



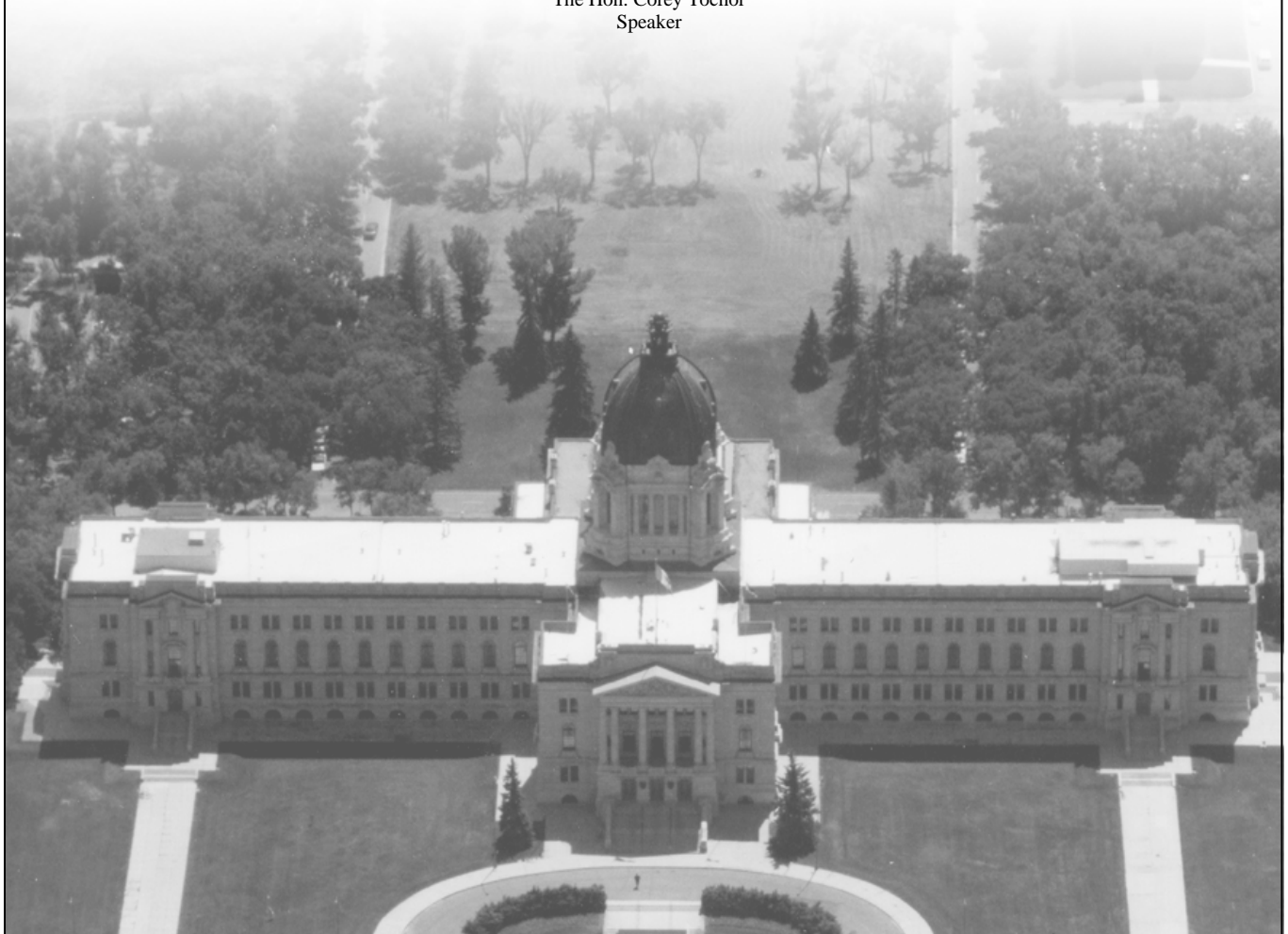
SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)
Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Corey Tochor
Speaker



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

Speaker — Hon. Corey Tochor
Premier — Hon. Brad Wall
Leader of the Opposition — Nicole Sarauer

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Marit , Hon. David — Wood River (SP)	Vacancies — Kindersley, Melfort

Party Standings: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 47; New Democratic Party (NDP) — 12; Vacant — 2

Clerks-at-the-Table

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. By leave, I would like to make a personal statement.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister.

STATEMENT BY A MEMBER

Apology

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Facts as they were related to me about an in-class presentation are now in dispute from another account. Erring on the side of caution, probity, and the honour of the Assembly, I apologize unequivocally to this House for the disputed account I included in my Throne Speech reply.

I want to be clear that our government implemented and continues to support, also unequivocally, mandatory treaty education in our system. We were the first government in Canada to implement such curriculum, and I will continue to work toward its continuation and its strengthening, Mr. Speaker.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I'll take this opportunity. We do have a guest in from Manitoba, the Deputy Speaker, Doyle Piwniuk. Would you give a wave? He had the opportunity to come out and visit us yesterday, and today we had a good visit again in my office. And I believe he's going to be meeting with the Minister of Energy and Resources later today. So could everyone please welcome Doyle to his . . . or not his Assembly, our Assembly. We're getting him over. He's going to be cheering for the Riders soon enough, but please welcome him to our Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize our Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Hart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with you in welcoming my colleague the Deputy Speaker from Manitoba. We had an opportunity to have quite a good visit and compare notes as to how their legislature operates, particularly from a Deputy Speaker's point of view. And I must say, Mr. Speaker, that I will certainly prefer our system here because Doyle had indicated that he had a very long night very recently, just to get some of the business of their House done. I believe they were sitting beyond 4 a.m. here just very recently, and I don't think we want to do that. But I would certainly ask all members of the Assembly to welcome Doyle to our legislature.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to, on behalf of the official opposition, welcome the Deputy Speaker from Manitoba here to the Assembly. Always good to see someone from friendly Manitoba here in the great province of Saskatchewan. And certainly on behalf of the official opposition I'd welcome this individual to our Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Assembly, I would like to introduce some special guests to us seated in your gallery. With us today from the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation are Executive Director Darrell Crabbe. Accompanying Darrell, Darren Newberry, James Villeneuve, Doug Gibson, and Chelsea Walters.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation is here today for Camo Day. It's a new tradition to celebrate Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Heritage Day. And I want to thank members that have taken part in wearing some camo today, some scarves and some pocket squares. I was hoping for a full jacket, but unfortunately the Duck Dynasty clothing line only extends to T-shirts and hats. Not jackets yet, but we can always hope.

You're going to hear more about this special day that's being proclaimed in a member's statement, and I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming these guests to their Legislative Assembly.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, another special guest seated in your gallery, Matthea Mlynarski. Matthea is from Weyburn originally. She's a student at the University of Regina where she's studying business as well as taking a minor in political science.

She has expressed a keen interest in politics, in governance in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. In fact I know that from the tender age of four years old she started watching question period with her mother. Now, Mr. Speaker, as a parent to young children, I'm going to take this in mind in some ideas for perhaps putting our children to sleep for a nap. We'll try to employ this technique. But it apparently didn't put her to sleep; it awoken an interest in politics in Matthea.

Matthea is a very talented young lady. She's a talented singer. She took part in choir in high school, including the Stars Choir at the Weyburn Comprehensive, and she's starting to write her own music as well. And so we wish Matthea all the best in her studies. I don't think she'll be a stranger to the Assembly now that she's attending school here in Regina. So I'd ask all members to join with me in welcoming Matthea to her Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And on behalf of the official opposition I too would like to welcome the individuals behind the clock from the Wildlife Federation to their Legislative Assembly, and I'm looking forward to the announcement coming up here in members' statements. But we do appreciate and rely on the work that you do, Mr. Crabbe, and your staff in terms of ensuring that the wildlife in our province are properly stewarded and looked after. So on behalf of the official opposition, I would like to extend a warm welcome to your Legislative Assembly, and would ask all members to do the same.

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

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like all members to join me in welcoming a class of grade 8 students, 36 of them from George Lee School in the beautiful constituency of Walsh Acres. They're accompanied by their teachers, Jennie Davies and Natalie Schapansky. I'm looking forward to having a conversation with the students after question period in the Qu'Appelle Gallery. So I ask all members to join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly, and I think we might have another introduction after. So welcome.

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker, just briefly following up with the member from Walsh Acres is a couple of folks I know up there personally. One of them's Tyrone Elek. He was on our football team this year, Mr. Speaker. A very good player for us and did a good job, and of course city champ. So also a good friend of mine, a very good friend of mine's son — I've known him since he was a baby — Master Tyson O'Day is up there. My good buddy Jeremy is out in Ottawa right now, but welcome, Tyson, to the Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina University.

Ms. Beaudry-Mellor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Very briefly, I'd just like to join with the member from Weyburn-Big Muddy and welcome Matthea to her Legislative Assembly. Matthea has reached out to me as someone who's very interested in politics, and I just want to say how gratifying it is to know that there are some very young and promising women out there who are really getting interested in politics. And it's wonderful to see, and I would like to welcome you to your Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure today to introduce someone who's been seated in your gallery for two days now, Mr. Austin MacNally. If you can give us a wave, Austin.

Austin is our constituency president in Saskatoon Fairview, and he also sits as a vice-president for the youth wing on the

Saskatchewan New Democrats, so for our party. So he's a very active individual in the political realm. He's also involved with the Saskatchewan Youth Parliament, so he'll be back here in December and sitting in this Chamber. And he joins us this week. He's a university student in political science from the University of Saskatchewan. He joins us this week because he's on reading week and thought that this was where he wanted to spend his time and take it all in. So I would ask all members to join me in welcoming Austin to his Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I wish to inform the Assembly that we have a new Page. Nengi Allison will be joining us as a Page for the session.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to present a petition as it pertains to the Buffalo Narrows Correctional Centre. And, Mr. Speaker, the people that have presented this petition for the Legislative Assembly have the following prayer or the following points to make before the prayer: that the closure of the Buffalo Narrows Correctional Centre left 15 people out of work, and financial impacts on their family and to a lot of local businesses. That the closure also hurt the part-time workers and elders within our community, with the help of inmates doing odd jobs throughout the community and for elders.

That the closure of the Buffalo Narrows Correctional Centre hurt the families of the inmates while learning new skills and working with skilled employers to obtain employment upon release. That the closure of the correctional centre took the inmates far away from their families, which makes visitation difficult or not existent at all. And that the closure of the Buffalo Narrows Correctional Centre also took away from inmates the ability to get treatment and to obtain training tickets while there.

So, Mr. Speaker, the people read the following prayer:

To immediately reopen the Buffalo Narrows Correctional Centre to better our community for future generations to come.

And the people that have signed this petition are from all throughout the region, and the page that I'm presenting today, the people that have signed are primarily from Buffalo Narrows. And I so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

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

I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the Government of

Saskatchewan to take the necessary steps to stop the federal government from imposing a carbon tax on the province.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens of Lloydminster, Paradise Hill, Frenchman Butte, and St. Walburg. I do so present.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for critical supports for survivors of domestic violence. Those that signed the petition wish to bring attention to the following: Saskatchewan has the highest rate of domestic violence amongst the provinces in Canada. Employers should be obligated to reasonably accommodate survivors of domestic violence in the workplace. Employees who are survivors of domestic violence should be able to take a leave of absence from their employment without penalty. And Saskatchewan must do more to protect survivors of domestic violence.

Mr. Speaker, these are the provisions we've called for in our private members' bill, Bill No. 605, which I'm very optimistic that the government will take on and pass. I'm hopeful that the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Labour, who is conveniently the same person right now, will see the benefit of this legislation and call for it to be passed by his government colleagues. I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Legislative Assembly to pass legislation providing critical support for survivors of domestic violence.

The individuals signing the petition today come from Regina. I do so present.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to present a petition today to get big money out of Saskatchewan politics. And the undersigned residents of the province here want to bring to our attention the following: that Saskatchewan's outdated election Act allows corporations, unions, and individuals, even those outside the province, to make unlimited donations in our province's political parties; that the people of Saskatchewan deserve to live in a fair province where all voices are equal and money can't influence politics.

And we know that Saskatchewan politics should belong to Saskatchewan people and that the federal government and the provinces of Alberta, Manitoba, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and now British Columbia have moved to limit this influence and level the playing field by banning corporate and union donations to political parties. Mr. Speaker, I would like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan call on the Sask Party to overhaul Saskatchewan's campaign finance laws to end out-of-province donations, to put a ban on donations from corporations and unions, and to put a donation limit

on individual donations.

Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition come from the city of Regina. I do so present. Thank you.

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

[13:45]

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to stand in my place today to present a petition for a second bridge in Prince Albert. The individuals that signed this particular petition want me to draw the following points to your attention: that the Diefenbaker bridge in Prince Albert is the primary link that connects the southern part of the province to the North; and that the need for a second bridge in Prince Albert has never been clearer than it is today.

Prince Albert the community, and north of Prince Albert, and the businesses that send people and products through Prince Albert require a solution; that the support of people across the province, municipal governments, and the neighbouring communities for a second bridge is overwhelming and has been joined by the support from industry groups, the Prince Albert association of regional municipalities, and many others; and that the Sask Party government refuses to stand up for Prince Albert and this critical infrastructure issue. I'll read the prayer, Mr. Speaker:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan ask that the Saskatchewan Party government stop stalling, hiding behind rhetoric and refusing to listen to the people calling for action, and begin immediately to plan and then quickly commence the construction of a second bridge for Prince Albert using federal and provincial dollars.

Mr. Speaker, the individuals signing this particular petition come from the communities of Regina and Prince Albert. I do so present.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling on the government to stop cuts to our kids' classrooms. Those who signed this petition wish to draw our attention to the following:

We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring your attention to the following: that the Sask Party has cut at least \$674 in government funding for every student across this province; that the Sask Party hiked education property taxes by 67 million, but cut total government funding for education by \$54 million; that even though the Sask Party is making us all pay more, our kids are actually getting less; and that the Sask Party cuts mean that students will lose much needed supports in their classroom, including funding for buses for kindergartners, and programs to help with special needs such as autism.

Those who have signed this petition call upon this certain prayer:

We, the undersigned, call upon the government to reverse the senseless cuts to our kids' classrooms and to stop making families, teachers, and everyone who works in education pay the price for the Sask Party's mismanagement, their scandal, and waste.

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

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Carrot River Valley.

Hunting, Fishing, and Trapping Heritage Day

Mr. Bradshaw: — Mr. Speaker, every November 15th Saskatchewan residents and visitors celebrate Hunting, Fishing, and Trapping Heritage Day. This day recognizes the important role hunting, fishing, and trapping has played in Canada's history, and how these activities continue to have significant economic, cultural, and social contributions to this province. This includes contributing more than 500 million to Saskatchewan's economy every year.

Mr. Speaker, since *The Hunting, Fishing and Trapping Heritage Act* was passed in the fall of 2009, the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation has been our partner in recognizing this day. Last week the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation launched a Camo Day initiative in conjunction with their Saskatchewan Hunting, Trapping, and Fishing Heritage Day announcement. Anyone can take part, and people are encouraged to wear camouflage and share their stories with friends and colleagues.

As you can see by my pocket square today, Mr. Speaker, I'm helping mark Camo Day in my own way. Thanks to all the members in the House today who are wearing the camo also. By working together we will ensure the ongoing success of this relationship as we continue to raise awareness and promote the integral role that hunters, anglers, and trappers play as stewards of our environment and recognize the significant impact that these activities have for our residents, communities, business, and visitors. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Sisters in Spirit Vigil Held in Prince Albert

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On October 4th, a Sisters in Spirit vigil was held at the Prince Albert Friendship Centre. October 4th is now recognized as the official day to honour missing and murdered indigenous women and girls across Canada. The vigil in Prince Albert was one of dozens held across Canada aiming to raise awareness about the impact of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls on local communities.

As of October 4th, Mr. Speaker, there are currently 35 investigations into missing women and girls from northern

Saskatchewan. The vigil was well attended with representation from the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police], Prince Albert city police, Prince Albert City Council, Prince Albert Police Indigenous Women's Advisory Council, Prince Albert Grand Council, Prince Albert Indian Métis Friendship Centre, Métis Nation-Saskatchewan, and concerned community members. They came together for a sharing circle, speeches, and a candlelight vigil followed by the sharing of food provided by Prince Albert Indian Métis Friendship Centre.

