



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

of the

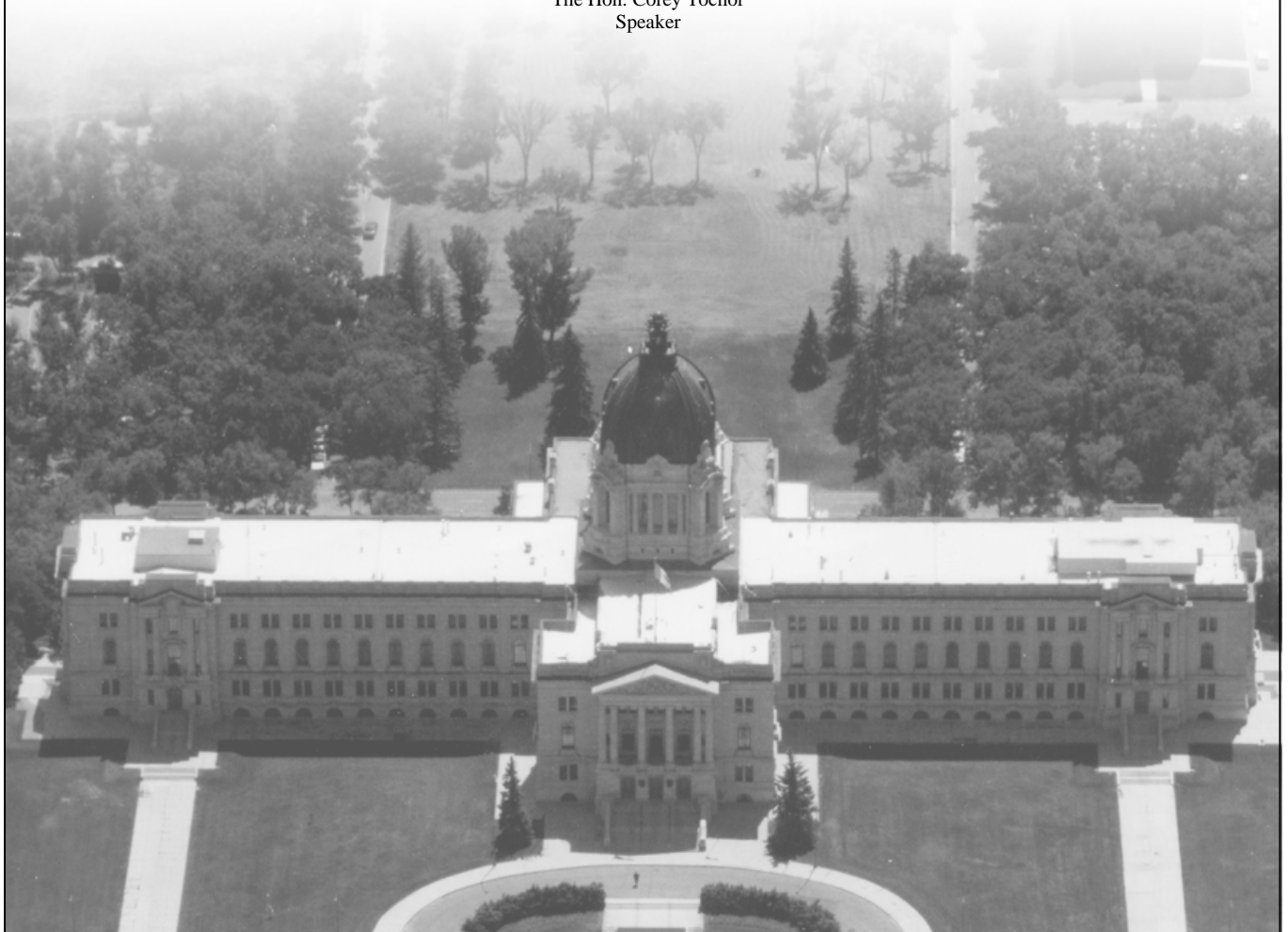
**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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(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

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

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**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 member from Weyburn-Big Muddy.

**Hon. Mr. Duncan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in your gallery today, and I introduce to you and through you to all members, seated in your gallery Ms. Gayleen Creelman. Gayleen is the program director for the Electronic Products Recycling Association of Saskatchewan, or EPRA. EPRA's helped support the province's goal of keeping electronic devices from our landfills, ensuring the devices are responsibly recycled, and returning the valuable resources such as plastics, metals, and glass to the manufacturing supply chain to be made into new products.

Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 10th year that EPRA has operated the electronic recycling program in this province. We look forward to continuing to work with EPRA as we introduce regulations to expand the electronic product recycling program. And I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming Ms. Creelman to her Legislative Assembly and congratulate EPRA on 10 years of operation in Saskatchewan.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On behalf of the official opposition, I would like to rise and join the minister in welcoming Gayleen to her Legislative Assembly. And again congratulations to EPRA for the fantastic work over the last 10 years. We know this is a growing industry, Mr. Speaker, and there's a growing need to divert from our landfills, so this is important work for the people of Saskatchewan. And on behalf of the official opposition, I would like to ask all members to welcome Gayleen to her Legislative Assembly.

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

**Hon. Ms. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Assembly, I would like to introduce Doug Page and BJ Arnold. They're way up at the top of the west gallery. They are from TransCanada, and I would like to thank them for their dedication and hard work trying to get pipelines built. I know that there is ongoing opposition to that cause, but as all members in this House will know, on this side of the House we are incredibly supportive of pipelines to help get our oil and gas to market, Mr. Speaker. So I'd ask all of my colleagues on both sides of the House to welcome them here. Thank you.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join

with the minister opposite to welcome these gentlemen with as much enthusiasm for the work that you do . . . [inaudible] . . . how important pipelines are for getting our products to tidewater. And so on behalf of the official opposition, we're very happy to join with the government in welcoming these two gentlemen to our Legislative Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of the Economy.

**Hon. Mr. Bonk:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Seated in your gallery today, I'd like to introduce Dauren Matakabayev. He's the CEO [chief executive officer] of the Kazakhstan Hereford Association, and I'd like to thank him for bringing a delegation of Kazakh farmers to Agribition to see some of the top world-class genetics that we have here.

I've known Dauren for quite a few years. We worked together in Kazakhstan exporting Saskatchewan cattle to that country. I would like to say Dobro Pozhalavat and welcome to Saskatchewan, and I'd like to have all members join me in helping to welcome him to Saskatchewan.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave for an extended introduction.

**The Speaker:** — Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member.

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister in welcoming Mr. Matakabayev to our Legislative Assembly here, on behalf of the official opposition. My Kazakh is not quite as good as the minister's, but I do wish to extend a hearty welcome to him. And I wish that his time at Agribition, I hope that it was a valuable experience for him and for his delegation.

So on behalf of the opposition, I would like to invite this important guest and the CEO of the Hereford Association to our Legislative Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, Ralph Katzman who's sitting at the rear on this side. Mr. Katzman was the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for Rosthern between 1982 and 1986.

The current member for Rosthern came up to me and said, I hope you don't draw any comparisons. I am working to try and get re-elected. So to both of them, I wish them well.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Katzman is very active in Saskatoon: a member of the Jewish community, and does a great deal of volunteer work for cemeteries, been a volunteer for the Blades. And not wanting to compare ages or anything else, he was a

friend of my father's who passed away some years ago.

He is in Regina today for the Saskatchewan Order of Merit proceedings this evening where his sister will be recognized, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the second half of my introduction, I'd like to welcome a number of guests seated in your gallery. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, some guests who I will be referencing later in a member's statement, but I wanted to take the opportunity to welcome each of them individually. In the gallery today with us, we have Bill and Bev O'Shea. They are the driving force behind North Central Kids Music, an after-school program for children, an opportunity to engage with music and to share their gifts. And thank you for sharing your gifts with so many children.

Also seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, is Mr. Errol Kinistino. Some of you may recognize him from roles on television, a celebrated actor and singer, instructor, and volunteer in our community. And I want to welcome him and thank him for his work.

And finally, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Gary Robins, someone who is well known in the Cathedral area, a photographer, instructor, and one of the driving forces behind Playing for Change. And I invite all members today to welcome these important guests to your gallery.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the current member from Rosthern-Shellbrook.

**Mr. Moe:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I want to join the Attorney General in welcoming Mr. Ralph Katzman to his Legislative Assembly. We were just chatting here, Mr. Speaker, with respect to what we agree on being the very best constituency in Saskatchewan, being that of Rosthern and now Rosthern-Shellbrook. And I think the late father of the current member of Martensville may agree with Ralph and I.

And we were chatting about, Mr. Speaker, we didn't think that it had ever been represented, that community had ever been represented by a New Democrat. But we think through redistribution, possibly at one time for a short period of time there was a New Democrat representing the community, but the members there quickly changed that when they had the opportunity to go to the polls, Mr. Speaker. So I would like to join with the Attorney General in welcoming Mr. Katzman to his Legislative Assembly and ask all members to do so.

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

**Mr. Kaeding:** — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you and all members of the Assembly, I would like to welcome 34 very bright and enthusiastic grade 10 students from Melville Comprehensive. They are accompanied today by their teacher, Andy Rondeau, who was here two weeks ago as a member of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Institute. He's also a Melville city councillor.

And accompanying him today is the intern, Ms. Jordyn Leib, who is from Balcarres, the member from Touchwood Last Mountain's constituency. And I would encourage all members to welcome Melville Comp and Andy Rondeau and Jordyn Leib to their Legislative Assembly.

## PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to present a petition to end the unfair tax hike, the Sask Party tax hikes for Saskatchewan families and businesses.

Mr. Speaker, the petitioners point out that the Sask Party has hiked taxes on Saskatchewan families and businesses to the tune of a billion dollars a year, Mr. Speaker. They point out that the Sask Party increased PST [provincial sales tax] to 6 per cent and applied it everything from groceries and children's clothes to a case of beer and even insurance premiums. The insurance premiums, I've heard loud and clear in my office actually, as the Health critic. I've had many people, particularly seniors, come into my office and talk about the concerns they have with paying the 6 per cent on health insurance, Mr. Speaker, to try to ensure that they have coverage for ambulance or prescriptions or needed services like physiotherapy, Mr. Speaker.

This PST hike has real . . . not just the hike, but adding it to insurance premiums has real costs for families, Mr. Speaker. We've become the only province — because of this Sask Party — in the country where people are charged PST on life and health insurance premiums.

The petitioners also point out that many small and medium-sized businesses, including those in the restaurant, tourism, and construction industries, have been hit hard by the Sask Party tax hikes, and these businesses will be forced to pass these rising costs on to their customers. I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Sask Party to immediately stop their unfair tax hikes on Saskatchewan families and businesses.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens of Pilot Butte. I so submit.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Pasqua.

**Mr. Fiaz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to present a petition from citizens who are opposed to the federal government's decision to impose a carbon tax on the province of Saskatchewan. I do like to read the prayer:

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens of Osage. Thank you. I do so present.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to stand in my place to present a petition to ask the question of who is in charge of our provincial highways. And, Mr. Speaker, this petition is on the permanent closure of Main Street access to Highway No. 1 in the town of Balgonie. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

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

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 obviously would allow emergency services access to the eastbound lanes of Highway No. 1 at the Main Street, Balgonie intersection, but would not allow public access to cross east- and westbound lanes, [Mr. Speaker].

And the people that have signed this petition as we stand day after day presenting page after page after page of petition, and not just from Balgonie, Mr. Speaker, but from all throughout the area, and the people that have signed this particular petition are from Pilot Butte; they're from Regina; of course they're from Balgonie; they're from Craven. And I so present.

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

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for critical supports for survivors of domestic violence. Those individuals who signed this petition today wish to bring to our attention Saskatchewan has the highest rate of domestic violence amongst 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 domestic 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.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is what we've called for in our private member's bill, Bill No. 605. We're hopeful that the Minister of Justice and his entire caucus will take on that bill and pass it into law or table a similar government bill. We don't care how it gets passed into law as long as it gets passed into law, Mr. Speaker, and preferably within the next few days here as we only have a few number of sitting days left before the new year.

Mr. Speaker, the individuals who signed this petition today come from Regina. I do so present.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, I'm rising today to present a petition to the Minister of the Environment and the Minister Responsible for the Water Security Agency of Saskatchewan. The people who have signed this petition would like to bring to our attention the following: to reduce inflows in the Quill lakes, the Quill lakes water association is proposing the phrase 1 Common Ground Drainage Diversion Project that would drain saline water from Kutawagan and Pel Lakes into Last Mountain Lake and thereby the rest of the Qu'Appelle Valley river chain of lakes.

The Water Security Agency, despite their commitment to do so, has yet to close a single illegal drain flowing into the Quill lakes watershed as promised. The Minister of the Environment has reviewed the documents put forth by the proponent and determined that the project is not a "development" under *The Environmental Assessment Act*. There is, however, widespread public concern regarding this drainage diversion because the potential environmental changes then have an effect on unique, rare, and endangered feature of the environment.

[13:45]

So I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Minister of Environment and the Minister Responsible for the Water Security Agency of Saskatchewan publicly release all documents used to make the determination under *The Environmental Assessment Act*; deem the Common Ground Drainage Diversion Project a development and therefore initiate a full environmental assessment of the project, including public and First Nations consultations; and refuse to issue any permits or licences nor fund any activities under the Common Ground Drainage Diversion Project proposal until a comprehensive, impartial environmental impact assessment and public and indigenous consultations are completed.

Mr. Speaker, the individuals who have signed this particular petition are from the city of Regina. 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 calling on the government to stop the cuts to our kids' classrooms. And we know that the Sask Party has cut at least \$674 in government funding for every student across Saskatchewan. And as well, the Sask Party has hiked education taxes by \$67 million, but cut government funding for education by \$121 million; and even though the Sask Party is making us all pay more, our kids are actually getting far less.

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

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

I do so present. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**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 present a petition for a second bridge for Prince Albert. The individuals that 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 local 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.

Mr. Speaker, 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 begin immediately to plan and then quickly commence the construction of a second bridge for Prince Albert using federal and provincial dollars.

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

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition calling for the reopening of the Buffalo Narrows Correctional Centre.

In the prayer that reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

The petitioners respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan immediately reopen the Buffalo Narrows Correctional Centre to better our community for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, this particular petition is signed by citizens from the good community of Buffalo Narrows. I so present.

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Regina Group Raises Funds for Music Education

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This past September, Saskatchewan musicians, dancers, and music lovers joined together for the sixth straight year in Regina to make a difference in the lives of young people in Saskatchewan and around the world.

I want to acknowledge the commitment of the Regina non-profit Blue Sky Cultural Connections which partners with the international Playing for Change Foundation to raise funds for music education for youth across Saskatchewan and around the globe. Blue Sky Cultural Connections is a remarkable partnership that brings together dozens and dozens of local performers, artists, businesses, and other organizations. In addition to the annual 10-hour concert on Playing for Change Day, the group has recently joined with the Regina Public Library on the annual film festival and showcased local performers in the big tent at the Cathedral Village Arts Festival.

Over the past six years, Blue Sky has distributed over \$26,000 for music education projects — half to Saskatchewan organizations, and half to support Playing for Change's 15 music schools in Asia, Africa, South America, and Mexico.

