



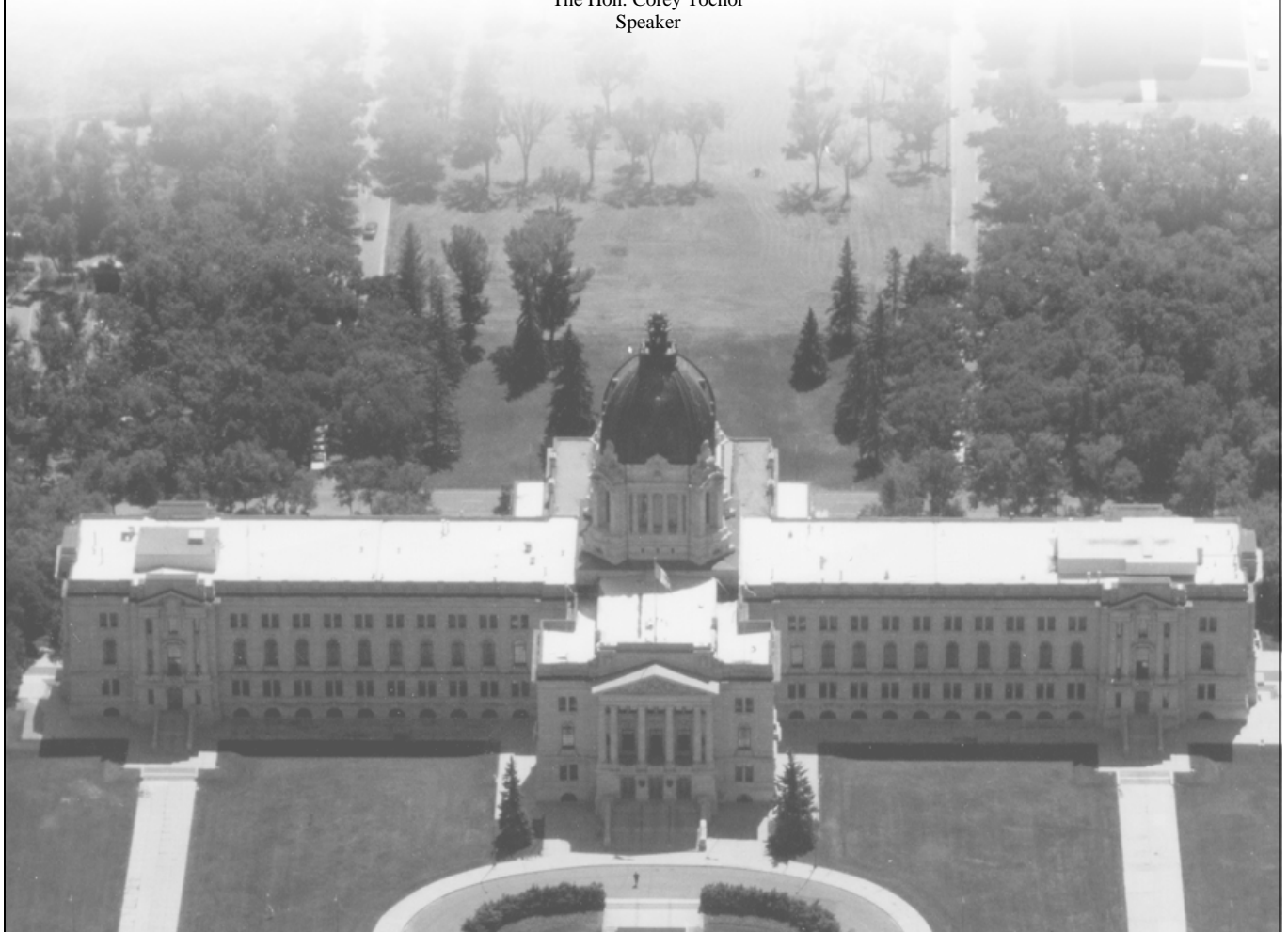
SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

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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| Beaudry-Mellor , Tina — Regina University (SP) | McCall , Warren — Regina Elphinstone-Centre (NDP) |
| Beck , Carla — Regina Lakeview (NDP) | McMorris , Don — Indian Head-Milestone (SP) |
| Belanger , Buckley — Athabasca (NDP) | Meili , Ryan — Saskatoon Meewasin (NDP) |
| Bonk , Hon. Steven — Moosomin (SP) | Merriman , Hon. Paul — Saskatoon Silverspring-Sutherland (SP) |
| Bradshaw , Fred — Carrot River Valley (SP) | Michelson , Warren — Moose Jaw North (SP) |
| Brkich , Hon. Greg — Arm River (SP) | Moe , Scott — Rosthern-Shellbrook (SP) |
| Buckingham , David — Saskatoon Westview (SP) | Morgan , Hon. Don — Saskatoon Southeast (SP) |
| Carr , Lori — Estevan (SP) | Mowat , Vicki — Saskatoon Fairview (NDP) |
| Chartier , Danielle — Saskatoon Riversdale (NDP) | Nerlien , Hugh — Kelvington-Wadena (SP) |
| Cheveldayoff , Ken — Saskatoon Willowgrove (SP) | Olauson , Eric — Saskatoon University (SP) |
| Cox , Hon. Herb — The Battlefords (SP) | Ottenbreit , Hon. Greg — Yorkton (SP) |
| D'Autremont , Dan — Cannington (SP) | Rancourt , Nicole — Prince Albert Northcote (NDP) |
| Dennis , Terry — Canora-Pelly (SP) | Reiter , Hon. Jim — Rosetown-Elrose (SP) |
| Docherty , Mark — Regina Coronation Park (SP) | Ross , Laura — Regina Rochdale (SP) |
| Doherty , Kevin — Regina Northeast (SP) | Sarauer , Nicole — Regina Douglas Park (NDP) |
| Doke , Hon. Larry — Cut Knife-Turtleford (SP) | Sproule , Cathy — Saskatoon Nutana (NDP) |
| Duncan , Hon. Dustin — Weyburn-Big Muddy (SP) | Steele , Doug — Cypress Hills (SP) |
| Eyre , Hon. Bronwyn — Saskatoon Stonebridge-Dakota (SP) | Steinley , Warren — Regina Walsh Acres (SP) |
| Fiaz , Muhammad — Regina Pasqua (SP) | Stewart , Hon. Lyle — Lumsden-Morse (SP) |
| Forbes , David — Saskatoon Centre (NDP) | Tell , Hon. Christine — Regina Wascana Plains (SP) |
| Hargrave , Hon. Joe — Prince Albert Carlton (SP) | Tochor , Hon. Corey — Saskatoon Eastview (SP) |
| Harpauer , Hon. Donna — Humboldt-Watrous (SP) | Vermette , Doyle — Cumberland (NDP) |
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| Heppner , Hon. Nancy — Martensville-Warman (SP) | Wilson , Hon. Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (SP) |
| Kaeding , Warren — Melville-Saltcoats (SP) | Wotherspoon , Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP) |
| Kirsch , Delbert — Batoche (SP) | Wyant , Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP) |
| Lambert , Lisa — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP) | Young , Colleen — Lloydminster (SP) |
| Lawrence , Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP) | |
| Makowsky , Hon. Gene — Regina Gardiner Park (SP) | |
| 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

Clerk — Gregory A. Putz

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

Principal Clerk — Iris Lang

Clerk Assistant — Kathy Burianyak

Sergeant-at-Arms — Terry Quinn

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

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

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and colleagues for the leave. Mr. Speaker, seated in your gallery this afternoon is someone that is a very special guest of the Assembly and yet, at the same time, really not a guest at all. She is the former MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for Swift Current who served in the legislature from 1982 until 1991. She's joined by her daughter, Sherry, and her son-in-law, Ron.

Mr. Speaker, I can remember in grade 11 at the Swift Current Comprehensive High School going to an all-candidates forum that was held there in the student lounge at the time. And I hope I get the roster of candidates right. Pat Smith was there representing the Progressive Conservatives as a candidate for election. My science teacher, Spencer Wooff, was representing the New Democratic Party. I think the woman representing the Liberal Party was Pat White. And then there was a Western Canada Concept candidate by the name of Henry Banman who was running. And, Mr. Speaker, I can remember being thoroughly impressed by what Pat Smith had to say and how she said it and how she communicated with students.

Of course that spring, in late April, she went on to become the elected member of the Legislative Assembly for Swift Current constituency. And then shortly thereafter, she was one of the first two women cabinet ministers in the history of the province. I think it's surprising for some that it took until 1982 for that to happen but her, along with Joan Duncan, they were appointed to the provincial cabinet by then Premier Devine. She was accustomed though to blazing trails because she was also the first woman to ever serve as president of the SSTA, what was then known as the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, as well.

And in this building, she served as the minister of Social Services, the minister of Education. She was for a time the minister of Energy and Mines. She was minister of Urban Affairs. She was minister of Culture, Multiculturalism and Recreation. She was minister responsible for the Status of Women. And then later on in her elected career, she became the deputy premier of the province of Saskatchewan, the first woman deputy premier, and I think, I think the only woman deputy premier in the history of the province. Maybe I could do

something about that here in the next number of weeks.

But, Mr. Speaker, I had the great honour of serving as her summer student, and I learned from her directly, Mr. Speaker, the importance of hard work. But also hers was an example of a sense of humour and great integrity, which she maintained through her entire time as an elected official and then well beyond.

Mr. Speaker, I'm also honoured to report to the House that she's been a mentor to me when I first ran for office in 1999 as a nominated candidate. She was a great source of advice and counsel, and then thereafter as well she provided advice. And so, Mr. Speaker, we are . . . I'm very fortunate to count Pat as a friend and a mentor. And, Mr. Speaker, it's just great to see her and Sherry and Ron here in the Assembly and to have a visit with Pat Smith.

I just want to say on behalf of the government, but also on behalf of a grateful province, we have a lot to be thankful for in terms of Pat Smith. She was a leader for this province in historic terms, contributed much not just to Swift Current constituency but to all of Saskatchewan. And I'd ask all members to please join with me in welcoming her back to her Legislative Assembly today.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to quickly join with the Premier in welcoming Pat Smith and family to her Legislative Assembly. Welcome back. And certainly to get the drop on someone like Spencer Wooff, your sense of humour must have been, you know, right up there, because certainly I'd known Spencer Wooff and he's a heck of a human being.

But certainly it's good to see you here today at your Legislative Assembly, and good to see the Premier being afforded this chance to say thank you to someone who meant a lot to his life and his political life, and certainly someone that did a lot for this province in blazing those trails. So on behalf of the official opposition, I'd like to join with the Premier in welcoming Pat Smith to her Legislative Assembly.

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

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to introduce a special guest seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. I can hardly see her here, but I know she's there: Michelle Okere.

Mr. Speaker, Michelle is the chapter services manager for Saskatchewan for Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Mr. Speaker. And I know she works very hard for this cause, and I've had a lot of dealings with Michelle. We've spoke at many events together, Mr. Speaker, one just a week or so ago in Prince Albert, Mr. Speaker, when we were kicking off the Red Ribbon campaign in Prince Albert, Mr. Speaker.

Impaired driving is something . . . I know she's forefront in the battle against impaired driving, as I am, Mr. Speaker, and it is

always a pleasure to see her and speak with her and to join in events that are supporting Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like all members to join me in welcoming Michelle to her Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister in welcoming Michelle Okere to her Legislative Assembly and to thank her on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan, and in fact people across this country, for the work that her organization has done in, first of all, bringing the issue of drinking and driving to the fore and their consistent and thoughtful lobbying in reducing the numbers of drinking and driving.

Of course in Saskatchewan, we have one of the highest rates of drinking and driving, and we will need many voices such as theirs in order to properly address this problem. So I invite all members to join me in welcoming Michelle to her Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to join with the members opposite and the Minister Responsible for CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan] to welcome Michelle to her Legislative Assembly. Michelle is a constituent of mine, but Michelle is also a very good friend.

I'm so pleased that Michelle has taken on the role with Mothers Against Drunk Driving, and she will do an absolutely incredible job. Michelle has, in any job that she has undertaken, she has always risen to the challenge and has done a superb job to ensure that, whatever cause that she is championing, she does to the best of her ability. And we all benefit from her hard work and her commitment to our community. So thank you very much, Michelle, and welcome to your Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Rural and Remote Health.

Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce to you, in the west gallery, some representatives from Diabetes Canada seated here today. I'll introduce them specifically; I'll ask them to just give a wave as they get introduced. With us is Brie Hnetka, regional director in Saskatchewan; a good friend of mine along with her family, Melissa Johnson, north volunteer regional Chair, and Tim and the kids; Bob Lydiate, a national advocacy committee member; Don Henriksen, south volunteer delegate; and David Thieme, north volunteer delegate. Mr. Speaker, also here with this group are more than 20 volunteer advocates from across Saskatchewan.

Diabetes Canada works tirelessly to raise awareness about diabetes and improve the health of people living with this very serious condition. The Minister of Health and I met with Brie and Melissa earlier today, and we look forward to seeing them again. I look forward to seeing them again tonight at the

reception. I also took part in a diabetes risk assessment today and, Mr. Speaker, and I'm happy to report low-risk. So aside from the other challenges I have, that's pretty good.

As part of the Diabetes Awareness Month, Mr. Speaker, the campaign this year, Diabetes Canada urges Canadians to take the CANRISK test to find out their risk of type 2 diabetes. I ask all members to join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister opposite in welcoming the folks today here from Diabetes Canada, Ms. Hnetka and all the volunteer advocates who have all been touched by diabetes in one way or another and want to come here and help us as legislators understand the issues facing those living with diabetes and what we can do as legislators to better support them, Mr. Speaker.

I also had the opportunity, as a few members on this side of the House did as well, to do the risk assessment, which was very much appreciated. I'm glad to report that at this point in time my risk is low but, as it was pointed out, I should come back and do it next year as well because things are always changing in our life.

But I just want to thank those folks with Diabetes Canada for the support that you provide to those living with diabetes, the advocacy that you do, and the research. That's a big component of Diabetes Canada too, to find a cure.

So with that I'd like to ask all members to join me in welcoming these folks to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Thanks a lot, Mr. Speaker. In the west gallery you'll find a fine group of grade 12 students from F.W. Johnson Collegiate. Their teacher is Mr. Scott McKillop. He's well known around here, a frequent visitor. And he always has his students well armed with great questions for their MLA, which I look forward to after routine proceedings. So I ask all members to welcome this group of students here this afternoon.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Indian Head-Milestone.

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's a privilege to introduce two people seated in your gallery, Wes and Candace Topal who are here today. It's one of their first visits I think since they've recently retired, both of them: Candace from SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] and Wes from a business that he ran in Balcarres. They're from Fort Qu'Appelle of course in the constituency of Indian Head-Milestone.

But the Topal name may be familiar to a few members that were elected pre-2016, I guess, or '15. Their son Dylan was a Page in the legislature for a number of years, or for one year I guess, and served quite well. He liked the building so much that

now he's working in the building for the Minister of Social Services, was a ministerial assistant, and now is the comms director in that office. So I'd like all members to welcome Wes and Candace to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for The Battlefords.

Hon. Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with the member from Indian Head-Milestone in welcoming Wes and Candace to the Legislative Assembly. Wes and I go back a long ways. We worked together in the beautiful city of Swift Current for a financial institution and made some good memories back then, I think you can say Wes, probably. And dare I say it was in the early '70s. But as the member has already indicated, Wes is retired from a very successful fibreglass vault business in the province and Candace from her employ at SGI. And they're certainly enjoying their opportunity for retirement, travelling around the province and enjoying each other's company. So everyone, please welcome Wes and Candace.

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

Ms. Lambert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you I would like to acknowledge Bill Gowen sitting in the west gallery. Give us a wave, Bill. Bill was my very affable and competent campaign manager for the 2016 election and he is a very good friend. He is here today as a volunteer with Diabetes Canada, so please help me welcome him to his Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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 who signed the petition would like to bring to our attention the following: Saskatchewan has the highest rate of domestic violence amongst the provinces. 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 much more to protect survivors of interpersonal violence. 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.

Mr. Speaker, this is what we've called for in our bill, private member's Bill 605. We're very hopeful that the Minister of Justice and his entire caucus will either pass that private member's bill or steal it from us and table it as a government bill.

Those who have signed this petition today come from Regina. I do so present.

