



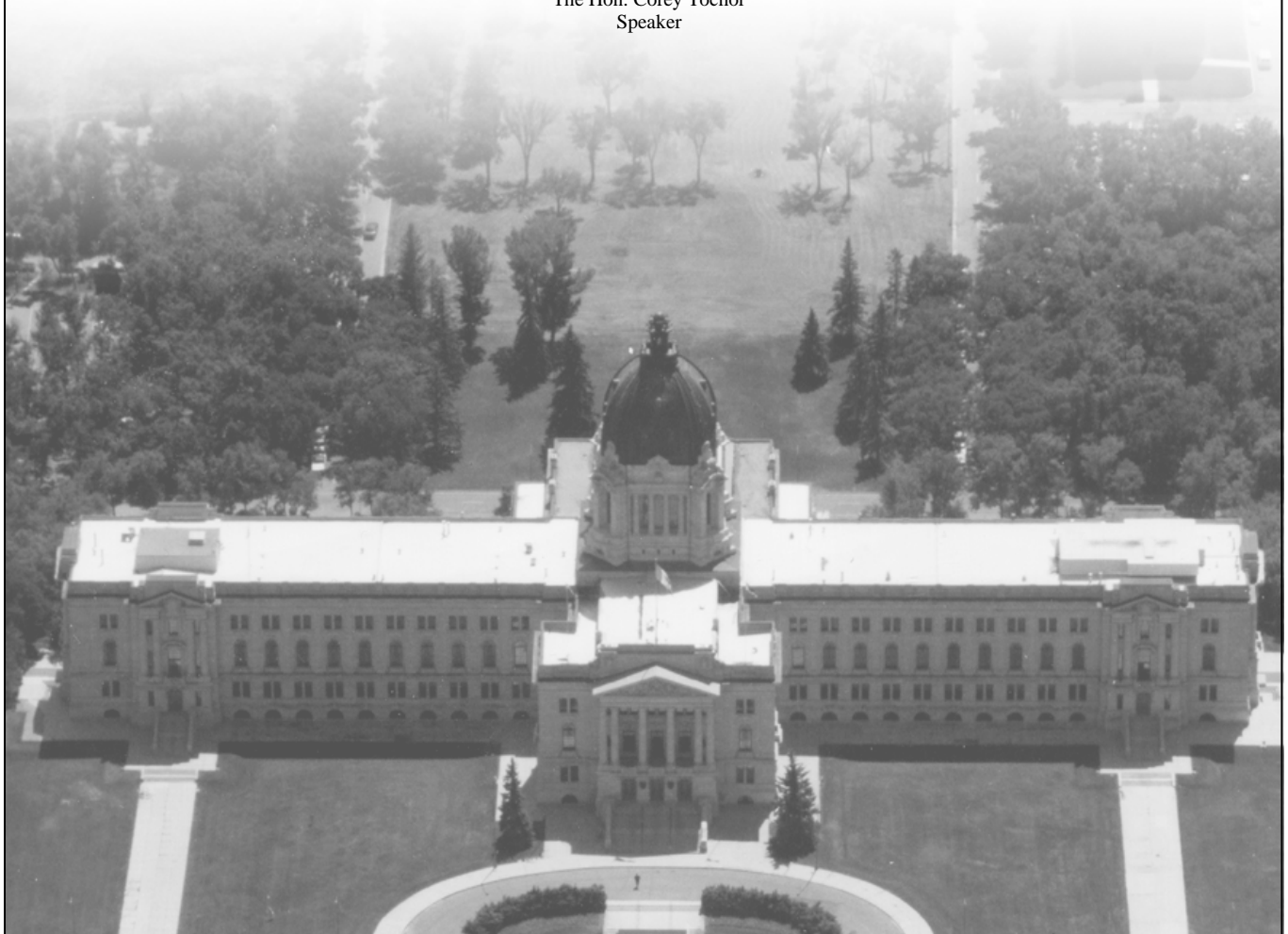
SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

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



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

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

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Makowsky , Hon. Gene — Regina Gardiner Park (SP)	
Marit , Hon. David — Wood River (SP)	Vacancies — Kindersley, Melfort

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

Clerks-at-the-Table

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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. With leave to make an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in your gallery and in the west gallery there are a number of individuals that have braved some pretty difficult travel conditions to be here at the legislature this morning. They were a part of our announcement on a made-in-Saskatchewan climate change plan. They come from business, industry, agriculture, the environmental sectors, to name just a few. There are so many individuals here that I'm not actually going to be able to read into the record every single individual's name, but I do want to note the industries or the businesses that they do represent.

So, Mr. Speaker, joining us we have individuals from the Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce, Evraz, Federated Co-op, Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association, SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association], APAS [Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan], SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities], Saskatchewan Mining Association, Mosaic, Westmoreland Coal, K+S Potash, Husky Energy, Crescent Point Energy, the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, CNRL [Canadian Natural Resources Ltd.], Valleyview Petroleums, CFIB [Canadian Federation of Independent Business], the Regina Chamber of Commerce, the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce, the Global Institute for Food Security, and the Saskatchewan Heavy Construction Association.

Mr. Speaker, these stakeholders and many more will be very vital in the coming months on our consultation process as we develop this plan. And I would ask all members to join with me in welcoming all of these guests from around the province and outside of the province to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister in welcoming all of these officials and business executives to their Legislative Assembly.

I was trying to keep track of and make a list of everyone that was here based on who I already knew, and then when the

minister was describing them, unfortunately I wasn't able to keep up to the minister's words. So please just let me generally say welcome to all of you. It's great to see you all here this afternoon at your Legislative Assembly. On behalf of the official opposition, we'd like to welcome you as well.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Meadow Lake.

Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to welcome Christie Gamble to the Legislative Assembly. Christie was born and raised in Regina. She moved away in 2004 to attend McGill University and later completed an M.B.A. [Master of Business Administration] at Dalhousie University. At that time, she understood that advancing her career meant moving out of the province. Twelve years later, she and her husband, an engineer, were convinced to return to Saskatchewan thanks to the many job opportunities fuelled by our strong economy. She is now proud to raise her children here in Saskatchewan.

While in Halifax, Christie joined a start-up technology firm called CarbonCure, whose mission is to reduce the carbon footprint of the concrete industry. Here in Regina, Christie continues to represent CarbonCure which has since been named one of the world's top 100 clean tech companies, the world leader in carbon utilization potential, and is currently a finalist in the global Carbon XPrize competition based in Alberta.

I'd ask all members to welcome Christie to her Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to introduce guests that we have with us from NORTEP [northern teacher education program] seated in the west gallery today. I'll ask them to give a wave when I mention them. So April Chiefcalf, April is a former faculty member with NORTEP. She spent 16 years with the organization. And Tammy Robinson, also a former faculty member with NORTEP and the student services coordinator, she has 18 years with the organization and initially started out as a student. So I welcome them in their long trip from La Ronge to come join us today and would like to ask all members to join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, I'd like today to introduce, sitting in your gallery, Nadiya Miftakhova. Nadiya, if you could give us a wave over there. I can see her just barely. Anyway, Nadiya is currently working at Crown Investments through the Johnson-Shoyama executive internship program where she's learning all about working in public service and the Crown sector. She's also engaging in research and initiatives in the Crown sector.

Nadiya is in her second year in the program and comes to us from her home in Ukraine. She tells us she's used to the winters

like ours. Well she'd better get used to it for sure. In the Ukraine they have the same type of winters, so she's settling in nicely into Regina. And we're very glad to have her here and we thank her for all her hard work. I encourage all members to join me in welcoming Nadiya to the Assembly today.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, seated in the west gallery I'd be remiss if I did not introduce my most favourite constituent, my best friend, the love of my life, my wife, Fran. I'd ask all members to help me welcome her to her Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Beaudry-Mellor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to quickly also acknowledge the presence of Darla Lindbjerg, the president and CEO [chief executive officer] of the Greater Saskatoon Chamber who is with us; and especially the Chair of the Regina Chamber, who is with us and seated in the west gallery, Tyler Willox, a good friend. He is on many boards in our city. He's on the CNIB [Canadian National Institute for the Blind]. He's on the Regina Airport. He travels extensively for ISC [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan], and in his so-called spare time, he's working on his M.B.A. at Queen's. And it's really great to see you here in the legislature. Welcome, Tyler.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To join in and join my colleague in welcoming a couple of my constituents from La Ronge, I want to acknowledge April and Tammy and just say to them, thank you very much for all the hard work you've done. You've been very dedicated to northern children and helping our northern students, and I want to thank you and welcome you to your legislature. But it's unfortunate for the circumstances that you're here. You know, that is unfortunate. But I would like to say again, thank you on behalf of the constituency of Cumberland. And I would ask all members to join me in welcoming to their Legislative Assembly, and maybe we can make some positive changes for the North. Thank you.

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

Hon. Mr. Bonk: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to request leave for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Bonk: — To you and through you, Mr. Speaker, to all members of the Legislative Assembly, it's my pleasure to introduce two special guests here today who are working on Innovation Saskatchewan's very first rural crime innovation challenge.

The challenge is a new initiative that is part of the government's strategy on rural crime reduction. Its focus is on using technology as a solution to improve the safety and security of

rural citizens and property. The challenge was open to technology companies and researchers in September. Twelve companies and researchers sent in expressions of interests. Four were shortlisted and of these, Mr. Jeff Shirley, who is here today, was the top proponent.

Mr. Shirley, owner and principal consultant of Rivercity Technology Services Ltd., or RCT, is a four-time Microsoft Most Valuable Professional award winner. He holds numerous IT [information technology] certifications and has worked in the industry for over 30 years. RCT is based in Innovation Place in Saskatchewan and has over 100 clients in a number of industries including mining, education, health care, agriculture, and manufacturing.

Also here is Mr. William Topping, founder of Brand X Technologies. Mr. Topping holds patents on a number of technologies he has invented, and Brand X Technologies provides tailored Internet of Things devices.

Mr. Shirley and his firm, RCT, will work with Mr. Topping to deliver the solution for rural crime innovative challenge. Their project is focused on designing and tracking systems and GPS devices that alert landowners about any event or irregular activity on their property. They will design a prototype in a 16-week residency program with the Ministry of Justice. If successful, the prototype will be deployed and a pilot refined as necessary and eventually commercialized.

The response to this challenge is a great example of how local technology entrepreneurs can help solve everyday challenges in our province. Mr. Speaker, I invite Mr. Jeff Shirley and Mr. William Topping to now stand while I ask everyone here to join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to join with the minister in welcoming Mr. Jeff Shirley from Rivercity Technology and Mr. William Topping from Brand X Technologies to their Legislative Assembly. And unless I miss my guess, Mr. Speaker, could be behind the clock up there, but I believe they're here with Ms. Kari Harvey from Innovation Saskatchewan, certainly no stranger to this building, Mr. Speaker.

Anyway it's good to see these individuals here at their Legislative Assembly and certainly we join with the minister in wishing them well, wishing them good luck in terms of the work that they've set out to do, and we look forward to the results. So, Mr. Speaker, again we'd ask all members to join with us in welcoming these individuals to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Nerlien: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure today to rise in the House and introduce to you a long-time educator in my constituency, who has moved on to become a now-famous author. We welcome to our legislature, Gail Krawetz, the author of *Risk and Reward: The Birth and*

Meteoric Rise of the Saskatchewan Party, which has been described as an engaging and must-read book. We're thrilled to see Gail here today, and with her, seated beside her, is her now somewhat less famous husband, who was a former member of the legislature and Finance minister. Welcome Gail and Ken. Thank you.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the member opposite in welcoming Ken Krawetz again to his Legislative Assembly, but more importantly, Gail Krawetz to her Legislative Assembly.

I actually had the opportunity, in light of this week, to finish your book. Yesterday I finished it, and it was quite good. So thank you for that. I'd ask that all members join me in welcoming . . .

An Hon. Member: — When are you crossing the floor?

Ms. Sarauer: — I'm not planning on crossing the floor any time soon, despite what the Premier is heckling. I'd like to ask all members to join me in welcoming Gail and Ken Krawetz to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce a special person in my gallery, if Ryan Vanjoff could please rise, give a wave. Ryan and I have been close friends ever since grade 2, going to school in East School in Esterhazy. Throughout the years, we have had lots of fun, lots of shenanigans we got up to, and lots of learning too.

One of our learning experiences was in grade 11; we were actually in this Chamber. So we were a part of the Saskatchewan Youth Parliament, and we ventured from Esterhazy up to Regina for the weekend. He was the member from your leader, and I was the member from beyond all hope, and we debated things way back over 20 years ago in this Chamber. It is incredible to see him back here. He just moved back from Alberta and was a great support of mine throughout all my endeavours, and I am so appreciative of his support. Could you please welcome the member from your leader to his Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I 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. We all know that a federal carbon tax would do nothing, wouldn't be efficient. It wouldn't be effective, and would only reduce . . . It would do nothing to reduce carbon, but rather would be a tax and a further burden to the economy input of Saskatchewan business and a disadvantage to our economy.

[13:45]

I'd like to read the prayer:

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens of Moose Jaw, Regina, Grande Prairie, and Wiseton. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Once again I'm very proud to stand in my place to present yet another page of petition as it affects the town of Balgonie. And the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

Take the necessary steps and actions to leave the west-in, west-out driving access for vehicles into and out of Balgonie at the intersection of Highway No. 1 and Balgonie's 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. [Mr. Speaker], this gate would allow emergency vehicles access to the eastbound lanes of Highway No. 1 at the Main Street Balgonie intersection, but would not allow the public access to cross the east- and westbound lanes.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as we do every day, we present page after page after page of petitions signed by person after person after person from every town, village, and community in that area. And on this particular page, Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed are from Balgonie. They're from Dalmeny. They're from Regina. They're from Moose Jaw. They're from Edenwold. They're from White City. 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 who've signed this petition wish to bring to our attention the following: Saskatchewan has the highest rate of domestic violence amongst the provinces in Canada; employers should be obligated to reasonably accommodate survivors of domestic violence in the workplace; employees who are survivors of domestic violence should be able to take a leave of absence from their employment without penalty; and Saskatchewan must do 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 No. 605, which we're hopeful that the government will take on and pass. Individuals who are signing 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 to present a petition to the Minister of Environment and the Minister Responsible for the Water Security Agency of Saskatchewan. The folks who have signed this petition want to bring to our attention the following: to reduce inflows in the Quill lakes, the Quill Lakes Watershed Association is proposing the phase 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 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 Ministry of 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 widespread public concern regarding this drainage diversion because of potential environmental changes, and have an effect on a unique, rare, and endangered feature of the environment. 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 project diversion project a development and therefore initiate a full environmental assessment of the project, including public and First Nation consultations; refuse to issue any permits or licenses, 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've signed this petition today are from Regina and Lumsden. I so present.

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

Ms. Rancourt: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to stand today to present a petition for a second bridge for Prince Albert. The individuals who have signed these petitions want to draw 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; and that municipal governments have limited resources and require a second bridge to be funded through federal and provincial governments and not a P3 [public-private partnership] model; and that the Saskatchewan Party government refuses to stand up for Prince Albert and this critical infrastructure issue.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan ask the Saskatchewan Party government to 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 that signed this petition come from Regina. I do so present.

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

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

I'd like to read the prayer:

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

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by individuals from Moose Jaw. 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. Mr. Speaker, this was a decision that came on the part of that government and had a particularly hard impact on the community of Buffalo Narrows in terms of 15 individuals thrown out of work, and a facility that did some good work in terms of rehabilitation and correction, Mr. Speaker, for those who have fallen afoul of the criminal justice system, that they might repay their crimes and work to not reoffend, Mr. Speaker, to get those skills and those life skills that would guard against that.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, this facility was closed by the government in the last budget. The community is not taking it lying down, though, and in the prayer that reads as follows, 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 individuals from the community of Buffalo Narrows. I so present.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling on the Sask Party to stop the cuts to our kids' classrooms. Those who have signed this petition wish to draw our attention to the following: that the Sask Party has cut at least \$674 in government funding for every student across the province; that the Sask Party hiked education property tax by \$67 million while at the same time reducing the total government funding for education by \$121 million; that even though the Sask Party is making us all pay more, our kids are actually getting less; that the Sask Party cuts mean that students will lose much-needed supports in their classroom. This includes funding for kindergartners and programs to help those students with special needs. I'll read the prayer:

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

Mr. Speaker, these petitions are being signed by people all over the province. Today I have folks who have signed from Tantallon, Balgonie, Pense, Regina, and Saskatoon. I do so present.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present petitions on behalf of concerned northerners that have been blindsided by a decision of this government to end the social housing program, something that had a dramatic impact on countless families throughout the North. The prayer reads as follows: to cause the provincial . . .

