is an opportunity now, desperate as he is politically, there is an opportunity now for him to finally do the right thing. We've never heard him say once that he's wrong about anything. Mr. Speaker, we're not saying he's wrong about pointed questions about the project. I'm not saying that. But I think all would agree that what he has done now in this regard frankly is beyond the pale, and he has the chance to walk that back.

We'll have the debate about the project. We've got plenty of quotes from insiders in the sector that are lauding what's going on at Boundary dam 3, Mr. Speaker. But what we need to make sure we're doing in this argument is keeping it in this room here, in this Legislative Chamber, and being respectful to long-serving Crown corporation executives and the members of IBEW [International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers] who have worked hard to deliver on this international leading technology.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, what is disgusting are zero answers from this Premier, Mr. Speaker, and a story, a story that changes from day to day, from person to person to person, over and over again, Mr. Speaker. That's the record we see from this government.

They're on the strong offence, Mr. Speaker, because they know, they know they have been caught, Mr. Speaker, telling a story that is not backed up by the facts. And they don't like it one bit, Mr. Speaker. And that's fine, Mr. Speaker, but they have a duty.

You know, I asked the Premier, I asked him how he felt about the fact that international insiders who looked at this project, Mr. Speaker, have some pretty concerning things to say. Not the things that they're saying after the spin tour cycle that they get, Mr. Speaker, from the Premier or an official, but once they know the facts, they have some concerning things to say.

The editor of the world's leading publication about electricity generation visited Boundary dam last May. This is what she said:

SaskPower representatives made it clear that there were some issues to be resolved with the contractor, and that some systems and individual components (such as valves leaking far earlier than expected) were not yet operating as they should. However, the impression was that the issues to be resolved were more along the lines of a "punch list" rather than fundamental operationally crippling problems, which is clearly the case if the capture facility's availability is only around 40 per cent.

Once insiders know the real facts, Mr. Speaker, about what's happening, there's some concern, Mr. Speaker, about what's going on. This is a damning assessment, Mr. Speaker, not only of this government's \$1.5 billion carbon capture project, but especially about the tales that the Premier has been spinning. I think it's completely unacceptable that the Premier hasn't been upfront with Saskatchewan people. But, Mr. Speaker, I frankly find it embarrassing that this government hasn't been truthful with international visitors about this project. Will the Premier at least admit that was a mistake?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Economy.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, when it comes to support for the project, the support for the project comes from around the world, Mr. Speaker. If you look at Professor Stuart Haszeldine, the director of Scottish CCS [Scottish Carbon Capture & Storage], said:

Boundary Dam is working proof for naysayers, including the . . . [international] Panel on Climate Change, that full-scale CCS on power generation now exists and works commercially to deliver electricity, with no subsidy.

Mr. Speaker, that was in October of 2014.

If you look at the International Energy Agency, the IEA, referring to Boundary dam: "Carbon capture and storage is the only known technology that will enable us to continue to use fossil fuels and decarbonize the energy sector."

The only people that we don't know where they stand, Mr. Speaker, are the members opposite. On a number of occasions, the Leader of the Opposition said that he was supportive of it, but yet his critic, the member from Nutana, says something entirely different. At one point the NDP [New Democratic Party] supported carbon capture, but has since moved away from it while the Sask Party still supports the concept. Mr. Speaker . . .

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the minister's giving answers from last October, back when the Premier said everything was great. Then you know, they're cranking out news releases saying it's exceeding expectations. Once you know the facts, Mr. Speaker, once you know the truth about what is happening, then people are taking another look and are revising, Mr. Speaker, what they're saying.

Let's look at Dr. Reitenbach. Her publication gave the Boundary dam project an award, Mr. Speaker, a few months ago, gave them an award based on what they had been told by the government, Mr. Speaker.

But her most recent column is clear. The information given did not paint an accurate picture of what was really going on with this \$1.5 billion project. Government claimed they were on track. Government claimed they were just doing a little bit of fine tuning. Everything was fine. Nothing to look at here, Mr. Speaker.

But now we know the truth. The plant's performance this year is worse than it was last year, and it hasn't even come close to reaching full capacity. Industry insiders like Dr. Reitenbach are saying that it's clear that there are fundamental, operationally crippling problems with this \$1.5 billion project.

Mr. Speaker, so if the Premier won't apologize to the international visitors who were clearly given the wrong impression about the \$1.5 billion project, will he at least apologize to Saskatchewan people for not giving us the facts?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Economy.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, the industry insider that the member opposite quotes from is indeed a professor at McGill. Her Ph.D. [Doctor of Philosophy] is in English, Mr. Speaker, we understand. So I'm not sure, I'm not sure about her credentials. I'm not sure about . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Both sides seem to want to blow off a little steam. I've allowed that to happen. Now it's time to answer the questions and ask them. I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, she does indeed write for *Power* magazine, but her credentials are around the area of English, not anything to do with electrical generation, Mr. Speaker. If you look down from there, if you actually look at other industry experts, Mr. Speaker, from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology: "How many technologies do we have that can vanish gigatonnes of CO₂ each year? . . . CCS stands alone," Mr. Speaker.

And if you look at it a little bit more local, Mr. Speaker, the mayor of Estevan, I think commenting on the project said, "SaskPower is a key economic driver for Estevan. This project breathes new life into Boundary dam power station . . ."

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, they've been telling one story to the world, Mr. Speaker, a story that is not backed up by the facts. When the truth gets out, Mr. Speaker, when the real facts get out, Mr. Speaker, there's a very different interpretation about the success of this project.

You know, the Premier and the minister, they keep claiming that these problems are just to be expected. You know, and the Premier's heckling, Mr. Speaker, but he's not fielding the answers. He's not fielding the questions. He's not providing answers. He'll talk from his seat, but he won't take questions, Mr. Speaker, about being open and transparent for Saskatchewan people.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the government claims that the problems that they're experiencing were to be expected. Even if we take the Premier at his word on that, then he needs to explain — and he has an opportunity to do so now — he needs to explain why he entered into an agreement with an Alberta oil company that forces us, the people of Saskatchewan, to cut massive cheques to that oil company, especially when a

confidential briefing note written for the Premier's eyes in 2012 says Cenovus didn't even need the CO₂ until 2016.

So a simple question to the Premier that he's refused to answer over the last week: if the government actually expected these problems with the \$1.5 billion carbon capture project, then why did the Sask Party sign a sweetheart contract with Cenovus that has us paying massive penalties to them?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Economy.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, we have said on a number of occasions that in 2014 indeed there was a cheque cut to Cenovus around CCS [carbon capture and storage], SaskPower's inability to send the CO₂ to them. But in 2015, we now see that the project will make about \$6 million, Mr. Speaker.

You know, there's another important thing that I think is missing in this debate, Mr. Speaker, and it's whether the Leader of the Opposition supports CCS production or not. And I just received a copy of a letter that has been sent to the hon. member opposite from Neil Collins, the business manager for the IBEW, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Mr. Speaker. And he says:

I am very concerned about your recent comments you have made regarding the Boundary dam 3 carbon capture and sequestration project. Our union members work very hard on this project and fully support this important initiative.