[13:45]

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the Premier has asked all of us, all elected representatives from both sides of the House, to stand up for Saskatchewan. I'd like to read the prayer as follows:

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 our province.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens of Leask, Shellbrook, Canwood, Big River, and Stump Lake. I do so present, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I stand in my place today to present a petition on behalf of the fine folks of the town of Balgonie because as we say every day, someone has to stand up for them. Mr. Speaker, the prayer reads as follows:

Take the necessary steps and actions to leave the west-in, west-out driving access for vehicles into and out of Balgonie at the intersection of Highway No. 1 and Main Street.

And they also respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan put up a locked gate on the apron between the eastbound lanes and westbound lanes of Highway No. 1 and Balgonie's Main Street intersection. This gate would allow emergency services access to the eastbound lanes of Highway No. 1 at the Main Street, Balgonie intersection, but would not allow the public access to cross the east- and westbound lanes.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as we do every day, we present petitions from all throughout the region that are concerned about Balgonie's loss of access in and access out, Mr. Speaker, and page after page, from town after town. And the people that have signed this petition, or this particular page of the petition, are from Pilot Butte and Balgonie. And I so present.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm rising today to present a very important petition regarding the community of Buffalo Narrows in the northern part of the province. The people who have signed this petition are residents of the village of Buffalo Narrows, and they are very concerned about some actions this government took earlier when they closed the Buffalo Narrows Correctional Centre.

It's had a very significant impact on their community, on the individuals who were placed in centres, left 15 people out of work. And of course that would have a huge financial impact on the families and the local businesses. It also hurt the elders within the community, Mr. Speaker, who were able to access the labour from the inmates to help them do odd jobs, and that's a really significant loss for those elders.

The closure of the centre hurt families of the inmates, while they were learning new skills while working with skilled employers to get employment upon release. And of course the families were able to visit the inmates as well, which is an important part of the reconciliation process, Mr. Speaker, and the rehabilitation process.

So I will read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan immediately reopen the Buffalo Narrows Correctional Centre to better our community for future generations to come.

I so submit.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition to get big money out of Saskatchewan politics. The undersigned residents of Saskatchewan want to bring to our attention the following: that Saskatchewan's outdated election Act allows corporations, unions, and individuals and even those outside the province to make unlimited donations to our province's political parties; and that over the past 10 years, the Saskatchewan Party has received \$12.61 million in corporate donations. Of that, \$2.87 million come from companies outside of this province.

And we know 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. And, Mr. Speaker, we know that Saskatchewan politics should belong to Saskatchewan people.

I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan call on the Saskatchewan 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.

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to stand in my place today to provide a petition for a second bridge for

Prince Albert. The individuals who signed this petition wish to bring to your attention the following: that the Diefenbaker bridge in Prince Albert is the primary link that connects the southern part of the province to the North; and that the need for a second bridge for Prince Albert has never been clearer than it is today.

Prince Albert, communities north of Prince Albert, and businesses that send people and products through Prince Albert require a solution; that municipal governments have limited resources and require a second bridge to be funded through federal and provincial governments and not a P3 [public-private partnership] model; and that the Saskatchewan Party government refuses to stand up for Prince Albert and this critical infrastructure issue.

I'll read the prayer:

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

The individuals that signed this petition, Mr. Speaker, come from the community of Prince Albert. I do so present.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition calling on the government to restore funding to post-secondary institutions. These citizens wish to bring to your attention that the Sask Party is making students and their families pay for Sask Party financial mismanagement; that Saskatchewan students already pay the second-highest tuition fees in Canada; that this budget cuts 36.8 million from post-secondary education and 6.4 million from technical institutions; that funding for the Saskatchewan Student Aid Fund and scholarships have been cut by 8.2 million; and that the Sask Party has broken a 2016 election promise by cancelling their first home plan. I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan immediately restore funding to Saskatchewan's post-secondary institutions and stop the damaging cuts to our students.

The people signing this petition are from Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Batoche.

Diabetes Awareness Month

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, November is Diabetes Awareness Month in Saskatchewan. I would like to take a moment to draw attention to this very serious disease, and the impact it has on patients and family.

Each year, over 200,000 Canadians are diagnosed with diabetes. This amounts to one in 12 Canadians living with type 1 or type 2 diabetes. Mr. Speaker, living with diabetes requires a great deal of care and attention. For many, this is made possible by the love and support of family and friends.

This year the focus on Diabetes Awareness Month is on prevention and early detection of prediabetes and type 2 diabetes. Diabetes costs individuals 5 to 15 years of life expectancy. It contributes to over 30 per cent of strokes, 40 per cent of heart attacks, and 70 per cent of all non-traumatic amputations, as well as being the leading cause of blindness. Early detection is key and education and awareness are crucial. Maintaining health and wellness is also important as it can often prevent prediabetes and type 2 diabetes, and plays a significant role in diabetes management.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Diabetes Canada for the work they do to fight diabetes and support people living with this very serious disease. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Saskatoon Advocate Recognized for Contributions to Gender Equality

Mr. Meili: — Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to recognize Betsy Bury, one of the six recipients of the 2017 Governor General's Award in Commemoration of the Persons Case, recognizing Canadians who advance gender equity.

Betsy Bury is one of those people who has dedicated her life to supporting social justice initiatives, especially those surrounding women's rights and access to health care services. It's my honour to recognize her today for her continued work to advance equality and social justice in this province.

After serving in the women's division of the Royal Canadian Air Force, Betsy was inspired by Tommy Douglas to fight for medicare. In 1962 in response to the doctors' strike against universal health care, she helped to establish the Saskatoon Community Clinic, a medical co-operative providing comprehensive prevention-focused care, and a place where I've been honoured to have had the opportunity to practise.

Betsy served as the member relations and health ombudsman for the clinic and also served on the board of the Saskatoon Family Planning Centre and helped launch Saskatchewan's first Planned Parenthood clinic, which is now the Saskatoon Sexual Health Centre.

Since her retirement in 1988, Betsy has continued to be an outspoken advocate for increasing women's involvement in politics. She's also actively involved in the Saskatoon branch of Veterans Against Nuclear Arms, and along with her late husband, John, was awarded the Joanna Miller Peace prize in 2014.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all the members to join me in congratulating Betsy Bury on her Governor General's Award and thanking her for her dedication to social justice and gender equality.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

New Computerized Tomography Scanner in Lloydminster

Ms. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise in the House today and announce that the new computed tomography scanner has been installed in the Lloydminster Hospital. The new 160-slice CT [computerized tomography] scanner is providing more detailed information for diagnostics and direction of treatment while reducing radiation exposure for patients. It is quieter and less intrusive than the previous 16-slice CT while allowing for faster and more complex scans. Even though it's only been 12 years since the previous scanner was installed, the technology has changed significantly to improve patient care.

Mr. Speaker, when using a CT scan, it can be for urgent matters or a step toward identifying the exact nature of an illness or injury. Having this new equipment will provide the best service to both patients and medical staff who are happy and excited about the new CT scanner, which is why, Mr. Speaker, this investment is so crucial.

As a government, we have contributed \$600,000 towards replacing the previous scanner with a safer, modern, and more enhanced unit. I would like to thank the Lloydminster Region Health Foundation, as they have committed to fundraise a matching contribution.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members please join me in celebrating the new CT scanner at the Lloydminster Hospital. Thank you.

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

Regina Philanthropist Invested Into the Order of Canada

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to recognize a constituent of Regina Lakeview, a passionate advocate for the arts. Ms. Jacqui Shumiatcher was recently awarded the Order of Canada. Mr. Speaker, Jacqui Shumiatcher has made a tremendous impact on the Regina arts community. Jacqui has served Regina as a business person, a philanthropist, and a patron of the arts.

Born in Vendin-le-Vieil, Pas-de-Calais, France in 1923, she emigrated to Canada in 1927. Jacqui worked as a teacher at Sacred Heart Academy along with other schools before she married Morris, a well-known Saskatchewan lawyer, while he was counsel to Tommy Douglas.

Jacqui has been commended for her legendary philanthropic work. For decades she has helped develop and financially support cultural, artistic, and social organizations. Until 2004 she did this work alongside her late husband, Morris. Jacqui has contributed time and financial support to institutions such as the MacKenzie Art Gallery, the University of Regina, and the Regina Symphony Orchestra. Beyond this, she has also donated many works of art. In 2014 she gave 1,310 pieces of art to the University of Regina, a collection valued at over \$3 million.

Mr. Speaker, the Order of Canada is one of our country's highest civilian awards. Established in 1967, it recognizes community dedication, service, and outstanding achievement. Ms. Shumiatcher had this to say when asked about receiving the award:

It's a wonderful feeling . . . I'm thrilled. And that's not going to be the end for me. I'm going to keep going, because 94 years old isn't . . . [that] old.

She is truly an inspiring woman, Mr. Speaker, and I ask all members to join me in recognizing Jacqui Shumiatcher, recipient of the 2017 Order of Canada.

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

Physician Named Cameco Chair in Indigenous Health

Ms. Lambert: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier this fall I had the pleasure of bringing greetings to the announcement ceremony of the new Cameco Chair in Indigenous Health. After nearly a decade search across the nation, Dr. Alexandra King was appointed as the Chair. Dr. King is from the Nipissing First Nation in Ontario and was educated at Simon Fraser University. As a specialist of internal medicine, she is well suited for this role. Dr. King will serve as the Chair for five years.

[14:00]

Mr. Speaker, the goal of this new position is to improve health outcomes for indigenous people in Saskatchewan. The gap in health outcomes for indigenous people persists, and it is important for the federal and provincial governments to continue to work together with First Nations and Métis communities to address it. The path forward involves making health care more culturally responsive and accessible for First Nations people, and the Cameco Chair in Indigenous Health is a step in this direction.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank Cameco for their donation of \$1.5 million to the Royal University Hospital to make this position a reality. I'd also like to thank the Royal University Hospital Foundation and the University of Saskatchewan's College of Medicine for making this recruitment possible. And finally, I'd like to ask that all members of this Assembly join me in wishing Dr. King the very best in her new role. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

North Battleford Vikings Win 3A Provincial Championship

Hon. Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier this month the North Battleford Comprehensive High School Vikings won the 3A provincial football championships on a very cold November afternoon. They defeated the Yorkton Regional High School Raiders by a score of 14-7. Running back J.T. Lamb scored both the Vikings' touchdowns, and their defence performed exceptionally well, propelling them to their first provincial championship since 1995.

Mr. Speaker, the Vikings also had the experience of winning the championship at home in front of family, friends, and alumni. Alumnus Bob Bartkewich, who had put together a tailgate party prior to the game, was credited as a factor for the fantastic turnout as the bleachers were full and fans filled both sidelines. Head coach Mike Humenny also credited the crowd with making the game so memorable. Mr. Speaker, this team has 25 grade 12 students, and Coach Humenny felt their experience played a significant role in their victory, specifically when facing the sub-zero weather that had a substantial impact on both teams' offences.

Mr. Speaker, it's incredibly rewarding to see all of these graduating students, who have put so much commitment and passion into their sport, go out on top. I'd also like to acknowledge Coach Humenny and all of the coaching staff on all of their work. This coaching staff is one of the best in the province, proving it once again with this victory. The Vikings football program has been a remarkable one for so many years, and it's due to the dedication of coaches and players like this year's team.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of everyone in this Assembly, I'd like to congratulate Coach Humenny and all members of the North Battleford Comprehensive Vikings on their impressive season. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Estevan.

Saskatchewan Highly Ranked in Investment Attractiveness Survey

Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to be able to announce that Saskatchewan has ranked second in Canada and seventh globally for the most attractive jurisdiction for oil and gas investment by Fraser Institute. Mr. Speaker, the survey notes pressure such as pipeline capacity which weighed on the rankings of Canadian jurisdictions. Those are pressures, I would note, that the federal NDP [New Democratic Party] has campaigned on making even worse. Policies matter, Mr. Speaker.

It is interesting to note that the two NDP provinces to our west now rank the least attractive in Canada. British Columbia, which just elected an NDP government, went from 39th globally to 76th, just behind Myanmar and Tanzania — but still ahead of Angola and Uganda — because policies matter, Mr. Speaker.

NDP Alberta is following in their footsteps. They now rank 33rd globally and are the second worst in Canada. That was the group the Saskatchewan NDP said they were watching and cheering every step of the way. Investment perception in that province has dropped quickly, Mr. Speaker, because policies matter.

We know members opposite aren't very comfortable with this sector of the economy. We know that some members opposite support the Leap Manifesto, which calls for the end of fossil fuels altogether. Policies matter because they bring investment and jobs to our province. A reminder to the members opposite: policies matter because people matter.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

SaskPower Project and Consultation With First Nations

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, despite the rhetoric and their talking points, the Sask Party's actions and their unscripted comments make it clear that they are walking further and further away from our province's path toward reconciliation.

Mr. Speaker, the chief of Cumberland House Cree Nation, Chief Chaboyer, is here today in the gallery. He and his council are concerned because SaskPower has combined two projects in the North and are looking to license them in perpetuity. Mr. Speaker, these licences are expiring, yes, and the First Nation is not opposed to these projects. They're asking for nothing more than their treaty rights and for the government to respect their duty to consult. But the government is sitting back and letting SaskPower ram forward with this never-ending licence without any proper consultation.

Mr. Speaker, has the government learned nothing from the past? Will the Premier step in and ensure proper consultation on this important project?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We place a high degree of importance and priority in terms of partnerships with First Nations and Aboriginal communities and individuals in the North and across the province. That would be true in respect of their dealings with a Crown corporation. It's also true in terms of the duty to consult which this government has taken very seriously and implemented to ensure that that consultation process is both respectful and meaningful, Mr. Speaker.

With respect to this particular SaskPower issue, I know the minister will have some more to add, but I just want to provide assurance to the hon. member and to members of the House that consultation is a priority. It doesn't mean that all sides get exactly what they wanted; I guess that's the very definition of consultation. But it will happen earnestly, Mr. Speaker, it should be happening earnestly. And I'll look forward to the subsequent question by the member opposite.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, if consultation is a priority of this Premier and this government, he needs to commit to meaningful consultations with this chief and his community today.

Mr. Speaker, it's unacceptable that the Sask Party refuses to acknowledge and enforce their duty to consult. These licences aren't for another 50 years or even a lifetime, Mr. Speaker. SaskPower wants it to stand in perpetuity. So I'm going to ask again. Is he going to stand by while his party turns their back on reconciliation and on treaty rights, or will he do the right thing today and agree that they will work with, instead of against, the Cumberland House Cree Nation, commit to meaningful consultation by the government, by the Premier, by the

minister, with the chief and his community?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of SaskPower.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, certainly this has been an ongoing work that SaskPower has been engaged with the First Nations on this matter. I would certainly be willing to meet with the chief and members of the council that are here today.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to note that first and foremost it was this government that brought in the framework to deal with duty to consult and to enact that policy as a part of the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. But I think it's also important to note that the duty to consult is not required when it deals with the past impacts of something like a dam, in this case. If there are future impacts, then that would be as a part of the duty to consult.

Mr. Speaker, this is something that SaskPower has met several times with all five of the First Nations that have been identified as rights holders and in fact have forwarded funds to be a part of that and to engage in that process. And so I'd be pleased to meet with the chief afterwards.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, I'm sure the chief would appreciate the meeting with the minister and maybe the Premier as well, but they need more than just another, yet another meeting. They need a commitment for meaningful consultation. Mr. Speaker, again the band is not against the projects continuing. They just don't want their rights to be flushed away in the process. They want meaningful consultation with the Crown and to work towards a constructive solution.

They don't want to be spoken down to or dictated to. Mr. Speaker, if our province is to succeed, we have to respect each other's rights and we have to build together. So will the Premier ensure that there is proper consultation before they plow forward and lock this decision in forever?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of SaskPower.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the discussions that have taken place with SaskPower and the Water Security Agency, Mr. Speaker, I would hope — and I will certainly check with officials to ensure — that nobody has been spoken down to by officials representing the Government of Saskatchewan, representing SaskPower and the Water Security Agency. There have been a number of meetings, as I've indicated before, since 2015 on this matter, Mr. Speaker.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I'll address the member from Nutana's question. The current licensing has no fixed date attached to it, unlike the previous 50-year term, but the regulations allow for periodic review of the operation. And the licence may be cancelled, amended, or suspended if it's deemed in the interest of the public or if the impact deviates significantly from the impacts predicted when the licence was first issued.

Keeping in mind, Mr. Speaker, this is a dam that has been in

operation for a number of decades in the province of Saskatchewan. We want to continue that relationship and ensure that this is an asset that we can continue to operate into the future.

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

Funding for Municipalities

Mr. Meili: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday Saskatoon residents found out they'll have to pay yet another unfair tax hike. Facing the reality of the Sask Party cuts, our city council was forced to increase taxes by nearly 5 per cent. Over half of that increase, 2.78 per cent, was directly attributed to the Sask Party's cuts to the city.