Events like the vigil remind us that everyone is affected when an indigenous woman or girl goes missing or is killed. Families and loved ones, but also police officers, first responders, medical professionals, and community members are all impacted by the loss.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join with me in congratulating the organizers of the Sisters in Spirit vigil and all those who participated in the event honouring missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

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

International Education Week

Ms. Lambert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to announce that November 13th to 17th is International Education Week. This week is recognized in more than 100 countries to showcase the benefits international education has in our schools and communities.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan plan for growth identified international study as a cornerstone for our province's immigration strategy. Last year there were nearly 7,000 international students studying in Saskatchewan from over 130 countries. These students contribute more than \$150 million each year to Saskatchewan's economy.

Mr. Speaker, we also encourage our students to study abroad. In 2016-17, close to 1,000 Saskatchewan post-secondary students travelled to over 60 different countries for study-abroad experiences. International education connects Saskatchewan to other parts of the world. It gives students the opportunity to develop new skills and learn about new languages, cultures, and traditions. Mr. Speaker, international education is important to our province and to our country. I ask all members to join me in recognizing the importance of international education and celebrating the many contributions it makes to Saskatchewan throughout the week. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Bullying Awareness Week

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, I rise in this House today to recognize Bullying Awareness Week in Saskatchewan, taking place from November 12th to the 18th. Bullying is a serious issue across our province and our country, and we on this side of the House are working hard every day to create an environment where our children can feel safe in our schools and our communities.

A recent report from the Saskatchewan Alliance for Youth and Community Well-Being found that almost 65 per cent of students experienced bullying at least once in the past year. Furthermore, according to the same report, nearly one in five students have also considered suicide.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to use this opportunity to encourage all members of this Assembly to reach out to those who are particularly vulnerable to homophobic and transphobic bullying. The lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities have as much right as anyone to feel safe and free, and we should do whatever we can to secure that.

Mr. Speaker, it's clear that we need to do more to create a positive culture within our school system. While proclaiming the 12th to the 18th as Bullying Awareness Week in our province is a positive start, I'd like to take this opportunity and encourage all members to take a stand against bullying. We know that bullying is not only limited to our classrooms but also happens in our workplaces, homes, and communities. Together we can work to resolve this issue and effectively bring about a society where we all thrive. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Saskatoon Hilltops Win Fourth Straight Canada Bowl

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past weekend, the Saskatoon Hilltops won their fourth straight Canadian Bowl championship, defeating the Windsor AKO Fratmen by a score of 56 to 11. This dominant win puts the Hilltops in the history books. In the 110-year history of the Canadian Junior Football League, no other team has won four in a row. This also marks the 20th championship for the team, the most victories by one team in the league's history.

Starting quarterback Jordan Walls was named the offensive MVP [most valuable player]. The defensive back Luke Melnyk was named the defensive MVP after securing two interceptions.

Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to recognize the Hilltops coaching staff, and in particular, head coach Tom Sargeant. Any time a team experiences this kind of unprecedented success as the Hilltops have experienced, preparation, hard work, and determination are essential factors. As coach Sargeant told the media in a recent interview, his first planning meeting for next season is already scheduled for this coming Monday.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all members of this Assembly, I'd like to congratulate coach Sargeant, his coaching staff, the Hilltops players, alumni, and entire organization on their remarkable achievement, and wish them the best of luck in their drive for five, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina University.

Campbell Tartans Win Provincial 4A Championship

Ms. Beaudry-Mellor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know it's not very often when you get to be both a proud mom and a proud constituency representative. But this past

weekend, one of the schools in my constituency, the Campbell Tartans, won the provincial 4A football championship, trouncing the Saskatoon Centennial Chargers by a score of 44-15.

Tartans quarterback Matt Rivers accounted for four touchdowns, and a stout defence forced nine turnovers. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize one of the players, Josh White, a senior and the team's captain. Josh lives down the street from us and led the Schwann Conference in defensive points. He has also played on Team Saskatchewan, where he has twice been the silver medallist linebacker in the Canada cup. Josh has been a great leader on this team, and I wish him well in his varsity career.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the dedicated coaching staff for their commitment and time to the young men on this football team, as this experience was unforgettable, especially for a young quarterback I happen to know and love. Congratulations to the Campbell Tartans.

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

Joint-Use School Openings

Hon. Ms. Heppner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to stand today to say that both of the joint-use schools in the cities of Martensville and Warman have opened for the school year. Prairie Spirit division's Lake Vista School and Greater Saskatoon Catholic's École Holy Mary Catholic School are the two new schools in Martensville. Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to announce that this P3 [public-private partnership] build finished on time and on budget. The P3 model enabled our government to build more schools at the same time, which wouldn't have been possible through a traditional approach.

This build was made possible through the hard work and collaboration that included input from the students, teachers, parents, school divisions, and community members. In the last decade this government has made education a priority. We have opened a total of 40 new schools — five in my own constituency — along with 25 major renovations to existing schools. These schools, along with the 17 billion invested from kindergarten to grade 12 and 875 new teachers, shows that our government doesn't just talk about making education a priority. It truly is a priority.

Mr. Speaker, the difference between our party and the members opposite is that they closed schools over their tenure. I think that speaks to their commitment to education as well, Mr. Speaker. We're proud of our record. Thank you.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Education Curriculum

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're all back here today to do the job we were elected to do. And on that front, I have a question for the Premier. Mr. Speaker, there's been much said about the Minister of Education's disturbing

comments, and she has now made an apology of sorts. It's November 15th, Mr. Speaker. It took this many weeks and thousands signing a petition calling for her resignation to finally have her stand up and apologize.

But her apology today was to the Assembly. She did not apologize to the teacher who she singled out. She did not apologize to all those who support indigenous education or to those who support the accurate teaching of history for that matter. And, Mr. Speaker, she did not apologize to other teachers and students who are teaching and learning from the same curriculum which you can find, by the way, on the ministry's own website.

[14:00]

Mr. Speaker, the minister could have found the facts if she wanted them, but she did not. She used the assignment to question the very idea of indigenous education in our classrooms. Mr. Speaker, does the Premier still stand by this minister or will he do the right thing and remove her from cabinet?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, thank you. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. The short answer is absolutely I stand by the Minister of Education, Mr. Speaker. And moreover I would highlight for members, as the Leader of the Opposition alluded to just moments ago, that when it was clear that there was a dispute in terms of the account of a class presentation, the Minister of Education rose in her place before the session began today to ensure the honour of the Assembly and apologize, which is, I think, the correct thing to do.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, I'm looking forward to the work of the minister and the ministry in the months ahead. As you will know, the Speech from the Throne highlighted our intention to ensure that math curriculum is better serving students. This will be led . . . This is an issue that the Minister of Education actually spoke to prior to her time in the role. She feels strongly about it as do members on this side of the House.

She also feels strongly about the importance of school choice in this province, and the reference in the Speech from the Throne to the use of the notwithstanding clause and its introduction since is also an important part of her education agenda, in addition to what has been, over the last 10 years, huge increases in operating dollars and significant capital investments, Mr. Speaker, building new schools in this province versus the days when they would be closed.

And so our commitment to education remains strong, to treaty curriculum in the K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] system, that remains strong — it was started by this government, Mr. Speaker — and so does the support I have for the Minister of Education.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, that is simply not good enough and those words ring hollow while that minister stays in

cabinet. We should all be proud, both sides of the House, that Saskatchewan was a leader in adopting indigenous education into our classrooms, but the minister is running in the opposite direction.

We were also sent a description of the assignment from a parent. Her child got an A and said that the class was asked to explore the differences between two world views and then write about their own world view and how they fit in each of them. Mr. Speaker, the students were being asked to open their minds and consider what their own perspectives mean. But instead of doing what the students were asked to do, the minister twisted the assignment and doubled down on her own ideas. That is dangerous, and frankly when you consider what she is overseeing — an entire curriculum review — that is very scary.

Mr. Speaker, we are all treaty people. By letting that minister keep her job, what message does the Premier think he's sending to indigenous peoples across this province and to all Saskatchewan people? And most importantly, what message is he sending to our kids?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I want to send a very strong signal, not just to the students across the province, to our teachers, to all the stakeholders involved in education, but to my hon. friends opposite when I indicate to them that when we were first elected in 2007, treaty curriculum was not mandatory in the province of Saskatchewan. In fact it was the Saskatchewan Party — it was this party — that campaigned in the election to fix that problem, a problem that had been there I think for some time when members had the chance to change it. When they had the chance to be in government they had the chance to ensure that this province, among the highest per capita First Nations population, would ensure that there would be mandatory treaty . . . Well members are heckling from their seat. The fact of the matter is they had a chance to do the right thing, but they didn't, Mr. Speaker.

And I'm proud to say that working with the school system, with the Ministry of Education, working together with the Treaty Commissioner, that has changed in the province of Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan was the first province to make treaty education mandatory, to make that part of the Saskatchewan curriculum. That is not subject to change.

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

Global Transportation Hub and Government Initiatives

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, this minister's comments are a symbol of the greater problem. They are a tired and arrogant government that doesn't get it. From that minister, to their heartless cuts and their unfair tax hikes, to their use of emails to avoid transparency and accountability, and the bypass and the GTH [Global Transportation Hub] — these are all matters of trust. And ministers being plagued by scandal is now becoming their legacy.

Even the newest candidate to lead their party says they are all tied up in scandals. In the same way that minister is denying what she said, what she said, Bill Boyd, the Premier, the former

and current GTH ministers and every Sask Party PAC [Public Accounts Committee] member have refused to come clean to Saskatchewan people about what they knew about the GTH land scandal. Rob Clarke is right. They aren't working for Saskatchewan people. Don't hide behind the auditor's report. She said, and the RCMP have confirmed, there are more questions to be asked. Don't hide behind the RCMP because Saskatchewan people have more questions.

Knowing what he knows now, does the Premier wish he had fired Bill Boyd and Laurie Pushor instead of trusting them with the GTH?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the question because, Mr. Speaker, it goes right to what we've seen, I think, over the last number of weeks in the House beginning with the Speech from the Throne. In the Speech from the Throne, we saw over a dozen brand new ideas or new initiatives coming forward from this government, that admittedly has been in place — and we're grateful to have been able to serve — now for 10 years.

New ideas coming forward on this side of the House, almost all of them by the way opposed by the NDP [New Democratic Party], including such crazy concepts as Uber in the province of Saskatchewan — supported by 80 per cent of the people, opposed by the NDP. Including invoking the notwithstanding clause so that we can protect choice for Saskatchewan families and parents, so parents can make a choice for education and we can preserve that for the province — supported by members on this side, opposed by members on that side. The seniors' tax deferral credit program, which we'll be talking more about in this session, any number of initiatives in the Throne Speech.

And what do we hear from the NDP, Mr. Speaker? It's the same old thing we've heard for 20 years. She wants to talk about a leadership race. I'm proud of the diverse leadership race that's going on in the Saskatchewan Party, now with someone who is a member of a First Nation, two women, Mr. Speaker, a total of six candidates. Compare that to members opposite where run and rerun are the leadership candidates there — two White, middle-aged men, Mr. Speaker. If you want renewal and new ideas, look to this side, not to that side of the House.

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

Education Curriculum Review

Mr. Meili: — Well, Mr. Speaker, regardless of our backgrounds, everyone in Saskatchewan, we are all treaty people. And the deep concerns of people around this province are not just about one errant comment in the House or about a minister minimizing the experience of indigenous peoples, even while she shut down NORTEP [northern teacher education program]. It's not even about a reluctant apology. It's about what she actually believes and what that means as she's responsible for a full review of our kids' curriculum.

Given her record, Mr. Speaker, an ongoing pattern of backward-looking commentary, how can the Premier have

confidence in this minister leading the review of a curriculum that is designed to move us forward?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Because, Mr. Speaker, the only two areas of review are in math and in coding, Mr. Speaker. And I simply refer back to my earlier apology today, and my commitment, our commitment, Mr. Speaker, to unequivocally support continued, mandated treaty education in schools in our province as we have.

I also refer to my apology, my expressions of regret of two days ago for having raised my son in a public forum, my undertaking to not do so again, Mr. Speaker, and finally to my remarks last Thursday in this House, that our government was the first to implement mandated treaty education, and we will continue to do so.

I reiterated this commitment yesterday to the SSBA [Saskatchewan School Boards Association], to northern education leaders, as I did to the head of the FSIN [Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations], Chief Bobby Cameron, last week, who said of my comments, quote, very graciously: her stance is that teaching treaty has to continue. It's about working together. And it is, Mr. Speaker. Build on what we've achieved together.

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

Support for Schools in La Loche

Mr. Meili: — Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan School Boards Association met here in Regina earlier this week. I had a chance to chat with education leaders from northern Saskatchewan. They talked about La Loche, that how two years after the tragic events, nearly two years after the events of January 2016, the high school still shows the scars. And they're still waiting for the money to renovate that facility.

Mr. Speaker, I'll be visiting La Loche later this week. I want to know what kind of a message, as I'm meeting with community leaders, I can bring. Am I able to tell them that we're ready to fix that facility? Or should I tell them that the healing of their community isn't a priority and they'll have to wait even more years?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I spoke with the mayor of La Loche, Robert St. Pierre, this morning. We had a very productive conversation as I did with him a few weeks ago. I spoke with northern education leaders yesterday and the matter of the school came up. So we will be working with this in the next week or so, Mr. Speaker, and to do our utmost to do good by that community and by that school. Our hearts will always go out, as we have said before, Mr. Speaker, to those who were affected by the tragedy in La Loche. It was a heartbreaking tragedy.

And it is important to appreciate the words of Mayor Robert St. Pierre, who has said that we care and we want to move forward,

and who acknowledged that, and we appreciate that because that is our intention, Mr. Speaker.

Following the tragedy, in the meantime the number of student counsellors at the school has increased from two to six. We increased administrative supports at both schools, invested over 100,000 to improve security, and put in place an RCMP school resource officer at Dene High School — some real attempted supports, Mr. Speaker, as we work together.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Northern Teacher Education Program

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. That whole government is failing to work for indigenous peoples. The Throne Speech had nothing for the North. They are refusing to take the necessary steps towards reconciliation, and instead of apologizing for the Sixties Scoop they are now blaming the FSIN and the Métis Nation.

Mr. Speaker, this Education minister is the same minister who helped that government shut down NORTEP, a program that worked for four decades. It provided education and teachers in the North, and more than that, Mr. Speaker, it provided hope. But the Saskatchewan Party cut took the number of people in the first-year education program from 35 to 5.

Mr. Speaker, now that the minister has made her bias against indigenous education well known, and if the Premier won't fire her, and if they truly care at all about reconciliation, will the new Minister of Advanced Education immediately restore funding for NORTEP-NORPAC [northern teacher education program-Northern Professional Access College]? Will he do that?

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

Hon. Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I'll just say at the outset that teacher education in the North is very important to this government and will continue to be. And the consolidation of that education program in the North is about expanding the programs and enhancing access to northern students, while also ensuring that those programs are going to be high quality and sustainable. And, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say as well that since 2007 the enrolment in the university education program has increased in that Northlands College in La Ronge by 226 per cent.

But part of that was done, Mr. Speaker, was simply because there was 3,700 people in La Ronge and Air Ronge, and it was done to reduce duplication and by achieving 500,000 in administration savings. So, Mr. Speaker, we believe that this was the right thing to do. We're going to continue on.

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

Support for Education

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, if the need for teaching our shared history wasn't clear enough before, the government's comments

and lack of leadership as of late make it obvious. More and more people are speaking out against the Education minister and her recent comments around indigenous education in this province. She has belatedly apologized for her comments in the House, but the consequences are much broader than that. She told the media, "I found it regrettable that the world vision of European pioneers, for example, that every single one of them in the assignment was 100 per cent negative."

Mr. Speaker, the minister called into question the entire curriculum without cause. It's unacceptable, Mr. Speaker. Thousands of people are calling for her resignation and even a former prime minister has condemned her remarks. So will the minister genuinely accept responsibility for the damage done by her words and will she resign from cabinet?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Once again, Mr. Speaker, I extend my heartfelt apology. It was never my intention to create any confusion or mislead this House in any way.

