



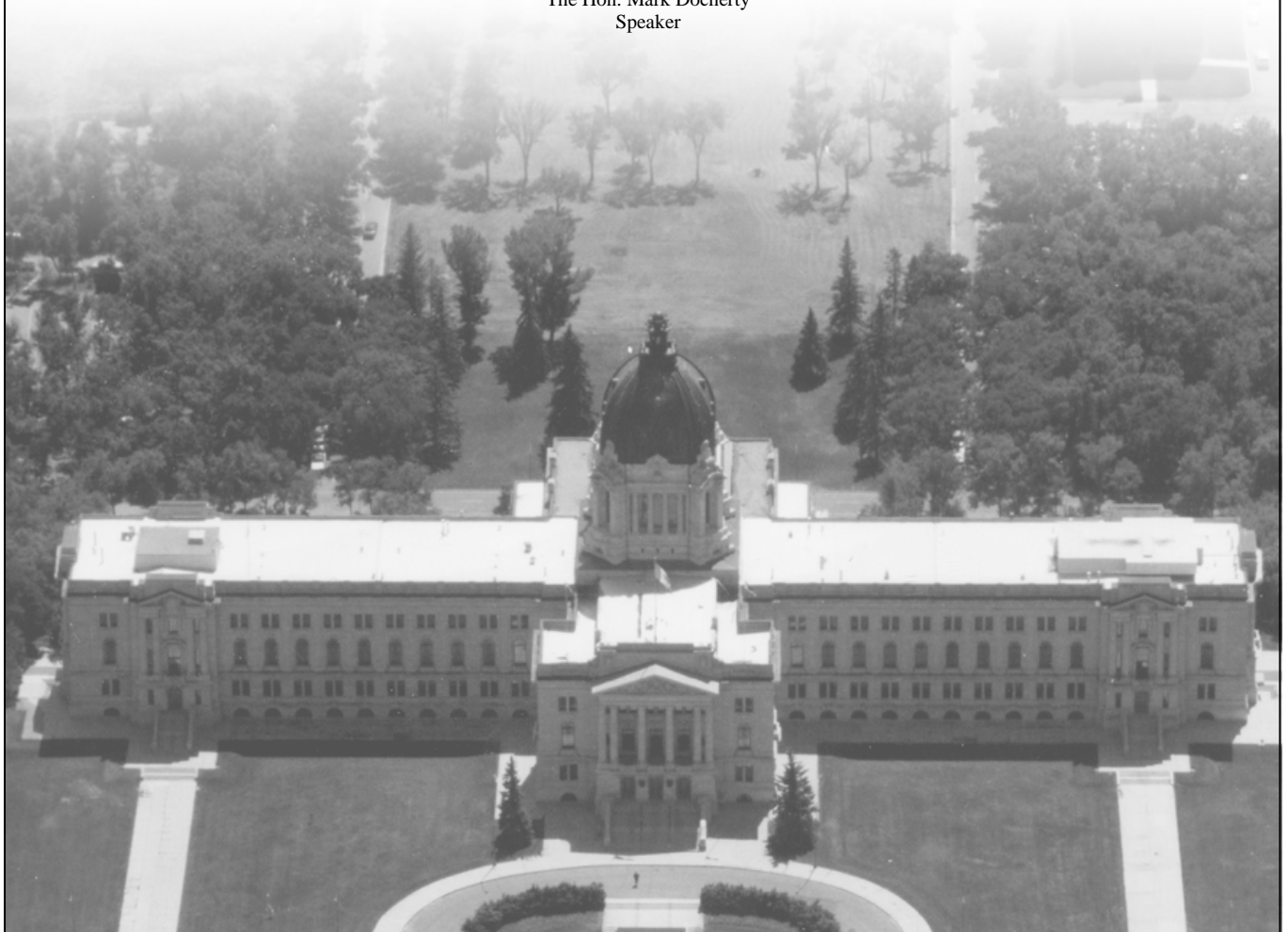
SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)
Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Mark Docherty
Speaker



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2nd Session — 28th Legislature

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Party Standings: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 48; New Democratic Party (NDP) — 12; Vacant — 1

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to this Assembly, it's my privilege to introduce to you in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, some representatives from the MS [Multiple Sclerosis] Society. We'd like to acknowledge all the good work that they do, Mr. Speaker. We have in your gallery Dr. Michael Levin who's a neurologist and Saskatchewan's first MS research Chair. We have Erin Kuan, the president of the Manitoba-Saskatchewan division of the MS Society of Canada. We have director of government relations, Jessica MacPherson, and we also a couple of volunteers that are no stranger to this Assembly, Mr. Speaker, Brian Duck and Eugene Paquin.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to meeting with them later this afternoon. They're also going to be hosting a reception for all members of the Assembly at about 5 o'clock, I think. We look forward to that. Mr. Speaker, again I would just like to thank these representatives of the MS Society for all the good work that they've done, and wish them well. And, Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all members to please welcome them to their Assembly.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to join with the minister to welcome the guests from the MS Society here today to their legislature. It's always a pleasure to have an opportunity to sit down and chat with them as I did this morning, and I look forward to the reception a little bit later today, but to hear about some of the work that their organization is doing, but work that's ongoing here in Saskatchewan to tackle MS. The work that they do around advocacy, to make sure that MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] know the lay of the land and what we could be doing as legislators to better support their work, is always very valuable. The support that they provide to families . . . Their awareness is always very much appreciated. So with that I'd like to ask all members to join the opposition as well in welcoming these guests to their legislature.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, although I don't know their names, today is World Ovarian Cancer Day, Mr. Speaker, and I'm sure that there will be an introduction on the other side of the House. But I just want to acknowledge their presence. Today is . . . Sorry, my voice is still not 100 per cent, Mr. Speaker. I want to recognize the folks here today who are here for World Ovarian Cancer Day. It's an important day around awareness and education of this disease that takes far too many women because people aren't always aware of the risks and don't always get that early screening. So I want to thank them for their presence today and appreciate the work that they do in raising awareness and bringing education to this issue as well.

So I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming these guests to their legislature as well.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of this Legislative Assembly, I'd like to join with the opposition Health critic, Mr. Speaker, in welcoming all guests here today, but welcoming our guests from Ovarian Cancer Canada here today, Mr. Speaker. I see they're wearing their Walk of Hope shirts, Mr. Speaker.