Mr. Speaker, and in the next subsequent question, I'll be happy to go on, Mr. Speaker, but I think the important question that he is asking the Leader of the Opposition is, do you support carbon capture and storage?

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

Ms. Sproule: — Yet again, yet again, Mr. Speaker, we have no answers from either the minister or from the Premier on this issue. Just like we saw with the smart meter debacle, the Premier and the SaskPower minister have been struggling day after day to keep their stories straight, and their stories still don't match what the internal documents reveal.

So will the SaskPower minister at least tell us just how much of our money has been spent for this government in travelling the world promoting this \$1.5 billion project that still isn't working?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Economy.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, we'll be happy to provide the information. I don't have that exact figure in front of me, but I'll be happy to provide that. I just want to go on to add some more things that Neil Collins, the business manager for the IBEW, asked the Leader of the Opposition:

While I recognize the role of the opposition is to ask questions about the government's actions, your comments and that of your critic, Cathy Sproule, call into question

your position on this [important] matter.

Do you support the CCS project as a means to reduce carbon emissions at our coal-fired plants, or do you intend to eliminate coal-fired electrical facilities in Saskatchewan, thereby eliminating hundreds of union jobs?

Mr. Speaker, that's the position of the Leader of the Opposition. We know the member from Nutana's position is far different than the Leader of the Opposition's position, Mr. Speaker, and we'd like them to articulate directly what it is.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, this is what we know. Since the start of this government's carbon capture project, the official in charge of this experiment has spent over \$476,000 in travel — \$476,000 just for travel expenses. That doesn't even include his travel expenses for 2015. We are told that he is currently in Saudi Arabia right now and Saskatchewan families are footing the bill for that trip too.

With such major problems with the \$1.5 billion carbon capture project, and with Saskatchewan families already paying much higher power bills under the Sask Party, how can the Sask Party minister possibly justify such a massive expenditure on travel around the world?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Energy.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, SaskPower is still receiving, in spite of any difficulties that they may be having with BD3 [Boundary dam 3], they are still receiving invitation after invitation from around the world to come and talk to various groups about the operations of the facility, to talk about the start-up of the facility, to talk about the goals of the facility, Mr. Speaker.

And I think that that's very important that we continue to promote the project, Mr. Speaker, continue to have officials travel at the request of other jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker, to talk about the important developments here. And I think it's something that Neil Collins, the IBEW business manager, certainly supports as well because the last sentence of his letter to us, to the Leader of the Opposition actually, is:

The CCS project is . . . [critical] to both Saskatchewan's economy and our environment. This is an important public policy question and our members are interested in your immediate response.

Mr. Speaker, I think the people of Saskatchewan are interested in your immediate response as well. Do you support carbon capture and storage in Saskatchewan or do you not?

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, if all these international folks are so interested in the project, you'd think they would be footing the travel bill. But no, on some of his high-priced,

out-of-province trips, this government's head of carbon capture actually travelled with the Premier to several other countries. His itinerary says, "accompany Premier Brad Wall, promote awareness of CCS." So we know that just this one official has spent well over \$476,000 on travel, most of which was supposedly to promote awareness of the \$1.5 billion carbon capture experiment.

But the question for the minister, we'll try this one: how much has this government spent in total for travel related to the carbon capture experiment, including the Premier, the Premier's travel scouts, the minister, and staff?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Economy.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, I think all that information is of public record, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the travel of the Premier or myself or our officials with SaskPower. I think it's all a matter of public record when it comes to that, Mr. Speaker.

You know, there are some folks opposite though that probably should spend a little bit of money on travel, and that's the Leader of the Opposition. I think if he spent a little bit of time and got in his vehicle and drove down to Boundary dam 3 and talked to IBEW members down there, talked to the people who are operating the facility, talked to the people who are building the facility, talked to the people who are attempting to correct the problems with the facility, I think he would find something far different, Mr. Speaker.

I think he would find that they are working on a project that's groundbreaking, that is leading, cutting edge, Mr. Speaker, in terms of carbon capture and storage around the world, Mr. Speaker. I think he would find that there is tremendous support among the people who are building the project down there, who are operating the project down there, and will continue to operate the project in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

[14:15]

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

Ms. Sproule: — This is somewhat ironic, Mr. Speaker. The Premier and the SaskPower minister claim it's very important to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars travelling the world to promote the government's \$1.5 billion carbon capture project. Meanwhile this Premier and this minister have struggled to answer the most basic questions about this project, and they refuse to be upfront with Saskatchewan people about what's really going on with this project. Well here's an idea: stop wasting so much of our money on international travel promoting a project that still isn't working today, and start being transparent with Saskatchewan people.

To the minister: what will it take for this government to finally agree that the Crown and Central Agencies Committee needs to be reconvened immediately to look into this fiasco?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Economy.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, when we look at the travel

budgets of the government today and you look at the travel budgets of the NDP the last few years when they were in government, Mr. Speaker, the travel budget in the last year of the NDP was \$975,000, Mr. Speaker. This past year for the Saskatchewan government, for the Saskatchewan Party government, it's \$355,000, or approximately one-third, one-third of the money that you folks opposite used to spend in terms of promoting projects, in terms of all of the government business that you used to conduct, Mr. Speaker. We are spending one-third of the amount and getting far more done than the members opposite ever got done in this province, Mr. Speaker.

It's clear that the people of Saskatchewan support the fact that we are working hard on an environmentally sound project, Mr. Speaker. Clearly they agree with it. Clearly they agree with taking the CO₂ off the scale, Mr. Speaker, taking 400 000 tonnes of emissions out of the atmosphere for the people of Saskatchewan.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, I'll never hesitate to ask questions when it comes to transparency, when it comes to openness, when it comes to ensuring the Saskatchewan ratepayers get the best possible value for the investments that their Crowns are making.

What we see though, Mr. Speaker, from this government are a host of questions that remain unanswered — questions, Mr. Speaker, that undermine our Crown, and questions that undermine the good jobs that are at Crowns.

Mr. Speaker, we don't know how serious the problems are. We don't know, Mr. Speaker, what it's going to cost. We don't know when we might see the proper outcome coming from this plant. We see deflection. We see bluster, Mr. Speaker, but we fail to see the answers.

My question to the Premier: when he's sending officials off around the world, off around the world promoting this project as is happening right now, are they telling the accurate story about the problems, or are they telling the story that's simply the picture that the Premier wants to paint?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Economy.

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, indeed there have been a number of questions that have been posed with respect to carbon capture and storage. And the most recent ones have been posed by none other than the IBEW business manager, Neil Collins, Mr. Speaker, when he asks whether the NDP — and particularly the member from Saskatoon Nutana, Mr. Speaker — support the project because this is a very important project for the members that he represents and clearly is a concern, given the public statements of the Leader of the Opposition and the member from Nutana when it comes to this project, Mr. Speaker.

He is wondering whether or not if they are supportive of the project. He's wondering whether or not they're supportive of the jobs that are associated with the project, Mr. Speaker, and I think it's an important question. And he concludes by saying,

the CCS project is critical to both Saskatchewan's economy and to our environment, something that the member from Nutana claims to be very concerned about as well.