And I would simply refer back to the TRC's [Truth and Reconciliation Commission] call to action no. 62, which calls on educators to create K to 12 curriculum on indigenous history, treaties, and residential schools. And, Mr. Speaker, once again, it was this government that mandated that. We stand by that. That will continue, Mr. Speaker. And we'll continue on building all the foundations that we have begun to establish for the future, for all parties in this discussion.

[14:15]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, it is my sincere wish that that minister would spend a little more time with the recommendations of the TRC. And let's be clear, that she repeated for weeks and weeks that the assignment presented said "the following facts . . . as facts." She claimed, Mr. Speaker, "that European and European settlers were colonialists, pillagers of the land . . ." Mr. Speaker, we know now that it did not say that.

The actual assignment asked the students to "Analyze the relationship between the traditional Aboriginal concept of land and the . . . [traditional] Western European notion of land . . ." Again, Mr. Speaker, it's all online.

She could have looked up the facts earlier. Instead, she used her own interpretation as justification to question how we're addressing indigenous education and propose upending the whole curriculum. If she won't resign and do the right thing, will the minister at least commit to not unilaterally removing the infusion of indigenous knowledge within the curriculum, referring to the committee that she spoke about yesterday in the scrum at the SSBA?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — The answer is absolutely, Mr. Speaker. And as I did say yesterday, this is a collaborative effort. Curriculum

development is never up to one person, nor was it ever my intention to suggest that it was. We've been talking about math, and we've been talking about coding in the context of curriculum development, Mr. Speaker.

And in the context of this social studies course, it's First Nations and elders and ministry and ultimately cabinet who are all hands on deck in terms of developing curriculum. And certainly it was never my intention, Mr. Speaker, to indicate that one person, one assignment would ever, of course, form any curriculum development in this province, Mr. Speaker.

Let's recall that across education, our record demonstrates a clear commitment to First Nations in education which we are all extremely proud of. The First Nations and Métis education fund that we created, increased graduation rates for First Nations and Métis students, and as well the invitational shared services initiative which helps bands access literacy and other online resources — some of many, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, to be clear, she's already contradicted herself with regard to just exactly what is under review, and I hope she gets that straightened out.

Last spring the Sask Party took away input and power from local school boards and local communities and put it all in the hands of their Education minister and their cabinet. Teachers and parents across this province are understandably concerned with this minister's comments and her refusal to fully accept responsibility for the damage that she has done.

And, Mr. Speaker, at the SSBA AGM [annual general meeting] yesterday, the minister gave educators even more reason for concern. After acknowledging the damage that was done by the Sask Party's cuts, the minister said, and I quote, "You rose to the challenge this year and whatever lies ahead, I am confident in your ability to do it again." Mr. Speaker, "whatever lies ahead" and "again" — really.

The fact that Saskatchewan school boards, trustees, principals, teachers, staff, and parents are finding their way through cuts, it's no excuse to threaten them again with more damage. Since the minister has shown no willingness to work with our educators and no understanding of the damage that her government's cuts have caused, what makes her think that she deserves to be the Minister of Education?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, of course we acknowledge that school divisions continue to have to make difficult decisions. And that was what I was referencing yesterday to the SSBA, that we appreciate their efforts, their ongoing efforts to deal with the fiscal challenges. And we always hope they make the right decisions, particularly when it comes to staffing the classroom.

Mr. Speaker, of course we don't get involved in the day-to-day operations of divisions, although certainly we cheer when for example members of Saskatoon Public and members of

Saskatoon Catholic literally stand together at joint-use school openings; or decide to joint bus, which other divisions are doing as well; or when 28 school divisions come together to save \$1 million on joint fuel procurement as they did this fall. That's the power of collaboration, Mr. Speaker. Those savings go right back into the classroom.

We have built. We have invested in education. Big picture across the board, more than any other province, 2.2 billion in 2017, up 114 per cent. We are proud of that record, Mr. Speaker.

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

Services for Special Dietary Needs

Ms. Rancourt: — Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party's deep cuts to the province's vulnerable continue. On October 1st the Sask Party quietly cut funding for more than 1,300 people who need special diets. These are people living with disabilities, with long-term illnesses, and some are pregnant. Now the Sask Party is forcing them to jump through hoops to try and get an appointment with dietitians to get the food they so desperately need. Why is the Sask Party literally taking food out of the mouths of Saskatchewan's most vulnerable to make up for their mismanagement, scandal, and waste?

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

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As everybody is aware, this was a very difficult budget year, Mr. Speaker. We made the decision to revalidate the 3,000-calorie diet, but I also want to state for the record, Mr. Speaker, that there is a broad range of food that is available, different diets that are available for specific individuals. The 3,000-calorie diet, Mr. Speaker, we are making sure that the people that get the proper protein, that they're able to make sure that all of their dietary needs are met. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Mr. Speaker, this has not been an easy process, particularly for the most vulnerable. We're talking about real people with medical needs who have been cut off and have no idea where they will get their next meal.

Mr. Speaker, as former CEO [chief executive officer] of the Saskatoon Food Bank, the minister should already know that food insecurity is a real problem in this province. And, Mr. Speaker, over the last several years, food bank usage has skyrocketed and Saskatchewan has the highest rate of children's food bank usage in the country. This will cost the government more in the long run.

Mr. Speaker, the minister should know better, so how can he justify cutting the already inadequate funding for people living with disabilities and medical needs?

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

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And again,

in a tough budget year we actually increased the funding to social services because this government takes vulnerable people as a priority. And as far as my time at the food bank, Mr. Speaker, I'm very proud of my record . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very proud of my record of the work at the food bank. I was on the front line, Mr. Speaker, working with the people of Saskatoon, also across this province, Mr. Speaker, and across the country to make sure that the food got to the people that needed it, Mr. Speaker.

All we're asking is for the 3,000-calorie diet, Mr. Speaker, is that they go back and visit their doctor, get a doctor's note, bring it back to their social worker and then we will reinstitute the 3,000-calorie diet. All we're looking for is some medical verification for the 3,000-calorie diet to make sure they're on one of the multiple programs that we have. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Fees for Trapping Licences

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, on this Saskatchewan Hunting, Fishing, and Trapping Heritage Day, I want to talk about the importance of maintaining a connection to our lands and to our traditions. It comes up a lot in my constituency and across the province, Mr. Speaker. There is no requirement for people over the age of 65 to pay a fee for a fishing licence, but trappers over 65 still have to pay a fee.

Mr. Speaker, will the government make this a fair policy, and will they eliminate the fee for trappers who are over the age of 65 and give them the same treatment they give to seniors who fish?

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would certainly like to have a conversation with the member opposite about this particular topic. It's something that hasn't come up in the short time that I've been in this position, the second time around. And I don't recall having a discussion with the trappers about this the last time I was the minister. So I'd be pleased to have a conversation with the member opposite in looking for a resolution to this issue that he's raised today.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 94 — *The Saskatchewan Advantage Grant for Education Savings (SAGES) Amendment Act, 2017*

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

Hon. Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 94, *The Saskatchewan Advantage Grant for Education Savings (SAGES) Amendment Act, 2017* be now introduced and

read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Advanced Education that Bill No. 94 be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — When shall the bill be read a second time? I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Cox: — Next sitting of the Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

Bill No. 96 — *The Choice of Court Agreements (Hague Convention Implementation) Act* *Loi sur les accords d'élection de for (mise en œuvre de la Convention de La Haye)*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 96, *The Choice of Court Agreements (Hague Convention Implementation) Act* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Justice and Attorney General has moved Bill No. 96 be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 95 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal and Amendment Act, 2017*

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 95, *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal and Amendment Act, 2017* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — The Attorney General has moved Bill No. 95 be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Next sitting, Mr. Speaker.

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Question of Privilege

The Speaker: — Earlier today, the Opposition House Leader gave notice of a question of privilege. The Opposition House Leader's argument is the Minister of Education breached the privileges of this Assembly by intentionally using misleading and false statements to support a personal opinion. The House Leader states that by presenting misleading information, the minister breached the trust of members who rely on information presented in the Assembly to perform their legislative duties.

I remind all hon. members that it is not the role of the Speaker to decide if a breach of privilege or contempt has been committed. This is a question that only the Assembly can decide. It is the Speaker's role to decide whether a prima facie case has been established. What that means is the Speaker is to judge whether there is sufficient evidence to merit setting aside the regular business of the Assembly to debate the matter. If the Speaker finds a prima facie case has been established, then the question is put to the Assembly in the form of the motion proposed as part of the Opposition House Leader's case.

At the centre of the Opposition's House Leader's case is the minister's response to the address-in-reply to the Throne Speech made on November 1st, 2017. In that speech the minister commented on a homework sheet brought home by her son and notes copied from the board. The minister then went on to provide her personal views and perceptions of a number of matters connected to education.

The Opposition House Leader claims that the minister's personal views about the curriculum caused her to mislead the Assembly by presenting false information. In making his case, he cites what he perceives to be the minister's point of view on a number of subjects.

First, I want to state that the presentation of personally held views, beliefs, and even perceptions are fundamentally part of debate. It is not up to the Speaker to decide if the views of the members are supported by facts. It is through debate the members make each other accountable for what is said in this Chamber.

The question for the Speaker is whether there was a deliberate intent to mislead the Assembly. In the past, Speakers have ruled that unless evidence can be produced that demonstrates knowing and deliberate deception of the Assembly, there is no question of privilege. There is a very high threshold of proof when it comes to determining if a member has crossed the line between presenting the facts, as the member knows or perceives, to knowingly deceive the Assembly. The primary threshold of proof is the member's own admission of guilt or direct contradictory evidence.

[14:30]

The Opposition House Leader bases his case on media reports and social media to refute what the minister stated in debate. He has not provided direct evidence sufficient to demonstrate the

intention of the minister. Whether or not information presented was misleading is not for the Speaker to decide. The member has not convinced the Speaker that the minister set out to deliberately and knowingly mislead the Assembly. For this reason, I find the member's case has not achieved the threshold of evidence needed for me to find a prima facie case of privilege.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 89 — *The School Choice Protection Act* *Loi sur la protection du choix d'école*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 89, *The School Choice Protection Act*, 2017 which proposes several amendments to *The Education Act*, 1995 in order to provide certainty to parents and students that the government can continue funding students who attend Catholic separate schools regardless of their religious affiliation.

These amendments are in response to the April 2017 Court of Queen's Bench decision on the legal challenge brought forward by the Good Spirit School Division known as the Theodore court case. The decision found the funding of non-Catholics who attend Catholic separate schools to be unconstitutional. While the court found that non-Catholic students could be admitted to Catholic separate schools, the court also found that government funding for the attendance of those students violates sections 2(a) and 15 of the Charter, which violates the state's duty of religious neutrality. If the Court of Queen's Bench decision were to come into force, there would likely be a significant shift in funding between the public and Catholic separate school divisions, which in turn would cause significant disruption in the education sector.

Bill 89 will allow the Government of Saskatchewan to invoke section 33 of the Charter, commonly known as the notwithstanding clause, to allow *The Education Act* to operate notwithstanding sections 2(a) and 15 of the Charter. Similarly section 44 of the Human Rights Code will be declared to operate notwithstanding sections 4, 12, and 13 of the Human Rights Code.

Invoking the notwithstanding clause will ensure the government can continue to fund public and separate school divisions based on the current funding model which takes into account how many students are in the division but does not discriminate based on religious affiliation. School divisions will continue to be responsible for determining their own attendance and admittance policies.

Both the Government of Saskatchewan and Christ the Teacher Roman Catholic Separate School Division have filed appeals on this ruling. It is anticipated the appeal could take between 6 to 18 months. Any decision would likely be delivered well after the June 30, 2018 date that the court decision is set to come into

force. Having to wait for a decision on the appeal could leave parents and students with a great deal of uncertainty about the future, not knowing if they would continue to be funded to attend a separate school.

It is important to invoke the notwithstanding clause now in order to provide certainty to parents and to students so that they can be assured that they will continue to be funded to attend their school without having to wait for the outcome of an appeal. Introducing the bill now will allow for Royal Assent in the spring, prior to the June 30, 2018 coming into force date of the court decision. Mr. Speaker, thank you.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Education has moved second reading of Bill No. 89. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Obviously the Bill No. 89, *The School Choice Protection Act* bill is a bill that's fundamentally very, very important to the Assembly and very, very important as to where we move this bill towards the debate in the Assembly. This is a bill that needs a lot of attention by many, many people and certainly, from the opposition's perspective, we have some very learned colleagues of mine that have paid very close attention to this particular bill as it really does merit a lot of our time, a lot of our attention, and a lot of the research, Mr. Speaker.

I want to say at the outset, as the Deputy Leader of the Official Opposition, that the official opposition supports publicly funded education in Saskatchewan, which includes both our public and our Catholic systems.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it's very important that I reiterate this to the public. We obviously want to ensure that people certainly interpret correctly what I'm sure that the Saskatchewan Party might try and mix up for their political purposes what our position is. So I want to reiterate to the people of Saskatchewan, very clearly: as it pertains to Bill 89, we support publicly funded education in Saskatchewan, which includes both our public and our Catholic systems, Mr. Speaker.

And certainly, as I mentioned at the outset, we've had a lot of our caucus colleagues that have entered this debate over time. They have researched much of the findings, and they have certainly been subjected to a lot of interviews and certainly a lot of media on this particular matter, Mr. Speaker. So we must be very, very clear and careful as we embark, the official opposition, on certainly the comments we make on this particular bill, and to make sure we fundamentally try and achieve the objective that we believe in wholeheartedly, and that is the continued public support of public funded education for both the public and the Catholic systems.

Now, Mr. Speaker, there's no question that as a result of this bill, Bill 89, that if unchallenged the ruling would make fundamental changes to education in classrooms, not only in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, but across the whole country. From the beginning, as we have said, in order to move forward, both time and clarity are needed. We support the appeal because it provides both. The Saskatchewan Party's grandstanding provides neither.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as we've indicated and as I indicated at the outset, our caucus colleagues have been in consult with various organizations. They have been in consult with the SSBA. They have been in consult with trustees of local school divisions. They have been in consult with teachers, and of course the students that grace our schools throughout the province. And there's no question that, on this particular matter, time and clarity are needed. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, the Premier himself said last spring, and I quote, "There's time. There's going to be an appeal and the ruling is stayed because of the appeal."

Now, Mr. Speaker, invoking the notwithstanding clause is almost without precedent on this particular bill. And that's why it's important to note even the Premier last spring indicated that there is going to be time. And that's one of the reasons why, Mr. Speaker, that we ought to be able to see how the courts and the ruling comes across. There is obviously an appeal to the process. And as I pointed out, the Premier himself, the words he used, and I quote again for the members opposite, "There's time. There's going to be an appeal and the ruling is stayed because of the appeal."

So now, Mr. Speaker, we see Bill 89, and obviously for the Sask Party to throw it around before the appeal has been decided is irresponsible. Mr. Speaker, this once again points out that the Saskatchewan Party is playing politics with our kids' classroom. The Premier himself has admitted that it is not really necessary. While the appeal is being considered, there is no legitimate need to jump to the notwithstanding clause.

Mr. Speaker, I tell the people of Saskatchewan this: that this is a clear example of how the Saskatchewan Party has not provided clear and concise leadership on matters that tend to threaten Saskatchewan's unity. They've put politics ahead of our kids' classroom. And again, as I pointed out from the official opposition, we support publicly funded education in the province of Saskatchewan, which includes both our public and Catholic systems.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when you look at the notwithstanding clause, it's a tool worth considering, always. But, Mr. Speaker, it is a very large tool in the tool box, and the question we have to ask is, do we need to go there yet? Mr. Speaker, as the Premier has indicated and as many other people have indicated throughout time, the courts have given us enough time for reflection, for thought, and for leadership. And we should follow the appeal to make sure that it is supported as much as possible. That should be a priority.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I've indicated at the outset, as you begin to see the agenda of the Saskatchewan Party, much to the chagrin of many, many people including the official opposition, we are accustomed to see bills of this sort coming forward, and much of it, in its own way, is intended to change the channel. And I say, shame. Shame on the Premier and the Saskatchewan Party for not resolving this matter over the last 10 years that he's served as our Premier. Granted, on this side of the Assembly, we can say this issue was before the Saskatchewan Party were elected. And obviously they didn't manage to find the ability and certainly the time to provide leadership on this file, and therefore we are before the courts and of course the appeal is under way.