Walk of Hope is a fundraiser for ovarian cancer and an awareness raiser for ovarian cancer, Mr. Speaker, held in cities across the nation, one that my wife and I've had the opportunity to participate over the last number of years, Mr. Speaker. As we all know, every day in this nation five women lose their battle with ovarian cancer. Ten years ago, Mr. Speaker, one of those women was my mother-in-law.

Mr. Speaker, with us today from Ovarian Cancer Canada we have Ann Chase. We have Cindy Rottenbucher. We have Keith Doering. And we have Wayne and Enid Young, Mr. Speaker, I think joining us here today. Mr. Speaker, through you and to you to all members of this Legislative Assembly, I ask all members to welcome our guests.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — With leave for an extended introduction, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the minister.

Hon. Mr. Stewart: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the recipients of this year's Agriculture Student Scholarships, seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. The Saskatchewan Agriculture Student Scholarship is an important part of the Ministry of Agriculture's commitment to developing young agricultural leaders.

Each year the Government of Saskatchewan recognizes four people for their passion and dedication to agriculture. This year's applicants were required to submit a video or essay based on their own personal food story. Again this year there were many exceptional submissions from young individuals from across the province.

This year's winners are bright, eager, innovative, and are leaders among their peers. It is young individuals such as these who will drive the future success of the industry. Their passion to share their own personal agricultural story with others is inspiring and helps build public trust in the industry. I'm confident they will succeed in whatever they set out to accomplish.

I ask the scholarship winners to please stand as I announce their names: Emma Hinz of Humboldt, Saskatchewan. Emma has been awarded the Grand-Prize Scholarship of \$4,000 to put towards her agricultural studies. Emma's winning essay submission discusses how her unique dietary restrictions have shaped her food story and helped her recognize the importance of agriculture advancements. Emma will be attending the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] in the fall to study Animal Bioscience.

Our three runner-up winners of this year's program were each awarded \$2,000 to put toward their agricultural studies. The winners, in no particular order, are Laura Carruthers of Frenchman Butte who will be attending the U of S in the fall to work toward her Bachelor of Science in Agribusiness, Kati Culbertson of Redvers who will also be attending the U of S in the fall to work toward her Bachelor of Science in Agribusiness, Crystal Daniel of Avonlea who will be attending Lakeland College to work towards her diploma in Animal Science Technology.

Laura is passionate about sharing her food story. She's excited about the future of agriculture and is eager to be part of an industry that feeds the world.

Kati cares deeply for animals. By using innovation and technology, Kati ensures that her animals are healthy and are raised using sustainable practices. Her goal is to pursue a career that focuses on the production of livestock.

Crystal understands the impact agriculture has on the world and values the advancements that the industry has made to ensure the production of safe, sustainable beef. She also understands how hard our producers work, as she lives it every day.

Thank you to each of you for your hard work and dedication to the agriculture industry. I ask all members to join me as I congratulate these four individuals on this outstanding accomplishment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, to you and through you and to my fellow members, I would like to introduce a group of special students visiting the Legislative Assembly today. They are seated in the west gallery.

Joining us today are 34 students along with their teachers, chaperones who have travelled from eight northern Saskatchewan high schools. They are here from the communities of Black Lake, Cumberland House, Dillon, La Loche, La Ronge, Deschambault Lake, Southend, and Stony Rapids.

Mr. Speaker, the students are here to participate in the educational program known as the Charles Knight Youth Mentorship Program. This is the ninth year of the annual program facilitated by the Provincial Capital Commission. The program provides high school students from northern Saskatchewan with an opportunity to learn about our democratic processes and to explore post-secondary educational and public sector career opportunities.

During their four-day stay, they will tour the University of Regina, the First Nations University of Canada, Saskatchewan Polytech Regina Campus, and the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] training academy. Mr. Speaker, the member from Regina Rochdale; the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport; and the member from Athabasca had a chance to visit with these students, and a member will have more to say in a member's statement. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to join in with the minister and just to bring some welcoming remarks to the northern students that are here. Again to the leadership from the communities of the North, to our students, our teachers, support staff, to the Provincial Capital Commission, I want to thank you for arranging this, organizing it. I know it's not easy. Sometimes it's a challenge getting us together too.

So I just want to take an opportunity to welcome the students. This is your Legislative Assembly. We're here serving you. It is an honour. You're getting an education. Today you will get an education while you are in here. Some will say different things about it, but I want you to watch as we, as opposition, try to hold the government to account as the role we're supposed to, advocating. So I just want to say welcome; hope you get a good education. Question the ministers. If you get a chance to talk with them, ask them some tough questions. With that, I will say welcome to your Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

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

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In your gallery, I would like to introduce a constituent, Don Ewart, whom I'm so pleased to have with us today. Don is the president and founder of Advanced Labour Solutions, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year as a Saskatchewan business, Mr. Speaker. He's developed some industry-leading human resource and management assessment and development programs, is a highly skilled negotiator and trainer, and is the architect of the positive employee program, which has proven to significantly reduce staff turnover.

Mr. Speaker, he's also served as a member of the Saskatchewan Labour Relations Board, vice-president of the Saskatchewan Administrative Tribunals Association, of the Saskatoon public school boards, a foundation board, past president of the Saskatoon Crime Stoppers board, and of the Saskatchewan chapter of the Canadian Association of Professional Speakers. Please join me in welcoming Mr. Ewart to his Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to also stand in my place and join the minister, as well as my colleague from Cumberland, and welcome all the students who are here to visit the Assembly and learn how politics work. I'm especially proud of the students that came all the way from Black Lake and Stony Rapids. Just to get to P.A. from Black Lake is a 12-hour drive. Then of course they very fortunately flew to Saskatoon, but many of them have taken that trip on that

horrible road. With that being said, Mr. Speaker, I won't get into politics today other than to welcome the students here and to point out to them that you are the best and we hope you all the bright fortunes in your future.

And, Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet, I also want to welcome all the students of course, but to also welcome one of the teacher chaperones, Rhonda Watchel. Rhonda Watchel is the first cousin to my wife, Beckie. And she's originally from Buffalo Narrows but now lives in La Ronge. And she warned my wife over and over about those guys from Ile-a-la-Crosse, but the charm was too much for Beckie to resist.

But nonetheless, Mr. Speaker, I want to welcome my wife's first cousin, Rhonda, and all her students from the east side and the west side, and to point out that she's a wonderful teacher, a great cousin-in-law, and one of the great northerners that we should certainly honour and appreciate each and every day. To all the students, welcome again to your Assembly.

