



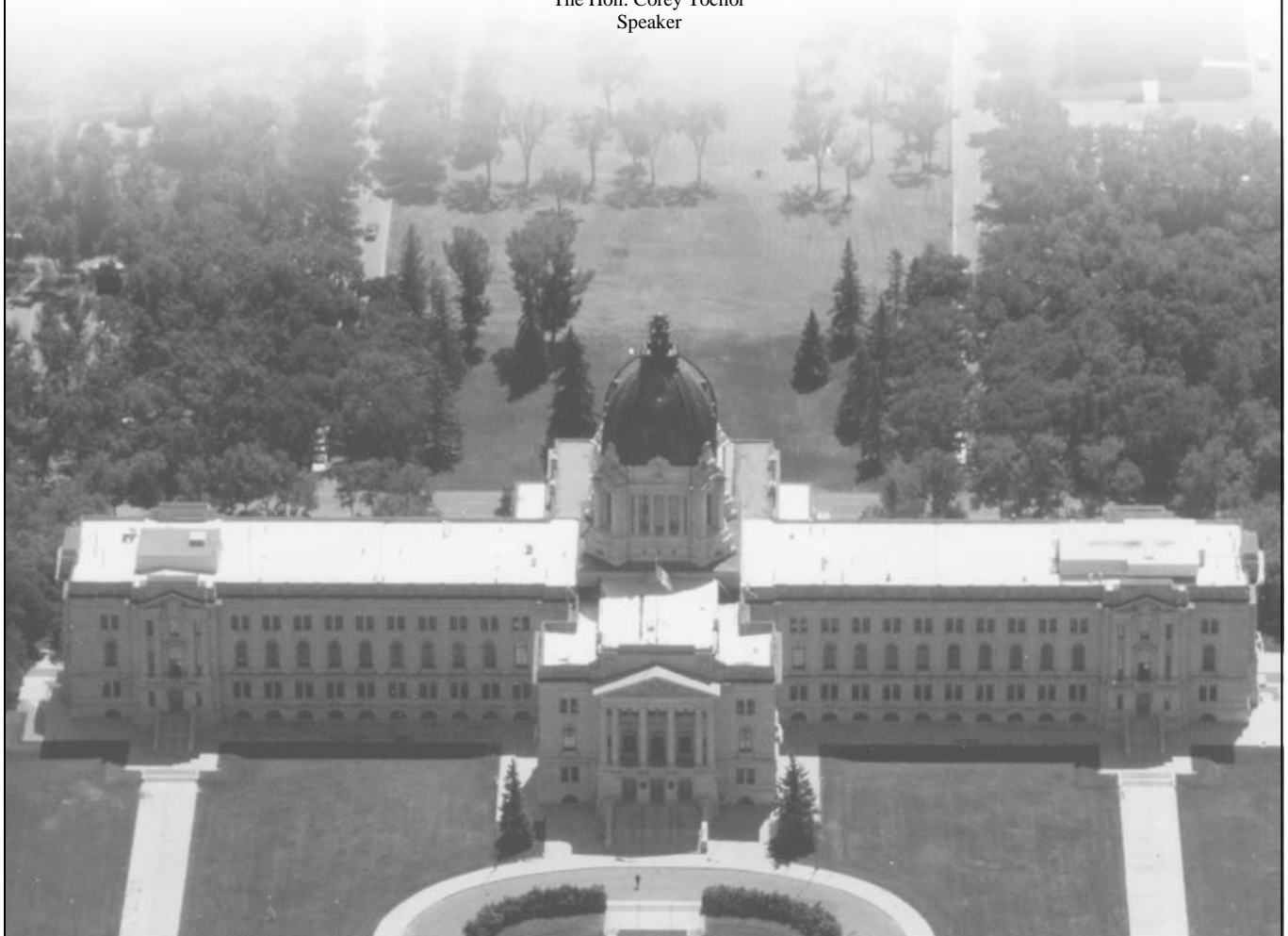
FIRST SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

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
1st Session — 28th Legislature

Speaker — Hon. Corey Tochor

Premier — Hon. Brad Wall

Leader of the Opposition — Trent Wotherspoon

Beaudry-Mellor, Hon. Tina — Regina University (SP)

Beck, Carla — Regina Lakeview (NDP)

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Bonk, Steven — Moosomin (SP)

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Chartier, Danielle — Saskatoon Riversdale (NDP)

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Docherty, Mark — Regina Coronation Park (SP)

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Harrison, Hon. Jeremy — Meadow Lake (SP)

Hart, Glen — Last Mountain-Touchwood (SP)

Heppner, Nancy — Martensville-Warman (SP)

Kaeding, Warren — Melville-Saltcoats (SP)

Kirsch, Delbert — Batoche (SP)

Lambert, Lisa — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)

Lawrence, Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)

Makowsky, Gene — Regina Gardiner Park (SP)

Marit, Hon. David — Wood River (SP)

McCall, Warren — Regina Elphinstone-Centre (NDP)

McMorris, Don — Indian Head-Milestone (SP)

Meili, Ryan — Saskatoon Meewasin (NDP)

Merriman, Hon. Paul — Saskatoon Silverspring-Sutherland (SP)

Michelson, Warren — Moose Jaw North (SP)

Moe, Hon. Scott — Rosthern-Shellbrook (SP)

Morgan, Hon. Don — Saskatoon Southeast (SP)

Nerlien, Hugh — Kelvington-Wadena (SP)

Olauson, Eric — Saskatoon University (SP)

Ottenbreit, Hon. Greg — Yorkton (SP)

Phillips, Kevin — Melfort (SP)

Rancourt, Nicole — Prince Albert Northcote (NDP)

Reiter, Hon. Jim — Rosetown-Elrose (SP)

Ross, Laura — Regina Rochdale (SP)

Sarauer, Nicole — Regina Douglas Park (NDP)

Sproule, Cathy — Saskatoon Nutana (NDP)

Steele, Doug — Cypress Hills (SP)

Steinley, Warren — Regina Walsh Acres (SP)

Stewart, Hon. Lyle — Lumsden-Morse (SP)

Tell, Hon. Christine — Regina Wascana Plains (SP)

Tochor, Hon. Corey — Saskatoon Eastview (SP)

Vermette, Doyle — Cumberland (NDP)

Wall, Hon. Brad — Swift Current (SP)

Weekes, Randy — Biggar-Sask Valley (SP)

Wilson, Hon. Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (SP)

Wotherspoon, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)

Wyant, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)

Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

Party Standings: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 50; New Democratic Party (NDP) — 11

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd request leave for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to members of the Assembly for granting leave. I do want to take some time here to recognize a number of individuals from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business that are seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. We have with us today Marilyn Braun-Pollon, CFIB's [Canadian Federation of Independent Business] vice-president for prairie and agribusiness. We have with us as well Jennifer Henshaw, CFIB's policy analyst in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. And as well we have, Mr. Speaker, Cole Hinzmann, CFIB's public policy and entrepreneurship intern for Saskatchewan and his first visit to this building here, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, these individuals have joined us today to present myself and the Government of Saskatchewan with a petition of over 1,000 small businesses that oppose a federally imposed carbon tax on communities in the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, we'll hear more in a member's statement here shortly, but I do want to say on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, we appreciate the support of small business. We appreciate the support of CFIB on this very important issue. And through CFIB I want to thank, from the Government of Saskatchewan, each of those businesses that took time to sign, to stand up for their communities, their industries, and their province.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask everyone in this Assembly to join with us in welcoming these individuals to their Legislative Assembly here today.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I would like to join with the member opposite in welcoming these important individuals to their Legislative Assembly. On behalf of the official opposition, we'd like to really thank you for the work that you do for independent businesses here in Saskatchewan. It's incredibly important advocacy work and a voice for those many independent businesses who on their own wouldn't be able to advocate quite as well. So thanks to Marilyn, Jennifer, and Cole for being here today.

