



FOURTH SESSION - TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

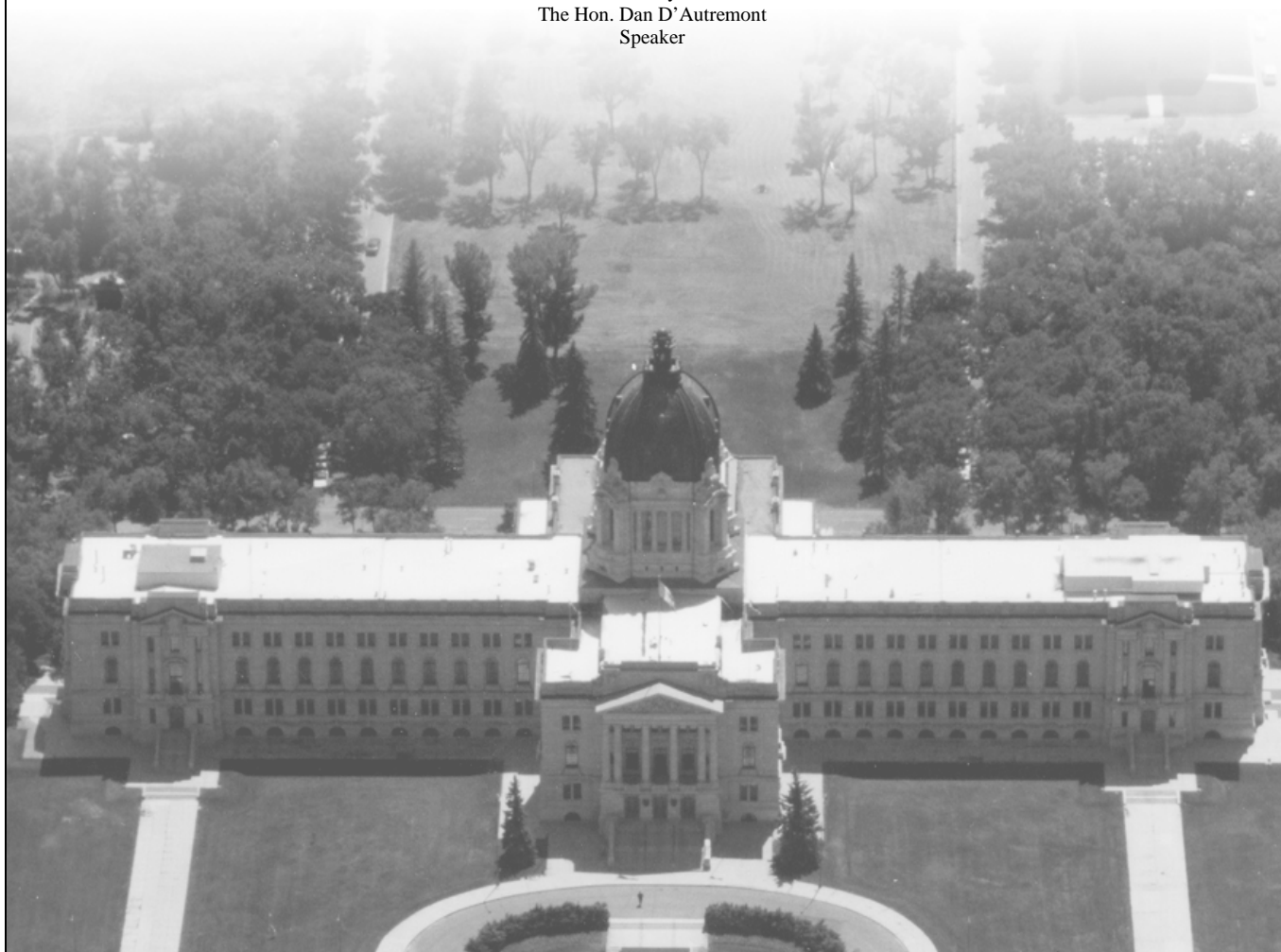
of the

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
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Makowsky, Gene	SP	Regina Dewdney
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Moe, Hon. Scott	SP	Rosthern-Shellbrook
Morgan, Hon. Don	SP	Saskatoon Southeast
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Phillips, Kevin	SP	Melfort
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Ross, Laura	SP	Regina Qu'Appelle Valley
Sproule, Cathy	NDP	Saskatoon Nutana
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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 member for Saskatoon Greystone.

Mr. Norris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, I'm delighted to stand today to introduce two guests in your gallery. Both have had a really significant role to play in the creation of a new documentary called *A Chance to Speak*. And so I'd like all members to welcome Vernon Boldick and Faith Eagle Slippery to their legislature.

Vernon has called Saskatoon home for the last eight years and is the producer and director for the film, *A Chance to Speak*. And Faith Eagle Slippery is actively involved with STR8 UP, an organization to support individuals who want to separate from being in gangs. And I'll have a chance to speak more about the film in the next few moments, and in the interregnum, I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming both of these guests to their legislature.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the official opposition, I too would like to extend our welcome to Vern and Faith for coming here today. I look forward to speaking to you later, but really I want to encourage all members — and I know you're looking for ways to spread the viewership of your documentary — encourage all MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] to encourage people in their communities to have a look at this documentary. It's a very powerful piece of filmmaking, and I want to congratulate you on that and welcome both of you to your Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Immigration.

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to welcome a friend of mine, an acquaintance and friend of many in this Assembly, sitting in your gallery, the Hon. Jonathan Denis who joins us today. Jon was a long-time friend back to our days in law school at the University of Saskatchewan, and I point out Jon was a good Saskatchewan boy as well. Jon was a former Alberta member of the Legislative Assembly for a number of years, former minister of urban affairs and a former minister of Justice. So I'd ask all members to join with me in welcoming Jonathan Denis to the Assembly today.

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

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the member in welcoming Jonathan Denis to the legislature. I remember many years ago when he was working here for people on this side of the House; I think it was how it worked then. But also more importantly he travelled, together with a

number of us members of the legislature, on the parliamentary exchange in Germany. We learned many things, and we got to figure out some of the politics of our provinces, and I enjoyed that trip. We had many things, so very much welcome. Also welcome to a Luther College grad.

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

Hon. Mr. Docherty: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave for an extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Docherty: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to introduce some special guests seated in your gallery today: Jess Moskaluke, Saskatchewan country music artist and Mike Denney, the president and owner of MDM Recordings Inc. Give us a wave there. There they are.

Mr. Speaker, Jess Moskaluke is quite a distinguished young woman who has been making a significant mark on the country music industry: 2014 Canadian Country Music Association award for Female Artist of the Year, in addition to receiving two additional nominations, Rising Star of the Year and Interactive Artist of the Year. A notable performer on the 2014 CCMA [Canadian Country Music Association] award show live broadcast, her single, "Cheap Wine and Cigarettes," quickly became the highest charting song on the iTunes top 200 singles chart for any Canadian artist.

With this second single off her new 10-track album, *Light Up the Night*, she also achieved gold record status in August 2014, becoming the first Canadian female solo country artist to surpass 40,000-plus downloads for a song since Shania Twain. Jess also had a single climb into the top country's chart in the last week, reaching the number three spot in airplay and number four in sales among Canadian artists.

She's a resident of Rocanville, and I know we here in Saskatchewan are proud of her and her great work. True to her Saskatchewan roots, she participated in the Telemiracle CTV [Canadian Television Network Ltd.] broadcast which raised over \$5 million for the Kinsmen Foundation and to aid Saskatchewan residents to access special-needs equipment and medical assistance. She also helped Saskatchewan causes.

And we have been able to support her. Creative Saskatchewan has provided funding support to Jess to assist in her efforts to grow as an artist. Helping creative producers like Jess expands our creative sectors not only here in the province but also to reach into national and international markets.

I hope Jess continues to make Saskatchewan's name in the industry. I know we are all proud of what she's accomplished. We look forward to seeing what she'll continue to do in the future. I ask all members to join me in welcoming Jess

Moskaluke and Mike Denney to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And on behalf of the official opposition, I want to join in with the minister to welcome Jess and Mike to the Legislative Assembly. We have certainly been following your career with great interest and great pride and are very impressed with the long list of accomplishments that you've already achieved. So we want to wish you all the best. Keep on making Saskatchewan proud, and a great big welcome to your Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Moosomin.

Mr. Toth: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the west gallery, I'd like to introduce a young gentleman who farms in the Wolseley area. He is also an ag consultant. But he's also the newly elected candidate for the Saskatchewan Party in the upcoming provincial election, and I know following the election he will have more of an opportunity to meet more of the members of this Legislative Chamber. So would you join me in welcoming to the Chamber today Steven Bonk.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Canora-Pelly.

Mr. Krawetz: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to introduce a young lady seated in the west gallery. Mr. Speaker, Jeri-Lee Romaniuk has joined us this afternoon in the gallery opposite. Jeri-Lee works for a company called ColasCanada, an Alberta company that provides resources to many companies across Canada. Most importantly of course, some of the subsidiaries that she works with are in Estevan, they're in Swift Current, and they're in North Battleford. Along with that she of course works with all of the municipalities in Saskatchewan whether they be urban or rural, so a pretty strong connection to Saskatchewan.

But, Mr. Speaker, most importantly her late father and I are first cousins and the Romaniuk family grew up just a couple of miles away from where I live on the family farm. So I've known that family all my life, and it is with pleasure that I would like all members to welcome and introduce to you Jeri-Lee Romaniuk.

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

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to this Assembly, I'd like to join with the member from Canora-Pelly and welcome Jeri Romaniuk to the Legislative Assembly. I first got to know Jeri a number of years ago when I had the privilege of serving as Minister of Highways and Infrastructure. At that time Jeri was the chief of staff to the Hon. Luke Ouellette, the Minister of Transportation in Alberta.