In Saskatchewan we pride ourselves on our sense of community and community building, and on our willingness to engage culturally with people around the world. Music education plays an integral role in the social-intellectual development of young people, enhancing teamwork, collaboration, self-confidence, and the joy of creativity.

Playing for Change Saskatchewan, as part of a unique grassroots cultural organization, is proud to facilitate the links and partnerships that showcase the power of music on both a regional and international level. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to recognize the positive cultural role that Playing for Change and Blue Sky Cultural Connections brings to our province and to our communities, and thank our special guests for joining us today.

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

#### Recycling Association Celebrates 10th Anniversary in Saskatchewan

**Mr. Bradshaw:** — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. 2017 marks the 10th anniversary of operations for Electronic Products Recycling Association in Saskatchewan. As a recognized industry-led, not-for-profit organization, Electronic Products Recycling Association Saskatchewan provides environmental compliance programs for manufacturers, distributors, and retailers of electronics.

Last year, more than 2500 tonnes of electronics and approximately 38,000 devices were diverted from Saskatchewan's landfill through the program. The program manages the collection by way of 88 drop-off locations throughout the province.

Saskatchewan has played a key role in electronics recycling. In fact, we started North America's first industry-led extended

producer responsibility program for recycling electronic devices in 2007.

We are pleased to celebrate the 10th year of the program in 2017, with more than 27 000 metric tonnes of electronic devices diverted from our landfills during that time. Today we are announcing the expanded list of electronic products that will be accepted for recycling in our province, starting in May of 2018. Thanks to consultations with stakeholders across the province and to the commitment and support from Electronic Products Recycling Association, our government amended regulations to offer more recycling options to the people of Saskatchewan, who are already among the most dedicated recyclers in Canada, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to thank the Electronic Products Recycling Association and retailers and all recyclers for their support. Congratulations to EPRA on 10 years of operations in our province. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

#### Code of Silence Award

**Mr. Belanger:** — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to say I'm very proud to rise in the House today to recognize an award given this week to the Government of Saskatchewan. No drum roll? However, this might be an award that the Saskatchewan Party government probably won't want to be patting themselves on the back for. And I'm afraid that the wine and cheese reception may have to wait.

The Canadian Association of Journalists have chosen the Saskatchewan Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure as their 2017 recipient of the Code of Silence Award for outstanding achievement in government secrecy in the category of provincial government ministries. In their rationale for presenting Saskatchewan Highways and Infrastructure with this prestigious award, CAJ [Canadian Association of Journalists] cited repeated attempts by the CBC [Canadian Broadcast Corporation] in Saskatchewan to shed light on the Sask Party's GTH [Global Transportation Hub] scandal.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we know that the scandal is bad enough on its own, but the Sask Party used every means possible to prevent the information from emerging, blocking frequent attempts to access for information. And, Mr. Speaker, if the Sask Party does want to celebrate this honour, then I might suggest a reception at the Balgonie Diner so long as they don't get stuck in the roundabout on their way there.

In the end, perhaps the Saskatchewan Information and Privacy Commissioner said it best: "I have no choice but to conclude that Highways is not able to manage its freedom of information process properly."

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all members and concerned citizens and journalists across this country, I'd like to congratulate the Sask Party for this award, and sincerely hope that they can take steps to never . . .

**The Speaker:** — Next statement. I recognize the member from Regina Northeast.

#### Partnerships Support Housing Initiatives

**Mr. Doherty:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and inform members of this House that as of November 27th, 10 more Habitat for Humanity partner families can call Haultain Crossing in Regina their home.

Since 2009 our government has invested \$9.85 million with Habitat for Humanity to develop 172 units in 14 communities across Saskatchewan. In Regina alone, Mr. Speaker, our investment with Habitat for Humanity is \$4.04 million to develop more than 67 homes. Province-wide, our government has invested over \$770 million to develop 11,641 homeowner and rental units and repair 4,330 units across the province.

Mr. Speaker, through this funding, we are enabling Saskatchewan families to focus on their future. I am proud that our government, together with our federal partner, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, contributed \$550,000 to help complete this portion of Haultain Crossing.

I want to thank the federal government for supporting housing initiatives throughout the province, and the city of Regina for their contribution in making these homes a reality. I'd also like to acknowledge, Mr. Speaker, the support of Mountie House, Farm Credit Canada, CJME, Doors, Habitat ReStore, Women's Build, Men's Build, the Square Foot campaign, and the Trades and Skills Construction Apprenticeship.

Mr. Speaker, these partnerships are vital to these projects, and we appreciate all those who help us continue to work towards improving the lives of our fellow citizens. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Saskatchewan Roughriders and Football Saskatchewan Honour Principal

**Mr. Kaeding:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, earlier this fall the Saskatchewan Roughriders football club and Football Saskatchewan recognized the contributions made to amateur football by individuals in their communities.

This year they honoured three individuals who have contributed many years of service to amateur football in Saskatchewan. One of these individuals is a constituent of mine, Reg Leidl from Esterhazy. Mr. Leidl is the principal and physical education teacher at Macdonald School in Stockholm. Mr. Leidl has taught for over 36 years and has served as principal for 25 years, mainly in Esterhazy and now in Stockholm.

During this time Mr. Leidl was also the head coach of the football team at Esterhazy High School from 2000 to 2016. For three years, my son Matthew was part of his senior football program and claims that he was made a better person for it. In this role, he was able to create a successful football program for all interested in football throughout the Esterhazy area. He had many players coming from communities around Churchbridge, Langenburg, Saltcoats, Wapella, and Whitewood, as well as Esterhazy. Mr. Speaker, Reg's motto was that no kid would be left behind. Mr. Speaker, he also founded the junior football

program in Esterhazy, giving an opportunity for younger players to develop their skills. He has created a football legacy that has now been carried on by many of his football alumni.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of everyone in this Assembly, I would like to congratulate Mr. Leidl on being celebrated by the Saskatchewan Roughriders and Football Saskatchewan, and for all his contributions to football in rural Saskatchewan.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Pasqua.

### Opening of Housing Units for Families With Complex Needs

**Mr. Fiaz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On November 17th I had the great opportunity to celebrate the opening of Silver Sage Holdings Ltd. opening of 14 units for families. Mr. Speaker, these units will improve the quality of life for those living in them. I would like to thank Foxvalley Counselling and Silver Sage Holdings for their vision and commitment to these units. Creating homes that work for families with complex needs with access to support will assist these families to a bright future in a safe environment.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation, along with their federal housing partners, contributed \$1.3 million to help fund this project. I would like to thank the city of Regina for being a key partner.

Mr. Speaker, this government believes that housing is fundamental to keep Saskatchewan strong, and housing projects such as this will help achieve that goal, leading families along the path to success. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is the province for all, and I am encouraged to see so many people come together along with our government to help make a difference.

Mr. Speaker, I now ask all members to join me in celebrating the opening of 14 units for families with complex needs. Thank you very much.

[14:00]

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

### New Elementary Schools Open in Warman

**Hon. Ms. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise yet again to talk about even more schools that are new in my constituency. Two new elementary schools are now open in Warman. Traditions Elementary School and Holy Trinity Catholic School are well into their new school year and a part of this government's joint-use school projects. I'd like to congratulate the school divisions for coming together to make these schools a reality. The P3 model, which continues to be criticized by the members opposite, has in fact saved millions of dollars and saw these schools being built on time and on budget.

I want to thank parents and community members for coming together to establish Catholic education in both Warman and Martensville. Having diverse education options will benefit these communities, and I'm sure students are excited to have

these new learning spaces in their neighbourhoods. Between the two schools, there are 28 classrooms; three gymnasiums, including a large shared gym and stage; two band rooms; libraries; a community resource space; and, Mr. Speaker, a 90-space childcare centre.

Our track record speaks for itself. Since 2007 this government has worked tirelessly to open more doors in education, committing \$1.5 billion towards 67 major capital projects, as well as various smaller projects.

Mr. Speaker, I now ask all members to please join me in thanking the builders, educators, and communities that came together to get these schools built. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### QUESTION PERIOD

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

### Access to Reproductive Health Services and Members' Views on Abortion

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Mr. Speaker, before we get into the issues of the day, there is some clarity that the people of Saskatchewan need because the Minister Responsible for Rural and Remote Health has refused to answer direct questions from us or the media.

That is a minister who, this year, attended an anti-choice rally and encouraged those in attendance to keep protesting his own government's position. He said that the protestors were "changing hearts and minds."

Mr. Speaker, we understand and respect that members hold personal views on this and many issues. That is not what this is about. As elected representatives, we are called upon to put those personal feelings aside and do what is best for the province, and at a minimum, what is required by the Supreme Court. That is all we are asking of the minister.

So again, can the Minister of Rural and Remote Health assure all Saskatchewan people that he is committed to working to improve equitable access to health care throughout Saskatchewan, including women's reproductive health services across the province?

**The Speaker:** — I'd like to thank the members for respectfully listening to the question. Now let's be respectful and listen to the answer. I recognize the Minister of Rural and Remote Health.

**Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Mr. Speaker, I absolutely went out and talked to members at that rally back in May because we represent all people, Mr. Speaker. We're here to represent all. Probably half or more of my constituency is pro-life, and probably half or around that number is not pro-life. I represent everybody equally, Mr. Speaker. As a pro-life member, as a pro-life person, I have my own views. But as an MLA and a minister, I'm here to represent the government. I'm here to represent the laws of the land. I totally recognize the 1988 Supreme Court decision. I totally recognize the *Canada Health Act*. We're here to uphold that, and I feel I can do that, Mr. Speaker.



And you know, just by the nature of the questions that I've been getting across the floor . . . I'm happy to answer these questions. I'm happy to talk about these issues anytime. But by the insinuations of the members opposite, by their insinuations against me, by their own questions, they would think that their own leadership candidate, as a doctor, wouldn't be qualified to be the premier, would-be premier, or maybe not even their own Health minister, Mr. Speaker.

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

### State of Provincial Finances

**Ms. Sarauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for finally getting on his feet and answering that question.

I will move on to the province's finances now. The Sask Party are busy trying to put some lipstick on this pig of a budget and they're saying they're on track, but let me remind you that means \$650 million in the hole. And, Mr. Speaker, the contingency fund is all gone. But the Minister of Finance doesn't seem to care that they're adding even more debt to future generations. She said, and I quote, "Keeping the finances more stable is a discussion for another day."

Mr. Speaker, does the Premier agree with the Finance minister's comments, or would he agree with me and us that managing our finances responsibly should be the focus of every single day and should not hang in the balance based on the Sask Party's own leadership race?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Wall:** — Mr. Speaker, I think anybody following politics in the last couple of years would be shocked at the thought that the NDP's [New Democratic Party] approach to budgeting is anything but reasonable and responsible. Because every single day in this session, they'll get up and ask for more money to be spent or ask for some tax adjustment to be changed, Mr. Speaker.

I'm happy, Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to report to the House, to confirm the report that our three-year plan to balance is on track, that the deficit target for this year is on track, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to report that the economic forecast for the province of Saskatchewan is strong for next year.

It's true we've taken a different approach than their cousins in Alberta, Mr. Speaker. Interesting that she would ask this question on this day when the Dominion Bond Rating agency has weighed in on the NDP's approach to a similar problem in the province next door. Mr. Speaker, DBRS [Dominion Bond Rating Service Ltd.] has maintained the negative trend. In fact their headline of the press release was called, for Alberta's NDP, "All trends negative." They say that they "maintained the negative trend because the province has yet [the Alberta NDP has yet] to demonstrate any real willingness to address the weakest budget outlook among all the provinces . . ." Mr. Speaker, they point out that there is not a plan next door because they're following . . . By the way, the NDP in Alberta are following the same approach as these folks over here. There's no plan to get to balance, Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding

resource revenue changes.

We've taken a different approach. We have a AAA credit rating in the province of Saskatchewan and our plan's on track.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, I get a kick hearing from the Premier here, the Premier that couldn't balance the budget during the best days, making noise about next door. And of course the Premier, you know, he spins well but, you know, that doesn't take away anything from his reckless and damaging record as Premier when it comes to the finances or what his Finance minister said today. She said that she'll worry about stable finances another day, another day, Mr. Speaker. Well it's been the story of this Premier, year after year after year. Mr. Speaker, while they hide the financial mess that they've created, they're making things worse.

Despite the Sask Party constantly putting their future into question and holding secret meetings to sell them off, our Crowns are making hundreds of millions of dollars this year, millions more than budgeted by the Sask Party. So will the Premier finally be true to his word and protect our Crowns? Will he scrap Bill 82 and take SaskEnergy off the auction block? And will he scrap all of Bill 40 to protect SaskTel and all of our other Crowns?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I find it interesting that they're going to take one part of a sentence in an answer to obviously a reporter's question. They're going to use it to their advantage. And it probably had to do with a question that will be, you know, looked at into next year's budget, Mr. Speaker.

So it's very typical of the NDP to torque their questions by using a few, a clip of words, inappropriately. That's quite what we can expect from the NDP. The other thing that we can expect from the NDP is not to recognize when a budget's on track. Another thing that we can expect from the NDP is not to understand when there is a plan. Why? Because they don't have one now. They didn't have one when they were in government. Their plan was to close schools. It was to close health care facilities, Mr. Speaker. Their plan was not to worry about finances, quite frankly, and right now their plan is just to continue to spend.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Mr. Speaker, either they don't get it or they don't care. And I think if you ask the folks, who are hard-working folks, at our Crown corporations and the public sector, they'll give you an answer to that. They're pretty clear which one it is.

Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party tried to cut \$250 million out of the hard-earned pay of Saskatchewan workers. They finally accepted that they can't get away with this. The Premier says there's no mandate, that it's just a goal. This is no way to run a

province. It's no way to treat the hard-working people of this province.

To the Premier: will he finally scrap his attack on the hard-working people who run this province?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, the resource revenues within our province, as that member well knows, is down \$1.2 billion. This has been a trend that's now in its third year, Mr. Speaker. The previous Finance minister has spoken to this and said that we're going to have to do things differently within this province, that we have to be less reliant on resource revenue, Mr. Speaker, unlike the NDP Alberta who are still hanging their hat on resource revenues.

And it's not faring well for them, Mr. Speaker. Over 7 billion of our budget is on compensation for our workers. They're very valuable workers, Mr. Speaker. We want to work with them, and there'll be collective bargaining that will take place at the table. But we have to look at, you know, savings within every part of our budget, Mr. Speaker, because we are going to balance within three years.

We have a plan. That's why we have the second-highest rating within our country and that's why we have the second-lowest debt-to-GDP [gross domestic product] ratio.

**The Speaker:** — Now I'll recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

**Ms. Sproule:** — Apologies to my colleague for standing up early, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this is the problem with that government. It's their own mismanagement, scandal, and waste that put our whole province in this massive deficit. And it's the Sask Party, not our natural resources, not the Saskatchewan people, who are doubling our entire debt in just five years. And yet they think it's the rest of us who should be paying the price.

Mr. Speaker, there was \$300 million in the contingency fund. It's only November, and they're finally admitting it's already gone. This is the government that blew through record resource revenues. They blew through the rainy day fund, and they blew through the surpluses that were left for them. Now they've blown through their own contingency fund.

The Finance minister has said, "Keeping the finances more sustainable is a discussion for another day." Mr. Speaker, my question for her is: when will that day come for this government?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Mr. Speaker, again they're using something totally out of context. Some of the questions had to do with the future budget in a press conference that was on the second quarter of this budget. So yes, there are discussions that's going to go into the next budget. There should be, quite frankly.