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to cause the provincial government to restore the rent-to-own option for responsible renters of the social housing program and to reinstate the remote housing program.

And these petitions are signed by concerned residents from Beauval, Saskatchewan. I so submit.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Teepee Project at Victoria School

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, I'm proud today to recognize the fantastic example of the commitment to reconciliation taking place in my own community. The grade 7/8 class at École Victoria School has worked with Donnie Speidel, a cultural resource liaison with the Saskatoon Public Library, to paint a teepee on the grounds of the school.

The teepee, provided through a partnership between the

Broadway Theatre and the Wanuskewin Heritage Park, creates a learning space for students to learn about indigenous history and customs. One of the grade 7 students had this to say about the project:

I thought it was really cool to learn about all the different shapes and meanings while painting the teepee, and I was super excited to help set it up. I had always wondered how it happened. I also love that we can learn about this stuff in person rather than just reading about it.

Mr. Speaker, all members of this House should know that treaty education and learning from our indigenous peoples is necessary for our province to thrive into future generations. I can't express strongly enough how important it is for our young people to learn about our province's shared history in this regard. It's quite inspiring to see the results of these efforts reach beyond just the immediate classroom as the teepee also has the potential to spur these conversations, both in the classroom and the broader community, thanks to its prominent location.

Perhaps Donnie Speidel said best, "I think it has a lot of potential to bring people together, to have discussions and create new learning opportunities. I look forward to that."

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all members, I want to recognize again the outstanding efforts of the students of École Victoria School and encourage all members to take the time to visit the teepee if they pass by.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Estevan.

Memorandum of Understanding on Carbon Capture and Storage

Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, last week the Premier attended the Western Governors' Association winter meeting in Phoenix, Arizona. At the meeting, the Premier signed a memorandum of understanding with the governors from Montana, North Dakota, and Wyoming on carbon capture and storage. This MOU [memorandum of understanding] will encourage information sharing regarding CCS [carbon capture and storage] technology, helping these states continue to build their carbon capture industries.

Mr. Speaker, there was significant excitement for the MOU after it was signed. North Dakota governor might have put it best when he spoke to the ability for these three states and our province to come together and reduce emissions through innovation. This is exactly what SaskPower is working towards with the CCS project.

Mr. Speaker, despite significant advances in renewable energy over the past few years, the world is still dependent on coal power for a significant portion of its electricity needs. And with our country and others' commitment to reducing global warming and to limit future temperature increases to less than 2 degrees Celsius, CCS will have to play a major role. In fact the International Energy association has identified that CCS must account for 12 per cent of cumulative emission reductions in order for us to meet this goal.

Mr. Speaker, this government is proud of the work SaskPower is doing at Boundary dam, and this MOU is a significant step in seeing this innovative technology implemented across the world. Thank you.

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

International Day of Persons With Disabilities

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, December 3rd was the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, which aims to promote the rights and well-being of persons living with disabilities while increasing the awareness of the issues that people living with disabilities face every day.

Across the world, it's estimated that over 1 billion people are affected by some form of a disability.

I want to recognize the outstanding work being done in our own province, specifically through Barrier Free Saskatchewan. Barrier Free Saskatchewan as an organization has been instrumental in fighting for equal and equitable access for people living with disabilities. Just this year they filed over 520 complaints with the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission against 40 restaurants, due to their lack of basic access. From not being able to enter through the front door, to use the washrooms, or to manoeuvre through a facility to a table is a serious access issue for someone in a wheelchair, for example. This is just one example of many of the issues that people living with disabilities might face on a daily basis.

[14:00]

Mr. Speaker, for those who might not live with a disability, we might not think about how inaccessible our everyday lives could be for someone living with a disability. Mr. Speaker, on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, the onus is on all of us to listen to those living with a disability and work together towards a more equitable and accessible province for everyone. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Members Raise Funds During Movember Campaign

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, Tom Selleck can rest easy this month. He once again has the world's best moustache now that many members of this House are clean-shaven. Mr. Speaker, once again we had a very successful campaign, raising awareness and funds for men's health.

This year our team raised over \$4,300. I'd like to recognize all of the members of our team: the Minister of Agriculture; the Minister of Advanced Education; the Minister of Highways and Infrastructure; myself; and our team captain, the Minister of Rural and Remote Health. Having recently completed treatment, the Minister of Rural and Remote Health was the driving force behind our team. He has truly been inspirational throughout his fight and in his effort to raise awareness and funds for this important cause.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to also acknowledge the members opposite's Movember team. Sometimes our exchanges in the House can get heated, but I'm proud to say that we can rise above our differences to both support such an important cause.

But, Mr. Speaker, if I could offer this: I think moustaches on both sides of the House may have been a little more impressive . . . I think that moustaches on this side of the House may have been a little more impressive. On behalf of everyone in the House, I'd like to thank all of those who participated and donated this Movember. Thank you.

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

International Day of Persons With Disabilities

Mr. Buckingham: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On December 3rd people across this province and across the world observed International Day of Persons with Disabilities. This day was first proclaimed in 1992 by the United Nations, and its goal is to promote widespread understanding of disability issues while marshalling supports for the rights, dignity, and general well-being of those living with disabilities. This year's theme was Transformation Towards Sustainable and Resilient Society for All.

Here in Saskatchewan, our government has taken many steps to create a more inclusive society, ensuring that this province is a province for all. Mr. Speaker, our province has set a vision for the people of Saskatchewan as we take steps to become a more inclusive province that is welcoming, responsive, and innovative.

Mr. Speaker, this day is an opportunity to reflect on our diverse communities to see how far we have come and understand the necessary steps that are needed to be taken moving forward. I encourage businesses and organizations every day to celebrate their accomplishments and continue to strive for an inclusive and welcoming environment.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members please join me in celebrating International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Batoche.

Soccer Teams Medal in Provincial Tournament

Mr. Kirsch: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to recognize the Middle Lake Avengers and Lake Lenore Lancers soccer teams for both taking home medals at this year's 1A provincial tournament. Mr. Speaker, the boys' Middle Lake Avengers brought home the gold, while the Lake Lenore Lancers took second.

The Avengers entered the tournament as the top and dominated every team in their path. The provincial final game was a rivalry match against the Lancers and the Avengers. It was a hard-fought match, and the Avengers came out victorious, winning 2-0.

Mr. Speaker, the Middle Lake Avengers girls' squad took home

second in the provincial 1A tournament. Despite coming into the tournament as a lower end, the team refused to back down, taking out teams all the way to the final, earning a silver medal.

It was a great season overall for the boys' and girls' Avengers team as well as the Lake Lenore Lancers. Both the 1A girls' and boys' soccer teams fought hard to represent their communities in the provincial tournament, making their fellow students and towns very proud of their achievements.

Mr. Speaker, I now ask that all members join me in congratulating the Middle Lake Avengers and the Lake Lenore Lancers soccer teams on a successful provincial tournament; as well, the coaching staff for their commitment to the sports in their community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Climate Change Strategy

Mr. Bradshaw: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today our government released a climate change strategy that reduces emissions in key sectors, introduces flexible options for emitters, and protects our province from a changing climate — all without a carbon tax.

This approach is called *Prairie Resilience: A Made-in-Saskatchewan Climate Change Strategy*. Our climate change strategy is about protecting our people and communities as much as it is about working with industry and others to lower emissions here in Saskatchewan. And we do plan to significantly reduce emissions in key sectors, but we will do so in a way that is economically sustainable and promotes economic growth. The strategy proposes actions in key areas including natural systems; physical infrastructure; economic sustainability; community preparedness; and measuring, monitoring, and reporting. Regulations will be developed through consultation beginning in 2018 and will recognize actions already taken by industry to reduce emissions.

Mr. Speaker, we have a good story to tell when it comes to climate change. This includes agriculture, where our producers sequestered over 11.9 million tonnes of carbon in 2015. An offset system will create additional value for actions that result in carbon sequestration or reduced emissions, especially from agriculture soils, wetlands, and forests. Mr. Speaker, we're proud to release this strategy on behalf of the people of our province. Thank you.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Effects of Tax Legislation on Businesses

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week the Sask Party took to social media and their fundraising email list and pushed political spin and hypocrisy to a new level.

But they were the ones who raised and expanded the PST [provincial sales tax] on Saskatchewan families and businesses. And to add insult to injury, they stopped paying businesses to

collect the increased PST for them. Mr. Speaker, instead of undoing the damage they've done to small businesses, because they are the ones who create more new jobs than anyone else, they didn't help small business owners at all. Instead, the Sask Party just changed another definition. Mr. Speaker, nowhere else in the country are businesses that large considered small.

So, Mr. Speaker, people want to know why did the Sask Party make this change? Well the former Finance minister says there are members of his caucus who own these businesses. Can the Premier tell the people of Saskatchewan which Sask Party MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] will benefit from this new \$11 million tax giveaway?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, this is an incredible question coming from the opposition. Mr. Speaker, I would want to share with members of the House a fact that I would hope that they would know, and that's that 80 per cent of the jobs in this province are created and sustained by the small-business sector. The specific changes that the NDP [New Democratic Party] voted against were for the small-business sector, Mr. Speaker.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I guess members opposite know more than the Canadian Federation of Independent Business or the chambers of commerce, Mr. Speaker. You see, those organizations actually talk to small business, unlike members opposite. Those organizations represent those small businesses, and they advocated or at least supported a change that we made when we moved off a reduction on the corporate tax and provided the relief instead to the small-business sector, Mr. Speaker.

It will be very much part of the record that when the NDP had the chance, in a difficult economic time, when they had a chance to support the small-business sector, they stood up in their place just last week and one by one, including the Leader of the Opposition, voted against a tax reduction for small businesses that create 80 per cent of the jobs in this province. Mr. Speaker, it is that side of the House that has some explaining to do.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Lots of rhetoric, Mr. Speaker, but the Premier clearly didn't answer my question at all. And the Premier doesn't get it. Mr. Speaker, there are 6,400 fewer Saskatchewan people with a job today than a year ago. In fact no other province saw a larger drop in the number of people working as Saskatchewan did last month. But the Sask Party's new giveaway doesn't help any of those people and doesn't help real small businesses.

Mr. Speaker, when the member from Nutana asked the minister if she had an estimate of how many jobs this tax giveaway would create, the minister scoffed and said she did not. And when she asked if they had engaged any experts to do the analysis for this bill, the minister said, "No."

Mr. Speaker, no wonder the Sask Party are failing workers so badly. Instead of reciting the same old lines and ignoring the reality being faced by Saskatchewan people, will the Premier

admit that their heartless cuts to important programs and services and tax breaks for the wealthy and well connected are hurting people and only making the struggle to find a job here in Saskatchewan even harder?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — You know, Mr. Speaker, I guess in this House in question period you're going to hear from members on that side of the House, and then often, not always, but often it'll be in disagreement with members on this side of the House.

And then I think it's fair on a question like that where there is some debate or division about, for example, who this tax reduction benefits, that we would go to those who represent the stakeholders involved, that we might check with those who represent independent small businesses in the province rather than check with the NDP whose track record, Mr. Speaker, in economic development was to lose for this province a generation of young people. Well you might want to check with chambers of commerce and the Federation of Independent Business who, Mr. Speaker, in principle, support the changes that members voted against.

But I congratulate the fact that the hon. member is happy to ask questions on it day after day. Because each time she does, it exposes the NDP as worse than really the same old NDP that was responsible for losing a generation of people. It exposes an NDP, Mr. Speaker, that has lost touch with Saskatchewan people, that is disconnected from those who create and sustain jobs for Saskatchewan people. If she opposes a business reduction for small businesses, she's welcome to that position, Mr. Speaker.

On this side of the House, a side of the House that has presided over the last 10 years, over the second-best job creation record in the country versus dead last for the last 10 years of the NDP . . . She can carry on with her position. Saskatchewan people have made their choice, Mr. Speaker.

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

Support for Northern Post-Secondary Education

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, the members opposite should be less smug. There were 6,400 fewer people working this November than last November. And the cuts are making things worse.

The Minister of Education's condescending words about treaty education raised a lot of concern over the last month. But the cuts to indigenous education that she led as Advanced Education minister have already had concrete consequences. It was just last spring that she led the charge to destroy NORTEP.

Mr. Speaker, Jerrilynn McKay is a Métis woman from Cumberland House. She was a second-year student in NORPAC [Northern Professional Access College], about to transfer to the NORTEP program. She wants to teach in the North. Like many, many others, she was forced out of school when the Sask Party scrapped NORTEP-NORPAC.

Mr. Speaker, Jerrilynn had a question for the Minister of Education, so I'll ask on her behalf: "Why would she take something away that was running successfully for 41 years?"

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

Hon. Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome our two guests here tonight. We're glad to see you in the Assembly this afternoon.

But, Mr. Speaker, our government is absolutely remaining committed to delivering quality post-secondary education to northern communities. And the consolidation of the educational program in the North is all about expanding programs, Mr. Speaker, and enhancing the access for northern students, while we also can ensure that that program remains at high quality and it is sustainable.

And I can confirm, Mr. Speaker, today that student supports, as per the board motion passed by Northlands on April 21st of this year, will be honoured. And after, Mr. Speaker, after we discovered the supports promised were not being honoured, the former minister asked officials to take corrective measures and ensure all supports were going to be provided to NORTEP.

We acknowledge, Mr. Speaker, that this transition has been a challenge for the community, and we are confident that the enrolments will increase as Northlands College continues its recruitment efforts. Thank you.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, again, they're making it up as they go along. The minister is talking about expanding and enhancing programs. Students knew their program was being cut, but they didn't know what supports would be available to them. These are not families that can afford to plan around so much uncertainty.

Mr. Speaker, the selection committee from the North unanimously chose Gabriel Dumont Institute, but the former minister responsible said she knew best and overrode that decision. And the confusion that came afterward is costing these students and the North dearly. Jerrilynn put it clearly when she said, "In the North, we have hardly anything. Indigenous people always get the short end of the stick."

Mr. Speaker, can the current Minister of Advanced Education admit that these consequences are serious? And will he commit to no further cuts to indigenous teacher training programs like SUNTEP [Saskatchewan urban native teacher education program] for example?

[14:15]

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

Hon. Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I'll once again repeat that education in the North is very important to us and that consolidation was about expanding. And furthermore, Mr.

Speaker, Northlands College has over 40 years experience in educating northerners, and I think they're very capable of continuing. And since that time we've seen significant increases in their university education.

I'll just give you an example. Since 2007, Mr. Speaker, the university education programing has increased by 226 per cent or some 232 students. Many of the aspects of this program, Mr. Speaker, will not change for the transitioning students including the teaching facilities, the delivery model, and at least three of the longest serving NORPAC-NORTEP instructors. But, Mr. Speaker, in the communities of Air Ronge and La Ronge of approximately 3,700 people, we felt the best use of taxpayers' money was to reduce duplication in that area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — That minister knows that his party doesn't do enough for the North. NORTEP gave hope and opportunity to communities that needed more of both, but still they cut and look at what happened. Mr. Speaker, as Rob Clarke said in their last leadership debate, "They drew a line from Melfort to Saskatoon to North Battleford and neglected the North."

Mr. Speaker, in 10 years, unless there has been a tragedy, the Premier almost never comes to the North. Why does the Sask Party ignore the North except when they want to make more cuts?

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

Hon. Mr. Cox: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And once again I'll just repeat that our government is committed to continue working with First Nations, Métis, and our northern communities on delivering a high-quality education. Across government, Mr. Speaker, this year we provided \$425 million for First Nations and Métis education since 2007-2008, Mr. Speaker. Advanced Education alone, Mr. Speaker, has invested \$17 million in 2017-18 targeted funding for First Nations. In La Loche, Mr. Speaker, the ministries of Advanced Ed and Education have partnered with the First Nations University of Canada to offer a Dene Teacher Education Program, the DTEP.

We're going to continue working with our northern partners, Mr. Speaker, and certainly we're going to watch as they progress.