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

In Cree, I'm so glad that they're here, and you have nothing to fear here. Congratulations, and welcome once again.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Biggar-Sask Valley.

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

I'd like to read the prayer:

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

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens of Alsask, Eston, Kindersley. I do so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to provide trapping licences exemption for residents 65 years or older. That trappers are a very important group of people that maintain traditional values in Saskatchewan; the fur harvesting industry provides many economic benefits to the province; the province has exemptions for fishing licences for residents over 65 years or older, but there are no age exemptions for trappers yet.

And the prayer reads:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call upon the Sask Party government to immediately show their

support for Saskatchewan trappers and provide a trapping licence exemption for Saskatchewan residents over 65 years of age.

It is signed by many good people of northern Saskatchewan. I so present.

[13:45]

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

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to stop the Sask Party attack on our kids' already strained classrooms. Those who have signed the petition today wish to draw our attention to the following: that the Sask Party cut \$54 million from our kids' classrooms in the devastating 2017-18 budget; that the 2018-19 budget only restores a fraction of last year's devastating \$54 million cut; and even though the Sask Party is making us all pay more, our kids are actually getting less.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, these cuts are having devastating impact across the province and students will lose much-needed support in their classrooms, including programs to help children with special needs.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call upon the government to fully restore the senseless cuts to our kids' classrooms and stop making families, teachers, and everyone who works to support our education system pay for the Sask Party's mismanagement.

Mr. Speaker, those who have signed the petition today reside in Regina. I do so present.

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition to get big money out of Saskatchewan politics. And the people signing this petition want to bring to our attention the following: that Saskatchewan's outdated election Act allows corporations, unions, and individuals, even those living outside of the province, to make unlimited donations to our province's political parties; that the people of Saskatchewan deserve to live in a fair province where all voices are equal and money can't influence politics.

And you know, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan politics should belong to Saskatchewan people; and that the federal government, the provinces of Alberta, Manitoba, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and now British Columbia have moved to limit this influence and level the playing field by banning corporate and union donations to political parties.

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

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Government of Saskatchewan call on the Sask Party to overhaul Saskatchewan's campaign finance laws, to end out-of-province donations, to put a ban on donations from

corporations and unions, and to put a donation limit on individual donations.

Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition come from the city of Regina and Lumsden. I do so present. Thank you.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise today to present a petition calling on the government to restore the rental housing supplement. These citizens wish to bring to your attention that the rental housing supplement helps people living with disabilities and low-income families pay their rent; that the Sask Party's elimination of the rental housing supplement hurts low-income families and people with disabilities; that those who currently receive the supplement have no assurance that a change in circumstance won't lead to their loss of the supplement; that this cut comes after previous cuts to the SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability] program have already affected hundreds and left people living with disabilities with fewer supports; and that rents remain unaffordably high for many, since the cost of living has increased significantly in the last decade while social services benefits have remained unchanged.

I'd like to read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Sask Party government to immediately restore the Saskatchewan rental housing supplement.

This particular petition is signed by individuals from Regina, Mr. Speaker. I do so present.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Athabasca.

Mr. Belanger: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise in my place once again to present a petition around Orkambi. Whereas Orkambi is the first drug to treat the basic defect in the largest population of Canadians with cystic fibrosis. It can slow disease progression, allowing patients to live longer, healthier lives.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the people that urge the Ministry of Health have the following prayer:

To negotiate a fair price for Orkambi and to make it available through the Saskatchewan drug plan for those who meet the conditions set out by Health Canada and the clinical criteria established by the Canadian CF clinicians.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the people that have signed the many, many, many pages of petitions, as I've presented over time, are from all throughout Saskatchewan and throughout the country. And the people that have signed this particular page, Mr. Speaker, are from Lloydminster as well as Neilburg. And I so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Estevan.

World Ovarian Cancer Day

Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to acknowledge May 8th as World Ovarian Cancer Day. Mr. Speaker, every year approximately a quarter of a million women around the world are diagnosed with ovarian cancer, including an estimated 2,800 Canadian women. Every day in Canada approximately five women lose their battle with this terrible disease. Ovarian cancer is the seventh most common cancer among women and the deadliest, with a five-year survival rate of just 45 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, ovarian cancer often goes undetected until it has progressed to an advanced stage, as early symptoms are subtle and often confused with less serious conditions. It is important that women be proactive in their physical health and well-being to help detect this disease as early as possible.

Mr. Speaker, we must all play a part in protecting our sisters, mothers, daughters, and friends by providing education and raising awareness on the most serious gynecological cancer. We are all affected by this devastating disease, and we are all in this fight together. That is why I am proud to see the members of this Assembly wearing teal ribbons in support.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in supporting those who have defeated ovarian cancer and supporting those who are fighting this awful disease. Thank you.

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

North American Occupational Safety and Health Week

Ms. Rancourt: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize North American Occupational Safety and Health Week, held from May 6th to the 12th this year. Also known as NAOSH, the week is intended to drive home the message that workplace injuries impact everyone. We must do whatever we can to reduce harmful and life-changing workplace incidences to zero.

Mr. Speaker, the goal during this safety and health week is to focus employers, employees, partners, and the public on the importance of preventing injury and illness in the workplace, at home, and in the community. This week several activities are taking place as part of the awareness campaign. This provides an opportunity to empower workers to take concrete steps in securing their own protection, while promoting a workplace culture of balance between individuals and employers.

Even though many companies see the value in managing their occupational health and safety responsibilities, it often takes a serious workplace injury or fatality before organizations understand the real costs of cutting corners. NAOSH week is a celebration of the safety work that takes place all year long and reminds us that safety should be considered a priority every week of the year.

Mr. Speaker, the North American health and safety week's goals require commitment from workers of all ages and abilities, but also employees, employers, and government. Workers deserve to be safe, and we must collectively stand for nothing less. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Lloydminster.

Fundraising Walk for Multiple Sclerosis

Ms. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was my pleasure to bring greetings on behalf of the government to the 20th annual Jayman Built MS Walk in Lloydminster this past weekend. We in Saskatchewan have some of the highest rates of MS in the world, but events such as this are taking positive steps in finding a cure for this terrible disease. For many years, the MS Society has been providing hope and support as well as important research and innovations to families and patients affected by multiple sclerosis.

Mr. Speaker, after Brett Coe was diagnosed with MS, he reached out to the society right away and they helped both him and his family adjust to his diagnosis. They assisted Brett and his wife, Chelsey, in educating their two children on multiple sclerosis by providing educational resources as well as sending them to a kids' camp where they would learn more about what their dad would be going through. The Coe family was in attendance on Saturday and are now part of the walk committee for the MS Society.