And we know they're also here to advocate for some of the unfair tax hikes in this particular budget as well. So we want to thank them for their advocacy on that work as well and really want to welcome you to your Legislative Assembly and wish you best in all the work that you do.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, leave to do an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, seated in your gallery is the newly re-elected Patrick Maze, who is the president of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation. I'd like to welcome Patrick to the Assembly today. He represents 13,000 teachers in our province. And while we may not agree on everything, he's certainly been a strong and passionate advocate for public education in our province and has been very good to work with. And I want to encourage him and his members to continue the great work that they do for the citizens and especially for the students of our province. So I would ask that all members join in welcoming Patrick to the Assembly today.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister in welcoming Mr. Pat Maze to his Legislative Assembly, to congratulate him on his re-election, and thank him for his advocacy work and his tireless dedication to representing the teachers across this province and also in support of publicly funded education in the province. And I'd invite all members to join me in welcoming him to his Legislative Assembly.

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

Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I have the honour of introducing a number of guests from Estevan who have joined us in the legislature today. Pardon me, Mr. Speaker, I do need to ask for leave for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — Bob's your uncle. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister.

Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have two introductions to do today, Mr. Speaker, for very important guests. So first, I'm going to ask these guests to please give a wave when you are introduced: Connie Wahlmeier, Trisha Carriere. I can't see them. Where are . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . They're behind me. Okay. Wade Kotole, Michelle Houston, Sydney Smith, Mindy Bonderoff, Deborah Farago, Sharon Steffensen, Larry Orser, Isabelle

Beahm, Tia Dayman, Abbie Brokenshire, Amy Quinn, Trinda Jocelyn, Cheryl Kvamme, Susan Colbow, Cindy Billesberger, and Jessica Shier.

These guests, Mr. Speaker, are here on behalf of Estevan Diversified Services and we are recognizing them today to highlight the work they have done to implement recommendations in the Saskatchewan disability strategy. Staff and participants from Estevan Diversified Services created a human rights book called *Your Life, Your Rights*. And the students here today used their talents to create really beautiful and amazing artwork in the book. We just celebrated their work by adding the book to our Legislative Library. I don't know how many high school students have a book in the Legislative Library of Saskatchewan, so that's pretty cool.

I want to note that the Estevan Diversified Services created this book following consultations from the Saskatchewan disability strategy when they realized the individuals they serve, as well as their staff, did not fully understand the human rights that belong to each of us. Because of this they decided to create *Your Life, Your Rights* using clear language that is easily understood by all people.

Additionally, students from the Estevan Comprehensive School spent 1,200 hours after school creating the beautiful artwork we see in this book. I think this shows that the Saskatchewan disability strategy is already making a difference in the lives of people experiencing disabilities. It also shows that all people and communities can find ways to use their skills and talents to take action to implement the recommendations in this strategy.

I want to thank the staff and participants who've joined us here today for their innovative and significant work in making a difference in the lives of Saskatchewan people experiencing disabilities. So please join me in welcoming these guests.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to also acknowledge three very special guests in your gallery as well. They are Jacque Tisher, the founder and CEO [chief executive officer] of Hope's Home — Jacque, would you give a wave? — Nicole Cook, the chief operating officer of Hope's Home; and Kelsey Stewart, the fund development and marketing manager of Hope's Home.

You know, Jacque Tisher is truly a trailblazer, not only in Regina, but also in Canada. In 2003 the Tisher family fostered a beautiful baby girl named Hope Dawn Marie. Hope was born with spina bifida and spent most of her 10 months on earth in hospital, Mr. Speaker.

The Tishers were never able to bring Hope permanently home due to the difficult processes involved in meeting her extensive medical needs. Hope's brief life inspired a legacy. Jacque, a pediatric nurse, combined her professional experience with her experience as Hope's loving parent to create an innovative solution for families like hers. Jacque's main strategic goal was, and is, to provide the necessary care for children with complex medical needs, their siblings, and typically developing children in a fun and safe, inclusive environment. This helps keep families together as well. Today, Hope's Home helps families in Regina, P.A. [Prince Albert], Saskatoon with daycare, respite, supportive living, and transition care. One of their

homes is in my constituency of Regina University.

They say great leaders attract great people, and while I only recently met Nicole, I can certainly say that this is definitely true also of Kelsey Stewart. Kelsey Stewart is a young woman to watch. In addition to putting together a phenomenal event you'll hear about soon, Kelsey came from another very important partner, Habitat for Humanity, where she was one of the youngest people in Canada to be a trip leader on six international builds, in addition to being a lead on many builds here.

I would like to welcome these very distinguished people to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join the Minister of Social Services in welcoming these folks to their legislature. You do outstanding work for the communities throughout the province. And we want to thank the folks from Hope's Home, the wonderful work that you do, and the Estevan Diversified Services too.

And as human rights critic, I think it is very important that you do take that perspective of human rights and disability. It's a huge, huge thing that we all, all of us in all our communities have to come to understand. And so thank you for all your work.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of visitors I would like to introduce. First from the University of Saskatchewan Students' Union, we have David D'Eon, the president of the student union. And if David could give a wave here, that'd be great. And Deena Kapacila who is the vice-president of finance and operations. And they're having meetings down here in Regina, and we want to welcome them to their legislature.

And I have as well two other very special guests I have to introduce: my daughter Cameron Forbes, who's here today; and my granddaughter Felix Rose Forbes. Now you can't really see her, but if Felix could give a wave — there you are. Yes. So, she's here to see what her granddad, where her granddad works. So I will ask . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I don't know. Anyways, I would ask all members to give all these folks a warm welcome to their legislature. Thank you.

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

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask leave for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join with the member opposite and welcome David D'Eon,

president of the University of Saskatchewan Students' Union. Reading a bit about him, I learned from an article posted just a few days ago that David is an avid traveller who took some time away from university to travel across Canada and even worked in a bank in the Northwest Territories for a while. After four years away, he returned to the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] to finish his studies in political studies and ultimately led a successful campaign for president, Mr. Speaker. It was a close race, and I would like to congratulate him on his victory.

Joining him today is Deena Kapacila, USSU [University of Saskatchewan Students' Union] vice-president of operations and finance. She's also a political studies student and was recently part of the Daughters of the Vote delegation in Ottawa.

I look forward to meeting with them later this afternoon after question period, would like to thank them in advance for taking the time, and I ask all members to welcome David and Deena to their Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to welcome 32 young Spartans, a grade 10 class from Sheldon-Williams Collegiate here in Regina, in Regina Lakeview, to their Legislative Assembly. This is a grade 10 social studies class, and no stranger to us is their teacher, Ms. Michelle McKillop and Mr. Jeff Perry as well as educational assistant, Ms. Lorrielynn Oleynik.

And I want to welcome each of you to your Legislative Assembly, to thank you for your interest, and the dedication of Ms. McKillop to ensuring that these young students have a sense of the work that is performed here in the Legislative Assembly. And I think this has been maybe the fourth group that we've seen already in this session from Sheldon-Williams. So I'd invite all members to welcome this group to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Estevan.

Ms. Carr: — Mr. Speaker, I ask leave for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member.

Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and to all members of this Assembly, I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome some special guests to the House.

First of all, I'd like to introduce my CA [constituency assistant], Susan Colbow. Susan, give a wave there. Very nice. Susan was actually . . . I inherited her from Doreen Eagles. She worked for Doreen. So it was actually a blessing. She's wonderful around the office, very diligent in her work, and it's just a great pleasure to work with her.

But on top of that, she's a huge asset to our community. Susan volunteers in so many ways within Estevan. In fact she's a member of the Estevan Kinettes and has been for 17 years. And in 2018, she gets the honour of being the Chair for Telemiracle 42 right here in Regina next year. So it's a big job, and I know she can do it. She also volunteers for many organizations in Estevan, one of them which is sitting on the board of Estevan Diversified Services, which is one of the reasons she's here today.