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

Benefits of Carbon Capture and Storage

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, for one last time the Premier recently travelled out of province to brag about Boundary dam 3 and carbon capture. While there he signed a memorandum of understanding, while there he signed a memorandum of understanding with three American states to advance carbon capture research and technology. Mr. Speaker, the Premier said that the partnership means that we are "...committed to sharing knowledge on this important technology..."

Really? We have to wonder if the Premier is truly sharing all of his knowledge about carbon capture with the three partner states. Did he tell them how often the facility is down for maintenance? Or how in the past year, it's been operating on average at just 63 per cent capacity? Did he tell them that? Did he mention how SaskPower's own CEO is recommending against any plans to expand CCS in the future? Mr. Speaker, did the Premier tell all of this to the states that he signed this agreement with? And will he tell us just how many more hundreds of millions of dollars he will make Saskatchewan people pay for the Sask Party's CCS experiment?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to confirm, in wake of the member's question, that we did sign an MOU with Montana, North Dakota, and Wyoming. They are very much interested in what we've done here and the leadership that we have demonstrated on the CCS file, Mr. Speaker.

We talked about a number of things. We noted for example that the International Energy Agency is saying that if the world is going to meet Paris targets, that CCS must deliver on 14 per cent of the emissions reductions worldwide. We noted that there are 1,600 coal plants being built around the world, and we needed an answer to clean that coal up. We absolutely talked about the fact there were commission-year challenges with this new technology. We noted the boilerplate capacity of the plant and how that capacity was not met in that first year, in the first number of months.

We also noted though that last month, the month of October, 85 000 tonnes captured, Mr. Speaker. We noted there was 1.75 million tonnes of CO₂ captured, Mr. Speaker, and used for EOR [enhanced oil recovery], Mr. Speaker. And the other states that are involved understand that CCS is part of the solution. The United Nations understands that CCS is part of the solution.

The only folks that don't understand it is the Saskatchewan NDP and yes, we may have talked a little bit about them too. I said, back home I had an opposition party that would shut down the coal industry because that's what the member said. Back home we have an opposition party whose critic that just answered the question supports the Leap Manifesto, Mr. Speaker. But, Mr. Speaker, I assured them with the good work on this side of the House, they needn't worry because those opposition members would stay opposition members.

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

Global Transportation Hub and Details of Land Transactions

Ms. Sproule: — Talk about getting it wrong, Mr. Speaker. But the problem is, is that the waste keeps on piling up. We've spent a lot of time these past few weeks uncovering new examples of mismanagement, scandal, and waste at the GTH [Global Transportation Hub], and more and more details keep emerging about this government's troubling land-buying practices at the GTH.

Mr. Speaker, on April 3rd in 2012, the Yanke Group of Companies purchased property at the GTH for just \$40,000 per acre. But on that same day, Mr. Speaker, Highways bought back a parcel of land from Loblaw for \$160,000 per acre. Mr. Speaker, why did Highways pay four times the price for this land than they charged for the land just across the street?

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have to say I'm a little disappointed, only one question from the member on carbon capture and sequestration, especially on a day like today where we have some made-in-Saskatchewan climate change plan, in which the members have asked for a made-in-Saskatchewan plan. We've delivered it. One that includes a tech fund, we've delivered it, Mr. Speaker. So it'll be interesting to see whether or not the members go with the carbon tax, cap-and-trade, or a made-in-Saskatchewan plan, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the member's question, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the member's question, obviously we'll have to look into exactly the land that the member's talking about. Perhaps it was serviced land compared to unserviced land, developed land, undeveloped land, bare land compared to land that's already been developed, Mr. Speaker.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think, as I've said before, this is a generational opportunity for the province of Saskatchewan, one that has created nearly \$500 million, half a billion dollars in private sector investment in just a half a dozen years, Mr. Speaker. We're going to work to see that it's a success moving forward.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, either Highways overpaid Loblaw or Yanke got a sweetheart deal from the GTH, and either way Saskatchewan taxpayers got hosed. Once again the Sask Party can't seem to understand that the GTH is supposed to be in the making money by selling land business, and not the losing money for overpaying for land business. Mr. Speaker, the GTH is giving land away at low prices to private corporations with one hand and then buying it back at exorbitant prices with the other.

Mr. Speaker, the minister is unable to explain why Highways paid such a price for the land that they bought from Loblaw when at the same time, on the same day, the GTH sold a similar parcel of land to a private company for far less. So, will the minister provide the appraisals that led Highways to pay \$160,000 per acre for the Loblaw land but sell similar land on the same day for a quarter of that price?

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

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the member from Athabasca wants another speech, so I'll give him another speech, Mr. Speaker. On March 4th, 2013, this is what that member had to say:

... this opportunity that the NDP envisioned in '06 [that they envisioned in 2006, so the GTH, the Global Transportation Hub, their idea], that it would be absolutely phenomenal for the city to work in concert with these companies to encourage job creation, to encourage investment.

Mr. Speaker, 862 full-time jobs, Mr. Speaker, 1,804 construction jobs, Mr. Speaker, and \$485 million in private-sector investment — in terms of the standards that that member opposite in this House brought forth, well I think we've met both of those. And we're only a couple of years in operation, Mr. Speaker.

With respect to the member from Nutana and her question, I don't exactly know the land descriptions that she's talking about. I don't know if it's bare land compared to developed land, whether there were improvements on the land. Obviously that member opposite would have to take that into account if she's asking for an apples-to-apples comparison. In her case it may be an apples-to-Volkswagens comparison for all I know.

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

Amalgamation of Health Regions

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, from land sales to health care services, the Sask Party can't seem to get their facts straight or get the jobs done right.

Today is the first day of the new provincial health authority. This is a huge change for our province. It has already cost taxpayers \$4 million in executive severance packages alone. And the very first thing they did was stack the board with Sask Party supporters.

Mr. Speaker, people are understandably concerned about what's coming next, but the minister says everything is under control and there's nothing to worry about. But a report last week showed Nova Scotia is still working through problems with the amalgamations of health authorities that they started more than four years ago. Mr. Speaker, after all the Sask Party cuts, what concrete assurances can the minister give Saskatchewan people that our health services are not in jeopardy?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The amalgamation of the health regions is the result of a very well-done report by a three-person panel that was released last year around the end of the year, Mr. Speaker. We are implementing all the recommendations that that panel suggested.

Mr. Speaker, this is a huge undertaking. There's 40-some thousand people that work in the health care field in this province. It's going to be in excess of a \$5 billion budget, Mr. Speaker. It's a huge undertaking.

We are learning from what happened in other provinces, in Nova Scotia as the member opposite suggested, and Alberta. Recently there was a conference, Mr. Speaker, and some of the

speakers were from Alberta. The Alberta Health Services vice-president of collaborative practice, nursing and health professions, Sean Chilton, Mr. Speaker, was one of the people that addressed the crowd. He said that in Alberta about \$600 million has been saved in administrative costs since the amalgamation of the health regions. Mr. Speaker, this is a huge undertaking, this is an important milestone along the way and, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to subsequent questions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Funding for Task Force and Mental Health and Addictions Issues

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, last spring the Minister of Health said Saskatchewan's meth crisis was hard to predict. He should talk to his colleagues because in 2004 the Premier, the then leader of the opposition, asked, "Does the government have a handle on the prevalence of it?" Mr. Speaker, the crisis the Premier was talking about has really spiked since 2015, and it took until last spring for the government to put together a task force. If only they'd given the task force the money they need.

Mr. Speaker, these are good people working hard and doing what they can. But in the very beginning the Saskatoon Health Region addictions consultant, Dr. Peter Butt, said, "The frustration is that it's being done in the context of significant fiscal restraints." Mr. Speaker, instead of bragging about the task force or defending the government's cuts from social services to health care, can the minister commit to more funding to address this crisis?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, the minister wasn't bragging about the amalgamation of the health regions. Mr. Speaker, that's a very important step towards providing consistency of health care to everyone across the province.

Mr. Speaker, to the issue on addictions and crystal meth, we take that issue very seriously. It's been a topic of discussion at federal-provincial-territorial Health ministers' meetings for quite some time, Mr. Speaker. We take the issue of all addictions very seriously. We've continued to fund mental health and addictions, Mr. Speaker. We'll continue to do that. We are looking forward to making appropriate use of every dollar that the federal government has earmarked for mental health for the provinces. Mr. Speaker, I just don't agree with the premise of the member's question; we take this matter very seriously.

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

Support for Northern Education

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Back to the North: last spring when I asked the then minister of Education, he indicated that changes to northern governance of the K to 12 [kindergarten to grade 12] system could be undertaken as early as this fall. But like their commitment not to allow cuts to

support programs for pre-schoolers, that promise faded into the sun. Mr. Speaker, we saw with NORTEP-NORPAC, and as we should all know, that changes made to any community, but especially in the North, these must be done in close consultation if they're to be successful.

[14:30]

To quote from a briefing note to the minister this August: "Otherwise communities will view these changes as being done to them rather than with them." Mr. Speaker, can the minister provide an update on the plans for government changes in northern divisions and will she commit today to ensuring full and complete consultations before imposing any changes?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the answer is absolutely yes. And we've been very clear on that point, Mr. Speaker, that no changes will be made without fulsome consultations in that and other regards, particularly as impact a boundary and other changes, Mr. Speaker.

I think it's important in the context of the overall picture in the North that we emphasize that those supports stretch across ministries and across government, Mr. Speaker. We've provided a total of \$425 million for First Nations and Métis education and training initiatives since '07-08. These are relevant to this context, Mr. Speaker. In '17-18 the ministries of Advanced Education and Economy have provided nearly 23 million for income supports, post-secondary education and training programs in the North.

The Minister for Advanced Education has referenced the Dene Teacher Education Program. Northlands College is training future northern teachers right now across the North in La Ronge, Buffalo Narrows, Creighton, and Ile-a-la-Crosse. Mr. Speaker, several of many commitments to the North.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Understandably people in the North are looking for more than just nice words from that minister. They're looking for plans, detailed plans around these consultations. Mr. Speaker, this is a chance for that minister to redeem herself after all the mistakes that she made in shutting down NORTEP and NORPAC, and after her controversy around her commitments to treaty education. If the minister hopefully has learned that she doesn't actually know best and that consultation will be key to ensuring that any of these changes actually meet the needs of people in the North, so this is a simple question. I'm asking for details today, Mr. Speaker.

What is stopping that minister from providing details to a full and complete consultation before they make any changes to northern governance?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, we've already committed to that, Mr. Speaker. And so to reassert the commitment to the North, I think it's important that we

remember what has actually been accomplished for the North, Mr. Speaker. When we formed government in '07 the student/teacher ratio in the North was 18. Today it's 16.5. Since '07-08, funding has increased to our northern school divisions by 28.5 per cent. The number of school-based educators has increased, Mr. Speaker, by 4.7 per cent.

When we formed government, we have increased the number of teachers since then in the North and increased school division funding levels, despite the fact that student enrolment has declined by 2.2 per cent, Mr. Speaker — important action versus talk.

The Speaker: — Why is the Government House Leader on his feet?

Hon. Mr. Brkich: — Point of order.

The Speaker: — I'll hear the point of order. I recognize the member.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Mr. Brkich: — At roughly the 17 minute of question period, I heard the member from Athabasca yell from his seat, that's a lie. That is considered unparliamentary language. I would ask that you ask the member to withdraw and apologize for that remark.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure what the member opposite is referring to in terms of the remarks attributed to the member from Athabasca. I'd urge you to review the tape to see if that is in fact what had happened and return to the House with a ruling further, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I was listening carefully during question period. I would like to remind members, you cannot heckle what you cannot say on your feet. However, I did not hear specifically what the member from Athabasca heckled, and I will have to review what was captured. I will return with my ruling at a later date.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

Release of Saskatchewan Climate Change Strategy

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in October's Speech from the Throne, the government committed to introducing further actions to reduce emissions while we continue to oppose a federal carbon tax on Saskatchewan.

Today our government has honoured that commitment with the release of a strategy called Prairie Resilience: A Made-in-Saskatchewan Climate Change Strategy. Today we released a comprehensive, forward-looking climate change strategy designed to make Saskatchewan more ready and more resilient to the impacts of climate change. It is an innovative and flexible approach that includes multiple options for

facilities in the province that emit greenhouse gases. The strategy includes new output-based performance standards for large emitting facilities as well as a new offset system and technology fund.

The strategy supports the province and its people by curbing emissions and preparing for changing conditions, all without a tax. A responsible climate change strategy needs to protect our industries and can't focus on a tax that unfairly burdens a province such as ours, where we rely on natural resources and trade, where we produce food and commodities, and provide technology for the rest of the world.

A responsible climate change strategy also needs to acknowledge that even if we reduce our emissions to zero, global climate change will continue to affect our province. We need to be ready and resilient to the effects of a changing climate, and I want to stress what we mean by resilience and why it's important.

Resilience is a much stronger indicator of effective climate action than simply measuring reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, because it measures our overall ability to adapt, innovate, and even thrive. Multiple systems need to be strengthened to improve the resilience of the province as a whole. This includes the ability of Saskatchewan's natural systems, including our land, water, and forests; infrastructure; communities; and economy to adapt and thrive in a changing low carbon economy.

In the strategy you'll see actions proposed in key areas including natural systems; physical infrastructure; economic sustainability; community preparedness; and measuring, monitoring, and reporting. Each section includes a list of policy commitments that we will further develop and engage stakeholders on. We will implement sector-specific output-based performance standards for facilities that emit more than 25 000 tonnes of emissions per year. In Saskatchewan this includes uranium mines, gas plants, refineries, steel manufacturing, and upstream oil and gas activities.

These facilities will have flexible options, including an offset purchase; a best performance credit; engaging in market mechanisms outlined in the Paris Agreement — specifically, internationally transferred mitigation outcomes; or paying in to a technology fund. A provincial tech fund will be enacted to meet performance standard obligations and provide investment in transformative technologies and innovation.

We will develop and implement an offset system that creates additional value for actions that sequester carbon and reduce emissions, especially from our cropping systems and forest management practices. The offset system is designed to recognize the agricultural community and other land management practices in our province that are already addressing greenhouse gas emissions. These performance standards for large-emitting facilities will be developed in consultation with industry for implementation in early 2019.

In addition, we will continue to work with companies in upstream oil and gas to develop sensible and effective regulations for greenhouse gas emissions, and we appreciate the work that some producers are already pursuing in this regard.

To address emissions from methane produced in oil and gas, policies will be explored to create market demand for this potential resource. These measures are expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from Saskatchewan's upstream oil and gas industry by 40 to 45 per cent of 2015 levels, or between four and four and a half megatonnes.

Regarding physical infrastructure, we will introduce regulations governing emissions from electricity generation from SaskPower and independent power producers and meet the province's commitment of up to 50 per cent electrical capacity from renewables by 2030.

We will also implement strategies around transportation and related infrastructure to look for opportunities for fuel efficiency and other impacts. We'll adopt the National Building Code and National Energy Code, and look for other energy performance measures in homes and buildings. And we will prepare our communities for the effects of climate change with flood plain mapping, preparedness plans, and municipal projects.

We believe the strategy is more thought out, more responsible, more innovative than any carbon pricing plan in Canada, and especially will be more effective than a singular and harmful carbon tax. The strategy we're releasing today is a made-in-Saskatchewan climate change action plan that meets the needs of our businesses, our residents, our economy, and our environment. Our plan outlines the province's strategic direction to kick off a new, more comprehensive conversation on how we're preparing for climate change.

Consultation and engagement will strengthen our ability to implement a plan that meets the needs and characteristics of our province. I know our strategy will make us resilient to the effects of climate change while still addressing emissions in key sectors. And I know this strategy will protect families, the employees, industries, and economies that Saskatchewan relies upon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the minister for providing his comments in advance so that we could have an opportunity to respond, and certainly my apologies for not using question period because I knew this opportunity was coming at this point in time.

Anyways, Mr. Speaker, until now when we called for this, they said it was itself a carbon tax . . . Oh I'm sorry. Okay. Excuse me, Mr. Speaker; I got my pages mixed up. Okay. When we called for this plan, Mr. Speaker, they said it was a carbon tax. For years from the other side on this issue, their rhetoric has been forceful but their plan has been non-existent. And despite the big announcement today I'm not sure a whole lot has changed.