This year's event had 466 registered walkers, including myself, and so far has raised approximately \$77,000. And that number is expected to continue to grow. Mr. Speaker, I now ask that all members please join me in congratulating the Jayman Built MS Walk on another successful campaign, as well as thank the incredible staff and volunteers for putting on a great event. Thank you.

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

Early Childhood Education Month

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today and join my colleagues in recognizing May as Early Childhood Education Month. May 9th has also been proclaimed as Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day.

The purpose is to recognize the thousands of early childhood educators who contribute to the physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual development of our children. Early Childhood Education Month reminds us that positive experiences for young children continue to help them throughout their lives.

Play is an essential part of childhood experiences because children bring meaning to their understanding of the world through play. Through play, children are further able to develop physically, socially, emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually, so they are better able to enjoy health and well-being into their adult years.

New Democrats know how important the fight for education is, and we will continue to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with parents and educators in the efforts to force the Sask Party to fully restore the devastating cuts they have brought forward in the past two years, including cuts to pre-K [pre-kindergarten] programs.

We know that every dollar invested in quality early years education returns 4 to \$9 in lifetime savings. It is important to

understand that short-sighted cuts have real impacts for students, parents, and teachers, and it's time that we as a province step up and fully invest in the quality early childhood education that our children deserve. Mr. Speaker, what an excellent time to acknowledge the many early childhood educators who work in centres and communities around Saskatchewan, and I invite all members to join me in celebrating early childhood education and educators.

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

Charles Knight Youth Mentorship Program

Ms. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to rise in this Assembly and acknowledge a fantastic initiative, the Charles Knight Youth Mentorship Program. For the ninth consecutive year, the Provincial Capital Commission is once again hosting 34 high school students from northern Saskatchewan. The students have travelled to the provincial capital to learn more about Saskatchewan's history and government. In addition, the students will discover further information about post-secondary opportunities available to them in this province.

Their visit to Regina will include multiple tours across our capital city, as well as meeting with the Lieutenant Governor, MLAs, and other community leaders. Now that's a lot to fit in to four days, but, Mr. Speaker, I have no doubt that these students are determined to learn as much as they can. To be accepted into the program, each had to write an essay saying why they are interested in the program and how they will demonstrate leadership in their school and in their community.

Mr. Speaker, this program was built to encourage future leaders from northern Saskatchewan. And when I, along with the MLA from Sask Rivers, had the pleasure of meeting with these students, we can say very strongly there's no doubt we have future leaders here today.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the entire Assembly, I want to congratulate all the students on being accepted into the 2018 Charles Knight Youth Mentorship Program. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Wedding Anniversaries

Ms. Lambert: — I rise in the House to acknowledge two couples in my constituency who celebrated 65th wedding anniversaries this past year. Mr. Speaker, Eugene and Alice Bader were married on February 28th, 1953. They called Rosthern home for 26 years, with Eugene working in plumbing and heating, and Alice bookkeeping for her husband's business. They raised three children: Janine, Lorna, and Darryl.

I had the opportunity to meet them at the Scott Forget Towers 90th birthday tea in March. Alice played piano at the tea. She started to learn piano just 10 years ago. Eugene is a guitar player and was a member of three dance bands over the years: the Polka Dots, the Range Riders, and Mel's Music Men.

Mr. Speaker, the second couple to celebrate this anniversary is Howard and Dorene Thomas, who were married on June 29th, 1952. The couple spent their career operating a mixed farm on land that Howard's father bought in 1909 just north of Vanscoy. It was mainly a grain operation and they also raised cattle.

The couple welcomed six children throughout their marriage: Melvin, Donald, Belle Marie, David, Carol Lyn, and Murray. Tragically Melvin, aged 14, and Donald, aged 16, perished in a hotel fire in Smeaton in 1973. David still works the family farm. Over 100 people joined them in celebrating their anniversary this past summer in Delisle.

[14:00]

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to congratulate both of these couples on their 65 years of marriage. They are testaments of true love and dedication to family and to each other. Thank you.

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

Family First Radiothon in Moose Jaw

Mr. Michelson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Congratulations to 800 CHAB Family First Radiothon on their 12th annual fundraising campaign in support of the Moose Jaw Health Foundation. This year they had a target of \$125,000 but exceeded that goal very quickly. They raised \$209,856 during the 36-hour live radiothon held last Thursday and Friday.

Mr. Speaker, the broadcast was a chance for patients and families and health care professionals to share their stories and testimonies about the health care in Moose Jaw. Mr. Speaker, a thank you goes out to all donors but especially to Cecil Smith, who donated \$18,452 in memory of his wife who had recently passed away. Thank you as well to the Moose Jaw Health Foundation legacy fund for donating \$30,000 for the radiothon. And the Fox family who made a final donation to the fundraising campaign with a cheque for \$75,000 in memory of Al and Bernice Fox who were great supporters of the foundation.

Mr. Speaker, this year's funds will go toward the travelling endoscope cart, the glidescope, the defibrillator, and surgical cart for surgeons, physicians, and nurses at the F.H. Wigmore Hospital in Moose Jaw.

I ask all members to please join me in congratulating 800 CHAB Family First Radiothon on a successful event and thank the many volunteers, organizers, and donors for their impact in the community of health care in Moose Jaw.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Just before we get to question period, I'll remind members to refer to the members opposite: this is the government; this is the opposition. I'll accept Sask Party government. I'll accept NDP [New Democratic Party] opposition. Anything else, no.

So you've been warned. Good luck.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

New Hospital for Prince Albert

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when seeking the leadership of his party, the Premier ran on his predecessor's promise to build a new hospital in Prince Albert with 100 per cent provincial funding, and committed to do so within the next three years once the budget was balanced. Well now the Premier's promising a balanced budget by next year. Yet in his tours with the Finance minister last week, he backed away from any timeline for that hospital, saying vaguely, the timeline will be when we can afford it. Yet the Finance minister told community members last week that she believed a new hospital for Prince Albert would be the next major infrastructure project for this government.