[13:45]

So that leads me into my next introduction of Connie Wahlmeier. Connie is the resource centre supervisor for Estevan Diversified Services, and she was the book project manager for *Your Life, Your Rights*, which we've heard the Minister of Social Services talk about today. Over the years, Connie's been a good friend to me and a good supporter of mine. I appreciate the work she does at Estevan Diversified Services with all of the clients there. I thank her for all the work that went into getting *Your Life, Your Rights* put together. I hear the project took two years or a little bit more, but now that it's here, it's a welcome gift to the Legislative Library.

And I know she didn't do this alone. She had a whole team of people; some of them are here today. We have students. We have teachers. We have some of the clients. We have some of the board members, some of the staff. So I just extend a big hello from the legislature and a big thank you for all the work you do for Estevan Diversified Services, and I ask all members of this Assembly to join me in welcoming all of them to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I also ask for extended leave to introduce guests.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to recognize two northern folks that travelled a great distance to be here today. Joining us on the floor, of course, from the great family, the Jobb family, all the way from Southend is the famous Bella Jobb. Bella of course works with the Gary Tinker Federation as a volunteer and certainly does a lot of work to support northern people that are facing disabilities.

And joining Bella today, none other than northern disability champion Mr. Gary Tinker, who is here today to talk about the effects of the STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company] cuts as it pertains to bus services for northern people and for those that have disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, it is no question that the volunteers like Bella, that come a long ways to support Gary, are very much appreciated. And certainly to point out as well, from the Gary Tinker Federation perspective, I often hear my colleague, the Leader of

the Opposition, talk about the 20-kilometre run that he takes every now and then and the marathons that he participates in. Well, Mr. Speaker, our northern champion walked 675 kilometres on crutches many years ago to bring out awareness about the disability issues facing northern Saskatchewan. And that is a long trek.

So again I want to thank Gary for his incredible work and to say to him that you've matched our leader in terms of physical fitness — surpassed him, rather — and to point out that all his work of champions like Gary Tinker and the support people out there like Brenda, like Bella Jobb, these are what the northern people represent. I'm very proud to have you in our Assembly today.

[The hon. member spoke for a time in Cree.]

In Cree I said I'm glad they've come to this place of assembly, and that this is their place as well and that they have nothing to fear here. So thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Speaker, I'd like to join with the member opposite and welcome Bella and also Mr. Gary Tinker. He's well recognized for the good work that he does for the province for those with disabilities and other areas, Mr. Speaker. So I want all members to join with us and the government and welcome Gary Tinker to his Legislative Assembly, and Bella.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Requesting leave for extended introduction.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you. To you and through you, Mr. Speaker, certainly I welcome all the guests that are here, so many that have been introduced that are friends. Nice to have you here. But to introduce in your west gallery, a grade 7 student that's bright, brilliant, and an incredible basketball player. Reese, can you give us a wave here? It's nice to have Reese in the Assembly. Reese's mom, Christy Blazieko, is a good friend. She's an exceptional teacher up in Saskatoon. She's also a real leader on the executive of the Saskatoon Teachers' Association. And it's my pleasure to welcome Reese to her Assembly here today. I ask others to join with me in doing so.

I want to recognize as well, we have Jeff Perry, the president for the Regina teachers' association here today. Jeff, thank you for your service and for your voice. Thank you for being here today. And we have Michelle McKillop of course here today, is a teacher at Sheldon and someone who's very active in her profession as well. So I welcome both of you to your Assembly.

And it's nice to welcome my buddy, Pat Maze, to the Assembly here today, someone who of course is a dedicated and a strong voice for teachers but, most importantly, students all across our province.

But some things you might not know about Pat is he's also a beekeeper: keeps bees, has great honey. He's a great dad for four kids, Mr. Speaker. He's an all around good guy and a good friend, half-decent fisher. If he's claiming otherwise, maybe test him a little bit on that, Mr. Speaker. But it's my pleasure to welcome a good friend, Pat Maze, a very important voice for students and teachers and education here in our province, to his Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to this Assembly, I am delighted to introduce, in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, a good friend and a former colleague, Donna Strudwick. Donna, please give us a wave.

Donna is a former administrator for the RM [rural municipality] of Edenwold. She was a long-term board member on the RM Administrators' Association. Later this afternoon, her and I and the Minister of Highways and the member from Cypress Hills will be travelling to Saskatoon for the annual awards banquet at the RMAA [Rural Municipal Administrators' Association of Saskatchewan] convention. So I'd like to apologize to Donna in advance for submitting her to the Minister of Highways for that many hours. But I look forward to the trip up, and discussion, and I look forward to the evening. And I'd ask all members to please give Donna a warm welcome to her Assembly.

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

Ms. Chartier: — With leave, for an extended introduction.

The Speaker: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member.

Ms. Chartier: — All right. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the House, it's my privilege to introduce some folks in the east gallery here today.

There are many people here today again concerned about the cut to the hearing aids plan, Mr. Speaker. Some of them were here just about a month ago, Mr. Speaker, and I know they had an opportunity to meet with ministry officials. And in committee they heard that their questions had been answered, but that couldn't be farther from the truth, Mr. Speaker. They're here again today to convey to the minister and to the ministry officials that this cut is not a good decision and will have a huge impact on families, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to introduce, we have Paula Anderson here. Her daughter has hearing loss. We have Olivia Anderson, whose sister has hearing loss; and Braelyn Anderson, who is 14, who is living with hearing loss, Mr. Speaker.

We have Garry Elriss, whose granddaughter has hearing loss; Joanne Anderson, who has two granddaughters with hearing loss; Trisha Donald, her daughter has hearing loss; Payton Donald, who is 13 and is living with hearing loss; Kumiko Yokoyama is a parent with a child with a hearing loss; Jayne Morris, her daughter Mary-Jayne has hearing loss.

We have Robert Mellau from Saskatoon, his daughter has hearing loss. Claudia Baptiste is the mother of a 12-year-old with hearing loss and is the president of the Saskatchewan Alexander Graham Bell Association, Mr. Speaker. We have Diane Edwards, who is a retired teacher of the deaf in Saskatoon. Tabitha Clayson is the mother of Finnegan Clayson, who has profound hearing loss bilaterally.

Michelle Halushka, she's the mother of Dakota Halushka, who has hearing loss and wears hearing aids; and Marilyn Barrington, who is a board member of the Saskatchewan Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. She is a retired consultant and teacher of the deaf and hard of hearing, Mr. Speaker.

More information continues to emerge. I know even in sitting together today, they identified even more issues that this cut to the hearing aid plan will produce, Mr. Speaker. I know the minister has a letter from 16 pediatricians and two pediatric audiologists here, he just received. The evidence continues to mount that this is a short-sighted decision, and the folks here in the gallery, among others across Saskatchewan, hope that the minister will reverse his decision.

With that, I would like to ask all members to join me in welcoming these guests to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to this Assembly, I'd like to join with the member opposite in welcoming these guests to the Assembly. I appreciated the opportunity to sit down with them a few weeks ago, a number of them. I've arranged for, I think there was either a meeting or a conference call with ministry officials to try to address any concerns they have. I know there's another meeting scheduled for tomorrow. Certainly we will do everything we can to address their concerns. In the meantime, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members to please join with me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

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

Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with the Minister of Health as he introduced earlier Ms. Donna Strudwick, who's seated in your gallery. I also wanted to introduce her. The Strudwick name and the Strudwick family is synonymous in Balgonie for the hard work that they have done to develop that community, whether it's through agriculture or through Donna's work at the RM. Mr. Speaker, they're still very instrumental in that community.

But I would say that her toughest work was back in 2007; she was my campaign manager and was fortunate enough to bring through a win despite the candidate, Mr. Speaker.