This is an important public policy question and our members are interested in your immediate response. And I, Mr. Speaker, submit that I think the people of Saskatchewan are also interested in that support.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, I will never hesitate to ask tough questions about projects, Mr. Speaker, that deserve scrutiny, projects that deserve transparency, projects, Mr. Speaker, that need to have the truth exposed about what is really happening. I'm not afraid of that scrutiny, Mr. Speaker. But we have a government, we have a Premier that is afraid of that scrutiny, afraid, Mr. Speaker, to have open and honest assessment of what is going on and the true state of affairs.

Mr. Speaker, this government has refused to convene the Crown and Central Agencies Committee to get to the bottom of this mess. My question to the Premier: why won't he agree to convene this committee today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, no one is disagreeing that the hon. member is not afraid to ask tough questions. He is apparently very afraid of answering any questions about what he might do with this particular project.

For example, he wants transparency. Why didn't he disclose to members of the House that the industry insider expert he was quoting has a Ph.D. in English, that she taught American literature and composition at the University of Colorado at Boulder? But yet she was in charge of power production, the production of the magazine called *Power*.

Maybe he wants to disclose that information, and moreover maybe once and for all he wants to disclose to the IBEW and the hard-working unionized members down at Boundary dam 3, maybe he wants to disclose to the senior team at SaskPower and the people of the province what's his position, because you either have to clean up coal or you shut it down.

And I've heard nothing from him, Mr. Speaker, that would say anything, but if you elect an NDP government they will shut down coal like they're doing in Alberta. We'll lose those mining jobs. We'll lose jobs at Boundary dam 3, 4, and 5, Mr. Speaker, and we'll lose the chance to keep our rates competitive and market this technology around the world.

[Applause]

The Speaker: — Thank you for the applause.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 1,001 through 1,003.

The Speaker: — The Government Whip has tabled responses to questions 101 to 103. I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answers to questions 1,004 through 1,017.

The Speaker: — The Government Whip has ordered responses to 104 through 117. I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 1,018 through 1,024.

The Speaker: — The Government Whip has tabled responses to 1,018 to 1,024 inclusive.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 183

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 183 — *The Saskatchewan Employment (Essential Services) Amendment Act, 2015*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is somewhat ironic that we enter into this debate after question period, and these folks in government so wrapped up in the union flag here and all of a sudden trying to protect jobs. We see the last eight years of where they've actually cut jobs. And I just think about the laundry workers in P.A. [Prince Albert] who say, remember April 4th. And I think the member who is from P.A. should remember April 4th when these folks are talking about jobs and union jobs. I mean I can't believe the irony of . . .

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

Hon. Mr. Cox: — To request leave for introduction.

The Speaker: — The member has requested leave for introductions. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for the Environment.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Hon. Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, seated in the west gallery, a very good friend of mine, Mr. Alexander White. He's here today with the Association of Saskatchewan Realtors. He has been a past president of that association and a very active member and a colleague of mine formerly in the real estate business. He sells

real estate in The Battlefords, and a long-time member of the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] and a great citizen of North Battleford. Just ask all members to welcome him to his Assembly please.

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

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 183 — *The Saskatchewan Employment (Essential Services) Amendment Act, 2015* (continued)

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity to enter into this debate on Bill No. 183, *An Act to amend The Saskatchewan Employment Act and The Saskatchewan Employment Amendment Act, 2014*. And it has been quite a journey for this government on this legislation.

And I want to start by thanking some folks who were really involved, and I want to thank the committee members. I know that the minister listed them off, and I won't at this time. But I do know that the folks responsible for this bill, who gave a lot of insight through committee work, did a great job. I also want to thank my colleagues here for some great speeches, who've done a good job presenting the case and really talking about the history of this bill since 2007 and how we've come to this point in time. And so my colleagues here have really put together some very thoughtful comments and I want to thank them for that.

I want to thank my past colleagues from previous years who've worked so hard in pointing out the errors of the way of this government and what we've done to get to this point. And I want to thank my colleagues: Andy Iwanchuk, Deb Higgins from Moose Jaw, Sandra Morin, and Kevin Yates, and many others who aren't here today but who were in this House, spent a lot of time making the case that this was absolutely the wrong thing to do, the wrong thing to do, and that in fact this government at some point will end up having to do the right thing. Somebody will make them do the right thing. And of course that somebody was the Supreme Court of Canada.

And I think all through this we should remember, we should remember that this committee and this work here was court ordered. It was not a consultation piece. We did not go to the Supreme Court for guidance. This government was forced to go to the Supreme Court because of how wrong they were proceeding in legislation when it came to essential services.

But, Mr. Speaker, this is so meaningful. I think that it's so important. And it is ironic that today we start out with the Premier defending the executives from SaskPower. But clearly if there's apology needed, if there is an apology needed, it's for the thousands of workers here in Saskatchewan that this government trampled their rights until they got to the Supreme Court of Canada, for eight years. Eight years, acted so improperly in terms of respecting their rights.

And we have not heard a single word from this government — not from the Minister of Labour, not from the Premier, not from

the Minister of Justice — at all about admitting that they were wrong and that they apologize to the people of Saskatchewan for this ideological adventure that they took starting back in 2007. And I know some members over there said they would never do it, and here we are eight years later. And here we are with a bill that could have happened eight years ago if this government had taken advice from the people involved.

I mean, it's so ironic today that we have a letter that one minister will hold up from the IBEW, but eight years ago they had many, many, many letters about how wrong they were on Bill 5. But they disregarded them. They disregarded them and went bullheaded into this Bill 5, and here we are. Here we are. And they continued that attitude for eight long years, eight long years where we could have done so many others things.

[14:30]

And yet I find it's ironic. I find it ironic that the Minister of Energy and the Premier will hold up a letter from IBEW and talk about it as if all of a sudden they found the road to Damascus. Here they have been saved, and all of a sudden they are paying attention to labour, where for eight long years we've seen such a disregard for anything that came from labour. And whether that was, of course, Bills 5 and 6, and then we had so many bills in between. And then we had the employment Act, where they disregarded the words from labour. And finally they were forced to, forced to.

Now, I don't know. It'll be interesting to see . . . The question I have really is, because there's been no apology, no remorse, they can pass this legislation. But because they are the employers, how will they approach this legislation when it comes to bargaining? Will they actually work in the spirit of how the committee laid it out or will they act as they have seemed to have acted before?

And really, what's interesting is that the Premier has said, and many times he's said, the best indicator of future performance is past performance. How people act in the past will be how they will act in the future. And I think this will be the question for us to see, whether or not this government will continue to act in a bullheaded ideological fashion when it comes to unions. They hold up IBEW from down in Estevan, and fair enough. They've got concerns. That's fair enough, and they're very free to write a letter, and we'll be responding.

But, Mr. Speaker, I just find it passing strange that all of a sudden, on the road to Damascus, they have now been holding up labour letters. They didn't do it when CUPE [Canadian Union of Public Employees] was concerned about the laundry facilities in P.A. They sure didn't do it. They dismissed the concerns and they closed that down, and now we have K-Bro and the loss of many, many, tens if not hundreds of union jobs there in that industry of laundry. So, Mr. Speaker, I find this very, very odd indeed.