That goes to my earlier point, Mr. Speaker, that it is being used as a political tool to distract people's attention from the real crisis hitting Saskatchewan, whether it's the sale of the Crowns or whether it's the miserable state of our finances and the incredible debt being heaped on the future generation by the Saskatchewan Party. This very critical matter, this important issue, not only for Saskatchewan but for all the country, is a way for the Premier and the Saskatchewan Party to change the channel and be basically on the history books as somebody that used the notwithstanding clause.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I said at the outset, we support publicly funded education in Saskatchewan, which includes both our public and our Catholic systems. And I would say to the people of Saskatchewan, this is an issue that we must pay very close attention to. It is something that's going to be important, as I mentioned at the outset, for all of us, and that goes for the entire country. So I would encourage people to pay very close attention to Bill No. 89.

And I'll also point out that advice is needed as we stand in this Assembly. As the official opposition, we will seek out that advice. We'll seek out the valued opinion of many people and then we will return. And, Mr. Speaker, the people that have had incredible insight into this particular issue, from the official opposition, will certainly be standing in their place in due time to present their matters and their issues of concern as it pertains to Bill 89, and certainly a message I think of hope and optimism and leadership. So I look forward to my caucus colleagues presenting their issues on Bill 89. So on that note I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 89, *The School Choice Protection Act*.

The Speaker: — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 89. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 90 — *The Heritage Property Amendment Act, 2017*

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to speak about *The Heritage Property Amendment Act, 2017*. *The Heritage Property Act* was passed in 1980 and is the primary statute that governs the protection, conservation, development of heritage property in our province. This comprehensive enabling legislation empowers both the province and municipal governments to recognize, preserve, and manage heritage properties.

Under the Act, heritage property is broadly defined as any property that is of interest on account of its historical, architectural, archaeological, paleontological, and other scientific or cultural value. This includes historic buildings including the beautiful building that we stand in today, archaeological heritage, as well as the vertebrate and invertebrate fossils from the geological past.

Among other purposes and provisions, the Act provides for the formal designation of heritage property by both municipalities and the province, the conservation and investigation of the archaeological and paleontological heritage, the operation of the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation, and the official naming of geographical features in Saskatchewan such as lakes, rivers, and streams.

[14:45]

While *The Heritage Property Act* continues to serve our province and municipal authorities well in protecting and conserving heritage, like all of our legislation, Mr. Speaker, improvements are required from time to time. Today I'd like to bring forward two specific changes that I believe will benefit all heritage stakeholders, including heritage property owners.

The first proposed amendment will implement an operational separation between the review board and the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation in order to avoid any potential conflicts of interest between these two entities. The review board serves as an impartial tribunal that conducts public hearings to consider formal public objections to proposed designations of heritage property, or appeal of existing designations and the alteration or demolition of designated property, then makes non-binding recommendations to the designated authority. The primary role of the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation, on the other hand, is to champion heritage preservation by providing financial assistance to protect and conserve heritage property. The proposed amendments will ensure that the review board hearings are handled in an objective, impartial, and transparent manner by clearly establishing the review board as a body that operates separately and independently from the rest of the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation.

Mr. Speaker, the second proposed amendment will provide an efficient and cost-effective process for amending existing provincial heritage property designations such as alterations to designation, boundaries, and name changes.

It's important to appreciate that provincial heritage property designation creates a partnership between the province and a willing private property owner in protecting and conserving some of Saskatchewan's most significant historic places. Owners of provincial heritage property often request additions or removal of land or other alterations to the boundaries of the designated area to accommodate their commercial, residential, or other needs. Unfortunately, at present even the simplest of changes can only be made by repealing the entire designation and redesignating the property with the desired changes, a lengthy and potentially costly process for those involved.

The proposed amendment will allow appropriate changes — those that in no way diminish the property's heritage value or otherwise relegate the original reasons for designation — to be made efficiently and cost-effectively and in a way that will not jeopardize the working relationship between property owners and the province.

Provincial heritage property owners support establishing a more convenient process for amending their heritage property designations. Mr. Speaker, these measures will reduce red tape by eliminating the current need to repeal and redesignate

property in order to effect simple property name and boundary changes.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, these proposed improvements to *The Heritage Property Act* will strengthen heritage property protection in Saskatchewan, improve effectiveness and transparency in handling property disputes, increase efficiency, help maintain co-operative relations with property owners, reduce red tape, and require no new funds from government to administer.

So to conclude, I'm pleased to move second reading of *The Heritage Property Amendment Act*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport has moved second reading of Bill No. 90. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again as now my duty as the member of the official opposition, I'm going to again respond firstly to Bill No. 90 on behalf of the opposition caucus.

And, Mr. Speaker, as always, as we've indicated time and time again, it's important as a province that we have certain values when we look at the history of our province overall. And certainly from northern Saskatchewan, as we ponder our future we also look back at our history. And in northern Saskatchewan there are two prominent communities that over time have been historically recognized as some of the oldest settlements not just in Saskatchewan, but across Western Canada as well. And I speak of Cumberland House and of course my home community of Ile-a-la-Crosse.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it's important to note that a lot of the history over time in some of these communities, you know, certainly have not been treasured and therefore not protected as best and as good as could possibly be. And that's one of the reasons why I point out today that it's always interesting that as the opposition we look at some of the changes to *The Heritage Property Act* in any way, shape, or form.

Because this is something that is important to a lot of people throughout our province is . . . Our history will teach us many, many lessons, Mr. Speaker, and that's one of the reasons why, when we look at heritage property as the bill is speaking of, that we have a very good system in place to protect that historical information, and more so to protect the assets of that history, if you will.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that there are a lot of mistakes people make. And when I was a young mayor back home in Ile-a-la-Crosse, we had planned to build a new nurses' residence as part of our agenda to attract professional people. And there was this older building on the property, and unbeknownst to me at the time this building had been around for quite some time. And it was obviously very expensive to dismantle it or to move it and I didn't know at the time that this was a historical piece of property. I don't know if it was designated historical but because it was on the same property we wished to build a new nurses' residence on, I got the fire department to practise some of their firefighting technique and we basically lit that house on fire.

And, Mr. Speaker, we're not certain, we're not certain if that was a historical building, but as I said, you know, in the past people come up and tell you, well that building was well over 100 years old. But, Mr. Speaker, I, as a young mayor, did not know that. And that's one of the reasons why it's important that we continue to identify historical buildings, to refine our system, to protect some of the treasures of our history, as many people, including people in this Assembly, as I've just admitted, that we don't take the time and certainly research the history of these buildings. And I'm not saying that it was a historical building but many of the older people said that building had been around for quite some time.

And I look at the community of Cumberland House, Mr. Speaker. They have a lot of historical buildings there as well, but there's nobody there, no resources there to help celebrate Cumberland House's incredible role in settling Western Canada. And so there's always the history that people ought to pay attention to.

And when there are errors made in certain Acts and there's changes necessary to strengthen the legislation that would protect that history and educate young mayors such as myself, Mr. Speaker, at the time, then a lot of these historical treasures may be lost and certainly lost forever. So it's important that we pay attention to all legislation that comes forward and certainly *The Heritage Property Act* is something that we must pay attention to.

And, Mr. Speaker, don't forget that heritage and celebrating history is important, not only for ourselves and upon reflection of trying to learn lessons of our history. It helps us forge the future, as we've always understood. And it also helps with tourism, Mr. Speaker, and some of the examples I would use . . . And thank goodness, thank goodness we've had a lot of elders in our community pull me aside at the time and explain some of the history of Ile-a-la-Crosse overall. And I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the father of Louis Riel, Louis Riel Senior, was born in Ile-a-la-Crosse. And his sister who became a nun, she was also stationed in Ile-a-la-Crosse, and Sister Sarah Riel is buried at the Ile-a-la-Crosse cemetery. And, Mr. Speaker, these are some of the examples of the rich history we have in these northern communities.

And I've been privy to visiting Cumberland House on numerous occasions and, Mr. Speaker, they are very proud, they're very proud of being designated the oldest settlement in Western Canada. It is from there that the western part of our country became settled, Mr. Speaker. Not to demean and to diminish the Aboriginal people who were here and their recognition through treaty and certainly through the sharing of the land, Mr. Speaker, but certainly, as records indicate, Cumberland House is one of the oldest settlements in Western Canada. And certainly Ile-a-la-Crosse was a close second, but both of them celebrate their rich history and the heritage they have and the contributions they've made to our country.

So it's important to note that heritage is something that we value and that everything that is being proposed under any aspect of heritage protection, we must pay very close attention to, to add some of these lessons and cautions and certainly warnings of what could occur if we don't do so.

As I look through Bill No. 90, there are changes of duties to the review board to ensure operational separation from the rest of the foundation. The review board will now consist of at least three people who are appointed solely to carry out the review board duties. Also we're updating the rules for hearings before the review board, including a party's right to be heard and the ability to accept any evidence deemed relevant, and also updates how the board will notify the public of the time, date, location of a heritage property hearing.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, Bill 90 also adds a section to allow for a more efficient process for amending the existing provincial heritage property designations, which I think . . . Being efficient in identifying and protecting some of these heritage property areas, Mr. Speaker, is something that we have to also follow through and ensure that the plan in the bill meets its stated objectives. And, Mr. Speaker, I think a lot of people in Saskatchewan would want to see their provincial heritage respected and protection of such lands and sites and buildings be something that's important to government.

And on that note, Mr. Speaker, we'll have much more to say on Bill 90, but I move that we adjourn debate on this bill at this time.

The Speaker: — The member from Athabasca has adjourned debate on Bill No. 90. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 91 — *The Snowmobile Amendment Act, 2017*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance].

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of *The Snowmobile Amendment Act, 2017*. The Act, administered by Saskatchewan Government Insurance, outlines considerations around the operation of snowmobiles. The most significant amendment to this Act, Mr. Speaker, restricts snowmobile trail use to only snowmobiles and trail maintenance equipment between December 1st and April 15th each year. The change is required to ensure the Saskatchewan Snowmobile Association and law enforcement have the authority to discourage drivers of other vehicles from using snowmobile trails. This helps ensure those trails aren't damaged, keeping them safe for snowmobilers.

As well, Mr. Speaker, a further amendment transfers certain authorities from the Highway Traffic Board to SGI. For example, the amendment clarifies that it's SGI, not the Highway Traffic Board, which sets the expiry date on certificates of registration and licences for snowmobiles, prescribes the form in which collisions are to be reported, and receives collision reports. In January 2016 an order of the Highway Traffic Board delegated these authorities to SGI. So these amendments to the Act are keeping up with what is already happening in practice.

There are a number of other housekeeping amendments, including updated definitions for the term "snowmobile" and "licence plate."

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of *The Snowmobile Amendment Act, 2017*.

The Speaker: — The Minister of SGI has moved second reading of Bill No. 91. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This is a very interesting bill from many aspects and the particular aspect that I wanted to attach my comments to is as it relates to northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. The first point I would make is that as we embark on the review and analysis of Bill 91, I want to reiterate to the people that we are having a lot of these bills being proposed to SGI by a minister that wants to sell SGI, Mr. Speaker, and not only sell SGI, but sell SaskPower, sell SaskTel, and sell pretty much any Crown in the province of Saskatchewan that he can get his hands on, Mr. Speaker. And this is the reason why, when we have any Crown corporations bills coming from that particular minister, we pay very close attention to what he's got planned and what his issues are, Mr. Speaker.

So I want to remind that minister, you are here to sell off our Crowns and we will continue challenging you and we'll continue looking at these bills as you propose ways and means in which you would weaken our Crowns, weaken them to a point where they can't perform as they have performed in the past, and make it much easier for that minister and that government to sell them all off.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Bill 91, *The Snowmobile Amendment Act*, some of the changes on this particular bill, Mr. Speaker, talks about the responsibilities of the Highway Traffic Board that are being transferred to SGI. It also updates the definition of non-resident to make it consistent with *The Traffic Safety Act*. It updates the definition of snowmobile to conform with current standards, and we need to know what those standards are, Mr. Speaker.

[15:00]

It removes the definition of trail permits, as they're no longer issued. It requires licence plates to be displayed on a snowmobile or carry a registration permit that the snowmobile is registered by permit. SGI, not the Highway Traffic Board, sets the expiry date on certificates of registration and licences, and between December 1st and April 15th snowmobile trails are restricted to snowmobiles and trail maintenance equipment only. And obviously, Mr. Speaker, having all kinds of vehicles on the snowmobile trail is not something that we would want to see happen. As we mentioned, there is an incredible cost for maintaining some of the snowmobile trails. And for somebody to foolishly use their four-wheeler on these trails, that, Mr. Speaker, we agree is a bit silly and certainly irresponsible and of course that shouldn't be tolerated.

Mr. Speaker, the bill also removes the authority of trail managers to set trail permit fees. Snowmobile trails are funded through these registration fees, and that certainly gives the trail

managers the ability to set some of those fees. And again, Mr. Speaker, it clarifies that SGI, not the Highway Traffic Board, prescribes the form in which accidents are to be reported. It clarifies that SGI, not the Highway Traffic Board, receives accident reports. And again it clarifies SGI, and not the Highway Traffic Board, has the authority to restrict or prohibit snowmobile use for safety concerns.

Now, Mr. Speaker, one of the things that I would advise the minister of as it pertains to different perspectives, and I open up my statement on that note, is that in northern Saskatchewan obviously every leader in northern Saskatchewan, myself included, would suggest that safety is paramount when we talk about any type of vehicle use in northern Saskatchewan. And in northern Saskatchewan, light trucks and certainly motorbikes, four-wheelers, and the like, Mr. Speaker, we all use these valuable tools in the North for a number of reasons.

And one of the more important vehicle I've used in the North is of course the Ski-Doo. As the minister may or may not know, we have a successful commercial fishing industry that many of the trappers use to subsidize their income. There's also the notion, Mr. Speaker, that hunting and gathering using Ski-Doos are an important aspect of northern life. If you go into a northern community, there are Ski-Doos in probably every second yard, Mr. Speaker. So the Ski-Doo is a valuable tool that is being used to not only sustain our economy but certainly to continue some of the traditional practices of our First Nations and the Métis people of the area in terms of hunting and gathering and certainly staying connected to the land through issues of commercial fishing and trapping as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, as you look at the age of some of the trappers, they're getting on in their years. And the fact that the Ski-Doo is largely viewed not so much as a vehicle on the road, Mr. Speaker, but an important transportation tool for a number of reasons, you've got to be very, very careful how you approach some of the, not just the northern people but farmers as well — they use a lot of Ski-Doos for a variety of purposes — that you can't be too onerous in terms of the rules and the permits and all the different, you know, requirements that SGI or the minister may have on the people that use the Ski-Doo. There has to be some appreciation and some recognition of some of the industry and some of the activities they do as it pertains to the Ski-Doo, and especially when it comes to operating Ski-Doos in the remote areas such as rural Saskatchewan and northern Saskatchewan as a whole.

So, Mr. Speaker, we want to know what responsibilities are being transferred to the Highway Traffic Board. We want to know as to the manner in which trail managers can set the rate, that it's fair and consistent throughout the province. We want to know also about the definition of trail permits, how they're going to change that. We want to know which responsibilities are being transferred from SGI . . . or transferred to SGI from the Highway Traffic Board, and how that implicates or impacts a lot of the Ski-Doo users in the province and, as I had mentioned earlier, how to incorporate some of the demands as it pertains to the different uses of Ski-Doos, from recreational to hunting to livestock monitoring to hunting, as I had mentioned, in the North, and the variety of uses we have for Ski-Doos.

So there's so many things at stake, Mr. Speaker, that we have to

take the time to talk to different groups on Bill 91. So on that note, I move that we adjourn debate on *The Snowmobile Amendment Act, 2017*.

The Speaker: — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 91. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 92 — *The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Amendment Act, 2017*

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

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of *The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Amendment Act*. Mr. Speaker, this bill serves to amend subsection 32(1) of the SaskTel, *The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Act* with a change that will increase SaskTel and SaskTel Holdco's maximum aggregate borrowing limit from 1.3 billion to 1.8 billion.

Unchanged since 1991, the current borrowing limit no longer allows the flexibility that SaskTel needs to continue to grow and have the capacity to respond to any future financial demands on their business activities and other business investments. SaskTel is currently in the first year of a five-year capital investment plan that calls for the corporation to invest 1.4 billion from 2017-18 through to 2021-22, with 300 million of investments scheduled for the 2017-18 fiscal year alone.