So I'd like all members also to welcome Donna to her Legislative Assembly and give her sympathy riding up to Saskatoon with the two ministers and the member from Cypress Hills. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Sproule: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge and briefly introduce Carol Kos, who's sitting in our gallery looking on the proceedings. She's been here every day, almost every day this session just watching the proceedings. I actually met her at the gym, but now we're Facebook friends, and she's expressed a great interest in the proceedings here. So, Carol, thanks for your dedication and welcome to your Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And to you and through you to all members of the Assembly, I'd like to introduce 20 grade 12 students from Winston Knoll. Give us a wave. They're in the west gallery, I believe. Yes, up there. They're in the west gallery, I believe, Mr. Speaker, and their teacher, Mr. Michael Silvius. I welcome you to your Legislative Assembly, and I look forward to meeting with them after question period and answering any questions they may have, on behalf of the member from Rochdale. So I'd like all members to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to take an opportunity to join the minister and the member from Athabasca to welcome Gary Tinker here. Gary Tinker, I just want to say, you are truly a leader in the North, especially with people with disabilities.

And I had the honour of sitting on Gary Tinker Federation as the Chair for a number of years. And I just want to say, Gary is committed to helping and awareness of people with disabilities. Many of us have challenges, but it's okay that, you know, you can overcome those challenges with support and people who understand and show their support. So I just want to say to Gary, thank you so much, Gary, for the kindness you show to many people, your leadership, and truly the activism that you do for people with disabilities. I welcome you to your legislature.

As well, Bella, welcome. I know you're from my side of the province — the good side, we'll say to Buckley. We argue once in a while.

So I would like to welcome both of you. I ask all members to join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

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

Mr. Olason: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Assembly, I'd like to introduce 59 of

the best, brightest, and most well-behaved grade 7 students from École Cardinal Leger School, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatoon. Give a wave. Hi. And I'd like to especially pick one out of her classmates, my daughter Abigail Olason is here. She's bright and a good worker and a good volunteer, and she's the apple of my eye.

Mr. Speaker, joining them today are their teachers, Ms. Gudmundson, Mr. Neufeld, Mme. Brisebois, and Mme. Erlandson; and chaperones, Mrs. Shipley, Mrs. Denis, and Mrs. Zdunich.

I'd like everybody to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present a petition. The people who have signed this petition are opposed to the Sask Party's plan to scrap and sell off Saskatchewan Transportation Company. They would like us all to know that STC provides a vital service to many seniors, workers, and families throughout the province; and that by scrapping STC out of the blue and without asking permission of the owners, the Saskatchewan people, the Sask Party is sending a clear sign about how little they care about protecting our Crowns like SaskTel; and that STC helps to drive the economy with a parcel service that serves farms and other businesses. Mr. Speaker, I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan immediately stop the plan to scrap and the sell-off of the Saskatchewan Transportation Company, and to resume transportation services to the people of Saskatchewan.

[14:00]

It is supported by many leaders and thousands and thousands of people who are very upset. I so present.

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

Mr. Steinley: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I'm proud to add my voice to the voice of members on this side of the House to . . . and a thousand businesses from the CFIB to be against a federal-imposed carbon tax being placed upon this province, Mr. Speaker. And this side of the House has placed their position firmly on the floor of this Assembly so the people of the province know where we stand, and we're against the federal carbon tax.

We're asking the opposition members to do the same at some point in time here in the next couple of years because some of them are for it, some of them are against it, and we just don't know where they stand right now, Mr. Speaker. And we're hoping that, on behalf of the people in the province, they'll add their voice to this side of the House and oppose the federal carbon tax so we can make sure that everything in this province does not go up in price, Mr. Speaker, because we know that a carbon tax will increase prices of groceries, gasoline, farming,

Mr. Speaker, and it'll affect everyone throughout our province. So:

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens of Big Beaver, Coronach, Assiniboia, Willow Bunch, Prince Albert, Glaslyn, Medstead, Leask, Shellbrook, Pelican Cove, Holbein, Debden. I so submit, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise again today to present a petition opposing the Sask Party's cut to spiritual care. Mr. Speaker, just a few weeks ago in committee, we had a discussion about this cut and the minister told me, well this isn't a service offered throughout the province, and it was inequitable. So instead of expanding this important service, Mr. Speaker, they chose to cut it.

The petitioners point out that in this budget the Sask Party government has eliminated funding for spiritual care services within our health care facilities. They point out that Saskatchewan will be the only province in Canada, Mr. Speaker, to not fund this support for patients, residents, and their families seeking wellness. They point out that the Sask Party didn't talk about this at all in their election platform just a year ago, Mr. Speaker. The petitioners point out that spiritual care responds to the spiritual and emotional needs of patients and residents and provides compassionate listening presence in times of crisis.

They point out that spiritual care supports families, patients, and residents in making difficult decisions, and they point out that spiritual care can provide support for all families, patients, and residents in obtaining comfort and support, regardless of their faith or belief, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan immediately reinstate the funding for spiritual care services in this province's health region facilities.

Mr. Speaker, this petition today is signed by citizens from Neudorf, Melville, Assiniboia, McLean, and Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, I so submit.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am proud to rise in my place today to present a petition on cellphone coverage for small northern communities. And, Mr. Speaker, there's no question that northern Saskatchewan communities should have access to the same quality of cell coverage as southern communities currently enjoy.

So the prayer reads as follows, Mr. Speaker:

To cause the provincial government to improve cell service coverage for the northern communities like St. George's Hill, Dillon, Michel Village, Dore Lake, Michel Point, and Sled Lake to provide similar quality of cell coverage as southern communities enjoy, as I've said earlier. This would provide support to our northern industries as well as mitigate safety concerns associated living in the remote North.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed this petition are from Laird. They're from Saskatoon. They're from Maidstone. They're from Dore Lake. They're from Meadow Lake. They're from St. George's Hill. They're from Dillon. They're from Big River, Mr. Speaker. They're from Regina. They're from Cornwall Road in Sherwood Park as well, Mr. Speaker, and also, as I mentioned, Saskatoon. And, Mr. Speaker, as we've indicated time and time again, this particular petition on cellphone coverage for the small northern communities are signed by many people from all throughout Saskatchewan. And I so present.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition concerning pay equity here in Saskatchewan. And the undersigned residents of the province want to bring to our attention the following: that the citizens here believe in an economy powered by transparency, accountability, security, and equity; and that all women should be paid equitably; and that all women are powerful drivers of economic growth and their economic empowerment benefits us all.

And we know the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives found that in Saskatoon in 2016, women earned on average 63 cents for every dollar that a man makes, and in Regina women earned on average 73 cents for every dollar that a man makes. According to the most recent StatsCan data, the national gender wage gap for full-time workers is 72 cents for every dollar that a man makes.

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

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan eliminate the wage gap between women and men across all sectors where the Government of Saskatchewan has jurisdiction, provide a framework under which this can be done within this term of the Assembly, and that the Saskatchewan government call upon workplaces within Saskatchewan within the private sector to eliminate the wage gap between women and men.

And, Mr. Speaker, the people signing the petition today come from Regina, Saskatoon, Wolseley, Grenfell, Paddockwood, Prince Albert, Wapella, Moose Jaw, Melville, Indian Head, Lumsden, Yorkton, Tisdale, North Battleford, the Battlefords, Maidstone, Marcelin, Spiritwood, Hafford, Edam, Shellbrook, and many other communities. I do so present. Thank you.

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition in support of child care in the province of Saskatchewan. Those who have signed this petition wish to draw our attention to the following: that across Saskatchewan licensed non-profit child care centres are taxed inconsistently; to the fact that many of our licensed non-profit child care centres pay commercial property tax, and this is something that's not done in Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, BC [British Columbia], or New Brunswick.