And so we look at this bill, and we will have questions in committee.

But I really want to talk about the issues that we have today because of what has happened with this legislation in Bill 183. And we know that the minister . . . You know, it's interesting.

The minister involved today as Minister of Labour of course was involved right from the very beginning and has been intimately involved with this essential services legislation on the path from day one, from day one, because he was the Minister of Justice at the time. And while we've had a change in labour and change in ministers of Justice, we have someone who's been there right from the very beginning.

And he has yet to say anything at all that comes close to being a bit of an apology. I mean, he's been soft spoken about it. He's been very measured in his language. But really, seriously, Mr. Speaker, when we see what has happened over the past eight years, thousands of workers who deserve recognition for what has happened over the past eight years in terms of their loss of rights and no recognition, we should give them some respect. Respect how they work. Respect what they do and how they get their work done, because it's so important that we do that as the House.

And I expect the government will step up at some point, at some point and say something like this: we've been on a grand ideological adventure for the past eight years that didn't need to happen, didn't need to happen at all and, Mr. Speaker, this has been a real, you know, real waste of time and we didn't have to go there. But really, Mr. Speaker, it's been about a government who's been out of touch, been out of touch, who was elected and really went right away to that ideological place when people were telling them, don't do that.

We can get a solution to essential services. We can work out the differences. We can make the system better, but we need to work on this together.

So unfortunately though, the government decided not to go down that road, but in fact they would keep on this ideological route. And really because of this, we have found ourselves in not a great place, in fact a place that we wish we could've been in so much different eight years later.

You know, we've been through three bills now. We've been through Bill 5, Bill 128, now Bill 183. We've been through three court appearances, right up to the Supreme Court of Canada, and we've also had an appearance with the ILO [International Labour Organization] when the SFL, Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, brought this forward to the International Labour Organization in 2009 and '10. And I understand that the government made at least two representations to the ILO. The government was resoundingly called out on how they approached Bills 5 and 6. They said, you need to consult. You need to consult. You cannot unilaterally act in this way, and you need to respect the right to strike.

Ironically, Mr. Speaker, and I don't think the Premier in his plan, his vision, maybe not even in his wildest dreams . . . that he would be the one in Canada to enshrine the right to strike. And in fact it is such irony and, you know, today has been a day of ironies, but here we are again talking about the irony that the Premier of Saskatchewan, the Leader of the Saskatchewan Party, has been the one who has brought this forward to the Supreme Court and forced the Supreme Court to make a ruling on this issue. And here we have the case before us, and in fact now unions enjoy the fact that the right to strike is now enshrined in Canada. And so this is an odd thing.

But, Mr. Speaker, really when this government came to power in 2007, it really had choices about what it could do in the labour world. It chose to go down this ideological path and he chose, the Premier and the government and the cabinet knowingly chose that route knowing that there would be battles; there would be fights. The labour movement clearly would not be happy with this, and rightfully so, and rightfully they took it all the way to the Supreme Court.

But we had opportunities, and I think we've had a missed opportunity for eight years. Eight years we've had and we continue to have the second-worst record in Canada when it comes to injury rates, the second-worst record. And we might as well say the worst. I don't know if it's better to be the second worst or the first worst. To me it's just darned close to being the worst, and it continues to be that way. And you know, Mr. Speaker, and it's funny, the minister will quote me saying that we have to do more because I was a minister prior. Clearly we had to do more, and it wasn't . . . We were trying to do our best when we were in government. But this was a missed opportunity, eight years.

You know, last year, and it was interesting because I did get some flak from the Workers' Comp. I did talk about how I really felt it was time for us to do a refresh.

This government had the opportunity to make some choices in 2007, and I wish we could go back and rewind the film and say, listen, we should make safety in the workplace the number one issue. We hear the Minister of Labour often say and he will say that this is something we need to do more about. And we agree on that. But we got to do more than just agree on it, and we've really got to get down to the nuts and bolts in that.

And I know this government really hung its hat on Mission: Zero. And I said last year, you know, I really feel that we need to take a look at that. We need to take a refresh. And I think we've missed an opportunity. We've missed eight years where, instead of fighting the battle of essential services, where we could have had a committee work that out and be where we are now several years ago. We could have done that. That opportunity was always there. We didn't need to go down the path of fighting it out in the courts. But this government chose to do that and here we are.

But instead, they chose a program in occupational health and safety where we have something that we could really work on, that there needed to be attention, that there needed to be something done about it. It is a crisis. It is a crisis. We have the second-worst record in Canada. And the government will say, well yes, we want to do something about it. But really we have had opportunities to do something about it.

And you know last year, as I said, I called, in the media, for a refresh. And I still feel that way. I feel like we've got to do something. We've got to take a look. Is Mission: Zero actually working? Or did it pick the low-hanging fruit and that's what we've got ourselves in a place where low-hanging fruit has been picked but really the hard parts aren't happening?

We've seen a government that has cut inspections, random inspections and planned inspections, and we called them out on that last fall. We don't know what the results of that have been.

Or in the spring we had questions on that.

But, Mr. Speaker, we're losing opportunities. And what worries me, worries me deeply is here we have a situation at this very time where we have the committee of review going around looking at Workers' Comp. What can we do better in Workers' Comp? Well there's several things we could do better for Workers' Comp, and we can give a long list of that, a long list. But the question really remains, what can we do before people get to Workers' Comp? What can we do there?

We've seen the Workers' Comp, WCB [Workers' Compensation Board], issue a major refund this summer, some \$80 million from their excess surplus account where they've had very good returns on their investments and they've been doing well financially. But they've refunded \$80 million. In fact the pool of money's 140 so it might actually be more than 80, but the press release that I've seen cites \$80 million.

So we're at \$80 million. What could we have done with some of that money? The government often pleads poverty, and now they're saying, and we hear this, that our budgets aren't as strong as they were a year or two years ago because of the price of oil and different commodity prices and the state of the economy. So we have to tighten our belts. That's fair enough. We are aware of the price of oil.

But the one thing that's interesting, and people may not know this: the occupational health and safety funding that goes into the Ministry of Labour is paid for by WCB. So whatever that amount is, WCB will put money into the GRF [General Revenue Fund] and then it will get paid to the occupational health and safety. So this year the budget for occupational health and safety is \$8.3 million — \$8.3 million. And how much are we paying Cenovus? And that's a big question.

So, Mr. Speaker, we've had two pools of money that we could have used: the first, which is interesting, the money that this government chose instead to put into the battle for essential services for eight years. Now this government has said that it's \$160,000. We have yet to see those numbers. I think we may have got some answers today. I'll look and see what they are, but this government has said it's about \$160,000. I think it's got to be much more than that, particularly when you take into account that they're including in their numbers how much the penalty is for paying for the labour side of the bill for going to the Supreme Court. I can't see how you can go to three court appearances, produce three bills and . . . So there's six occasions right there, and we're talking about \$160,000.

I know the minister has been upset when I said that if that's the case, then clearly it wasn't a priority for the Ministry of Justice and Labour. In fact they may have been doing it off the side of the desk because I don't know how else you can do it so cheaply. But we'll wait and see what the numbers are because we haven't seen the numbers. We haven't seen the numbers. They may be available today. We'll see. I did ask for some answers, and we'll see what kind of answers I've got.