Many Saskatoon families are already struggling to make ends meet. When the Sask Party raised education taxes and the PST [provincial sales tax], they made it even harder. And now people are seeing their municipal taxes go up as well. Families are doing their best to get by, and our city councillors are doing their best to make do with the mess the Sask Party has dumped on them. So why is the Premier turning his back on them on his way out the door?

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

Hon. Mr. Doke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll just remind the member opposite that revenue sharing in this province has increased since 2007 about . . . For Saskatoon alone, 257 million last year was revenue sharing in the province, up 130 million or 103 per cent since 2007.

So, Mr. Speaker, it's up to the city of Saskatoon, or any municipality for that matter, to set their municipal rate, and we're not in charge of that.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the minister for the reminder. I'll remind the minister that families all across the province are facing higher taxes and fees. They're paying more and they're getting less. The Sask Party's cuts to our cities, towns, and villages are forcing municipalities to struggle, and to make matters worse, municipal leaders don't know what's coming next. Mayors are lobbying hard for the Sask Party to reinstate their grants-in-lieu to avoid being forced to raise taxes again. The Sask Party is refusing to tell them the status of grants-in-lieu. They say it's up to the new premier to make that decision, Mr. Speaker, but our cities and towns need to know now.

Will the minister commit today that there will be no further cuts for cities, towns, and municipalities?

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

Hon. Mr. Doke: — Mr. Speaker, 257 million in overall funding, up 103 per cent; 165.4 million to cities, up 158 per

cent; 72.8 million to RMs [rural municipalities], up 54.5 per cent. Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, municipalities are in charge of their own mill rates, and they will look after that. We'll do our share.

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

Global Transportation Hub and Details of Land Transactions

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, that minister doesn't seem to like those questions any more than several ministers liked mine yesterday. So since the minister doesn't want to come clean on the scandals or the lawsuits, I'll ask about their real estate practices in general.

[14:15]

In 2012 the Yanke Company bought land from the GTH [Global Transportation Hub] for \$1.6 million. Then in 2013, when the company was facing serious financial problems and a tax lien was even placed on the property, and then despite or for all we can tell because of the financial woes Yanke was facing, the Sask Party hired the company's vice-president, Bryan Richards, to run the GTH. But wait, Mr. Speaker, it gets worse because then in 2014 under Mr. Richards's watch, the GTH bought the land back from the desperate Yanke and, instead of making money on the deal, paid Yanke \$200,000 more for the land.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister explain why the GTH would let a failing company flip land back to them at a loss to Saskatchewan people?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of the Environment, GTH, and SaskPower.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, I think as the member, I think, knows, Mr. Speaker, this is a generational project for the people of Saskatchewan. The Global Transportation Hub is going to be able to facilitate continued trade for a province that exports more than 95 per cent of the products that we produce.

Mr. Speaker, I would caution the member who came, I think, pretty close to the line in terms of her comments on the hiring of the CEO [chief executive officer], the president and CEO, I think an individual that is well regarded in the transportation industry in this province, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, under his leadership, under the board's leadership and the staff at the Global Transportation Hub, they're working hard. Despite the smears from the members opposite, they're doing hard to ensure that this is going to be successful project, one that has already seen nearly half a billion dollars in private investment. I know that's hard for the members opposite to even get their heads around. They're used to Crown corporation investment as economic drivers. This is private sector investment of nearly half a billion dollars in just the first half-dozen years of operation.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, I thought the GTH was supposed to be making money by selling land and not losing money by buying it back. Mr. Speaker, this wasn't an isolated incident. Here's another example. In 2015 the GTH sold a parcel of land to Skyways Trucking. Good. But then they bought it back less than a year later.

Mr. Speaker, no wonder the member from Meadow Lake said they should get out of the business and fire Bill Boyd and Laurie Pushor. Now normally it's buy low and sell high. Mr. Speaker, understanding that concept should be as easy as selling country music in Saskatchewan. But can the minister set aside the arrogance, get real, and explain how this business model makes any sense at all?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of the Global Transportation Hub.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, for the member opposite to want to school the Government of Saskatchewan, school the members on this side on buying low and selling high, the members opposite may want to refresh the public's memory when it comes to things like Channel Lake. How'd that work? Guyana? NST Chicago, Persona, Retx, tappedinto.com, Clickabid.com. Yes, that was the one that was going to compete against eBay. How'd that work out for the province of Saskatchewan? Navigata Communications, SPUDCO, mega bingo, Astar Communications, Minds Eye Entertainment, and literally the list goes on and on and on, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this is a generational opportunity for the people of Saskatchewan, for a province that exports more than 95 per cent of the products that we produce. We need access to the global marketplace and that's why, in less than half a dozen years, nearly half a billion dollars in private investment in this entity.

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

Access to Reproductive Health Services and Members' Views on Abortion

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan already has some of the worst access to women's reproductive health services in the country. The services that we do have are centred in Regina and Saskatoon. And by scrapping STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company], the Sask Party made access even worse.

Mr. Speaker, as we all know, some of the members opposite who are running to lead their party and our province called a woman's right to choose into question last week. And yet in the six days that have passed, the Minister of Rural and Remote Health has stayed silent. Yesterday he even refused to answer his questions from me or the media.

I want to give him another chance today. Will the minister responsible for ensuring equitable access to health services in rural and remote areas confirm that he supports a woman's right to actually have access to these services?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, I want to share with members in the House the contents of a column by *Saskatoon StarPhoenix* columnist Murray Mandryk from January 2013, wherein he canvasses the personal opinion on abortion of the member for Saskatoon Meewasin, who is currently running to be the leader of the NDP.

Mr. Speaker, quite candidly, and I would say quite credibly, this then doctor and now current member running for the leadership of the party, says that he is pro-life, says that he is, as a Catholic . . . Well the member from Nutana just yells. What we have here is the height of hypocrisy from members opposite. The inference, Mr. Speaker, the inference is that any . . .

[Interjections]

The Speaker: — Order. Members will come to order. I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, in the column, the columnist says:

But Meili's personal [I'm quoting] opposition to abortion [his personal opposition to abortion] shouldn't be a bad thing for a party that's hoping to attract a wider swath of Saskatchewan voters.

And this is a quote now that he, the member there now running for the leadership of the NDP, provided to then reporter Joe Couture of the *StarPhoenix*: "To put it simply, I am a practising Catholic, but I'm also a practising physician and a practising New Democrat."

Well these are the words of the individual that she's supporting to be the premier of the province, who has to oversee access to the services the same way, if he became premier, the same way that a minister of the Crown would.

Mr. Speaker, the candidate for the NDP leadership goes on to say that the distinction between personal beliefs and political and legal legacy is . . . that it's something he recognizes, Mr. Speaker.

So apparently, apparently if you're running to be the premier of the province, you can have an anti-abortion stance but still want to ensure that the province is providing the service as per the law, as per the Supreme Court. You can do that if you're a New Democrat running to be the premier, but not if you live on this . . . if you sit on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker. That is the height of hypocrisy.

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

Ms. Chartier: — How can the women of Saskatchewan in rural and remote areas trust that minister to provide them the necessary care if the Premier won't let that minister even answer any questions? The Minister for Rural . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Okay. Mr. Speaker, the Minister for Rural and Remote Health is a full minister, a full minister, and as you may have guessed, he is responsible for rural and remote health.

Mr. Speaker, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is clear, the

Canada Health Act is clear, and the minister needs to be too. He's got one job. And, Mr. Speaker, the fact is that government and that minister are failing by not providing sufficient and equitable access to reproductive health services.

So again to the Minister Responsible for Rural and Remote Health, can he confirm there should be no debate? Will he respect the law of the land? And will he take women's health seriously, and will he work to ensure better access to these health services all across Saskatchewan? He is responsible for rural and remote health, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, the abortion services will be provided and care will be provided in the province, across the province in the same model as it was when members opposite were in power, in the same manner.

Now the member that sits immediately behind the member that just asked the question is running to be the leader of the New Democratic Party, and therefore running to be the premier of the province.

The member who just asked the question, her rationale is how can you serve as a minister of the Crown, have an anti-abortion stance, and still oversee a system that ensures abortion services for the province? And yet, Mr. Speaker, just behind her is a member of her party that is running to be the New Democratic leader that has said that he is opposed to abortion because he's a practising Catholic. Here's the quote again if the Leader of the Opposition wants to hear it. This is what the member for Meewasin who wants to be the premier said:

"To put it simply, I am a practising Catholic, but I'm also a practising physician and a practising New Democrat," Meili told StarPhoenix reporter Joe Couture. "That means I've probably had more practise than most actually digging into this issue [and I think he's right], and it is an issue on which I still have my own personal beliefs."

So, Mr. Speaker, the hypocrisy of that member and those members is stunning. They can infer that anybody on this side of the House that opposes abortion can't critically and objectively administer a system that provides the service; all the while they can allow someone to run to be the premier of the province and lead their party who holds those exact same views. Mr. Speaker, that's the kind of double standard that will keep those members on that side regardless of who their leader is.

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

Closure of Railway Loading Facilities

Ms. Beck: — I hope that helped the Premier feel better, Mr. Speaker, but still no answers or accountability by that minister.

Mr. Speaker, agriculture is one of the foundations, not only of our economy, but it is a big part of what defines us as a province. As an export economy, Saskatchewan producers need reliable transportation to get product to market. But CP [Canadian Pacific Railway] has announced that they will be

shutting down at least 10 producer car-loading sites in our province.

According to the agricultural groups such as APAS [Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan] and the wheat and barley commissions, and according to common sense, these closures will hurt the agriculture industry, and neither industry nor municipalities nor affected producers have been consulted. Sound familiar, Mr. Speaker? Last spring the Sask Party sold off our profitable Crown grain cars without asking the owners — all the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, in 2005 there were 79 loading sites on CP Rail [Canadian Pacific Railway] lines in Saskatchewan, and if these cuts go through, there will be no more than 26. To the minister: what has been done to ask the federal government for a moratorium on these and future site closures until a proper, full costing review is complete?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member for her question. It's a good question. I think it's a legitimate question.

The Minister of Highways and myself met with CP Rail when they announced that they were going to close these loading facilities or potential track-loading facilities, and we very strongly opposed that action. Following that, we wrote a joint letter to the Canadian minister of transportation, which was followed some time later by a response which we consider to be a non-response. And just this morning we discussed sending a second letter to the federal Minister of Transport to demand a better answer than what we got in his previous one.

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

Funding for Education

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the minister for standing up and directly answering the question. It's appreciated.

But, Mr. Speaker, on a different topic, yesterday I asked whether the Minister of Education would commit to stop cutting resources out of our kids' classrooms. She refused to answer and instead defended herself by saying the cuts were "less severe than anticipated." Less severe, Mr. Speaker. It's like the knight in Monty Python who claims it's just a flesh wound as he loses his limbs.

The question was whether she would commit to not cutting the number of teachers or the funding going to our kids' classrooms even further next year. So, Mr. Speaker, I will ask again. After everything that kids and educators have gone through in this province, how can the minister responsible for the education of the next generation even contemplate further cuts?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I've said, this year the number of in-class, full-time employees, which of

course includes teachers, has increased since '13-14 and '14-15 and is the same as '16-17, which is relatively balanced in a challenging year. And take Saskatoon Public, Mr. Speaker, the province's largest urban division: it has seen an increase of 31 per cent in school-based FTEs [full-time equivalent] including teachers since '07. Its overall operating grant has increased by 43 per cent.

Across the province the number of regular teachers has gone up by 9 per cent since 2007. The number of all school-based educators has increased by 1,000 — nine and a half per cent. The number of counsellors, psychologists, occupational therapists, medical facilitators, and speech pathologists have all gone up.

[14:30]

Divisions, Mr. Speaker, absolutely have minimized impact to the classroom. They have taken a hard look at administration costs. They have joint bused. They have agreed to joint procurement on fuel, which means more money back into the classroom, Mr. Speaker, where it belongs. But we're proud of our growth: 20,000 new students under this government. With growth comes challenges, but we will meet them, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, with answers like that it's no wonder that teachers and parents and students are worried about what this government is going to cut next in our classrooms.

The minister seems to like using examples, so let's look at a few. Regina Public was forced to eliminate preschool programs for kids living with autism, intellectual and physical disabilities. They also had to scrap preschool programs for children who are hard of hearing and kids who have experienced severe trauma and neglect. Regina Catholic had to phase out their preschool for kids with intensive needs, and families have been left scrambling as they have been left without busing. Mr. Speaker, these cuts are severe and they have significant, immediate, and long-term impacts. So again, will the minister commit to stop the cuts to education?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. By all means, let's talk about our commitment to early years programming. After all, we created the first ever early years plan, Mr. Speaker.

The overall funding to pre-K [pre-kindergarten] programs since we formed government has been significant. It went from 7.6 million in '07 to 27 million this year, and that was a challenging budget year, Mr. Speaker. 1.6 billion has been provided to school divisions for supports for learning since 2012, which helps divisions allocate special needs funding where it's needed most, Mr. Speaker: this year, 277.5 million. And then there are early childhood intervention programs and KidsFirst for home visits and family and transition supports, child and nutrition development: 18 million this budget year. This year, Mr. Speaker.

When she spoke to the media recently, the member opposite did

not seem aware of these programs which provide intensive support outside the K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] system to families for literacy, parenting, skills development. Could she acknowledge them now, Mr. Speaker?

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 112 — *The Miscellaneous Vehicle and Driving Statutes (Cannabis Legislation) Amendment Act, 2017*

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

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 112, *The Miscellaneous Vehicle and Driving Statutes (Cannabis Legislation) Amendment Act, 2017* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Crown Investments that Bill No. 112 be now introduced and read a first time. It is the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Clerk: — First reading of this bill.

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

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — Next sitting of the Assembly.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

TABLING OF REPORTS

The Speaker: — Before orders of the day, I'd like to table the *Business and Financial Plan for the Year Ended March 31st, 2019* by the Provincial Auditor.

I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Brkich: — With leave, to move a motion.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has requested leave to move a motion. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

MOTIONS

Amendments to Rule 14

Hon. Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The motion deals with the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly* of Saskatchewan to be amended by adding the following after rule 14:

14.1(1) The Board of Internal Economy (Board) may

report on any matter prescribed by statute.

14.1(2) A report from the Board shall be tabled by the Speaker at the conclusion of Routine Proceedings and before Orders of the Day.

14.1(3) When the Assembly is not sitting the rules for filing and distribution of standing committee reports shall apply.

14.1(4) When the Board report recommends that the Assembly take action on a matter the Government House Leader may move a motion without notice strictly relevant to the recommendations of the report. The motion shall be debatable except when the subject of the report is a recommendation for corrective action in accordance with the Board anti-harassment directive.

I so present.

The Speaker: — The Government House Leader has put forward a motion. We'll take the motion as read. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 110 — *The Animal Protection Act, 2017*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the end of my remarks I will move second reading of the animal protection amendment Act, 2017. Mr. Speaker, our government is moving forward with amendments to animal protection legislation in Saskatchewan. We are updating *The Animal Protection Act* as part of our government's commitment to animal welfare in our province.

The Act came into force in 1972 to provide a legislative framework for animal welfare and animal protection enforcement in Saskatchewan. The Act has been amended a number of times since 1972. Mr. Speaker, amendments to this Act are necessary from time to time to keep pace with changes in our society and our expanded knowledge with respect to animal welfare. We must be responsive to public expectations and the latest evidence supporting the need for better animal health and welfare.

In 1999 the Act was rewritten to improve animal protection enforcement in our province. By amending the Act, the

province ensured we were responding effectively to concerns and addressing them as needed. In 2010 the Act was amended to increase the maximum penalty. This change brought Saskatchewan into line with other provinces. The term of maximum allowable imprisonment increased to two years. Another amendment in 2010 was to ensure that any person could be held accountable for neglect or cruelty to an animal, not just the person responsible for the animal.

It remains critical that current legislation has sufficient authority to address animal cruelty. The Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for administering the Act and ensuring that it provides clear direction for enforcement of animal protection in the province for all animals. The ministry also approves humane societies and appoints animal protection officers to enforce the Act. Animal protection officers, APOs, must be able to respond to and address animal cruelty cases effectively.

Our government is seeking to amend the Act to ensure it is up to date, consistent with other jurisdictions, and provides clear direction for enforcement agencies. Heightened public scrutiny and increased public expectations demand accountability. Stakeholders have requested amendments to the Act to improve animal protection. We have listened to stakeholders and developed a balanced approach with these amendments.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is not the only province to amend animal protection legislation. Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and British Columbia have all recently amended their animal protection laws and regulations to ensure that they meet current animal welfare expectations.