They want us to remember that child care is essential to the economy, yet most centres struggle to balance their budget. And this issue threatens both the number of child care spaces as well as the quality of care.

They want us to remember that child care has an enormous positive impact on a child's future outcomes and yields high rates of economic return, and that child care centres are institutions of early learning and childhood development, and as such it's appropriate that they have the same tax treatment as schools.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan recognize that licensed non-profit child care centres provide programs that are foundational to a healthy society by including them in *The Education Act* and further exempt all licensed non-profit child care centres in Saskatchewan from property tax through changes to the appropriate legislation.

Mr. Speaker, these petitions have been signed by citizens across the province. Those that I will present today have been signed by residents of Weyburn and Regina. I do so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition to ensure job security for victims of domestic violence. Saskatchewan has the highest rate of domestic violence by intimate partners amongst all Canadian provinces. One in three Canadian workers have experienced domestic violence, and for many of them the violence will follow them to their workplace. Employers lose \$77.9 million annually due to the direct and indirect impacts of domestic violence. Mr. Speaker, Manitoba's already enacted legislation, and Ontario's on its way to enacting legislation that ensures job security for all 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 enact legislation that requires all employers to provide a minimum of five paid workdays and a minimum of 17 weeks unpaid work leave with the assurance of job security upon return for all survivors of domestic violence in

Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the members on this side of the House tabled a private members' bill a few weeks ago that called for the implementation of these exact measures where . . . We know that time is running short on this session, so the government has a limited amount of time where they can take that bill on and pass it into law. We do hope they do so relatively quickly, Mr. Speaker. It's been called on by many stakeholder groups and although it is a small measure, it is a measure that can be implemented today to help people in a very big way, Mr. Speaker.

So the individuals signing the petition today come from Maple Creek. And I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Early Childhood Education Month

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, May has been proclaimed Early Childhood Education Month in Saskatchewan. This month we recognize the many childhood educators who work throughout our province and celebrate the benefits they provide for children in their care and for our province.

Mr. Speaker, quality early childhood education is foundational to the development of healthy children and a healthy society. From ensuring school readiness, to emotional regulation and teaching children how to get along with others, early childhood educators make an enormous contribution to the lifelong success of future generations.

The dedication of our early childhood educators here in Saskatchewan is evident. Not only do they provide high-quality, positive learning experiences for our children, but they also promote strong relationships between Saskatchewan families and communities. Unfortunately, due to this government's short-sighted and mean-spirited budget, our early childhood educators are struggling to ensure that Saskatchewan children get the care that they so deserve. From callous cuts to funding, to the refusal to fix unfairness in taxation for childcare centres across the province, the Sask Party is forcing cuts to early childhood programs and supports that Saskatchewan children and families require.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would like all members to join me today in recognizing the unparalleled importance of early childhood education, and thanking all early childhood educators in Saskatchewan for the tireless work that they do, despite underfunding, to ensure that future generations of our province are provided with every opportunity to thrive and grow. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I'd like to ask guests of our Assembly today to refrain from using electronics which also includes taking pictures of the proceedings.

I recognize the member from Moose Jaw North.

Fundraiser Held for Hope's Home

Mr. Michelson: — Mr. Speaker, I stand to recognize Hope's Home. This community-based organization was launched by Jacqueline Tisher, who is in your gallery, in 2005 in memory of a foster child named Hope. Hope's Home has established unique programming designed to strengthen children's cognitive and social development.

Well, Mr. Speaker, on May 6, Hope's Home hosted a fundraiser entitled *Swinging with the Stars*, which paired eight of the city's most influential people with eight professional dancers. One of these eight was Rachel Mielke, CEO of Hillberg & Berk, who made a very generous contribution to the event. Rachel contacted Brett Wilson, a well-known Canadian businessman and philanthropist, who also supported the cause.

That amount was generous, and it ignited friendly competition between Rachel and the other dancers, affectionately known as the magnificent seven. The Justin & Greg Facebook Live show promoted a donation challenge and started a hashtag called #StopRachel. In the end, the magnificent seven did out-fundraise Rachel, but the real winners were the children at Hope's Home, with an incredible total of \$103,000 being raised.

Mr. Speaker, this event shows that no matter what, there's always hope. I ask members to join me in thanking Hope's Home for all they do to support children in need and to thank the organizers, the donors, the supporters of *Swinging with the Stars* who made this a great success. Thank you, Mr. Speaker .

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Regan and Robin Yew

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I stand in this House today to recognize two constituents of mine, brothers Regan and Robin Yew, and their contributions to hockey in Saskatchewan.

Born and raised in Ile-a-la-Crosse, Regan and Robin started skating at the age of five and instantly fell in love with the game. They began playing organized hockey in Meadow Lake for a few years and were coached by their father all the way up to bantam. With the support and dedication of their parents, Iona and Lloyd Yew, both boys have made their way from minor hockey and are currently playing for the London Lakers in the Canadian Junior Hockey League.

But playing hockey hasn't always been easy for the Yew family, Mr. Speaker. They've had to overcome many obstacles, and the costs were not always easy for the family to pay. Lack of local facilities meant the Yew brothers often had to make a five-hour round trip to Meadow Lake for games, tournaments, and practices, and a 14-hour round trip to Saskatoon to train in the off-season. Both brothers also had to sacrifice their free time and chance to play other sports to concentrate on hockey.

Mr. Speaker, Regan and Robin have worked very hard to get where they are at today, and they have accomplished so much. I'd like to ask all members to join me today in congratulating these boys for their dedication to hockey and for showing

Canada the great talent that our community of Ile-a-la-Crosse, northern Saskatchewan, and our province as a whole has to offer. Thank you very much.

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

[14:15]

Weyerhaeuser Honoured by Ethisphere Institute

Mr. Bradshaw: — Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to announce that for the eighth time, Weyerhaeuser has been named world's most ethical company by the Ethisphere Institute.

Ethisphere is an international organization dedicated to the creation, advancement, and sharing of best practices in business ethics, corporate social responsibility, anti-corruption, and sustainability. Weyerhaeuser offers many compliance and ethics-related tools and processes including its code of ethics, a variety of training modules, and an issue-resolution process.

Weyerhaeuser operates an OSB [oriented strand board] plant in Hudson Bay in my constituency, employing 190 full-time employees and 15 summer students. Several full-time contractors are hired for logging, hauling, road building, and mill maintenance, which equates to approximately 200 indirect, full-time jobs.

The OSB plant produces approximately 560 million square feet of OSB and the primary products are sheathing, flooring, and web stock, which is truss joist material. This is enough for over 50,000 homes.

Not only is this company an excellent employer, but they're outstanding members of the community as well. Over the past 10 years, Weyerhaeuser has donated approximately 500,000 to various community projects including \$100,000 to the new Hudson Bay Community School, 70,000 to the Hudson Bay hospital, 30,000 to Hudson Bay ball diamonds, and 20,000 to the Mistatim community hall.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate Weyerhaeuser on receiving this honour and look forward to continued involvement in the Carrot River Valley constituency.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Provincial Secretary.

Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan Annual Conference

Hon. Ms. Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to stand today to share about the Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan Inc. 2017 annual business conference. This was an amazing event held during Women Entrepreneurs Week and was attended by many dignitaries, including the member from Regina Rochdale, Trish Cheveldayoff, Christine Hrudka, Rachel Mielke, and June Draude.

This event held at TCU Place in Saskatoon was an amazing showcase of some of our province's best and most successful entrepreneurs, as well as some of the promising start-ups that are on their way to success. Also Women Entrepreneurs of

Saskatchewan unveiled their new logo at this event.

Women entrepreneurs are a force to reckon with as we add to our province's stability and vibrancy, and create opportunity for others in all sectors of the economy. They are driven and always wanting to make a difference, and Saskatchewan empowers women to be successful.