When asked about this discrepancy yesterday, the Premier listed several priority hospitals and other projects which might lead the people of Prince Albert and northern Saskatchewan to legitimately wonder where their community falls on that list of priorities. So to the Premier: what assurance can the people of Prince Albert have that this project will go ahead as promised? Or will the next Sask Party election campaign also include a promise for a hospital in Prince Albert?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Let me be very clear here, Mr. Speaker. The NDP opposition is wrong. Mr. Speaker, they are wrong in these assertions. Mr. Speaker, I have always said, whether I'm running in a leadership election or since, that we are on a three-year path to balance in this province, Mr. Speaker. And I'm proud to say that this Finance minister and the governing members on behalf of the people of the province, we're on track to meet that balance, Mr. Speaker.

And when we are able, Mr. Speaker, to meet that balance and ensure the fiscal capacity of this government is strong, we are going to continue to invest in hospitals across this province, Mr. Speaker, like we have over the last decade. And we're going to continue to invest in the people that work in those hospitals, Mr. Speaker — the 900 more doctors that we have now, the over 3,000 more nurses, Mr. Speaker. We will continue to invest in hospitals in Weyburn, in Prince Albert, Mr. Speaker. A long-term care facility needs to come in Meadow Lake because, Mr. Speaker, for 16 years previous, none of that happened in this province.

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

Changes to Rental Housing Supplement

Mr. Meili: — Mr. Speaker, they say that empty barrels make the most noise, and whenever we're not going to get an answer, we hear the Premier get a lot louder in his responses.

Mr. Speaker, good housing is the foundation of good health. And as of July 1st of this year, the government will no longer be accepting applications for the Saskatchewan rental housing supplement. Vacancy rates have risen, but rents have not fallen

accordingly. Despite those higher vacancy rates, \$7 a month — that's how much rents have gone down, \$7 a month on average. That's certainly not enough to make life more affordable. When you can't afford a home, Mr. Speaker, you can't afford a home. It doesn't matter how many are vacant. Some 50,000 Saskatchewan households continue to struggle to afford adequate housing.

What is this government's plan to end homelessness, to ensure adequate housing in Saskatchewan, given this backward step of cutting the Saskatchewan rental housing supplement?

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

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I've said in the House, and as I've said in committee, there's lots of things that came to this decision, and again this isn't a financial decision, Mr. Speaker; this is a policy decision.

We have a huge surplus of Sask Housing on our market right now, Mr. Speaker. We have over 3,000 Sask Housing units that are not being used, Mr. Speaker — we want to utilize that — that combined with a very high vacancy rate. When the Sask rental housing supplement was introduced, Mr. Speaker, the vacancy rate was in and around 4 per cent. That actually dropped down to 1 per cent in 2012, and now it has climbed to 9 per cent, Mr. Speaker. That, combined with our federal program that is coming online in the next . . . And we want to continue to work with our federal counterparts, Mr. Speaker. We think that this is the right decision. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Meili: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This clearly is not a financial decision because anyone can tell you that that \$5 million cut will cost a lot more in downstream costs in health.

Mr. Speaker, this cut is going to hurt the most vulnerable people in this province. Just take a look at the eligibility for the program. To receive the supplement, you must have recognized disability supports in your home, or children under the age of 18. The decision to prohibit people who either have children or are living with disability from receiving support, it seems to be based on hopes for a yet non-existent federal homelessness strategy. Mr. Speaker, the federal government has not provided a timeline on this strategy or any details on the Canada housing benefit, which we know won't kick in until at least 2020.

So to the Premier: why would this government make such a decision? Why would you cut a program now, on July 1st of this year, when you have no idea what kind of help is going to come forward for the most vulnerable people in the province?

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

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. And I want to get on the record, Mr. Speaker, that nobody that is on this program right now will see any change as long as their eligibility remains the same, Mr. Speaker.

As far as some of the comments that I do have, Mr. Speaker, is there is a comment that I'd like to be able to put on the record that was heard during the budget debate, Mr. Speaker, and it

was:

You know \$50 million is a lot to pay in rental supplements. And if you look back in the comments I've said . . . And I expect . . . somebody throw this back to me. I've said . . . [there is a better way we could spend \$50 million] in terms of building social housing, building seniors' housing, building affordable housing.

And who said that, Mr. Speaker? It was the member from Saskatoon Centre. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Discontinuation of Athletics Programs at the University of Regina

Mr. Wotherspoon: — And of course they're not doing any of that either, Mr. Speaker.

Since November 2016, that government has cut more than \$6 million from the University of Regina's budget. After the 5 per cent cut last year, programs were eliminated, tuition was hiked, and jobs were lost. And after last month's austerity budget, this institution is left scrambling to deal with under-funding and cuts from that government.

Under these pressures, the University of Regina has sadly announced that both the men's and women's wrestling programs and the men's volleyball team will be eliminated. Mr. Speaker, student athletes are here today and our community is rising up to fight for these programs. Does the Sask Party government recognize the damage that they're causing with their cuts? And will they step up today to properly fund our universities and save these programs?

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

Hon. Ms. Baudry-Mellor: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I would like to welcome the members of the University of Regina wrestling team here to their Legislative Assembly.

First of all, Mr. Speaker, you know, the recommendations that came out of the athletics review came out in January of 2017. Mr. Speaker, that's two budgets ago. And as a result of that engagement process, Mr. Speaker . . . I'd like to just list the number of individuals who were engaged in that process. They were the members of the University of Regina senior admin; the Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies administration; the University of Regina athletics; the University of Regina full-time coaching staff; the University of Regina external relations; the president of the Regina Rams Football Club; the members of community-based sport governing associations; University of Regina medical staff; student athletes; selected University of Regina community partners and supporters; and the broader faculty and university community members. I think one of the things that's important here, Mr. Speaker, is that this was an engaged process.

And I would also say that I've been in contact with Dean Riemer from Kinesiology and Health Studies. I'm very, very

pleased to see that the university will be honouring the scholarship terms for these individuals.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — What a weak answer from that government, a government that's cut our post-secondary institution, the University of Regina, by \$6 million in less than two years, Mr. Speaker. For over those past two years they made the choice to offer cuts instead of supporting students.

The U of R [University of Regina] wrestling program has been in place for over 30 years, and in that time has been the most successful athletic program in U of R history — national titles, international and Olympic champions, and an incredible legacy of sports development throughout our community. It's a point of pride not just for our university, but for our province.

The volleyball program has also been successful and is essential to supporting youth sport and high school sports throughout our community. How can the Sask Party stand by and force the elimination . . .

The Speaker: — Next question. Next question.

An Hon. Member: — How can the Sask Party government . . .

The Speaker: — Sit.

An Hon. Member: — How can the Sask Party government . . .