[14:45]

But, Mr. Speaker, there's one pool of money, but the government chose to say, I'm not investing that money in

occupational health and safety. I'm investing it in the battle for essential services and the legal costs that are involved with that.

The other pool of money that we have found is the excess surplus earnings from Workers' Comp, some \$140 million. Here's a budget of occupational health and safety of \$8.3 million. If they were to just increase it by 25 per cent, that's \$2 million. That's hardly anything. That's the interest off the \$140 million. That's the interest off that, and that would be 25 per cent more. That could mean 25 per cent more . . . Well we could take a look at what that, you know, whether that would be . . . How many more inspectors would that be? How many more people involved in education would that be? What could you do with 25 per cent? What could you do with 50 per cent? What happens if we were to double it and say, you know what we're going to do, is we're going to have the best safety record in Canada, make that the goal and make it happen through occupational health and safety.

Instead this government has invested . . . And I call it a kitschy little, a kitschy Mission: Zero. Now I know that I've got in trouble for saying that because people say it's much deeper than that, but nobody has really shown me that it's deeper than that. And I haven't gone anywhere. This is where I work, in the legislature. So if there is more to Mission: Zero than their television ads and their meetings with folks, I'd like to know about it.

But you know, if we were really truly committed to safety, I don't think we would be refunding \$80 million. We would be keeping that back and saying to different safety associations and to occupational health and safety, we are going to really invest in people in Saskatchewan. We're not going to every April 28th read off the list of names of who've died. And we get pretty choked up about that. That is a tough day. I get how tough that day is for everybody involved. But I think we really have to take the resolve of that day . . . When we say we're going to do something about it, we really do something about it. We really do something about it. But instead this summer we saw a refund of \$80 million.

Now this is so odd though, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because while they're emptying out the piggy bank, they have a committee of review going around finding out what they can do to improve workers' comp. But Workers' Comp is emptying out their piggy bank right away. So these folks will come back with recommendations about what they can do. And I'm deeply, deeply worried that Worker's Comp will say, we have no money. We have no money. But a few short months ago they were pretty flush. They had some \$80 million that they could give away. So, Mr. Speaker, I am deeply concerned about that. I am deeply concerned about that, that we aren't using the opportunities presented to ourselves.

And here we are some eight years later and we're having this discussion about essential services. And I think that, I hope the government has learned something here. And of course I want to get back to what the Premier said. This does concern me because he says what the best indicator for future actions is past actions. And we've seen this government, when it comes to labour, become very ideologically bound in their decision making. They don't use consultations in a really productive way. These consultations are different because they were

Supreme Court ordered. They were court ordered, so they had to do something by January 30th. The clock is ticking. I mean we'll pass . . . It'll probably be passed some two months before the deadline. Fair enough. But even so, you know, I mean it's interesting how they are really cutting it close.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think I want to just review what I've said. Because I first want to thank all those who've worked before on this issue, who've really forced the hand of this government and made them get to the place where they are today; made them get to the place where they used the common sense of working people who are in these positions, who do play important roles in our lives, who do clean . . . make the highways safe when there's storms, who do provide essential services in the hospitals. So it's just a common sense thing that at the end of the day we would use their expertise. And so here we are, but it's so ironic that it's because of the courts that we are here, and we cannot lose track of that.

And it was so rich in irony that the Premier would stand up today and talk about apologies when he's got a couple of apologies that he's got to make, he's got to make to the people, the working people of Saskatchewan about the fiasco of essential services here in Saskatchewan. This is going to be quite a chapter somebody's going to write in a few years about what happened from 2007 to 2015 in labour history in Saskatchewan when this government decided to go through this ideological battle and really ended up, really ended up in a place that we could have gone right away with some common sense consultations if they were really interested. But when they were elected, they decided to go down that road of an ideological venture that involved three courts, involved three bills. I mean it will be quite the chapter.

But I don't think it's the end of the book because the next chapter is how this government will act, how this government will act. How will it act when it comes to bargaining? Will it respect the people that it's bargaining with? Will it do what's in the Act, in the spirit of the Act, in the spirit of what that committee saw? I mean there's some loose ends maybe that we have questions about, and we'll have questions in committee, and that involves the definitions and timelines and that type of thing. But they can be answered in committee.

But, Mr. Speaker, we are deeply concerned. We are deeply concerned about the next chapter in essential services. Will this government act in the way, in the spirit of this legislation? That's the challenge for this government. We can all pass legislation. But will they actually act in good faith?

But, Mr. Speaker, as I say, it's about choices. It's about priorities and what really matters. And today we've seen the government talk about apologies and commitments to IBEW. And I talked about, in April we'll hear about how we need to do so much more for working people who've died on the job. And we'll hear the minister say in a very meaningful way that he really feels for these folks and these families and that we've got to do better. We've got to do better.

But we see that we've got inspectors doing less inspections. We don't know if there's all the positions filled in the department of occupational health and safety. We know that — and this is the irony again, you know, Mr. Speaker, this is the irony that we've

seen over the past 10 years — the workforce that the WCB covers has grown from 300,000 to some 400,000. That's 33 per cent. It's grown by 33 per cent. You would think that that alone would demand a bigger occupational health and safety budget. You'd think that by itself would be a reason for this government to say, we can't operate occupational health and safety on \$8 million. We've got to have 10. We've got to have 12 million. And we know WCB's got it. We know they've got it, and we can just take a look at their excess earning surplus, which they're giving back to the employers. And it wouldn't . . . It would hardly put a dent in it.

So, Mr. Speaker, we will be looking at this bill. We'll have questions. But I hope my message to the minister: take a look at Mission: Zero. Is it actually working? Take a look at occupational health and safety. Put a real investment into it. I know that they're probably putting together their budgets as we speak, or should be, because I know that the election is coming up, but government must continue on, must continue on.

But we can't operate when we know the working force here in Saskatchewan is growing so significantly and particularly by those who are covered by WCB. So we really need to make some different choices. And the real choice we've got to make here in Saskatchewan is really to invest in eliminating workplace injuries and deaths, and we've got to make that commitment. And we can't have a kitschy saying anymore, Mission: Zero. You've got to take a look at that.

But, Mr. Speaker, I hope the minister will take some time and reflect on the past eight years, where they've gone, how they've acted, and what are they going to do. I hope that there's a real change, a real change in their attitude, that they will bargain in good faith with those who are involved in essential services, using this legislation. That's the key. They've got to bargain in good faith. And will they do that? Will they do that? That's the next chapter.

And will they make a commitment, a real commitment to make sure we eliminate workplace injuries and deaths and use the resources this government has? Because they do have resources, and they can't plead poverty in that because there are resources for that. They have the money. They can do it. They can get the inspectors. They can do the education. And we know that's the thing to do.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I know that there are many other bills that we want to get to today. These are my thoughts on Bill 183. We will have lots of questions in committee, and we're looking forward to having that. And so with that, Mr. Speaker, I'm willing to see this bill go to committee.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the Minister of Education that Bill No. 183, *The Saskatchewan Employment (Essential Services) Amendment Act* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Law Clerk and Parliamentary Counsel: — Second reading of

this bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that this bill be referred to the Committee on Human Services.