In 2016 there were over 34,000 self-employed women in this province, an 11.4 per cent increase over the past decade. These women are making a significant impact on the economy. I ask all members to join me in thanking Women Entrepreneurs of Saskatchewan for putting on this annual event and joining in promoting women's entrepreneurship in Saskatchewan. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Estevan.

Small Businesses Opposed to Carbon Tax

Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We heard the Minister of the Environment introduce some special guests this morning from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. They are here at the legislature today to share with the Assembly and the whole country that small businesses in Saskatchewan are opposed to a federally imposed carbon tax.

The CFIB has canvassed their membership and learned that 76 per cent of Saskatchewan entrepreneurs oppose the carbon tax. They are here today with petitions titled "Timing couldn't be worse for introduction of a carbon tax." Mr. Speaker, the signators of more than 1,000 small businesses from every corner of the province . . . Further, the CFIB has learned that businesses see punitive measures as the least effective way to reduce carbon emissions. Mr. Speaker, small businesses in this province have serious concern with a one-size-fits-all approach and believe the Government of Saskatchewan should be recognized for its current use of carbon capture technology to reduce carbon emissions.

Mr. Speaker, we know that the new member from Saskatoon Meewasin supports the federal government's imposed carbon tax, and we know that the member from Nutana supports the principles of the Leap Manifesto. And the silence has been deafening on where they stand on pipelines and if they support the policies of the federal and BC branches of their party.

Mr. Speaker, our government stands with these 1,000 small-business owners and the entire province to say no to an imposed carbon tax. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Moosomin.

Manufacturing Growth in Saskatchewan

Mr. Bonk: — Mr. Speaker, statistics show that Saskatchewan was tied for the highest manufacturing growth in Canada for the month of March — nearly 20 per cent growth, Mr. Speaker. That's more than twice the national average, and proof of our increasingly diversified and resilient economy. We are seeing the strength of this economy in the face of low commodity prices, Mr. Speaker.

We are experiencing steady job numbers, nation-leading building permits, and increased drilling forecasts. Couple that with the first new potash mine in decades — the K+S project — also the Esterhazy K3 mine, the PCS [Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan] expansion in Rocanville, and some very strong signals from BHP on their Jansen project, we see an economy that is continuing to move forward.

Now I want the members opposite to look to the gallery, look at our guests from CFIB today and listen to their message. They represent a lot of job creators in this province. They understand the devastating impact a carbon tax will have on our nation-leading manufacturing. So to the members opposite, drop the politics and work with us. Work with us against this job-killing carbon tax. Work with us to support Canadian energy and pipelines, even if the BC and national NDP [New Democratic Party] won't. Work with us on innovation like the patent box legislation that we passed yesterday.

Members on this side of the House will keep working with Saskatchewan manufacturers so they can continue to lead the nation. I invite the members opposite to do the same.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Usage of Private Email Accounts

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday the minister who was forced to stand up and answer the questions when the Premier dodged them once again said that the former minister of the GTH [Global Transportation Hub], who was and is plagued by scandal, did not use the private political server for emails regarding the GTH. So I guess my question is, does the Premier stand by this statement? And how does he know?

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Well as I've . . . I answered that question yesterday, Mr. Speaker. The former minister did not use the party server for government business.

What I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, is that the server is secure. There were no breaches, and we have fully complied with FOI [freedom of information], with *The Archives Act* as well, Mr. Speaker, as evidenced by the fact that the email the member referenced from the Premier was caught by FOI. That had been a consideration from the government point of view all the way along.

And as members well know, we all have many accounts, whether that be our party account, our MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] account, government account, caucus account, and private accounts. And members opposite have been known, well known to use their personal accounts for government business.

We know that we can all do a better job of making sure we use the proper account for the appropriate business or their party account for government business. We all can do a better job, and we'll do that going forward, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, these are important questions, and that was about as straightforward as you can get. Day after day, and the Premier dodges it and can't take to his feet and answer that very straightforward question.

You know, it's obvious with their budget that that Premier and this Sask Party have forgotten who they're working for. Forty thousand Saskatchewan people are out of work. Supports are being cut for students in their classrooms. The most vulnerable are being even further marginalized, but it's the biggest corporations that the Sask Party are helping out with their giveaways.

It makes no sense until you realize that the Premier was doing government work with party resources. It all went through the Sask Party server, of course, Mr. Speaker. We know that the Premier doesn't have a mandate from Saskatchewan people for his budget, but we're wondering if maybe he thinks he has a mandate from those that fund his party, the fundraisers of his party, for the desperate sell-offs, the callous cuts, and the corporate giveaways. After all, they're all working on the same server. Can the Premier not separate his political interests from our provincial interests?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — You know, Mr. Speaker, honestly. With apologies to Thomas Mulcair who made a reference like this yesterday, the preamble, his preamble has more twists and turns and non sequiturs than a White House press briefing. And frankly, it's full of incorrect facts, Mr. Speaker.

But there are some elements of debate in the preamble around the budget, for example, Mr. Speaker, wherein a number of tough decisions were taken, difficult decisions were taken in the interest of getting this province back to a balanced budget, ensuring that our economy would remain strong, and also ensuring that we could afford to sustain important quality-of-life programs for the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

He decried some of the tax relief, Mr. Speaker, in his preamble with respect to the corporations of the province. When the NDP were in power and they implemented the very . . . in fact deeper corporate tax cuts than what are contemplated in our three-year plan, way deeper — 29 per cent by them and 9 per cent of the budget. What did the NDP call it when they were in government? Why they said, “. . . cutting business taxes and other measures to stimulate the economy . . . [will] sharpen our competitive edge.” That's what the House Leader said when he was on the government side, Mr. Speaker.

We do believe it's important to provide the right signals to the market so that we could see manufacturing numbers like we're seeing in this province, so that we could see job numbers like we're seeing in this province. That includes more competitive taxes, Mr. Speaker. The net result is the second-best job creation record in the country versus dead last when they were in office; 60,000 more jobs in the province of Saskatchewan today that will help us pay for quality of life in health care and education for years to come.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, no answer, and that Premier has no mandate from Saskatchewan people for his devastating budget. But we do know that the Premier was using the same private political email account to deal with a giveaway to the biggest corporations, to discuss international trade deals, collect sensitive commercial information, and Mr. Speaker, also to collect big money from Sask Party donors.

Can the Premier of Saskatchewan not see anything wrong with this? And will he stand by, will he stand by the statement of the minister as it relates to the scandal-plagued minister's utilization of that political server?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Wall: — Mr. Speaker, what utter nonsense from the member opposite. What he's alleging, it's absolute fantasy, Mr. Speaker.

And I would just say this, this was a difficult budget. Difficult decisions were taken and there are groups in this province who quite rightly are concerned and they're raising their case here in this legislature.

Mr. Speaker, what I'm saying is there's plenty of issues for the members to raise that aren't fantasy, that aren't complete contrivances of the members opposite, of that member in particular. If he wants to tread on conspiracy that's nonsense — which I'm categorically rejecting now as just that — Mr. Speaker, if he wants to do that, waste a question period, he's happy to do it.

We'll stick with both the record of the government and our plan going forward in the budget that he did kind of reference in a side-swipe in his preamble. That budget provides for a three-year plan to get back to balance in this province. It provides for measures on the tax side that will keep our economy strong. It provides for the largest budget in Social Services in the history of the province, a 9 per cent increase, even as we're facing some challenges on the revenue side.

It provides for strategic investments in health care so that Regina and Saskatoon could see relief in terms of emergency rooms in the province. It provides for continued momentum for surgical wait times. It provides for the business climate that's just seen Saskatchewan lead the country in terms of manufacturing sales and, Mr. Speaker, a record that includes 60,000 more jobs today than when members opposite were in government, when they were doing more than engaging in conspiracy and fantasy.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, a server at the Sask Party office holds government communications and information, public and private and commercially sensitive information. It also holds the Sask Party big donor list. The Premier really sees no conflict with this? Really?