Under this current plan, SaskTel predicts that through 2017-18 to 2021-22, it will see the corporation's debt peak at 1.25 billion in fiscal 2019 and '20, leaving it little room to manoeuvre within the current debt limit of 1.3 billion. There are potential business investments that could be required in the future that have not been included in the plan because the timing cost of these investments is unknown. Some of these investments include funding for a spectrum auction to increase wireless capabilities, funds for the development of a 5G wireless network, and other technological changes that SaskTel could be required to implement in order to serve our fine province.

Based on SaskTel's approved plan, the debt ratios are forecast to be 51.2 per cent for 2017-18, 52.6 per cent for 2018-19, 53.1 per cent for 2019-20, 52.6 per cent for 2020-21, and 52.2 per cent for 2021-22. These are well within industry standards, which range from 47 to 76 per cent. If borrowing did total 1.8 billion, SaskTel debt ratio is forecast to climb to 63 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, the amendment to the Act being put forth for second reading today is essential to ensuring that SaskTel can continue to grow and maintain the flexibility it needs to adjust to changing market conditions today and in the future.

Given that the corporation's robust financial health will allow it to support up to 1.8 billion of total debt and the need to maintain the flexibility of its operations, authorizing the change to the debt ceiling is the prudent choice for this government to

make.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of *The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Amendment Act*. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Crown Investments has moved second reading of Bill No. 92. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well, well, well, here we go again, Mr. Speaker. The same minister that has been trying to sell off our Crown corporations once again is putting another nail in the coffin of the viability of the Crown corporation by adding more debt, allowing them to get into more debt from 1.3 billion to \$1.8 billion, Mr. Speaker. That's half a billion dollars more that this government is allowing SaskTel to go into debt, Mr. Speaker. And the question people have to ask is . . . And we're going to ask these questions as time goes on.

The minister alludes to a couple of things, that there's some investment projects under way. We would like to know what those investment projects are going to cost. What exactly are the impacts of the extra half a billion dollars needed for SaskTel to borrow, Mr. Speaker? And we also want to know whether they have any opportunity or any discussions or any meetings as to how SaskTel could partner with another firm that would weaken SaskTel's market overall, if there are discussions for any other company that might want to buy a piece of SaskTel or buy SaskTel altogether, Mr. Speaker. Has that minister had any of those types of meetings? And is any of the debt limit that is being proposed today, does that have any effect or impact on how the Crown corporation will perform into the future?

And there's two trains of thoughts we have on that, Mr. Speaker. And we've seen this act before by the Sask Party where they allow our Crowns to go into deeper debt. And they allow the Crowns to go into deeper debt because they're, on one hand, giving the Crowns greater debt and, on the other hand, they're taking out greater dividends from the Crowns because of their scandals, mismanagement, and waste on the general revenue. What happens, Mr. Speaker, is they allow the Crowns to go deeper in debt; at the same time they're taking more and more of the retained earnings of the Crowns to cover for their mismanagement and scandal and waste. So what happens is our Crown corporations have to operate under greater debt, less opportunities for success in the future, and still continue feeding the General Revenue Fund of which the Saskatchewan Party control.

And another fact, Mr. Speaker, is that the province is going into deeper debt. Cuts are still occurring, and yet the Crown corporations are allowed to increase their debt at substantial amounts because they're paying much more dividends out the back door to the Sask Party for them to spend on their scandals, mismanagement, and waste.

And that's exactly the point that we would raise around this particular bill is that the people of Saskatchewan ought to know that the trust from the people and the trust from the opposition is the same, Mr. Speaker, is that it's not there. We have zero faith and they have zero credibility in their notion that they're going to protect the Crowns, Mr. Speaker. The people of

Saskatchewan know that. We know that.

So when they come along and propose a bill that allows SaskTel to increase their debt by half a billion dollars, Mr. Speaker, we begin to wonder what the projects are, what the cost of each of those individual programs. And does this mean that the Sask Party's taking out more dividends out the back door to cover up for their poor financial management on the GRF [General Revenue Fund] side?

And more importantly, Mr. Speaker, as SaskTel begins to embark on these projects, are they planning on selling SaskTel? Or the people of Saskatchewan pay for the improvements and then later on whoever buys SaskTel purchases the company for a song and all the projects, all the investment, and all the debt that we see under Bill No. 92, we pay for that and some other private company later on gets it for 10 cents on the dollar?

This is typical of the Saskatchewan Party economics, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the Crowns, and that's why I tell the people of Saskatchewan, we have to be very careful. Again, Mr. Speaker, this is further evidence of saddling our Crowns with incredible debt while they take out more equity out the back door. This is the operation of the Saskatchewan Party, what they've done time and time again. And this bill further lends credibility to our arguments that we should not trust them with the Crowns.

And I do not take for one second, Mr. Speaker, the minister's assertion that the debt ratio that SaskTel has in 2018 is 51.24 per cent, 52.66 in 2019, 53.1 in 2020, 52.6 in 2021. Mr. Speaker, he indicates that's the norm in this particular field, in this particular telco industry. But, Mr. Speaker, we don't take that minister for one second at his word that these are the norms. Obviously borrowing half a billion dollars one year, that's going to affect the debt ratios of any company. And we need to know what the effect, the long-term effect is on SaskTel, the stability, Mr. Speaker, and certainly the strength of SaskTel over time saddled with that kind of debt. We need to make sure that they're able to survive for years to come, and again we don't have that assurance. We don't have that confidence, and we certainly don't have that belief that the Saskatchewan Party is going to protect our Crowns to this extent.

So on that note, we have much more to say on Bill 92, and I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 92, *The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Amendment Act*.

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

Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Deputy Leader of the NDP said just a moment ago that he doesn't take the minister at his word. I would make reference to June 6th, 2016 *Hansard*, 580, in which that very same phrase was used and the member was asked to withdraw and apologize.

[15:15]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would

rephrase my comment to indicate that I don't have confidence in the minister's ability to point out that these are the norms for this particular industry.

The Speaker: — I'll let the member from Athabasca have a second chance at this one. I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I apologize and I withdraw that comment.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would go on to add that it's important that as the minister presents this information to the public indicating that these debt ratios are the norm of this particular . . . or the telco industry overall — I'm assuming he's referring to the telco industry — Mr. Speaker, I would challenge the minister to bring his comparisons of other telco companies across the province and bring it forward so the opposition can indeed see what he has asserted in this particular Assembly. And, Mr. Speaker, it's important that we have that information, so I would certainly ask the minister to do so.

I don't suspect that the minister will be providing that information, but I think it's incumbent upon the House that when a minister asserts that these debt ratios are the norm, that they must also, when requested, assert that information by providing us the information which he bases his statement upon. So I think it's important to tell the minister, if you believe that these debt ratios are the norm for the telcos such as SaskTel, I would ask him to share that information with my office and see how and see who he is comparing that information with, Mr. Speaker. I think it's a very essential part of what we do in the Assembly, and that's why it's important to challenge the minister on that front.

So on that note, Mr. Speaker, we have much more to add to Bill No. 92. So obviously my colleagues will have an opportunity to discuss how half a billion dollars are going to affect the bottom line of SaskTel, and if it's all about improving the services and reinvesting in technology and not meant to give the Saskatchewan Party more earnings out the back door to cover up for their scandals, mismanagement, and waste on the GRF side, Mr. Speaker, then that's something that we need to find out and determine, and this of course will take some time. And we will certainly take the time to research that thoroughly to see how this impact of further debt to SaskTel will impact our great Crown. So on that note, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 92, *The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Amendment Act, 2017*.

The Speaker: — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 92. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 93 — *The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Holding Corporation Amendment Act, 2017*

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

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of *The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Holding Corporation Amendment Act*. Mr. Speaker, this bill serves as amendment subsection 17(1) of *The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Holding Corporation Act* with the change that will increase SaskTel and SaskTel Holdco's minimum aggregate borrowing limit from 1.3 billion to 1.8 billion. This is the same amendment as in Bill 92, *The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Act*.

Because of the borrowing limit of 1.3 billion contained in both Acts today is the aggregate borrowing limit for both SaskTel and SaskTel Holdco. Both of the Acts need to be amended to provide for a new maximum aggregate borrowing limit of 1.8 billion. The reasons for increasing the borrowing limit to 1.8 billion are the same reasons that I provided in Bill 92. The amendment of the holdco Act being put forth for second reading today is essential to ensuring that SaskTel can continue to grow and maintain the flexibility it needs to adjust to changing market conditions today and in the future.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of *The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Holding Corporation Amendment Act*. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Crown Investments has moved second reading on Bill No. 93. Is it the pleasure . . . Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Obviously the minister alluded to this particular bill is attached to Bill 92 as it indicated in Bill 93, the existing provision:

Neither the Minister of Finance nor the corporation may borrow any moneys by the issue and sale of bonds, debentures or other securities or by way of temporary loans or otherwise, under the authority of this Act, where that borrowing would cause the aggregate principal amount of:

- (a) the outstanding bonds, debentures or other securities; and
- (b) the outstanding temporary loans;

of the corporation and Saskatchewan Telecommunications, continued pursuant to *The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Act*, to exceed the aggregate sum of \$1,300,000,000 unless the borrowing is for the purpose of paying in whole or in part any indebtedness previously incurred for the purpose of this Act and *The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Act*.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is obviously an administrative Act that should certainly be in support of Bill 92. And one of the explanations, and I want to quote the explanation, Mr. Speaker, which is really important to do, and I quote the explanation:

As SaskTel continues to grow, it needs to borrow money to fund its capital program as it continues to invest in provincial infrastructure. The increase in the debt limit will provide flexibility to respond to future cash demands for this infrastructure and other business activities. It is

proposed to set the debt limit at a \$1.8 Billion ceiling to provide sufficient room to stay within the debt ceiling for the foreseeable future.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the part I want to really focus on, obviously, and I mentioned and I alluded to it a bit under Bill 92, is the words in the actual explanation, and I quote, “The increase in the debt limit will provide flexibility to respond to future cash demands for this infrastructure and other business activities.”

Mr. Speaker, it’s important to note that we’re borrowing half a billion dollars. Half a billion dollars for SaskTel is a lot of money. For any government across the country, it’s a lot of money. For Saskatchewan, it’s a lot of money. And, Mr. Speaker, I think it’s important to note that it is incumbent upon the opposition and the people of Saskatchewan to pay very close attention as to where our monies are going. When I say where our monies are going, Mr. Speaker, it is to our Crown corporations that this money is being flowed to and obviously used, as the note would suggest, for continuing to invest in provincial infrastructure.

Now the other business activities identified in this particular bill, Mr. Speaker, we have to know what those are. It’s important to know what we’re spending our money on. And that’s why, one of the reasons we need the opportunity through committee is to ask the executives within SaskTel for a breakdown of that particular cost and how it’ll affect their bottom line, and certainly whether their debt ratio is on par with other telco companies across the country of similar size and abilities, Mr. Speaker.

So it’s important to have the opportunity during committee, which we look forward to doing, is to break down those costs and see exactly whether or not what we are determining is the practice of the Sask Party, is that if they can’t take every possible penny out of our Crowns while saddling it with debt, what is the impact going to be overall on the future health of our Crowns? And that’s what we see the practice of the Saskatchewan Party doing, Mr. Speaker.

So we must take the time to see where they’re investing and what is meant by “other business activities.” That’s the purpose of this Assembly and that’s our role as the opposition. And I certainly look forward to asking those very direct questions of the minister when we’re in the committee phase so they, or him and the SaskTel officials, could explain in greater detail how this affects not only their bottom line but their debt ratio and certainly the future growth and success of SaskTel.

That’s paramount to us as the opposition, and we will continue playing that role to hold this government to account because of their miserable failure at managing our finances and protecting our Crowns. So on that note, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 93.

The Speaker: — The member from Athabasca has adjourned debate on Bill No. 93. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 84

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Harpauer that **Bill No. 84 — *The Income Tax (Business Income) Amendment Act, 2017*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’m proud to stand in my place today to have a discussion with regards to Bill No. 84, *The Income Tax Amendment Act*.

Mr. Speaker, I have to admit that income tax is not something that I have a real extensive knowledge about. I am very thankful to have an accountant that does all that work for me, and all I need to do is collect all of my receipts and everything and submit that. But I did enjoy having a little bit of . . . learning a little bit while I was reading through this bill and looking at some of the changes.

And it was very interesting with the Minister of Finance’s comments about the changes to this bill, Mr. Speaker. It’s pretty obvious that the budget that they put forward in the spring, they’re backpedalling on a lot of issues and a lot of things that they presented there. And it just again shows the fact that this government doesn’t consult and isn’t making decisions based on best practices or well-researched information. And now they’re coming to terms that they have to make a lot of changes, and so presenting a lot of this new legislation in order to provide for that.

It’s unfortunate that we have to go through this process without them first making those informed decisions when they’re implementing a budget. But one of the biggest impacts I found when I was reading through this literature, Mr. Speaker, was on some of the changes for the small businesses. And the minister indicated small businesses are important for the Saskatchewan economy, and I definitely would agree with her on that aspect, Mr. Speaker. We know that small businesses, they create the majority of the employment and jobs that we have in our province, and it’s really important as a government that we really keep that in mind when we’re making legislation or decisions in the budgets.

But we see that small businesses were really hit hard by this budget, Mr. Speaker. Small businesses have been struggling with the increase to the PST [provincial sales tax]. Even one percentage means a big difference in businesses and the sales that they’ll get. Individuals are struggling with the poor economy, but also the addition of the PST to different services.

I’ve talked to a lot of restaurant owners indicating the impact that it had on their businesses when people know that they’re going to be paying even more for restaurant meals, or some people who own businesses, construction businesses, and the impact that the increase of PST has on their business with regards to material and how they’ve had to make arrangements

with some deals that they had with individuals, and the issues that they had with regards to that. And so I know the members across have also heard a lot of those issues.

But also a big one too is the PST on insurances, Mr. Speaker. The increase of insurances for families in this province, but also for businesses — and small businesses in particular — is a huge cost. And we're the only province that implements the 6 per cent PST on insurances, which has had a big impact on businesses.

And so when I look at the increase of the threshold for small businesses here from 500,000 to 600,000 come January 1st of 2018, that helps, but we can't forget about the impacts that these businesses have had in a lot of different other areas. And those impacts are a straight result from the decisions made from this government and they need to be held accountable for that.

So I guess, Mr. Speaker . . . oh there was a comment, a quote that the Minister of Finance said was, "... enhance the Saskatchewan advantage." That was her quote when she made the statement here. Well you know, when businesses are having to lay off staff or even close their businesses because of how they've been hit hard by this government, I don't believe that's a real advantage, you know. And so they need to take that into account.

There's been some housekeeping items with regards to this bill. And I know a lot of my colleagues have some input that they want to have with regards to the changes to this bill. So, Mr. Speaker, I know our colleague, the member from Saskatoon Nutana, is going to do an excellent job with looking into this bill and asking committee a lot of good questions with regards to the impacts that the changes in this Act will have. So with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am going to . . . I'll move the adjournment of this debate, thank you, on this bill. Thank you.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — The member from Prince Albert Northcote has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 84, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2017*. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

[15:30]

Bill No. 76

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Makowsky that **Bill No. 76** — *The Parks Amendment Act, 2017* be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I'm pleased to rise today to enter into the debate on Bill No. 76 which is *An Act to amend The Parks Act*. I think the primary focus of this bill, of course, is the establishment of yet another provincial park here in Saskatchewan. And there's also a number of housekeeping changes plus some clarification on park boundary descriptions.

So just to highlight that for the first part of my discussion here,

just a note that the legal descriptions are being brought forward with minor amendments to Christopher Lake, protected area at Candle Lake Provincial Park, Danielson Provincial Park, and Greenwater Lake Provincial Park with some minor exclusions being proposed. And this is in relation to some work that the ministry is doing in regards to roadway widening, canal expansion, and description corrections.

Mr. Speaker, I spent many years in my prior career looking at legal descriptions of proposed Indian reserves and past Indian reserves, and this is indeed an ongoing process as we become better . . . more technology to refine legal descriptions using GPS [global positioning system] and various other technologies to be much more accurate. We can then describe things much better. And quite often some of these errors in legal descriptions from the past cause considerable work for lawyers, which in some ways keeps lawyers employed — which is I suppose a good thing — but it is a conundrum and a lot of work to make sure that these areas are actually corrected properly.