We do have some concerns, Mr. Speaker. We have seen them present plans before and then refuse to act. And even if they do make it law, there are no clear targets highlighted in this plan. Almost a full decade, years, and a plan without targets is no plan at all.

Whenever they get close to something concrete like the resilience measure, we keep seeing the words, "to be determined." It seems like the minister himself has no idea if this plan will be enough to protect Saskatchewan from the federal carbon tax. That arrogance is already hurting Saskatchewan people. And shaking fists toward Ottawa may make them feel better, but it's not enough to stop the federal tax. To truly protect ourselves from the federal carbon tax, we need a truly made-in-Saskatchewan true plan.

Now we're happy to see that methane was included but, again, there's no actual plan. It's also good to see that Saskatchewan people's homes and buildings were also considered, but these initiatives need to be part of a full, fleshed-out plan.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite have played a lot of politics with this issue. But now that they're claiming to have a plan, the problem is it's actually an announcement without a plan. We need to make sure that it actually protects the air that we breathe, the water we drink, and that it serves the needs of Saskatchewan families. Instead of this assurance, we have "to be determined." We have no targets and we have no guarantee that it will even protect us from the federal carbon tax.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am glad that the minister finally made an announcement of some kind, and I applaud that. It's a first step from a party that has, until now, preferred to scream from the sidelines. But now we look forward to seeing the details from this announcement, getting them laid out, hearing from stakeholders. And I hope the minister and the members opposite see this as a starting point. And I hope they're open to building on what they announced today and working with us and the experts to build something that we can truly call both made-in-Saskatchewan and a solution.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

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 rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 113, *The Planning and Development Amendment Act, 2017*. *The Planning and Development Act, 2007* provides the legislative framework for municipalities to manage and facilitate development of their communities. This framework supports municipalities with the tools to achieve economic growth, environmental stewardship, and social and cultural well-being for their communities.

Mr. Speaker, this bill will incrementally improve Saskatchewan's land use planning framework and save taxpayers money. The bill strengthens existing legislation to help municipalities plan regionally, support opportunities for municipal and provincial infrastructure to service department, clarify a planning process for the use of municipal reserves for school purposes, and address miscellaneous items.

[14:45]

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Government Relations consulted extensively with internal and external stakeholders to prepare this bill. Preliminary engagement sessions were undertaken in 2014 and 2015. In 2016 and 2017, the ministry undertook 25 engagement sessions involving stakeholders representing 59 different organizations.

As part of the ministry's engagement strategy, individual meetings were conducted with the following key organizations: Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association, cities of Saskatoon and Regina, the Saskatoon and Region Homebuilders' Association, the Regina & Region Home Builders' Association, public and Catholic school divisions, and the ministries of Highways and Infrastructure, Education, and Agriculture. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank these and other organizations which participated in the consultations. The input from these consultations provide valuable insight into developing this bill and will contribute to the development of vibrant, safe, and self-reliant communities.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take just a few minutes to share the details of the bill. Regional partnerships can make it easier and more cost-effective for municipalities to grow together in the future. Additional flexibility is being proposed in this bill for those municipalities wanting to plan regionally and manage areas of common interest. The existing legislation allows regional planning authorities to include a city and adjacent rural municipalities. During consultation, stakeholders requested additional flexibility to use this type of regional partnership tool. In response, this bill enables multiple urban and rural municipalities to enter into this type of regional partnership.

Mr. Speaker, schools are necessary to educate the children of our growing province. Schools, along with other public buildings and recreational facilities, are allowed on municipal reserve land under existing legislation. Locating schools on municipal reserve land saves the taxpayers of this province money. For example, Mr. Speaker, the government's decision to locate nine joint-use schools on municipal reserve in 2014 saved 36 million in land acquisition costs.

To ensure clarity for all stakeholders involving and planning for future schools, amendments to the existing legislation are necessary. The bill supports collaboration between municipalities, school divisions, and the Ministry of Education to jointly develop policies to ensure municipal reserve lands are available for school purposes.

Mr. Speaker, the provincial highway network benefits from residential and business development in our communities. Municipalities currently have authority to collect servicing agreement fees for public highways. In addition, the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure currently has a transportation partnership agreement process for development that will increase demand on the highway network. This bill will provide the opportunity to coordinate the subdivision process with the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure process. In doing so, this bill will help facilitate the appropriate level of public highway services.

Mr. Speaker, a number of miscellaneous amendments will improve the efficiency of the legislation. These include improving public safety by requiring municipalities to have land-use planning policies for development adjacent to railway operations, streamlining the process for approving authorities to enter into development levy agreements, improving procedures of the Saskatchewan Municipal Board's planning appeals committee, and modernizing the maximum fee for appeals to local development appeal boards. The existing fee of \$50 was reset in 1973. Changing the maximum fee to \$300 accounts for inflation and helps offset municipal costs associated with the appeal hearings.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I'm confident that this bill will improve opportunities for regional planning, clarify municipal servicing, and improve planning for municipal reserve lands. Together this will facilitate the development of vibrant, safe, and self-reliant communities and regions in Saskatchewan. I urge every member of the House to review and support this bill. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 113.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Minister of Government Relations has moved second reading of Bill 113, *The Planning and Development Amendment Act, 2017*. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As has become the norm in this particular Assembly, I'm pleased on behalf of the official opposition to be the first to speak on the second reading stage of this particular bill from the opposition perspective, Mr. Speaker. And I want to speak very briefly about the bill and certainly what the bill intends to do. And obviously I also want to take this opportunity to congratulate the new Minister of Municipal Government, and certainly I'm looking forward to establishing a long-lasting relationship maybe for about three more years. And then, Mr. Speaker, then we'll bring in the appropriate government to make the significant changes that are required.

But on that note, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that under *The Planning and Development Amendment Act* it talks about the conflict of interest provisions that apply to members of a district development appeals board and members of any regional planning authorities.

Mr. Speaker, the bill goes on to explain that there are currently 10 cities in Saskatchewan that have been granted approving authority status. And, Mr. Speaker, I want to speak about that as I go down through the bill, but I want to talk a bit about that later on. But the important thing right now is this bill speaks about the fact that 10 cities in Saskatchewan have the ability to have the approval process, and certainly have approval authority status, as is pointed out.

An amendment will allow the minister to modify some of the terms of an order granting authority status to achieve provincial interest. And for example, they used the example they used the land for P3 schools. And any other order a minister issues under this new section must be published in the *Gazette*.

Mr. Speaker, currently the ability to apply policies for site plan control is limited to commercial and industrial lands. And now, Mr. Speaker, this particular bill expands that ability to include

institutional and mixed-use development.

Mr. Speaker, municipal planning bylaws are now submitted to the director of community planning instead of the Minister of Government Relations. We need to know who the director of community planning is and how they'll be guided in their decision-making process, and what significant difference does it make in terms of the rules and regulations and authority as compared to the minister himself or herself.

Mr. Speaker, it also points out that the minister had and still continues to have "... the ability to require municipalities to amend their official community plan to achieve consistency with provincial interests."

And, Mr. Speaker, there's been a new section of the bill that adds some flexibility to timelines that the municipalities have to abide by, by the minister's orders.

Mr. Speaker, another section requires "... municipalities to develop their school site policies collaboratively with the Minister of Education, any local school divisions, and any municipality(s) that the Ministry of Education determines is necessary ..."

Mr. Speaker, there are changes throughout the bill that'll impact municipalities and how they can plan, how they can develop and address regional issues. And this is the important note, Mr. Speaker, that this is a fairly significant step in terms of trying to understand the relationship between not only the ministry of Municipal Government, Mr. Speaker, but also the Ministry of Education and, Mr. Speaker, especially with those cities that have district development and regional planning authorities granted to them under this particular bill.

So this has a fairly significant shift in understanding the relationship between the municipal authority boards and the Ministry of Education, the Municipal Affairs department, and so on and so forth. So it's important for us to take the time to speak to some of the folks that are part of the governance structure across the province of Saskatchewan, whether those individuals be members of SARM or whether those individuals be members of SUMA. Mr. Speaker, we obviously have to also talk to the members of the school division, because obviously there is some ministerial of Education overlapping here in terms of school sites and school zoning and so on and so forth.

So this Act really takes into effect a lot of different components as it pertains to planning and development overall and not just granting the municipal body — in this case the 10 cities that I made reference to — total control over decision making, that there is a lot of interaction, inter-collaboration. And of course, as we point out, the importance is to make sure that there is conflict-of-interest guidelines being imposed on this particular process, and that Saskatchewan people's interests would certainly be paramount in some of the discussions.

And, Mr. Speaker, as you begin to look at the regional development opportunities around our cities, it's quite amazing as to what the cities can come up with. Their imagination certainly is limitless, Mr. Speaker, and their aspirations to build stronger and vibrant and interconnected communities. Even though they're large centres, Mr. Speaker, they do have a

relationship with their neighbouring communities. And we've seen some of the beautiful opportunities in planning that many of our larger centres undertake, not only for their citizens in their immediate area but engaging other communities in the vicinity of their particular city. It makes great synergies. It makes great opportunities. It makes great vision, and it certainly makes for great planning. And, Mr. Speaker, this bill speaks of those particular values, and it's certainly something that we'll pay attention to.

It's important, Mr. Speaker, to note that I made great reference to our city planners and the people that work within SARM and SUMA and the fact that they have some very solid experience in how to do these things. And the last thing you want to be able to do is have a government that has had as sad a record that the Saskatchewan Party has had over the last number of years in zoning. And you need look no further than the GTH, Mr. Speaker, on how they somehow bungled that up right from the start.

And this is the worry I think a lot of cities would have under this particular bill, is dealing with the party that doesn't have a very good track record when it comes to planning and development overall, Mr. Speaker. We've seen evidence of that day after day after day in this particular Assembly. And I say shame to the Saskatchewan Party. I say shame to every single member of that caucus that allowed the things that have surfaced under the GTH, Mr. Speaker.

And the same bill speaks about oversight. The same bill speaks about conflict of interest. The same bill talks about a lot of the challenges that we see in the opposition that are very paramount and apparent within the Sask Party caucus. So it's almost kind of a ... It's almost hypocritical, Mr. Speaker, that we see on one hand a bill advocating for sound development and being above board and addressing conflict of interest to the municipalities, in this case the 10 cities. And yet when you see the government of Saskatchewan named the Sask Party advocating for this, and people turn around saying, okay well, Saskatchewan Party government, why don't you guys take a look in your own backyard? And don't look any further than, as I said, the GTH and see how they bungled that up right from the start, Mr. Speaker.

So it's kind of an odd message that we're getting from this particular bill, and that's why it's important to go to the municipalities. We need to talk to the RMs [rural municipalities] in and around the cities. We need to talk to the people that have gone through this process with the Saskatchewan Party government, and really begin to ask them what exactly was your experience with this government that's now advocating sound policy development, addressing conflict of interest, collaboration, certainly oversight from a number of other organizations within government, whether it be health or economic development or education. We're going to ask them how they perceive the role of the Saskatchewan Party, as it pertains to their experience, when it comes to regional development overall, Mr. Speaker.

And again, I go back to the GTH scandal, Mr. Speaker. This is something that's not going to go away, and this is an example, Mr. Speaker, that the Saskatchewan Party caucus has given to the opposition party. This is the gift that keeps giving and

giving and giving. And yet, Mr. Speaker, to come along with bills of this sort, which I think would make a lot of different municipalities across the province kind of smile — well that's actually not a smile; it would be considered a smirk, Mr. Speaker — because of their experience around how the government somehow bungled a great opportunity called the Regina bypass and certainly made a joke out of the Global Transportation Hub. And, Mr. Speaker, there'll be more of that GTH scandal as we continue, as the opposition, calling these folks into account as to how, somehow, they bungled even land sales which were something that the people of Saskatchewan have a right to know.

So the intent of the development Act, Mr. Speaker, should apply to the province of Saskatchewan as well — that if there is a conflict of interest there should be oversight. There should be immediate repercussions. There should be a ministerial order. There should've been some action on behalf of the government to address the GTH land scandal, Mr. Speaker. Obviously it didn't happen. So now several months later, they prepare a bill basically telling the RMs or basically telling the cities in this case, Mr. Speaker, here are the rules in which you will develop your region and these rules will talk about oversight bias. Well, Mr. Speaker, I think the opposition has done a remarkable job in providing oversight on their GTH scandal.

[15:00]

So perhaps the Saskatchewan Party should get a mirror and have a look at themselves when it comes to the intent behind this bill, because quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, they have bungled every opportunity around the GTH. They have somehow taken good intent and the regional planning that in this case the city of Regina undertook and, Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party somehow interfered. They removed safety barriers that would really shine a lot of light in terms of what activity happened in that particular area. And, Mr. Speaker, I dare say today that the Saskatchewan Party government, as a result of this bill, should actually look at themselves in the mirror as opposed to trying to scold and certainly trying to direct municipalities as it pertains to regional planning authorities.

So I say that to the Saskatchewan Party. Shame on you. You should've had this all figured out when you guys were developing the GTH. And all of a sudden the rules now are different because you're government. Now you put in these different rules for cities that have to follow your rules. And, Mr. Speaker, again as I've said, if you would've followed your rules then perhaps some of the problems we have today with the GTH would have surfaced earlier. There would have been severe repercussions and the people of Saskatchewan — the taxpayers — would not be out a great number or millions of dollars, Mr. Speaker. And that's the situation. That's where we're at in this day and age.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out in northern Saskatchewan we also watch what the Saskatchewan Party do. And I say to the people of Saskatchewan this: that in the province as a whole, as you look at this particular bill, a lot of the cities as I said in this particular bill, they have these regional planning authorities. And in these regional planning authorities in and around the cities, Mr. Speaker, there's some good synergies between the private sector, the city aspirations, and,

as I pointed out, some of the planning around schools. So there's a lot of different issues at play, but there are some very good, valuable people involved with city planning. And, Mr. Speaker, the regional planning authorities do some very, very comprehensive analysis of many opportunities that come their way.

So the cities themselves have regional planning authorities, Mr. Speaker. The RMs, the rural part of Saskatchewan, have SARM, Mr. Speaker. SARM, through the strength of their organization and the fact that they have a great number of RMs throughout the province, well they have an avenue, and they have a process that they can undertake if they wish to regionally plan as well. And SUMA . . . And when you look at the towns and villages, Mr. Speaker, that also want to lobby and be part of the process, not only are they connected with SARM, they're connected to the cities, but they also have what we call SUMA, the association of municipal governments across the province, Mr. Speaker.

So all these entities . . . You look at the province as a whole. The RMs have SARM, and of course the RMs have their land in which they are responsible for development and developing opportunities as well. And then you look at the cities and towns. Cities have these regional planning units. The towns and villages have SUMA. And, Mr. Speaker, what does the North have?

The North at one time had fur blocks. And, Mr. Speaker, you look at some of the typical, if you want to use the phrase, the carving of areas in northern Saskatchewan, they had fur blocks. And the fur block system had been in place for many, many years, and the fur blocks were really our own version of RMs. And now we're hearing that the Saskatchewan Party is trying to do away not only with the fur industry, Mr. Speaker, but with the fur block system as well.

And I want to say to the Saskatchewan Party, similar to the interests behind regional planning authorities, similar to the interests behind the creation of RMs under the SARM support, similar to how the cities and . . . or the towns and villages migrate to SUMA to represent their interests, in northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, people have a strong connection to that land. And a lot of times the trappers are the conscience of that land.

And yet, Mr. Speaker, we see time and time again when it comes to any regional planning or any aspirations that we have from the northern communities' perspective, whether it be trapping or whether it be harvesting, Mr. Speaker, there is a resistance by governments such as the Saskatchewan Party government in trying to recognize that authority that exists within the people's inherent right to continue using that land, Mr. Speaker. We have seen that time and time again where they have fought against the interests of not only the trappers, Mr. Speaker, but the commercial fishing industry. And even if people want to put a cabin a mile past, a mile into the bush, Mr. Speaker, we see incredible resistance by the province of Saskatchewan.