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Unbelievable. Fantasy conspiracy theories from the Leader of the Opposition about engaging in international trade negotiations betrays a complete lack of understanding as to how these things work, Mr. Speaker. I know the member opposite has never been in government but he has members who have been in government.

When we're dealing with trade discussions, largely they're dealt with at the officials' level. The officials will brief the minister responsible. The minister responsible will brief the Premier for direction. That's how it works, Mr. Speaker. First ministers are not engaged in email negotiations about international trade agreements. That is not how it works.

But as I have said, Mr. Speaker, the account is secure. All of the rules with regard to FOI, with regard to archives have been complied with and we'll continue to do that going forward.

[14:30]

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

Mr. Forbes: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier is getting all shook up and refusing to answer any questions, but that's not all right. And we're going to keep hunting for answers like a hound dog because, Mr. Speaker, the fact is it's not just suspicious minds. People across Saskatchewan want to know what the Premier is doing, the work of government on a private political server housed at the Sask Party office.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier wants a little less conversation but the people of Saskatchewan deserve a straight answer. Does the Premier honestly see no problem with using the same email server that he's using to fundraise with, that's he's using to fundraise with, and to do the work of the Premier of Saskatchewan?

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — I think it's illustrative, Mr. Speaker, that the member opposite can't even keep a straight face asking that question. They clearly prefer to engage in fantasy conspiracy theories. There are, as the Premier indicated, many legitimate issues they could be raising in the Assembly that are rightfully important to people across the province. They've chosen to engage in fantasy conspiracy theories with members asking questions that they can't even keep a straight face while asking, Mr. Speaker, because they're very aware that it is a fantasy conspiracy theory.

And that member particularly, who has been using his personal address to engage in government business, along with a number of his colleagues who have done so as well. Mr. Speaker, there's a word for that. It's called hypocrisy.

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

Interprovincial Agreements on Post-Secondary Educational Resources

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, while the Sask Party serves tax

breaks for corporations, they're making life more expensive for families in so many ways. And they're raising fees in every way for post-secondary students, too. They've scrapped the tuition fee and textbook tax credits, and by cutting funding from universities, Sask Poly, and regional colleges, tuition fees are going up again.

On top of that, the Sask Party has yet to fund the third year of the cost-saving, open-source textbook agreement with Alberta and British Columbia. Why is the Minister for Advanced Education further abandoning students by cutting off open-source textbooks?

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

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite can rest assured. Since 2015 our government has invested \$500,000 in projects at Sask Poly and our two universities to create, adapt, and adopt open educational resources including digital textbooks, Mr. Speaker. This was part of a three-year memorandum of understanding signed in 2014 under the New West Partnership Agreement.

As part of this MOU [memorandum of understanding], the institutions were asked to develop 21 such resources, including open textbooks. Subject to budget appropriation, additional grants will be provided this year, Mr. Speaker. While the three-year MOU has expired, collaboration between provinces continues and officials from the three provinces are in discussions to evaluate the current agreement and to determine next steps, Mr. Speaker. And Manitoba, the newest member of the New West Partnership, may have an interest, and we're hoping to engage them in the process.

But again, Mr. Speaker, we've invested \$500,000 so far. When the members opposite were in government, they invested zero.

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

Canada Infrastructure Bank

Ms. Sproule: — Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party has already hiked taxes, raised fees, and increased power rates. And now if they continue to put their corporate, wealthy, and well-connected friends ahead of Saskatchewan families, the Sask Party could allow the new federal Infrastructure Bank to make life in our province even more expensive. Under this privatization plan, private corporations get loan guarantees from the feds with the promise of big returns through tolls and user fees, paid for by the rest of us.

Mr. Speaker, will the Sask Party allow these new tolls or fees? Or will they stand up for Saskatchewan families and make sure that any dollars that come from Ottawa will not come with a requirement for tolls, user fees, and rate hikes for Saskatchewan families?

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

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I'm

glad that the members opposite are engaged with the critical importance of infrastructure funding within our province, and should note that for infrastructure funding in partnership with municipalities, is increased in this year's budget.

Mr. Speaker, we don't have any details on the federal government's bank, and so we're looking forward to looking at those details. We do have concerns and we will be examining them as we go forward, as we also do not have any details on the future infrastructure funding from the federal government that they're saying is going to be available — but we don't know for what projects, what will be the criteria, or anything else. So we'll be working with the federal government to try to gain those details.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Closing of Saskatchewan Transportation Company

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party refuses to put people first. With STC, they say they are scrapping it and selling it off to save money, but they refuse to consider what the real cost will be for scrapping it. How are they so short-sighted?

Other provinces have paid the price for rush sell-offs. Hundreds of million dollars gone, just for a one-time cash grab. If the Sask Party really stands by scrapping STC, why won't they do a value-for-dollar audit before they throw it away?

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

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the question from the member opposite, Mr. Speaker. STC is not being sold off; it's being wound down, Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned before. Mr. Speaker, again I'll mention to the member opposite that the reason for that, Mr. Speaker, ridership continues to decline — 18,000 rides just last year, Mr. Speaker. That's 35 per cent since 2012, Mr. Speaker.

And as I mentioned many times before, since 2007 the subsidy has gone from \$25 all the way up to \$94 per ride, Mr. Speaker. That's between 85 and \$100 million over the next five years that that could cost, that this government could put to other priorities in this government, like social services, like education, and like health, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Sask Party has no mandate to scrap STC. Their sell-off is going to have the biggest impact on the most vulnerable people in the North. STC is a crucial service for so many, and, Mr. Speaker, the shameful crisis of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls in this country have made the need for safe public transportation — especially for First Nations communities — even more clear.

In British Columbia, the provincial government is working to expand bus service along the notorious Highway of Tears. But in Saskatchewan, that Sask Party is moving in the totally opposite direction. How can the minister spin numbers and pay no attention to the impact that the sell-off of STC will have on

the North and on indigenous women and children and girls travelling on the remote highways in Saskatchewan?

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

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again I'll remind this member opposite, Mr. Speaker, that it's not a sell-off. This is a wind-down of STC, Mr. Speaker. So just to be clear, Mr. Speaker. Again, Mr. Speaker, it was a very difficult decision, especially, Mr. Speaker, as it affects the hard-working 224 employees at STC. And we do want to thank them for their service, Mr. Speaker.

As far as the North goes, Mr. Speaker, I should note that I'm very happy that this government provides \$4.1 million, Mr. Speaker, for northern medical transportation program, Mr. Speaker, which had a total last year of 4,946 transportation, Mr. Speaker. Of that number, Mr. Speaker, 356 were by plane; 1,410 were by ambulance; 3,146 was by taxi, Mr. Speaker; and 34 were by bus, Mr. Speaker, for a total of 4,946. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Mr. Speaker, public safety impact and no answer. Why, Mr. Minister?

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

Hon. Mr. Hargrave: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, Mr. Speaker, it was a very difficult decision, Mr. Speaker, but we had to go through. There was 85 to \$100 million over the next five years, Mr. Speaker, that was projected to be the subsidy to STC, Mr. Speaker.

So we did look at where else we could spend that money, Mr. Speaker — in social services, Mr. Speaker, and they are additionally providing some assistance to people in transportation, Mr. Speaker. We looked at health as well, Mr. Speaker. And health as well, Mr. Speaker, provides assistance in transportation for blood services and for other things, Mr. Speaker. So we have looked at the impact on people, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

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

Provision of Hearing Services

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, with no mandate and with no analysis of the impact, the Sask Party cut the provincial hearing aid program. The minister has had his facts wrong on this file from the beginning. In fact, he was so wrong that it's not even clear he realized what they had cut or how it would hurt families across the province.