We have a three-year plan. It doesn't end at this budget. And the interesting thing is, we have a three-year plan that has given

this province a very good credit rating, Mr. Speaker. That fares well when we have to borrow money, Mr. Speaker. It fares well when there is industry and corporations looking for where to invest, Mr. Speaker. That fares well, Mr. Speaker, when people are moving to this province instead of leaving the province as they did in the past. Mr. Speaker, the member opposite should take a look at the three-year plan and then talk to her cousins next door and see what their plan looks like.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, governing was easy when the money was flowing in. But now that times are tough, they're digging the hole deeper. The former Finance minister delivered the government's budget, but that whole caucus is responsible for it. They spoke in favour of it and they all voted for it.

So, Mr. Speaker, before his colleagues threw him under the bus and started undoing what he dutifully presented, the former Finance minister was asked to justify some of his generous tax giveaways. And he said that he knew that some of his "caucus colleagues would benefit." Last night I asked the current Finance minister which experts they had consulted and she said, and I quote, ". . . well I guess my answer would be people."

Mr. Speaker, how can the Finance minister still stand by a budget that hurt so many across the province when their justification for it is that they said they'd consulted with caucus colleagues and people?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Wow. Mr. Speaker, that's awesome. She just asked a question, she was asking questions to do with a bill concerning small business, change to the small-business threshold, and then is suggesting that that was a conversation about the second quarter. Mr. Speaker, that is how they distort their questions, the comments that are made. It is ridiculous. It's irresponsible on their part to distort things in such a manner.

However, I don't apologize for consulting with people, Mr. Speaker. I don't think anyone in our caucus is going to apologize because we consult with people and talk to our constituents. She needs to read it all into the record, Mr. Speaker. How we talk to businesses, how we talk to the chamber, how we talk to the Federation of Independent Business, Mr. Speaker, how we talk to the businesses within our constituencies and our constituents.

Mr. Speaker, I was speaking specifically to the decrease to the personal income tax.

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

#### **Land Acquisitions for Regina Bypass Project and Global Transportation Hub**

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, the wealthiest in our province are still getting an income tax cut. And their new tax giveaway for not-so-small businesses is not going to help the thousands of small businesses struggling to stay afloat. Mr. Speaker, the

former minister of Finance said that members of that caucus run businesses that will get their new tax cut but nowhere else in Canada would these companies be considered small businesses.

And it's being that out of touch, their focus on the wealthy and their well-connected friends, that has people so concerned with the Sask Party's GTH scandal. And that's why they're concerned with who is getting richer with taxpayer dollars with the Regina bypass.

[14:15]

Now we already know that the land at the heart of the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] investigation made \$11 million for two Sask Party supporters, but now they're stonewalling on answers to other questions. Just before question period, they released a total amount, but that's not the question that we were asking, Mr. Speaker.

So I'm going to try this again. Can the minister provide the total amount that was paid out in lawsuits over land sales at the GTH and the bypass? Not the total amount of the purchase. We want to know about the lawsuits and how many of those who benefited have donated to the Sask Party.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Highways and Infrastructure.

**Hon. Mr. Marit:** — Mr. Speaker, there is a process for Highways to acquire land through appropriation. The way we do it, expropriate the property, it's no different than it's been for the last 30 or 40 years. It's the same process. We hire assessors to do the assessment on the property. If the landowner wishes to get a third party assessor, we do that. We put those values together. We come up with a value.

If the process doesn't work, that the expropriation process doesn't work, there's a mediation process that can work, Mr. Speaker. And at the end of the day, if the landowner isn't happy with that process, there is the court. And at the end of the day, the court will decide the value of the land, not the government, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, there's no wonder he's being awarded an award for stonewalling. The question was, not a lesson, but how many dollars, taxpayers' dollars have been paid out in lawsuits over the GTH and the bypass? That's the simple question. Let's get the answer.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Highways and Infrastructure.

**Hon. Mr. Marit:** — Mr. Speaker, we made it public, the process that we went through. There was a total of 103 different landowners in the GTH, in the property. There's about 190 different properties, but 103 landowners, Mr. Speaker. It's a public document.

The land acquisitions and the other compensations total roughly about \$80 million. And in the budget that the GTH, that we

used, it is well under that, and it's well under that number, Mr. Speaker. So that's where we're at with the dollar numbers. It's public.

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

### Employment and Provincial Economy

**Ms. Mowat:** — Mr. Speaker, today's financial update showed more bad news for jobs in Saskatchewan. Revenue from income taxes is 110 million less than the government originally predicted. The minister has a lot of excuses, but let's be clear: income tax revenue is down because there are more people unemployed in this province.

Mr. Speaker, according to the latest numbers from Stats Canada, while EI [employment insurance] claims are decreasing in most parts of the country, the number of people in Saskatchewan making claims actually increased 6.7 per cent. That's the second-highest increase in Canada, and the highest increase outside Atlantic Canada. Mr. Speaker, instead of making excuses and looking out for their friends, when will they step up, stimulate the economy, and start helping Saskatchewan people get back to work?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of the Economy.

**Hon. Mr. Bonk:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I empathize with anyone who's been impacted by a job loss. But low global commodity prices have had a real impact on our financial situation in the past few years. But despite these challenges, unemployment rate of 5.9 per cent is lower than the national average of 6.3 per cent nationwide. And we're seeing improvements in these areas. Jobs in oil and gas are on the increase, Mr. Speaker. The industries with the largest gains in our economy, Mr. Speaker, are construction, transportation, warehousing.

There are 64,400 more people working in Saskatchewan today than there ever was under the best days of the NDP, Mr. Speaker. We stand by our record of job creation compared to their job creation record of the worst, dead last, in Canada.

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

**Ms. Mowat:** — Mr. Speaker, they can't take credit when job numbers are good but then point fingers when they drop the ball. The reality is when other provinces are creating jobs and sparking record growth, Saskatchewan people are losing their jobs and the Sask Party is letting our economy fall behind.

Mr. Speaker, there are 11,000 more people looking for work than a year ago. Across the province, we've lost jobs in the resource sector, in agriculture, in construction, and in the private sector. And the Finance minister said today that she wouldn't rule out firing even more public sector workers.

Mr. Speaker, after seeing the numbers today, after all the evidence that their cuts, tax hikes, and sell-offs are costing Saskatchewan people jobs, when will the Sask Party finally start taking job losses seriously? And when will they finally

come up with a plan to put Saskatchewan people back to work?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of the Economy.

**Hon. Mr. Bonk:** — Mr. Speaker, thank you for . . . I thank the member opposite for that question. I am very proud to say, in Saskatchewan we have worked hard to create an atmosphere where everyone can thrive in this province. We keep our taxes low. We have incentives for our private businesses, who are the small businesses in this province, who are the drivers of our economy, who are the businesses that employ people in this province. We've had unprecedented job growth in this province over the last 10 years.

If you look at the long-term trends in employment numbers in this province, it's a far cry from the dark, dreary days of the NDP when people were fleeing this province and they had the worst job creation record in the nation.

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

#### Assistance for Cattle Producers

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As all members are aware, wildfires near Burstall, Leader, and Tompkins destroyed thousands of acres of land and claimed the lives of hundreds of cattle. The government has promised some funds, but it isn't enough. And over a month later, producers are still waiting.

Mr. Speaker, according to today's financial update, agriculture expenses are down — almost \$90 million less than expected, partly due to a reduction in crop insurance claims. Why won't this government use some of this surplus to provide much-needed disaster relief to these producers?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

**Hon. Mr. Stewart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member for her question. The wildfires were a tragedy. There's no question about that. And first of all, I extend my condolences to the family and friends of James Hargrave, who lost his life, and to those who were injured as well fighting the wildfires, Mr. Speaker.

The livestock branch has put together a technical document on disposal recommendations and we've provided the five impacted RMs [rural municipality] with dollars, Mr. Speaker, to help with the disposal of dead stock. We've providing funding to the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association, Mr. Speaker, in the amount of \$100,000 to bolster their fund that they're raising to help the victims of the wildfires.

Mr. Speaker, AgriStability is available to those who have it, and a number of them may be able to trigger claims this year because of the losses in the wildfires from AgriStability, Mr. Speaker. And regular programs, agricultural programs are all available.

And as the grassland recovers from the fires, Mr. Speaker, our experts in the ministry will be helping producers with grazing plans and monitoring the recovery of the grass.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — I thank the minister for that answer, Mr. Speaker, and share in the condolences and the sentiments expressed.

But the reality is — we all know, and the minister knows this — that what has been provided for producers to this point is simply inadequate. We have producers who are looking to replace their herds, who are wondering how they're going to come up with the dollars to feed their cattle over the winter, and to find pasture land to graze these cattle on in the long time.

We have had a surplus in the agriculture funding as noted today of \$90 million. My question is this: will the minister commit to using some of that funding to help these producers in this very desperate time of need?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

**Hon. Mr. Stewart:** — I thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've illustrated how the government will help those producers, Mr. Speaker. And it's substantial of course. You know, this is another case — the Finance Minister mentioned it earlier — where we're criticized for not always running a surplus. And every instance where there's an opportunity to spend more money, the opposition encourage us to do just that, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Mr. Speaker, this really isn't the time for spin. I appreciate what has been done to this point, but we all know that it is not adequate. Those answers and that spin will not feed those cattle. It will not replace the herds. It will not provide the much-needed answers to these producers who are wondering where they're going to graze their cattle next year. There are provisions that should be made available by this government in the time of this unprecedented disaster — wildfires of this scope — to help these producers. The minister knows that more is needed. Will he commit to it today?

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

**Hon. Mr. Stewart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And again I thank the member for her question. It's legitimate. Mr. Speaker, we have provided substantial funds for this. We'd all like to give more, but our programs don't cover insurable assets, Mr. Speaker. So while in our hearts we might like to stroke a big cheque from public funds to help these people, some of whom are actually hurting, Mr. Speaker, our programs do not cover losses on insurable assets. And virtually all of the losses in the wildfires were insurable assets and that's why, on top of everything else we've done — with veterinary help, help to dispose of animals — we provided the \$100,000 for the Stock Growers.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### Bill No. 113 — *The Planning and Development Amendment Act, 2017*

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Government

Relations.

**Hon. Mr. Doke:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 113, *The Planning and Development Amendment Act, 2017* be now introduced and read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Minister of Government Relations that Bill No. 113 be now introduced and read the first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

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

**Hon. Mr. Doke:** — Next sitting of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

#### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

##### Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

**Ms. Young:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 84, *The Income Tax (Business Income) Amendment Act, 2017* without amendment.

**The Speaker:** — When shall this bill be considered in the Committee of the Whole on Bills? I recognize the Minister of Finance.

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

**The Speaker:** — The Minister of Finance has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bills on Bill No. 84, *The Income Tax (Business Income) Amendment Act, 2017*, and the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried. The minister may proceed to move third reading.

#### THIRD READINGS

##### Bill No. 84 — *The Income Tax (Business Income) Amendment Act, 2017*

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — I move that the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 84, *The Income Tax (Business Income) Amendment Act, 2017* be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, just an opportunity to present a few words on this bill. We do support small businesses on this side of the House. Small businesses create about 80 per cent of all new jobs across our province and they grow our economy, and the NDP is committed to finding ways to support all small businesses in Saskatchewan. But that is not what this bill is about.

This bill is about the Sask Party changing the definition of "small business" to benefit the wealthiest. And last night in committee, the minister confirmed that this change will only help 1 in 13 small businesses in Saskatchewan.

[14:30]

If the Sask Party was truly serious about helping small businesses, it would recognize that their PST hike has hurt all small businesses, all producers, and all families big and small across the province.

Now we've heard from business owners about how this tax hike has hurt the restaurant industry. The restaurants and bars are struggling and have had to lay off employees because of these tax hikes. Saskatchewan is the only province where people have to pay PST on life and health insurance. We've heard from producers about how the PST increases on insurance have impacted their bottom line.

We absolutely should be doing more to support small businesses throughout the province. But the fact is that Bill 84 will only help 1 in every 13 small businesses — and these are the wealthiest, Mr. Speaker — while the Sask Party's PST hikes have hurt all of the small businesses.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this spring when I was asking the former Finance minister about the tax changes he said, and I quote:

So you could have a small business making \$600,000 in taxable income, and there are a lot of them in this province. I dare say I've got some colleagues in my caucus, caucus colleagues that run some of those businesses.

It's an odd thing to have one Finance minister using his caucus colleagues as examples of business owners who make 600,000 while another Finance minister changes the law to help those business owners.

Nowhere else in Canada would these businesses be considered small businesses. Across the board, the limit is \$500,000, Mr. Speaker — everywhere, in every other province, and federally. But in this province these businesses are now being deemed to be small businesses.

We are committed on this side of the House to finding ways to support all small businesses — all of them. And we want to help all those who have been hurt by the Sask Party's PST hike, not just the richest businesses that the Sask Party is looking to help with this tax giveaway.

**The Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is the third reading of Bill No. 84, *The Income Tax (Business Income) Amendment Act, 2017*.

All those in favour say yes.

**Some Hon. Members:** — Yes.

**The Speaker:** — Those opposed say no.

**Some Hon. Members:** — No.

**The Speaker:** — I think the yeases have it. Call in the members.

[The division bells rang from 14:32 until 14:40.]

**The Speaker:** — The question before the Assembly is third reading of Bill No. 84, *The Income Tax (Business Income) Amendment Act, 2017*.

All those in favour of the motion please stand.

[Yeas — 46]

Wall	Hepner	Makowsky
Stewart	Reiter	Morgan
Harpauer	Duncan	Cox
Marit	Hargrave	D'Autremont
Docherty	Merriman	Doke
Bonk	Tell	Eyre
Brkich	Harrison	Ottenbreit
Ross	Weekes	Hart
Kirsch	Bradshaw	Steinley
Nerlien	Carr	Lawrence
Wilson	Young	McMorris
Michelson	Buckingham	Doherty
Lambert	Beaudry-Mellor	Moe
Wyant	Dennis	Kaeding
Steele	Fiaz	Cheveldayoff
Olauson		

[Nays — 11]

**The Speaker:** — All those opposed to the motion please stand.

Sarauer	Chartier	Belanger
Sproule	Forbes	Rancourt
Mowat	McCall	Beck
Meili	Wotherspoon	

**Clerk:** — Those in favour of the third reading motion, 46; those opposed, 11.

**The Speaker:** — I declare the motion carried.

**Clerk:** — Third reading of this bill.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### TABLING OF ESTIMATES AND SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Ms. Harpauer:** — Before orders of the day, Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to submit supplementary estimates accompanied by a message from the Administrator of Saskatchewan.

**The Speaker:** — Would you please rise for the message from the Administrator of Saskatchewan.

The Administrator of Saskatchewan transmits supplementary estimates November of certain sums required for the service of the province for the 12 months ending March 31st, 2018, and recommends the same to the Legislative Assembly. Hon. Robert Richards, Administrator, province of Saskatchewan.

### WRITTEN QUESTIONS

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Government Whip.

**Mr. Lawrence:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answers to questions 55 through 72.

**The Speaker:** — The Government Whip has ordered the responses to questions 55 to 72.

### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### SECOND READINGS

**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'm pleased to rise today to move second reading of *The Miscellaneous Vehicle and Driving Statutes (Cannabis Legislation) Amendment Act, 2017*.