I will outline some of the key amendments to the Act. The amendments will provide the Ministry of Agriculture with the authority to approve organizations beyond humane societies to enforce provisions of the Act. This will provide greater flexibility and will expand investigation capacity within the province.

The amendments will revise the definition of "distress" to broaden the scope of what is considered animal neglect or abuse. Animals will not be considered to be in distress when they are handled according to accepted codes of practice. Mr. Speaker, in the current animal protection regulations 2000, there is a list of codes of practice and guidelines that provides nationally recognized animal care requirements and recommended practices for various species of animals. This list will remain in the regulations under the amended animal protection Act and will continue to be updated as required.

The Act will clearly state what is required of animal owners and their duty of care for any animal they own or are responsible for. The Act will also state that animal owners will have met the duty of care required if they are following a code of practice or guideline listed in the regulations.

The amended legislation also includes a provision for mandatory veterinary reporting of animal neglect or abuse. The Saskatchewan Veterinary Medical Association requested this amendment which aligns with other provincial legislations.

Animal protection officers will be able to order corrective actions be taken by the person responsible for the animal to

relieve it of distress. If corrective actions are not taken by the person responsible, the animal protection officer will be able to take the necessary steps to relieve the animal of distress, including seizing the animal.

Amendments will define an abandoned animal. These changes will allow animal protection officers to take an abandoned animal into custody prior to it suffering from distress.

The Act will be amended to provide clearer direction to animal protection officers on when animals can be returned after they have been seized. In order to return an animal to its owner, animal protection officers will need to be satisfied the animal will not be subjected to further distress.

Inspection powers for animal protection officers will be broadened, allowing them to inspect additional sites such as transport trailers, slaughter plants, boarding kennels, and other sites where animal services are provided. Provision for humane slaughter and euthanasia will also be added to the Act.

A prohibition on transporting unfit animals will also be included. This will clarify that unfit animals may be loaded and transported to obtain veterinary care.

We are increasing fines for second offences. The fine or imprisonment time for second or subsequent offences would increase based on the numbers of days the offence continues. Courts will continue to have the ability to prohibit the guilty person from owning or having custody of an animal for a specific period of time.

We know there is public concern about animal welfare. Mr. Speaker, the agriculture industry recognizes the importance of securing and increasing public trust. One of the things we can do as government is to ensure our legislation is relevant and responsive. These changes will continue to strengthen our government's commitment to improve animal welfare and protection in Saskatchewan. For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of the animal protection amendment Act, 2017. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Agriculture has moved that Bill No. 110, the animal protection amendment Act, be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the minister for his notes that accompany this new bill, Bill No. 110, *The Animal Protection Act, 2017*.

Mr. Speaker, there's no question that as you look at some of the rankings of the province that Saskatchewan has a lot of work ahead of itself. I understand that it's rated second poorest in terms of animal protection overall. I understand that the territory of Nunavut is the only one that's lower than Saskatchewan as it pertains to the protection of animals overall, and that's something that we obviously have to address, Mr. Speaker.

As you look at the bill itself, obviously there'll be a number of organizations involved, and certainly a number of people that have a special desire to really work hard in protecting a lot of

the animal rights that we as a just society should certainly pay attention to as well.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to note that there are pieces of the old Act that are maintained and you want to obviously study what the old Act and part of the pieces that are being maintained, whether that is something that is being supported by the groups and organizations that certainly monitor provinces like Saskatchewan in terms of their rating as it pertains to the animal protection that we do as a government.

[14:45]

Mr. Speaker, what the Act does, it expands the definition for an animal in distress, including conditions that would cause the animal extreme anxiety or impair the animal's well-being over time. Those criteria or that explanation of how they would define those definitions . . . I'm sorry, they define the conditions in which the animal would be able to be assessed in terms of the anxiety or the well-being over time.

We need to know what parameters are being used and how the government arrived at those parameters. Obviously one would assume that there's a number of professional organizations like the veterinarians, Mr. Speaker, that have a lot of knowledge around animal health and so on and so forth. So I think it's important that we have to really pay attention to how the rules are set up and what criteria is being used to determine the future well-being of animals, because as some of the animals are put down, Mr. Speaker, for lack of a better phrase, there obviously has to be certain decisions made to ensure that, not only for the animals suffering, but also for our overall view of how society should be treating animals that are in danger or are in poor health. How we respond to that is also very telling as a province, so we have to make sure, Mr. Speaker, that we do this right.

It also talks about expanding animal care duties and what is expected of people who are responsible for animals. This changes the language from "humane society" to "animal protection agencies," and I'm assuming that the animal protection agencies is a wider range as opposed to being simply viewed as a humane society. There's probably a number of organizations that are involved with animal protection. We need to know what those organizations are and of course we also need to know what their participation in the design of this bill . . . And of course if they didn't participate or weren't invited to participate, then obviously their opinions matter and we would want to seek those particular organizations out.

Mr. Speaker, the bill also includes limits on transporting animals that would suffer unduly during that transportation. And we need to know, is this an ongoing problem? Is there some challenges as it pertains to the transportation of animals? Is this a continual theme in the province of Saskatchewan? I'm assuming that it probably is not, Mr. Speaker, but obviously we would need to know why this particular section of the bill would talk about transporting animals that would suffer unduly during the transportation.

Obviously a section on humane slaughter and euthanasia, Mr. Speaker. We need to determine again, as I mentioned, the criteria and the parameters that were established as it pertains to

humane slaughter and euthanasia of animals and of all animals, Mr. Speaker.

The bill also spoke very briefly about veterinarians would have a duty to report when they have reasonable grounds to believe someone isn't caring for an animal or causing these animals distress. Now obviously, Mr. Speaker, veterinarians are the front-line professionals that most of us are familiar with. There are other animal protection professions that are out there that of course would be engaged. I'm thinking of, for example, there are many pet shops that groom animals for different homeowners. Would they have a role to undertake to report that they believe that there is some abuse happening? Well obviously, Mr. Speaker, a veterinarian would have, of course, more knowledge, but more so would be exposed to potential abuse of animals, primarily because of the animal's health or certainly the animal's condition. So we need to find out. Yes, veterinarians need to be engaged, but are there other animal protection agencies that are involved, and how we would engage them and get their advice.

The bill also talks about the ways that animal protection officers can relieve an animal in distress. It talks about entering premises and vehicles, etc., as well as the rules that apply to an animal protection agency across the province. Now, Mr. Speaker, we have to be very cognizant of the fact that there are laws that prevent people access to homes and even vehicles. Now have we compared those laws as it pertains to being able to enter some of these premises or enter some private vehicles? And of course, Mr. Speaker, there's the transporting of animals in many different types of vehicles. We need to be able to determine what exactly, what laws . . . Is there an infringement on people's personal right, at the same time trying to make sure that this law can actually relieve an animal in distress or of course being threatened?

So it's important that we understand that those rules and regulations that are being identified in this section of the Act, that we certainly find out what they are, what they mean, and what potential legal problems that might occur because you're obviously entering premises.

And I'll point out again, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is the lowest ranked province for animal protection ranking, and we're behind Nunavut, of all places, Mr. Speaker. So we know that we have to strengthen our legislation. It's a step in the right direction. And, Mr. Speaker, it's important to note that many families are paying very close and special attention to this. Many communities, agricultural communities obviously paying very close and special attention to this particular bill. And I think by and large, a lot of people right across Saskatchewan would be surprised to know that we are ranking so low. So any effort to improve on this front of course would be greatly appreciated.

Now as a family man that had three daughters, and of course my wife, they were just crazy over animals and pets, Mr. Speaker. My daughter would often bring home hungry or injured dogs and cats. And I was never one to, you know, to embrace the role of caring for dogs and cats and so on and so forth, but I had no choice. My daughter, especially my youngest one, had a soft spot for animals, and she loved her cats and her dogs, and so overall we had to, as they would say, bear with it

because your daughter obviously loves animals.

But over time, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that there are many occasions where animals are distressed, they are in danger, and that we can't simply hope that there will be a Taylor out there that would pick them up and bring them home. Mr. Speaker, we've got to make sure that there are laws, there are proper processes, there are rules and regulations, there's an overseer team, if you will, of veterinarians and other animal protection groups that might be of significant help in this regard.

So it's important that we look at the overall law itself to make sure that we're doing the right thing and the proper thing. So on that note, we'll have more to discuss on this particular bill as the session goes on, and I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 110, *The Animal Protection Act, 2017*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 110, the animal protection amendment Act, 2017. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 111 — *The Municipal Tax Sharing (Potash) Amendment Act, 2017*

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

Hon. Mr. Doke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 111, *The Municipal Tax Sharing (Potash) Amendment Act*. Mr. Speaker, let me begin by giving a little background as to why this bill is being amended.

The Act was first introduced in 1968 and established a tax-sharing system for municipal taxes on potash mines. The intent was to create a system where municipalities closest to the mines, and not only the municipality where the mine is located, are able to benefit from the municipal tax collected from potash mines.

To make sure the taxes were redistributed properly among the participating municipalities, the Act also established the Municipal Potash Tax Sharing Administration Board. The board is responsible for receiving the municipal taxes collected from potash mines and redistributing the tax to the municipalities within a 20-mile radius from around the mine.

After the initial coming into force of the Act, the Act underwent a major revision in 1978. But since then it has remained relatively unchanged with the exception of some minor housekeeping that was done in 2005 due to changes to *The Municipalities Act*. So to say that the Act is overdue for an update is an understatement.

The bill before you today is designed to modernize the Act and ensure that provisions of the Act align with current potash mining practices and operations of the board into the future. To address the outdated language and requirements of the Act, the Ministry of Government Relations began an internal review of

the Act and identified potential changes. The suggestions were shared at an interim report called the review of the industry financial contributions to RMs, rural road infrastructure, and RM accountability, *The Municipal Tax Sharing (Potash) Act*, and the associated regulations. The report was distributed to both the municipal and potash sectors in late 2015.

Based on initial feedback to the report, government drafted amendments and further consulted with both potash and municipal sector stakeholders, and the result is the bill tabled here today.

Mr. Speaker, for this bill, the ministry consulted with the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association, Municipal Potash Tax Sharing Administration Board, the Saskatchewan Potash Producers Association, and individual potash producers including feedback from Mosaic, PotashCorp, Agrium, and K+S.

I would like to take a moment to thank these municipal and potash stakeholders for working with the government to develop this legislation. Contributions by these stakeholders have been of great benefit to understanding and changes to this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I will now go through the bill, or speak to the main highlights of the bill. Now many of these changes proposed are simply to bring the Act into the 21st century. The prime example of this is converting measurements from imperial to metric system. I will not go through these minor changes in the House today, but focus on the key changes.

Mr. Speaker, one of the primary reasons for amending the Act was to reduce the ambiguity of potash sharing calculation and clarify how mill rates are to be calculated by the Municipal Potash Tax Sharing Administration Board. This led to the change to the definition of the actual municipal mill rate. The definition now establishes a standard mill rate formula for all municipalities. This is being done to make potash tax sharing equitable and possible for potash mines and municipalities. Adding a standard calculation will clarify how the mill rate is to be calculated and aims to avoid confusion and improper calculation into the future.

Another key proposed change in the definition section is the addition of resort villages to the definition of urban municipalities. Historically towns and villages were the only urban municipalities receiving benefits from the municipal potash tax-sharing process. This goes back to the outdated nature of the bill. In the past, resort villages were excluded from the urban municipalities definition because resort villages were considered seasonal and not year-round residences. However, this is no longer the case and many resort villages offer year-round services to residents, the same as other urban municipalities. The request for this change came from the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association and government agrees that resort villages should no longer be excluded.

The next number of sections of the Act deal with the administration of the Municipal Potash Tax Sharing Administration Board. Currently the board consists of two

members from the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities and a provincial representative. The bill proposes that the board be expanded to allow the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association, or SUMA, a member, and the potash industry also a member. Other minor administrative matters have also been clarified to support this change, such as changing the number of quorum in meetings to three instead of two.

The main reason for this change is to increase transparency. Even though the board is an administration board where actions must follow the legislation and regulations, it will be helpful for both SUMA and the industry that pays the taxes to be able to participate and observe.

Section 3 is also broadened to properly give authority to the board to appoint a secretary-treasurer. Though this was done previously, the Act did not properly cite this authority. The bill also indicates both the board and the secretary-treasurer have to follow the rules prescribed in the Act and regulations, and more specifically points out actions related to the calculating and collecting the redistribution of municipal potash taxes.

The final administrative matter is a proposed change to the length of the board member terms. It is proposed that the board member terms be increased from one year to two years to increase administrative efficiency.

Next the draft bill clarifies several other areas, including a section to accommodate the addition of new mines. This covers how, when a new mine becomes operational, it will become part of the tax-sharing system. The Act now addresses this situation when it did not before and provides some transitional provisions respecting taxes for the RM in which the mine is located.

The bill also now has a section to account for year-to-year changes in tax assessment during a re-evaluation year. A new subsection is proposed to allow for new additions, whether it be equipment, buildings, or other taxable items, to be added to the revenue remitted to the board for redistribution to the municipalities. Previously it was unclear how these new additions were to be handled since legislation was silent on the issue. Now it is clearer what the process will be and the board can follow these rules in the future.

[15:00]

Finally there are new additions to the Act where the . . . specifically suggested by municipal and potash stakeholders to help clarify and accommodate the needs of stakeholders going forward. For instance a number of potash stakeholders indicated they wanted to see the board better communicate mill rates to the potash mines by a set date to help improve communication and information sharing between the board, municipalities, and the potash producers. This change has been included in the bill. And the bill clarifies that the board and municipalities are prohibited from using tax tools, but municipalities are allowed to continue to allow discounts in accordance with *The Municipalities Act*. This is proposed to address the concern that some municipalities may use tax tools to disproportionately advantage other properties in a municipality while raising the taxes on potash mines. It creates a more equitable playing field

and promotes more respectful relationships between the mines and surrounding municipalities.

We do not want to discontinue municipal discounts that help promote early tax payment and accordingly a competitive tax environment for potash mines in the province. Therefore municipalities can continue to apply discounts to tax on potash mine assessments.

The final issue I want to highlight is that clarity has been given as to what happens in the event an assessment appeal is made. The Act now clarifies that the assessment appeals shall follow the process outlined in *The Municipalities Act* and the board shall accommodate changes required by the decisions.

Consequential amendments will also be made to *The Municipalities Act*. This includes specifying the board will receive a copy of an appeal decision related to potash mine assessments in order to properly carry out the necessary changes.

That concludes my summary of the proposed changes to *The Municipal Tax Sharing (Potash) Act* and the consequential amendments to *The Municipalities Act*. And so, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 111, *The Municipal Tax Sharing (Potash) Amendment Act, 2017*.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Government Relations has moved second reading of Bill No. 111. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to enter into the debate on Bill No. 111, *The Municipal Tax Sharing (Potash) Act, 2017*.

No question, Mr. Speaker, that some of the changes that the minister alluded to is modernizing the Act and of course also re-engaging a number of important components of the Act. And that includes the notion around membership, and actually talking about mill rate, and of course some of the language changes to the Act itself. It's important to note that some of the portions of the Act are administrative and housekeeping in nature.

No question, Mr. Speaker, there's significant changes around this particular bill. It talks about the Municipal Potash Tax Sharing Administration Board. Now what happens, Mr. Speaker, as the minister made in his comments, that the board has been in place for quite some time and that there's going to be a different number of members on that particular board. And in fact, Mr. Speaker, the membership now moves from a three-member board to a five-member board and then two new positions. And representatives on this new board are from SUMA and of course from the potash industry.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Act also redefines the actual municipal mill rate. And you know, certainly the point that the minister made in terms of a definition that sets a standard formula to be used for all municipalities, they say that a formula was added to make clear how the mill rate is to be calculated for potash tax sharing and to avoid improper calculations in the future. And, Mr. Speaker, it's really, really important when we talk about improper calculations, what is really meant by that particular

paragraph. It's important to know there's a couple of things that come to mind, Mr. Speaker, and that we need to investigate further as a result of this particular bill.

As we look at ways and means as a province to attract investment, and potash is one of the areas that have given to the province of Saskatchewan great opportunity and great hope for many, many years, is exactly how we keep that investment in the province of Saskatchewan.