So I say to the people of the province, yes, under this bill, under this bill you have regional planning authorities for the cities. You have SARM and the whole notion of the RMs throughout

the southern part of Saskatchewan that are being monitored and controlled by a local board of people, Mr. Speaker. And in the North we had the fur block system. We had the fur block system, Mr. Speaker, and these people have lived in these communities for years and years and years and years. And yet is there any effort, any interest in trying to develop what we see as our comparable version of fur blocks as it pertains to RMs in the South that the northern and the indigenous people together, northern and indigenous people, Mr. Speaker, have been working at developing this fur block system in place so they can have control and authority around development in and around their communities? But when it comes to the senior governments such as the Saskatchewan Party government, they have no interest whatsoever to protect not only the fur block system but the fur industry as well, Mr. Speaker.

They have steadfastly threatened the existence of the commercial fishing industry, Mr. Speaker. They have steadfastly resisted the option and opportunity of people of building a cabin in and around their communities because they simply don't want to see the Aboriginal, indigenous people continue owning land in that region, Mr. Speaker. They have consistently trying to push people off that land, Mr. Speaker.

And this is one of the messages that I have for them today, Mr. Speaker, and that the North is going to get organized. And I say this with all respect. I say this in particular note to the minister of SERM [Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management] who is here today, that the northern people will not be pushed around anymore when it comes to allocation of land. They will not take a second seat anymore when it comes to protecting their inherent right to access and to harvest lands in and around their communities. They will not continue sitting by as you grant forestry permits to companies from BC [British Columbia] at the expense of local people, Mr. Speaker. They will not continue sitting by and hoping, and hoping that you'll have a change of heart.

Mr. Speaker, as we speak, the people of the North are beginning to organize. We think it's a fantastic idea in a sense that they're going to work together; they're going to collaborate together. And I say to the First Nations organizations within Saskatchewan — the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations and, Mr. Speaker, the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan and, Mr. Speaker, New North and, Mr. Speaker, all the partners that strengthen the North — that now is the time, as we talk about regional planning and this particular bill, to send a message to the government saying that we are not taking a back seat anymore.

As I've said time and time again, the northern people have to assert themselves on their own land, that we have to say, in the words of our former MP [Member of Parliament], take that step forward in claiming our land and the opportunities attached to the land so we can continue building for the future and stop suffering the degradation of our people and our communities that we see today, Mr. Speaker. That's exactly what we intend to do.

And, Mr. Speaker, that fight is coming from many corners. That fight is coming from many corners. And I say to you today that one of the things that really excites me as an MLA, after being here for many years, is the fight coming from the communities.

And I can say today that the community of Turnor Lake . . . And they share borders with the First Nations community of Birch Narrows, Mr. Speaker. Both the First Nations of Birch Narrows and the hamlet of Turnor Lake, Mr. Speaker, there's First Nations and Métis people, along with non-Aboriginal people, that are working together, Mr. Speaker, to protect Turnor Lake and Birch Narrows' future interests. And I'm seeing that collaboration over the years, Mr. Speaker, finally come together as a united front. And I'm very pleased that I'm going to be attending a meeting next week to talk to the elders about the fight that's going to be coming out of the North, when we tell people, if the Government of Saskatchewan do not care what happens in the North, it is time for us to take matters into our own hands.

And the first step is to assert ourselves over our traditional lands and territory that we had enjoyed for centuries, Mr. Speaker. And this is something that we're hearing on a consistent, continual basis. And as the MLA for the area, Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of that message that I got from my constituents that are saying to me that, as their MLA, you put the message forward that we're not going to tolerate this anymore. We're not second-class citizens, and we have a right to enjoy the resources based on that land as we had for centuries, Mr. Speaker.

This is an important matter I think that is not going away. And I think 2018, you're going to see a resurgence and a re-energized group of people that are coming forward. And we're going to start asserting ourselves and we're going to start establishing ourselves. And we're going to dream for our future generations that we can have a regional planning authority like this bill dictates, as it comes to having powers and abilities to make a difference in our own communities, Mr. Speaker, especially when they see the current Sask Party government doesn't care for the North or has no plans for the North in any future, Mr. Speaker. We can see that very, very clearly and this is the reason why I'm quite happy, I'm quite honoured that this meeting's going to be the first of many meetings. And we're going to tell the people, we're going to tell the people as an MLA that we need to continue that fight to have that authority granted to us either through the courts, Mr. Speaker, or either through discussion or, Mr. Speaker, but we've got to have that assertive position.

And I can tell the people of Saskatchewan today right across the province, as I mentioned, the cities have these planning regions as identified in this bill. The RMs have their rural municipal boundaries, Mr. Speaker. They have influence in and around the lands of their RMs. The towns and villages certainly have their authorities through SUMA, Mr. Speaker. In the North, we have nothing.

It's a wide-open field for the Saskatchewan Party to play as to who gets a hunting licence, who gets a cabin, who gets our forestry, who gets our oil and gas. They make all the decisions and the people of northern Saskatchewan sit by and watch all the resources get hauled out as we deal and grapple with many of the social issues that I spoke about earlier, Mr. Speaker.

And our people have a better plan for themselves, and a better vision. And I'm so glad that the work to assert themselves in and around their community, the same manner in which this development Act allows the cities to assert themselves in and

around their planning areas, their regional planning authorities, Mr. Speaker . . . I say to the people of the North, the time has come. We're going to assert ourselves and I'm going to be a proud part of that, a proud partner to rally as many people as we can to begin that fight.

So I'm giving notice today to the Saskatchewan Party government that the North will not take a back seat any longer. We are going to be coming at you, and coming at you steady till you begin to recognize and respect the fact that we are tired of going through the same process of trying to build a cabin, we are tired when the same process of trying to harvest an opportunity on the resources in and around our communities for our children and our grandchildren, and we are tired of being nice — being nice to the point where we're always asking for permission to do what is right for our communities and our people. And, Mr. Speaker, every time we do that, we are turned away.

So as much as people want to fantasize about continuing on how they've been operating and treating the northern people, Mr. Speaker, that movie is over. We are now going to start a fresh approach and a fresh chapter. And I'm going to tell the trappers, the commercial fishing industry, the traditional resource users, and people of the North, the people of the North — and that includes First Nations; that includes Métis; that includes the non-Aboriginal community people that have made northern Saskatchewan their home — that I think it's time we stand together and we start demanding our own way of governing in northern Saskatchewan and stop taking orders from the Saskatchewan Party government that do not have our interests at heart.

And that's an important message that I have for the people of Saskatchewan today. We do not do this out of disrespect or disregard to the Saskatchewan people, who we know in their hearts and minds have this compassion for northern Saskatchewan, have this understanding, and have the belief that the North can make a significant difference on their own if they are afforded the authority and the tools to make that difference. And the Saskatchewan Party has not done that. They have punished the North, Mr. Speaker, and they continue punishing the North. And sooner or later, you punish a people long enough and hard enough that they will rebel, that they will fight back and they will organize and they will assert themselves on their own land.

[15:15]

So, Mr. Speaker, it's important to tell people once again as I summarize this bill, the cities have planning regions. They've done a wonderful job. The RMs have SARM in which they have authority and control in certain areas of their land within their RM boundaries. The towns and villages have SUMA, Mr. Speaker, that really works with them very closely.

What does the North have? The North have fur blocks, Mr. Speaker, and now the fur blocks are being threatened by the Saskatchewan Party government. Land and resource development Acts are changing how land is being allocated, Mr. Speaker, and bit by bit the Saskatchewan Party is destroying the future of the North. Bit by bit they're eroding the authority and opportunity people see and should have on their

lands, Mr. Speaker.

And I think that the northern people have been pushed far enough. Now it's time for a fight, and I say to them that this opportunity through this bill will afford us that fight. And, Mr. Speaker, we have just begun. And I want to serve notice to the Saskatchewan Party government that we're not going to go away, that we're going to do what is right. We're going to do what is right, done by a lot of people in the province of Saskatchewan. They have fought for their land. The northern and Aboriginal people will fight for their land as well.

It is a fight they understand. It is a fight that they can respect, Mr. Speaker, and if we want to build a better future we've got to have that authority and ability to be able to have decisions in and around our community, made by us, Mr. Speaker, for our interests and without having to go through the provincial government for every piece of land that people want to build a cabin on or for every opportunity we have to harvest, whether it is plants, Mr. Speaker, whether it's berries, whether it's animals. We have to have full engagement and the same opportunities as identified in this particular bill, Mr. Speaker. The North needs that opportunity as well. And any government that denies the people of the North their right to assert themselves on their land, I say shame on them. And if they continue denying that opportunity, the people will only be pushed so far and then they'll start to push back; they'll start to organize. And they certainly will do this in a very intelligent, responsible manner, Mr. Speaker.

So I think it's important that people of Saskatchewan know this is our belief. This is our desire. This is our vision. This is our fight from this day forward. And we ask that you respect that fight because certainly we need to change the direction that the North is currently facing. The future's not bright because we have been patient long enough, and we continue having Saskatchewan . . . governments like the Sask Party government that ignore the North and are ignorant of the challenges in fact that northern people face. I think, Mr. Speaker, enough is enough. On that note, Mr. Speaker, I would encourage people of the province to understand what the North is going through and to show them that the fight has just begun.

On that note, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 113.

The Speaker: — The member from Athabasca has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 113. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 114 — *The Vehicles for Hire Act*

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

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to move second reading of Bill 114, *An Act respecting Vehicles for Hire and making consequential amendments to other Acts*.

The Act, administered by Saskatchewan Government Insurance, outlines the regulations for transportation network companies, also known as ride-sharing companies. This Act provides a framework for these companies to operate safely in our province, and sets out requirements for companies and drivers.

Mr. Speaker, technology is moving swiftly, and we have heard significant interest from Saskatchewan residents in having access to ride sharing. Our government believes in being prepared for new ways of doing business, and this Act paves the road for ride-sharing services to operate here.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, we also know that impaired driving is a problem in Saskatchewan. Combatting impaired driving is a priority for our government. We introduced tough measures in 2014, and bolstered them at the start of this year. A few weeks ago, we introduced stronger penalties for people who drive impaired with children in the vehicle. Impaired driving is the leading cause of fatalities on Saskatchewan roads, and any tool we can use to combat this issue is welcome.

Ride-sharing services are another alternative to driving while impaired, which makes it worth our consideration. It is not the whole answer, Mr. Speaker, but it can be part of a solution.

The Act sets out important regulations for ride-sharing companies, making it clear what is required for these companies to operate in Saskatchewan. Licensing of the businesses will be required, Mr. Speaker. The proposed Act also addresses who will be able to drive for these services and what skills they need to do so. Drivers will require a prescribed licence and will not be able to drive for a ride share if they have been convicted of certain criminal offences.

Also, Mr. Speaker, these ride-sharing companies will need to file written evidence of motor vehicle liability insurance with SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance], and they are required to insure every vehicle that provides service under the automobile insurance Act. These regulations are being created with the safety of everyone on the road in mind. Finally it is very important to note that the authority to pass bylaws regulating these companies will rest with municipalities, very similar to how taxi companies are already regulated. Mr. Speaker, one more thing I'd like to highlight is that we have studied other jurisdictions in the creation of this Act and looked at how these regulations should be applied here.

Mr. Speaker, when I speak in my role as Minister of SGI, I often end my remarks by reminding people to plan a safe ride home and take care out there. I'm confident that people of Saskatchewan will welcome this new option that will help them do just that. Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill 114, *An Act respecting Vehicles for Hire and making consequential amendments to other Acts*. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The Minister of Crown Investments has moved second reading of Bill No. 114. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Certainly for my opening comments I want to say that . . . I'll preface my opening comments with the fact that they'll be very, very brief on this particular bill. Many members of my caucus

will be certainly elaborating on this particular bill as time progresses and as the bill makes its way through the Assembly. I think it's important to note that there's a lot of information here that we have to certainly digest and to also share and to network feedback points as well. So I will just be very brief in my opening statements on Bill 114.

Mr. Speaker, the summary on this particular bill: transportation network companies require a licence issued by the municipality, and the municipality can make bylaws around licensing, standard fees, and records and so on and so forth. And, Mr. Speaker, there's also discussion around the trips between municipal governments, municipalities of course, and the bylaws of each of the municipalities where the trip originated from apply. Of course all drivers must have a driver's licence. All vehicles must be registered as required by *The Traffic Safety Act*. The transportation network company must prove they have insurance. Information to be provided to the insurance is name and place of business, name and address of drivers, lists of vehicles providing that service, geographic service or area of service, proof of licence to operate, etc. This, of course, information has to be provided, Mr. Speaker.

The government still retains the power to suspend or cancel a registration permit to a transportation network company if they fail to comply with the Act and regulations. Government have regulating powers on defining vehicles, prescribing classes of driver's licences, prescribing a special feature indicating that a vehicle may be used for vehicle-for-hire services, prescribing insurance premiums, and procedures for suspending and cancelling a licence.

Mr. Speaker, there's no question that this particular bill has co-operation required on many levels, and obviously the municipalities will play a key role in which they will license and create the bylaws for this particular industry. Ultimately it's up to the province to ensure the safety of the communities, consumers, and drivers. As the minister indicated, and as I pointed out, that we'll be taking this bill to committee and looking for clarification from the minister and for input from all the stakeholders that may be involved. And we would invite that very publicly here today.

And of course, Mr. Speaker, regulations that affect taxi companies have been developed for decades to protect both the public and the drivers. And, Mr. Speaker, no one is saying no to bringing in ride-sharing companies, but regulations are needed to be in place to ensure the safety of consumers and drivers. And that is the role of the provincial government and, Mr. Speaker, that's identified in this particular bill. And we'll be looking forward to bringing this bill to committee to flesh out these details with the minister.

And, Mr. Speaker, about the only closing comment I'd have on this particular bill is that I would ask a lot of people for their valued input. It's important to note we need to have that advice. As we've said time and time again, it is my opinion that this government doesn't know what it's doing on 99.99 per cent of their files. And it's important that we get networks in place to have people give us advice and how, as the official opposition, we could warn this current government of what they're doing wrong, different people that are being affected by these bills, and in this case Bill 114, that if there's certain perspectives we

can offer as the opposition . . .

Our interests of course are the consumer. The interests of course are the safety of the consumer and making sure that these operations are licensed properly. And certainly I think regulatory processes must be undertaken. But before we get to that stage, Mr. Speaker, we've got to have that network. We've got to have that input. And we've certainly got to have that advice from various people that are being impacted.

So on that note, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 114, *The Vehicles for Hire Act*. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — The member from Athabasca has adjourned debate on Bill No. 114. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 100

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Stewart that **Bill No. 100 — *The Agrologists Amendment Act, 2017*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure today to rise and enter into debate on Bill No. 100. And this is *The Agrologists Amendment Act*, as has been noted, a piece of proposed legislation that would update this Act. I believe that the last substantive changes came in in 1994.

The Agrologists Act, just for a bit of a history lesson, we were at the forefront in this province, Mr. Speaker, with regard to this Act. In 1946 . . . Or I guess we were the second jurisdiction in Canada after Quebec to regulate the profession of agrology. And this is an Act that has served the profession and the people of Saskatchewan well, Mr. Speaker, over the years. But as happens when you have legislation in place for that long, it is in need of periodic updates, and that certainly is the case here.

We've heard from the agrologists themselves that they have been asking for a number of changes over the last several years. We had opportunity on a number of occasions to speak with them, and they have certainly indicated to us that these changes are in line with what they've been asking for.

I'll maybe just briefly go through some of the changes that are proposed with Bill No. 100. And they do pertain almost exclusively to those practising agrology in the province, but it's worth going through.

One of the things that Bill 100 does is broadens the scope, the definition of what it is to practise agrology. This is a definition that a profession — as many have, as you can imagine, Mr.

Speaker — over the last 70 years, or 60 or 70 years, the profession has grown and the scope has changed. So this definition proposes to sort of keep pace with the profession of agrology as it's practised in this province today, and in fact as it's practised in other jurisdictions across Canada. This modernizes the definition and sort of broadens the scope to include fields such as bioresources and environmental remediation — certainly growing fields in this province and across the country. I think when this Act was first brought forth in 1946, the profession of agrology would have focused mainly on crops and cattle production and sciences around those, Mr. Speaker.

This change also allows for the alignment of that definition, as noted, with other jurisdictions in Canada. In fact I believe most jurisdictions in Canada have this sort of broadened scope of practice, and it would make sense for a whole host of reasons to update that to ensure that when you talk about an agrologist in Manitoba and Saskatchewan and Ontario, that that would be a similar or the same definition. And this was one of the updates that the agrologists as well had asked for.