And surveyors as well, I mean especially with park boundaries. As you can imagine, a lot of these are in undeveloped areas. So I know that disputes regarding park boundaries lead to disputes regarding oil and gas interests, for example, and that certainly is the case in the southeast corner of the province. So it's important to continue on with this work, and I think it's obvious that it's necessary to keep being diligent in that respect.

Of course the same can be said for the housekeeping amendments that we find throughout the bill, and I'll speak to some of those as I get into the bill itself.

And then the new park itself, Porcupine Hills Area Provincial Park is the proposed new park. And the minister indicates that this is a temporary name and there will be an intention to have Aboriginal communities included in the discussion regarding the change, what name the park should actually have.

Now we've seen differing opinions from the First Nations communities as to the appropriateness of this park and the adequacy of the consultation that was done by the ministry and by the government. This is an area of great concern, Mr. Speaker, because as you know, the duty to consult and accommodate is one that's been articulated quite clearly — well extensively — by the Supreme Court of Canada. And I think there's still an outstanding dispute vis-à-vis Saskatchewan First Nations and the provincial government's policy regarding duty to consult and accommodate. So this is again another iterative process.

And I think if we infuse the treaty relationship and the principles of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission into our dealings and changes within the boundaries of these parks, changes with any Crown land, it's very, very important to ensure that we do infuse the negotiations with the obligations that are articulated in the duty to consult and accommodate.

Now as you know, Mr. Speaker, the duty to consult and accommodate is probably a narrow legal definition. And I believe that many governments have gone beyond that and taken opportunity to use that requirement for the duty to consult and accommodate with respect to the treaty relationships here in Saskatchewan, as we have . . . all of our land within the

geographical area of Saskatchewan is actually covered by one of the numbered treaties that were negotiated in the late 1800s.

So I think when we have government agencies and ministry officials dealing with Crown land and dealing with changes to the use of Crown land, it's always important to ensure that that full and complete engagement with First Nations people and the impact on their treaty rights which they continue to have, that we have those full and meaningful discussions and not just a rubber-stamp process where First Nations are feeling disregarded and left out, and that the true meaning of the treaty relationship is being brushed aside, so to speak, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So as you know, these are important discussions to have and I think we see, through the media and reports, that there are concerns about the creation of this new park. Some First Nations feel, you know, fully engaged or they have minimal concerns. But others have concerns that need to be treated respectfully and, as I say, infused with the treaty relationship that we have here in Saskatchewan.

And I think we have much to learn from some of the young people that we see in the news these days who understand our treaty relationship way better than my generation certainly did. And in fact, I don't think I was ever told in school that we even had treaties in Saskatchewan. So it's interesting to see our young folks now who have had the benefit of the treaty education, who've had the . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I think someone is questioning how old I am over there, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

An Hon. Member: — You can say, “none of your beeswax.”

Ms. Sproule: — That's right. With the help from the member from Regina Rochdale, “none of his beeswax” would be the appropriate response.

So it is important for the new generation to inform us about the meaning of the treaty relationship, and I think we have the TRC which has the guiding principles. There are a number of recommendations within the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations that do have a direct provincial implication. And we need the leadership from our elected officials; we need leadership from our community leaders to ensure that those children are able to continue to be infused, as the current word is, with the meaning of their treaty relationship.

The first time I think I ever heard, you know, we are all treaty people, was back in the early 2000s when he was then the treaty commissioner, Judge Arnot. And he came to our office and we did a session on the treaty, the meaning of the treaty and the treaty relationship. And he really turned his attention in those days to the notion that we are all treaty people, that it's a two-sided arrangement.

And I say with pride that I come from a settler background. And I think it's important to acknowledge that my grandfather wasn't able to homestead without the existence of the treaty. And in this case, he homesteaded in Treaty 4 area, which is the area we're in right now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, here in Regina.

So it's important for that relationship to be nourished and that we can feel proud of what we've done today but that there is still work to be done. And I think when we have a government creating a new park, taking Crown land and changing its use, that is paramount when it comes to the treaty relationship in terms of the existing rights that are being infringed upon.

When the land surrender took place in the treaty negotiations in the 1870s, it was very clear that First Nations could continue to exercise their rights that weren't being surrendered. And in the case of Crown lands in Saskatchewan, it's certainly the hunting and fishing rights as well as some other rights that were preserved, and that was, I think, much to many of our surprise in my generation. I continue to learn. I think we all need to continue to learn and listen and understand and be open to a different way of looking at things, Mr. Speaker. And yes, my grandparents worked hard and they suffered and they came from a place where they were looking for a better life. That's exactly what happens, Mr. Speaker. But that's part of the story.

I remember a few years ago at Ness Creek, there was a theatre piece that opened up the Ness Creek Music Festival. And it was a beautiful story about engagement between settler families and First Nations who came together and shared when the settler families arrived. And I think those are the kinds of stories that I feel are positive and can enhance the understanding of our treaty relationships. So I really hope that we see more of those stories of understanding and reaching out.

I remember stories that, I think it's up in the One Arrow area in your riding, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when the Doukhobors settled, and they came to the North Saskatchewan River and were basically starving. And the First Nations at One Arrow wanted to help them out, but they weren't allowed to leave the reserve without the permission of the Indian agent. So the story I've heard — and I don't know if this is this story — is that they actually snuck off the reserve at night to give horses and cattle to the Doukhobor community that was suffering and needed animals to work the land. They saw the women pulling the plow. And I think you've heard those stories, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And that was the spirit of giving and sharing that I think was the understanding.

And again the concept of First Nations concept of land as opposed to the John Locke version of land . . . I did a paper in university about that and about ownership and about what that means from a Eurocentric and British parliamentary concepts vis-à-vis the concepts that First Nations had within their governance. And they are opposing world views, Mr. Speaker. And certainly I think with the advent of the Dominion government here in Canada, perhaps the European version is the one that's prevailing, but it doesn't mean that we can just necessarily discount wholly that perspective that comes from a First Nation understanding.

And I'm no expert, and I think it's a complicated issue, but when we see these kinds of concerns coming out with the introduction of a bill like this in our legislature, that maybe we don't have it right yet. Maybe we need to continue to examine this relationship and examine what our obligation is as a Crown, as one partner in a treaty relationship. So that's something, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think that maybe the mark was missed on this one, and the government needs to do a little more

homework and a little more listening and perhaps a little more openness to some of the concerns that are being raised through the narrow focus of the duty to consult and accommodate, but I think through the larger lens of the principles of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

So the new park, I'm kind of glad to say I've had a bit of a role in the McBride Lake area because back in 1989, I planted several thousand trees right in the McBride Lake area. And it was probably the muddiest contract that I can recall in my short tree-planting career. But we had to do a lot of walking in muck because even the equipment that the tree-planting company had weren't able to deal with the beaver dams and the former trails that had become basically swamp.

But certainly I remember that was where I was inspired to pick up a guitar and start learning to play music around the campfire, and that was because of the wonderful people that I had the opportunity meeting at that particular camp. I remember hearing that was when Tiananmen Square, the murders in Tiananmen Square happened, and we were all shocked, and it's just a flashback in my own mind. But that's a beautiful area of the province, the McBride Lake area.

I also did a survey, a regeneration survey just a little bit west of there, at the Pepaw Lake area, and had an opportunity to look at some of the work that had been done in years past when MacMillan Bloedel was basically the logging company in the area. And because of the nature of the mixed boreal forest, much of the conifers had not regenerated at all, and what you see is the deciduous trees taking over and dominating. So I got to see first-hand, I think, some of the man-made changes to our forests that can occur when we have massive logging operations and not thinking carefully about the regeneration of the species that are being removed. So that's something that I carry with me.

And when I think about the McBride Lake area, I certainly have those memories, and memories of a really truly beautiful park. The Porcupine Hills are definitely a beautiful part of our province, and I hope that as we work through these treaty discussions that we allow other people in the province of Saskatchewan to have that opportunity to enjoy that part of the province.

So you know, courage to all the parties that are involved and to speak the truths that we need to speak in order to ensure that our treaty relationship is one that is iterative. It didn't end in 1876 or in, I think this would be in Treaty 4 area, 1874. That wasn't the end, Mr. Speaker, of the treaty relationship. That was the beginning of the treaty relationship, and that's something that we are able to continue and work on and continue to build upon in sort of a shared way.

[15:45]

So again, I think these are opportunities that the government has to make a difference and to advance, I guess, our treaty relationship in a meaningful way and one that respects and listens to the First Nations.

Just a few comments on some of the housekeeping changes that are being made. I do question . . . There's a couple of references

to Her Majesty's Court of Queen's Bench for Saskatchewan, and they've taken out "Her Majesty." In the explanatory notes, they are taking out the reference to Her Majesty because we know that our next king or queen was likely going to be a king if the succession line works. So I think there's some pre-emptive work being done here.

So they're taking out the reference to Her Majesty, and they're just saying the Court of Queen's Bench. But won't it be King's Bench, Mr. Deputy Speaker? So I'm not sure why they're taking out "Her Majesty," but they're not taking out the reference to the Queen. So I'm a little confused about that. I don't think it quite covers the changes that are needed to make it completely generic or non-gendered. So I'm not sure I understand.

That's for example in section 19.1(1), which in this amending Act is found . . . I'll just find the reference. Yes, it's section 11 of the amendment Act . . . oh, pardon me, section 12 where they're striking:

. . . **repealing** "Her Majesty's Court of Queen's Bench for Saskatchewan" **and substituting** the "Court of Queen's Bench".

But I think we still have a gender reference there that could be problematic if and when we switch from having a queen to a king. So that's something I found interesting.

A lot of the housekeeping changes here are things where they change the word "where" to "if." I think the meaning is pretty clear with the word "where," but if "if" is more popular these days, that's fine. Good to see a lot of changes to gender neutral language so wherever it says "him" or "he," which occurs in a surprisingly number of places in this bill or in the existing Act, they're being changed to reference either "him" or "her" or the noun of the person that's being referred to.

Some changes. There's a new clause 25.1 and I think the minister talked about that a little bit in his comments, but I just want to find the right reference again, 25.1. Yes, the existing clause is being repealed and now it's being a little more prescriptive about cutting, harvesting, and removing timber. So it's kind of going from positive language to negative language, and we'll certainly have an opportunity to speak to the minister in committee on that.

The drafter seemed to have a problem with the word "time" and they're switching that to the word "period." So for example "within the time and in the manner directed" would now become "within the period and in the manner directed."

Also the word "such" is no longer acceptable and it's now the word "those." So those are quite a few of the changes that we see throughout the Act, and some cleaning up.

Section 32 of the existing Act deals with evictions of persons, and there's a little more clarity here now where the enforcement officers are definitely going to be able to evict people in relationship to the alcohol and gaming regulations. So currently there's no reference to the alcohol and gaming regulations, but now there is a specific reference being added under order, under section 107.1 of the alcohol and gaming regulations. So I think

that is something that will allow the enforcement officers to do their job more effectively and make it absolutely clear.

Again there's a bit of a drafting issue, and I don't understand it. Section 19(1) of the amendment Act actually fully repeals subsection 31(1), but the only change I can find is changing the word "where" to "if." So throughout the whole bill, wherever "where" exists, it is substituted with "if." But in this case they repeal the whole clause, and I'm just not sure how on earth that could happen. It's enough to drive a law clerk crazy, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So just little things that we notice from some of the drafting changes that are being brought forward, and we'll have an opportunity to ask questions about the thinking on that with the drafters or at least the ministerial staff and the minister and his officials, when we are in committee on this bill.

So at this point in time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that I've exhausted what I have to say. Many happy memories of times at McBride Lake, and perhaps we'll have an opportunity to visit Porcupine Hills again once this park is established. But I do encourage this government to take the intent and spirit of the treaties as far as they can and then beyond that. Because I think it's time to make sure that those treaties are interpreted in the spirit that will move us forward as all people of the treaty. We are all treaty people. And so I look forward to more work from the government on that aspect, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So at this point I think I will move that we adjourn the debate on Bill No. 76, *An Act to amend The Parks Act*.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — The member from Saskatoon Nutana has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 76, *The Parks Amendment Act, 2017*. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — Carried.

Bill No. 77

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Harpauer that **Bill No. 77 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Superannuation Plans) Amendment Act, 2017*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to enter into adjourned debates on Bill 77, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Superannuation Plans) Amendment Act, 2017*. I understand this proposed legislation intends to dissolve the Liquor Board Superannuation Commission, considering the plan is near to having zero members. These are people who were enrolled on October 1st, 1977 and who did not elect to transfer to PEPP [public employees pension plan] prior to October 1st, 1978.

The minister proposes to now solely be managing the superannuation plan for the remaining employees. The previous commission was composed of . . . Previously the commission was composed by three members that were appointed by

order-in-council appointments and one member needed to be an employee of the Liquor Board. So this bill proposes to change that. It seems reasonable considering, I understand, there are only two active members of this plan. And it seems that there are many other amendments that are reasonable housekeeping items as well.

When the minister spoke to second reading on this bill, she identified that, although the Liquor Board Superannuation Commission is responsible for the administration of this plan, the day-to-day administration of the plan is delegated to PEBA [Public Employees Benefits Agency]. She also indicated that a third party has reviewed this plan with a key recommendation, and one that is being accepted here, being that the minister should be designated as the sole member of the commission, understanding that day-to-day members are still going to be handled by PEBA.

I thought my colleague from Athabasca had a good point when he raised that it would be interesting to hear from the remaining active members of this plan. Considering there are only two, I think this effort should be made to reach out to these individuals and hear from these folks before this legislation is processed.

I understand that the current role of the plan is primarily to pay pensions and that in December 2016 there were 177 retired members registered through the plan. I had a chance to review the Saskatchewan Liquor Board Superannuation Commission's annual report for 2016, Mr. Speaker. One discrepancy I did note was that this report identified three active employers and 177 retired employees . . . employees sorry . . . three active employees and 177 retired employees for a total of 180 employees as of December 31st, 2016. In the explanatory notes provided with this bill, it was identified that there are two active employees still paying into the plan, so this is a discrepancy from the three. Things change over time, perhaps that person has retired since then. But I did note that discrepancy and I wanted to raise it.

Mr. Speaker, I know my colleagues are going to have more to say about this particular bill. These are people's retirements that we're talking about. This is the livelihood of people who have worked hard in our province for the Liquor Board, so it's an important piece of legislation. For now I will move that we adjourn debates on Bill 77, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Superannuation Plans) Amendment Act, 2017*.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — The member from Saskatoon Fairview has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 77, the miscellaneous statutes amendment Act, 2017. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — Carried.

Bill No. 78

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Harpauer that **Bill No. 78 — *The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2017*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to enter into adjourned debates on Bill 78, *The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2017*. When the minister spoke to second reading on this bill, she identified that this bill proposes to eliminate provisions that impact the financial stability of the pension plan, stating that there were 25,000 plan members in MEPP [municipal employees' pension plan] as of March 31st, and indicating that these changes are coming forward from the Municipal Employees' Pension Commission. She cites that the ability of plan members to remove lump sums of money "... at retirement is a financial drain on the pension plan." I think some stakeholder consultation on the impact of this statement and this change is important.

As someone who recently retired from the Canadian Armed Forces, one of my options in my pension was to receive some of that as a lump sum payment. I thought it was a nice option to have. You know, people have different experiences that are coming at different times in their life. And I know that there may have been many individuals who have positively benefited from being able to receive this lump sum. I didn't personally do that, but I did appreciate having that opportunity despite the fact that it may have led to some instability in the overall pension plan. So I think some looking into the impact of this decision is important.

The minister also identifies how the amendments propose to remove unforeseen liabilities by requiring members "... to move their excess contributions out of the pension plan within two years of the termination date or immediately upon their retirement."

And she identifies other amendments that are more administrative in nature, such as electing a chairperson for the commission for two years rather than one, adding two additional members to the commission, one from the firefighters and police officers and one from Saskatchewan locals of CUPE [Canadian Union of Public Employees] that represent MEPP members. This change is coming forward as a recommendation coming from a report. I understand that a review is required every five years by *The Municipal Employees' Pension Act* and that this report came out of one of these regular reviews to examine committee composition. The justification that's provided for these changes is that they will "... ensure more equitable representation for stakeholders and will enhance the continuity of ... operations ..." year over year.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate several of the language updates that ensure gender neutrality and modernizing the language. As my colleague from Saskatoon Riversdale identified, "gender neutrality language is important because it is involved in changing perceptions." As someone who comes from a sociology background, I definitely appreciate that language is important in terms of our overall perceptions of a particular idea. So these changes, although they may seem small to some of the members here, are significant.