And people ought to know that the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan, many, many people misinterpret the fact that the Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan's owned by the people of Saskatchewan, when in fact, Mr. Speaker, it is largely an American-based, -owned company and something that's based out of Chicago, Mr. Speaker. But the benefits that we have as a province, of course, are on two fronts. Obviously the employment created, it's important that we continue that employment and that's something that we in the opposition certainly appreciate, the fact that the potash industry itself is robust and creating a lot of great jobs for a lot of families that need that income.

So, Mr. Speaker, the same token, as people often say, it's important that we look at the benefits with the jobs, first and foremost, but some of the royalties that we would derive from our resources. So that balance is there, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that, not only do we attract investment, but we also try and get as much as we can from industry to make sure that we're able to fund our education, fund our educational needs. And the list goes on as to what we as a province certainly need when it comes to developing our resources and benefitting from having those resource bases located here.

So on that note it's important to point out that the balance between revenue sharing for some of the communities impacted or near the potash mines in the province, and of course attracting investment, that that balance must always be carefully monitored. And it's something that we've heard time and time again. And that's why, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about adding SUMA to the board, adding the Potash Corporation to the board, and the minister using the improper calculations, note on this particular bill, we would assume that there's none of this activity occurring and that as a result of expanding the board from three to five, including the potash industry as one of the new seats on the board, that that I would certainly say is probably important to do.

There's very few minor amendments, Mr. Speaker. Changing miles to kilometres; as we all know, we use the metric system nowadays. There's also a new section that outlines a standard date to be set for when the board announces the mill rate for the year, and that they inform individual potash mines and the Potash Producers Association.

And there's also a new section that clarifies that the tax tools are prohibited but that incentives are not. Municipalities can continue to apply discounts to tax on potash mine assessments, and I'm assuming, Mr. Speaker, that some of the municipalities have been doing that for quite some time and they obviously have a relationship with the potash industry within their particular area of influence, so to speak.

So obviously it shows, Mr. Speaker, that there's been a relationship building for many, many years and obviously we want to see the continued investment by the potash sector, the continued relationship with SUMA, the continued relationship with the municipalities. And, Mr. Speaker, if you engage people to the extent that you should on some of these matters, then it's important to note that it is the right thing to do. It's important to note that if you bring the parties together and have true meaningful discussions and dialogue, then this is something that ought to certainly set a precedence.

Now I want to attach these comments, Mr. Speaker, under *The Municipal Tax Sharing (Potash) Act* to what is happening with the northern Cumberland House Cree Nation. Obviously the chief was in here today to talk about the importance of having full engagement with the Cumberland House First Nation as it pertains to a licence that SaskPower wants to have in perpetuity for operating a number of hydro dams in and around and certainly affecting the Cumberland House Cree Nation.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the principles under the Bill 111 where you have a cluster of communities benefiting from an activity in and around their community, nobody's decrying that particular process at all, Mr. Speaker. And we have seen this happen on numerous occasions where activity in a certain sector obviously benefits a certain region, Mr. Speaker. A lot of the people within that particular region will of course see some good benefits. And I think that's the point that the chief of Cumberland House Cree Nation brought forward today, saying, look, if you guys want to set up a licence for a dam for the next . . . or forever, at least have those discussions with us as to how we can formulate a partnership.

Much the same premise behind the establishment of the Municipal Potash Tax Sharing Administration Board, Mr. Speaker. It's much the same principle. Here you have SaskPower promoting a dam and keeping the dam in perpetuity for life, and there's been no consultation or discussion with the Cumberland House Cree Nation or the community or the region and for the, you know, for the whole region. And this is something that's really important to the Cumberland House Cree Nation. Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of parallels to this particular bill, the Act behind this bill, and of course what the Cumberland House Cree Nation are advocating for.

What's really important for the people of Saskatchewan to understand is that as we have developments happening on lands in and around our community . . . And on this particular bill I'm certain that the community of Esterhazy and many other communities in the Esterhazy area are probably part of the process of the potash revenue-sharing arrangement, Mr. Speaker. So as they are looking at this particular agreement and they agree to expand the boards and they have a good relationship with the potash company, and there is some benefits to having potash in the area to these individual municipal governments, Mr. Speaker, I would venture so far as to say that this is the same principle behind what the Cumberland House Cree Nation have brought forward on numerous occasions, as other bands have brought forward as well.

And the important note I'll tell the people of Saskatchewan: the principle is the same. What the Cumberland House Cree Nation

are saying to the government is, you're setting up a dam through SaskPower. This dam has been operating for a great number of years already. You're going to grant the licence in perpetuity for this particular operation to continue. Can we sit down and have a discussion on how the benefits and how this whole licensing forever is going to . . . what benefits that we could derive as a band impacted by the disruption of water flow to our traditional lands.

The principle is much the same, Mr. Speaker. And I noticed with a bit of amusement, Mr. Speaker, where we had the discussion and the wording from not only the Premier but the Minister Responsible for SaskPower in the sense of saying, well yes, we should have discussions; we should have these meetings, Mr. Speaker. And it's important to note when we talk about meaningful consultation, Mr. Speaker, it's all about the wording.

And this is the important fact that many First Nations and Métis leaders across the province are now saying, that meaningful consultation also infers that there should be some agreement of sorts, Mr. Speaker. And this is the important distinction between the language that many of the First Nations and Métis leaders bring forward under the duty to consult, the duty to accommodate.

And if we're serious, Mr. Speaker, and if we're serious about reconciliation, the simple fact that many First Nations and Aboriginal communities overall are looking for leadership from the government to deal with one fundamental point, is that is to be able to benefit from some of the resources that have been under traditional lands. And they have been shut out of those discussions for years and years and years.

So there is a significant difference between the wording used today by the Saskatchewan Party when they talked about consultation. Mr. Speaker, consultation does not mean agreement. And this is where the important distinction remains and where many of the First Nations and Métis leaders have always made the important note to the media, to the public in general.

And as defined in Bill 111, if you're allowed to have municipal revenue sharing for the potash industry in one section of the community, is it unfair for us to say no to another section of the province involving the First Nations, in this case the Cumberland House First Nation, on negotiating a deal and having an agreement in perpetuity with the province and with SaskPower to make sure that they benefit from that activity, from that particular industry in their backyard? And I would assume, Mr. Speaker, the answer from the fair perspective would be yes. Absolutely. You don't just have consultations and meetings, Mr. Speaker. They have to result in what we say. Meaningful consultation has to result in an agreement following those discussions and those meetings.

And as I noticed the minister today offering to have a meeting with the Cumberland House Cree Nation, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the meeting's important, but the minister has got to go into those meetings with the idea that he's got to hammer out an agreement with the Cumberland House Cree Nation. Because the dam affects their backyard. The water flow is interrupted, and of course, Mr. Speaker, a lot of times the land is never

returned to its normal state. And that affects the economy, the livelihood, and the future of that particular First Nation.

So there's a lot of parallels here that you can draw from Bill 111, *The Municipal Tax Sharing (Potash) Act* of 2017, Mr. Speaker, to what the Cumberland House Cree Nation was talking about today, that we have to have those discussions, but we have to have those meaningful discussions that result in some kind of agreement where each of the parties benefit, Mr. Speaker.

[15:15]

And as was pointed out today by some of my colleagues, the chief of the Cumberland House Cree Nation was in the audience today. And the important point that they wanted to raise is that they weren't against development, that they weren't trying to stop the ability of SaskPower to generate power to sell to the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. It's an important Crown.

But what they wanted to do is have discussions, meaningful discussions, and a dialogue, a respectful dialogue, to talk about how they can benefit from the activity in their backyard, and the disruption of water, and of course there's also the notion of flooding as well, where they can have the discussion of the impacts in their backyard and how they can benefit as well, and not just simply the government of Saskatchewan or certainly, Mr. Speaker, the rest of the province. In the meantime, the Cumberland House Cree Nation and the community of Cumberland House continue suffering economic and social problems that have been very apparent over the years, Mr. Speaker.

Now I'll point out . . . end on this particular note. The fact is that Cumberland House Cree Nation and the community of Cumberland House, they have very resilient leaders and very strong people. They are the oldest settlement in Western Canada. They've got a great history, Mr. Speaker. They've got great leadership, and of course they have a great vision.

Obviously being the Cree Nation and a First Nation, they obviously have their federal avenues in which they can pursue legal action against the province in the event that this issue is not resolved. I know the community of Cumberland House also want to be part of the solution, and they have their avenues available to them as well. But rest assured, I think that Cumberland House Cree Nation are going to fight back. They are going to organize. They are going to work together, and they do have some very compelling arguments.

And I would dare say that the thought behind Bill 111, when we talk about municipal potash-sharing agreements, Mr. Speaker, that have been identified throughout the bill, that the parallel that I would bring into play of course is the request by the Cumberland House Cree Nation to have, not just discussions but have an agreement following those discussions.

And if we don't address those, if we don't get those issues resolved, then, Mr. Speaker, then we go to court. And then there's a long, drawn-out, expensive process when clearly the court has compelled the Crown, in this case the province, compelled the Crown to deal with this matter. They didn't spell

out the parameters of how to deal with this matter, but they're compelling the Crown to work under duty to consult, duty to accommodate, Mr. Speaker. And yet again the current Saskatchewan Party has ignored those legal precedents, Mr. Speaker. They have not been fair to the people of, in this case, the Cumberland House Cree Nation.

And on one hand, they have a potash revenue-sharing scheme, which we don't argue with, that we think is very important that we share, in that sense, Mr. Speaker. But on the other sense, they simply do not want to deal with the Cumberland House Cree Nation on the matter of flooding of lands and interruption of water services to their traditional lands and to their people.

So I think that there is the practice. I think there is legal precedence. There's a philosophical argument. There's a benefit versus benefit for everyone, Mr. Speaker. It all makes sense to have those meaningful discussions with the Cumberland House Cree Nation. And this is the reason why I think we use this bill, saying you got precedence here with this bill, follow through with other areas and in particular to deal with the Cumberland House Cree Nation.

So I think, Mr. Speaker, this bill is really, really important to our ongoing argument under duty to consult and duty to accommodate. It goes under our ongoing argument that if there's resources in your area that, yes, while local municipalities can benefit, that clearly that this is a precedent that other sectors could easily follow. And I would dare say, Mr. Speaker, that when we talk about meaningful discussions and dialogue on this side, it also means agreement not just discussions. It means agreement.

And that is the significant wording difference that I notice that the province of Saskatchewan continually make reference to. They always mention the word discussions, Mr. Speaker. That does not mean agreement. They always talk about consultation. That does not constitute agreement. And that is the significant difference when we hear the government language.

And I think people in Saskatchewan, particularly the First Nations and Métis communities, they understand that, and they see that this government obviously is not serious about reconciliation. So they continue using language that devalues their argument as we preach about agreement and, Mr. Speaker, again reiterate the point that consultation does not constitute agreement.

So on this bill I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 111, the municipal tax sharing amendment Act, 2017.

The Speaker: — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 111. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 85

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Heppner that **Bill No. 85 — *The Reclaimed Industrial Sites Amendment Act, 2017*** be now read a second time.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to join in on Bill No. 85, *The Reclaimed Industrial Sites Amendment Act, 2017*. Looking over some of the minister's comments and where he's going, the amendments that are being proposed here and some of the comments that my colleague has made, I want to get into . . . I realize there's a process and I know it's a lengthy process that they go through to make sure that we have industrial sites that are out there for whatever reason. And I think in there they refer to a few of them and you think about oil . . . [inaudible] . . . sites that may do business in the province.

And later on, maybe there's a mine. And I think about Gunnar, you know, and I think of the Gunnar mine site. And I know that there's been quite a bit of concern and who should clean it up, whether it's federal, provincial, industry. And at the end of the day, they're doing some work on that and moving forward on those. And it's in my colleague, his riding, the Athabasca constituency. It's in his riding. And I know that there have been many people talking, partners, about how they will come together to work on cleaning up that site. And there's different things, provisions . . . And I don't know if it's 75 per cent, what percentage the federal government . . . I don't know what the involvement. I know from the province . . . And I don't know if there's any money coming in from the province. Is there money that's coming in from industry that will help clean that site up?

But I do know that many have called for that and from my understanding, and I don't have a lot of knowledge of the Gunnar. I do know that there has been stuff in the media, people talking, meetings, and different people moving forward trying to work on cleaning up that site. But having said that, that's a site that one is going on.

I think these amendments that are being proposed here gives the minister, and I think it's the institutional control program and after referring to that, they call it the ICP [institutional control program] and that's the term of it that they use, ICP. Now that process and here in some of the amendments in that, are giving the minister some powers. Should he feel . . . and these are new powers is my understanding. Should he feel that this site is in this program that's supposed to protect it, to make sure that, I guess, the due diligence on the site — from whether it was mining or some type of an industry, a business — was working on a site. And once they go through that site and they're abandoning the site and they're moving on, there is some requirements, from my understanding. And I'm no expert on this and I know we will have many questions in committee and we can ask the minister.

But having said that, you have an abandoned site and, you know, they're going to turn it over, I guess, to government or to the program where that site will go into and be, I guess, it's monitored mainly. There's some monitoring that goes on and

they monitor that. But let's just say if it qualifies — the minister says yes, it can go into this program; they meet the requirements and accepted and the site goes into the program that's going to oversee it — the minister now, with the provision, has the power to, if somebody else wants to take over, from my understanding, somebody else wants to take over that site and the site has an interest why they want to — maybe they want to do some development or do some type of a business and they require that site — there's an obligation that they have to show to the minister . . . And any time I guess you take away from legislation or you take away from the legislation and you put the power into the minister, I know some people on our side have red flags it raises in them.

And they're a little concerned sometimes how this came about. Who's asked for this, and what's the reason? And what are the concerns, and what are some of the issues? And like everything else, there's pros and cons, and I think we owe an obligation as members in this House to ask those questions. And I know in committee, but also as we go through debating it in the House on the floor as we are right now, we'll go back and forth with, you know, some comments and getting clarification. But I know this needs to be clarified.

So having said that, the minister has these new powers where he can say yes, I'm going to grant to another company that they will look after this site and they will take the responsibility. We move it out, and they will now have the responsibility. But they have to meet some obligations, financial obligations, for some, you know, I guess for unseen situation where it would arise. I guess there's different ways that could impact that site.

So if there was something that needed to be cleaned up for whatever reason — Environment, I guess, was to come out later; there's a problem with the site — that those dollars were there. And that's my understanding, that those dollars would be there to make sure that that site, you would deal with those situations should something arise. And if it doesn't, then fine. But I guess there's dollars put away.

Now that takes us to another side. They're also in here, they're talking about there is a committee. The minister can have a funded advisory committee that I guess oversees the long-term investments of the dollars that are put . . . And I don't know if it's from companies. And we'll have to work this out in committee if it's individual companies that put that or if it's the province, if it's federal dollars, provincial dollars. But there's a fund. And it's a long-term fund is what I'm getting. It's put there to make sure that should something happen, they can clean up the site.

Now that process, as we talk about it, and I know we'll have to go through that, but those individuals that are asked to sit on that and be the fund committee, advisory committee, there are some exemptions in here.

Should they make some decisions to invest and, you know, I guess due diligence is . . . They've done all of this. They've followed the rules, and they've done what they can do to protect the investment as it goes on. But I guess where, you know, some situations come up and for some reason unknown to themselves, or they've followed all the rules but now there's a problem and the fund doesn't have the . . . I guess the

investment doesn't grow the way it is or achieve what it is or . . . and I don't know if it's losing money. And we'll have to work through that. But there's no liability on them. As long as they followed the rules and the obligations that have been set out by the ministry that oversees it, there is no obligation on them. So that's one area where I noticed they're making some amendments.

But there's a few other areas that they are making some changes and proposals. And I know for ourselves, we will have an opportunity in committee, my colleagues, to ask some questions and maybe of the minister and his officials to see why, who proposed this, what's the difference, and what the changes are. So when I see that, we'll get an opportunity. And you know, I don't really have any more comments on this bill, but I know in committee my colleagues will have, as I've said, and we will ask some questions and get clarification as to what it is. So at this point I'm prepared to adjourn debate on the bill.

The Speaker: — The member from Cumberland has adjourned debate on Bill No. 85. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 86

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Merriman that **Bill No. 86 — *The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 2017*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today and enter into debate on Bill No. 86, *The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 2017*.

[15:30]

Mr. Speaker, I have a lot of interest of course, having spent 20 years as a social worker in this city working mainly with children, any time we discuss issues of child and family services, and certainly members on this side of the aisle have paid close attention to this bill. I understand, as the minister noted in second reading, that this bill is largely administrative. But it does set the groundwork for some further changes, and I'd like to focus much of my comments on that and perhaps ask some questions and maybe offer some suggestions with that regard.

