

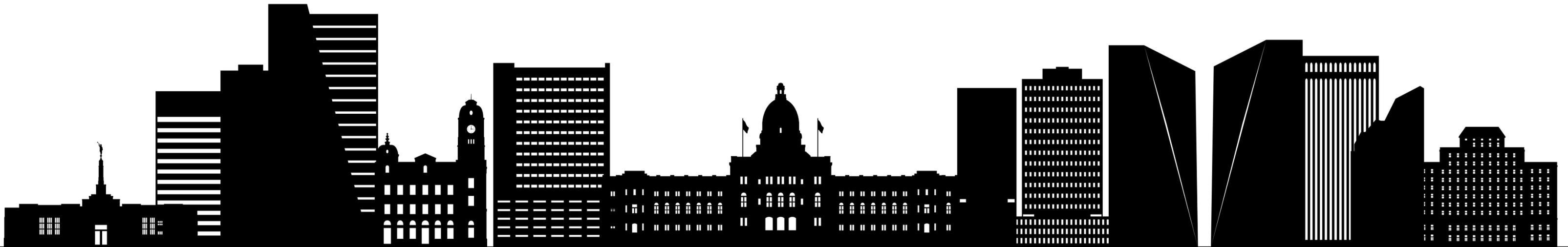


The Legislative Assembly

A Student's Guide to What it Does!

Legislative Branch Review

- The legislative branch is responsible for debating and creating laws.
- The legislative branch of Saskatchewan assembles in Regina, Saskatchewan.
This is why it is called the capital city.
- The building that houses the Legislative Assembly is called the Legislative Building or nicknamed as “The Leg” (pronounced “Ledge”).
- The Legislative Building is a key part of Wascana Park, the area around Wascana Lake.



Let's take a closer look...

- The core part of the legislative branch is what is known as the Legislative Assembly.
- The Legislative Assembly is made up of people who voters choose, through elections, to represent them.
 - These elected members are called Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs).
 - MLAs usually belong to a political party. The political party with the most people elected during an election forms government. The party with the second most people elected forms the Official Opposition.
- When a political party holds the most seats, it will be able to pass bills more easily because it has more party members to vote in favour.
- There are currently 61 seats in the Legislative Assembly.



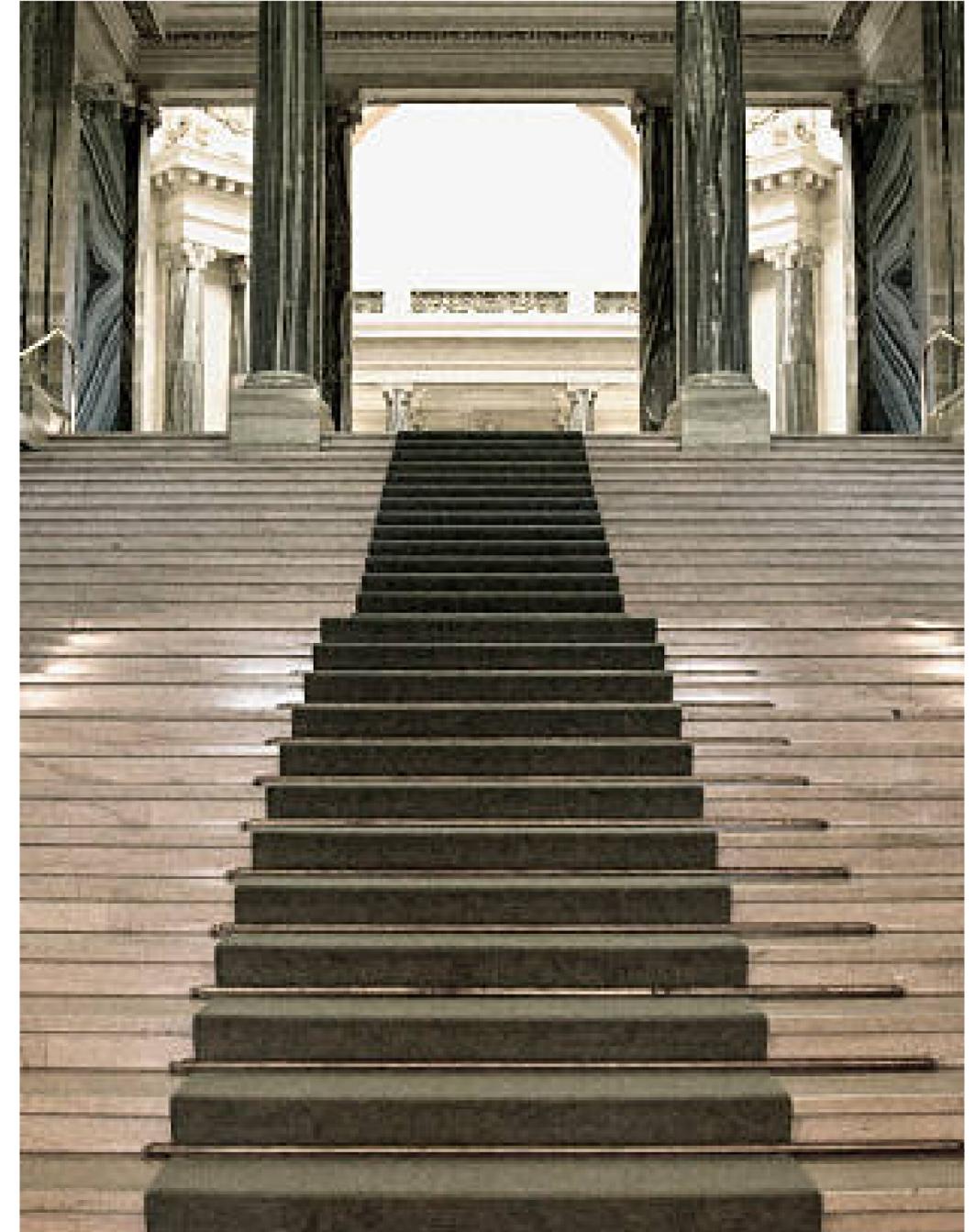
So how does it work?