What I didn't know at that time, Mr. Speaker, was that she was related to the member from Canora-Pelly. I found that out in just the last year or two. But, Mr. Speaker, I shouldn't have been surprised. They have a lot of characteristics in common. They're both intelligent. They're both hard-working, and they

both have a passion for politics. But luckily, Mr. Speaker, the member from Canora-Pelly has some characteristics that Jeri doesn't share. First of all, she's much softer spoken. And second, Mr. Speaker, fortunately she's not a Toronto Maple Leafs fan.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask all members to please welcome Jeri to our Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for support for GSAs [gender and sexuality alliance] in Saskatchewan schools. And we know this province is lagging behind other provinces in securing the rights of gender- and sexually diverse students, and we know that GSAs offer supports for gender- and sexually diverse students to assert their needs and have their voices heard, and these GSAs offer opportunities to improve attendance and retention rates, generate meaningful relationships at schools, and reduce homophobic and transphobic bullying. I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on 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 as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition come from Moose Jaw, Mossbank, and Saskatoon. I do so present. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition Whip.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition asking for this government's support for a new long-term care facility for Creighton and Denare Beach. 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 and northern communities need immediate attention from this government, and many residents cannot provide 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 in the Creighton and Denare Beach area.

As in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

It is signed by many good people of Creighton and Denare

Beach. I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise once again to present a petition as it relates to cellphone coverage for northern Saskatchewan. 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. Mr. Speaker, this would provide support to the northern industries as well as mitigate safety concerns associated with living in the remote North.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I've mentioned time and time again, this petition has been signed from people from all throughout Saskatchewan. On this particular page they're signed from Saskatoon, from Big River, and from Dore Lake. And I so present.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise again today to present a petition in support of better seniors' care. Mr. Speaker, the petitioners point out that it was this government who removed regulations requiring a minimum standard of care. They talk about families speaking out about short-staffing that's resulted in a lack of staff to help their loved ones with basic needs while in care facilities. And the petitioners talk about chronic understaffing in seniors' care facilities that's led to things like unanswered calls for help and being left on a toilet for hours on end and infrequent bathing. I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the provincial government to immediately undertake meaningful steps to improve the quality of seniors' care, including creating more spaces and more choices for seniors; ensuring higher standards of care in public facilities, private facilities, and home care; ensuring appropriate staffing levels in seniors' care facilities; restoring regulations that provide minimum standards of care; and providing more support to help seniors remain independent in their own homes for as long as they desire.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens from Earl Grey, Strasbourg, Southey, Canora, and Central Butte. I so submit.

The Speaker: — I recognize the government . . . excuse me, the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. Always nice to be considered for a promotion. I rise to present a petition from citizens in the province of Saskatchewan who are concerned about the high cost of post-secondary education here in the province of Saskatchewan. 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 rates.

Mr. Speaker, this particular page of the petition is signed by citizens from Regina and Silton. I so present.

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

[13:45]

Mr. Nilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to present a petition in support of better schools. And the prayer reads as follows:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on this government to immediately stop ignoring schools and start prioritizing students by capping classroom sizes, increasing support for students, and developing a transparent plan to build and repair our schools.

And these petitions are signed by people from Saskatoon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Agribition and Funding for Evraz Place Facility

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Many people across our province and in this Assembly have had the privilege to tour around the Agribition exhibits and barns. As an exhibitor with my family for over 25 years, we've brought many animals to Agribition and housed them in the barns on the Evraz grounds.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday was a great day for exhibitors and attendees of Agribition and all future events being held at Evraz Place. I attended an event where it was announced that the Regina Hotel Association donated \$3 million, and Canadian Western Agribition an additional \$1 million towards the construction of the International Trade Centre at Evraz Place. The funding adds to the \$33 million announced in July from our government, the Government of Canada, and the city of Regina.

Mr. Speaker, the Regina Hotel Association is a non-profit organization that advances the interests of Regina's destination hotels. They are a dynamic part of our growing tourism sector.

The Canadian Western Agribition is the largest livestock show in the country and is a powerful and constant advocate of the growth, development, and interests within the agriculture sector of our province in Canada. Yesterday was also the official kickoff to this year's Agribition. A reminder to everyone that Agribition will run from Nov. 23rd to the 28th this year.

Mr. Speaker, I want to, and invite all members of this

Assembly, to thank both the Regina Hotel Association and Canadian Western Agribition for their generous donation to this great project. We should all look forward to seeing the new opportunities this great new 150,000-square-foot facility will bring when the doors open in 2017. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MacKenzie Gala 2015

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Friday, October 16th, it was my pleasure to attend MacKenzie Gala 2015, also attended by members from Wascana Plains, Coronation Park, as well as the federal member for Wascana. This was an exceptional event: gourmet food by Crave Kitchen and Wine Bar, live music, and of course amazing works of art that were graciously donated and sold through live and silent auction.

The funds raised at the gala support Saskatchewan's largest public art gallery, which offers original art exhibitions from Saskatchewan, Canada, and around the world. The gala was held in the beautiful atrium of the T.C. Douglas Building, and one of the highlights was the exceptional OrangeCrush installation installed by the Open Design Collective.

I'd like to thank the gala sponsors, attendees, and specifically the very impressive gala organizing committee which included Chair Amanda Baker, Leah Brodie, Anthony Kiendl, Brittany Krivoshein, Jackie Lindenbach, Johanna Salloum, Wanda Schmockel, Gina Sebastian, Lisa Semple, Gerri Ann Siwek, Cydney Toth, and Nadia Williamson.

I'd also like to recognize and thank the board, staff, and volunteers at the MacKenzie Art Gallery for their contributions to our province, and supporters like the Canada Council for the Arts, the Saskatchewan Arts Board, SaskCulture, the city of Regina, and the University of Regina.

I ask all members to join me in extending our thanks and appreciation. Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

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

Connecting Northerners to High-Speed Internet

Ms. Jurgens: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to inform the House that earlier this year SaskTel received approval for assistance from Industry Canada under a federally funded program called Connecting Canadians to further expand development efforts in northern Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, SaskTel will be using the \$7.4 million in funding provided under this program in addition to its own investment of \$2.4 million to expand and enhance access to high-speed broadband for nearly 2,700 homes in northern Saskatchewan.

This project will enable households to receive access to SaskTel's DSL [digital subscriber line] high-speed basic Internet in the following communities and their surrounding areas: Bear Creek, Black Lake, Brabant Lake, Dillon, Canoe Narrows, Clearwater River Dene Nation, Dore Lake, Far,

Fond-du-Lac, Grandmother's Bay, Jans Bay, Missinipe, Patuanak, Red Earth, Shoal Lake, Sled Lake, Southend, Stanley Mission, St. George's Hill, Stony Rapids, Sucker River, Turner Lake, Wadin Bay, Wahpeton, Waterhen Lake, and Wollaston Lake.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend SaskTel for its commitment to expand broadband access to the northern part of our province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Remembering Bill Wuttunee

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, last Friday our country lost a Saskatchewan trailblazer and a strong voice for indigenous people and human rights. His name was Bill Wuttunee, and he passed away on October 30th at age 87.

Mr. Wuttunee was born and raised on the Red Pheasant Cree Nation, just south of North Battleford. He completed his high school education at the Onion Lake Residential School. He went on to attend law school at the University of Saskatchewan, and in 1952, he was the first Aboriginal person to be called to the bar in Western Canada. After finishing law school, Bill Wuttunee worked with Premier Douglas to improve the life of First Nations peoples here in Saskatchewan.

In 1958, he travelled to 56 First Nations across Saskatchewan on a listening tour to see how the provincial government could work to improve the lives of First Nations people. This led to the CCF [Co-operative Commonwealth Federation] government extending the right to vote to First Nations while retaining their status under *The Indian Act*, legislation that paved the way for full voting rights all across Canada.

Bill Wuttunee played a critical role as well in the founding of the National Indian Council, which was a forerunner to the Assembly of First Nations. And later in life, he worked as a key advisor to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and was a key player in helping thousands of residential school survivors to have their stories told.

I ask all members to join me in recognizing the important contributions made by Bill Wuttunee through his life in law, politics, and public service. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Regina Riot Wins Championship

Mr. Makowsky: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to inform the House that on July the 4th the Regina Riot won the Western Women's Canadian Football League championship. The Riot beat the Edmonton Storm 53 to 6 in the final game which was played at Investor's Group field in Winnipeg. The game was a satisfying end to a successful and hard-fought season.

Mr. Speaker, their biggest challenge came a week earlier when the Riot faced their closest rivals and four-time defending champions, the Saskatoon Valkyries, in the Prairie Conference final. In that game, the Riot were leading 28 to 7 early in the

fourth quarter when the Valkyries rallied and the Riot found themselves trailing 29-28 with just over a minute left in the game. The Riot then put together an impressive drive that ended with Morgan Turner kicking a 13-yard, game-winning field goal. This was a major accomplishment for the Riot who had lost each of their four previous conference finals to the dominant Valkyries.

Mr. Speaker, in the final game against Edmonton, the Riot's dominant performance was led by quarterback Aimee Kowalski who threw three touchdown passes to Sami Bray, Claire Dore, and her sister, Alex Kowalski. Running back Carmen Agar rushed for 104 yards, scoring two touchdowns.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating all the Regina Riot players, head coach Sean McCall, general manager Emma Hicks, and all the other team staff on a terrific season and on capturing their first WWCFL [Western Women's Canadian Football League] championship. Thank you.