As noted by the minister when the second reading occurred with this bill on November the 7th, the minister noted that:

The amendments in Bill 86 are generally administrative in nature. They set the stage for us to move forward in a more substantive change in the future that we require additional policy development, stakeholder consultation, and financial analysis prior to introduction.

So certainly, Mr. Speaker, there are a number of administrative changes in this bill and I certainly will speak to some of those, but also would like to speak to and question what some of those substantive changes with regard to *The Child and Family Services Act* are. And certainly this is an area that does require our attention. It requires thought. It requires many people coming together and being very thoughtful and circumspect as to not only how we go forward with the state of child and family services in this province, but I think it also bears a lot of attention to look at what exactly got us to this place, in this province, at this time, and certainly as a country as well, Mr. Speaker.

Just looking at some of the changes that are proposed with this bill, a number of changes to definitions for example: adding a definition for business day, dispute resolution, and peace officer, which certainly seems understandable; and it also redefines a parent to clarify that it does not include the minister or a person providing out-of-home care service on behalf of the minister. So that I think is something important, Mr. Speaker, in terms of parental rights and defining who constitutes a parent. And while a child can be taken into care and treated well, that arrangement does not constitute a parental arrangement.

There's also updates in the section referring to what is in a child's best interest. Changes made to . . . The child's physical, mental, and emotional level of development has been changed to the mental, emotional, physical, and educational needs of the child and the appropriate care or treatment — or both — to meet those needs.

One of the things I wonder if, brought this change about, certainly the advocate brought forth some very significant concerns with regard to a young man who was hearing impaired who was in care, and certainly if those who haven't read it really ought to have a look at that document and understand just some of the challenges and really unbelievable conditions, frankly, Mr. Speaker, that some children recently have experienced in the system.

And I think it is incumbent upon all of us to ensure that those type of instances do not happen again. And if we don't have a full airing of them, if we don't really seek to understand them and bring them out into the open, it's often too easy to disregard them or treat them as one-offs, Mr. Speaker. And certainly in the case of our child welfare system, this is not a one-off issue. This is not a matter of, you know, one parent not having skills. This is really a systemic issue and it goes back to really the formation of our province. And I'll get into some of that in a few minutes, Mr. Speaker.

Another . . . and this is something I'm sure that we will have a number of questions when we get into committee. I know the critic will and a number of my colleagues. This is around eliminating the family review panels and boards. These boards were brought into existence for a reason, I would suspect, Mr. Speaker. The minister noted in his comments that they were not being regularly used and had never really been enacted in a consistent way across the province. So I wonder if there was a way . . . the reasons for them coming into existence in the first place, and if there were proper resources or training involved with those panels, if it's something worth saving. Or because we didn't resource it or pay attention to those panels, that they

are being disregarded and done away with. But that was not commented on in the second reading, so I think we'll have some questions about that going into committee.

It also notes that the family service board could be established to review cases. So another thing that we would have more questions about, Mr. Speaker.

It also notes that dispute resolution is being offered in place of mediation services, so that is something interesting, Mr. Speaker. It's something that . . . The access to dispute resolution is something that I think really benefit a number of areas in our province, and sitting parties down and having trained staff and proper resources to be able to arrive at less contentious or acrimonious proceedings. So I would be more . . . I would be interested in hearing a little more about that, Mr. Speaker, as well.

It also notes that section 83 and 56 are being repealed. They were passed but never proclaimed. And these two sections refer to the First Nations authorities and the government were never able to come to an agreement on the implementation of these two sections. They relate to the transfer of guardianship, financial assistance, and transfer of custody, Mr. Speaker.

This bill was substantially changed in 1984, I think, Mr. Speaker. I would be willing to be corrected on that. There have been a number of changes since then, but we have not really addressed the substantive issues within our child welfare system, our child and family services system, and really, one of the elephants in the room is this, and that is that 15.6 per cent of the population of Saskatchewan identifies as First Nations/Métis, that 48 per cent of children in care in Canada are First Nations, Métis, or Inuit, and in this province 85 per cent of the children in care are First Nations or Métis.

And these things, as I said, are not one-off. This is systemic. It is far reaching, and to treat it as anything other than as systemic really, I think, Mr. Speaker, is missing the point. If we treat these instances as one-off cases of parents failing to meet their obligations as parents and not look at the larger societal forces that have brought us to this place, where fully 85 per cent — and I think that's a shocking number, Mr. Speaker — 85 per cent of the children in care in this province are First Nations and Métis.

That is a systemic . . . I'm going to name it. It is the most, one of the most clear manifestations of systemic racism that I can possibly conceive of, Mr. Speaker, the fact that we have 85 per cent of children in this province in care having First Nations and Métis ancestry. And it is something, as I said in my earlier comments, that reaches back to the very formation of this province. If we go back to the formation of treaties, of course, residential schools, Mr. Speaker, would . . . There were issues of course prior to that, but imagining . . . I think we all must imagine and look fully at our history in terms of residential schools, residential schools that took First Nations children away from their families with the expressed goal of "taking the Indian out of the child," Mr. Speaker, was one of the quotes that I remember. And you know, imparting a very strong sense of shame in many children about their own cultures, about their own families, their own communities, their own spiritual beliefs, even before you got to the rampant abuse, physical and

sexual abuse, within those schools.

There were experiments with starvation and near-starvation that were inflicted on children. And this is not a far-off history, Mr. Speaker. We are a relatively young country. And that type of systemic severing of family and community ties have impacts today. And lest we think that this is an issue that happened, you know, a hundred years ago, we had the last residential school in existence in this province that didn't close until 1998, Mr. Speaker. That is not even 20 years ago. And so this is relatively recent history.

And I bring this into the context of this bill because I don't think that we can look at our child and family services Act or contemplate any substantive changes without involving in a real way the voices of First Nations communities and First Nations leadership. And certainly we have every indication that those communities are wanting to be at the table in a meaningful way to come up with solutions.

And of course residential schools were not the end of it, Mr. Speaker. We have some indication that the Premier at some point — although we are running out of time, Mr. Speaker — may be interested in offering an apology for the Sixties Scoop, which was again very impactful. You had, between the 1960s and 1980s, 20,000 children that were taken from the care of their families and placed in the care of non-indigenous families, Mr. Speaker. And that again has another impact, a huge impact, and continues to have an impact today.

Certainly I knew, I think probably many, many people . . . I had friends who were involved in the Sixties Scoop and to watch them try to find their siblings, their parents, to dig into their roots, and to have a sense of self, Mr. Speaker, even in cases where their homes were loving and supportive, it has an impact. And that is one of those developmental, I think, necessities that people have — to understand where they came from, to have a sense of pride in their heritage. And that was denied generation after generation in this province, but all the way across this country.

And it has an impact. It directly impacts that 85 per cent of children in care percentage that I have spoken about, Mr. Speaker. And there are a number of voices that would like to enter in, would like to have their voices heard with regard to where we go from here with regard to child and family services. We have right now in this province, I believe it's 17 agreements with First Nations Child and Family Services, which is a step in the right direction, Mr. Speaker, but there is some concern about the level of co-operation at those tables.

And I'm just going to read a quote from Derald Dubois, who is the head of the Touchwood Child and Family Services. He noted, "We're shut out, our leadership is shut out. They have no say in policy development." Mr. Speaker, so here is an opportunity if the minister is contemplating further changes to *The Child and Family Services Act*, to sit down with not only these 17 First Nations who have child and family services agreements with the province, but larger communities throughout the province to really start to set right that which was set on such a . . . today, almost unimaginable road all those years ago in this province.

[15:45]

Quoting again from this article referencing Mr. Dubois, he says that "... agencies can only enforce the ministry's policies and that in order to see ... [substantive] change, both the community and its leaders need to be involved."

And so there is ... I noted I might have some suggestions for the minister. That would be one. And I hope that that work is ongoing, and again that consultation is not just sitting down and presenting, you know, a few alternatives, that it's really listening to those communities and understanding the wisdom and the history and the wishes of those communities. So hopefully we will see that.

Mr. Speaker, someone I'd like to reference and I think really we could learn a lot from is Ms. Cindy Blackstock. And Cindy Blackstock, for those who don't know, won a very significant battle at the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal about a year and a half ago. And that tribunal ruled that First Nations Child and Family Services are underfunded and discriminatory, and we have yet to see that set right.

And that would be a place where the minister could enter in and lend his voice to ensure that children in Saskatchewan get the services that the Human Rights Tribunal has ruled that they are deserving of, that they are in need of, and up to this point, that they have been discriminated against by not receiving that level of resourcing and funding.

And of course this also leads us to the issue of underfunding for children who attend school on-reserve. That level of funding is at about 60 per cent of what it is for children who attend provincially run schools. And that is a gap that has impacts of course for those children, but has impacts right across this province. And I would like to see a stronger voice, if we're looking at things that really will impact the welfare of children, that really will impact, you know, moving away from these really indefensible numbers with regard to the number of children in care. That would be a place to start. And certainly, you know, the government has shown that they are more than willing to go to bat with the federal government on issues that they deem important. I would suggest that this is important.

All of this ... When you have children in care, regardless of what the care looks like, this impacts their schooling. We have an education gap in this province that by some studies is costing not only those children — depriving them of the right to have the education that they deserve — but is costing our economy \$90 billion. And this has certainly gotten the attention of many people in this province.

And I wish that we would see this as an investment, see the investment in our children as something that not only is the right thing to do, but actually has economic returns for all of us, Mr. Speaker. This is something that we very clearly have to work out and that we very clearly have not ... We have not. We have failed with regard to children in care in this province. And frankly we have not invested in children the way that you would expect a civilized and forward-thinking province or country to.

But every day is a new day, and we have an opportunity to

make right. This will not be a quick solution because, as noted, the situation we find ourselves in today has its roots far back. But the first part of it is acknowledging and understanding that we do have an issue. And to suggest, as has been suggested, that we do not have a problem with racism in this province really defies belief. It is not looking; it is not listening to the facts if someone believes that this is not an issue in our province.

And again I will refer back to that number of 85 per cent. It doesn't matter what's in your heart; it doesn't matter what's in your intentions. If you as a society allow injustices such as 85 per cent of children of First Nations and Métis descent to be scooped up into foster care regardless of the reason and not look at more systemic solutions to that problem, you're frankly turning a blind eye. So I am happy to hear that there is contemplation of changes to this legislation and to the way that child and family services are undertaken in this province, and I hope that this opportunity would be seized.

Another document that I'd like to bring into the discussion here is one that has been brought up a lot — though maybe not enough — and that is the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, the calls to action. And the first section, and I don't think that this is by chance at all, are under the heading of child welfare. Mr. Speaker, this is one of the main ways that we can redress and address and start to put right all of those decades of wrongs that we have been witness to or that we have inherited in this province, Mr. Speaker.

The first call is the call upon the federal government, "... the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to commit to reducing the number of Aboriginal children in care ..." And there are a number of steps under that, Mr. Speaker, and I would suggest if ... Hopefully there'll be broad-based consultation; there will be meaningful consultation. But at least start here. At least start here and read these calls to action.

I know at one point we had a list of the calls to action that pertained to the province of Saskatchewan particularly. And unfortunately what we saw was not only were we not meeting all of those, we actually were regressing in some of the areas that we had made progress. And that is the wrong way to go, regardless. Human rights are human rights. And that doesn't matter what the, you know, frankly what the price of oil is. This is an investment in our future. This is an investment in making right which has been so wrong for many, many years. And it is an opportunity for all of us in this province.

And as has been noted, rightly, we are all treaty people. This is a project that we all need to take on in this province. This is something that we all need to look forward, look into ourselves, and come together in an honest way with honest intentions to make this right. And we can do that. Again, every day is a new day. We have an opportunity every day to start moving in that direction and I would suggest to the minister that this is a good place to start.

Some of the other notes here:

We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with the provinces and territories, to prepare and publish annual

reports on the number of Aboriginal children . . . who are in care . . .

We call upon all levels of government to fully implement Jordan's Principle.

Again sometimes the medical needs of children are a factor impacting the determination that they are in need of care. Jordan's principle, simply put, is the principle that when there is a child requiring medical services, that the child is provided those services first and we leave it to work out who to send the bill to later. Because what was happening and, unfortunately, still happens in this country is there is jurisdictional wrangling over who pays the bills. And you have children, in the case of Jordan of Jordan's principle, who end up living their whole life in a hospital because the adults can't figure out who needs to pay the bill.

It's not acceptable, Mr. Speaker. We can do better and we need to do better as a country. And we need to do better with our child and family services system in this province. We have everything that it takes in front of us. We just need the political will to do it, some time, put our minds to it in a thoughtful way, and really start putting kids first in this province.

And it's what . . . I've said this before, but it's what led me here, was the belief and my experience that we were not doing that. We were failing to invest in children in this province. We were failing to see this as a priority issue, that it's something that you might, you know, divert some funding to when times are good. But it's one of the areas that gets cut back when times are not good, Mr. Speaker.

Ironically, some of the stressors that lead to having children in care are those things: financial issues, issues outside the child welfare system, of course. You know, children in care . . . I believe, to a person, there is no one here who would like to see children suffer. I believe that fully. But we have to understand that children don't exist on their own as entities. They are born into families and to communities. And when those families and those communities are suffering and they don't have the supports that they need, then children suffer.

You know, it's one thing to, you know, feel empathy and concern for children. I think sometimes that well-meaning, misplaced desire leads us to do things that are largely harmful in the long run, like taking them out of the care of their communities and their families, putting them in residential schools, scooping them up and putting them with other families, Mr. Speaker.

So we have to understand that in order to support children, we have to support families. We have rates of domestic violence in this province that are twice the national average. That impacts the number of children in care. A child in need of protection, one of the . . . Under the Act, one of the conditions that is deemed a child in need of protection is a child who witnesses family abuse. And so until we address the domestic violence issue in the province, you'll continue to see kids going into care because of domestic violence.

Housing is another issue. Some parents are not able to provide housing, which means that they are not able to provide the

necessities of life for their children. And that is also a reason that some children are apprehended.

Other issues — addictions. We certainly have not addressed addictions issues in this province. We have new opioids and other outbreaks of addiction that have not been fully addressed that are fuelling crime. They are fuelling incidents with the police. They're fuelling a number of things. But they're also fuelling children going into care, Mr. Speaker. And we saw some decline, but we've seen that number increase over the last several years. And until we address the root causes of child neglect and child abuse, we won't address the number of children going into care.

We of course have issues with the number of foster families. That's an end solution. And I have empathy for that and certainly have respect for people who open their homes to children when that's needed, but that, you know . . . And there has been some effort put there, which is very difficult, to recruit those families. But that is an issue after the parental rights have broken down, where children go into care. And maybe if we address some of the issues that put children into care more deliberately, we would have a lessened need.

We have this crux right now where you have a declining number of foster homes and an increasing number of children in care, which has led to a number of children being placed in institutional care. What would have been a 24-hour daycare or agencies like that are now the place that children are calling home. Unfortunately also hotels at times, Mr. Speaker, we have seen. I know the critic on our side has asked a number of questions about the number of children who are being housed in hotel rooms.

And there are some lovely staff, Mr. Speaker. There are people with good intentions. But you simply, as a child, that's not a normal situation for children to spend any time growing up in 24-hour daycares or growing up in hotel rooms. And it's stressful for the staff. It's stressful for the children. And I think, while I understand and appreciate the need for emergency services and emergency care, until we start to address these more systemic issues, this is going to be an ongoing issue.

And frankly I'm afraid we're moving not only toward a solution, we're moving away. As we pull out supports, as we reduce funding, this is impacting. And I think it's reasonably foreseeable by anyone who studies these things that as rates of poverty increase, as housing, access to housing decreases, as domestic violence remains high and climbing in some cases — or it's certainly stable at twice the national rate — as we see rates of addiction increasing, as we see rates of mental health issues along with a lack of supports and early intervention with regard to those issues, we will continue to see these really unacceptable rates. And this is one of those issues where, yes it will take some investment. But the returns, both in human terms but also in economic terms, if we have the political will to invest and to hold that space, if we make this a priority, this is something that will benefit all of us long term.

[16:00]

And as I've noted, I understand that there are no simple issues or no simple solutions here. This is an issue that has been

complex to get us to this point. And it will take persistence, consistent resources, and political will. But hopefully we can decide as a province that this is not acceptable and that this is something we want to put our hearts and our minds to and be serious about coming up with a solution here. There are also, again, many more minds than mine and many more ideas for solutions here. And again, if there is no other document that is looked at, the calls to action in the truth and reconciliation.