[14:45]

The federal government is moving to legalize personal cannabis use in July of next year. In advance of that, the federal government is preparing to amend the Criminal Code in the coming weeks to add drug-impaired driving offences. Police will have the ability to lay the new charges on Royal Assent.

The federal changes make it necessary to update some of our provincial legislation for administrative consequences for impaired driving. We do this so that the tough consequences impaired drivers in Saskatchewan face will also apply to anyone charged under the new federal laws.

Anyone charged with any of the new drug-impaired driving offences under this Criminal Code will receive an immediate licence suspension until the charges are dealt with in court.

Drivers also face a minimum 30-day vehicle seizure or 60 days if the driver also has a blood alcohol content over .16, and significant financial penalties under SGI's [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] safe driver recognition program.

As you are aware, Saskatchewan has some of the toughest impaired driving laws in the country, Mr. Speaker. Our strict penalties are meant to send a clear message that it is never okay to get behind the wheel of a vehicle if you are impaired by alcohol or drugs. And that is a very important message for the people of Saskatchewan to remember, Mr. Speaker.

It is currently, and will continue to be, illegal to drive while impaired, even when cannabis becomes legal next July. There are misconceptions among some cannabis users that it does not impair driving. That is simply not true, Mr. Speaker. Cannabis impairs drivers' judgment, reaction time, motor coordination, and ability to make decisions. And some drivers mix drugs and alcohol, which can significantly increase impairment.

While we hope that legalization will not lead to more people choosing to drive impaired by cannabis, we have to be realistic and recognize that it is a potential safety concern. The new federal legislation expected to be proclaimed in the coming weeks gives police new tools to detect drug-impaired drivers and charge them. Specifically, it allows police to use federally approved roadside testing devices to detect drivers who may be impaired by cannabis.

It's also important to note that Saskatchewan will have zero tolerance for all drivers for drug-impaired driving. The zero tolerance approach means that drivers should not get behind the wheel with any level of impairing drugs in their system that is detectable by a federally approved screening device. Police can already request the standardized field sobriety test at roadside or a drug recognition evaluation if they have reasonable suspicion that a driver is impaired.

More and more, police in Saskatchewan are being trained to recognize signs of impairment from drugs. By July of next year, Saskatchewan will have almost 100 officers certified in drug recognition evaluation. Training has been funded by SGI. Even more officers will be trained over the next five years, with financial support committed by the federal government.

Mr. Speaker, combating the terrible problem of impaired driving in Saskatchewan is a priority for our government. During the fall sitting of this legislature, we introduced legislation that will mean stronger penalties for people who drive impaired with children in the vehicle. We have also announced that we intend to enable ride-sharing services to operate in this province so that people have another option for a safe ride home. And now our government plans to implement zero tolerance for all drug-impaired drivers.

Quite simply, drivers should not get behind the wheel with any level of impairing drugs in their system that can be detected by a federally approved screening device or that would cause them to fail a field sobriety test or a drug recognition evaluation. While cannabis may soon be legal, driving under its influence is illegal. It is dangerous to public safety and it will be dealt with harshly. Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of *The Miscellaneous Vehicle and Driving Statutes (Cannabis*

*Legislation) Amendment Act, 2017.*

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The Minister of Crown Investments has moved that Bill No. 112, *The Miscellaneous Vehicle and Driving Statutes (Cannabis Legislation) Amendment Act, 2017* 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. I'm again pleased to stand on my feet today to talk about Bill No. 112, *The Miscellaneous Vehicle and Driving Statutes (Cannabis Legislation) Amendment Act, 2017.*

Now, Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to do a quick recap of the bill as we interpret it, and obviously this is a very important bill to spend a lot of time in the Assembly and throughout the process as we try and grapple with the notion of how to certainly get impaired drivers, such as those that may be under the influence of drugs, off our roads and streets, Mr. Speaker. That certainly is an important endeavour to ensure safety for all people and I think, Mr. Speaker, nobody's arguing with that point.

Certainly I think that's something that we have to also keep in the back of our minds as we move down this whole process of having cannabis become legal in the country — I believe the date that's been set is July 2018 — and this bill is somewhat of the preparation for that law coming into effect. And this particular bill, Mr. Speaker, adds the new federal drug offences under the Criminal Code to various sections of *The Automobile Accident Insurance Act* as well as *The Traffic Safety Act*, so obviously, Mr. Speaker, that federal drug offences are part and parcel of the rollout strategy as it pertains to the cannabis legalization plan for July 1st of 2018.

Mr. Speaker, the bill also adds a definition for "drug" to *The Traffic Safety Act* and this bill also adds a new section to *The Traffic Safety Act* that outlines a zero tolerance for drug. Mr. Speaker, the Act also sets out licence suspensions, legal impoundments, and administrative fines for drivers found to have driven while having consumed drugs. Drug offences will be dealt with in the same way as alcohol-related offences are dealt with, except that the ignition interlock can't be used to deal with the consumption of drugs. And, Mr. Speaker, it is currently illegal to drive while impaired, whether it's from alcohol or from drugs, and that remains the same with this bill.

We will continue having questions for the minister as this whole process rolls out, Mr. Speaker, in particular when you look at the notion around the drug offences that are being identified in this particular bill. Mr. Speaker, obviously the minister was correct in indicating that an ignition interlock can't be used to deal with the consumption of drugs.

As the member would very well know, that one of the tools in combatting the drug-impaired driver, Mr. Speaker, is how would you measure the amount of drugs consumed, and what drugs consumed by the individual that could be in question as to their impairment from drug use? And, Mr. Speaker, from some of the discussions that we've had internally as a caucus, we've looked at some of the issues that remain with, how do we track this? How do we monitor this? How do we test — as you test an impaired driver with a Breathalyzer — how do you test an impaired driver with drugs?

And, Mr. Speaker, one of the concepts that had been certainly brought forward to many discussions around the whole notion of safe driving in the province of Saskatchewan was the fact that there was not enough drug recognition experts. Now, Mr. Speaker, I'm not familiar with the drug recognition experts as to what kind of training they have, what kind of certification, and how they become an expert in their particular field, but one of the challenges that was raised during some of the Committee on Traffic Safety's hearings was they heard very clearly that drug recognition experts are available, but there aren't enough of them to begin to address what I think may be an increase in activity from drug impairment challenges, as you move down this path towards the legalization of cannabis, Mr. Speaker.

So what happens in this case is that there was discussion and presentations brought forward to the panel on safety while driving. And, Mr. Speaker, one of the points that was raised, that drug recognition experts that could train police officers, there was not a lot of those drug recognition experts that could do the training in Saskatchewan.

So one of the things that we have to look at is how do we begin to develop a system of policing the fact that there may be — well there is already — but there may be other matters that pertain to impaired driving due to drug use, Mr. Speaker. There's no question one of the things that we have to do is to ensure that we have drug recognition experts that train as many police officers as possible, so the policemen, like in the alcohol case, are able to police the streets with sound science.

I am uncertain, Mr. Speaker, as to whether consultations with lawyers have been undertaken because obviously they say there is a test available — I think it's a saliva test — to determine whether there is drugs involved in a suspicious driver, Mr. Speaker. And some defence lawyers have indicated that that process can be easily defeated in a court of law. So this is the reason why we have to look at perhaps a myriad of processes to discuss what the best way is, the most legally concrete way in which we could legally charge people with impaired drug driving, Mr. Speaker. And that's something that's really important.

On the flip side, Mr. Speaker, as we all know that cannabis will be legalized in July of 2018, and this is going to be a federal Act. And obviously the federal government have gone through a lot of process in determining, you know, how the industry is regulated and certainly how the plan will be rolled out in terms of making sure that this industry no longer becomes a illegal activity, that there is now a process in place to legalize it. And there are many opportunities attached to this Act, Mr. Speaker, and the federal government have identified those opportunities. They have also identified challenges. And they've certainly identified what role that the provincial governments can play in the rollout of the legalization of cannabis in July of 2018.

So the biggest thing that we have to do as opposition, and I understand several members of the Sask Party have undertaken some of these meetings, is to talk to those people that have prepared Acts and prepared processes and certainly prepared for the inevitable declaration of the legalization of cannabis in July of 2018, and they have gone so far as to set up shop to begin to sell some of the products as a result of this legalization. I understand that there are several businesses that are now open.

Obviously in Alberta is an example I would use that there is some forward thinking by the government in terms of recognizing that this is going to be a law, and that as much as some people may not like the idea of drugs in general, Mr. Speaker, cannabis by and large has been one of the softer drugs that the federal government saw fit to legalize. And as opposed to us going on the path of whether that should have happened or not, Mr. Speaker, many people are embracing that change, and they're certainly preparing for the opportunities attached with legal sales of cannabis, Mr. Speaker. And our job as legislators is to see if we could sit down and see how this could be regulated, how this could be monitored, and how we protect the public in general.

There are many, many arguments for and against the particular process. And it's incumbent upon us as people that make laws in Saskatchewan such as the bill before us, Bill 112, is to take the time to understand what the federal law states, what their process is in place to make sure that it's regulated, it's monitored, and that there's some benefits for the federal government as well.

What are the challenges health-wise, Mr. Speaker? Some say that there aren't, compared to the consumption of alcohol, Mr. Speaker. There are some medicinal properties of cannabis that have provided some significant advantage for many people throughout the country.

So all of these factors are flying at various provinces, Mr. Speaker, as we speak. And it's important that we take the time to do two or three things, Mr. Speaker, as the minister indicated in the bill, to ensure that we don't have impaired drivers on the road — that's important — impaired by drugs. We suggest that there has to be a proper test. And one of the biggest opportunities we see is having drug recognition experts train police officers so they're able to make sure they've got the strongest case against a suspicious drug-impaired driver, Mr. Speaker. That's really important. So we don't have enough of those experts.

We also have, Mr. Speaker, the ability to understand what other jurisdictions are doing. I made reference to Alberta. What are they doing? What are their best practices? BC [British Columbia] is probably another example that we could seek advice from and offer advice to, as a province. So it's important that we keep those channels open to seeing what other jurisdictions are doing.

And, Mr. Speaker, it's also important to talk to the industry because we know people are preparing for the cannabis legalization opportunities. And it's important that we sit down and see what medicinal values are found in these properties, because we all know that there's laws now that allow for the medicinal value of cannabis. Some patients do have that opportunity, particularly cancer patients, as you know, that I'm aware of.

[15:00]

So this is a bill that's fairly complex. There are a lot of angles to it. There's some that like the bill, others that don't, but the important thing is that we have to make an informed decision on how we proceed as a result of this federal Act coming into



play. And obviously as a province I would dare say that it is probably not wise to try and fight this federal law, because the bottom line is it's going to be proclaimed. Most provinces are preparing for it. And our best bet, Mr. Speaker, is exactly what the bill intends to do, is to try and keep drug-impaired drivers off our streets.

We also need to look at the opportunity attached from the regulatory and taxation perspective. And most important of all, Mr. Speaker, we have to talk to those that are preparing for this industry to make sure that we are able to make sound decisions not based on hearsay, not based on moral perspectives that may be just not willing to listen to any other point of view, Mr. Speaker. We must take the time to hear what the industry's saying about the future of the cannabis industry, Mr. Speaker.

So by and large, it's a complex bill. We have a lot of issues that we haven't talked about. There's a lot of moving parts to this bill. And it's on that note that I move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 112, *The Miscellaneous Vehicle and Driving Statutes (Cannabis Legislation) Amendment Act, 2017*.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 112. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is my pleasure today to rise and enter into debate on Bill No. 85, *The Reclaimed Industrial Sites Amendment Act, 2017*. Mr. Deputy Speaker, as has been noted, previously this bill had its first incarnation in 2007. And it has a clause that requires it to be reviewed every five years, so this would be the second review of this particular bill.

I'm going to first start with some of the comments that the minister for mines and resources mentioned on second reading. Again as was mentioned by my colleague from Saskatoon, the bill was initially presented by the Minister of the Economy, but second reading was presented by the member for Martensville.

In her reading, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the minister noted, as I just said, that this is an update of the current Act which was approved in 2007. Some of my colleagues happened to be around at that time when this Act was initially brought forth, and in doing some reading about this bill prior to getting up

today, I found that very helpful I think to have some of that background.

Often when we get up and we start talking about bills, we don't always know why the initial bill came into force, what some of the impetus was for that, who was consulted, what issue it was to address. And again it's always helpful to have that background information so we can measure if the legislation has, up to this point, done what it was initially intended to. And to be fair, the minister as well as my colleagues both provided some background around that. But I'll get into that.

As noted by the minister:

The current Act was approved in 2007 and, as part of its attendant regulations, implemented the institutional control program . . . or ICP, [which] manages the transfer of remediated sites back to provincial custody and manages the long-term monitoring and maintenance of those sites.

For those maybe who . . . that seems like a bit of a technical explanation, these are sites, often mine sites, that have closed down for various reasons, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and there's an element of environmental risk there. So those lands are transferred into the control of the ICP and there are measures taken to remediate those lands and to monitor, and as well there's a fund in place should there be a need for cleanup or the like, Mr. Speaker. So there's a controlled fund and some mechanism for the province to assume control of these lands to ensure that they are properly protected and not posing an environmental risk.

As noted by the minister, this has been seen as both a benefit environmentally, but also a benefit to industry to be able to have a mechanism and these controlled funds to deal with remediated sites.

And that didn't happen in a vacuum. It happened in part, and both my colleagues noted there were some issues such as mines around Uranium City if I'm correct there, and concerns that there was no money set aside for the remediation or for the cleanup of those sites. And I believe, and I'm looking for confirmation that we are still paying for those sites. So this was a measure undertaken so that we didn't find ourselves in that situation again.

And certainly, you know, we don't always make the right decisions, but when we have a chance to see how things could be put right, I think it's a worthwhile endeavour to undertake that. So this was a measure to address both concerns of industry, but also environmental concerns.

So again, as has been noted, this is the second review of this legislation, and there are some proposed changes here. The minister noted that, in completing the review, the Ministry of Energy and Resources has consulted with stakeholders and is now introducing these amendments identified through those stakeholder discussions. She did mention some of the folks that they met with. She noted that "I'm pleased to say that this bill has the support of industry, industry organizations, the federal and provincial regulators involved in the stakeholder consultations."

And I just offer here that when we're talking about consultation with stakeholders it's always . . . I find it helpful anyway to know exactly who was consulted with and maybe some of the feedback that was received. It gives us maybe a better picture of the reasons that we see these changes coming forward and in the long run gives us the ability to evaluate whether the legislation meets the measures that were set out, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So there are some questions there in terms of the width and breadth of who was consulted with; certainly industry, as has been noted. And the government is very, very proud, and I know the minister noted in her remarks of being seen as being very favourable to the mining community, and that is fair, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But there's a dual purpose to this legislation and that is to enhance both industry but also environmental, forward environmental safety and stewardship I guess, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And that certainly is a delicate balance sometimes but is one that is very worthy and worth our time. And I'm wondering if that balance was met in terms of the consultations, and that would be a question that perhaps can be asked in more depth when we get into when we get into committee.