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

Peacock Tornadoes Win Championship

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Peacock Tornadoes of A.E. Peacock Collegiate in Moose Jaw on winning their fourth straight High School Football League championship. Last Saturday the Peacock Tornadoes took to the field for the league championship title. With a heavy rain the night before, the field conditions were quite unfavourable; in fact, they were pretty mucky. But it didn't take long for the Tornadoes to establish their game.

With a 27-consecutive-game-winning streak on the line, the Peacock Tornadoes set the pace and battled to a 28-14 victory over the Central Cyclones, also of Moose Jaw. Head coach Colin Belsher had this to say after the game: "I'm proud of our guys for grinding it out. We knew it wasn't going to be an easy game."

Mr. Speaker, the Peacock Tornadoes now have their sights set on the provincial title and are hoping to win three straight 3A provincial football championships for the second time in school history. They will face the Regina O'Neill Titans in the 3A provincial semifinal game next Saturday at Mosaic stadium.

I ask members to join in congratulating coach Belsher and the Peacock Tornado players on a hard-fought win and their fourth straight Moose Jaw High School Football League title. Also, Mr. Speaker, we wish them good luck in the provincial semifinal game this Saturday.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

***A Chance to Speak* Documentary**

Mr. Norris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Vern Boldick, Faith Eagle Slippery, and their colleagues are the creators of a compelling documentary, *A Chance to Speak*. The documentary draws on riveting interviews from members of Saskatoon's

homeless population with the aim of delving into their personal experiences and stories.

Mr. Speaker, as the director, Vern was motivated to create the documentary to find out why people are homeless and to help people across this province listen with their hearts to the stories which are so compelling.

At the film's release in September, over 1,000 people gathered at the Roxy Theatre in Saskatoon. They were lined up around the block, both at the 7 o'clock showing and at 9 o'clock. Given this interest, since then, the documentary has been shown at the Dubé Centre in Saskatoon and in Rainbow Cinemas here in Regina.

Mr. Speaker, like Vern and his colleagues, our government takes the issue of fighting poverty very seriously. That's why we've invested more than \$675 million to repair or develop 14,000 housing units across the province. We've doubled emergency shelter spaces in the province and undertaken a number of other initiatives. Although we've taken these concrete steps, we know that there's a lot more to do; hence the significance of this film, *A Chance to Speak*.

Mr. Speaker, I'll ask all members of this Assembly to help congratulate Vern, Faith, and their colleagues on the success of their documentary and the significance of its message. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Planning of Educational Facilities

Mr. Broten: — The Sask Party's P3 [public-private partnership] schools are being built far too small. So they're already, already planning to add a whole bunch of portables to these brand new schools. How can the Premier justify this?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite should have some understanding of how we construct schools in this province. For many years we have built schools so that it accommodates the stable enrolment within the school. During peak enrolment, as there would be in the early days of a new neighbourhood, there is usually a period of time where a number of portables having been added. And it's just a matter, Mr. Speaker, of making good economic use of the facility and of the space that's there, and we build schools for what we expect the long-term growth to be.

Mr. Speaker, at this point in time the members are likely speculating, because we anticipate the new schools to be complete in fall of 2017. And, Mr. Speaker, to the people that are in those neighbourhoods, I'm pleased to tell them that everything looks like we are on time and the schools are progressing exactly as they should.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, I guess this is what happens when

the government enters into a ridiculous P3 arrangement for cookie-cutter schools. Right from the outset, these new schools will not meet the needs of students, of teachers, and communities, Mr. Speaker.

Do you know how many portable classrooms this government will be adding to these nine brand new schools? Now the minister was talking about peak enrolment. I think people would think one or two portables being added, that might accommodate peak enrolment. Mr. Speaker, they are planning to add 68 portable classrooms — 38 on day one, Mr. Speaker, and another 30 within four years.

So again to the Premier: why on earth are these new schools so small that the government is already planning to add 68 portables before they are even built?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Premier I'll take that question. Mr. Speaker, I can advise the members opposite that these schools are going to be publicly owned schools with community access. They will be maintained through their life cycle in like-new condition and the schools will accommodate 11,100 students from pre-K [pre-kindergarten] to grade 8 at full design capacity.

Mr. Speaker, unlike the members opposite who chose to close 176 schools during their term in office, Mr. Speaker, we're pleased that the province is growing, continues to grow and expand and, Mr. Speaker, these are the problems of growth. We'll continue to work with them. I don't know where they're getting their numbers from, Mr. Speaker, but we will do everything we can to ensure that we've got schools that are open on time and service the needs of the citizens of our province.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the minister should read his own briefing notes in his briefing binder and he would see, Mr. Speaker, that this government is planning to add 68 portable classrooms to these schools that aren't even built, Mr. Speaker. The minister talks about planning for growth. That's not planning for growth. That's a failure to plan, Mr. Speaker, for what the needs are in the community.

If the minister is keen to answer, I have a question for the minister. Does the minister agree that portable classrooms "don't provide the kind of learning environment we need for our students and teachers"? Does he agree with that?

[14:00]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, 68 portable units is 3.7 units per school, Mr. Speaker. That means two or three or four units per school. Mr. Speaker, we have schools that were operating under the NDP [New Democratic Party] that had 10, 12, or more portables added to them. Mr. Speaker, we have high-quality relocatables that will be used to handle peak enrolment as communities grow and communities mature. Mr.

Speaker, we're pleased that these schools will be able to handle approximately 3,300 students in Regina, 5,700 students in Saskatoon, and an additional 2,100 students in Warman and Martensville.

Mr. Speaker, we're pleased that we're able to handle the challenges of growth. These schools will, Mr. Speaker, be state of the art. They will be able to service community needs and look after the communities for years and decades to come. Mr. Speaker, we won't take lessons from the members opposite whose ability to build schools was only . . . had more to do with building schools in Alberta than building schools in Saskatchewan.

The Speaker: — I know that members on both sides are interested in the subject, but perhaps the Minister for Government Relations would like to take the opportunity to answer. I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, nine new school buildings and 68 portables, that's this government's brilliant plan for meeting the needs in growing neighbourhoods in the province, Mr. Speaker.

Well I gave a quote to the minister and I asked if he agreed or disagreed with it, and I didn't hear a response to it. But I think Sask Party members should listen closely to this quote: portable classrooms "don't provide the kind of learning environment we need for our students and teachers." You know who said that, Mr. Speaker? The member who said that is the member from Swift Current, the Premier. That is who said that, Mr. Speaker.

It was the Premier that said that portable classrooms don't meet the needs of students and they don't meet the needs of teachers. And do you know when he said that, Mr. Speaker? He said that, Mr. Speaker, when he was announcing nine new schools. It's absolutely ridiculous. So why on earth, Mr. Speaker, would the Premier not be building these new schools to an appropriate size? Why is he already planning to add 68 portables?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, we are pleased that the enrolment has gone up in our province. Mr. Speaker, the members opposite dealt with enrolment decline. They dealt with decay. They dealt with waste. We will have a good program in place, Mr. Speaker, and we will certainly have some portables on the schools as they open. Relocatable classrooms, Mr. Speaker, are used throughout the province. They give the divisions flexibility. They allow for growth, and they allow the school to contract for its stable growth, Mr. Speaker.

And we'll make no apologies for trying to make plans that save the taxpayers money, provide good service, safe and secure classrooms for our citizens, Mr. Speaker. That's the goal of this government. That's something that we're going to continue to do, unlike the members opposite who closed 176 schools because they chose to move those students to Calgary, Edmonton, and elsewhere in Alberta. We're having those people here. They're moving back, and we're pleased to have them.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, this is a clear example of this government's cookie-cutter approach to these P3 schools simply not going to meet the needs of these communities. All right now before the schools are built, they are planning to add 68 portables to these new buildings. Now the minister talked about the need for some portables, and I think most people in Saskatchewan would say, well maybe it's reasonable to have one or two portables on a school so you can adjust. But that's not the reality that we're going to be seeing at these new schools.

The school in Greens on Gardiner will have 10 portable classrooms. Hampton Village will have 12 portables. Harbour Landing will have 14 portables, and Stonebridge in Saskatoon will have 18 portables attached to it. In total, Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party is already planning to add 68 portable classrooms to nine new schools, Mr. Speaker, and all of this being planned before the schools are actually built.

It's incredibly ironic because, when the Premier announced these new schools, this is what he said about the portables: they "don't provide the kind of learning environment we need for our students and teachers." Straight from the Premier, Mr. Speaker. So how can the Premier justify building schools that are so inadequate that he is already planning to add 68 portables?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, there they go again talking about P3s. This has nothing whatsoever to do with P3s. This has everything to do with education and everything to do with enrolment growth and population growth in our province, which is something we won't apologize for because it's something the members opposite never had. What they dealt with, Mr. Speaker, was declining enrolment, closing schools, and seeing the tail lights of the cars moving away from this province.

That's something that's not happening in this province. We are dealing with the challenges of a growing population, and, Mr. Speaker, we're doing it with P3 schools that will allow for some room for expansion. And, Mr. Speaker, there will be relocatables on some of those classrooms, approximately 3.7 units per school. Some will have more; some will have less. But we plan for long-term enrolment. Peak enrolment is slightly higher. And that's the way it's been, Mr. Speaker, for decades in this province.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, the minister needs to listen to what he's saying. He says, it's not the P3's problem, Mr. Speaker, its fault. It is its fault because it's imposing a cookie-cutter approach to every community, Mr. Speaker. That's why you have 18 portables being added on to Stonebridge school before it is even built. I don't understand how they can't see how this is a problem.