Mr. Speaker, parents, kids, doctors, and advocates are worried about this cut. We know the minister has promised to teleconference tomorrow. These folks have had meetings before and nothing has changed. They weren't offered a seat at the table and the minister certainly didn't offer to reinstate the

funding.

Without that funding, Mr. Speaker, the minister's words mean nothing. So instead of waiting for another meeting that leads nowhere, will the minister commit to reinstating the funding for the hearing aid plan today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to meet with some of the parents that are here today a few weeks ago. Subsequent to that, I asked ministry officials to meet with them. I'm not sure if that was an in-person meeting or a conference call. I know another one is scheduled for tomorrow. Mr. Speaker, certainly our officials are glad to hear concerns that they may have going forward.

But the point of this very simply, Mr. Speaker, is that issues around the hearing aid plan that the member consistently has raised in the past — cochlear implants, bone-anchored hearing devices — those programs and the treatment around those, preliminary and post-operative, those are going to continue, Mr. Speaker.

Any concerns that the parents may have, we're going to do our best to address them. The ministry right now — in fact as we speak right now I believe, Mr. Speaker — are on their weekly conference call with the health regions working on this. The intent is again for the province to get out of the business of selling hearing aids and the audiology services around that, but those other services to continue with, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, ensuring children have access to hearing is not a business. It is a core service of government, contrary to what this minister has said in the past, Mr. Speaker. To be clear, by cutting this program, the government has hurt so many and saves only \$3 million. The minister has said, and I quote:

... when health services in the province take almost 40 per cent of the budget, if we're going to get a handle on expenditures, obviously there will be some impact on health.

But, Mr. Speaker, the cut to the hearing aid plan was the biggest program cut in health care, and it is point zero five per cent of health funding — point zero five. This clearly isn't the government getting a handle on their expenditures.

So, Mr. Speaker, why this cut and why this program? Why is hearing loss clearly not a priority for the Sask Party?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, that's just simply wrong. It is a priority for this government, Mr. Speaker. And the member opposite in the past has insinuated about other programs around hearing, that somehow that this budget cut was going to impact them. In the past she's referenced the newborn screening. Mr. Speaker, there's more work to do. We could certainly have a

more robust screening device for newborns, Mr. Speaker, but let's be clear: this budget has had no impact on that.

Those programs that are in place, which by the way, Mr. Speaker, vary from region to region, which we don't think is right. We think it needs to be uniform across the province, one of many reasons that we're moving towards one health region. And, Mr. Speaker, what did that member say about consolidating the health regions? She said it's code for cuts, that every time there's been an amalgamation in the past, Mr. Speaker, that all it did was led to cuts. What she neglected to mention, Mr. Speaker, is the last two rounds of health consolidation were under an NDP government.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Mr. Speaker, if he thinks cutting audiologists that support the only city in this province that has early detection and intervention screening programs, if he thinks cutting all the audiologists who support that program won't have an impact, he is sadly mistaken, Mr. Speaker. We will be the only province in the country that doesn't have some mechanism to reduce costs for all children, Mr. Speaker, all children. We will be the only province who doesn't have that.

Saskatchewan has one of the worst records in the country when it comes to early detection and intervention programs for hearing loss. We need to ensure that kids get screened and diagnosed. We need to ensure that they have access to follow-up services, and we need to ensure that hearing aids are affordable and accessible when they are needed.

[14:45]

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan pediatricians are speaking out and are "... deeply concerned about the announced cuts to funding to the hearing aid plan." Mr. Speaker, they say these cuts will have the biggest impact on infants of zero to six months old with hearing loss, children eight months to five years who need to be monitored for hearing loss, and infants and children with complex medical needs.

Mr. Speaker, a decade of Sask Party mismanagement, and this is who they choose to heartlessly hurt. I ask again, will the minister reverse this cut?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it's ironic. In the previous answer I mentioned the member opposite insinuating in the past that somehow these changes to the budget were somehow going to have an impact on newborn screening, and then in the subsequent question, she does that very same thing.

Mr. Speaker, I've made it very clear that the newborn screening programs that are in place are very ad hoc. As she mentioned, Saskatoon has the most universal one, and even then it's only Mondays to Fridays. Other health regions are basically only on referral. Mr. Speaker, we're going to look at that. We think potentially we can do better.

But, Mr. Speaker, again let's be perfectly clear. This budget has had no impact on that. Those programs are the identical programs that have been in place in those regions since before we were in government, Mr. Speaker. So in the meantime, that's going to continue.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, we take this very seriously. Our ministry officials will continue to meet with the parents. We'll try to address any concerns that we have, if at all possible. Mr. Speaker, we want to make sure that this only affects the issue around the hearing aids themselves and not those other programs that are offered. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers from questions 412 through 422.

The Speaker: — The Government Whip has tabled responses to questions 412 to 422. I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answers to questions 423 through 432.

The Speaker: — The Government Whip has ordered responses to questions 423 to 432. I recognize the Government Whip.

Mr. Lawrence: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the answers to questions 433 through 435.

The Speaker: — The Government Whip has tabled answers to questions 433 to 435.

I'm advised that His Honour is here for Royal Assent. All please rise.

ROYAL ASSENT

[At 14:50 His Honour the Administrator entered the Chamber, took his seat upon the throne, and gave Royal Assent to the following bills.]

His Honour: — Pray be seated.

The Speaker: — May it please Your Honour, this Legislative Assembly at its present session has passed several bills which in the name of the Assembly I present to Your Honour and to which bills I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

Clerk: — Your Honour, the bills are as follows:

- Bill No. 52 - *The Meewasin Valley Authority Amendment Act, 2017*
- Bill No. 51 - *The Saskatchewan Grain Car Corporation Repeal Act*
- Bill No. 53 - *The Provincial Health Authority Act*
- Bill No. 54 - *The Provincial Health Authority Consequential Amendment Act, 2017/Loi de 2017 portant modifications corrélatives à la loi intitulée The Provincial Health Authority Act*

- Bill No. 63 - *The Education Amendment Act, 2017/Loi modificative de 2017 sur l'éducation*
Bill No. 43 - *The Pipelines Amendment Act, 2016*
Bill No. 55 - *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Economy — Audit Assessments) Amendment Act, 2017*
Bill No. 56 - *The Oil and Gas Conservation Amendment Act, 2017*
Bill No. 64 - *The Miscellaneous Statutes (SaskPower and SaskEnergy) Amendment Act, 2017*
Bill No. 50 - *The Provincial Capital Commission Act*
Bill No. 70 - *The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2017*
Bill No. 68 - *The Fuel Tax Amendment Act, 2017*
Bill No. 69 - *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2017*
Bill No. 30 - *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Amendment Act, 2016*
Bill No. 31 - *The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Amendment Act, 2016*
Bill No. 59 - *The Summary Offences Procedure Amendment Act, 2017*
Bill No. 60 - *The Legal Profession Amendment Act, 2017*
Bill No. 44 - *The Water Security Agency Amendment Act, 2016*
Bill No. 62 - *The Labour-sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Amendment Act, 2017*
Bill No. 61 - *The Saskatchewan Commercial Innovation Incentive (Patent Box) Act*

His Honour: — In Her Majesty's name, I assent to these bills.

The Speaker: — May it please Your Honour, the Legislative Assembly has voted the supplies it requires to enable the government to defray the expenses of the public service.

In the name of the Assembly I present to Your Honour:

Bill No. 71 - *The Appropriation Act, 2017*

to which bill I respectfully request your Royal Assent.

His Honour: — In Her Majesty's name, I thank the Legislative Assembly, accept their benevolence, and assent to this bill.

[His Honour retired from the Chamber at 14:54.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that this House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — It has been moved that this Assembly do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. This Assembly now stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:55.]

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Premier

President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

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Minister of Social Services
Minister Responsible for the Status of Women

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff
Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport
Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission

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