And a few other highlights here just in terms of what the issues are in this bill. One of the amendments, or it's actually a clarification of the ministerial authority, regulatory authority, to require that a site holder has provided acceptable financial assurance before a closed site can be accepted into institutional control program or ICP. Which certainly seems reasonable that if you're putting a piece of land into the ICP that has potential future liabilities or will need a great deal of remediation or may propose a significant risk perhaps to waterways or other bodies, it seems reasonable that you want to be assured that industry is putting sufficient funds forward into that fund so that we're not depleting the fund on one instance of remediation.

There's also a new section that outlines that the minister can transfer a closed site from the institutional control program to a responsible person or entity. This is something I do have a lot of questions about. It's not really explained in the second readings why, once a site goes into ICP, I'm not sure what the incentive would be to pull it back out and transfer control to a private entity. When it is in the ICP, there are certain oversights, and certainly the review of this legislation is one of those oversights. But I don't know why that would happen. And it's an honest question, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and hopefully we can get some answers about that when we get into committee.

But it does seem a little counterintuitive that once the site is taken into the ICP and is mandated and there are funds available for remediation but it's, you know, it's a site that has certain environmental qualities, why another entity would want that. So maybe that's something that came out of the consultations.

I would be curious to know what, you know, is the business case or what the reasons would be for that change because it really is a rather significant change. Up until now, my understanding is that once lands are transferred into the ICP that they remain there. And I'm getting nods from my colleagues. So I hope that we do . . . and I'm sure that our critic and members of the opposition will have further questions about that.

Another main feature of this bill is a new section that allows the minister to appoint a fund advisory committee to advise on the Institutional Control Monitoring and Maintenance Fund — again that fund that I've been talking about and has been talked about previously — and the Institutional Control Unforeseen Events Fund, which is more the long-term investments of those funds. So certainly we've seen that done with other funds, to have people appointed to make sure that those funds are adequate and being properly invested, that there are, I would suspect, audits.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, a couple of points under that. This committee is exempt from liability for investment decisions, so I guess perhaps the minister would assume responsibility or there would be some other place, but that's one caveat in these proposed changes. And it also, it seems that there's some indication that this committee would be composed of Econ employees. So just a couple of points there, and maybe we'll have a chance to get into that a little further into committee.

Another main point that I will spend a little bit of time on is the fact that this maintains that the minister must conduct a review of the Act every five years. As we've said, that has been a part of this bill. This is our second review. But it makes some changes and it removes the specifics on who this review must consult and the requirement to review that the money in the funds is sufficient to meet the needs of the accepted site into the program.

So on the first piece of that, I do find that a little bit problematic and I suspect others will as well. You know, if not specific agencies or entities, certainly a broad-based consultation of all stakeholders, which really would be industry, environmental groups, and I think really the people living around these sites — that seems reasonable. Many of these sites are in the North. We certainly hear consistent, and many, concerns about the lack of consultation with people in the North. And these are sites that have the potential to impact land and way of life very significantly. So there is some concern there that that isn't spelled out, that there must be specific groups to be consulted with. So that would be something that I would wonder about the reason for that, for removing those specifics and maybe suggest that there be very robust and wide-reaching consultation.

[15:15]

The other part is the removal of the requirement that there is a review that the funds are sufficient. Now perhaps that is because there is this new committee to oversee the maintenance fund and the institutional control monitoring unforeseen events fund, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But I guess that's something that we may have to ask. And how that committee will report back and their accountability, I think, is a little bit unclear at this point. So that would be something that we would have questions about.

So I'm afraid I stand here with more questions than answers, but it would be interesting to hear my colleagues' comments on this and hear the minister's responses in committee. I do think that this is, you know, back in 2007, this seems there was good reason to put this legislation forward. And by the minister's own admission, it has served this province well with that delicate and dual role of providing benefit to industry and also

ensuring good environmental stewardship.

So I think I have come to the end of my comments. I look forward to further debate. And with that, I will move to adjourn debate please.

**The Deputy Speaker:** — The member from Regina Lakeview has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 85, *The Reclaimed Industrial Sites Amendment Act, 2017*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And it's always part of the great pleasure of being an MLA that we get to participate in the debate here in this Assembly, and I certainly appreciate the opportunity to do so. Today I'll be talking a little bit about the changes to *The Child and Family Services Act*.

And as you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is one of the most difficult areas, I think, of governing, is looking after children who need support, who are struggling within their family unit. And it's definitely something I know that governments undertake with care and sincerity and with great difficulty, Mr. Speaker. Obviously offering new homes for children that have been traumatized or troubled, who aren't getting the parental care they need, is always fraught with difficulty. And I think some of the needs of these children are incredible.

I have friends who work in this area and it's really . . . Although they don't tell me the details, I know that it's very difficult work for them. And everyone I believe is doing their best to protect these children. Having said that, when you act in the place of a parent, as a government, there are expectations, and I believe there are legitimate expectations for governments to look after these children as if they're their own. *In loco parentis* I believe is the Latin phrase.

And so it's a complicated bit of work. It's certainly one that needs the full support of a government and all the services that go with it, and you know, holistic family supports too. I know that's part of the piece, is ensuring that the families that are struggling have supports they need to be able to keep their children with them. Addictions and poverty are a large cause of a lot of the troubles these folks are facing, and housing. And even today on the radio we were hearing about toothaches and people not being covered for dental care and how that can seriously impact quality of life for children and for adults as well.

But I think in terms of the bill itself, Mr. Speaker, there are, as the minister pointed out in his second reading speech on November 7th, there are a number of administrative changes. Now he tells us that these administrative amendments are paving the way or setting the stage for this government "to move forward in a more substantive change in the future." So I always get a little worried when this government talks about substantive changes in the future because sometimes, you know, they fix things that aren't broken and other times they don't fix things that need fixing. So it's a little flag and I think we're going to have to watch it very carefully of course to ensure that these — what did he say? — "move forward in a more substantive change in the future." So he says they're still doing "additional policy development, stakeholder consultation, and financial analysis prior to introduction."

Now we've seen the height of financial analysis that this government's capable of when it comes to tax analysis . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yes, it's dizzying, as my colleague says. You know, where they actually go out and they talk to people, Mr. Speaker, and that's the level of tax analysis that appears to be sufficient for making decisions for this government. So when it comes to financial analysis for Social Services and the child and family services provision, it makes me a little bit nervous when we see that that's . . . They're out talking to their friends and that should be sufficient. So hopefully the ministry will convince the political folks that it's important to do an actual proper financial analysis that recognizes all the aspects of these changes and whatever changes that are being contemplated.

So there are a number of minor changes being contemplated in the bill. I notice once again that the war on "where" or "if" is in, you know, full force here. In fact they might put North Korea to shame with the way they're attacking it, but "where" is being completely wiped out and we are now using the word "if." So this appears to be "if" is winning the war and "where" is losing it badly. So in a number of clauses — section 11, section 13, section 13.1, section 14 — so those all have changes where poor "where" is being wiped out and "if" is taking over, also section 19 of the existing Act, section 22. Yes, there's a whole bunch of them, Mr. Speaker, if you go through.

Oh yes, and there's also a war on "shall." It's now being replaced by "must." So we have two wars going on here, and I think the drafters are certainly on the side of "must" and "if." So glad to see that.

Oh yes, section 36, "where" is disappearing, as it is in section 38, oh, and 39, section 50 — I'm getting near the end — 53, 54, 55, 56, 60. What's this one— 63, 69, and so on and so on. I guess you get the drift.

So that's some of the administrative changes that are being made. And it's interesting to see these, I would say, phases of drafting where certain words win out over others. But I think I would use "if" in most cases. "If" I'm going to town, I will do this, instead of "where" I go to town. So it makes more sense in many contexts.

I tried finding online where the rule makers are landing on this. There's not a lot that can be found. But you will find a lot about computer programming, because if you use "where" instead of

“if” it means something very different in computer programming. So if anybody wants to get caught up on that, they can certainly go to the Internet. But in the meantime, “if” is winning the war.

Some of the other changes that the minister talks about was apparently back in 1980s there was a hope that “. . . First Nations participation in the decision making of matters relating to First Nations children.” We started talking about that in 1989, and there was a family board that was created. Unfortunately, apparently it was never operationalized, and so it was just never used. And I think that’s something this bill is attempting to review and maybe recreate a new system out of that.

He says in his speech, “The 1984 legislative amendments were intended to address the shortcomings of this Act, specifically with regard to the transfer of custody . . . guardianship, and the financial assistance and kinship-in-care arrangements.” And he said it was accepted by many, but “. . . First Nation leaders and organizations articulated that the provisions were counter to their culture and values.”

So what has happened instead when these changes were made, the ministry “. . . continued to strengthen extended family options through the enhancing of policy and the Person of Sufficient Interest program.”

So these programs have sort of taken over what was intended in the provisions of the Act and he’s saying now that the program is going to be prioritized through transformational change.

Well there it is, Mr. Speaker. Transformational change has revisited us once again and we see it here in the changes in the family services, child and family services. So I guess transformational change is hard at work in the ministry and they’re now using this for their “. . . future phase of the ministry’s legislative renewal.”

So again as I say, I get a little bit nervous when these guys talk about transformational change. I get a little bit nervous when they talk about renewal and legislative reforms. So we’ll see what happens, and we’ll make sure once that happens that proper consultation . . . We need proper consultation. We need proper financial analysis to make sure these programs are sustainable and we need proper — well especially — consultation with First Nations and Métis.

People in this province, Mr. Speaker, as you know, too often the duty to consult stops at duty to consult and there isn’t enough talk about accommodation for First Nations. And in this case, some of the changes that are happening, and this has been long called for, I believe, is changes to the definitions of — I want to make sure I have it right — oh yes, the child’s best interests. So currently in the existing Act we refer in section 4(c) to the “child’s emotional, cultural, physical, psychological and spiritual needs.”

And the explanatory note tells us that this is being changed. The entire section’s being changed, but really the main changes are in the existing section (c). And they’re indicating the change reframes “. . . the focus of a child’s development to a needs-based assessment and the support required to optimize a

child’s potential.”

So those are very lofty aspirations and we can only hope that that is where we get to. “It further stresses the importance of cultural and spiritual heritage to a child’s upbringing, promoting a holistic approach to the best interests of a child.”

And, Mr. Speaker, we now have, 50 years later, the effects of the Sixties Scoop for many, many First Nations and Métis children. And I think the work done by Betty Ann Adam in terms of her family’s story and the framing of her story in her own words really, really tells the importance of the impact of the Sixties Scoop on those children. And I don’t think it takes away from the fact that a lot of those children were in need, but the way they were taken from their families and then their entire heritage, their entire DNA was denied them as they were raised in non-First Nation homes. And I know there was love in some of those non-First Nations homes and there was caring. Some of them there weren’t. But their cultural and spiritual heritage was taken away from them, and their language too in many cases.

So we see, too often we see the impacts of these things 50 years after the fact. We see it in the residential school program. We see it in a lot of the First Nations relations.

And so with the Supreme Court of Canada talking about the honour of the Crown, we are the Crown. This is our obligation as a government. It’s our obligation as a people, as treaty people, to ensure that we keep trying at least to get it right. We don’t always get it right, but in this case I think the recommendations to include the heritage of these children will be an important fact that the homes they’re put in will take seriously. And then people know about it nowadays. They understand so much more about the treaty relationship.

And so the change that’s being made, mainly to this clause, is about adding the words “spiritual heritage.” So they have to take into account whenever there’s an order to determine the best interests of the child, this is now one of the key components is the child’s culture and spiritual heritage and upbringing.

So I think it’s a step in the right direction and certainly one that will encourage and direct the families that take these children in. And again, my kudos to all the foster families in Saskatchewan who are opening their homes to children in need. Again the First Nations families that are doing this for the First Nations children, and also other children that are taken, need to be taken from their homes. It’s one of the most traumatic things that can happen to a child, and when the government steps in we have to make sure we get it right.

[15:30]

So I believe, Mr. Speaker, there’s some other minor changes about time frames and revocation periods and things like that. So I know that our Social Services critic and others who have been more close to this area of government will be able to provide more insight and more questions to the government, especially when we get into committee. I think that you know my concerns; I’ve pretty much laid them on the table here today. So I will move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 86, *An Act to amend The Child and Family Services Act*.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon Nutana has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 86. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's always a pleasure for me to join in the debate, and today I'll be talking about Bill No. 87, *The Data Matching Agreements Act*.

Mr. Speaker, when I was reviewing the minister's notes he was indicating that *The Data Matching Agreements Act* would allow for the matching and linking of information and databases to improve fact-based decision making within government. And we know that we need to improve on having decisions made based on facts here. So that's a good step in the right direction.

Also he indicated that this would promote co-operation amongst government institutions, sharing information while still protecting the privacy rights of individuals, which has been recommended by the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think back of some of my work that I did previous to being elected here, Mr. Speaker, and when I was working for the Ministry of Health with regards to mental health and addictions. When I first started working at the agency, technology wasn't as advanced as it is today. And so the way we kept our information was in a file cabinet and we had them all over the place and things like that.

And then we started getting more involved in the technology that we have now with regards to computers and emails and such, and even towards the end using cellphones a lot of the time because that was the main form of communication with clients. And I know when I first started there, that was totally taboo to call a client on their cellphone because you couldn't trust those devices and you had to use a land line. And we had all these strict requirements. And that's also important because confidentiality is so important when we're dealing with clients' sensitive issues.

And so we struggled with the fact that we were moving towards more of a technology-based system, and how do we ensure that client confidentiality is kept but still being able to share information with other agencies. And as of now, like email being so readily used, and how do we keep track of that and how do we make sure we're emailing based on other agencies that also have strict requirements with regards to safety with their emails?

And so I'm really happy to see that the Office of the

Information and Privacy Commissioner is looking into this as well and ensuring that when we do communicate amongst each other that all of this information will be protected, and privacy rights of individuals will be respected and protected as well.

And more and more we're working with other agencies because we know that having wraparound approaches with regards to, oftentimes, clients is really important, whether it's in Health or whether it's in Social Services or Justice and all of these departments. And we're all working together for the best needs of the individual and to support the individual. And so because we're doing so much of that work and also, like was mentioned in the minister's notes, working with other agencies, like maybe police officers and such, making sure that all of this information is kept confidential. So my understanding is part of the priority of this Act is to do that.

So the oversight will be provided by government access coordinator and the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. And I think that's good that both of them will be overlooking that because as we know the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner is an independent agency, and so he's appointed by government to oversee things. And I believe that he's done a really great job so far and his office has always been open to talk to. And so for them to be paired together, that's great.

The government access coordinator is a new role, Mr. Speaker, and that will be created through amendments to *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. And so the duties will include reviewing data-matching agreements and provide comments; receive reports from government institutions where a data-matching project is completed; receive and respond to access requests, which will be working towards centralization of access to information service for government agencies.

So it's a big role. It's a big job for the individual that will be placed in that position. But again, like I said, this is so very important. And also it indicates that anyone who is seen to contravene the Act would be fined up to \$50,000. So that's a hefty fine and I believe that will show the importance and severity of sharing any information that you shouldn't to other individuals or risking the fact of protecting the privacy rights of individuals.

So although I think going this direction is a really important step, Mr. Speaker, I do think it's important for me to also talk about the fact that when it comes to accountability and transparency, this government has a terrible track record with regards to that.

And so I find it interesting how we have this government who . . . They can't figure out how to stop using private emails housed in their party server, but here they want to talk about government agencies and them protecting rights. I know for a fact that as a government employee, if I was using my own personal email, I would have been terminated from my position. And the Premier won't even allow us to let the people of Saskatchewan determine that as well and terminate him. Instead he's running away from all of his troubles here.