Mr. Speaker, we've been told that it's a lot more cost-effective just to build a school to an appropriate size rather than adding a bunch of portables. But the financial cost is only one consideration here.

And I agree with what the Premier said. I agree when he said the portables "don't provide the kind of learning environment we need for our students and teachers." That's straight from the Premier, Mr. Speaker, so I can't understand why the Premier would plow ahead with a plan that means 68 portables will have to be added on to nine new schools. They're planning for this before the schools are even built. Will he at least tell us, Mr. Speaker, will he at least tell us, how many students will be forced to learn in this substandard learning environment because of the Premier's decision?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the use of relocatable classrooms allows significant flexibility for divisions to deal with changing and increasing and varying enrolment. It has been done for decades in this province.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition once again has facts wrong and is misconstruing things. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to invite the member opposite and like to invite the Leader of the Opposition to go out to some of the schools where there are new relocatables in place. The teachers and the students like and are comfortable in them because they have their own independent heating system, their own electrical system, Mr. Speaker. They are roomy. They are comfortable, and we don't have complaints from the people that are there.

Mr. Speaker, I can advise the members opposite: they closed 176 schools. They neglected the schools that they didn't close. We've invested almost four times what the NDP did into schools across the province. Mr. Speaker, when they were in government, they drove 35,000 students out of the province — 35,000 students that aren't in this province anymore because they left under that government.

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

Mr. Broten: — Mr. Speaker, earlier on I read a quote from the Premier. I asked the minister if he agreed with it or not. The Premier said, about portable classrooms, "don't provide the kind of learning environment we need for our students and teachers." My question is to the Education minister. Does he agree with that? Yes or no?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister for Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite underfunded school divisions to the point where there were tax revolts in the province. The ratepayer had to pick up the education tab. The total budget line for Education has more than doubled since 2007.

Mr. Speaker, we're pleased and we're proud to be adding 18 new joint-use schools and yes, Mr. Speaker, for a period of time there will be relocatable classrooms added to those schools. Mr. Speaker, we built those for what we project the long-term enrolment of those school divisions to be, and what those schools and what those neighbourhoods will contain. And, Mr. Speaker, what we have in those neighbourhoods is something that's viable and will work well and service those communities for generations to come, Mr. Speaker, unlike the members opposite that chose to close and move out 176 schools across

our province. Mr. Speaker, the flexibility that's there is something that needs to be there for the divisions and we'll continue to provide it.

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

Promotion of Carbon Capture and Storage

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday yet again the Premier and the SaskPower minister refused to go out to the rotunda to face reporters and answer questions on the 1.5 billion carbon capture project. Well they've got a lot of bluster in the House, Mr. Speaker, when they're surrounded by their pals, but then they hide under their desks after question period.

So if they won't answer the media's questions, hopefully, hopefully they'll answer questions now. So I have a very specific question for the SaskPower minister. What exactly is the head of carbon capture selling when he travels the world on our dime?

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, what Mr. Monea is selling or what he is talking to people about around the world is the technology that is in use down at Boundary dam 3, Mr. Speaker. He's talking to them about the choices that the Government of Saskatchewan took in terms of making a decision around this project.

About 44 per cent of the electricity in Saskatchewan is generated using coal, Mr. Speaker. So the government and SaskPower had a choice to make: do we continue the use of that electricity generated with coal or do we shut it down, Mr. Speaker? The decision was taken at that point to use the technology that's available, that has been developed, that has been brought together by SaskPower through a number of sources, Mr. Speaker, to clean up that coal emissions — to capture the CO₂, to use it in enhanced oil recovery, Mr. Speaker, and to demonstrate to the world that the technology, while it has some problems, definitely works, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, here's what we know. We know that this government's head of carbon capture is in Saudi Arabia right now and we know that he's travelled to China, Peru, Germany, Poland, the United Kingdom, Holland, Norway, Tokyo, the Philippines, Korea, Belgium, Las Vegas, and a whole lot more. And we, the people of Saskatchewan, have paid for those trips.

This is the explanation for all the trips given by SaskPower, their president, yesterday. Now get this, Mr. Speaker. He said, "Someday there will be someone who comes knocking on our door." Someday there will be someone who comes knocking on our door? To the minister: when this imaginary someone knocks on your door someday, what exactly will they be buying?

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Mr. Speaker, there have been over 260 organizations that have sent people to Boundary dam 3, from academics to universities from around the world, from small companies, from multinational companies, Mr. Speaker.

BHP Billiton just signed an MOU [memorandum of understanding] with SaskPower here recently around the promotion and the development of carbon capture and storage, Mr. Speaker. Obviously I think they would be considered pretty significant players in terms of energy generation, electricity generation around the world.

If you look at . . . The list goes on and on of companies from General Electric, from Global CCS Institute, from the international agency, from JCOAL [Japan Coal Energy Center], from Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, from the National Energy Administration in China, Mr. Speaker. All of those companies have come to Saskatchewan, have talked to SaskPower about the development of CCS [carbon capture and storage] technology, Mr. Speaker. And I think it's something that the province of Saskatchewan is very proud of, the fact that we have that type of development going on in Saskatchewan, and that we have made that choice, Mr. Speaker, to clean coal up rather than shut it down like the NDP will.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, the minister can refer to all these MOUs, but what's the bottom line? What are we selling, is the question. Where is the money? We know that SaskPower doesn't own the carbon capture technology so we can't market that. And we don't even have the expertise in making the technology work. In fact, we know that the performance of the carbon capture plant throughout 2015 has been much worse than it was in 2014. So the only real expertise that this government had was in spinning this project and pretending that everything was on target and going well. And we know that bubble burst big time last week when the truth finally came out.

So to the minister: what was sold? What was sold on all those international trips, and how much money has been collected for the Saskatchewan people as a result?

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Well, Mr. Speaker, again what was sold was the development of the technology, Mr. Speaker. What was sold was the choice that the people of Saskatchewan made given the facts that we have 44 per cent of our electricity is generated from coal, Mr. Speaker. So we have a choice to make here in Saskatchewan.

Well the choice is obvious, Mr. Speaker. Either we use coal and use the technology, carbon capture and storage, sell the CO₂ to the oil industry and enhance oil recovery, Mr. Speaker, or we shut it down. Those are the choices that are before the people of Saskatchewan.

[14:15]

Mr. Monea's job is to go around the world at the invitation of company after company after company. In Saudi Arabia, in

Saudi Arabia for example he's at the invitation of the Saudi Arabian government. They're paying about 75 per cent of the cost of his travel and accommodations, Mr. Speaker, attached to that travel that he is doing with respect to it. He is talking to them about the development of it. He's talking to them about the problems associated with it, and he's talking to them about the future of the project going forward — one that this government supports directly, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sproule: — The government's head of carbon capture has been jet-setting around the world, and the explanation from this government is that "someday someone will knock on our door." This is absolutely ludicrous. Why won't the minister just agree to put an end to these wasteful trips immediately, until the technology actually works and we have real knowledge and real expertise to sell?

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the NDP opposite can chide the technology all they want. You know, yesterday in the legislature, yesterday in the legislature we received a copy of a letter that was sent to the Leader of the Opposition from the IBEW [International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers] and they were asking some very important questions, Mr. Speaker. Are the NDP in favour of the use of the technology or would they rather shut it down?

And if you go on from there, Mr. Speaker, and you look at what's taking place, well it's just not the IBEW. It's not the Government of Saskatchewan. In addition to that, in the most recent issue of *The Estevan Mercury*, they talk about a whole number of choices that this government has and that they're wondering where the NDP sits. Would you shut it down or would you use coal? Would you throw all of those people out of a job, Mr. Speaker, or would you keep them employed using the technology that's available, Mr. Speaker? Would you have invested those kinds of dollars in this facility, Mr. Speaker, or would you not invest those dollars, Mr. Speaker? And what would you use to generate electricity in this province, Mr. Speaker, if you shut down coal here, resulting in a loss of 44 per cent of the electricity that is generated in Saskatchewan?

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regards to the letter the minister refers to from yesterday, we need to make something very clear. We do not accept the false choice, whether it comes in from a union or from the government, because we know that Saskatchewan people know we can clean up our electricity sector and deliver tons of good jobs for Saskatchewan workers. It's not an either/or.

The question is, where is the business plan for this project? And we have asked, and we'll ask again. Will this government reconvene the Crown and Central Agencies Committee so we can get to the bottom of the business plan and where the money's going on this project?

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

Hon. Mr. Boyd: — You know, Mr. Speaker, the member from Nutana can be as dismissive of the importance of the jobs to the people down at the . . . that are represented by the IBEW as she would like to be.

When she talks about false choices, there's no false choice at all, Mr. Speaker. The choice is very simple. Do we continue the use of coal? Do we continue the use of coal for generating electricity in Saskatchewan as the IBEW supports, Mr. Speaker? Or do we make a different choice, and that's shut it down, throw all those people out of work, Mr. Speaker, at Estevan down there, make sure that they don't have a job into the future, Mr. Speaker. Make the choice.

That's the choice that's before the people of Saskatchewan. Do we create . . . Do we add 120,000 new wind turbines or 200,000 acres of solar panels as is suggested in *The Estevan Mercury*? That's the choice that the people of Saskatchewan have in front of them, Mr. Speaker. That's the choice that we accept, Mr. Speaker. We chose Boundary dam carbon capture and storage, and we'll continue to make that choice. The NDP have a choice to make as well.