The Speaker: — This bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Human Services.

Bill No. 187

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Stewart that **Bill No. 187** — *The Saskatchewan Farm Security Amendment Act, 2015* be now read a second time.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Good to stand today, take my place, and join debate on Bill No. 187, *The Saskatchewan Farm Security Amendment Act, 2015*.

Just a few comments off the top by way of declaring my interest in the subject, Mr. Speaker, and then we'll get into the substance of the bill itself. But certainly farm land and the importance of that, not just to the present day in Saskatchewan but certainly to the history of the province and where we come from, how we regard ourselves as people in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, it's certainly a real touchstone as regards the Saskatchewan identity.

For the McCall family, they'd first proved up a quarter out in Montmartre country in 1883, and the quarter section that my father was raised on was first proved up in 1907. And in point of fact, Mr. Speaker, that quarter section of land is still in the McCall family and the old neighbours, the Procyks, they've continued to make a good go of life on the farm and they do a fine job bringing in the crop off of that quarter section of land.

So you know, when different items come before us in this legislature, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure all of us have different sort of things that come to mind or different experiences that we draw upon. And certainly for me standing in a debate such as this, I am very much thinking about that quarter section of land, that three-room farm house that my father was raised in, had his bed right by the stove, and just the way that the years have come and gone and all the different — some of them wrenching, some of them beneficial — all the different changes that have been undergone in the last 100 years-plus on that quarter section of farm land, Mr. Speaker. I think about the way that it's impacted by the different things around climate change. I think about the flood that drove my grandma and my dad in off the farm in the '50s to the city to come make a new life there. And I think about our cousins that have still persisted and made a living off of the land, and the way that again so many others have come in off the farm and moved on to different things, or the way that the size of a farm has grown ever larger.

[15:00]

When my dad was a teenager, his father, my grandfather,

grandmother, they farmed their home quarter and they rented out a quarter from one of the neighbours. And that half section of land provided a living. And if you think about it, Mr. Speaker, in terms of a half section of land, it's a fraction of some of the holdings that are out there these days and what constitutes a viable, economic farm operation in these modern times.

And certainly land is, land is not just valuable to the people of Saskatchewan in terms of their heritage, in terms of, you know, how we define ourselves, but that land is also seeing a real dollar value increase. And we've seen different passes at that, Mr. Speaker, where the values have gone up, gone down, but certainly farm land in my adult life is on a fair upswing.

And the questions around how the global economy impacts who has control of Saskatchewan farm land and balancing that off with investments and the ability for different dollars to come in from out of province and be put to use is a question that has grown in complexity as well, Mr. Speaker.

So the way that translates into the question of farm land ownership and who has control of Saskatchewan farm land has been an interesting one. And certainly the way that we've seen that addressed by this government of the last number of years as well has been interesting. The talk that you hear on coffee row and out in the different farm gates in terms of what's happening with farm ownership and who owns those farms, Mr. Speaker, rose to such a point where the government a couple years back appointed a special investigator to look into it, into the situation, and we've yet to see the final report come forward from that investigator. But the fact that that did not put the matter to bed but instead necessitated another review, another consultation with the public more broadly, and that alongside the situation we had an entity such as the Canadian Pension Plan Investment Board buying up 40 000 hectares, 100,000 acres of land, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And certainly I'd know that Mr. Deputy Speaker is quite familiar not just with the theory of all of this but certainly from the business end of it and what this means for neighbours and the towns and communities of Last Mountain-Touchwood.

So I know that this is something that has had an increasing interest throughout the province and increasing activity perhaps coming in ways that had not been previously anticipated, that again brings forward the need for a response in terms of the regulator, which is of course the province of Saskatchewan.

But the legislation itself, so again, Mr. Speaker, I'm interested to see this legislation come forward. And again I represent a constituency, have the privilege of representing a constituency in the inner city of Regina. But again in Saskatchewan you're never too far away from the farm gate. You're never too far out of the countryside, Mr. Speaker. So we all have an interest in what this particular piece of legislation is bringing forward.

In terms of the changes itself, in terms of again trying to balance off investment dollars flowing into the province but keeping farm land accessible to Saskatchewan farmers, ranchers, producers, we'll be interested to see the changes and how they impact that situation.

In terms of giving the Farm Land Security Board greater teeth and more authority, in terms of the work that it has set out before it to carry out in policing the farm land ownership regime in Saskatchewan, we'll be interested to see how that goes.

We'll be interested to see the fealty between those 3,000-plus Saskatchewan people that responded to consultations in terms of what they had to say about foreign investment, foreign involvement in the province of Saskatchewan, or institutional buyers such as pension plans and how that impacts the situation in Saskatchewan.

In terms of the amendments in the legislation around pension plans and administrators of pension fund assets and trusts ineligible to buy farm land, in terms of the more closely defining "having an interest in farm land" to include any type of interest or benefit that's normally associated with the ownership of land, and in terms of the purchase of farm land requiring financing to be through a financial institution registered to do business in Canada, or with a Canadian resident, we're glad to see the different clarifications that have been made there and we'll be interested to see whether or not that is in fact how it plays out.

So it's an interesting process, Mr. Speaker, and it's particularly interesting for a government that has a self-perception of it as, you know, bullishly free enterprise and interested in market approaches to just about everything. But interesting to note, Mr. Speaker, that on a matter as fundamental, of fundamental importance to the province of Saskatchewan, that this government of course is quite happy to intervene in the market, that this government is quite happy to move to regulation and using that collective wherewithal that we have, that we vest in the Government of Saskatchewan, to stand in the way of what would be a classic free-market approach to a matter such as this.

And it's not the first time we've seen that kind of inconsistency, Mr. Speaker. And I guess if it actually makes sense, then fair enough. We just hope that that gets referenced when we hear the lathered speeches about the virtues of free enterprise later on down the agenda, that kind of more accurate, fuller recognition of just the complexity of life as it is. And you know, just because you're a hammer doesn't mean everything's a nail. And in terms of having a right wing response to everything, well how that plays out on the ground is sometimes a bit more complicated, a bit more complex. And we see that in the situation that has brought this legislation forward here today.

So I know that I've got other colleagues that have got some interventions they'd like to make in this debate, that would like to get some remarks on the record before it moves on to the committee stage, but at this stage of the game, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 187, *The Saskatchewan Farm Security Amendment Act, 2015*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 187, *The Saskatchewan Farm Security Act, 2015*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 188

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Wyant that **Bill No. 188 — *The Best Value in Procurement Act, 2015*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and as always it's my honour to be able to rise in this Assembly to provide a few thoughts on the bill in question. In this case, it's Bill No. 188 which is entitled *An Act to amend certain Acts respecting Awarding of Contracts*. And just off the top, Mr. Speaker, I mean this is a very short bill. There's basically two sections and all they do is amend part of the highways Act and then they amend a section of *The Public Works and Services Act*. So very clearly an amending bill.