But I think it's really important for us to realize that this House needs to show, be the role models with regards to accountability

and transparency and be the role models of showing how professionalism is key. And they should be doing it in-house as well. So I hope this agreement also will manage the individuals in this House and they could stop using their private emails for government issues.

We also have serious concerns about the Sask Party's accountability and transparency when it comes to the GTH land scandals and denying witnesses to testify. If there's no issues, why can't these people who have had a key role in this actually testify? And withholding information from our side of the House, from journalists, and the extreme costs and delays for information requests that the Privacy Commissioner has already spoken about. So he's indicated that this should be more available. And improperly sharing information about journalists and other people as they try to cover up and spin their issues about the GTH.

So in general, I have some real serious concerns about how this government continues to politicize to access of information. And they should show by example of how they feel that transparency and accountability is important, and they should start demonstrating this right here in this House, Mr. Speaker. And that's exactly what we feel on this side of the House.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I know I have a lot of other colleagues that would like to add some more information with regards to this Act. And I know that the critic with regards to this file will also do her due diligence. She'll talk to the stakeholders that are involved and also ensure that all the information is provided and the questions are asked. So with that, I move to adjourn debate on Bill 87, *The Data Matching Agreements Act*.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Prince Albert Northcote has adjourned debate on Bill No. 87. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise into this debate on Bill No. 88, *An Act to amend The Automobile Accident Insurance Act*. And this is one that in our day and age becomes more and more important as we deal with accidents with our cars and our vehicles, and what's the law behind that.

And it was interesting. My colleague from Nutana talked about how she gets nervous when the government says they're going to do substantive or major changes. And I get nervous when they say they're going to, and I quote the minister: "There are a

few minor amendments to this Act, Mr. Speaker." And I think well, you know, we'll have many questions in the committee on that.

But I think I want to highlight a couple of the things that this really starts to do. And the minister talks about SGI's safe driver recognition program, and that's been really popular. It's been sort of a carrot-stick approach. You get rewarded for great, good driving habits, and then you also get a lot of punishments for bad driving, and whether that's accidents or speeding or failing to follow the rules of the road. And so that's based on their driver history, and that's fair enough. You know, we all are very familiar with that, and over the course of time we build up a good reputation.

What this really does is it starts to move a lot of the information into regulations. And this is one that might be a good thing or might not be. It's one we're always nervous about because then there is no real debate, no examination of the reasons for why things are changed in regulations. It's decided by cabinet, and we understand that. There's an appropriate amount of decision making that stays with cabinet. That's fair enough. They are the members of Executive Council. We have to keep the wheels of decision making happening within Executive Council and government. But then there's a fine line; there's a balance of how much should go over to cabinet and not really see the light of day and how much should remain so it's debatable on the floor of the House.

And this is one where we start to see . . . And the member went through all the examples of prescribed manner, prescribed circumstances, prescribed fees, prescribed documents, and on and on the list goes. And you know, unless you watch and really pay attention to *The Saskatchewan Gazette*, you may not be aware of the changes that are happening. And so this is one that we really have to pay attention to.

I think it's always a good thing to profile improvements to this. I mean we've just last week had a lot of discussion about distracted driving and the idea of texting and what are the rules around texts or using your cellphones. But it's not only that. People are distracted . . . You know, we see now in vehicles, you can watch a movie inside your car. Hopefully that's not on the front seat, but you could be listening quietly to that in the back or watching that, and that could be a problem.

Eating is one that many of us have fallen trap to because we're in a rush. We're in a rush more than ever, more than ever, and so you stop at a restaurant, pick up a coffee, pick up something for breakfast. And maybe the road conditions aren't what they were the day before, and you find yourself caught because you don't have both hands free. And this could be a problem.

[15:45]

And then of course we're debating issues around the use of drugs and marijuana while driving, and we're also debating issues of impaired through alcohol use. So this is a big topic for this fall, and one that's really, really important. So we'll be having a lot of questions in the committee about this type of thing and what do we do.

And it's interesting — another part of the new bill talks about a

new section that clarifies that the insurer has the right to recover money paid to an insured customer or family of a deceased customer from an insured person who's been convicted of a specific Criminal Code offence. And of course we'll need to know more details around that. We might have assumed that that was the case, what in . . . When he talks about a specific Criminal Code offence, what was the offence and what can we find out more about it?

And so this is interesting that we have this situation. So SGI can recover any insurance money paid for pain, suffering, or bereavement damages from that driver's third party liability insurance. So we will be watching this very closely.

And of course then the other one is that we've seen many changes in terms of the tougher consequences for risky drivers, and it's caused — and fair enough — some hardships for these drivers because of the size of the financial penalties. So they're allowing or setting up a system where in fact you can make a payment schedule so that they actually do get their penalties paid. Which makes some sense because we know many people depend on being able to drive to work, and if it makes sense that they can continue to drive but they are paying their penalty, that's an appropriate thing to do. But we'll be watching that and what kind of range that is all about.

And he talks about also a change that clarifies who will pay for counselling costs for somebody, but that would be outlined in regulations so we won't be able to go to the Act. So we really want to make sure people are accessible; they have access to the legislation or how this impacts them. That's what's really critically, critically important but, as I say, I do get concerned when things do leave the floor here and get turned into regulation because that is unfortunate in so many ways.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I know that we've got a lot of work to do this afternoon and we've got some ground to cover. But I would like to move adjournment now on Bill No. 88, *The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2017*. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — The member from Saskatoon Centre has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 88. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — 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 Saskatoon Riversdale.

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As always it's my pleasure to wade into debate today, this time on Bill No. 89, *The School Choice Protection Act*, Mr. Speaker. This bill in essence will allow the government to invoke the

notwithstanding clause.

It's always good to take a look at the minister's second reading comment. It's not always the whole story, but it tells often a good chunk of the story here and often it's from the government's perspective, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Education, in her second reading speech, pointed out that this bill “. . . proposes several amendments to *The Education Act, 1995* in order to provide certainty to parents and students that the government can continue funding students who attend Catholic separate schools regardless of their religious affiliation.” I'll get back to that in a little bit, Mr. Speaker.

But just her comments around the words “certainty” are interesting because I don't think it actually offers certainty over the long haul and in fact . . . I think it's important to put on the record that the opposition fully supports publicly funded education in Saskatchewan for both our public and our Catholic systems. I know, I happen to have . . . I've heard from many, many of my constituents who have children in the Catholic system who know how important this is. I know in my own experience, I have a . . . this would impact me. I have a child at a Catholic school and she is not Catholic, Mr. Speaker, despite my own religious affiliation, Mr. Speaker. But I've heard from many, many families of whom this is a huge concern. And we fully support publicly funded education of both our Catholic and public systems.

And there's no doubt that the decision, the decision last spring that the Theodore decision could have a very negative impact on many families and put them into a bit of a panic, those folks who have non-Catholic children in Catholic schools who learned that there was a court decision saying that there would no longer be any funding for those children. So there's no question, unchallenged, this ruling would make fundamental changes to education and classrooms, not only here in Saskatchewan, but all across the country. It would have a huge impact.

And right from the beginning last spring, we've said in order to move forward, both time and clarity are needed. And we support the appeal because it provides something that the Sask Party's approach to this doesn't. So around the appeal, Mr. Speaker, the government didn't get into the appeal right away. It was the Saskatchewan Catholic School Boards Association. And the appeal actually is what would provide certainty and clarity, Mr. Speaker. And in fact the Premier said last spring himself that there was no need for this clause because there's . . . and time was not a bad thing. He said, “There's time. There's going to . . . appeal and the ruling is stayed because of the appeal.”

So the minister's comment that this notwithstanding clause had to be invoked and in play for next spring is not in fact the case, Mr. Speaker. The Premier's own words point out that the ruling would have been stayed during the appeal process. And it's important to point out that with the notwithstanding clause, in terms of certainty, the government would have to come back every five years to implement it again. So I'm not quite sure what kind of stability that it provides for someone who's got a child in grade 1 or grade 3 or anywhere along the lines, Mr. Speaker. The reality is that it doesn't provide certainty, that it buys you a five-year window, a five-year window at best,

because there has to be some point in those five years where government has to start having the conversations about whether or not they're going to pursue this.

So invoking the notwithstanding clause wasn't necessary in this case and we fully supported the . . . I can hear actually the member from Meadow Lake heckling that it was, but the Premier's comments actually say that the ruling would have been stayed, Mr. Speaker, because of the appeal. So the minister's comments around clarity and certainty are interesting because it does not provide that, Mr. Speaker. This in fact, every five years having to come back to putting this clause in place is a problem. So I would argue that this is the Sask Party once again playing politics with our kids, Mr. Speaker, and our kids' classrooms.

While the appeal is considered, there is no need to jump to the notwithstanding clause. And again I've spoken to lots of families who want certainty and who want to have that opportunity to have their children in the Catholic system if they so choose, Mr. Speaker. But I've talked to many of them who understand that this is a process, a legal process, that buys them more time, and will not just buy them more time but in fact create the opportunity for some certainty down the road.

But I think the one thing . . . And it's not to say one doesn't rule out the notwithstanding clause, but I think that it would be wise to let the process play itself out, which could literally be years in the making, Mr. Speaker. So we should follow the appeal and make sure that it's supported as much as possible, and that should be the priority of this government, Mr. Speaker.

But I think the interesting thing for me is this government is attempting to appear to be a champion of education. We only need to take a look at their record, Mr. Speaker, in recent years. We have a government, Mr. Speaker, that has cut at least \$674 in government funding for every student across the province. And you know, talking to teachers and talking to families, to parents, that is very apparent in classrooms. I'll talk in a few minutes about some conversations that I have had with educators about what their reality looks like in the classroom.

So this is a government that hiked education property tax by 67 million but cut total government funding for education by \$121 million in this budget, Mr. Speaker. And that is showing up in the classrooms, Mr. Speaker. I can tell you some of the stories that I've heard. And we need to talk a little bit about numbers.

So in the last decade or so there's . . . The government likes to talk about how they've increased funding. Well they sure as heck better have increased funding, Mr. Speaker. This is a government who's had more revenue at its disposal than any government in the history of this province, but in fact they've also seen an increase in the last decade of 20,250 students added to our schools. And that's a good thing, Mr. Speaker, but education is the cornerstone for our future, Mr. Speaker. If we don't support our children from their early years onward, we are not setting ourselves up to be a strong province down the road.

This last year alone, there was at least 2,500 students added this year. And you know, in fact the minister finally admitted this week with her own numbers that there's about 180 fewer teachers in education or school-based supports. And it was

interesting, her comment — I'm paraphrasing here — but she had said that it wasn't as bad as they expected. It was a little crisis, Mr. Speaker, not a big crisis, but just a little crisis.

But you talk to anybody in the classrooms . . . There's members on the other side of the House who have young children. I'm not sure if they're quite at school age yet, but I know my own daughter in her classroom in her school this year, I believe there's not a single classroom that now isn't a split classroom, which is incredibly difficult for teachers to manage split classrooms. You see it occasionally, a few classrooms in a school, but without fail there's not a single classroom that isn't split in her school at this point in time, Mr. Speaker. I know in my daughter's own classroom, a Grade 4/5 split, and trying to manage well over 30 students and two different grades is challenging.

But that's actually one of the better cases that I've heard, Mr. Speaker. I've talked to parents and teachers in recent years — a grade 1 teacher actually who was telling me about her class. She's got 32 children in grade 1. I know as a parent of two children, I'm not quite sure . . . I can't even imagine what a classroom of 32 grade 1 children looks like. And in fact she had an EA [educational assistant] for a whopping 15 minutes — or sorry — she had one EA, Mr. Speaker, for two hours a week in a classroom of 32 grade 1 students. She had some children who were in need of English as an additional language. They got 15 minutes of English as an additional language training, two times a week, Mr. Speaker. So I'm not quite sure how you bring kids up to speed and help them grow and thrive in their classroom with 15 minutes of English as an additional language support. I can't even imagine what a classroom of 32 grade 1 kids looks like.

I talked to a teacher who was just telling me recently her school doesn't have the math resources to provide to her kids, so she just has spent \$800 of her own money. She herself is a single mom who doesn't have a lot of money herself, but she wanted to make sure that her kids . . . She needs to have multiple levels of materials for her students, Mr. Speaker.

I spoke to a teacher recently at one of the schools in my constituency actually, probably a school that has more challenges than many in the province around socio-economic issues, parents who are struggling with systemic racism, and struggling with the legacy of residential, Mr. Speaker. This year the teacher that I spoke to recently has 21 kids in her grade 1 class and she has one EA, so she's grateful for one EA, but she talked about being run . . . Her EA, she says, is run ragged and she is run ragged, Mr. Speaker. She's got two children who can't count to three. She's got many students with FASD [fetal alcohol spectrum disorder]. She's got kids who are hungry on a daily basis. She has new students all the time because of insecure housing, Mr. Speaker, kids whose families are struggling with maintaining housing. And these are huge challenges.

[16:00]

Because of this government's budget cut last year, the Catholic School Board in Saskatoon had to cut the Aboriginal liaison workers, which were a huge support for teachers and to ensure that families got their kids to school because not everybody has



a legacy of attending school, Mr. Speaker. And these are things that we have to support folks to do sometimes. This teacher was telling me about she has two children who aren't verbal, and they had, for a period of two months, 15 minutes of speech pathology a day for two months for which she was grateful. But it stopped because the speech pathologist has a huge list of other students that they have to support.

I've spoken to a teacher at a school here in Regina who . . . In fact the copy paper is being rationed because of the . . . The school-based budget is not where it should be at, and in fact the copy paper is locked up and is rationed, Mr. Speaker. This is this government's legacy of education, a government who has had more resources at its disposal than any other government in the history of this province and who doesn't recognize that those investments in children bear fruit 20 years down the road, Mr. Speaker.

There are story after story. I have a nephew who is a teacher in Saskatoon, a brilliant kid who's just finishing his Ph.D. Any child would be lucky to have him as an educator, and I know that he's struggling and he is wondering if education was the right career for him after a decade or so in the profession.

The stats that I've read, I understand we're losing half of teachers in the first five years, Mr. Speaker, half of teachers we're losing in the first five years. So they go through their education and are feeling not supported by a government, by their government, Mr. Speaker, a government who isn't putting the resources into classrooms and into our children and into our future, for all intents and purposes, Mr. Speaker.

It was heartbreaking, actually, one of the conversations that I had recently with an educator who told me she feels like she's failing. It was heartbreaking, as this teacher is crying, Mr. Speaker, and telling me that she wouldn't wish this job on anyone. She says she loves her kids and she knows . . . Like people get into education because they want to make a difference and they want to change lives. And she kept affirming for me how much she loved her kids, but she feels like she's failing them, Mr. Speaker. And as such, I think this government . . . It's not her who's failing those children. It is this minister and this Sask Party government that is failing our students and not . . . It's about today, but it's about the next 20 years and going forward.