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

Usage of Health Facilities

Ms. Chartier: — City Hospital was designed to have 309 beds. It now has just 173 beds, the vast majority of which are transitional care, convalescent, and rehabilitation beds. This has long been a major irritant for the people of Saskatoon and throughout Saskatchewan. But it's especially frustrating when we hear that, instead of properly using City Hospital, this government's solution to hospital overcrowding is to send seniors far away, including to Wadena, 208 kilometres from Saskatoon. How can the Health minister justify this?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would just say that the offer that has been made to some people that are waiting in Saskatoon in an acute care bed that have been deemed to be long-term care residents and are awaiting long-term care placement, they are being offered space. And they, in fact, are being offered some additional incentive including mileage for a family member to visit them once a week, a reduction or no fees for long-term care — I believe up to including a month; I've heard as high as perhaps three months — which, Mr. Speaker, actually is a better offer than what was offered under the NDP when they actually implemented the first-available bed policy in this province.

This is the policy that goes back to the NDP. It's a policy that's been put in place in every single constituency that members on this side of the House represent, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we want to ensure that people, that residents in long-term care have the care that they need. That care is better provided in long-term care as opposed to a hospital bed, Mr. Speaker.

And with respect to Saskatoon City Hospital, that hospital is a

fully functioning hospital. It serves the people of Saskatoon very well. If the members opposite want to see a hospital that isn't a hospital anymore, I'd invite the Leader of the Opposition to jump into his van and take a drive down Wascana Parkway. He'd see a hospital that's not properly used.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, my own dad was in the hospital this summer. As a family, we were able to check on him several times a day, making sure he had the company and the support that he needed. It was devastating to me to imagine how it would have affected him and our family if he was two hours away. He's a selfless man, and like many seniors, if a health professional told him that someone sicker needed his bed, he would feel terrible. I don't think any family should be put through this.

To the Health minister: why won't this government fix the overcrowding problem, starting by properly using City Hospital instead of shipping seniors 200 kilometres away?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can say that in our major cities in this province, we have in fact opened up more rooms for more beds in this province, including in Regina where, in our hospitals, on average, the number of beds are up in the neighbourhood of 8 to 12 per cent. The same is true in Saskatoon. We've actually taken rooms that were storage rooms under the NDP — prior to the NDP they were actually hospital rooms; they became storage rooms under the NDP — and we've actually had to reopen those rooms for the benefit of our patients.

But, Mr. Speaker, it is hard to stand to listen to the NDP opposite talk about a policy that was put in place in Five Hills under the member from Lakeview; in Sun Country, my health region, under the member from Lakeview; in Sunrise under the member from Lakeview; Heartland, the member from Lakeview; Prairie North, the member from Lakeview; Cypress Health Region, the former member for The Battlefords, Len Taylor, Mr. Speaker.

This is a policy that has been put in place, and the city of Saskatoon, Saskatoon Health Region is going to try to accommodate as many patients as they can in the most appropriate space, including using, better utilizing facilities in that health region.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Chair for the Standing Committee on Human Services.

Standing Committee on Human Services

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Human Services to report Bill No. 179, *The MRI Facilities Licensing Act* without amendment.

The Speaker: — When shall the bill be considered in Committee of the Whole? I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill, and that the bill be now read the third time.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Health has requested leave to waive consideration of Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 179, *The MRI Facilities Licensing Act* without amendment, and that the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — The minister may . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Was there a no? The minister may proceed with third reading.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 179 — *The MRI Facilities Licensing Act*

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, I move that this bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Health that Bill No. 179, *The MRI Facilities Licensing Act* without amendment be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the chairman of PAC [Public Accounts Committee].

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Public Accounts to present its second report which reflects the work of the committee for the period December 12th, 2011 to September 17th, 2015. I move:

That the second report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be now concurred in.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Chair of Public Accounts Committee:

That the second report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts now be concurred in.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

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 member for Saskatoon Nutana.

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and indeed as always it's my honour to be able to rise in the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan and enter into debate on bills that are being presented by the government for consideration.

This bill is . . . I think there is one way to sum up this bill, and it's too little too late, Mr. Speaker, and particularly the too late part. And I will definitely get into that in the course of my comments this afternoon.

But firstly maybe a brief explanation from my perspective of what I think this bill is trying to do. We have a minister who decided to consult with people on a topic that's been, you know, of considerable debate at least since I was elected in 2011 and I know before that as well. It was no surprise I think in terms of the results of the commentary that the government received. I think what was surprising is the way the government went about doing this, and they waited until this summer and over the summer period to conduct an online survey which basically told them what I've been hearing all along.

And I was a bit disappointed when I think the minister was quoted in *The Western Producer* about why he didn't want to go with public meetings, and he was talking about how public meetings were messy. And you know for me, Mr. Speaker, that's what democracy's all about is those messy conversations that we have to have amongst our peers, amongst our friends, our colleagues, amongst our clients, amongst our voters, amongst politicians, amongst partisan groups. And I think public debate is one, which we're engaging in right now, is one that's incredibly important to the advancement of ideas that reflect what's going on in the province of Saskatchewan.

We've received some criticism from many different avenues on this bill. In general though I think the closing of the loophole to restrict investment entities like the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board is certainly one that was necessary. It was obviously not within the spirit of the existing law when it was

passed back in the '70s, nor was it in the spirit of the major amendments to the law when it was changed in I think 2002 or 2003. So that is something that needed to be fixed, and we are in total agreement on that piece of the bill.

I think what's really questionable in this case was the fact that the Minister of Agriculture consulted with the Ministry of Justice, was advised that what the Assiniboia Farmland was attempting to do was within the four squares of the law, but that it was clearly not intended by the original mandate of this bill and what the farm security Act was attempting to do.

[14:30]

So I think, and this will always bother me, is why didn't Minister Stewart introduce the regulations back three years ago? The Minister of Agriculture. I apologize for that, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Agriculture, why didn't he go back to those regulations three or four years ago? Because it was public knowledge that this amount of land . . . The Assiniboia Farmland had gathered over 100,000 acres of land at the request of the investment board, and the investment board were trying to acquire a large chunk of land. That makes sense for an investment board because they want large investments. That's their business; that's their mandate.

But the minister knew that this was happening. He knew that this land was being amassed for that exact purpose, and I think they made probably around \$40 an acre on that sale. So it's a huge profit for Assiniboia Farmland, and it was happening right before the minister's eyes. And he decided not to introduce regulations to stop that kind of activity until after the sale went through.

And I just want to be clear on the record for that, Mr. Speaker. I think that was intentional and I think it was unfortunate. And I think it is a sign where the minister's allegiances lie, and we have to really question why he didn't step in sooner. And I think that was the biggest, the biggest mistake this minister has made as the Agriculture minister.

I'm not sure who's instructing him or who he is taking his advice from, but clearly that option to introduce those regulations could have been done years ago. It didn't have to happen in May of this year, after the deal went through. So I think we're going to live with that one for a long time. The horse is out of the barn. There's little way for the minister to go back on that deal, and I think we're stuck with having a large institutional investor like the Canada Pension Plan as a major landowner in Saskatchewan for many years to come.

In terms of the bill itself, there are a number of minor changes, some cleanup. And I think we have to keep in mind, Mr. Speaker, that part VI of the farm security Act is the part where farm land acquisitions are dealt with. But this is about farm security. This is the name of the bill. And the original part of the bill that was dealing with farm security was back in the '80s when everyone recalls the real crisis in farm finances. It was a terrible time. Interest rates were at 17 per cent. I remember working in the credit union in Lafleche in 1981, and farmers were paying 17 per cent interest on their mortgages and on their farm loans.

And so as a result, and we all know the story, many people faced bankruptcy. And this bill was introduced for a way to protect farmers, to at least keep their home quarter so that they weren't about to lose everything in that terrible time. So much of the bill really deals with farm land security in terms of keeping farmers on the land as best we can and helping them through financial crisis like the one they experienced in the 1980s. So those are there and if, God forbid, those situations arise again, we know that that part of the Act is there as an assistance for farmers in Saskatchewan.

But part VI of *The Saskatchewan Farm Security Act* is the part that deals with farm land ownership, and so most of the changes in the bill are — any changes other than those to part VI — are minor changes. There's some gender neutral language that's being introduced in quite a number of clauses. There's some references, you know, corrected. Instead of Farm Credit Corporation, it's now Farm Credit Canada. There's other minor corrections that are being made.

We know that there's references to the Farm Tenure Arbitration Board now which was new, a correction to the bill. And there's things like definitions of mortgage that are being changed, and a few other changes. But that's the sort of side effect of having this bill come through. And I know often individuals in the Ministry of Justice take a look when a bill is being amended for substantive policy changes. They also go through the Act and see if other changes are needed.

So in terms of part VI, there's a few substantive changes that are being proposed here. I just want to go through them a little bit. First of all, the definition of agricultural corporation has been repealed, and that's in section 76 of the bill. So what we find is that it's actually found within the other parts of the bill that's coming forward. They've also struck out what a Canadian-owned . . . Well they've kept "Canadian-owned entity" but they've struck out the reference to an agricultural corporation and now it's just:

(i) a corporation or any other entity in which . . . shares or interests are legally and beneficially owned, and all the memberships are held, by resident persons or other Canadian-owned entities.

but does not include any person or class of persons prescribed in the regulations.

So what we have here now is a bump from the description of what a Canadian-owned entity is. It's being bumped down to the regulations, and again we don't have those regulations in front of us today, Mr. Speaker. So we don't exactly know what that meaning, what Canadian-owned entity is going to mean until we see the regulations that this government will introduce.

One question I do have for the minister is on the definition of farm land, because that's actually defined in both parts of the Act — the farm land security Act portion of farm land and the one in farm ownership. And it's just curious to me why they didn't use the same definition, and certainly that's something I'll want to raise with the minister in committee. But right now we see in addition to the definition of farm land in part VI, which includes land use primarily for sand and gravel extraction . . . So that's an exemption to the definition of farm land. That

exemption doesn't exist in the first part, and I'm not sure if that was intentional or if it was an oversight. So that's one question I'll have for the minister once we get into committee on this.