[15:30]

It also updates the terms, a number of terms, such as moving the term "membership certification" to "licence." And this is something that also was asked for by the agrologists, and it really updates and reflects the model professions Act, as we've seen other bodies, such as the nurses, move to. So that I think is a very reasonable update and one that's contained in this bill.

There are some other changes that are proposed here. One is allowing independence for people who have less than a four-year degree — I'm just looking for it here — that it would allow them to have a bit of a provisional licence in the province. Those with less than a four-year degree would be allowed to practise independently but would have a restricted licence. And this is something that we do see in other professions.

It also exempts professional engineers, geoscientists, and forestry workers from the right to practise . . . to having to be members of SIA, the Saskatchewan Institute of Agrologists. And that is a change that is required because we do have this overlap of scope of practice, for example the professional engineers and geoscientists. And that is something that the minister and the ministry had consulted with APEGS, the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Saskatchewan. And in conversation with Mr. Robert McDonald, the ED [executive director] and registrar of APEGS, certainly they concur that that seems like a reasonable provision within this Act.

So often in this Assembly I find I'm standing up to speak to bills with a lot of questions and not being entirely certain about what the changes or what the proposed legislation is meant to do, who's calling for it, who's been consulted, and what the intended outcomes are here. And as I did mention to the minister last week, I think it is really appreciated when it's really nicely set out. Both in the explanatory notes in the bill and in second reading comments, those questions are answered for us: again, you know, what the intent is of the legislation, who was consulted, what the intended outcome is.

And it also allows us to meet with those stakeholders. I know in the second reading comments by the minister, they noted that they had had consultation with employers of agrologists; educational institutions, both in this province and in other provinces; as well as impacted ministries, as noted, Sask Environment and the Water Security Agency.

I noted really general support for these proposals, and that has been the case for us as well when we've talked to those groups, as I noted. I know Al Scholz from SIA has been here on a number of occasions, and we've had good opportunity to discuss this with him, as well as APEGS and other impacted organizations and agencies.

We've also had correspondence with SIA just asking about expedited . . . or passage, you know, making sure that we've had opportunity to fully look at the proposed changes, to meet, to consult with those groups impacted. And that is afforded to us when that type of consultation has gone on and there's such a clear indication in second reading comments about what it is that is proposed by the legislation.

Just if I could read into the record . . . At the end of my comments today, I am going to move a motion to send this bill to committee because I think it is reasonable, and for reasons that I will outline in comments here by SIA, that when it makes sense for us, there's . . . You know, the role of opposition is to ask those questions. It is to provide that oversight, ensure that there's transparency. But when it makes sense on both sides of the House and there's a benefit, a reasonable benefit to those that we represent, we have no problem with ensuring swift passage of legislation like that. Again that I think is reasonable.

If I could, to read into the record from SIA and from Al Scholz: "If the Bill 100 amendments come into place before January 1st, 2018, it would allow SIA to present the required bylaw amendments to the general meeting, which is held in April, and allow the agricultural technologists to practise independently by April 30th, 2018." Obviously that would be all pushed back by another year if this bill were to be held over to the spring session.

So again in light of those timelines as well as our consultation and the minister's consultation with people impacted in the industry, and as well as I think we've had a chance . . . We'll have some opportunity this evening in committee, but having a full opportunity to do our due diligence on this side of the House, I think that we are more than comfortable to move this bill to committee and have an opportunity to allow passage potentially this week.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude my remarks and move to move Bill 100, *The Agrologists Amendment Act*, to committee.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the member that Bill No. 100 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

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

Hon. Mr. Brkich: — I designate that Bill No. 100, *The Agrologists Amendment Act, 2017* be committed to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

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

Bill No. 85

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

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today to enter into adjourned debates on Bill 85, *The Reclaimed Industrial Sites Amendment Act, 2017*.

So of course when we're talking about a reclaimed industrial site, we're talking about a site where the government accepts responsibility for land that, in consequence of development and use, requires long-term monitoring and sometimes maintenance. So these are some important sites that exist across our province that we need to be able to look after. So we need to give important consideration to changes to this legislation.

So what this legislation . . . What this bill proposes is that the minister now requires that a site holder has provided acceptable financial assurance before a closed site can be accepted into an institutional control program. A new section outlines that the minister can transfer a closed site from the ICP [institutional control program] to a responsible person.

There's a new section that allows a minister to appoint a fund advisory committee to advise on the Institutional Control Monitoring and Maintenance Fund, and this is mostly on long-term investments of the funds. There's definitely a concern that I have around this piece, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where this committee they're proposing is exempt from liability for investment decisions. There becomes a question about who's accepting the liability for the decisions it makes. It seems that the committee is likely going to be composed of Econ employees. So that is a question that I have, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about who is ultimately responsible for those decisions.

The bill also maintains that the minister must conduct a review of the Act every five years, but it removes the specifics on who this review must consult and the requirement to review that money and the funds is sufficient to meet the needs of the sites accepted into the program. So we have some serious concerns about removing specific agencies or entities from this process. In the explanatory notes, it was identified that the stakeholders consulted strongly support the five-year-review process. So I

think that we need to be able to maintain the integrity of that in this process as well. But there is definitely a question emerging around who is involved in that process and who conducts that review.

So many of these . . . Many of us have these sites in our riding, Mr. Deputy Speaker, whether we're talking about a former gas station or a mine site that has been closed. Many of these sites could have been closed for various reasons. This is the second time we've reviewed this bill because this is part of the five-year-review process that we're working on. So in accordance with that fact, we're reviewing it now. I think government has an important role to play here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in protecting these sites and also protecting the citizens that exist here. And the ICP or the institutional control program has the responsibility to remediate these lands and to monitor cleanup. So there's an important responsibility that is held by this program.

I understand that these mechanisms can be beneficial to both industry and to the environment. So it serves the industry in making sure that we have someone responsible for monitoring cleanup of the sites. It also protects our environment and makes sure that we are . . . Or the goal is to protect the environment and make sure that we are passing along that appropriately to the next generation.

And I understand that the minister has indicated that stakeholders from industry, many different stakeholders from industry have been consulted, which is an important part of any of this, building any of these bills, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where we want to be able to consult with industry. We want to be able to make sure that relevant stakeholders have been consulted, but I'd be interested to learn about the depth of that consultation, specifically what feedback has been received from those individuals.

And I want to raise something here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that my colleague from Regina Lakeview identified, some thoughtful comments that I would like to echo here. So, Mr. Speaker, I am quoting *Hansard* from November 29th, where my colleague from Regina Lakeview said:

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.

So she talks about how there wasn't really an explanation for this provided. Maybe it came out of consultations, but that's not really clear. It seems like this is a significant change so it would be good to pinpoint what reasons exist for this change, and perhaps we'll get a chance to discuss that a little bit more in committee as a key piece, as a key change to this proposed bill.

As I understand it currently, once the lands are transferred into the ICP they remain there, so this is a significant divergence from what we have seen up to this point. So we should

definitely be talking about it and finding out a little bit more on why this change exists, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We're talking about something quite different here that's being proposed than what we have seen in the past.

Certainly I know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that when we're talking about Bill 85, many of my colleagues will have more to say about this particular piece of legislation. We'll have some more questions in committee, and the critic will have some more questions. But with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to move that we adjourn debates on Bill 85.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Fairview has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 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 Centre.

[15:45]

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today and enter into this debate on Bill No. 86, *An Act to amend The Child and Family Services Act*. And it's one that I've been following very closely in the last 10 years largely because, for many of those years, I was the critic for Social Services, and was so in 2009 when the then-children's youth advocate, or advocate for the child at the time, released a damning report, a stinging report called *A Breach of Trust*. And in that *A Breach of Trust* report he called on the government to report, to fix *The Child and Family Services Act* in many ways, but one particularly was around the issue around best interests of the child. It would be interesting . . . The Children's Advocate at the time, Marv Bernstein, at the time really talked a lot about how important that was and whether or not this work that is before us today would meet that test.

Now I do want to say that this issue has been facing . . . This is a tough, tough, tough, tough issue. It's a tough one for everyone in this province. We all want the very best for our families and we all want the very best for children. Children are so vulnerable, and it is a difficult thing to know. Families are sacrosanct in the sense that we do not want to pass judgment or make a cultural decision or let racist or other types of stereotypes interfere with our willingness to do well and help other families who may be at risk in our communities. It's a very difficult balancing act and whether . . .

I just want to say that, and I want to acknowledge that this is one that's challenging, challenging for the people who work in

social services, and has been ever since the inception of community really because we do want to do our very best. But we have to make sure that we do it in an appropriate and cultural-sensitive way, and we do have to think about what's in the interest of the child, what's in the very best interest of the child.

And this is not easy because, and particularly when we see, and rightfully so, the Children's Advocate is rightfully named, the advocate for the child because the child is in a vulnerable circumstance because of age, because of knowledge, because of experience, cannot make the kind of judgments, cannot have the kind of responsibility that the adults in their circumstance might have. And so we've often had, I know in my office, parents come forward and say, hey I feel like I'm being mistreated; I'm not being understood. I'm the parent. I should be heard more because I do have the children's interest at heart. And actually in many ways, I've counselled the parents to say you have your rights, your interests at heart. You're the parent and you do have rights, but they're not necessarily . . . Often, often they align with the child but sometimes they may not. And so while I counsel them to make sure they're treated fairly by the government, that would mean going to the Ombudsman or some other advocate, because it's so clearly, clearly to me that there are many perspectives in this situation before us.

So this report, *A Breach of Trust*, came to us in the end of February of 2009 and I know that . . . And it was done, it was done really in the sense of the urgency around overcrowding for kids in foster homes. And I was the critic at the time and we had asked many, many questions about that. We saw this situation happening in Manitoba. We saw it happening in other provinces where overcrowding of foster care homes was reaching an epidemic, and we clearly needed, clearly needed to do something. And the Children's Advocate at the time identified many, many fronts on which action was needed. And some of them, I have to say, I have questions still for the government of the day. But in many ways I would say we often reached out to the government of the day.

And I look at what happened in British Columbia, where they have a standing committee for the child and family, the standing committee on youth, children, and families, something along those lines. And it was done, it was done also sort of in the same sort of scenario we had here. It was done and a report was done by a retired judge, a retired judge actually from Saskatchewan. He said we need to take the politics out of this. We need to take the politics out of this.

And I couldn't agree more. I couldn't agree more, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because there were too many times where as critic I was saying and criticizing the government of the day, the minister of the day. And we had too many situations where I think the child's best interests were not being served, but we made it political because we were not working together.

You know the government, the ministry would try to, in many ways, contain the issue, whatever was happening. And that meant not letting many people know. And in fact, in many ways, that kind of blew up. It blew up on the government because at the end of the day, and rightfully so, we have a Children's Advocate who will investigate, who will investigate. That's why we have that legislative officer who will be neutral

but do the best job to investigate and act on the best interests of the child.

And so it makes the adults in the room not look all that adult because we're not working together to support them, but really we should. And it's been something I've called for in the last several years because of my reading. It just seems to me that the children of our communities right across this province deserve, they deserve so much more. They deserve a higher duty of care, and we have big questions about that. I've had questions and I continue to have questions about it. And I know the deep irony of this, the very deepest irony of this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is here we've gone through a period of boom and we've not seen the kind of impact . . . The children who are the most vulnerable still are suffering.

And you know, I know the people that work in foster care are just doing such a phenomenal job but it's challenging. It's super challenging. And I know the First Nations community and I know the Métis community are stepping up as best as they can. But still we are where we are today, and now we are looking at a bill that is some eight years . . . has been called for eight years now and even perhaps longer, that I know was called for in February 25th, 2009, that report. And the minister at the time said that they would conclude the consultations and conclude that work, and we would be coming forward with a report of amendments for *The Child and Family Services Act*, particularly around the section 4 that deals with the statement regarding best interests of the child.

And you know, I took a look back to see, so I see there were some notes and the comments that say that they weren't really changed all that much. There's some words changed in one particular phrase around cultural interests, where it's inserted. And I'll talk more about that. That's very important. But generally the last time that section, section 4, was amended was in 1989.

And so clearly it hasn't been as updated as it might be. And it would be very interesting to go back and talk to the children's youth advocate. And I hope that the critic will do that, say, so you called for this in *A Breach of Trust*. Now we do have a new children's youth advocate. And I hope that he is current and has read *A Breach of Trust*. I'm sure he has because that is one that was really, for this government, the Sask Party government, set a lot of the direction for where we are. And one of the things, the primary things, were to fix the "best interests" statement in the Act.

So we will be looking and finding out, did that actually . . . does it meet the benchmarks, the expectation of the youth advocate, and is that the case? Does it meet the benchmarks of the First Nations community? Is it adequate for them when they reflect on their children, what's in the best interest for their children, and in terms of the Métis communities and other communities too? I think this is very, very important.

So there is a lot here. And while the minister talks about this being the first of the change . . . And of course we actually read in the paper, I think it was today or over the weekend, the changes that are forthcoming. We're going to be looking very closely at these because they are overdue.

Now we have seen some changes, and I do want to take a minute and just highlight some of the changes that have happened. One of the most promising, and I use that word cautiously, is what we've heard from the federal government around Jordan's principle, and the fact that the Jordan's principle speaks to the concept or the idea that a child presented in a health care facility, such as a hospital or emergency care, will be dealt with and get the services that they need right away. And then after the fact, after the fact, they determine, they will determine who is the payer for those services because if the child is from, well we could say, would say, on-reserve or is with a First Nations Band, then that would be the federal government paying for that. And that's very important that they do pay their share.

But the issue is not . . . don't determine that before. And we've had . . . In fact that's the name of the principle. It comes from a young child who suffered and, if I'm not wrong, I think actually passed away in terms of the care or lack of care being provided because of a squabble over whose jurisdiction was going to pay for the services that that child needed. And that's just wrong. Now the federal government has taken it to court several times to, what they would say, we need more clarification on this interpretation of this principle. We think the principle is straightforward.

And I remember when the concept came forward, and many of us celebrated it and thought this is a really good thing and we should make this one of our key operating principles — we will provide services for children, no matter who is the payer. We can always find out who pays the bill after the fact, but not before the fact. But the federal government saw it a different way, saw that they needed to determine first who was going to pay. And that became a nightmare, a nightmare for parents who face these issues daily when their child was sick and needed health care and the issue was going to be, at the hospital, who was going to look after the bill. And that's just wrong.

We have heard just . . . [inaudible] . . . the last few days, that Minister Philpott has decided that they are not going to actually ask the courts for clarification, that they are going to accept the principle and work . . . make that happen. And so that's very, very good.

The other issue though I'd still . . . And I'm not sure, maybe others can clarify with me, but the other issue around human rights and the fact that Cindy Blackstock raised in terms of financing for First Nations children in care and how much money was being spent per child compared to children off reserve, and how much money was being spent on them, and called it what it was. It was a case of human rights and it was racist in terms of the care, the commitment that the federal government had towards First Nations children and the outcomes that we saw. And it was no fault of the social workers but it was the fault of the resources that the government of the day was providing for First Nations children. And that was something that Cindy Blackstock had taken to the federal Human Rights Tribunal I think two or three times and won several times. So it's just a matter of having it operationalized, and we sure hope that it does.

[16:00]

So these changes that we see before us, *The Child and Family Services Act*, the amendments, are ones that we think are critically, critically important in the sense that they're done right and that we will have to go back to these stakeholders and say, is this the right move that you see us making? Because it is so critical that they're not done poorly or we have unintended consequences, and it's a huge, huge issue.

You know, one of the issues that I often raised and raised in the House in question period was around the issue of the number of deaths in care for kids who had died while in care of the government and the Minister of Social Services. So I read with interest that one of the changes will be more clarity around the term "parent" because that is one that is often used to describe the Minister of Social Services, that they in fact act in lieu of the parents, the natural parents. And this is not a small thing. This is a hugely important thing, and so what is the legal implication of this change, this, what they would say is a clarification? Is it a more narrow definition to escape some more responsibility? I don't know. I'm not trained in that area. I'm not trained at all in law, so I won't say I'm trained in that area of law because that would be misleading as well. But I don't know. I just have to say that is a flag that I would raise.