I think also about children on reserve, Mr. Speaker. This is a government who can't recognize the injustice of the fact that children on reserve get 60, about 60 cents on the dollar of what my child in Saskatoon receives at a school, Mr. Speaker. Instead of making sure that that isn't an issue and ensuring that kids on reserve have what they need, instead of fighting over jurisdiction, the government needs to get its act together and support those kids as they support . . . Well actually I was going to say as they support kids in the city, in the bigger centres, but the reality is they're not supporting children well anywhere. But there's a huge disparity between kids on reserve and off reserve, Mr. Speaker. So bare minimum, those kids should be receiving the same amount of funding as my child does in Saskatoon, but I think we have to raise the bar for everybody.

So despite this government's grandstanding around this particular bill and the notwithstanding clause, they really need

to start showing people in Saskatchewan that they support our education system and need to invest in our future, Mr. Speaker. We have a government who has some interesting priorities. I don't think that they're priorities of the people of Saskatchewan by and large, Mr. Speaker. And I guess we see how that plays out in the coming years.

But with that, I know that there will be my colleagues who will also weigh into the debate on Bill No. 89, *The School Choice Protection Act*. I know the critic will weigh in, in time, in debate, but will also have many, many questions when we get to committee on this. She will have many questions, I have no doubt about that, Mr. Speaker. But with that, I think I'd like to close my comments and I would like to move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 89.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

### Bill No. 90

[The 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 is a pleasure to rise and enter into this debate again. I was speaking a bit yesterday, but I wanted to make sure I got a few more comments on the record because I do think this is a very, very important piece of legislation. And some of the comments that are flying around the province these days, it's very important that we get them on the record and talk about the issues at hand.

As I said yesterday, we are very blessed to be working in one of most highly regarded heritage properties in this province, if not in Canada, I would think. It'd be certainly up amongst the top 25 I would think, if not higher than that. But of course I'm talking about the Legislative Building here and the grounds that really we are so very, very proud of.

And we did a lot of work over the past few years on the dome, and of course that cost us, I think, somewhere around \$12 million, I think 12 or \$15 million. And it's been pointed out, quite often when you do heritage properties like that, there's a multiplier effect where the benefits that are seen really can be as high as 12 times. So the benefit of doing, maintaining this property here in that one project could be as high as \$200 million.

And I wanted to also give another shout-out to what's happening in Saskatoon and urging people and if they're not aware of the initiative that Wanuskewin is taking on. And it's Thundering Ahead, I think is what it's called. And it's a bold initiative to be a first UNESCO [United Nations Educational,

Scientific and Cultural Organization] site here in Saskatchewan. And there is a lot of merit to that initiative in terms of the archaeological digs, the cultural significance of that area right beside the South Saskatchewan, and the way the city has come together with Wanuskeewin too, that we hope to see bison actually roaming within a few short years. And that will be very interesting to see that kind of thing happening.

So there is a lot of good reasons to get excited about heritage here in Saskatchewan because we really have such a wide range, a real gamut of experiences. And I was talking yesterday, even my hometown of Mortlach which had the first professional archaeological dig in Saskatchewan: it's called the Mortlach Site. And it really is something that, you know, we're pretty proud of. And when you talk to archaeologists, you know, well they get pretty pumped about different things. And I was talking to one at an event just a few weeks ago and it's sort of like the basic 101. You have to talk about the Mortlach dig, and that happened in the mid-'50s. And I actually think that it was part of the ... Was it the Jubilee, the 50th anniversary of Saskatchewan that they were starting to do that in 1955, which is hard to believe that we're here that much further.

Yesterday I talked a little bit about the heritage projects that are happening in Saskatoon Centre and that we're all getting these letters. And I don't think it's any mistake that we are getting these letters. And I'm sure the members over there are. And I know the minister has been cc'd on my letter from the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation to talk about the provincial impact that SHF [Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation] has provided through its grants program since 1991. And I highlighted that in my town, my riding, a couple. One was back in 2006, the Fairbanks-Morse Warehouse restoration and conversion. They received a grant for 13,000.

Then there was just a couple of activities. But the other one that was quite major and I'm quite familiar with as they're often lobbying me and they have been successful in the SHF award — they've had three in 2011, 2012, 2013 — the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist in Saskatoon, of which they've received three awards totalling about 109,000. But to be fair to those folks, they've applied for 300,000 so they've got about a third.

So people don't get all that they need. And I know the work that the people for St. John's Cathedral, a church that's over 100 years old — in fact I think they just had their celebration of their 100th annual service this past summer — it's important work. It's hugely important work because many of us who will know Spadina Crescent in Saskatoon will think about the three churches that are along Spadina, will think about the Bessborough, will think about the heritage properties there along in that area — it's quite a dense area — and how important that is. And so it's something that we should take a lot of pride in, a lot of pride in.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that ... And then they also talk about some of the other things that happened, that they've helped fund: a water tower restoration project in Hague; a log home that was built in 1892 in Shellbrook, they received some money. Indian Head Grand Theatre received \$45,000, and I can imagine that it probably is a pretty impressive theatre and probably deserved that; the Zion Church in Moose Jaw, 33,000. The Bent Nail Cafe in Mossbank received 5,000. And then

there was another one for St. Matthew's Church here in Regina. And in fact it's the church that my wife and I were married in on Winnipeg Street. It received \$25,000.

So there's a lot of work that needs to be done. And this is how Neil Russell closes off the letter:

On behalf of the board, it's my honour to share and celebrate the incredible heritage conservation projects in your constituency and look forward to continuing this important work across the province.

And so it's really critical that we do that and we take a look at that letter and reflect on what this bill ... While the minister says it's pretty straightforward, we do have some questions about it.

And I guess the one big one that I'll have and will be talking about is this: the review board will now consist of at least three people who are appointed solely to carry out the review board duties. And the idea was they wanted somebody at arm's length because the foundation does give out the awards. They do the grants on behalf of the province to different organizations who are wanting to maintain or restore their heritage properties, and sometimes there are appeals or reviews. But it's really important that these three people, I think, have some critical experience or critical expertise in heritage property, that we don't have just all three might be just random people.

Well you know, we would never have a situation where in the Arts Board where we have a process where you don't have people who know something about art, adjudicating art applications. We would never have somebody in the environmental review process, we would never have somebody or three people on a board who know nothing about environmental protection. And we would never have, when it comes to either manufacturing or resource management or where we're talking about just on the industrial sites board, to manage their money, we would never put three people on a board who knew nothing about money. That doesn't make a lot of sense.

And so here we're concerned that the three people who may be appointed solely to carry out the review board duties — I understand the arm's-length thing, and I think that's fair enough if they're not awarding the money — they should have, they should have some expertise, some knowledge that they're working from and that they value heritage property in the province.

[16:15]

I mean if they're just not at all interested in heritage property and they're more interested in development and that's what their real endgame is, to get developers on this board, that could be the worst case scenario: who don't see the value of some of our older properties and rather just see them be torn down. They don't see the actual impact and the leverage that when you invest in heritage property that actually you can do quite well.

I wanted to as well — and this is a letter and I talked about Dr. Merle Massie's letter yesterday — and I wanted to refer back to it. And it's one that just came out just a few short weeks ago. It

was printed in the *Leader-Post* on November 1st this year and the headline was “Province needs to prove that heritage matters.” And I think it’s one that we should listen to this fellow and we should be thinking about and really think about the kind of province that we want to have for our future generations.

I mean the wonderful thing about heritage is, while it’s attractive and beautiful and interesting for the people immediately, it’s even more attractive and interesting and intriguing and interesting for people, generations down the road. We’ve all travelled to places in the world — whether it be Quebec or the Maritimes, any place really — and we’ve wondered at the history of the place. And so the fellow, Dr. Massie, talks about, and he refers to last summer, the Government of Saskatchewan received an international award for heritage restoration done on this dome. And we were all very impressed and happy that that happened.

It took over a year to complete. Many of us actually went up to the dome, and in fact I know my colleague from Prince Albert went up with me. We had our hard hats on and our safety glasses, and it was quite a thing to see. And it was very important. And he talked about how that cost about \$21 million, and actually the return on investment was 252 million for the city of Regina. And that’s an impressive number. That’s very, very important.

The unfortunate thing, and this is something like when I’ve talked about St. James, that in fact not many other groups have that kind of access to \$21 million. They couldn’t all of a sudden say, let’s do the Cadillac version on our church, our theatre; we’re just trying to make do. And so that’s really the issue, that we need to make sure that we do fund the Heritage Foundation and that it’s appropriate.

And we did see a cut last year where the funding from the government was just over 500,000 — 504,000 — and it was cut to \$290,000. There’s not much work that you can really do. They’ve worked hard to be as efficient as they can, to make sure as much money of that gets out the doors, but it’s hard. And when we see a budget clawback . . .

And we talked about the choices. You know, this government over here likes to talk . . . You know, they’re keeping a lot of money in certain areas like Agriculture, \$90 million. They’re keeping — and we know there are people in need in agriculture — 90 million they’re keeping. But it’s choices they have made, choices they have made, Mr. Speaker. They get grant requests from across the province — from universities, cities, churches, banks, libraries, businesses, the small rural churches that are kept standing through bake sales and pocket money and donated hammer time — and the number of requests and the amount of these requests far outstrips the available grant revenue by an order of magnitude, and they just can’t deliver.

So, Mr. Speaker, there were changes. There were changes that happened after, in the last few years. “After years,” and I’m quoting:

After years of growing tension, the government saw fit to quietly let all of the old board members go and appoint an all-new board, no doubt hoping they would be better at bowing. But the new board members are just as smart —

smarter than the old. They formally cut all ties to the ministry, and have hired their own manager and their own grants and a finance officer.

The board and staff are dedicated to serving the province of Saskatchewan, as is their mandate.

So we’ll have some questions to the minister. Is that the case? Is that the case? He goes on to say:

It is imperative that the SHF, with its public granting programs, be arm’s-length from the government. The interference was too much. [Dr. Merle calls on, he says.] I call upon the five Saskatchewan Party leadership candidates to look into this issue, and make it part of their platform. It is imperative that you give the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation transfers directly from the [government] General Revenue Fund, at the level given to other third party agencies . . .

And then he lists, he lists . . . And you know, I’m a big supporter of the other two, or at least of the Saskatchewan Arts Board which received \$7 million last year, or Creative Saskatchewan which received 8 million. So the three arm’s-length boards, one gets \$200,000 and the other two get 7 and 8 million. Now I know the good work that the Arts Board does, and I would hate to see it cut. But I think when you’re cutting, what kind of work can you do for \$200,000? So he challenges us. He challenges us in the legislature. He says:

You’ve proven it yourself. Saskatchewan has a bold, international statement to make through heritage conservation and preservation. Heritage matters.

He goes on:

Therefore we expect our government to support its many inspiring national, provincial, and municipal heritage properties from north to south and from east to west, not just the dome in Regina.

Do better.

So, Mr. Speaker, I really feel that this is not an urban issue. This is not a rural issue. This is a Saskatchewan issue. This is one that we all matter. We’re on a verge of getting a UNESCO site here in Saskatchewan, we hope. We hope. But really the signal needs to be from this province, from this government, that heritage does matter, does matter. And a paltry \$200,000 a year just doesn’t cut it. And while they can be concerned about who’s on the board and the appeal process, we can have that discussion. But I really urge people to take a look at the letter they received, that we all received this fall from the Chair of the board. And then also take a listen to Dr. Merle Massie. I think he’s got a lot to say that we need to pay attention to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Rancourt:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It’s always a pleasure to join in the debate when it comes to discussing some of the new bills that are coming out, and so I’m going to be

adding some of my comments to Bill No. 90, *The Heritage Property Amendment Act, 2017*, Mr. Speaker. According to some of the minister's remarks here, he indicated that *The Heritage Property Act* was established in 1980. And so the primary focus for the Act was to govern the protection, conservation, and development of heritage property in the province, and this enables both the province and the municipal governments to recognize, preserve, and manage heritage properties.

And so, Mr. Speaker, this is really important because in Saskatchewan we have a lot of heritage sites which are really important to our history of our province and to maintain all the stories that our province has.

And, Mr. Speaker, in my constituency we have a lot of heritage sites inside Prince Albert Northcote. And actually my own house was built in 1909, so it's 108 years old. So I really appreciate our historical sites and our historical homes. And we were just talking about some of the beautiful museums that Prince Albert has as well, and I think Prince Albert has done a wonderful job with restoring and encouraging people to utilize our older buildings and heritage sites.

And also growing up I lived just on an acreage between St. Louis and Batoche, so spent a lot of time at Batoche. And so I know museums and history have always been very important in my family and our history, and I love the fact that we keep it well alive in Saskatchewan.

And I oftentimes think of Moose Jaw and how, what a wonderful job they've done with restoring their buildings and keeping them looking really nice. But you also feel like you kind of walk into a time zone sometimes too there, and it's just really lovely. So I think this is important for our government to realize that we have to ensure that we have heritage properties that are properly maintained in our province.

So "heritage property" is broadly defined as any property that is of interest on account of its historical, architectural, and scientific or cultural value. And it provides for the formal designation of heritage property by both municipalities and the province, and that's what the purpose of this Act is.

Some of the amendments that are going to be discussed and presented are . . . One of the first amendments will be to implement an operational separation between the review board and the Sask Heritage Foundation in order to avoid any potential conflicts of interest between these two entities. So the review board will operate separately and independently to provide objective and partial and transparent hearings.

So some of the questions that I had, Mr. Speaker, was what conflicts have already been raised. What were the issues that led to the decision of separating these two, the review board and the Sask Heritage Foundation? I would think that there'd be more transparency and accountability with having two different entities involved. But maybe there's a little bit more to this, and I hope when the critic gets a chance to meet with the minister that they have this discussion because I think it's really important what's led to this decision. And who asked for these changes? Was this something that outside stakeholders were asking for or was it one of the two agencies here, the Sask

Heritage Foundation or the review board, recommending it?

My understanding is that this decision here isn't accepted by some people, you know, and I think it's really important that we hear out what their concerns are and discuss with all the stakeholders and consult with them and ask their feedback. My colleague was talking about how there was some concern about the review board and who would be the members of that board and how they're selected and who makes those decisions. And so I think those are also really good questions to ask when this is brought back to committee.

The second amendment would be to provide an efficient and cost-effective process for amending existing provincial heritage property designations such as alterations to designation, boundaries, and name changes. The hope, with regards to this amendment, is to allow appropriate changes to be made efficiently and cost effectively. And it sounds like they're wanting to expedite the process because the process that happens now is a little bit more cumbersome. But you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, sometimes cumbersome processes are there for a purpose because it allows people to have an opportunity to evaluate the situation and look at all sides, and do some more investigative research and evidence-based decisions, which I was talking in a bill earlier about, you know. And I think that's really important that we keep that in mind as well.

So again, who asked for these changes? And, what was the purpose of wanting to come forward with making these changes, after all these years of doing it the way we have been doing it? So I think it'll be very important that we talk with all the stakeholders and that we have these discussions.

And I know some of my colleagues are going to be wanting to have more input with regards to this bill, and I know that the critic is going to have a lot of questions that they'll want to present to the minister. So with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am going to move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 90, *The Heritage Property Amendment Act, 2017*.

**The Deputy Chair of Committees:** — The member from Prince Albert Northcote has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 90, *The Heritage Property Amendment Act, 2017*. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Chair of Committees:** — Carried.

[16:30]

### Bill No. 91

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hargrave that **Bill No. 91** — *The Snowmobile Amendment Act, 2017* be now read a second time.]