And what tells me that this has been rather hastily thrown together is the fact that there are no explanatory notes for this bill, and the explanation for why there are no explanatory notes was that they're only provided when bills amend existing legislation. The people that prepared this note basically said there are no explanatory notes because it's a new bill. But very clearly it's not a new bill and even in the title itself it says it's *An Act to amend certain Acts respecting Awarding of Contracts*.

So I think hopefully the Ministry of Justice will remedy that because I know that people rely on explanatory notes. I know I certainly do when I take a look at bills that the government is proposing. I look at the explanatory notes to help give context to what is being attempted in the bill itself or certainly in the amendments.

And I think that it really would be important to have explanatory notes on this particular bill because I think it's a little misleading even in terms of its title when it's called *The Best Value in Procurement Act, 2015*. I sort of take issue with the title itself because what I understand, and I'll go through this in my comments today, is that there's really nothing that's changing here in these two sections except that the minister no longer has to go to the Lieutenant Governor in Council when he decides not to accept the lowest bidder. And that's really what this bill is accomplishing, is it's just taking away the intervention of the Lieutenant Governor in Council when the minister decides not to accept the lowest bid.

And we can look at that very carefully here because I think it's important for people to realize. I think this really is a political response to some of the concerns of organizations like the North Saskatoon Business Association. And this is something that we know. We know that the north Saskatchewan business association has been very concerned about the awarding of contracts and the lowest tender as being the sole benchmark for the Department of Highways or the Department of Public Works.

So they've brought those concerns to our attention. They've brought them to the attention of the public, and certainly

they've brought them to the minister's attention, the Minister Responsible for SaskBuilds who is the minister that's introducing this particular bill. I guess he's doing it maybe as a Justice bill. I'm not sure because Highways and public works are the bills that are affected by this change, you know. Obviously the Minister of Highways and the minister responsible for public works would be also very closely involved with this. But it was brought forward by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

So we're assuming that he's taking responsibility for these changes as a result of his responsibilities with SaskBuilds. The connection there, of course, being the approach this government has taken to public infrastructure and that being the wholehearted, whole-scale adoption of the P3 [public-private partnership] model which we've had lots to say about on this side of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker, and certainly our concern about the ideological leap this government has taken into that particular pool, the P3 pool, without sort of taking a close look at each project and then determining whether that is in fact the best model.

Certainly we know for a lot of these projects . . . And our former prime minister was happy to provide federal dollars but only when a P3 model was adopted. So it's certainly a compromising situation for federal dollars to be forwarded for projects, and certainly I think provinces have been forced to adopt that model simply to access the federal dollars that they need to carry out those projects. So SaskBuilds is certainly following along with the lead of the former prime minister. We'll see what happens with the new government and their approach to infrastructure dollars, but I certainly hope it's not . . . We see infrastructure dollars being tied and married to the P3 approach which is obviously why this minister who is responsible for SaskBuilds is the one making these changes.

Public tendering, lowest bidder, is presented in the existing clauses. And what I want to do right now is take a look closely at the clauses that exist currently, before these amendments. And I'll talk about highways and transportation first.

So the two important clauses we're talking about there is section 53 and section 55. Now the Act only amends section 55, but it's tied closely to section 53, so I'll just talk a little bit about the existing section 53 of *The Highways and Transportation Act*. The name of this section is called "Tenders required for public improvements." So there we go. Right away we know this is talking about the requirement for a tender for public improvements. And 53(1), this is not being changed, 53(1) says:

. . . the minister shall call for tenders by public advertisement or other public notice for the construction of all public improvements to be undertaken by the minister.

[15:15]

This is for highways. Secondly in subsection (2) it says:

The minister is not required to call for public tenders where, having regard to the nature of the work, the size of the undertaking, the urgency with which the work is required or any other prescribed circumstance, [so there's

our secret language for regulations; so there might be some other reason] the minister is of the opinion that the work can be carried out more expeditiously or economically:

- (a) by contract without tender; or
- (b) by employees of the department.

And there is an important distinction between this clause and the one for public works, which I will talk about when I get to the public works part. So this isn't being changed.

Section 53 says, the minister shall call for tenders by public advertisement in all cases except for the situations where there are good reasons not to go with a public tender. So that's not being changed.

Now section 55, which is being changed, reads as follows, and the marginal note or the headline for this particular clause says, "Authority for awarding contract to other than lowest bidder." So this is what is right now. It says:

Where, in the minister's opinion, it is not expedient or in the public interest to award the contract for construction of a public improvement to the lowest bidder, [this is the Minister of Highways] the minister shall report the matter to and obtain the authority of the Lieutenant Governor in Council before awarding the contract to any person other than the lowest bidder.

So current in the law the minister can choose not to go with the lowest bidder. That already exists in the current law, and that's a very important point that needs to be made. What this section says is, in order for the minister to not award it to the lowest bidder, outside of those expeditious circumstances we talked about, the minister would have to go to the Lieutenant Governor in Council. That's the current state of the law.

So now let's take a look at what this bill is attempting to do. This is an amendment of section 55 of *The Highways and Transportation Act*. It's taking out that section where you have to go to the Lieutenant Governor in Council if you don't want to give it to the lowest bidder. It is saying, in those cases, here is what the minister shall do. I'll read the section. The proposed section reads:

55(1) Subject to subsection (2), the minister shall:

- (a) obtain competitive prices for the construction of all public improvements through the public tender process mentioned in section 53.

The minister still needs to go through the public process. Nothing's changing there:

- (b) award the contract to the bidder whose bid, in the opinion of the minister, offers the best value taking into consideration all or any of the factors described in the tender documents.

And then subsection (2) of the clause says:

The minister is not required to accept any tender.

So what we see is a slight shift here. I don't think this is earth-shattering or groundbreaking. What we see is the minister, rather than if they don't want to take the lowest bid — and in the current section it's just, it reads, it's not expedient or in the public interest, she can go the Lieutenant Governor in Council — right now this change says if it's the opinion of the minister. So no longer does the minister need to go to Lieutenant Governor in Council of executive government. In the minister's own opinion, she can take into account what is considered to be the best value.

Now what I really have a problem with is nothing in this bill tells us what best value is. There's a reference here that says best value is described in the tender documents. So each tender that goes out now has to describe what best value would be and what would be considered. To me, this creates a whole lot of uncertainty. If I'm somebody trying to bid on those contracts, I'm in shaky ground now because there'll be something about best value described in the tender document itself.

So first of all, the people drafting the tender documents have to be very clear in their own mind what best value will be. There's no guidelines in the legislation at all. There's no requirement for regulations to provide for the definition of best value. So to me, this is a crap shoot, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I have no idea how this best value's going to be established. It's going to be on an ad hoc basis. It's certainly going to be at the discretion of the ministry. It may be within discretion of particular public officials who may differ from one desk to the next in terms of what they feel best value will be.

I'm just going to quickly go into *The Public Works and Services Act* amendment as well because it's very, very similar. These clauses that exist in *The Public Works and Services Act* are very, very similar to the ones that are in *The Highways and Transportation Act*. So the point there, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that it's exactly the same changes that are being considered for public works. And I think . . . Well it's obvious. We also have the same concerns in terms of who decides what best value is. That's a large gap.