The Speaker: — Sit. You haven't been recognized. I recognize the member for Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — How can the Sask Party government stand by and allow for the elimination of these programs, to force the elimination of these programs as they foist cuts upon our university?

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

Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As the member opposite knows, the universities are autonomous institutions, and they have the ability to make decisions about programming autonomously and irrespective of government.

And I would also point out, Mr. Speaker, that we have provided \$113 million this year to the University of Regina, which is 74 per cent more than the members opposite ever did, Mr. Speaker.

I have great empathy for the students as victims of this decision that the university of made. I am very pleased however, that the university is going to honour their scholarships' terms. And I'm also, as I understand it, they will have a private meeting today with members of that administration, and I hope they get a lot of their questions answered, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, student athletes are here today, and they're looking for answers from that government

who have cut \$6 million from the University of Regina in less than two years. These athletes aren't just athletes; they're not just numbers on a spreadsheet. They're community leaders, potential Olympic athletes. They volunteer and help build sport within our community.

Many of these students and alumni volunteer with at-risk youth, with students in high school programs all through our community, providing a positive direction for kids and healthy lives. Keeping one young person out of the correctional system saves the province \$100 in just one year. This program itself, the wrestling program, runs for about \$80,000. Mr. Speaker, the cost savings of these program cuts are minimal, but the cost to our community are immeasurable.

Will the Sask Party government finally show some leadership, step up, and provide the proper funding to our universities and save these important and proud programs?

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

Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again, I have spoken with the dean and I'm very pleased that these students will have their scholarships honoured. I think that is the most important thing in this conversation.

In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, I would also say this, that it is very important to note that the dean of Kinesiology and Health Studies has indicated that all the savings that have been captured through this decision will be kept within the Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies, Mr. Speaker, which has experienced about a 31 per cent growth. This is an example of a faculty that is trying to direct resources to where they're needed the most, Mr. Speaker, and I think that's very important in this conversation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[14:15]

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

Funding for Education

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, there are 2,700 more students in our province's schools, but because of the cuts there are fewer and fewer teachers. In 2016 the Sask Party failed to fully fund negotiated salary increases for teachers. Not only did this demonstrate the Sask Party government's utter lack of commitment to the bargaining process, it left school boards with a huge hole in funding that they were unable to fill, and they were forced to make cuts, cuts to teachers and cuts to student supports.

Can the minister acknowledge that when the Sask Party government fails to fully fund teachers' salaries, it's kids in the classroom who end up suffering?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as I've stated before on the floor of this legislature, in this year's budget there was an additional \$30 million that was provided to

support children in the classrooms, Mr. Speaker. And as the member opposite knows, those funds are provided to the school divisions unconditionally so that they can use those funds in the best way that they think is right to support children in the classroom, Mr. Speaker.

That \$30 million, Mr. Speaker, in additional funding was the annualized amount of the seven and a half million dollars that the Premier announced prior to the budget, Mr. Speaker. So that demonstrates our commitment to the classroom, Mr. Speaker.

I continue to have ongoing consultations and discussions with school boards, Mr. Speaker. I met with another school board this morning, Mr. Speaker, so we can fully understand the challenges that the school divisions are having, Mr. Speaker. We're committed to public education. We're committed to ensuring that we provide the right supports in the classroom because we know, Mr. Speaker, that children are the future of this province and they deserve our support. And they'll continue to get it from this government.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, when there's a shortfall in any line item of funding, it results in cuts to the classroom. And when school boards and teachers negotiate in good faith and the Sask Party government fails to fund that contract, it means that school boards are short money and they're forced to cut.

Yesterday when asked about funding the teachers' salary, the minister said, and I quote, "I am not in a position to make that commitment." So if the Minister of Education isn't in a position to commit to funding teachers and subsequently kids' classrooms, can you tell us who is?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, we were in estimates last night, Mr. Speaker, and I answered a number of questions that were asked by the member opposite, Mr. Speaker. And we're going to continue to consider the estimates of the government, Mr. Speaker.

But as I've stated before: once there is an agreement to consider, Mr. Speaker, the government's going to examine the cost and explore the options with that, Mr. Speaker. We're going to continue to look to see what options, what the needs are in the school division. And not just with respect to the teacher's salary, Mr. Speaker, but with further supports in the classroom.

And I've said on a number of occasions, Mr. Speaker, we're going to look at the enrolment projections in the fall, Mr. Speaker, to consider what else we need to do to support children in the classroom. But that's an ongoing conversation that we will have on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, and we'll have more to say about it when those decisions are made.

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

Provincial Sales Tax on Used Vehicles

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, it's obvious that this government

and that front bench have been comfortable with saying one thing and doing another. The Sask Party government's flip flop on used cars will take nearly \$100 million out of Saskatchewan people's pockets at a time when they're still grappling with last year's billion-dollar tax hike, skyrocketing power bills, and even property tax increases.

On top of all that, this government will even be taxing vehicle purchases that took place before the budget. Buyers don't have a crystal ball to predict the whims of this government, Mr. Speaker. So how can the minister retroactively apply a new tax policy that buyers didn't account for when they actually bought their vehicles?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the member opposite knows of someone that purchased a used vehicle in a private deal prior to the date of the PST [provincial sales tax] being applied to used vehicles, she needs to give a phone number to that person who can phone and if he or she has the bill of sale, there will not be PST. The PST will be rebated.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, buyers who made the decision to buy a vehicle before the budget did so with all the information that they had, but they're stuck paying more than what they budgeted for, significantly more, because SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] will be using the red book value to determine tax rates.

They're told they can challenge the price with the Ministry of Finance if they don't like it — quite the runaround for a government that states that it's committed to cutting red tape. People are frustrated, and rightly so. Will the government reinstate the PST exemption on used cars or, at the very least, will they get it right?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — I believe perhaps, Mr. Speaker, that the member opposite didn't hear the previous answer. If this person bought their vehicle prior to the PST being reinstated, then they only need to show their bill of sale proving that the purchase was before the date, and they will get their PST rebated.

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

Privacy Commissioner's Recommendations Concerning Global Transportation Hub

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister for the GTH [Global Transportation Hub] wouldn't commit to following the recommendations of the Information and Privacy Commissioner to release the documents journalists have been asking for. That's a real shame, Mr. Speaker. These are public documents and the public has a right to know what's going on at the GTH.