**The Deputy Chair of Committees:** — I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Chair of

Committees. Good to join debate this afternoon on *The Snowmobile Amendment Act*. Certainly winter is upon us in Saskatchewan, and there's some folks I know that are about as keen on sledding as I am on cross-country skiing certainly. And I'm sure there was no end of rejoicing about three weeks ago when we had that great snowfall, only to turn to dismay when we'd watch the, you know, the unseasonably hot, record-breaking hot temperatures come in and change the conditions considerably, Mr. Speaker.

And so one thing I know about Saskatchewan: there are a lot of passionate, avid snowmobilers north to south, Mr. Speaker. I know that some of them are even in this House, although perhaps . . . I'm getting a nod in the affirmative, a vigorous nod in the affirmative from the member from Carrot River Valley. And certainly given his need for speed, Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt that being the case.

But certainly *The Snowmobile Amendment Act, 2017* and the transfer of responsibilities, they're, I guess, different things in the bill. But certainly one of the more dominant themes than what's set out in the legislation here, Mr. Speaker, is the move from a number of responsibilities of what had been with the Highway Traffic Board being transferred to the SGI. And, Mr. Speaker, it'd be interesting to find out why the Highway Traffic Board has been deemed no longer sufficient to carry out these duties, why it made more sense to transfer to SGI. And certainly we'll look to pursue that matter further in committee under closer questioning of the minister.

In terms of updating the definition of non-resident, making it consistent with *The Traffic Safety Act*, again, Mr. Speaker, fair enough. Don't know if we need to stop the press for that one, but certainly that's what happens when you're setting out to modernize the legislation. And probably a good move.

There's an update to the definition of snowmobile to conform with current standards. Now again I don't know if it needs to be fast enough for the member from Carrot River Valley or how that works out precisely, but certainly these things change over time and that's the way it goes.

Removal of the definition of trail permits, those no longer being required, Mr. Speaker. The requirement of licence plates being displayed on snowmobiles or the carrying of a registration permit if the snowmobile is registered by a permit. Again, Mr. Speaker, fair enough, seems like a good move. And again referencing that transfer of different functions between the Highway Traffic Board and the SGI, that it would be SGI and not the Highway Traffic Board to set the expiry date on certificates of registration and licences.

In the legislation it sets out December 1st and April 15th, snowmobile trails being restricted to snowmobiles and trail maintenance equipment. Again, Mr. Speaker, pretty straightforward.

The removal of authority of trail managers to set trail permit fees, making them more uniform, Mr. Speaker, and the snowmobile trails being funded through registration fees. And again it's an interesting . . . I'll be interested to find out myself, Mr. Speaker, how many registered snowmobiles there are, what kind of dollar figures are involved, and how that in turn works

to make the considerable system of snowmobile trails in this province go around, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of again clarifying that it'll be SGI and not the Highway Traffic Board prescribing the form on which accidents are to be reported, again, Mr. Speaker, you know, safe sledding is good sledding. And there are a lot of great snowmobilers out there that do so safely, have a lot of fun, but there's obviously some danger involved with the speeds you can reach on a snow machine. And again that that is more uniformly regulated would only make sense. And in terms of, you know, which is the authority for that, the appropriate form, and then how that relates to insurance, how that relates to different things around health outcomes, if that's involved, Mr. Speaker, then so be it. But again clarifying that it's SGI and not the Highway Traffic Board which is prescribing the form again makes good sense.

And also clarifying that it's SGI and not the Highway Traffic Board that receives accident reports. Again clarifying the respective authorities, Mr. Speaker, and that it is SGI and not the Highway Traffic Board with the authority to restrict or prohibit snowmobile use for safety concerns. Again, Mr. Speaker, clarifying the appropriate authority and then the powers and the different functions that flow therefrom. All pretty straightforward, Mr. Speaker.

I do want to say that as straightforward as the legislation would appear, it's good . . . I know that in the sector there are a lot of great people involved, Mr. Speaker, lobbying, examining the regulations that are in place. I think certainly of the Brewers out of Regina Beach and, you know, a family that's put endless hours into the betterment of conditions and the way that people are able to enjoy snowmobiling in Saskatchewan. And I think of different of the stories from my northern colleagues about the different poker rallies that get going. People going great distances in all kinds of weather on their snow machine. Snowmobiles are about as Saskatchewan as they come, Mr. Speaker.

So again it's good to see the legislation being brought forward. Not anything too earth-shattering here, but good to see them being brought forward, and further proof of good co-operation between the association and the snowmobilers and the government. And I know there are certainly folks in Parks, Culture and Sport . . . And I'm sure the same is true for folks over in SGI and in the transfer of different of these powers from the Highway Traffic Board to SGI. I'm sure there are a lot of good public servants that have impacted Bill No. 91 that we see here before us, here today.

So now all we need, Mr. Speaker, is good, consistent snow and we'll be good to go. So with that, I know other of my colleagues will certainly be hitting the trail for this one as well. And in that regard, Mr. Chair of Committees, I would move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 91, *The Snowmobile Amendment Act, 2017*.

**The Deputy Chair of Committees:** — The member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 91, *The Snowmobile Amendment Act, 2017*. Is that agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Deputy Chair of Committees:** — Carried.

**Bill No. 92**

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hargrave that **Bill No. 92** — *The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Amendment Act, 2017* be now read a second time.]

**The Deputy Chair of Committees:** — I recognize the member from Regina Lakeview.

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's once again my pleasure to rise and enter into debate today on Bill No. 92, *The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Amendment Act, 2017*. This bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is rather straightforward, but I think requires some context and has some significant impact for people in Saskatchewan.

This bill and the next bill, Bill No. 93, are in front of us contemplating a change to both *The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Act* as well as to SaskTel Holdco to allow a maximum aggregate borrowing limit to be raised from 1.3 billion up by another half a billion dollars to \$1.8 billion, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In reading the second reading by the minister, he noted that the borrowing limit has been unchanged since '91 and that it does not allow the flexibility that SaskTel needs to grow and have capacity to respond to any financial demands.

And certainly I think members on both sides of this House have been hearing about the need for increased Internet access and, more so, speed in rural areas, rural and northern areas in this province, and upgrades to those services, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And you know, I've heard people describe access to Internet as sort of the second coming of rural electrification. It is, to business and to schooling and to families, that important. And we've heard that from a lot of different sectors. Certainly I've heard that from the stockgrowers who put some points forward with regard to that. One of the concerns that they had noted was when marketing cattle online, you could actually miss sales because your Internet speed was not fast enough. And certainly that has a huge impact.

When we were in discussions around the libraries Act or the contemplated cuts to the libraries, one of the concerns that we heard from people particularly in small towns and more remote locations was that the library was the one place that they could access the Internet. So they were doing their books there, we heard from some people. They were doing transactions for their small business or their operations in the library. So we certainly have heard that. I know that SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] also passed a resolution in this regard.

And when I think of education in this province, our ability to provide students with access to Internet as well as content really is impacted by their ability, how quickly they can access information — electronic information, digital information.

I think there'll probably be impacts when we think about things in terms of diagnostics, the ability to do medical imaging, remote medical imaging to rural and remote areas. That's another area.

So certainly we understand the need for continued innovation, and that is something that SaskTel has done really quite effectively over the years. As well as providing important employment opportunities, they really have been an innovator over the years. I think of fibre optics. We were a world leader in fibre optics, and that technology came out of the innovation of this very important Crown corporation. And we would like to see, as is no secret, we would like to see that success continued.

And if we have some concern about the future of our Crown corporations, I don't think that anyone who has been paying attention would question that too much. Certainly we have seen a threat to our Crown corporations with the passage and now sort of partial repeal of legislation that would allow the sale of up to 49 per cent of any one of our Crown corporations and some, you know, threats to those jobs that are contained there. And, Mr. Speaker, we've been very clear that that's not something we want to happen.

[16:45]

As well as the innovation that SaskTel provides and the services, the lowest cellular rates in the country, having that third major carrier in the province not only provides low rates but provides downward pressure on the rates of the other carriers, you know. That's but one more benefit for all of us.

The fact that SaskTel has provided half a billion dollars in dividends back to the GRF [General Revenue Fund] in this province, that's also no small measure. And it is something that allows us to pay for things that we all value here in this province, well that people value in this province anyway, Mr. Speaker, like education.

The other context here that I think is important to point out is the borrowing limit, you know, as we've noted some concession with regard to the need to invest in increased technology and availability of high-speed Internet in more areas of the province. This is part of a trend that we have seen, certainly we have seen with SaskPower for example, an increase of their debt ceiling from 5 and then quickly to 8 and then quickly to \$10 billion.

I think over the course of — I'm looking to the critic here — over three years and a doubling of that debt . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Over five years. I stand corrected, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And a current level of debt back in 2008, the public debt in this province was \$18.2 billion. We have seen that grow to the current 18.2 at the end of this year and projected \$22.3 billion by 2021, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And that is something that is a concern. Of course we have had difficult times as some reduction in resource revenue certainly over the last year or two, but the debt was growing even during the best years.

I look back . . . I'm just going to take a screenshot here of some of the projections. Back in 2008 as I noted, sorry, total public debt was \$10.5 billion; 2009, as we're entering some of the years of the 150-plus-dollar-a-barrel oil, there was some reduction down to 7.9. But from that year has steadily increased, 8.2, 8.3, 8.5, relatively stable; 2013, 9.4; and then climbing more rapidly starting in 2014, 10.7 billion, 11.7 billion, 13.4 billion; up to this year, 16.1; and again projected to 18.2 by the end of this year.

I don't know; they're through the contingency already. We'll see what else happens here. But by 2021 — and I'm reading from the budget documents here — up to \$22.8 billion by 2021. And certainly when I mention that to people in the community, they're quite surprised by that. They're surprised that through a decade of growth that we have actually, the government has managed to actually double and almost triple — well, over triple — from the low of 7.8 per cent.

So, Mr. Speaker, I say that in conversation about this bill because we have to think very carefully about the long-term plan here. Certainly we enjoy relatively low borrowing rates at this time. The Premier has mentioned that several times. But that doesn't happen forever. Some of us are old enough to remember when interest rates were much higher. And while there will be a little bit of a buffer, we have seen interest rates, you know, 18 per cent. Our ability to pay this debt off is called into question even at those rates, the current rates at numbers that high.

But when you talk about potential interest rate hikes, which we have seen slow hikes recently, I worry about what we're kicking down the road for our kids. And it makes budgeting choices and choices, you know, to incur more debt — we ought to have a very good reason to do that.

And perhaps I would concur that, you know, that the task of ensuring access to Internet is important. Maybe we ought to look at, you know, other spending decisions and see if there aren't other places that maybe we could have . . . well certainly in retrospect there are many places we could have spent less money. I think of, you know, recent concerns about the GTH is not a small part of that, but other funding decisions.

We also, you know, adding to this concern when we're talking about getting best value for Crown corporations and ensuring that the work there, that it continues to be innovative and supported. It's difficult, as I mentioned, back to Bill 40 and subsequent partial repeal of Bill 40. That sort of uncertainty really draws attention away from the core business of any operation, be it education, be it a private business, be it a Crown corporation.

When you are concerned about rollbacks, you're concerned about what potentially the makeup of your company looks like when there's a vacuum of leadership and certainly direction by the government in terms of . . . and mixed signals about what's going to happen. That has an impact on an organization, and certainly I'm sure that it has things like morale, but just in terms of where energies are spent. It is difficult when there is so much uncertainty.

And we certainly, you know, some of us haven't been here very long yet, but we've already seen a lot of different directions or signals and mixed signals with regard to what the intentions are of this government with regard to our Crown corporations.

I know, you know, initially there were no meetings with regard to the sale of SaskTel. And then there were meetings, and then people were at meetings and they weren't at meetings. And there was, you know, packaging it up to sell 49 per cent, and then we're repealing it. So, Mr. Speaker, I think we would forgive anyone who felt a little bit less than certain with regard

to what exactly the intentions are here.

One of the clear intentions of course with this bill is increasing the borrowing limit and, as I said, I understand some of the reasons for that. It would be interesting to tuck into a little bit exactly what the projections are for how this money will be spent.

One of the things we should always pay attention to when we're talking about borrowing, and certainly one of the measures that's used, is the debt-to-equity ratio. This is from the minister's second reading on November the 15th. He noted that SaskTel's, based on the approved plan, debt ratios are forecast to be 51 per cent. He also notes that industry standard is between 47 to 76 per cent, but that if SaskTel and a SaskTel Holdco did reach their limit at 1.8, that would bump that debt ratio forecast up to 63 per cent, which is getting towards that higher end, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and is something we all . . . You know, when it's the case with one Crown corporation, but when we're piling debt on all of the Crown corporations, that has an impact.

And again, I think, many people have said it, but this is also something that I hear from my constituents: there's a real concern about what we're leaving for our kids in terms of kicking responsibility down the road, which is a reasonable consideration, Mr. Speaker. There has been sometimes, you know, much talk at one point about paying down the debt. And again, as I recognize, there was a dip there one year. But it's been steadily climbing since 2009, again, even during some of the best years of this province. And I think that that is, as I stated before, people really are surprised by that. Sometimes, you know . . . not buried. Certainly this is readily available right within the most recent budget.

But, you know, the fact that we are forecast to be at \$22.8 billion by 2021 really does capture people's attention, and often they're unaware of that. And, you know, there's a message often that we're keeping strong and everything is fine, but that is an increasing concern for people. And when they have a chance to look at the numbers in black and white, I do hear from a lot of people that that is something that they're first of all surprised by, but concerned about as well.

I'm sure we'll have some more comments and questions about this, Mr. Speaker, as we move through the comments and the debates of some of the members on this side. And also I'm sure the critic will have more questions. But I think I have concluded my remarks here with regard to this bill, Bill No. 92, *The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Amendment Act*. And with that I would move to adjourn.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

### Bill No. 93

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed

motion by the Hon. Mr. Hargrave that **Bill No. 93 — *The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Holding Corporation Amendment Act, 2017*** be now read a second time.]

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now for something completely different. I'm afraid some of my remarks on this bill might be curiously similar to the ones that I just made. But I think I will . . . It's worth repeating. I'm getting some nods from this side, anyway. Mr. Speaker, so of course as I sort of gave a little foreshadowing that Bill No. 93 sort of is coupled with Bill No. 92, this being *The Saskatchewan Telecommunications Holding Corporation Amendment Act*. And between these two bills, they contemplate increasing the debt ceiling of SaskTel and SaskTel Holdco, increasing it from 1.3 billion up to \$1.8 billion.

And I think to summarize some of my remarks, on one hand certainly understand the need to invest in infrastructure and to ensure access to the important utility that, you know, perhaps wasn't contemplated in this province not so long ago but has become the way that people do business, the way that they socialize and communicate, and the way that we conduct, increasingly, schooling and, you know, venturing into areas such as medical diagnostics.

The other train of my comments was around just paying very careful consideration to the amount of debt that we're taking on and the decisions that we're making and what we are passing on to people who will be here far after us. I know when last time we were up to \$15 billion in debt in this province, we didn't quite get it paid down. And now through the best years, we're starting to — well we have more than started to — rack it up again. And I think that that bears some scrutiny and some consideration, Mr. Speaker. So with that, I think I have probably doubled up on my remarks a bit and I will continue to talk for a second here.

**The Speaker:** — It now being 5 p.m., this Assembly stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 17:00.]





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