- The Legislative Assembly typically meets for 25 days in the fall and 40 days in the spring.
- MLAs will spend much of their time debating and creating laws during these periods, along with reviewing government spending and debating topics of interest.
- After an election, the MLAs choose one of its members to be the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.
 - The Speaker plays an impartial role, maintaining order in the Assembly and ensuring business is conducted according to its rules.
- In addition to the Speaker, staff of the Legislative Assembly Service also help support the MLAs in the House in an impartial way. They include clerks, pages, and the Sergeant-at-Arms.
- To help you remember what MLAs do, remember another word we use for the Legislative Assembly: Parliament. Parliament comes from the French word “parler,” which means “to speak!”
- There is a process for how laws are passed and how debate can happen at each stage in the process. You’ll learn about this next.

A day in the Legislative Assembly...

1. The day begins with a non-denominational prayer.
2. MLAs introduce guests that are watching in the gallery. This would include visiting classrooms!
3. Petitions from the public are presented asking the Legislative Assembly to take action on certain issues.
4. MLAs speak on a topic of their choice often highlighting people and events in their constituencies.



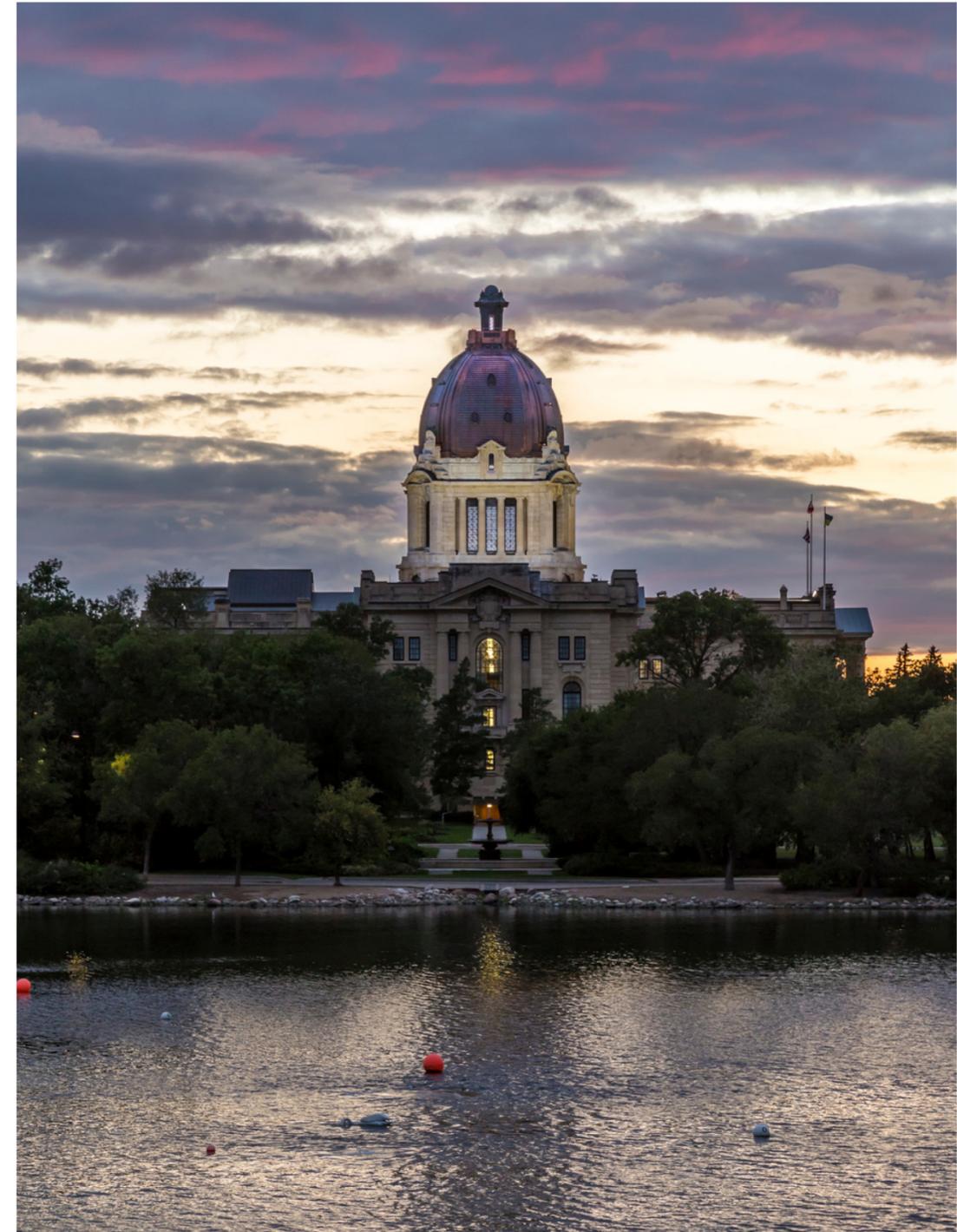