Another section is around education for reconciliation:

We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to:

Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory educational requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that that's the direction we continue to go in, in this province.

Provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms.

Provide the necessary funding to Aboriginal schools to utilize Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods in classrooms.

Establish senior-level positions in government at the assistant deputy minister level or higher dedicated to Aboriginal content in education.

Mr. Speaker, again I speak to this because it's one of those instances where rather moving closer to fulfilling some of our, some of the recommendations of the call to action, I fear we're actually lapsing backwards, Mr. Speaker, and it's the wrong direction, and I hope that that changes again.

Every time we enter into looking at changing legislation, looking at . . . I'm going to go back to the minister's comments here: ". . . move forward in a more substantive change in the future."

When we're looking at substantive changes to legislation and to how we undertake and think about child and family services in the province, it presents an opportunity. So I hope this is an opportunity that is fully taken by the minister and sets about the consultation looking at root causes of the crisis, the situation that we find ourselves in with regard to child and family services, and really again put our hearts and minds to finding a solution. And those solutions will have to come with resources, Mr. Speaker, and they will pay dividends, both again in terms of economic cost and as well as in human cost.

And really, you know, when you look at our future, the growth of population, the fastest growing segment of population are First Nations children under five in this province. We have to do better. We have to do better for all children in this province.

And again, as has been noted by members on both sides, we do know that we are all treaty people. All people in this province, those who have been here for a long time — the first people of this province — as well as newcomers, we are all treaty people, and this is a joint task. This is something that is in front of all of us that provides a tremendous opportunity should we choose to take it, Mr. Speaker.

I'm just going to look at my notes a bit here, Mr. Speaker. Again the bill itself is largely administrative but, as the minister said, it sets up perhaps some different or more substantive changes going into the future. So I hope that that process has already started. And I know that members of the opposition will have additional questions here. I know that we'll have questions in committee about this bill, but would also be very interested in looking at the larger issue here, and that is how we provide child and family services in the province.

One thing I would be remiss if I didn't talk about was the folks who work in this area, both on the First Nations child and family services agencies that enter into agreement with the province, and also those who work within the ministry.

This is one of those ministries that seems to be the last to receive additional funding and the first to be cut when times get tough. And that impacts all who work there. You look at caseloads. You look at workloads for those who work in the system. That has to be part of this as well. In order to be able to do the very important work that they need to do, there has to be some recognition of the size of caseloads, of the ability to connect with families. And there have to be some options, other than no involvement by the ministry or putting children in care. And that is something that really has eroded over the last number of years.

If you'll indulge me a personal story, I was working as a social worker, working with children who had witnessed violence, when my last daughter was born in 2006. When I left work and then when I came back — I had an extended mat leave in about 2008 — and there was a real noticeable pullout of supports for families who were struggling, perhaps not yet in a position where they had a child in need of protection, but had indicated that they were struggling, and that they needed some additional support. And there were some, not enough, but there were some supports that families could access at that point in order to help them, you know, be it wraparound, some of the parental services that were available.

And you've seen a real hollowing-out of those services. And I hear that from people all over the province that it really has become, you know, the people go . . . either aren't entering into the system, or children are being apprehended. And there's that suite, small as it was, and inadequate as it may have been, is gone. So either there's no involvement, or children are apprehended in many cases. And that doesn't leave the opportunity for parents to, you know, stick up their hand and say, hey I'm struggling; I need some help.

And another thing, again if we're still indulging the personal here, that I've noted over 20 years of working with families that is constant, is that parents love their kids and they want to do well by their children. And some situations make that infinitely harder than others to do, and if we can offer parents a little bit

of support . . .

And the other thing is that the children tend to want to be with their families, regardless of what that looks like. So if we can provide some support at that level, and hold those families together, at least hold children in their communities and wrap them with people who care about them and understand them and, you know, remember their first steps and those things, that's better for children where we can accommodate that, and where we can find our way to ensure that that happens in as many cases — if not all cases — as possible, Mr. Speaker.

Kids are resilient, but they are impacted when they're taken away from their communities. And if there are ways that we can find our way forward to providing those supports to ensure that kids get to stay within their communities . . . This isn't about punishing parents for bad behaviour because that ultimately punishes the kids, Mr. Speaker. And you know, as well meaning as we may be, when we take children away from their families and their communities, there are impacts. And certainly that's been the history of this province that we've seen time and time again.

Again, we have an opportunity to get this right. I hope that we're on that track. I look forward to further discussion on this proposed legislation, but with that, I am going to conclude my remarks and move to adjourn.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — The member from Regina Lakeview has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 86, *The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 2017*. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — Carried.

Bill No. 87

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Morgan that **Bill No. 87** — *The Data Matching Agreements Act* be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. To join in on Bill 87, *The Data Matching Agreements Act 2017*, initially I'm going to talk about, I guess, privacy and information. Many people, whether it's opposition, I think media, there's different ways that you can request information from government ministries. But for whatever reason, whether it's journalists, people request . . . And this bill is going to . . . There's different ways that they request the information. And it's almost like some of my colleagues have said, you know: trying to get answers is almost like pulling teeth from the current government, and that we've seen how hard it is to get that information.

Sometimes, you know, people have to use the Privacy Commissioner, which he has a role to do to make sure that the information is provided, and get those supports from the Privacy Commissioner, you know, and his office to assist

different individuals whether it's companies . . . I guess it could just be for whatever reason they're trying to get information that, I think, is for the public. And the public has a right to ask for certain information. And I think the commissioner, you know, does his role, an independent officer does his role as making sure that government's held to account to provide that.

And we've seen time and time again, I think of many different ones. And I'll use that as an example before I get into, you know, the amount of actual information; sometimes it's such a large amount. But you think about, you know, the GTH and trying to get some of the information. My colleagues here have been asking questions, trying to get information. Many journalists, many people have been trying to get some information.

The government on that side of the House has an obligation and should have an obligation to the taxpayers of this province to provide information. And when they're being asked, you know, they're acting on behalf of the people. Well it's the people that should have that access, and when they're asked, should get the information. And it should be provided clearly. And I mean we've seen the kind of tactics that, you know, the government has used to not getting . . . Whether it's the price, it's just unbelievable some of the prices that some people are being asked to pay for getting information, a request.

So we see that time and time again the track record of the government is not good. When it comes to citizens or people, it doesn't matter who it is requesting information, the government sure has not done a very good job. And they said they'd be one of the most transparent, one of the upfront, one of the most . . . governments in history I believe is how that government . . .

You know, they should be ashamed of themselves for some of the stuff that they have done and the hurdles they have put in for people to request information that belongs to them. This government has, you know . . . Don't pat yourselves on the back because what you have done is an injustice to people who think it should be easy to ask your government for information that belongs to the public. Now I know there's certain information that's sensitive, and I understand that. And the Privacy Commissioner looks at things and can make a ruling on it. And that's fine. That's to protect people's individual information. And stuff that's very personal, I believe, should be protected, but there's been a lot of information that people have asked that isn't.

[16:15]

It's money that government has used, the GTH, to buy land, to do certain things that they have done, to take taxpayers' dollars, taxpayers' dollars. And they have spent those dollars and used those dollars of the . . . You know, the GTH buying land or doing whatever, their track record has not been very good.

And we're still waiting for the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police]. They've done their investigation and it's been moved, you know, for someone else to have a look, you know, a look at. And we're hoping at the end of the day, you know, it comes back and we'll hold people accountable. The government and ministers and whoever else should be held accountable will be held. And that's what the people demand, of this province

are demanding. And we hope and we'll do all we can to make sure that happens but, like I said, that just goes to show you where you're trying to get information.

But the other side of this is in this case here. And I want to get into that because I've talked, you know, about how individuals get information, but when we're dealing with this, you know, this data matching, what they're talking about is a large volume of information. So you might have — and I'll give you an example — you might have a journalist, you know, that decides they want a large piece of data that would come through. So you know, giving it the way governments would do, there was a way to process that and bring that information, you know . . . the way we have technology. Then you might have . . . Government would send that electronically, would send that information to a journalist.

Now that journalist or whoever it is requesting that information — and it's talking about a large, large volume of data that they're retrieving and getting — government will provide that to them. Now should the government provide it or should the Privacy Commissioner say the government has to provide that and says you need to do that, that large amount of data would come forward. Now there is a process, you know, and it talks about the tracking. And it's a program, from my understanding, that they would use, and it's software. It would track it. It would actually, you know, analyze it and give them some numbers, I guess, what they're looking for. So there's a provision in there to do that.

But having said that, there's also a provision in here, with the amendments that are being proposed in this agreement, that there's holding that organization or it's a journalist or whatever, it's giving them the responsibility. The onus is on them to protect that information, to make sure that that information and data is protected. And if it's not protected, there's a provision in here that this individual, should they breach that agreement that's in there, they might have and go up to a \$50,000 fine. They could be held accountable, and the fine is 50,000, should a fine be . . . [inaudible] . . . it could be. So when you're seeing that . . .

But it also talks about having somebody almost like a coordinator of the access of information, that they have to provide information to whoever should that individual be working for. And I don't know if it's going to belong to a ministry or if this is just someone within a Crown would do this. So they would be able to, you know, they would be able to take that information and provide that.

But what's interesting is after they get the data and they have the data, after two years — two years, Mr. Deputy Speaker — they have to I guess it's delete or make sure to whoever is coordinating that, or they have to answer to I guess the ministry or the minister, saying how — from my understanding — they have dealt with that data and how they got rid of it. And they have to get rid of, from my understanding — and we're going to ask some questions — they have to make sure that they get rid of the data and it's done, and the information they have, that it's protected. There's a way to do it so they're going to have to make sure they comply to the rules and regulations to make sure they have . . . When they agree to taking that data, they for two years have to agree how are they going to dispose of that data

and the information.

Now I don't know. They just can't take that information, from my understanding, and I know we have to ask these questions. They can't just take that information and I think share it with anybody. I'm not sure how that process is going to work. And I know we're going to have more questions, and there must be a reason why this is coming forward at this time. Maybe it's because of the government's terrible track record when it comes to providing information when the public asks or, you know, this side, the official opposition asks or reporters ask for information. And there might be a reason why, and they're doing this.

But I don't know at this point because I haven't talked to the minister. And I know my colleagues and the critics, they will get an opportunity and they will ask, you know, some of those questions in committee, and we'll go through this to find out exactly. Point by point we'll consult with people, and we'll do our due diligence on this side. Government needs to do their due diligence.

So really at this point, you know, just talking about overall, there isn't a lot. I know we'll have more questions in committee, but I don't have a lot more on this bill right now, 87, *The Data Matching Agreements Act*. So I'm prepared to adjourn debate, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — The member from Cumberland has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 87, *The Data Matching Agreements Act, 2017*. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — Carried.

Bill No. 88

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hargrave that **Bill No. 88** — *The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2017* be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Sproule: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And it's always nice to be able to rise in the House and enter into the debates on these bills as they come forward — 88, that's how many keys are on a piano. I just wanted to share that with the House. I don't know if that's auspicious or not. But this is a fairly uneventful bill I guess in some ways. It will have impacts on drivers in different situations, so I'll just kind of charge in here and get right to the meat of it.

The minister in his second reading speech indicated that there's a few changes that are coming forward because this Act is the one that deals with considerations with respect to people injured in vehicle collisions as part of the Act. It's a large Act, *The Automobile Accident Insurance Act*.

And I guess, just as a commentary, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we know that when people are injured, innocent people are injured

in automobile accidents, we do our best to make sure that they're looked after. And that's what some of these changes are doing, for example ensuring families get counselling or have access to counselling, different things like that.

And I think one of the saddest things that I have ever encountered since I became an MLA and even when I was nominated as a candidate before 2011, the election in 2011, I met a family in Saskatoon who are also victims. But if they had been hit by a drunk driver in a car, they would have been covered far greater than they are because the young man in question was assaulted and brain injured as an innocent victim. It was actually a house party in Saskatoon which was stormed and he had just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. He spent a considerable amount in the hospital in a coma. He was 17 at the time, but his brain injuries are quite severe, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And he's talked to various ministers through his mother who is one of the best advocates I've ever come across. Her name is Sharlene Lange and his name is Kutler Lange. And also Sharlene's family, her sisters, have been strong advocates for Kutler, but he still was only able to access the victims of crime funding. Even the judges at the time when the court . . . The fellow who assaulted him was found guilty. He spent time. He was charged and found guilty. And then he got out of jail and he since has been able to take over his father's business and has a family and children. He is a successful businessman in Saskatoon. Kutler's not so lucky, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And his mother Sharlene, along with the sociologist that I met, pointed out how as a society we are more inclined to support victims of automobile accidents — and he had sociological studies that proved that — than young men who are harmed as a victim of a crime of assault. And I know there's another gentleman in Saskatoon as well who's in the same situation. Because he's brain injured, he will never be fully employed. He will likely . . . He has all sorts of subsequent health issues and will have difficulty having what we would call a normal life, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But he will never get the support that someone who is injured in a car accident would get.

Now it used to be if victims of crime, catastrophic victims of crime, or I forget where the catastrophic fit in, but it was in those situations where someone was so injured that the \$25,000 that is provided to victims of crime basically got used up in physiotherapy, Mr. Speaker, for the first few years.

So I always want to comment on Kutler's situation when we talk about victims of automobile accidents because this is a gap. And prior to the no-fault legislation that came in in the early '90s, this bill actually was there for people who had catastrophic results from — as a victim, an innocent victim — from various other crimes. And sadly that bill was repealed and now there's no coverage for someone like Kutler. So I just wanted to make sure, Mr. Speaker, that I spoke to that as we talk about victims of automobile accidents.

What happens in the changes here is we see once again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the moving of definitions. And some of the clarity we find in the Act is being moved to the regulatory authority. And for people . . . I worry because one of the goals of this bill as introduced by the minister was to provide more

clarity around the appeal period, for example, when some sort of conviction results in a change in your driver rating.

And I have to confess, Mr. Speaker, I have been below zero on my driver rating from time to time, and I know how grumpy I get when I get that extra cost, when I have to pay more money to get my driver's licence or my registration. So it is expensive and those of us who choose to perhaps go a little faster than we should and are charged for that, we know that those are going to be extra expenses. But how do you find out the rules for complaints if you want to complain about the rating that you've been given for whatever reason?

Sadly more of that, more and more of that is now being moved over to the regulatory side of things. And I feel that it's difficult enough for people to find laws on the Internet and understand where the clauses are that affect them. But when you move it further off into the regulatory sphere, it becomes more and more difficult for members of the public to understand what their actual rights are.

So I'm worried that there may be actually a contrary result to what the minister is hoping for when it comes to things like they're moving the timing of the appeal to 90 days instead of 30 days. Well you can't even find that in the Act anymore, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So I think it's going to be difficult unless hopefully the website will have some very clear directions and will have, you know, hyperlinks or whatever is needed to direct people to the right place so they know how long the appeal period is. I know the minister said that it used to be 30 days but in practice people were allowed 90 days, so they're just reflecting the practice.

And also instead of the board contacting the driver to schedule a hearing, the practice is the driver contacts the board, so they're reflecting that as well. But I think it's being moved over to the regulations which will make it more difficult for drivers to figure out the ins and outs of the appeal process.

They're changing . . . "Chargeable incident" in section 6 of the existing Act is a fairly lengthy definition. It has some implications for drivers. And there's some, apparently in the Criminal Code, some changes that the government made in 2017 to the rules, needed legislative change as the minister indicated. And again, you know, I find that I'm often speaking to bills that are correcting oversights, and again this is another bill where there was an oversight in January. There were some amendments made in January. And I know we weren't sitting in January, but there were two additional offences apparently added to the list that triggered payment of pain and suffering bereavement damages.

So they didn't do their homework and didn't realize that this also needed a correction in the bill. So "chargeable incident" is now being defined in the regulations which means it will be harder to find, but hopefully that they won't need legislative changes. And I think that's always the saw-off. Once you want more flexibility in changing the rules, you don't want to have to come to this House and have it debated on the floor. I always worry about the impact on democracy and on the transparency and accountability of a government if changes are being moved into the regulatory sphere, that only the Lieutenant Governor in Council, and that is the cabinet, will have the final say.

And we don't hear about those changes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, until we get the copy of the regulations as amended. So there's no debates. There's no ability to debate, and I think that's something that is a loss for democracy ultimately. I understand the administrative expediency of those types of legislative changes, but I think overall there has to be a balancing, and I fear that we're losing some of that balance with all of these moves to the regulations.