And so I want to say that there is many things that have focused our attention in this legislature in my period of time. And of course it goes back to the death of baby Andy on the Montreal reserve, Montreal Lake reserve. And so these issues are no stranger to any government, but it's one that we need to make sure we get it right and that we balance being bold and taking good steps for our children, but also making sure we don't put them at further risk and that in fact we can do better for them because we know . . . Well I mean I don't have to go into the reasons why we know kids are our future. I think we can all relate to that. But they are so vulnerable.

And so, Mr. Speaker, I do want to just reflect on a few things here that I'll now . . . I'm sort of getting to the main part of my speech here and talk about what the minister had said. He talked about taking a phased approach to rewriting the child welfare program legislation, and the amendments in this bill demonstrate this continued progress. And he talked about some earlier works talking about disclosure of information and strengthening provisions governing the ministry's delegation agreements with First Nations Child and Family Services agencies, and we saw how that played out. I think it was either last June or the June before where the Saskatoon Tribal Council ended up going to court over this issue. And I'm not sure how that ended or if it's still in play.

But again, you know, we'd like to see, and I think what's really important and that if we had a road map, a plan of how this was going to be implemented. How are these details going to be rolled out? Where are we going at the end of this? What does that look like? Is it continued, just you know . . . And sometimes this is what this government seems to do is careen from one crisis to another and it's crashing from one crisis to another crisis to another crisis without having a clear vision put forward. And I really worry that this is the kind of thing that happens when we have this kind of, trust me; we know where we're going. And we really have to say, do you really know where you're going, you know, and is there really a plan? Are you bringing people along with you? Are you heading towards

something or running away from something?

And I think this is really, really worrisome that we have a situation that's so critical, that is so critical, and I know members over there are very keen on this issue, but it is really important. It really is important when we talk about children in care. So where are we going with this? Where are we going? And I didn't see, or I didn't read that vision. I didn't read that vision in the minister's comments, you know. He just talked about a phased approach, and really the underlining thing is that it's in many ways a bureaucratic response to this.

You know, it was interesting that he talks about some of the things that were in *The Child and Family Services Act* before, and part of them were the panels, the review panels, and how they didn't become implemented, and that . . . I mean it was really sort of no reflection whether that was a loss or a gain or just a reflection on what actually happened, but talked about how in some way that they were never operationalized. The establishment of this out-of-court mechanisms were well intended but never operationalized, and the premise of the time were review panel boards would consist of volunteer community members. And the plan lacked both infrastructure support and a mechanism to ensure consistent access and application across the province. The ministry was also unable to support the First Nations community to operationalize these mechanisms.

In many ways that sounds like a lot of those faults would lie with the government in terms of not providing infrastructure support or the mechanism to ensure consistent access and applications across the province. So what was really happening? I think we need . . . We haven't really heard that, and that was really, really unfortunate that we haven't seen this.

And of course the idea around Person of Sufficient Interest program was something that we've seen that's new and it's been prioritized, but a transformational change that we see for the government in its new . . . [inaudible].

So you know, Mr. Speaker, he ends by saying, "The proposed amendments outlined today are a demonstration of the government's commitment to improve the lives of vulnerable families, children, and youth who receive child welfare services in this province." And you know, I have to say that over the years that I've been involved, the 10 years I've been actively involved in this role, but over the 16 years that I've been here, some of the issues that we've seen have really caused us to ask a lot of questions about the government's commitment. We've raised the issues about the child deaths in the care of the government. We've seen now that this has taken some . . . since 2009 when the *A Breach of Trust* report called for a better definition around statement of best interests of the child.

And one of the other issues, and I've raised this so many times, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can remember the minister at the time talking about the kids in foster care. And she was referring to them as library cards, and keeping track as if they were books. And the system of the day, she said, was no better than the system of library cards, so she was going to do something better. She was going to get this new computerized system.

And if you remember, I think the first estimates of the cost were

going to be maybe 5 million, \$6 million. And this was in 2010, not that long ago, Mr. Speaker, not that long ago. The last time I heard, and this was about four years ago, it was knocking on \$40 million, this Linkin system, \$40 million. Now how many kids do we have in care? You know, and now the last I would have records for, Mr. Speaker, was before the 2016 campaign, but I think it's about 4,000, 4,500 kids in care, somewhere around 5,000. Five thousand kids, but a program that cost \$40 million to track 5,000 kids.

You know, I come from a school system . . . I haven't been there teaching in Saskatoon Public since 2001, but we had over 20,000 kids and we implemented a new computer system and they just did it. They just did it. There was no \$40 million Linkin Cadillac computer system that was needed to be implemented. And this is the kind of priority system this government has when it deals with some of their issues. They're attracted by bright, shiny things, and the bright, shiny thing of the day was this Linkin computer system that cost tens of millions of dollars. And I would even hazard a guess it's up to \$50 million now.

And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is an issue that people are watching very carefully. This is not going to be one that's going to go quietly into the good night. I know the Children's Advocate, we all have to check for sure what they think of this, and also the state of affairs with foster care and for children who are in care. Because we have high expectations. We have the highest expectations of this government to do the right thing, to absolutely do the right thing.

So with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will have lots of questions in committee. And I know lots of people will have lots to say in the days and months ahead as we take another look and check to make sure there has actually been full consultation. And this is the priority. And what is the game plan? What is the road map? What is the road map ahead?

Because we don't want just another shiny thing to spend millions of dollars on. We really want real action for kids. And if the federal government is stepping up, then it's time this government step up with them and make sure that kids right across this province have seamless care and that every night is a safe good night for them. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would move adjournment of Bill No. 86, *An Act to amend The Child and Family Services Act*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Centre has moved to adjourn debate on Bill 86. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I was just chatting with my colleague and he realized that he had other things to say on that other bill. But one of us can bring it forward, so for sure no shortage of that.

This bill today is an interesting bill, and it's one that's being brought forward to I think assist the Privacy Commissioner in some of the issues that arise when we are dealing with large volumes of data. And as you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, data has become king in the last few years. And sometimes I wonder if perhaps data is the master and we are the slaves because we see that often the data drives the approach; data drives the measurement; data drives the choice of allocation of resources. And certainly I know from being a public servant for seventeen and a half years, quite often management was more driven by fitting numbers into spreadsheets than really looking at the need for the work, which often isn't something you can put in a little square on a spreadsheet.

And so we see now that the Privacy Commissioner is looking for a way to make sure that when a government agency is accessing data that it's done properly, and the data matching is an attempt to access government information from other ministries or agencies and making sure that all the data is available to a particular agency if and when it's needed. There are a number of obvious privacy concerns that come out of this type of access to information and it needs to be handled with care.

And of course we've seen a couple of examples from this government where I'm not sure they have the capacity to handle this with care. We look at, for example, the Premier himself and his troubles with his emails. And we see the response has been very confusing at best because we have a government . . . Premier who's saying his server wasn't working, but we have a Minister Responsible for Central Services who told us she doesn't really care, and then we have no evidence or any report that the Premier's server wasn't working. And yet he continues to use his private email almost proudly, Mr. Speaker, and I think that's something that . . . That attitude is one that is concerning.

[16:15]

Another area where we have seen concerns expressed by the Privacy Commissioner himself and backed up of course by — I'm just going to pull this up — by an award that was recently awarded. It was the Code of Silence Award. And we have the Canadian Association of Journalists giving to the Ministry of Highways an award for the most secretive ministry in Canada. And this is as a result of a number of access to information requests that were not properly delivered, weren't delivered on time — they weren't even delivered — and had several rebukes from the Privacy Commissioner himself to that ministry saying they're not following the intent of the law.

Mr. Speaker, this is the atmosphere that we're looking at this bill in, and I think it's one that we need to be concerned about. I think it's one that the public needs to be concerned about because, Mr. Speaker, access to information is gold in this day and age. And we know that that's how determinations are made. That's how things are proven. That's how stories are written, and that's how governments are judged. And when we see a

provincial ministry receiving a national award for being the most secretive in the nation, I think that's a sign that this government has become tired and old and insulated. And they're not listening to the public anymore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that's a good example.

So when they bring forward a bill about matching data from one ministry to another, you've got to wonder what's going to happen when Highways is asked to provide information. If they're the . . . I think it's the partner. There's two new terms that are introduced in the bill, Mr. Speaker. There's two parties to this: one is the initiating organization and then there's the participating organization. Well God help us if Highways is the participating organization because we don't know, under their code of secrecy, what kind of information that they will be providing. And obviously when we have our own Privacy Commissioner weighing in with those concerns then we have to wonder how effective this bill is going to be.

So basically the agreement itself is the data matching agreement, and there's a definition. Basically . . . I'll read the definition just for the record:

“data matching” means the matching or linking of information in one database in the possession and control of an initiating organization with information in one or more other databases in the possession and control of a participating organization without the consent of the individuals who are the subjects of the information.

So people's private information is being collected by all sorts of government organizations and this will allow for transfer of that information from one to the other without the consent of the individual. So this is a very important aspect of privacy that I think is a big step. But again, it reflects the way data is driving the bus these days, Mr. Speaker. And I know it makes sense that if information is available, you shouldn't have to gather it twice. And God knows, I don't want to fill out two forms every time I'm, you know, accessing or using government services or programs. So it's an important way of sharing information and I think, given the modern technologies that we have, it is information that we want to have access to.

I just want to call up the Privacy Commissioner's response to this . . . and I'm afraid my cellphone's not going to co-operate with me. But he basically had some comments about when this bill was introduced. There was a press release from the Privacy Commissioner and he said this is something that has been called for, and as Privacy Commissioner he wants to make sure that it's done to protect people's privacy. And that's why he's saying we need some sort of government mechanism to deal with these issues.

And I remember when I used to work with the federal government and the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, and again there was a lot of private information that the First Nations individuals had to give to the government. The government was responsible for their treaty card information. It was responsible for treaty payments, and what families they belonged to and all the records that went down the many hundreds . . . not many hundreds, many decades of data collection, basically, for First Nations people. And then there was provincial programs like social services or various health

agencies that would require information from the federal government. And it was complicated, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And that's people's private information that was being shared.

So the protection of your privacy is of utmost importance. We know it's a right under our Charter, the right of privacy. So we have to make sure that these programs will make that the priority. I think that's what this bill is attempting to do. As I indicated before, there's the initiating organization who are ones that are undertaking the data-matching project, and then there will be a participating organization which could be a government institution or a local authority. So, Mr. Speaker, we're now talking about health authorities, perhaps school boards. We're talking about municipalities, urban and rural. And I'm not even sure where First Nations or federal authorities fit into this picture. And perhaps that will be the next step in the evolution of this type of work.

So the bill sort of sets out what has to happen before a data-matching project is initiated. We have section 5 that details what has to be done. And the person requesting the information has a number of steps that they have to go through. Then at the end of the project they also are . . . There's a section regarding the retention and destruction of the information and what the schedule for destruction will be. So obviously this information can't just sit around for years. It has to be dealt with properly.

There's several . . . There's a section regarding the reporting. And so I guess the big question then is, who is going to be managing this? And according to the Privacy Commissioner there was a need to have a government-appointed person to be responsible for these data-matching projects.

So what's going to happen, Mr. Speaker, is they're going to create a new position within the Privacy Commissioner's office called the government access coordinator. And that would be . . . We have to have some amendments to *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* to allow for the creation of this new government position. So that person is going to be the one that is the coordinator responsible for . . . And here's the duties in section 10: giving advice and direction to government institutions to promote compliance with this Act, prepare the form of the data matching agreement required, and to prepare the form of report. So there will be an official that will be responsible for all of this.

There's also a commissioner, and in this case it is the Information and Privacy Commissioner that currently is in place. And there's a number of significant new duties for the commissioner. They can offer comment on implications for privacy. They can make recommendations on the project. And then they can also make recommendations for seizing or modifying data matching if it contravenes this Act, *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, *The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, or *The Health Information Protection Act*. And I think most of our personal information that's stored within government agencies would be our health information. And of course the importance of privacy in that context cannot be underestimated.

The commissioner can also carry out investigations of these initiating organizations, so there's considerable scope of power

now that's being provided to the Privacy Commissioner in order to ensure that . . . I mean the Act is the protection of privacy Act, and again that's paramount. There's a number of offences that are outlined. Immunity, nobody's immune from prosecution, or proceedings are not prohibited. I think what's interesting as well is the duties and functions . . . Oh yes, we have to amend the freedom of information and freedom of privacy Act to create this government access coordinator position. And the duties of the government access coordinator are really being expanded beyond the scope of this Act, Mr. Speaker, because now also under *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, the new duties of this new position would also include receiving and responding to applications and communications pursuant to the freedom of information Act.

So again I'm thinking about Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure, and this poor government access coordinator is going to have to deal with recalcitrant and unresponsive ministries. And I'm not sure . . . I feel like the Privacy Commissioner has already hit his wall when it comes to ensuring that ministries provide the information that's requested. It's going to be interesting to see how this new position, the government access coordinator, will be able to maybe assist individuals who are seeking information or not. And I don't know. They're not really being given any extra scope of the duties, but they're certainly getting a very broad job description here, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Receiving and responding to applications communications pursuant to *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, so I guess it's always kind of a wait-and-see thing. I know one of the questions I always have is, who is asking for this? Maybe HIPA [*The Health Information Protection Act*] is people that are working . . . maybe I assume it's the Privacy Commissioner himself. Because he certainly in his press release indicated that there's a need for some way to get agreements around matching of data. So I think, given the world that we live in now where data is king, it's obviously an important procedural change to the way freedom of information is handled.

I wish the person who gets the job all the best, because I think when you have government agencies and ministries winning national awards for not being co-operative, that puts us in a very precarious place. And you can create all the positions you want, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but if ministries don't comply, then I think the only next step is enforcement. And I'm not sure whether the Privacy Commissioner's at that spot yet, but it wouldn't look very good if we started prosecuting our own ministries for failure to comply with providing access to information.

And of course the information that's often being sought is not personal information. This case is very public information. It's not relating to individuals at all, Mr. Speaker, so it's concerning. But I think once we get into committee we'll have, we'll certainly have some questions about the mechanics of this and the, you know . . . Who was consulted? Who was asking for these changes? And we'll get more information from the minister and the officials at that time.

So at this point I'm prepared to adjourn the debate on Bill

No. 87, *An Act respecting Data Matching Agreements and making consequential amendments to The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Nutana has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 87. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter into adjourned debates on Bill 88, *The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2017*.

I know when we start talking about automobile insurance, ears perk up and people want to know how these changes impact them. It's some exciting legislation to be able to talk about, Mr. Speaker.

So what this bill proposes to do is a few different things. So it changes the definition of chargeable incident, which is moved into the regulations. So according to the minister, when the minister was giving a second reading of this speech, he indicated that this is a way of eliminating unnecessary duplication that existed in the legislation. So that part appears like it's part of a housekeeping or an administrative change, Mr. Speaker.

Another thing that it does is it changes the process for appeals for driver safety ratings. So it moves the procedures, fees, and required documents from the legislation into the regulations. So the minister's argument for why this should take place is that it would be more in line with what's actually happening. So for example, if a driver contacts the board instead of the board contacting the driver to schedule a hearing, it allows them to be a little bit more nimble and reflect what's actually going on in the field as opposed to having to make those changes to legislation every time. So it takes that piece out of the legislation.

A new section also clarifies that the insurer has the right to recover money paid to an injured customer, or a family of a deceased customer, from an injured person who has been convicted of a specific criminal code offence. So this is based on the addition of new criminal negligence offences, and SGI needs to be able to collect recovery against a convicted driver. So that's the reason that was provided for making this change.

[16:30]

And also this bill proposes to allow for insurers to collect debts

owed in instalments. So in talking about recovering insurance money from drivers, this is a piece, in terms of the fact that there are changes to the driver safety program, where there is increased penalty for riskier drivers. And better rewards for good drivers could mean that they end up paying a larger amount. And if a larger amount is owed to the insurance company, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it makes sense that they would have an opportunity to pay that amount in instalments. So collecting debts in instalments is logical with the fact that they could end up paying a little bit more.

Both of these last two sections, it was identified that they come from oversight in the January revisions, so they're meant to reflect housekeeping amendments with these changes in mind.