The Information and Privacy Commissioner is an independent

officer of this Assembly and he should have the final say when it comes to the release of public documents. But unfortunately, the commissioner doesn't have the power to order the GTH to release those documents. Does the Minister for the GTH think that's okay, or does he think it's time we modernized the freedom of information Act, similar to what the member for Meadow Lake has said, to give the commissioner the power to order the government to release these records?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday I answered the question for the critic. I explained to the critic yesterday how the law worked. It's pretty clear that the critic should have thought about it before she posed the question. Now I have the question from the justice saying, well she didn't like the answer that we gave yesterday because she now wants us to change the law.

Mr. Speaker, you can't just say, we don't like this so change the law today, Mr. Speaker. As we go forward and we update various pieces of legislation, and that may be one that the members want to have some input or some comment on.

But I can say this, Mr. Speaker: I'm glad that the members opposite went to the GTH. I'm glad that they went on a tour. I'm glad that they went inside the Loblaw facility. I'm glad that they saw that it was a 24-hour-a-day, 7-day-a-week facility; 750 employees; employees from 47 different countries. Mr. Speaker, they'll also have seen 60,000 containers moving through the CP [Canadian Pacific Railway] facility.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, this is what the member for Meadow Lake said during his big announcement on government accountability when he was doing his brief run to be Premier. He said, "I will reverse the onus in *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* to require disclosure, on the recommendation of the commissioner."

Now I won't say this often about the member for Meadow Lake, but I think he was really onto something here. Now these aren't new powers. Information commissioners in Alberta, BC [British Columbia], Ontario, Quebec, PEI [Prince Edward Island], and Newfoundland and Labrador all have the ability to order the government to produce records, not just make recommendations.

Doesn't the government think Saskatchewan's Information and Privacy Commissioner should be able to enforce these recommendations? What is the Sask Party government so afraid of?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, under the existing legislation, the GTH has one month to respond. They also have the ability to go back to the Privacy Commissioner and to have some discussion about what is, or what is not, commercially sensitive. That's the process that I expect will take place.

And what the members are asking for today is simply political opportunism, saying we're afraid we might not like the answer later on, so now we're asking you to change the law today. Mr. Speaker, there are laws. There are processes in place. Those will be followed, and we'll respect the law on this side of the House, as we have in the past and as we will continue to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to mention to the members opposite that the GTH is a self-governing inland port. It's similar to other inland ports in Canada and elsewhere. Its benefits include designation as a foreign trade zone. It's its own taxing authority. It maintains autonomy. And, Mr. Speaker, it's doing what it's supposed to do.

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

Wait Times in Health Care

Ms. Chartier: — The wait-list for surgery is moving in the wrong direction, Mr. Speaker, but that is just one step in the process patients go through to get the care they need. Before they can even get on the surgical wait-list, they need to see a specialist, and that wait-list is growing too. In 2012 this government committed to reducing wait times to see a specialist to one week, a goal this government is a far cry from achieving. Information from the Ministry of Health shows a 20 per cent increase in the average wait in just a single year to see a physician in the top 20 specialities.

To the minister: what is stalling progress, and why are specialist waits getting longer?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are concerned about the wait times for . . . to see a specialist have increased slightly, Mr. Speaker. We're concerned with that. We think the best way to deal with that, frankly, is recruitment, Mr. Speaker. And you saw a news release last week that said 900 more doctors are practising in this province today, Mr. Speaker, than were in 2007 when we were given the privilege of forming government.

Mr. Speaker, wait times in different areas, whether it be specialists, surgical wait times, Mr. Speaker, we're extremely concerned about those. We've made great strides, Mr. Speaker. We recognize we have a lot more work to do but, Mr. Speaker, we believe we're moving in the right direction.

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

Ms. Chartier: — Great strides, Mr. Speaker? He's going the wrong direction, Mr. Speaker. This is a huge issue for people suffering, waiting for the care they need. Last year it took on average 224 days to see a neurosurgeon and 250 days to see a nephrologist. These are not worst-case scenarios either, Mr. Speaker. These are averages.

Even at a time when the need for mental health supports are so great, people waited on average 162 days to see a psychiatrist. That's more than five months, Mr. Speaker, to see a

psychiatrist. This was a key element of the government's surgical initiative and it appears to have fallen by the wayside. What is the government's plan to get these wait times for specialists under control?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, officials are looking at a number of options. We're obviously concerned about this, as I said. Obviously recruitment is a huge part of this, Mr. Speaker.

The member opposite spoke to wait times for mental health. We've discussed that in this Assembly on a number of occasions, Mr. Speaker. The wait times, especially in Saskatoon, are troublesome. We're looking at options there. The wait times in Regina and Prince Albert are much better. My deputy minister some time ago had sent a letter to the CEO [chief executive officer] of the Saskatchewan Health Authority asking him to look at the processes that we followed in Regina and Prince Albert to rectify the situation in Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, let's look at the broad picture in health care, though, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite is picking different areas, and that's valid when, in the case of specialists, the wait times have increased, Mr. Speaker. We're concerned. But let's look at the broad picture: 900 more doctors — you're going to see an announcement very soon — far more nurses than when we formed government, Mr. Speaker, more long-term care workers. We know that we have a lot more work to do but we are moving in the right direction.

The Speaker: — Why is the member on his feet?

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Requesting leave to introduce guests.

The Speaker: — The member has requested leave to introduce guests. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, it's a tremendous honour to introduce guests that are seated in the west gallery here today that are with us. These are student leaders, student athletes that have joined us here today.

I want to welcome Jordan Tholl, who's a graduate of O'Neill. That's the captain right now of the men's wrestling team for the U of R Cougars. He was second at Canada West in 2018. He's a two-time junior national finalist. He's an incredible performer, Mr. Speaker.

It's an honour as well to welcome Amber Wiebe who's here today, the captain of the women's team that's here. She came from south of Winnipeg out of Morden, Manitoba. She's a Canada West champion. She's accomplished a U Sports bronze, junior national bronze, and is a Commonwealth Games second runner-up.

I'd also like to welcome Lucas Hoffert that's here today, team captain from 2015 all the way through to 2018. He's a graduate of Miller high school here in Regina. He's an academic all-Canadian four times over, Mr. Speaker, and this year won the president's award — a very accomplished athlete.

We're joined here as well by Brett Kryger all the way from Moosomin. He's a Canada West bronze medallist as well.

We have Matt Fedler who's here today, a friend and student leader, a 2014 MVP [most valuable player] and team captain, Canada West silver and bronze medallist, Mr. Speaker. He started wrestling out in Unity with Chris Kent, a friend as well and a former wrestler out of Thom Collegiate.