The only changes that are really being made here is that no longer is the minister required to go to Lieutenant Governor in Council. That itself is somewhat concerning because it provides a lot more discretion within the minister's office without the scrutiny of executive government. And we're talking about perhaps a more subjective awarding of contracts.

So yes again . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . The member from Moose Jaw wants to know what we're talking about. I love it when he hollers that out because it gives us an opportunity to have him stop and listen and perhaps maybe understand exactly what we're talking about. If he's always asking the question, you've got to wonder what the problem is. But in the case of these changes here, I think the member from Moose Jaw needs to understand that we are opening up a lot of discretion within the ministry itself and certainly within individual interpretations of public servants who are drafting the tender documents. We are also creating an uncertainty with the people that are responding to these calls for tender. They're not going to know what best value means, or they're going to have to interpret

what a particular person has inserted in the tender document as to what best value is.

We know that there are different ways to sort of establish a certainty. There are grids. We've even proposed a grid ourselves in the bill that my colleague from Regina Rosemont introduced into the Legislative Assembly asking for transparency and accountability and asking for fairness in procurement. Actually there's two bills I'm talking about, not just one. It's two. But the one on fairness is one that everybody needs to know what the playing field is. And I'm concerned that this was a bill that was very hastily put together at the last minute, that the government felt it needed a political response to concerns being raised by, valid concerns being raised by the North Saskatoon Business Association. That's important as well.

But you can tell that this was a very hastily put together concept. There hasn't been a lot of thought put into it. And we're certainly going to have a number of questions in committee about how this is exactly going to work because it seems like there's a lot of uncertainty that's being created by this change.

So first of all, I question the fact why there are no explanatory notes. There should be explanatory notes. I also question why this bill wasn't introduced by the Minister of Highways or the Minister of Public Works. It certainly affects their bailiwick. And why the Minister for SaskBuilds was the one anointed to introduce this bill provides some questions for us to think about in terms of where Highways is going and where Public Works is going.

Certainly the Minister of Highways and the Minister of Public Works are the ones responsible for the implementation of these clauses, and they're being given much more discretion and much more power under these clauses than they currently have because they no longer have to go to executive government. That's a big shift in authority. It's a big shift in discretion. And plus there's no definition of best value in this bill, none whatsoever.

I just wanted to make a couple comments about the Minister of Justice's introduction to this bill. And again I'm not sure why the Minister for SaskBuilds is introducing this, but he's saying this is a significant change, that somehow inserting that term best value is a significant change. Really? The minister already had the ability to do that in the previous Act, but they would have to go through Lieutenant Governor in Council.

So the change he's talking about is not the insertion of best value. That was already within the bailiwick of the minister. It's whether or not they accept the lowest tender and would have to go to Lieutenant Governor in Council. So I think the examination of the minister's comments will reveal that. And certainly I believe in committee, we're going to have to take a very close look at exactly what the changes are.

The minister goes on in his third paragraph of his introductory comments, and I think this also raises cause for alarm. What he says there is "... the problem with looking at only the price is that it overlooks a number of other important factors ...". Absolutely, and that's what we've been saying all along. And I

know that that's what the North Saskatoon Business Association was saying.

But he goes on to describe best value, and there's one word he uses to describe it that's very concerning. He says it might include ... There is nothing definitive at all in this bill about what best value is, and I think that's what's really concerning. He says it might include price. It might include product quality. It might include vendor experience. It might include their performance history and their demonstrated ability to deliver what's being promised. It might include a vendor's safety practices. It might include the potential for innovation. And this is all about how best value is going to be determined. But of course it's going to be determined by the person who's drafting the tender documents.

And I submit to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is going to create all kinds of confusion. It's going to create all kinds of concern within the construction industry. And it's going to create concerns within the ministries because whoever's crafting the tender documents are going to have to take this long list of what might be determined as best value, and it's going to be I think a very vague and uncontrolled maybe ... There'll be a lack of control on how best value is really determined. I think that's going to cause a lot of concerns for contractors.

And certainly we'll be keeping a very close eye on this as we move forward to the election itself. We'll see what happens after the election, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But you know, for the brief period of time this law will be in effect before the election, we're certainly going to have to keep a close eye on how these tender documents are being prepared, how best value is going to be defined by the two ministries, what the role of SaskBuilds is in terms of those contracts.

The minister went on to say that "Criteria for each competition are selected in advance by knowledgeable staff to meet the specific needs of each project." I hope that's true. I hope that is what's going to happen. We know that this requires a high level of sophistication that will go beyond, I think, what's currently happening in the tender documents. So that's something else we'll have to keep an eye on.

And for some reason, Mr. Speaker, the minister saw this bill, small changes in highways and public works procedures, to remove the Lieutenant Governor in Council. And then he leapt into a long speech about P3s [public-private partnership], Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And again I do question sort of the connection in his mind between how we, as government obtain our contracts, and how we do it in a public and transparent way, to all of a sudden a speech about the P3s. And he was patting the Premier on the back and going on about the creation of SaskBuilds and the disappearance, I guess, of Priority Saskatchewan. So I think we can clearly see the ideological link that the minister is attaching to this type of procurement. I don't think the connection's there though, and I'm disappointed that the Minister of Justice saw fit to make those comments that really aren't in relation at all to what the intent of this particular bill is.

So I think in summary, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I question why best value is not being defined in this Act. I question whether

this is a significant change. I don't think it's significant in how this government does business. The only major change is of course the minister now having the authority to accept something other than the lowest bidder without having to go to Lieutenant Governor in Council. That's the major change here.

And thirdly, I question why there aren't explanatory notes available for the public. These are going to be looked at far into the future, long after the bill is introduced, unless of course it gets reversed by the next government. But in terms of what's out there, people do rely on explanatory notes, and I think it would be helpful for Justice to take a second look at this one and provide those kinds of explanatory notes.

So at this point, I believe other of my colleagues are going to want to comment on this bill as well. So I would like to move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 188, *An Act to amend certain Acts respecting Awarding of Contracts*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Nutana has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 188. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 15:29.]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Duncan	7583
Broten	7583
Moe	7583
Nilson	7583
Lawrence	7583
Elhard	7584
Draude	7584
Docherty	7584
Cox	7592

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Forbes	7584
Vermette	7584
Belanger	7585
McCall	7585

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Provision of Medical Coverage	
Forbes	7585
Diabetes Awareness Month	
Kirsch	7585
Sproule	7585
Dresses for Haiti	
Wilson	7586
Bursary Honours the Memory of Three Young Sons	
Elhard	7586
Community Living Association of Saskatoon 60th Anniversary	
Tochor	7586
National Down Syndrome Awareness Week	
Merriman	7587

QUESTION PERIOD

Carbon Capture and Storage Project

Broten	7587
Wall	7587
Boyd	7588
Sproule	7589

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Merriman	7592
----------------	------

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 183 — *The Saskatchewan Employment (Essential Services) Amendment Act, 2015*

Forbes	7592
Cheveldayoff (referral to committee)	7596

Bill No. 187 — *The Saskatchewan Farm Security Amendment Act, 2015*

McCall	7596
--------------	------

Bill No. 188 — *The Best Value in Procurement Act, 2015*

Sproule	7598
---------------	------

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