I think the most important change in this bill is the amendments to section 76(e), which is the definition of land holding. And in this case the land holding that we are looking at, the change is, in particular, in (e)(iii) where there are interests in farm land held under other agreements. So what this is, is the land holding includes — and I'm going to read this to you, Mr. Speaker — land holding includes:

any interest in farm land held under any agreement that may directly or indirectly:

result in vesting of title to farm land;

confer the right to possession of farm land;

confer any right or control ordinarily accruing to the owner of farm land.

Now what the minister is doing is extending this. There's two new sections here; (D) is the proposed amendment: "confer the right of obtaining the right of capital appreciation in the farm land." It's a very big change, and I think it's one that's an important change. Or "(E) confer any other right that is prescribed in the regulations."

So once again we have a movement from the bill to the regulatory realm, and again we have no opportunity to comment on that. So we don't know what that other right might look like, but the minister is certainly reserving the right to add other types of interests or other types of rights in this definition of land holding. We don't have any indication from the minister what that might look like, but once again, we'll have to keep an eye on the regulations as they go through.

There is also a new definition of what an entity is. And basically this definition describes . . . I'll describe it for you. It says:

“(c.1) ‘entity’ includes:

(i) a partnership;

(ii) a syndicate;

(iii) a joint venture;

(iv) a co-operative;

(v) an association;

(vi) a pension plan;

(vii) a trust; and

(viii) any other body that is prescribed in the regulations”.

So once again we have the regulatory description as well. But the entity provisions were basically in the Canadian-owned entity description previously, but now they're a separate description or definition with the regs, or within the bill itself.

The other change is a change to the definition of . . . I think that we're still on the definition of land holding. It's near the end of land holding, and this is an exception to the definition of land holding. It says:

“but does not include farm land or any interest in farm land held by way of security for a debt or other obligations [and here’s a change] unless the debt or other obligation is of a class prescribed in the regulations.”

So once again we have another reference to moving the definitions to the regulatory sphere, which means it is very difficult to enter into debate on those regulations when we have no opportunity to see them or get a chance to review them before Executive Council decides to pass them.

We see that again in terms of the resident person. What is the definition of a resident person? For decades it has been someone who resides in Canada for 183 days in a year and is a Canadian citizen. It’s a pretty straightforward definition. But for some reason, the ministry is now saying, no, we don’t want the definition of resident person to be found within the Act, and they’re moving it to a definition of a person prescribed in the regulations.

So again we have this transition of sort of the meat and potatoes of the bill that seems to be being moved over to the regulatory sphere, and that’s concerning, Mr. Speaker. We are always kind of trying to have the debate as public as possible, and when we see this happening, it’s frustrating. So it’s hard to comment on.

There are a number of other changes to part VI. Section 85.1 is actually entirely repealed now, and it is being replaced. Actually it’s being repealed; 85.1, 86, and 87 are entirely repealed. And these were the sections that deal with an agricultural corporation and Saskatchewan resident, and also limited partnership landholding prohibited. So we’re not exactly sure what that means, and we’ll have many questions for the officials when we get to committee on this bill.

And then 87.1 is also being repealed or, sorry, section 87 in its entirety. And this is some other exemptions that don’t apply . . . Or it’s exemptions to section 86. So because 86 is repealed, then 87 is redundant. So those are complicated sections that I think we need to have a good conversation with the officials on when it comes time to look at these bills in detail.

I think another main new section that we’re talking about here is the new proposed section 90, which is statutory declaration regarding landholdings. This is one that causes me some concern, although, Mr. Speaker, I’m not opposed to the concept of having the board direct anyone to provide a statutory declaration, setting out anything in the regs that the board might require. And you know, it’s all good and right to have a fine if they refuse to provide the statutory declaration.

What I understand when I talk to people who are involved in the land investment business in Saskatchewan is that there are very sophisticated money arrangements that can be made that affect the de facto control of ownership in Saskatchewan farm land. There are some very sophisticated schemes out there. They’re referred to by one of the persons I talked to as a swap. And I’m no financial expert, Mr. Speaker, but I trust when this person tells me — who is a financial expert and deals in a lot of farm land — that these swaps are very sophisticated but that the de facto control of the ownership of land may rest with someone other than the individual whose name is on the title. If people are controverting the intent of the bill to that extent, I’m

not . . . It brings me cold comfort to know that they provide a statutory declaration to that effect.

So I was hoping to see more tools for the Farm Land Security Board to actually peer behind the title and into the financial arrangements to have a better sense of how the arrangements are being handled. And we don’t see it going that far. As I say, having a statutory declaration is a step in the right direction. And I know that when I spoke to Mr. Folk from the Farm Land Security Board that they’re feeling that this is a very useful tool for them. And I appreciate that, but I still think, based on the discussions I’ve had, that there has to be a way to peer behind the curtain of the title and see exactly where the arrangements are, because these stories are out there.

And I know the minister hired a special investigator a couple of years ago. Sadly we haven’t been able to see the report. The minister won’t release it. Although the special investigator said they could find no wrongdoing, I think part of the problem is because there was no way for them to find the wrongdoing. They didn’t have the tools they needed to examine these really complex financial arrangements and these swaps that are alleged to be in place in Saskatchewan.

When you have something as valuable as our farm land out there, I think it’s attractive to all kinds of investors who want to make sure that they can get in on the action. So people are sophisticated. There are many ways to subvert the law. We saw that with the investment board for Canada Pension Plan where they found a way to use a loophole to be able to purchase a lot of land in Saskatchewan all in one fell swoop. And certainly the commentary from all sides of the political spectrum questioned whether or not or why not, I mean, that these things should be happening.

I just have a collection of a number of comments that we’ve received, and I’m hoping I brought them with me, Mr. Speaker.

Another concern that we’ve heard and is one thing this government avoided completely was talking about the exemptions that are available for potash mines right now. And we have two examples here, well more than two, but particularly BHP and Yancoal, both of whom have received exemptions to purchase really large chunks of land, I think up over 6,000 or close to 6,000 acres. This is well beyond the 320 or 160 acres — I can’t remember if it’s two quarters or one quarter — exemption that currently exists for that type of purchase. And of course this is all in the name of potash mining and expanding it.

[14:45]

But, Mr. Speaker, it’s been suggested to me that there’s a bit of a backwards approach to this and perhaps the potash industry should have to demonstrate the project to the community first before being granted the exemption. I get emails frequently on these. The Yancoal proposal, I think the people, the local people in those communities like Strasbourg are feeling very left out of the discussion and very much concerned about what they see as being rammed down their throats in terms of a very large organization, very large potash mine, being plunked down in the middle of their community.

Secondly, when you're able to buy that amount of land, obviously there's a profit and there's a competition factor that would be very difficult for young farmers in the area to be able to compete with BHP, one of the world's most financially successful mining companies. Yancoal, as we know, is also a huge financial operation, a mining operation. And so for a young farmer from Strasbourg to be able to stand up to BHP and enter a bidding war on land, it's really hard to imagine that that creates a level playing field in any stretch of the imagination.

Another thing that I think we're concerned about, and we didn't see any changes in this bill, is the huge benefit that these investment-type purchases get from buying Saskatchewan farm land. We know that in I think it was 2011, this government introduced changes to our education taxes so that farm land owners get a benefit or are no longer required to pay the education portion of their property taxes in the same way they did before. So we are benefiting and it's okay to benefit Saskatchewan farmers with Saskatchewan taxpayers' dollars and for Saskatchewan education, but I find it hard to understand how that is something that's made available to investors from outside of Saskatchewan. So that's something I think that we're going to have to ask the minister about when we get this into committee as well.

I don't think I brought with me the commentaries that I received . . . Oh no, here they are. There's some concerns. This is from the chamber of commerce actually who wrote a letter to the minister back in October, just recently on October 21st, once they've had an opportunity. Now this is typically a group that is aligned closely with this government but they have a number of concerns themselves about this bill, and I'm just not sure why the minister wouldn't be responding to their concerns. Not that I'm saying I'm concerned about it, but I think it's of great interest that the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce is very concerned about this bill, and it sort of makes you wonder about the popular type of approach this government takes to its decision making.

So we have here a challenge raised by the chamber of commerce, and they're asking the minister, they're saying, "Agriculture is capital-intensive and needs access to investment pools . . ." I'm quoting this, by the way:

Agriculture is capital-intensive and needs access to investment pools to evolve and achieve its natural potential. Do we have good estimates of the possible capital requirements of the farm and ranch sector over the next 15 years, and an understanding of what restrictions may mean?

I think this is a very good question, and what it asks is, has the government done its homework? Has it done the research to understand exactly what is going to happen to available sources of capital for farmers to take up farming? And although, you know, there's a flip side to that question definitely, Mr. Speaker, I think it's an interesting question for them to be asking.

There's also concerns expressed by the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce on the principles of limitation, and I'll quote this one. This is a quote: "Creating a new restriction raises the

question of how future demands to regulate or modify other large investors interested in farm land could anticipate being treated." So they're worried about that. That's the end of the quote. I'll go on; I'll continue to quote:

Should they be concerned about possible further changes impacting their financial commitment to the province, we begin to risk a chill on inflow of capital that could clearly be required to support the development and competitiveness of a major industry. A further concern is the signal that additional restrictions sends to investors in other sectors of the economy. It's important to invest political capital in principles that lead to good outcomes rather than to hoard that capital and concede in the contest for public opinion.