So some of the changes that we're talking about to the safe driver recognition program, I just pulled some of them up off the SGI website. And these changes were from October 2016. SGI indicated that this was in response to customer input and analysis undertaken by SGI. So the first change was that the safety rating scale grew up to +25, so this can allow for a discount of 25 per cent for the safest drivers.

The second change, the at-fault collision threshold increased from \$305 to \$700. So this change means that you could be deducted four or six points, based on the auto fund payout amounts.

The third change is that financial penalties have doubled from \$25 to \$50 per point in the penalty zone, so this is essentially doubling the penalties that exist. And this was identified by the minister I believe as well.

And the fourth change, drivers lose two points for less severe speeding infractions. So when we're talking about this driver safety record, we know we are going to have appeals about it if people believe they have been treated unfairly or the situation does not reflect what they perceive. So this bill relates to some of these appeals and what this process looks like.

Regarding the changes to safety driver ratings, Mr. Speaker, moving the procedures and fees from the legislation seems like a prudent step, but I also have some concerns here with the level of scrutiny these future changes will face. Right now, changes are debated here in the Assembly because of the fact that we are amending legislation. And removing some of the details from that legislation makes me question the level of oversight that we're going to have, the level of oversight that's going to exist after these changes go through.

The points system is quite meaningful to people as well. People are afraid to get points taken off their rating, so the appeal process seems like an important piece. And this financial penalty comes around, you know, when you're renewing your driver's licence. People consider it very closely. It's something that's important to them when that time of year comes, as it did for me this past month, Mr. Speaker. Not too many additional penalties on my record, thankfully. But I know that it can be quite the financial burden and, you know, something that the people take very closely, especially considering the fact that the penalties are harsher now.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about SGI, I think it's also

important for us to talk about how valued this Crown corporation is in our province. We rely on SGI to keep our rates low, to keep our insurance affordable. I had, while I was growing up I had cousins that lived in other provinces that did not have the benefit of a Crown corporation, and the cost for their insurance was prohibitive. They could afford to buy a car, but they couldn't afford to be able to drive it. And I remember going to visit them and seeing cars sitting there that, you know, I was like, oh I'm so jealous that you have your own car. But they were like, yes, it doesn't really get me anywhere. I have to walk. I have to walk everywhere. So SGI is important in keeping our rates low. We're thankful to be able to have a Crown here. And I know that many people feel the same, and that they feel that we've been able to keep good jobs in this province as a result of this, through this Crown corporation, as well.

Now of course despite the fact that rates are lower, the government has actually made it more expensive for us to get insurance recently with the addition of PST being added. So they're making life affordable by taxing our insurance. We're the only province in Canada to add PST to health and life insurance. So this is something that is making life less affordable for people and something that is creating a barrier as well. So I don't think we can talk about insurance without bringing that up as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that there's going to be a lot more that we want to talk about in this bill. We want to take a close look at this legislation and ensure that these changes are in the best interest of our province and also for our citizens, so we'll have some questions that we'll be asking in committee. But for now, Mr. Speaker, I move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 88, *The Automobile Accident Insurance Amendment Act, 2017*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Saskatoon Fairview 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 Deputy 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 Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Good to join debates on Bill No. 89, *The School Choice Protection Act*, stand in my place, say my piece.

I guess there are a few thoughts that occur, Mr. Speaker, to myself watching this debate. First of all one of my political heroes in this life is Allan Blakeney. And the debate around the notwithstanding clause over the years that has taken place, Mr. Speaker, I thought that the position of Mr. Blakeney always had

a lot to recommend it in terms of the bar should be high, certainly, for the invocation of the notwithstanding clause. But it shouldn't be ruled out of hand absolutely, Mr. Speaker.

The notwithstanding clause was very much what helped to mediate the regional differences in the patriation of the constitution and the bringing the constitution to Canada, removing it from British hands ultimately, Mr. Speaker, and to put in place the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. And that balance, that dynamic tension that should exist in those things, Mr. Speaker, in terms of making sure that the will of the elected representatives of the people, that there should be that . . . That should be held in check certainly by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, but the Charter of Rights and Freedoms didn't come to us down Mount Sinai, Mr. Speaker. They're not carved in stone. They're hugely valuable, but societies do evolve and different of these things need to be kept in that evolution, in that dynamic tension, with the will of the people as expressed through their elected representatives.

So you know, I guess early on in this debate, Mr. Deputy Speaker . . . I've never counted myself as one who looked upon utilization of the notwithstanding clause in and of itself as something that a provincial government or a territory or . . . that it shouldn't be forever behind the break glass, Mr. Speaker, never to be brought to bear. I guess what I do have a problem with is going to such lengths to further . . . in proclaiming clarity and proclaiming protection of parental choice in what school system you're going to be going to, be it, you know, pick your branch of our publicly funded system, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And again I say this as someone who has no small amount of experience and exposure to the great education that's on offer at Sacred Heart Community School, part of the Regina Catholic school board system and a school that is well regarded for innovation, for working with populations that often does not have a lot of diversity, but also challenge alongside that, Mr. Speaker, but that it's a school that has risen to challenges, that provides academic excellence, and an atmosphere of love and support and spiritual nurturing as well for those students. I think it's a wonderful example of what a school can and should be.

And again, Mr. Speaker, this bill coming forward in the wake of the Theodore decision from the Court of Queen's Bench in Saskatchewan, and the way that that bench has sought to mediate the differences arising out of Theodore and to try and negotiate, you know, who should and should not be going to this school or that. Or whether a Catholic school in the case of Theodore, Mr. Speaker, was properly constituted or whether it was a means by which to get beyond school closure.

And again how that feeds into things like community choice, like community priorities, Mr. Speaker, and how that interacts or does not with the Education ministry and in this case, Mr. Speaker, the Premier's office. And the changes that have been made to local education authorities, Mr. Speaker, the body of school boards. There are a lot of different issues that go into this debate, Mr. Speaker.

And arguably that before appeals that seek that further clarity, that seek further certainty for parents, Mr. Speaker, that the notwithstanding clause is being invoked ahead of all of that,

Mr. Speaker, it makes one question the motivation. And is this about providing certainty and peace of mind for parents that are making decisions about where to send their kids for schooling? And what choices are available to them accordingly?

Or are we seeing this take place in a time where you've got a government that has a problem with dealing in good faith and in good will with teachers, with the sector, and how that in turn impacts the education offerings that are there for students? Is it about a diversion from that day-to-day reality which gets acknowledged in the more honest moments of the Sask Party leadership contest?

The difficulties, the challenge that this government has in terms of mending those fences with people that are tasked with the day-to-day work in the education sector, you know, is that where the work should be placed? Or is it in terms of this ongoing drive that we see on the part of this government to seemingly centralize and consolidate power and authority? And we've certainly seen that with Bill 63 and the way that this government has taken power for itself in the education sector, which in its best days there's always been that partnership between communities and the provincial government, Mr. Speaker. Or they're tilting that balance very much so that decisions are made out of the Education minister's office. And I dare say not so much even out of the Education minister's office, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but out of the Premier's office.

And I guess I don't understand how it is that a political group that calls themselves the Saskatchewan Party in actual fact is more the Regina party. And again I say this as a member of the Legislative Assembly that's very proud to represent Regina Elphinstone-Centre, but I wouldn't presume to run everything out of Regina Elphinstone-Centre or out of the Premier's office should I be on the government side, Mr. Speaker.

[16:45]

In terms of the partnership that has succeeded and has served our students and teachers and families well over the years, Mr. Speaker, and the evolution that has taken place in that sector — absolutely. But the power grab that has gone on in recent days on the part of this government and the power grab that has seen power consolidated into Regina and into the Premier's office again, Mr. Speaker — I think this is why we're here today in some parts to discuss Bill No. 89. Because while that power grab goes on and while that conflict gets worsened, Mr. Speaker, between the Premier's office and that government and everybody else in the sector, you know, they're looking for diversions.

They're looking for ways that they can say, you know, look over here. Don't pay any attention to what's going on in our classrooms where we're, you know, as a province paying more and getting less, and the students pay the price for that. Don't pay any attention to that; rather watch as we head off on some kind of Charter challenge or attempt to invoke the notwithstanding clause on the outcome of the Theodore decision before the appeals on the Theodore decision are even heard, Mr. Speaker. And then what's the go-forward plan there?

And again, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the folks that have been tasked with seeing that through, you know, I'll be very

interested to see what happens in committee around this and the way that the answers are forthcoming or not to the questions that people have, and that certainly they have been providing to us to ask of this government, as to how this all works or does not, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So again I think the notwithstanding clause is not something in and of itself that a government would never invoke. And I know enough about history to know times where governments of different stripes throughout the West have sought to go their own way, and the kind of tension and conflict that that has engendered, and how that in turn held up the notwithstanding clause as a remedy to bring about that agreement and the assurance of the balance that must exist for provincial rights in a federation.

I am not one to write off the notwithstanding clause out of hand, Mr. Speaker. But in terms of the way that it is brought forward, the juncture that it is brought forward in the history of this province and, you know, the context in which this particular piece of legislation is coming forward, it makes me more than a little suspicious about the motivations on the part of this government.

And it also makes me wonder, again in terms of . . . for a party that calls themselves for the name of this province and the way that you'd think that would involve the importance of all of the people of this province, the way that they not just want to consolidate power in Regina, Mr. Speaker, or even in the Education minister's office but in the Premier's office, I think is, you know, kind of hard to understand and kind of directly at odds with the proclaimed mission of the so-called Saskatchewan Party.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I know that other of my colleagues will have, I'm sure, much more insightful things to say about this legislation than I, and I certainly look forward to that. But with that, Mr. Speaker, I'd move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 89, *The School Choice Protection Act*.

The Deputy Speaker: — The Opposition House Leader has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 89, *The School Choice Protection Act, 2017*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Deputy 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 Deputy Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. To join in on Bill No. 90, *The Heritage Property Amendment Act, 2017*. I just wanted to talk a little bit, I guess, about heritage parks and heritage sites. There's different places, whether it's a building,

whether it's a park. We've got many people that, you know, go and visit our heritage sites that are identified. And there's a process and sometimes it is confusing, wondering . . . [inaudible] . . . different people saying if it's a heritage site, and sometimes it's federal, provincial. So there's different ways.

And I'm no expert on it but I know at the end of the day we have had many people, whether they come from other provinces, other parts of, you know, other countries, they come here into the province of Saskatchewan and that's what they look for. They look for heritage sites that they want to see. And there might be interest.

And some people I know that have come over . . . and even up north when I've seen some of them coming to visit up there, they talk about certain sites that mean something to them. Families, there's some way they found out that they have family members. And it's amazing to see how those different things . . . And they'll talk about it, and I have sat there listening in restaurants, and you start a conversation with somebody who's a tourist, and before you know it, you find out you're talking about the great things, and the great things that they want to see in our province. And it's heritage like that. And we should all be proud, and I know many of us are proud of that.

But I guess to go through, you know, the bill and looking at it, I mean, there is that . . . Whether it's our schools, we have our classrooms. I think about my grandkids and my kids. They would go on trips in the summertime, and that's exactly what they did. It's a part of the education because some kids never . . . and I know out of the North, you know, there was times where — and some smaller communities, rural communities — maybe they don't get a chance to get out to some of the areas. Whether they come to Regina and they get a chance to see some of the sites that are here, and the heritage sites that are here and get to share as a class and kids, to understand that. It's important and they do that.

And again, I give those teachers that take the time . . . And it's not always easy to decide whether some of them are fundraising . . . well again, because of the cuts government has given to education, maybe there isn't as much dollars to make sure that you get out and bring students out. So having said that, they still could do it.

But having said that as well, I know myself and my kids, my grandkids, they have had an opportunity and have gone to see certain sites. And it is amazing when you stop, people, along the side of the roads and you look at certain areas where they'll have a heritage site and you read the . . . There's these plaques on them, and you read those. Sometimes it's amazing. I don't know, you know, how many people stop for all of those, but I have done that, where you . . . All of a sudden, you don't know what it's there for. You stop and you pull over and you see it, a little building, and for whatever reason . . . It might have been a school.

And I think about that. I think about that back in the Duck Lake area when visiting, where actually my late mother went to school. And it's interesting when we see some of those sites. And it's amazing that she went there and, you know, they're a little bit of a story. So it's that connection to all of us, that many of us have connections to heritage sites. Not all of us but many

of us do, and it is good. And it's good to see that they're protected.

But going back into this bill, and it's interesting. I don't know why all of a sudden there's amendments to this bill, and you have . . . And maybe, you know, somebody has brought it forward to the government that there's a problem and there's a situation where there could be a conflict. When you have a board that . . . From my understanding, the amendments that are being made here, is you have an individual or a board that's appointed, gets to have hearings and decide who will actually be designated a heritage site. But then there's also funding that, you know, they get some funding for a heritage site.

And I've heard different people, even in my office, come in trying to find out. There might be a site or an area where they would like to protect, and they're trying to find the information. And we've tried to assist them through my office, how you go about going through . . . It's not, from my understanding, it's not an easy process to get a site, you know, designated a heritage site. So there's a lot of work and, I think, commitment by those individuals, and I give those individuals credit that want to do that. But when they do that, they want to make sure that they've got a fair chance to have, you know, their proposal being looked at fairly.

So I think, by what I'm getting out of this, there could have been some conflict or potential conflict. So they're taking three out of the board, and they will do a different role versus what . . . the funding. So you'll have one who designates, and one that does the funding, approves funding. So there are some proposed changes that they're doing.

But also on that, I didn't even know this, that apparently they have hearings where you can go to when they're designating . . . And it's interesting; like I would have never known if you weren't talking about this, that when individuals bring forward a proposal to have a heritage site, that the public has a right to hear. And I'm curious to see further in this if you're . . . And I guess maybe it's out of the public that I'm getting out of it. And I know we're going to have to go through committee . . . [inaudible] . . . but if you're proposing to maybe demolish or take down a heritage site, there's a process, whether it's hearings. And that's where I know it's going to be interesting to see, are they proposing that? And there's changes in there with that. And who have they consulted with and who they've talked with? And these might be changes that are needed. And like I say, sometimes people bring them forward.

So having said that, I'm not sure. And I know we're going to have, you know, more opportunity when we get into committee to ask questions. And my colleagues will have . . . the minister and the officials exactly, why is this being asked? And like I said, and maybe we'll be able to find out was there a conflict at some point? And was there a feeling that somebody was getting an advantage because . . .

Like I don't know who gets who appointed. So I guess maybe that's the other thing. In the whole process, maybe the government appoints those that are on this board. So I assume that's the way it is, but I don't know that for sure. So it's going to give us an opportunity to ask some of those questions too to get clarification. And is that where this has been a problem?

Where somebody's feeling like if you separate them, like I said, so that there is no conflict, or we don't want to see there being a conflict, and it's a fair process. We like to see that, that people have a fair process. Not like I can say in many of the other, you know, concerns that have been raised by many Saskatchewan people, that sometimes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it hasn't been a fair process, and some people maybe aren't happy.

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:59.]

In this case they're making some amendments. And maybe it's because someone's come forward and has decided to say, hey there is some challenges or some concerns, so we would like to make some amendments. And I don't know if the government woke up, you know, last week and decided they want to do that, or somebody's brought it forward, or from the board and they're listening to recommendations from the board. But having said that, I know at the end of the day we're going to get a lot of opportunity, and we'll go to committee. And we can find out exactly, you know, detail that we want as far as we want to go in committee in the time that's allowed to ask some tough questions and get some answers if we need that.

And maybe we can do a little bit of work on our side to find out who exactly did they consult with and who do we talk to. Because I know there's groups out there that do a great job and a service to many of our communities, that work hard, you know, making sure heritage sites are protected, making sure they're designated. And there are. There are people who put many hours into photos and everything. Like you look, the work that those individuals, and I thank them, that they do.

So we want to make sure the public and those people that are doing the good work make sure, at the end of the day, that as a government they're doing what they need to do, but we're also protecting the good work they are doing and, when they come forward, that it's a fair process, a meaningful process to those individuals who put the good time into it and want it designated. So at this time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I don't have any further comments, and I would like to adjourn debate on Bill No. 90.

The Deputy Speaker: — The member from Cumberland has moved to adjourn debate on Bill No. 90, *The Heritage Property Amendment Act, 2017*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. Brkich: — Mr. Speaker, so that the committees may do their work this evening, I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

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