[16:30]

A couple of other things that the Act is doing. So as I mentioned earlier, they're changing the "chargeable incident" definition, moving it to the regs. We are also changing the appeal process and who is to contact who, and those amendments are going to reflect that. The changes to offences that are added . . . You know, there were offences added to the list so we need a statutory change to reflect that. And basically it's how you can recover insurance money for pain and suffering or bereavement damages from a third-party liability insurance. I'm not sure how that works in Saskatchewan when I would think a large number of drivers are covered under SGI and I don't know what the percentage of that is, so I'm not sure what kind of numbers this will impact, and perhaps it's something we'll ask about in committee.

Also because of the changes in funding for people that are good drivers and people that are bad drivers, a lot of . . . I think the reward for being a "good driver" has been increased, but then the negative impact is, if you choose to not be a good driver and for whatever reason choose not to follow the law, you're double penalized even further now with some changes. As a result of that, some people simply cannot make the payments they need to make to SGI to continue driving. So I guess the government is being somewhat lenient here because they're now allowing people with these charges to make a payback schedule rather than having to pay the amount in full because riskier drivers have now had their penalties doubled. It can be very challenging.

So I don't know if that's a good thing or not. I guess it lessens the pain for people who are penalized by choosing to be a risky driver. I'm not sure if that changes behaviour or not, and if that's a motivator. I mean nobody likes to go below zero on their rating. We all know that, but sometimes you do, and so if the penalties are greater . . . I'm not sure why we don't just fine people greater amounts and do it all up front, but somehow through the back door SGI is doing this, as I would call it, a secondary fine, but it's meant to be behaviour changing and I would like to know whether that is in fact working.

So the final change that the minister talked about was counselling costs for family members of someone injured in a collision and again, what's happening there? Guess what, Mr. Deputy Speaker? They're moving it to the regulations. So if you look at . . . There's been a number of changes to section 81, which is the regulatory section. It's a very long section already, but we're adding at least 10, maybe 11 new changes to the regulations in terms of what can be done and what rules can be established under the regulations.

I hope that when people look at these things and they see the word "prescribe," the common interpretation of the word

"prescribe" would be get a prescription from a pharmacist. That's what we think of as prescribing. But it actually means, when you prescribe in an Act, it means it goes into the regulations. So as long as people understand what the word "prescribing" means in this context, they will know that they have to look further past the Act into the regulations.

So I guess those are basically the changes that are happening and at this point I know we'll have some questions about whether the efficacy of these changes, how SGI is considering them, and how they'll make a difference.

And so I'm going to . . . I know that others will want to weigh in on this as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So at this point I will move that we adjourn the debate on Bill No. 88, *An Act to amend The Automobile Accident Insurance Act*.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — The member from Saskatoon Nutana has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 88, *The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2017*. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy Chair of Committees: — Carried.

Bill No. 89

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Eyre that **Bill No. 89** — *The School Choice Protection Act/Loi sur la protection du choix d'école* be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to stand today and add my remarks with regards to the debate for Bill No. 89, *The School Choice Protection Act*.

Mr. Speaker, all of the bills are very important and have a lot of relevance but I would have to say that this is a really contentious bill that has been in a lot of discussion with many groups of people. And I know for myself, I've been talking to some of the stakeholders and individuals who will be impacted with regards to this bill. And I know a lot of the members on both sides of this House probably have been as well because people have been very vocal about how they feel about the issues with regards to this bill.

And I'll start off by saying, Mr. Speaker, that I truly believe that this is just a political move by the Saskatchewan Party because they know that they don't have a lot of good things happening for them lately and haven't been making some decisions that are really unpopular with the people in Saskatchewan, and so they're trying to earn some points here. And I believe that the stakeholders are really identifying how much this is a political move. And I don't think we should be making decisions just to gain some support. We should be making the right decisions, and I'll get into more of that later.

I want to talk a little bit about the context of this bill first, Mr. Speaker. Bill No. 89 proposes several amendments to *The*

Education Act of 1995. And it is a response from the April 2017 decision of the Court of Queen's Bench on the legal challenge brought forward by the Good Spirit School Division, also known as the Theodore court case. And, Mr. Speaker, I encourage every member of this House to look through this court decision, to read through the findings. This was put forward by Justice Donald Layh, and it was a 242-page decision, so it's a really length decision. He goes into a lot of detail.

And I encourage every member of this House to really look into that. And I know all the people in education — teachers and administrators and school board members — have also, when they've contacted me, they have also encouraged me to do that. And I have had an opportunity to review that. So I think until you have all the information, you can't make a decision, and so I'm glad I did look into that.

So with regards to this court case, Mr. Speaker, they found that the funding of non-Catholics who attend Catholic separate schools to be unconstitutional. And my understanding is, too, it applies to other faith-based schools with people who are attending that don't belong to that faith. And so this is a really important decision that was made and would have a serious impact on both school divisions. So the court found that the government funding for non-Catholics attending Catholic separate schools "... violates sections 2(a) and 15 of the Charter, which violates the state's duty of religious neutrality."

So that's what the minister said with regards to her remarks. And so if this decision comes into effect, this will potentially have a significant effect on attendance in the Catholic separate school divisions as well as funding because, as we know, there's a lot of people who attend the Catholic schools that are not of the Catholic religion and they've chosen to go to those schools for whatever reasons that they have.

And I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, that when this came forward and the decision was made and the information was brought forward, both me and my partner read this decision because, as I've said before, my partner's involved in education. He's a principal of a school, and so decisions with regards to education have always been something that we talk about within our home, and we're of Catholic religion, both me and my partner. But I've chosen to send my children to a public school, and he chose to send his children to a Catholic school. And so we understand the importance of being able to choose the education for your children and the importance of that.

And so I think with the Government of Saskatchewan and . . . My understanding is the Government of Saskatchewan, along with Christ the Teacher Roman Catholic Separate School Division, both have filed appeals on this ruling. And so, Mr. Speaker, I think that's definitely the direction to go — go to an appeal, follow the judicial system, and ensure that the proper due course is being laid out. And I've had opportunity to talk to the school board, the Catholic school board in Prince Albert anyway, and I know they indicated that they felt comfortable with that, going in the appeal process and then after the appeal process, making a decision.

This just being a decision that was made and, again in my opinion, as a political front. So it looks like once again the Sask

Party is playing politics with our kids' classrooms, and I don't agree with that, Mr. Speaker.

Also Bill 89 allows the Saskatchewan government to invoke section 33 of the Charter, commonly known as the notwithstanding clause, and to allow *The Education Act* to operate notwithstanding sections 2(a) and 15 of the Charter. But also section 44 of the Human Rights Code will be declared to operate notwithstanding sections 4, 12, and 13 of the Human Rights Code. So these are really serious legislation that we have here, Mr. Speaker. And the notwithstanding clause is a really important tool for government to use in really serious, dire situations that they have no other options. But in this situation, Mr. Speaker, we do have other options. And the government has already followed through with those other options, which is filing the appeal and going through the process, the judicial process that we should go through.

And, Mr. Speaker, the Premier himself even said and admitted that this is not really necessary, and so why the Sask Party wants to put politics ahead of our kids' classrooms makes no sense to me. I think this is one way that they could avoid having to talk about all the deep cuts that they've made into education and not feeling that they need to answer to that and the tough decisions that they've had to put school boards in. I feel for every school board in this province that has had to try to manage a budget that is unmanageable.

Someone was telling me, it wasn't perfect under an NDP government but at least we had money to fund education and to do what was necessary to provide a good quality education for our kids. And you know, Mr. Speaker, that's the main thing is ensuring that we have enough funding so that we can provide the services that we need to for our kids in the classroom. And the school boards have had to really make these tough decisions and put themselves in really tough circumstances where parents aren't happy. But what it really comes down to is it's because of the decisions of the members across here, the government, and their decision to underfund education that has put us in this position.

So again I want to stress the importance that we completely support publicly funded education in Saskatchewan, and that includes both the Public and the Catholic school systems, and that is something that is a core belief for us. But like we said before, we feel that you should go through the judicial system, the proper way.

And there's no question that, unchallenged, that this ruling would make fundamental changes to education and classrooms, not only in Saskatchewan but the entire country, Mr. Speaker, because whatever decision and whatever ends up happening here with regards to education, I am pretty sure that's going to affect other provinces of how they're managing education as well. And so this will have a long effect, but we know that in order to move forward we need both time and clarity, and I believe that the appeal provides both of that, provides the time and clarity that we need. But again the Sask Party's just grandstanding and providing none of this, and they're just using this as a political tool.

[16:45]

And we need to realize that this notwithstanding clause should not be something that's played around with. It's a really important tool. The people need to understand that we can't just use this whenever we feel that our government's losing ground. We need to only put that in when it's the last option, and in this case it's not the last option, Mr. Speaker. So for the Sask Party to throw it around before the appeal has been decided, I feel that's completely irresponsible.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I know the critic that's involved here. She's already done a lot of work with regards to this profile and she has been and will continue to meet with the stakeholders and have that dialogue. And I know she'll have a lot of questions to add to the discussion when she's approaching the minister. And I know my other colleagues also have a lot of information that they would like to add to this debate, and so at this point I will move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 89, *The School Choice Protection Act*.

The Speaker: — The member from Prince Albert Northcote has adjourned 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 Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Makowsky that **Bill No. 90 — *The Heritage Property 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 today to enter into a very important bill, Bill No. 90, *An Act to amend The Heritage Property Act*. And it's one I know that we'll have a lot of discussion about, and we have a lot of concerns about what this really means. If on one hand it's as what the minister says, to streamline and make the processes more efficient and effective, then how can anybody be against that? But I think there's some unintended consequences and some history here that we think we need to be well, well, well aware of before we go too far down the road of expressing support for this.

And of course as the minister has noted, and of course as we all noted, we are so fortunate to be working in a heritage property ourselves, the Legislative Building, of which we went through a major renovation just a few short years ago — one or two — where we had spent . . . I think the actual bill was something like \$21 million that we saw.

But of course we are very fortunate, and of course in a province like ours that since the recent settlement of Europeans we've seen an increase of heritage properties. But this is not only speaking to that type of heritage. It does talk about archaeological properties of which I and we have talked about. In fact this House has passed a motion to the effect, supporting in Saskatoon, Wanuskewin and their goal of being nominated

for the first UNESCO [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization] site here in Saskatchewan because of the cultural significance of Wanuskewin. And we are certainly hoping that that actually happens. The processes are in place and we know that in Ottawa the people there are, within the various departments, I think there's two or three that are preparing that case.

In Saskatchewan we are supportive and I do want to recognize that, I think it was last year that we had an all-party resolution in support of that. And that is actually something that they use as part of their information package, that there's wholehearted support in Saskatchewan for Wanuskewin.

So it is of the whole gamut, it runs the whole gamut of what speaks to our heritage as a people in our various cultures here in Saskatchewan. So we have some interesting pieces and I think this one that we need, that we to take some time. But we have had a couple of letters. And I know that every, I believe, every member here has received a letter from the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation, and I'll take a minute to review that.

But there was also a letter that was just published just November 1st of 2017 by Dr. Merle Massie, a former SHF [Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation] director from Biggar, that was published in the *Regina Leader-Post* that talks about what the province needs to prove that heritage matters. And I certainly agree. I certainly agree with that. But I'll review that and I know that we may not have enough time this afternoon, but I do want to speak some points on this because I think it's very, very important.

I want to reflect on the letter that I received, and I do believe many others have. It's so interesting because so many of us in our own ridings have heritage properties. And I think this was the intent of what heritage means in our own constituencies. The writer here — and the writer is the executive director or the Chair of the boards, Neil Russell — sent one to all of us, but it was also copied to the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport. So we're all well aware of the significance of heritage in our constituencies, and he writes that he wants to share with us the investment has been made in preserving and conserving Saskatchewan heritage in our constituencies.

And he writes, and I quote:

By way of background, the SHF is a Crown agency with a legislative mandate through *The Heritage Property Act* and related regulations to invest in conservation of Saskatchewan's unique history. The foundation's strategic direction is entrusted to a Lieutenant Governor in Council appointed board of directors.

It goes on to say that "The SHF is the only remaining heritage conservation and preservation program and thus has a significant responsibility in the conservation and preservation of Saskatchewan's historic resources and assets."

It talks about the provincial impact. The SHF has provided grants and programs that support conservation since 1991, invested more than \$9 million in 1,200 conservation projects across Saskatchewan, and celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2015-16, and in that year gave out over \$400,000.

And it talks about how when you have heritage projects, the ability to leverage private sector investment is as much as 12 to 1, and that's very significant. And so it goes on but talks about the challenging budget that we had in the previous year where we saw the impact of the provincial budget where their budget was slashed from \$504,000 to a mere \$289,000, but in fact still gave out significant amounts of money.

Now in my own riding, Mr. Speaker — and you would be aware of these buildings downtown — 2006, the Fairbanks-Morse warehouse restoration conversion. The award that year was \$13,000 that was able to be given to that project, and that was so huge. One was the Doors Open, the city of Saskatoon got a \$2,000 grant. The two churches — or it's actually one church that I know has been lobbying very, very hard for conservation funding — received three grants: over 2011 they got \$49,000; 2012, the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist got 30,000; and then in 2013 again St. John's Cathedral got another 30,000. So they were able to receive \$109,000 over those three years. But meeting with them regularly and their very effective lobbying, they were actually asking for over \$200,000, in fact it was almost 300,000. It's not quite . . . While it sounds great they got \$109,000, they were asking actually for more.

And actually what's interesting, Mr. Speaker, I was looking through this list and checked with the Regina folk. We were married in St. Matthew's Church on Winnipeg Street, and it's also a heritage building and got a grant of 25,000. So I don't know what it is about me and heritage, but seems to be following me around. So very important. I think about these things.

But I do think it's critical that we do fund these cultural landmarks in our communities, and whether they're archaeological digs, archaeological sites such as Wanuskewin. And I also think about in my hometown, the Mortlach site, which I wonder if it is actually a heritage site. It should be. It was the first professionally dug archaeological site in Saskatchewan and done in 1955. And I'm just reading about that now and thinking that should be protected in some way.

So there's a lot of work here. And so the two changes that this government really is looking for, to do . . . And there'll be much more to talk about because we have some letters that raise some concerns. The one is, changes the duty of the review board to ensure operational separation from the rest of the foundation. And there's three people who are appointed solely to carry out the review board duties.

Now I understand that there has to be some arm's-length distance both from the government and from the foundation, but I hope that these people are people who have the technical expertise, when they're making the decisions on the appeals around the designation or changes they would like to see to heritage properties that they do have some expertise that they bring to the table. This is critical. This is critical because when you are working with heritage property, it is very important that we have the long view in mind. And sometimes we often get distracted by short things that are happening right in front of us and that we would like to expedite decisions that might have a huge impact.

And so this is really important. And I know that this is a bit of a concern, particularly as the province is growing quickly, that sometimes we don't see the value in older buildings. We see challenges where we really, frankly, should see opportunities, opportunities because we all know how we love to go to, when we're out travelling around . . . And I was just talking to folks about the fact that we were down to Charlottetown and the fact that we saw . . . And many of us, the folks who were there, had supper at the Government House, the house where Canada was actually founded. And this is the argument Prince Edward Island has. They say that it was the birthplace of Confederation, but they didn't actually join. But in Ottawa, it talks about it being, you know, the home of our country.

But these are important things. Charlottetown or Regina or Wanuskewin or Mortlach or some of the other places that were mentioned, like the town of Hague, the water tower there — all of these are critically, critically important that we get this right.

And so I hope that next time when I'm able to speak to this, I can talk a little about the letter that Dr. Merle Massie wrote because while he talks about the good things that have happened, for example the refurbishment of the dome here, that in fact that we are putting a lot of our heritage property at risk because we are not investing, we are not investing the dollars that should be.

Now the government on the other side says, well, you know, we always want to spend, spend, spend. This is something that you're looking at the long-term investments, long-term investments. And we saw a budget that was slashed from about 600,000 to about 200,000 or 300,000, and it is a dangerous thing.

So, Mr. Speaker, there will be lots that need to be said about this particular bill. It is one that we cannot just go quietly. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would move that we adjourn Bill No. 90, *An Act to amend The Heritage Property Act*.

The Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Centre has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 90. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. Brkich: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So the committee may sit this evening, I move that this House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — It being near 5 o'clock, it has been moved this Assembly do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:59.]

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President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

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Minister of the Economy
Minister Responsible for Tourism Saskatchewan
Minister Responsible for Innovation
Minister Responsible for Trade

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Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan
Water Corporation
Minister Responsible for Saskatchewan Water
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