So we see the chamber of commerce challenging this government on their concession to public opinion and certainly, you know, one has to ask the question, has the government actually done their homework? Do they understand the impact of these changes on future acquisitions and the capital pool and the access to capital? So these are concerns that are being raised by the chamber of commerce. This again is a letter of October 21st to the minister.

There is another one that I could share with you, and this is a quote regarding younger farmers:

Renting is a common strategy among those entering farming. Roughly a third of land in production now is rented. Stable, non-interventionist investors would seem an ideal source of capital for new farmers to call on as they begin to establish their own operations. We do not see how this move will help address the lack of equity in young farmers — seen by many to be the most significant challenge — and their respective growth plans.

So again, Mr. Speaker, I don't necessarily agree with these comments but I want to raise them for the record in terms of my role in raising the questions that are being positioned to the government of the day.

And another letter that just came in on November . . . It was I think a little earlier, October 20th. And this is from a farmer in the Colonsay area, and he is concerned about the changes that are being proposed as well. He says that . . . Here's the quote. This is from a farmer in Colonsay:

After trying to have discussions with elected officials and the Farm Land Security Board, I always received the generic responses and the lack of willingness to admit there was a problem or willingness to do something about it. With the survey I was hopeful but from the first page I knew this wasn't what it should be intended for as the "statistics" tried too hard to prove it was still Saskatchewan land.

And I'm going to carry on quoting:

One "statistic" that sticks out is that 80 per cent of the land sold was farmer to farmer, but looking at the fine print it was taken from three individual months. Three chosen months by someone does not make a reliable statistic. In

my RM, I would bet non-farmers own close to 50 per cent of it. Alberta has relaxed rules and look what has happened there. The family farms got sold to larger corporations for excessive amounts of money and they come here, buy more, and do it all over again. On Saskatchewan people's back.

This farmer goes on to say:

Do you have any idea how disheartening it is to have a non-local business make forever lasting decisions on the area and landscape of fourth generation homesteads? As Mark Folk from the Farm Land Security Board said when questioned about the dissatisfaction of locals having BHP come into the area to yet forever change the landscape [this is from Mark Folk now, a quote within a quote], "If they aren't wanted there, then I suppose locals won't sell to them."

He goes on to say:

Theoretically this could be true, [but] not when you have an investor owning a large portion of land. Part of the tract of land BHP wanted was over a homesteaded yard site where all three boys actively farm. When they refused, BHP went to the Alberta investor (majority owned parcel) and moved half a mile over. Their landscape is lost, their expansion dreams are lost, the aesthetics of their land is lost, and they and everyone else around will have to put up with noise, light, and environmental pollution. All because of the decision of someone in another province.

This letter goes on. I know that the Premier responded to this farmer in a letter on November 2nd. It talked about balancing the competing interests here. This certainly is an issue about balancing of competing interests. But I think I'm not sure the government has done enough homework to really understand the impact of these.

I know that there was a paper released I think in early of this year, maybe February, by some researchers, and I'm going to try and find the reference to that paper. And what they're saying is that . . . Yes, this is a paper that was presented in Saskatoon and it was published in the January edition of the Canadian journal of food studies.

And what these people have found . . . And this is just the beginning of the research. When we met with them earlier this year, Mr. Speaker, that was their main concern is that there just isn't enough analysis of the data. This phenomenon of farm land purchasing for investment purposes really started around 2007, 2008. And so there isn't enough time or research available yet to really understand the impact of this phenomenon and that's the concern that these researchers have raised.

What the *Leader-Post* story on November 28th of 2014 said was that . . . And this is by, from the *Leader-Post*, Jason Warick. It says, "Some rural municipalities have seen a 20-fold increase in corporate land ownership since 1994. Three corporations each now own more than 100,000 acres [of land]."

And we know who those folks are — this is no surprise — and

certainly they're well known in many communities in Saskatchewan. It's also well known that they don't live in Saskatchewan and that creates concerns for community continuity and community strengths. And that's part of the research that needs to be undertaken.

The researcher, Annette Desmarais, said, "We're just beginning to understand what the impacts are. It makes it very difficult to build community in that environment." And they go on to say, for example, "In the RMs of Harris, Lajord and Excel, less than 3,200 acres were owned by investors or 'farmer/investor hybrids' in 1994." So only 3,200 acres in 1994. Twenty years later it's 59,000 acres. So from 3,000 to 59,000 acres.

These people are alleging that this type of growth in the farm lands obviously ". . . exacerbates the decline of some rural communities. [Generally] the investors don't live in the areas where they own land, their kids don't go to the local school, they don't contribute as much to the local economy, and they aren't part of the town's social life."

And these are the kinds of comments that came out quite clearly in the online survey that the minister sanctioned as well. We know that the one largest landowner that we know of in Saskatchewan is Robert Andjelic, and he holds in Saskatchewan 161,000 acres, Mr. Speaker. That's a very, very large area. And when he was interviewed he actually said he now owns around 180,000 acres. He's from Manitoba, lives in Alberta, but he has 180,000 acres in Saskatchewan. He doesn't live here. And he's defending what he's done but he's talking about efficiencies, and we know those are important for our farms, and certainly that's been happening since farming started in Saskatchewan over 100 years ago.

At any rate, there's lots of questions being raised. I think the point is there's a lot of research that still needs to be done. There are a lot of questions that need to be asked. There are concerns from all sides of the political spectrum for sure about this issue. It's an important issue to Saskatchewan people. And we heard the minister talk about farm land being a strategic resource. So we know this government has declared potash as a strategic resource. Now we see farm land being treated as a strategic resource, but it's in a very different context, Mr. Speaker.

And again I would like to, you know, suggest that this government needs to do a little more research, that maybe this is only the beginning of the investigation into the farm land sales and the impact to Saskatchewan. We know that most land in Saskatchewan is still owned by Saskatchewan farms. My brothers were a corporate farm because they incorporated as two shareholders, and they owned their own farm.

An Hon. Member: — In Lafleche.

Ms. Sproule: — In Lafleche, Saskatchewan. That's right. And you know, took over the farm from my dad, who took it over from his dad, came out in 1909 to homestead here in Saskatchewan.

And so it's not about the fact that they chose that business vehicle to become, to conduct their business. They were a corporate farm. It was MGD Farms. Merle, Garth, and David

was the name of my dad and my two brothers, so MGD Farms Inc. was the vehicle they chose to do their business. But they're not . . . I think their maximum holdings may have been around 15 or 20 quarter sections of land, some of which was land bank land that actually got my brother into farming successfully in the '70s. So we're ever thankful for that as well and that program. So it was a successful career for my brother and a very good procedure for them to be able to enter into farming, and we're very thankful for that.

So in some ways, you know, these changes I think were necessary. As I said at the very outset, it was too late. We needed these changes much sooner, and it's unfortunate that Assiniboia Farmland got the loophole that they did. They made several million dollars off this deal, and plus they continue to make money off of it by being the vehicle . . . Obviously the investment board doesn't have a lot of farmers kicking around on their investment board, so we have the Assiniboia Farmland continuing to farm the land, continuing to make money off of it because they happened to find an investment board that was willing to take on that kind of capital investment. They had the money. And you know, when you think about it, it's taxpayers' after-tax dollars that are being used to invest in farm land which creates a bit of an inequity in and of itself.

We are glad to see that the loophole's closed. It certainly better reflects on the spirit and intent of the original bill and the changes in 2002. I certainly want to thank all the people who have contacted me and raised this issue with me. I think there's a lot of people who care passionately about this issue. And we'll continue to see further debate as we go along, but I think it's time for us to take a very close look at the changes with the officials and the minister and to make sure that we ask the right questions in committee. So, Mr. Speaker, I think that's the extent of my comments at this point in time.

[15:00]

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the Minister of Agriculture that Bill No. 187, *The Saskatchewan Farm Security Act, 2015* 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 very much, Mr. Speaker. I move that this bill be referred to the Committee on the Economy.

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

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 Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

[Applause]

Mr. Wotherspoon: — It's an honour to be recognized by those members in this way, Mr. Speaker, and I'm happy to get over the boards and go for a skate on Bill No. 188, *An Act to amend certain Acts respecting Awarding of Contracts*.

Now this bill in essence is dealing with the debate around procurement, Mr. Speaker, and this has been an important debate in this province. I know the discussion that was just being had by the member from Nutana related to foreign acquisition of farm land and the concern that had long been dismissed, and then the delayed action of this government relating to concerns around foreign entities, foreign corporations purchasing farm land, finding certain structures, swaps, and schemes that allowed them to skirt the Farm Land Security Board rules, a Farm Land Security Board that hadn't been given the tools that they required to enforce the law of Saskatchewan.

And we had a government that stubbornly refused to listen to Saskatchewan people who were talking about this matter all across Saskatchewan and dismissal, dismissal, and then a delay of action. Meanwhile the entities and the foreign acquisitions that were being alleged could have had a significant impact, may have had a significant impact in the province. And certainly those quite close to members opposite, quite close to cabinet members opposite acquired, you know, well over 100,000 acres and then had the Canada Pension Plan acquire those lands, all in . . . that certainly have some outstanding questions for the government opposite.

So we see that same sort of approach relate to the simplistic, naive approach of procurement from this government. What we saw for a long period of time, as Saskatchewan companies were making calls and speaking out and calling for a more effective procurement model, we saw a government dismiss the issue for a long period of time, delay the action that was required, Mr. Speaker.

But what I'd like to say to Saskatchewan companies and to industry groups: it's been a pleasure to work directly with you on this matter. You know, certainly we've had many, many conversations and meetings with those in all sorts of different industry, specific businesses and industry leaders, businesses, Mr. Speaker, that have skin in the game, that are driving, key drivers within this economy, who have made investments in this province, who have workers in this province, who also pay taxes in this province, Mr. Speaker, and who are building their lives in communities across Saskatchewan.