It also makes sense to me that this Act legislates the existing board requirements by legislating changes to committee

composition. Considering the commission is seeking approval to amend legislation to amend the plan, I think a key consideration is the potential for unintended consequences and whether all these recommendations were aligned with stakeholders' opinions and commission recommendations.

I also understand there's a provision in this Act that allows an employee to transfer their existing pension plan from another employer to the municipal plan provided it does not cause the previous plan to default. Considering the amount of members — 25,000, Mr. Speaker — I think we should take care to ensure that we're carefully examining these changes that affect their pensions.

When we talk about pensions in this province, Mr. Speaker, even what is presented as sometimes small housekeeping changes, it's crucially important for us as opposition members to hold the Sask Party government to account, especially during this current political climate where we have seen a government that will cut anything and everything to save a dime. We need to ensure that our hard-working municipal employees are being looked after. They are hard-working people of our province, and we need to look after the futures of these people who have worked so hard to serve us in our municipalities.

So I think we will need to further discuss these details in committee and to delve deeper into what consultations have taken place, and what if any unintended consequences will result for these 25,000 individuals. I am sure my colleagues will have more to say on this particular bill but with that, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debates on Bill No. 78, *The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2017*.

[16:00]

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — The member from Saskatoon Fairview has moved to adjourn debate of the municipal employments pension amendment Act, 2017. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — Carried.

Bill No. 79

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Harpauer that **Bill No. 79** — *The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2017* be now read a second time.]

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Northcote.

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm proud to stand in my place today to have some discussion with regards to Bill No. 79, the public employees pension plan, some of the amendments to this Act.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Finance minister indicated that the reason why they were making some changes and amendments to this Act was because they want to improve the rights for the public employees pension plan — and they call it PEPP, like

P-E-P-P, for short — members. And they wanted to improve services for the spouses and services for previous members.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this bill is actually really quite important for a person like myself. I previously was employed by SaskTel and SaskPower, so I am a PEPP member, and so this has some implications on my pension. And I'm really happy and proud to have served for these Crown corporations. They're very important in our communities and they provide good, stable, family supporting jobs and helped me provide for my family while I was a single mom as well.

And so pensions was not something that I thought about back in my younger days, but it's definitely something that I'm thinking about right now. And I admit that I need to learn a lot more about that. But it is something that's really important, and I do realize how privileged I am to be able to have a pension. Not everybody has that benefit that they can rely on and know that when they get older, that they can have that consistent funding while they enjoy their later years of life. And I know how we all realize that that's very special and really important.

The Minister of Finance indicated that as of March 31st there was 6,500 members and 146 employers involved with the PEPP pension plan. And so that's quite a few people, a lot of people that are involved and this will impact. So there were six amendments proposed with regards to the changes in this Act. So I'll kind of talk a little bit about each one.

The first one is to provide immediate vesting or locking in of member and employer contributions. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, previously members had to wait one year to become vested into the pension plan. And I remember that when I first started my employment and being told that. And like I said before, I was a lot younger back then and didn't realize the importance of being invested into a pension plan. But when I heard about that first amendment, it got me thinking a little bit about how the changes to this amendment will have an impact on some of the employees. And I'm not quite sure if there's been a lot of consultation with regards to how that will have an impact on them. I was thinking what about the people who are in temporary jobs. We know in some of these employers that they might hire people for short periods of time or seasonal. And so that one-year period, I guess, gave people an option of whether they wanted to be invested in this plan or not and they had that opportunity for whatever decision of theirs it was. So I don't know if this is going to have an impact on them.

Also I was wondering, there's staff that are on probation at that period of time and my understanding, when they said it was about a year before you were vested in, I thought that had a role and played a big part of it was because you were on a little bit of a probation as an employee. And so I don't know, if a person doesn't fulfil the contracts of what their probationary period of time, if that would have an impact on that, then they would be vested in. If they can't pull back their investment, will this increase the case loads for the PEPP staff or the administration of this pension plan? How much more costs will that have or will a lot of members get lost in the system?

I know some people, they get jobs and they don't realize, like I said, especially in your younger years, you don't realize that you've been paying into certain programs and such and then

you move on in life. And then, will there be a hard time tracking down some of these people that come in and out of these businesses and employees? And right now, if we have 65,000 members, I wonder how many more members that will increase over the years. And then again, like, people who terminate their employment within that first year, how are you going to keep track of where these people go and how they're going to be maintained?

There is some talk, I know in this Act, about people who live outside of the province and there's a lot of that too; a lot of people moving out of country, out of province. And how will we keep track of that?

I know when my father passed away, my dad in his younger years had many different jobs, and so when he passed away, we were trying to think about any potential pensions or any benefit plans that he could have contributed to. And we thought we had it all figured out until about six years after his death and we got a letter saying, oh there's this pension plan that we didn't know about, and it existed. And my mother had to do all the paperwork to collect that. So these kind of situations do exist.

And there was also another pension plan that my dad didn't realize that he invested in when he was in his early 20s. Well he was still alive at that point, and they gave him a call and said, hey did you know you have this pension plan? Because that was back when he was in BC [British Columbia]. And so it wasn't a big one, but every dollar counts when you're in those later years and so it was a pleasant surprise. Oftentimes you get phone calls that are saying that you owe people money, not necessarily that they owe you. And oftentimes when you get those calls that they owe you money, you've got to question them, like you won a trip. But no, this one was valid and he had a pension that he didn't know about.

And so I wonder about, like, the difficulties of administering all these pensions, and when you have all these people and how to maintain that. So I think about the administration aspect as well, you know, and I hope the people who are going to have to implement these amendments have been consulted. And I know our critic will do a good job with consulting the people that she believes are needed to consult with, with the stakeholders.

So the second amendment . . . Actually the second and the third amendments are both supposed to be providing spouses' additional rights. So the second amendment is with regards to the case of a member's death and allowing the spouse to keep any amount left in the plan. And so I just . . . I kind of, I guess, thought that that was the process already, but it seems like it was something that was important to implement in this. So I think if you've contributed into a plan, that it really is important that the people that you leave behind have the ability to benefit from that, because we know it's really important to take care of our loved ones even after we've passed on.

The third amendment is in case of a breakdown in a spousal relationship. That ex-spouse can keep the PEPP pension plan, any amount resulting from the division of that member's account balance within the PEPP plan. And they would have the same rights as any other non-working member. And so I think this is also a really interesting aspect. I wonder how this will be administered. So if you are a PEPP person as well, if that could

be just added to your existing plan, or if this would be a secondary plan, or how is that going to look like, Mr. Speaker. I've been thinking about that.

Also I'm wondering will the ex-spouse have options with regards to whether they want to keep the benefits within that existing plan, or maybe they want to invest it into a different plan, and what their options will be. Or will it be changed that they don't have that option? That's another question I have. And I'm sure our critic will be looking into that because I think you have the right to decide how you would like that money to be spent or invested, you know. And I know it's really important that if it's taken out of there to invest it back into a pension, but I think we need to respect the rights of the ex-spouse on how they want to manage that. And again how is this going to be administered? He'll increase the number of memberships within the plan. And will there be, like, increased costs with regards to staffing and managing these changes?

The fourth amendment removes the 15-day waiting period for the unlocking of voluntary contributions on termination of employment. So if it's removing that 15-day waiting period could like . . . To me that sounds then you can take it out right away. And again I want to ask like, what was the reasons for having these rules and regulations to begin with? Obviously they were in place for a reason, and we can't forget about the fact that these rules were administered for a reason. Like, so the 15-day waiting period, is it so that people have a period of time to calm down or to make good, valid decisions? Or was that because the agency needed about a 15-day period of time to kind of handle all of the dealings with someone terminating their employment? We know there's a lot of paperwork, a lot of the things that need to be dealt with, and we can't forget about that administrative aspect.

And then number five was that the Public Employees Pension Board may make a policy to administer PEPP with respect to out-of-province members and their monies which is subject to the laws of the other provinces. My understanding from what the notes that the Minister of Justice provided in her speech was that these were recommendations from the board, and the board is made up of people from all different aspects of the PEPP plan.

[16:15]

And so it sounds like they wanted to have a little bit more ability to administer the PEPP, allowing the PEPP benefits so that when people are from out of province, and it brings back to the fact that I brought up before, Mr. Speaker, the fact that we have to take into account that people could be moving all over the place and so there's also the laws in those areas, those provinces. And in here they don't talk about it, but also what about other countries, you know? And there could be some laws and legislation that need to be dealt with in that aspect.

And the sixth one is to update, and we know when we're looking at Acts it's really important to look at the housekeeping aspects of them and change some of the language and the wording that is in there because oftentimes some of these bills or these Acts aren't looked at for years and years and things change within our processes. So some of the housekeeping aspects of updating this Act is to reflect the new name from the

CEP [Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada] members to Unifor. So my understanding is that's a lot of the SaskTel employees used to be a CEP member, but now they went to Unifor union, so they want to update that because some of those members are also on the board and so they have to make sure that that's updated.

So, Mr. Speaker, I guess when we're looking at this Act, it's really important that we can't just instantly say that the recommendations are good and fine. I think it's really important that we talk to the stakeholders, talk to some of the PEPP members, the people potentially that work there, some of the people who would be really impacted by some of these amendments to this Act, and ensure that what we're placing in here is going to work well, you know, for the members and the spouses that they may leave behind if they die. And we have to make sure that this is going to work with other provisions and other rules and laws that are in other provinces as well, and how does that look compared to other pension plans and such.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I also know pension plans got hit hard with the increase to the PST to insurances and such. I got a letter with regards to that just the other day, and so we've got to keep that in mind as well.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I am going to allow my colleagues to have time to add their remarks with regards to the changes to this legislation. And so I am going to move adjournment for this bill and I'm interested to hear what my colleagues have to say. So thank you.

The Speaker: — The member from Prince Albert Northcote has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 79. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 80

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Harpauer that **Bill No. 80** — *The Municipal Financing Corporation Amendment Act, 2017* be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again I'm happy to be here today and to stand and discuss, participate in this discussion with bills and this particular bill, Bill No. 80, *The Municipal Financing Corporation Act*, amendments to this Act.

Mr. Speaker, this particular bill I found very interesting because of my critic portfolio with regards to the critic for Government Relations, so municipal relations. And I've had an opportunity through my time as being the critic to go across the province and talk to municipal leaders around the province, and talk to them about some of the concerns that they have with regards to decisions that are made at this level. And we know that there's been a lot of decisions quite recently that have really impacted municipalities and they've been really hit hard. And I believe

this government has downloaded a lot of their issues back onto municipalities. They're needing to face the issues that their residents are coming to them with concerns with increases in taxes and cuts to services. And that is due to the fact that this government, especially in this past budget when they did the cuts to the grants-in-lieu, that was huge, Mr. Speaker. That was a huge impact to communities and to municipalities, and they're still really struggling with that and not knowing how they're going to manage their budgets coming forward.

So, Mr. Speaker, when I look at this bill and I look at the fact that this government is increasing the allotment for Municipal Financing Corporation of Saskatchewan to give out 500 million, it's an increase from 350 million for municipalities looking for financing. I brought this up when I met with some community leaders in the last few weeks and asked them what they thought about this themselves. And they said to me, if this is a way for this government to try to justify the cuts that they've given to these municipalities in the past year, they don't want more debt, they don't need more debt, and that's not good governance.

And so the municipal leaders realize by increasing debt is not the way you manage financially. What they want from this government is they want support and they want consultation. And they realize that our economy is struggling right now and that this government is faced with some really challenging decisions. But to be notified on the floor of the Assembly here that their communities are losing millions and millions of dollars was a real slap in the face, you know. And that's not the way you treat leaders in your province and that's not the way you treat our municipal leaders.

And so I am not in favour with the increase of debt. What I think this government really needs to do and what communities are still waiting for is the capital project fund. They want municipalities to have consistent and reliable provincial funding to help with infrastructure costs.

Mr. Speaker, I went on a regional tour with SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] and listened to community leaders. And I sat back and I just listened. And I think that's what good leaders do, is listen. And that was consistent across the board, was that they said that they want consistent infrastructure funding that they know they could count on, and that they're all struggling with challenges with their infrastructure because our province is aging and our infrastructure within our municipalities is struggling. And this government has a role and duty to help with that, and it's not helping when you increase their debt load.

And so I know the critic responsible for this portfolio will have a lot more to add to it. I know she will consult with the stakeholders, and I'm sure me and her will have a lot more discussion as well. And I know a lot of my colleagues have a lot of input that they want to put with in regards to this particular bill. But with that, Mr. Speaker, I am going to adjourn my comments and allow my colleagues to have their input with regards to this discussion. So I adjourn debate with this bill.

The Speaker: — The member from Prince Albert Northcote has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 80. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 81

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hargrave that **Bill No. 81 — *The Traffic Safety (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act, 2017*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise and to debate on Bill No. 81, *The Traffic Safety (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act, 2017*. And this is a very, very important piece of legislation that we have before us and, as all governments, try to get the right balance in terms of making sure our streets are safe in dealing with the issue of impaired driving.

And particularly here in Saskatchewan, we seem to have a problem that we really have a hard time getting right down to the solutions on it that could really solve the issue. It's just a tragic situation when people die in a vehicle accident, and it's doubly tragic when you find out that there was alcohol involved and that there was potentially no reason for that accident because people were just drinking. And we think we should do as much as we can to make sure that we resolve that scourge of society. It is something that really in Saskatchewan we have . . . I'm lost for words in terms of, what do you do when you have such a bad reputation for being among the worst in Saskatchewan? It's a tough, tough situation.

And I do want to thank my two colleagues that spoke before me on this issue, the member from Nutana and the member from Riversdale. And the member from Riversdale has done a lot of work on this and feels particularly strong about some of the solutions that we should have done sooner or quicker, that we still need to do. She was a member of the all-party committee, along with the member from La Ronge. Rough work. Some very strong ideas. But the government drew back and decided not to do them right away, but has in fact moved quickly on some of the ones in the past years. But still there is much more work to do.

And I look at the press release that came out: tougher consequences for impaired drivers who transport children. And that is something that I think we need to make sure that if the adults in the car have been drinking and they're driving with children, that they really should be hit with stronger penalties. Children being in the vulnerable circumstances they are, have not the ability to say, hey, Dad or Mom, you probably shouldn't be driving. They don't know. They don't know. And it's a tragic situation that arises if they are caught in a vehicle accident that then, themselves, they could in fact lose their lives or potentially be injured or have a disability and all these things that we just hope never happen to our children. But again it's the senseless, the needless time that it happens because somebody has chosen to have a few drinks and take their kids for a drive.

And that's something that we're glad to see — the situation that the minister is calling for is a driver with blood alcohol content of .04 or higher, who transport children under the age of 16, will face longer licence suspensions and longer vehicle seizures. And this is very, very important and I think we need to move on this. The length of suspensions and seizures increase for repeat offenders. And this makes it even . . . underlines the severity of the circumstance if there is a repeat offence.

But we know we're dealing with addictions. We know we're dealing with alcoholism, and we know that we need to deal with those issues here in Saskatchewan. And this is something . . . there's one hand that we need to have those stronger penalties, but we also need to make sure that there's appropriate treatment for addictions, especially when it comes to alcohol. And this is something that's very, very important.

The minister is also calling for an increased looking-back period, extending from five years to 10 years, allowing for tougher penalties for repeat offenders. I think that's a fair option. I think that it's fair enough to say, okay, five years wasn't long enough and that, really, people need to be serious about when they've been charged and found to be drunk while driving, that they really do need to have a more severe, a stronger penalty, and that we're not going to forget and it's not going to go away. So this is very important.

[16:30]

All right, and this also talks about, law enforcement can offer an indefinite administration suspension, making roadside consequences for those charged with impaired driving under the Criminal Code consistent with those charged with having exceeding .08 breath BAC [blood alcohol concentration] or refusing to comply with a demand for a test.

So all of those deal with drinking and driving, and working harder to make sure people understand, drivers understand there will be consequences. There will be consequences if you're a repeat offender. There will be stronger consequences if you're driving with children. And the police have stronger penalties along the roadside.