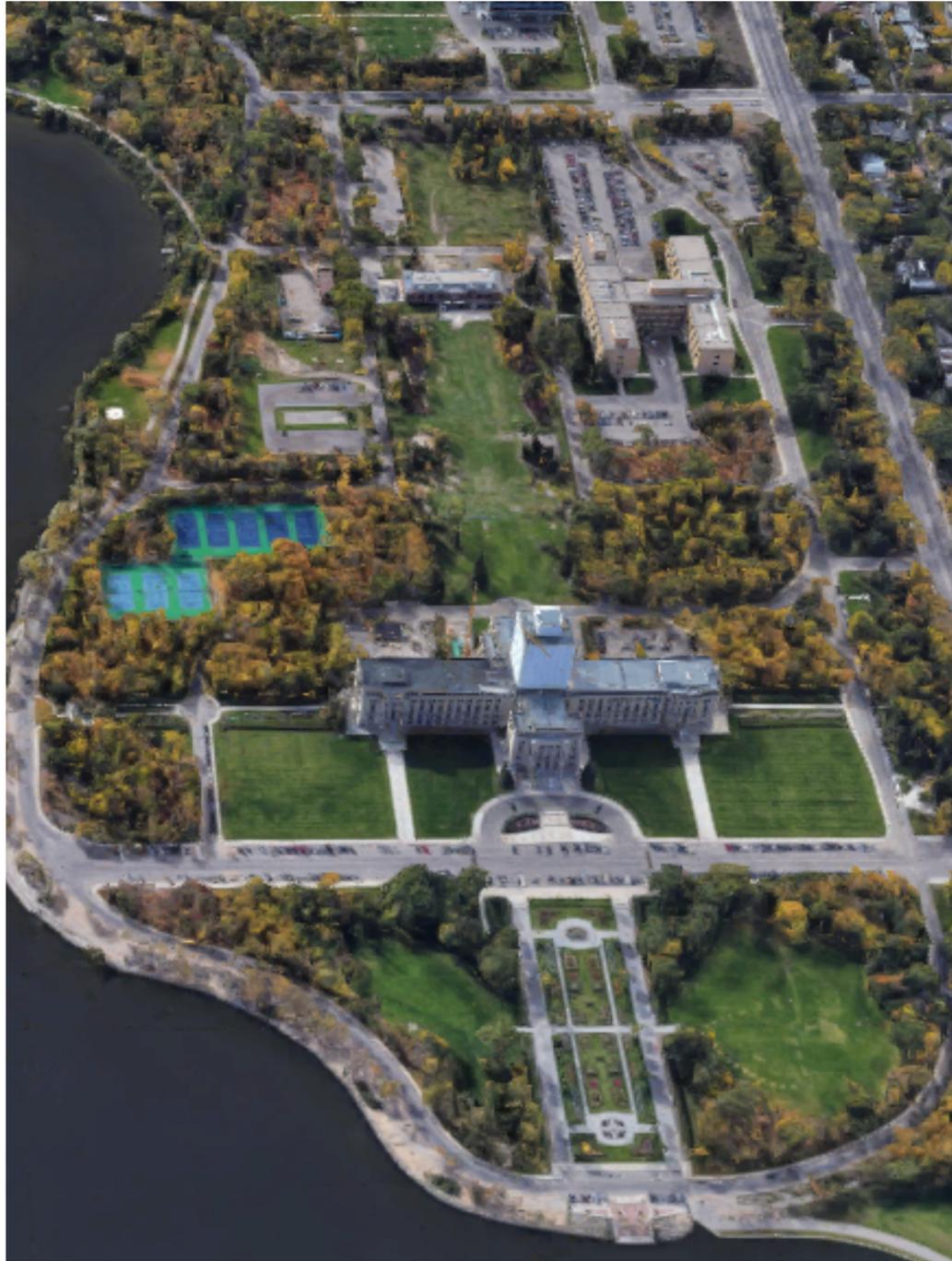
A day in the Legislative Assembly continued...

5. Opposition members have a 25-minute period to ask the government questions.
6. Cabinet ministers (MLAs that oversee certain areas of government) have a chance to announce new policies or programs.
7. Government Orders comes next. These are the items of business that government wants to achieve. This is when the work of bills becoming law begins. Think of bills as potential laws in the making!

First Reading

- First reading of a bill is its introduction to the Assembly and the public.
- After having first given two days' notice, a MLA (usually a cabinet minister) will put forward a motion to introduce their bill.
- If the majority of members agree with the motion, the bill becomes public. Bills are posted on the Legislative Assembly website for anyone to read!
- There's no debate at this stage. That will start at second reading after the Assembly and the public have had time to look it over.





Second Reading

- After first reading, there is a discussion on the principles of the bill.
- The minister responsible for the bill highlights key sections and discusses why the bill should become law. At the end of their speech, the minister moves a motion for the bill to be read a second time.
- Other MLAs then get to speak in favour of or against the bill. This can take several days.
- Once everyone who would like to speak to the bill has had their turn, members will vote on the minister's second reading motion.
- If the majority agree, the bill will go to a committee for review.

Review by Committee

- Committees are made up of smaller groups of MLAs that look closely at the bill.
- They can ask the minister and officials detailed questions about the bill, and they can even bring forward members of the public to ask what they think about it.
- These meetings also give MLAs a chance to make changes to the bill, called amendments.
- When the committee is done considering the bill, it reports back to the Legislative Assembly to update the rest of the MLAs on its work and any amendments it made.



Third Reading

- Third reading gives MLAs and the public a chance to see the bill in its final form (including any amendments).
- Discussion and debate can happen again at this stage, but usually does not.
- Then another vote takes place. If the bill passes this vote, it only has one more step before becoming a law!



Royal Assent

- This is where the Crown gets involved! It's the Queen or King formally agreeing to make the bill a law.
- In Saskatchewan, this is a symbolic ceremony that happens in the Chamber. The Lieutenant Governor arrives to give royal assent on behalf of the monarch.
- When the bill receives royal assent, it can come into effect either immediately or at a specific time set out in the bill.
- Once it is law, it is no longer called a bill but an Act!