And it was more than troubling, Mr. Speaker, to see a government dismiss their concerns that they've been noting with this government as it relates to the current government's approach to procurement, Mr. Speaker, at a time where we should have been ensuring there was at least a fair shot, a level playing field for Saskatchewan companies, Mr. Speaker.

So this file goes back a little bit. You know, there's some progress that we can note and we'll spend some time in committee and certainly will give credit where credit is due and when it's due. But I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, it's been incredibly frustrating to watch a government dig in and to dismiss the real and valid concerns of businesses across this province and to delay actions, all while that government has doled out contract after contract after contract, Mr. Speaker. And we're not talking small dollars, Mr. Speaker. We're talking industries all across this province and we're talking about communities and businesses that haven't had the opportunity to bid, haven't had the opportunity to participate in building Saskatchewan the way that they should be.

We've seen a government that's been far too willing to adopt a model of selling out that opportunity that's rightfully deserved to Saskatchewan businesses and Saskatchewan workers, Mr. Speaker, that haven't been focused on what truly matters in ensuring we can build the strength in this economy that we deserve and, most importantly, Mr. Speaker, deliver best value for taxpayers.

And I would commend, I would commend all of those individuals that have made the phone call and spent the time and sat down with myself or others within the opposition, and certainly those as well, and these are companies and also industry groups, but also those that participated in the recent process of government and had provided input to improve procurement in Saskatchewan and to arrive at the bill that we have here today.

And you know, I'd certainly like to recognize some of these industry groups. I'll leave specific businesses out of mention because I know they don't appreciate necessarily having, you know, being noted or singled out. There are sometimes concerns when they're speaking out that government may act in a vindictive way, and I respect that. And I wouldn't and I would never urge an individual business to do anything in a public way outside of what their comforts are.

But the industry groups that have certainly spoken out and worked with government to arrive at this bill, I'd like to recognize and thank their efforts, and certainly the member companies within those associations: the Saskatchewan Construction Association, the Saskatchewan Heavy Construction Association, the Manufacturing Council, the NSBA [North Saskatoon Business Association], Mr. Speaker, the Consulting Engineers, Merit consulting, Mr. Speaker.

The list goes on for the industry groups who represent their members that have contributed to this process. And I say thank you to them. I also say thank you to them for the work they do in this province representing their members day in, day out — key drivers within our economy, Mr. Speaker.

I do want to recognize the businesses that have spoken out and identified key concerns with procurement over the past number of years — the reality of businesses that are still phoning and still reaching out to share the reality of what's going on under this current government, Mr. Speaker, and all of the concern over this government putting taxpayers on the hook to foreign corporation after foreign corporation after foreign corporation with literally hundreds of millions of dollars of taxpayers'

money, Mr. Speaker, when we have Saskatchewan companies, Mr. Speaker, who deserve a fair shot and deserve to be a part of that process.

So this matter needs a resolution. It needs a government that's going to look to Saskatchewan companies with the respect that they deserve. And taxpayers deserve a government that's going to ensure value for taxpayers, Mr. Speaker.

We can see that this is a government, Mr. Speaker, that dismissed action on this issue, dismissed the concern, delayed action, all while letting contract after contract after contract. And we can think of just some of those, Mr. Speaker, massive contracts. We've got this Paris outfit, Mr. Speaker, from Paris, France, if you can imagine, connected into this massive bypass contract, Mr. Speaker, which isn't yet delivering the safety that those on Highway No. 1 East deserve, Mr. Speaker.

A contract, Mr. Speaker, you know, that just a couple years ago the government opposite said that it would be \$400 million. And they said they've studied the project to death, Mr. Speaker, to death. So you'd think that they'd have pretty good numbers at that point. But that project, Mr. Speaker, has gone from \$400 million to \$2 billion and counting, Mr. Speaker, with the lead proponent being a company from Paris, France, if you can imagine, Mr. Speaker — Paris, France.

You know, and a plan that doesn't make any sense when it comes to which snowplow has jurisdiction on which mile and, you know, who is going to effectively respond to winter weather at a time when lives are at risk, Mr. Speaker. And a government that just can't provide a reasonable explanation about why they can't manage their project, why they're placing this bypass itself in this Tower Road location, Mr. Speaker, built within the city itself and not effectively moving truck traffic off that artery. And putting taxpayers on the hook, Mr. Speaker, for \$2 billion and counting, with a large proponent being from Paris, France. Talk about falling out of touch with Saskatchewan people and businesses, Mr. Speaker.

We see the same in the schools, where the government itself has created its infrastructure scheme that actually prevents many Saskatchewan companies from actually bidding on those projects. And I know the government opposite will say, oh, well they're going to include a few businesses in that. You know what? Saskatchewan businesses have the exceptional ability of delivering on their contracts. They can build the infrastructure and schools that we need, Mr. Speaker. What they don't need is bits and scraps and to be subcontracted from large, international consortiums, Mr. Speaker, with the profits left outside these borders. What we need is to work with the exceptional builders and companies of this province in all trades and all industries to build the infrastructure that this province deserves.

And it's a reminder as well, Mr. Speaker. Sadly we're dealing with a lower oil price environment which doesn't assist many that are working within that sector, Mr. Speaker. Certainly we've seen layoffs. We see some difficult circumstances. We see companies that may not be as engaged in projects that they would have just a short while ago, Mr. Speaker. Now while we can't control oil price, we can certainly make sure that the policies of government are getting the job done, certainly for taxpayers of this province when it comes to value, but also for

the businesses of this province.

We see a massive contract that's been doled out to a company from Milwaukee to come in and apparently take care of the P3 rent-a-schools of this government. We have workers here in this province that can get that job done, Mr. Speaker. I don't know why, Mr. Speaker, we see a government that is so relentless on sending . . . inking large contracts with corporations from the United Kingdom, Mr. Speaker; from Paris, France; from Milwaukee; from Texas, Mr. Speaker, when we have workers and we have businesses here who deserve that opportunity. And that fulfills value for taxpayers but also strengthens our economy.

I mean one example that's often noted, Mr. Speaker, by so many across this province, and it just defies common sense, that this government, you know, they're so relentless on their out-of-country outsourcing, Mr. Speaker, that even when it comes to your fishing and hunting licence, Mr. Speaker — I know you're an avid hunter just like I am, Mr. Speaker — it just makes absolutely no sense that we have some company down in the United States, Mr. Speaker, in the southern United States who are collecting dollars and taking those jobs, Mr. Speaker. And we have companies and people right here in Regina and all across Saskatchewan who could be delivering that for Saskatchewan people.

That's the approach of this government. Profits for companies in other jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker, maybe lower wage strategies here at home, when what we need is good mortgage-paying jobs, Mr. Speaker, and what we need is companies fully engaged in the building of the infrastructure and delivering the services that we need here in the province.

You know, Mr. Speaker, we've brought forward, we've urged government to act on this. Government delayed actions. We've raised it in question period. We pushed government. We brought forward a piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker, private member's legislation. We called on government constructively to work with that legislation. We said, hey listen, if you need to amend aspects of that legislation, we will advance this.

Well instead, Mr. Speaker, they sat on their hands and doled out contract after contract after contract, hundreds of millions and billions, Mr. Speaker, that are committed and that will be flowing outside this province for many years forward.

You know, and I've heard from construction companies. I've heard from electrical contractors. I've heard from engineers and architects, Mr. Speaker. I've heard from trade after trade, Mr. Speaker, the nonsensical approach, an approach that's really not fair and certainly not in the best economic interests of our province, Mr. Speaker.

With that being said, you know, we have a bill before us. It's a tad ill-defined around what sort of criteria will be utilized within the . . . for project to project. What's going to be important on that front is clarity from government directly to industries and businesses related. There needs to be a fair, objective process and there needs to be the fair shot for Saskatchewan companies, the one that they deserve, Mr. Speaker.

Now we'll spend some time in committee to flesh out some of the detail of this legislation. But, Mr. Speaker, I want to . . . and there we'll deal with it from a, you know, more of a technical perspective. But it would be wrong, Mr. Speaker, for me not to take my feet and to put onto the record the frustration of businesses and workers all across this province, Mr. Speaker, with a government that's dismissed this very important issue, that's held onto a simplistic and naive boy-scoutish procurement policy, Mr. Speaker, selling out the opportunity rightfully deserved by the fine businesses and entrepreneurs of this province and the exceptional workers, Mr. Speaker.

[15:15]

But with that being said, I do want to recognize once again the businesses across Saskatchewan that have reached out, that have had their voice, whether it be with opposition, whether it be with government. And I definitely want to recognize as well those that have been a part of guiding this process, Mr. Speaker, and I want to recognize those industry groups as well.

What we need to see though, Mr. Speaker, is meaningful action. We have a government, as I say, that's doled out big contract after big contract, not delivering the best value for Saskatchewan taxpayers, Mr. Speaker, and not ensuring a fair shot for Saskatchewan companies and workers or our economy, Mr. Speaker, but some sort of simplistic, naive policy that defies serving the people of this province.

With that being said, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to questions and some time within committee. Thanks, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General that Bill No. 188, *The Best Value in Procurement Act, 2015* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Principal Clerk: — 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 very much, Mr. Speaker. I move that this bill be referred to the Committee on the Economy.

The Speaker: — This bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on the Economy. I recognize the Government House Leader.

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. This House stands adjourned to 10 a.m. tomorrow morning.

[The Assembly adjourned at 15:18.]

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