Also the minister talks about enforcing new rules around slowing to 60 km an hour, and that'll be required when snowplows are stopped on the side of the road and when passing other vehicles providing assistance, providing the prescribed lights are in place. And we've talked about that last year with the . . . or in the spring, with the tow trucks, and how important that is.

Now, so those are the things that I think that we can get behind. But there is one, and I think the member from Nutana really talked at length about this. And this is one that came up in the spring. You know, one of the consequences of the STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company] wind-down was the fact that then we got to see how the Highway Traffic Board operated or what effectiveness they were working at. And it caused a lot of people to be very concerned about the effectiveness of the Highway Traffic Board and really the mandate they have and the independence they have. And people were surprised and a little bit shocked when they went to some of the hearings and found out just how the Highway Traffic

Board operates.

Now I did mention that I was reading from the press release, but nowhere in the press release does it reference what the minister said on November 6th. The press release came out on November 2nd, but the speech in the House, November 6th. And I would quote the minister responsible for this Act, and he said, and I quote:

Mr. Speaker, one more change I'd like to highlight is the proposal to eliminate operating authority certificates currently issued by the Highway Traffic Board. Operating authority certificates are required for transporting passengers for hire, for example, by limos and chartered buses. Taxis don't require . . . authority certificates because they are regulated by a municipality. Operating authority certificates were intended to outline specific requirements of the certificate holder regarding routes, insurance, rates, background checks, and more. Over time the Highway Traffic Board has been issuing them in a much more general way, and they have almost evolved into a rubber stamp.

And that's what he's called it, a rubber stamp. He continues to say:

Thus it makes sense to deregulate this process. SGI will strengthen other regulations . . . to ensure there is sufficient oversight regarding safety requirements.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that's where — for me — red flags drop all over the place. If the Highway Traffic Board has evolved over the past 10 years to be essentially a rubber stamp, then we have questions about their work for the last 10 years. And I wonder if they feel that they would be characterized fairly as a rubber stamp. You know, Mr. Speaker, I've had people come into my office who operate a limousine service, very concerned about the unfair nature they perceive of what's happening at the Highway Traffic Board.

And you know, the other thing . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . And now they can chirp over there. And if I'm wrong, please, they can correct me. They can stand up and correct us. But for example, you know, I live on 29th Street in Saskatoon; we're not far off Idylwyld. So we get the buses going by that they call the highway or the party buses. I understand they're supposed to be having . . . they are supposed to be licensed for carrying young people, but some aren't. What happens with those young people — and there might be 40 or 50 of them in that bus — if they were involved in a serious, serious accident?

And some of you will remember in Saskatoon where a young man, actually from the Maritimes, got in a fight on one of those buses, got off the bus, and then froze to death. And it was his bachelor party. And he died and of course there was . . . So what are the regulations around that?

And I didn't realize this, and I may be wrong, and if I'm wrong then the minister for Liquor and Gaming can shout out that I'm wrong. But these limousine services, I've not been in one, served alcohol. But apparently you have to have a permit for these services to have alcohol in them, and they will serve you beer and wine and champagne. That's what they do. That's part

of their business.

But they're supposed to have a permit from SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority] to do that. But many don't have that permit. And so this is a question: do they even know that over there? Many of us don't make use of that service, and some on this side over here may not know that, but this is a question that is very, very serious. And it's unfair because we've been told, we've been told that some services will just go out and buy a case of beer and a few bottles of wine and serve it in the back of their vehicles, because nobody's going to check them. Nobody will check them. But then other people will go out and actually buy the permit and then you have to say, you have to buy an appropriate amount of beer and you have to buy an appropriate amount of champagne. You have to buy an appropriate . . . And you're supposed to be a professional about this.

So this is very interesting that the minister characterizes this as a rubber stamp. And there might not even be a rubber stamp, but this is a problem that we have. And people living in . . . Well I mean, all the Saskatchewan people would be very concerned about this if they knew their family members or relatives or whatever, innocently were in a vehicle that they thought was properly licensed, properly insured, had the proper certificates, but actually didn't have that, and got into an accident. And what would happen?

And so I'm really very, very, very concerned about this and I think there will be lots of questions. And I think when people find out about this piece of legislation . . . And this is why we talk about this, and then we'll talk to people over the winter months to say, did you realize what they are proposing? Some people will have some big question marks about what this really means.

And one particularly, and we've raised this before, but I've heard shouts from the other side that they will look after this. So we're looking forward to seeing the actual proof in the pudding. But we remember last December where a taxicab driver in Regina, a Mr. Sharma, was attacked and did not have, could not get appropriate insurance for himself. Taxicab drivers are required to have insurance for their passengers but cannot get insurance for themselves for injury. And the question mark around, are they covered by SGI or are they covered by WCB [Workers' Compensation Board], we're going to be looking into that.

And this is the kind of things that need to be in place before we deregulate. And the minister has used the word "deregulate." We don't want to create a situation where we have deregulation and then we really have the wild west when it comes to the transportation systems in our province.

And this is interesting coming from them, where they want to actually make our highways safer. And I have a question about, is this going to make our highways safer or is it going to make our highways more dangerous because of the deregulation and nothing in place? And the minister hasn't shown us what he's got in place to resolve these issues that he's well aware of. He's well aware of the taxicab driver situation. We've talked to him about that. We've raised that with him. We've raised it in the House here, so his people should know that. SGI should be fully

aware of that. WCB should be fully aware of that and should be bringing forth solutions. In fact I expect WCB in the fall may be bringing forward legislation to deal with their report that they released essentially a year ago that called for legislative change. We're expecting to see it, so I assume any day now we'll be seeing that.

So we have some real questions. And, Mr. Speaker, the mixed messages we see from this government and the one that, you know, my colleagues have talked about, in the Throne Speech we talked about making our highways safer. We talked about how we recognize and we acknowledge that in Saskatchewan we've got one of the worst reputations for drinking and driving.

But at the same time, in that same speech, we acknowledge that it's much easier to get liquor in this province than ever before, than ever before. More stores are opening up to sell liquor. And you know, you've got to ask the question about that: is that a good policy direction to go in, to making liquor more easily accessible, deregulating vehicles that transport people when they're drinking? Who knows what, you know, if you're deregulating, what the situation is with the driver?

So, Mr. Speaker, there is big questions about this. And when I read a press release that talks about tougher consequences for impaired drivers who transport children, yes we can definitely get behind that. But not a mention of any changes to the Highway Traffic Board, which we expect better work than simply rubber-stamping applications from these different businesses who provide transportation. If they haven't been doing their job, then I think the minister needs to be held to account for why they haven't been doing their job. It's on his desk this comes to.

And you know, I have to say and I clap for and I acknowledge the good speech he gave on the Throne Speech day when he talked about . . . I think it was somebody he knew quite well. It might have even been a family member who was an RCMP officer who talked about why he went after people who gave underage kids alcohol. And said he's stopping accidents. He's stopping the accidents. He gave a very powerful speech, and it was really very moving. And I believe that he was sincere about it.

But on the other hand, we have these, I would say to be kind, inconsistent . . . We're seeing this from the leadership over there, inconsistent messages: more alcohol available, deregulating the Highway Traffic Board and their regulations. It just doesn't add up. It's like one step forward, two steps back.

So, Mr. Speaker, with that I know that we've got a lot of work to do today, and I think that I've made my point about how there will be lots of questions. And as I said, with the STC, people really saw the underbelly of the Highway Traffic Board and were not impressed by the work they do. And all of a sudden now we see why, that they do plan on deregulating the board. And essentially we'll see a board that probably in a year or two won't even exist. It'll be done. It will be done and the government will say, well they're not doing any work anyways. Why should we keep them? But actually they were doing good work. They played a very important role here in Saskatchewan, and to get rid of them at a time when we're dealing with unsafe highways . . .

And I would say, you know, I would be remiss if I didn't raise this, as in Saskatchewan we have one of the highest fatality rates when it comes to workplace injuries. And one of the places where we experience death in our workplaces is on the highways. And I don't see the minister addressing that issue. I'll have questions about that because I think that's a serious situation, particularly with young people who lose their lives at work and they're driving. That's not something that we should take lightly and we need to know more about.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would move adjournment of Bill No. 81, *The Traffic Safety (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act, 2017*. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Centre has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 81. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 82

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hargrave that **Bill No. 82 — *The SaskEnergy Amendment Act, 2017*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again I'm happy to speak to Bill No. 82 today, *The SaskEnergy Amendment Act*.

[16:45]

Mr. Speaker, the Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy presented this amendment Act. And whenever he gets up to speak about amending Acts, it very much concerns me because he was the previous minister for STC, and we saw what happened with them. He completely eliminated that corporation, and we know the respect that he has for our Crown corporations. So really troubles me to see that he is the Minister for SaskEnergy.

And I'm going to quote some of his statements that he said in his response when he stood up and discussed the amendments to this Act, which also concerned me. So the quote here is, "These updates will allow the corporation to better serve private sector business opportunities to support growth and competitiveness." Mr. Speaker, this to me screams privatization, you know. And a lot of the amendments to this Act really scares me for that possibility because there's a lot of terminology that the minister used when he was discussing the amendments to this Act with regards to privatization.

So I'm going to start with . . . Here he says the major proposed amendment in section 23 and 60 is with regards to "... exclusive rights for distribution and transportation of natural gas." He talks about modernizing the Act because it was initially passed in 1992. And I agree. I agree we need to look at Acts that are . . . especially in 1992. Wow, that was like 25

years ago? I'm doing my math real quick. And so I could see why we would want to modernize that.

But when he talks about this modernizing, he talks about "... recognizing today's industry needs and support new business ventures in the province . . ." And yes, we want to increase businesses within our province, but we also have to realize the importance of keeping our Crown corporations. And they employ people right here in our province, and they have good family-supporting jobs.

And like I was talking earlier, Mr. Speaker, I've previously been employed with SaskTel and SaskPower. And when I was employed with SaskPower, we worked really closely with the employees in SaskEnergy, and so it's near and dear to my heart. When I first starting working with SaskPower, they had the ability that you could go between the two companies. If you decided you wanted to seek employment at SaskEnergy, you could. There was . . . that you can go between the two. And they worked really closely together, and our offices worked closely together. And when I was out in the field working, because I was a meter reader, I'd oftentimes come across some of the SaskEnergy employees. We would have coffee together. We would have lunch together. And I know the value of having them in our communities. They're coaches within our teams. And having those family-supporting jobs is so important.

And when we're looking at these business ventures, are they going to be hiring people right from our province or are these going to be people that are coming outside of our province? And we need to look at having jobs here for the taxpaying people here.

So the minister also talks about providing:

. . . efficiencies and enhance safety . . . by allowing flexibility to determine the end point of the gas distribution system; increase compressed natural gas and liquefied natural gas . . . by allowing for third party trucking to qualified companies; and support the development of enhanced oil recovery and natural gas markets in the province by allowing operators the right to move high-pressure natural gas across land parcel boundaries; and move the exclusive business rights [exclusive business rights] definition from the Act . . . [this is] to accommodate changes in technology and marketplace conditions.

Mr. Speaker, when I see language that says "exclusive business rights," it really makes me concerned again about privatization and allowing third party trucking companies to come in.

When I look at the changes to this legislation, Mr. Speaker, it talks about . . . Currently, the process is if you want to have these outside trucking firms or agencies to do some of the work, you have to get an order in council. And what the provisions here are talking about, getting rid of the fact that you need an order in council to engage in business. And, Mr. Speaker, that really concerns me with regards to accountability. Where is the accountability aspects when we have these processes in place, so that both parties can see what kind of business is going on within the government? And when we eliminate provisions like ensuring that an order in council is provided, we're losing that aspect of accountability, and that to me is very troubling. And

again the language with regards to these changes is very concerning.

There's also amendments to sections 16, 34, 35, and 45, and the minister indicates that this is housekeeping because they need to make it current with recent case law and corporate policy. So again I know the critic with regards to this profile, she'll do her due course with consulting with stakeholders and doing her research and ensuring that this is in fact the case, because I would be very worried if this housekeeping was to go along with what I'm worried about with this minister's plans for privatization.

Section 12 indicates that they're going to do some amendments with regards to that because they want to prevent insurance premiums from rapidly increasing due to nuisance claims, again making it consistent with the SaskPower legislation. And when I look at words like "nuisance," Mr. Speaker, I worry about the definition of that. And I didn't see anything within the legislation here that indicated that they were going to define that language. And maybe it's just me, but I found it a little bit concerning what I would determine as nuisance and what you may could be quite different.

Sections 54 and 64, the amendments there enables the Lieutenant Governor in Council to make regulations respecting to "exclusive business rights" definition. And again that's changing the definitions and allowing individuals to have that level of power. It's concerning when we're talking about a corporation that is owned by the people of Saskatchewan, and I would want to make sure that the people of Saskatchewan know exactly what's going to be happening.

And then another quote from the minister. He says "... amendments are intended to address modern industry needs and align with corporate priorities." I thought that was a pretty strong statement coming from the minister, especially when we're talking about a Crown corporation. And like I said before, it's owned by the people of this province.

And also some of the information and changes and updates to this legislation reflects the recent closure of the customer services to pedestrian traffic. Mr. Speaker, I know that change has had a huge impact on my home community of Prince Albert. People are still ... They come to our office on a regular basis wondering why they can't go into SaskEnergy. I believe SaskPower also was closed for customer services for people to walk in there, and a lot of people want that face-to-face interaction with people.

And the people who worked in those agencies ... Like, Prince Albert's a big city, but it's also small in consideration that oftentimes you know a lot of the same people. And people wanted to walk in there and talk to the people that work there. They don't want to phone a number and talk to someone from Regina. The centralizing of services has gotten to be so extreme and has had a huge impact on my community, and I know smaller communities and the northern communities with not having that interaction that is so important.

But there's still a lot of people who, they go down and want to pay their bill. They want to talk to someone. A lot of people don't carry their actual bills, so when they went to the

SaskEnergy office they could pull it up. Or if they go to the SaskPower office they could pull it up. But now the only office that's available for that customer service, within Prince Albert anyway, is the SaskTel businesses. And they will take your payments, but you have to have the bill with you.

And again a lot of people who may use that service, they don't necessarily carry their bills. Or they caught the bus to get down to the mall to go to the SaskTel depot, and they don't have their bill and now they have to go back home and get it and come back. And then oftentimes people are late, and it's caused a lot of issues with regards to that.

And we talk about, you know, having a computerized system, but we've got to be mindful, Mr. Speaker, that not everybody has a computer. That might seem maybe strange to us. I know, like even all my children have access to it and they do a lot of their stuff online, and so do I. But not everybody has the lifestyle and access that we do or the ability or the finances to do that. And I keep that at mindful when I talk about my critic portfolio of Social Services and some of the most vulnerable people. And when they only have a couple of hundred dollars left after paying all their bills, they're not going to spend that on Internet or computers. They're going to spend that on food, you know, Mr. Speaker, so we got to keep that in mind as well.

And again, I wondered how many staff that caused services to like ... There was quite a few people that I know in Prince Albert that that was their job, was to provide that customer service. And maybe with the fact of retirements and stuff, they find them employment, but we also know when you don't replace someone off of retirement, that is a loss of a position and a loss of a good-paying job in a community. And I think because these are a service for our province, that it's a service that's owned by the people of our province, and they deserve to have that service available to them the way they feel comfortable for that. And to have that ... The money that we're investing into these corporations, we want them to come back as good-paying jobs within our communities.

And when we see facilities being closed, and we know, like, as soon as they're closed for business from nine to five, we wonder when they'll be closed for good. And will they be centralized? Will they be privatized? That's what a lot of people are really concerned about, Mr. Speaker, and I think they are rightfully concerned about that. And so that's what I worry about.

And like I said before, a lot of the language that's in this bill concerns me with regards to the direction of privatization, and I'm sure a lot of my colleagues are going to also be addressing that. And I'm pretty sure the critic, I know that she'll be dutiful and consult all of the people who are going to be impacted by the changes of this bill. She's going to ensure that all the t's are crossed and the i's are dotted.

With that, I think I'm going to adjourn my remarks with regards to this bill and I'll allow my colleagues to have further discussion with regards to the amendments with this bill. So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The member from Prince Albert Northcote has moved to adjourn the debate on Bill No. 82. Is it the

pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. It now nearing 5 o'clock, this Assembly stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.]

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