[14:30]

We also have Katelynn Kowalchuk that's here today, the president of the Saskatchewan young New Democrats, a student leader, somebody who's an important voice as well, an important voice to me around mental health for young people and all people.

We're joined as well by Evan Lemieux, a wrestler. I don't have a whole bunch more information here, Evan. I apologize for that. Trey Lansdel and Christopher Busch are also here today.

So I welcome all these folks for being here. I thank them for their important voice and I just thought their voice yesterday at that press conference was inspiring, Mr. Speaker. This is an important program. And I recognize Leo and Dan McGee and people like Ron Gonzales, and so many that have built that program. I ask all members of this Assembly to welcome these incredible student leaders and athletes to their Assembly.

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

Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the member opposite in welcoming you to your Legislative Assembly. I would also like to offer the invitation, I would love the opportunity to sit down and have a discussion with you. If you're interested after this, I can just meet you outside and we can have a chat. I'd love nothing more than to do that. So if you are interested, I'd love to see you. Thank you very much.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 129

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor that **Bill No. 129** — *The Saskatchewan Technology Start-up Incentive Act* be now read a second time.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina

Elphinstone-Centre.

Mr. McCall: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As ever, good to take my place in this Assembly, join the debate before us, and comment on the issues as they present. In this case we've got *The Saskatchewan Technology Start-up Incentive Act*. Again, Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to rise and join debate on this particular new measure. It arises from the budget of course, and again there are a lot of things to recommend this particular initiative. This was part of the discussion we had last Thursday in this Assembly during private members' motions in the 75-minute debate, Mr. Speaker, wherein the government was mightily interested in patting themselves on the back for this particular measure.

And as I said at that time, I'll say again, Mr. Speaker, you know, there's a toolbox of public policy tools, initiatives, that are at the disposal of any government. Tax credits — refundable, non-refundable — are certainly one of those tools, Mr. Speaker, but a lot depends on what you're doing with the tool. And as is the case with a hammer, you can be using that tool to be building or you can be using or misusing that tool, Mr. Speaker, in terms of destroying or harming something.

And in terms of the track record of this government, I think it's safe to say that there's nothing in particular wrong with something like — say, I don't know — the Global Transportation Hub. A perfectly fine idea, Mr. Speaker, capable of supporting jobs and logistics excellence, Mr. Speaker. But if you handle it like the government of the day is handling it, well then it starts to look like you're not using that hammer to build something. You're in fact using it to bludgeon something. And in terms of the way that this government acts on too many files, Mr. Speaker, and more and more all the time, again in terms of something that would seem to be reasonable on the face of it — the Saskatchewan technology start-up incentive — we'll see how this plays out on the ground.

Now in terms of the actual details of the legislation, Mr. Speaker, we'll certainly look forward to having a more detailed conversation in committee and going at greater length and gaining a finer understanding of what's on offer. In particular we'll be looking for, you know . . . The government would seem to be indicating there are a number of corporations that'd be able to advantage themselves with this particular measure.

We'll be looking to get information from the government in terms of how many . . . You know, what they've got this booked as an expenditure in the budget. Is it the 5 million that is entailed in this subvote of the Finance estimate (FI12), or is it some other way evidenced in the estimates, Mr. Speaker? Where did they arrive at that particular figure? How many corporations do they think will be available or will be eligible for this particular measure, Mr. Speaker? What do they think will be generated in terms of economic activity? What do they think will be generated in terms of job creation, Mr. Speaker? What do they think will be facilitated in terms of the generation of intellectual property and the commercialization of that intellectual property, Mr. Speaker?

These are a lot of questions that we will be seeking answers for in committee when we have that more, as is often said in this Chamber, that more fulsome discussion, Mr. Speaker. Not that

. . . Well we'll see. We'll see how that discussion goes.

As regards the overall use of targeted tax initiatives on the part of this government, more broadly put, Mr. Speaker, I note in the past two budgets alone, we've had measures brought forward by the government that ultimately, I think, saw zero in terms of expenditure.

So in terms of those measures hitting the mark that was set out for them or the very unique sort of profile of those measures, Mr. Speaker, it was evident that whatever the government was offering, that it didn't quite hit the mark. So you wonder if is it what happened with Kal Tire at the GTH, Mr. Speaker? Is there something like that has gone on where the government, you know, couldn't help themselves and managed to screw up a good opportunity for the province, Mr. Speaker, and misused the tool that is inherent in this piece of legislation. We'll see again how that plays out over time.

We do know again, that in the past two budgets there have been specific initiatives brought forward using tax credits as an incentive, Mr. Speaker, that have resulted in precisely nothing. So we're not hoping for that of course, Mr. Speaker. We're hopeful, positive, optimistic people, Mr. Speaker. We want to see good things for the province. And certainly the tech sector is a great thing in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and not just Saskatoon which, as was noted by the minister, is second only to Waterloo in terms of regions of economic activity and development on the tech sector, Mr. Speaker, but also certainly throughout the province.

And again there's an infrastructure here that is, you know, in other regions I'm sure would be construed as Saskatchewan's connectivity advantage in terms of all the great work that's been done by SaskTel in conjunction with the people, the men and women of this province, but the way that that particular infrastructure benefits the people of the province.

I also think of the great work that's done under the aegis of the Saskatchewan Opportunities Corporation, Mr. Speaker, and the research parks, be it the Terrace or Innovation Place. And certainly some of the very industries cited in the minister's second reading speech of May 1st certainly have been part of that nurturing community that is on display in those research parks, Mr. Speaker, where the commercialization of intellectual and innovative development takes place.

So we'll see that . . . We'll be interested to see if what they're putting forward here, if it does in fact have a positive impact, a helpful impact, Mr. Speaker, if it's used at all; if it's misused, as arguably was the case with previous offerings in this very sector, Mr. Speaker, on the part of actions of that government. And we'll also be interested to see if anybody takes them up on it. Because again, we know that in terms of other particular initiatives, it's a light in the window, but not a lot of heat being generated, Mr. Speaker.

So in terms of doing the work in committee, I'm looking opposite for the . . . I guess I'm going to look to my colleagues to take us to committee on this particular piece of legislation, Bill No. 129, *The Saskatchewan Technology Start-up Incentive Act*, so that we might have that, that more detailed and thoroughgoing discussion at that stage of this particular bill.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the minister that Bill No. 129, *The Saskatchewan Technology Start-up Incentive Act* be now read a second time. 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 minister.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I designate that Bill No. 129, *The Saskatchewan Technology Start-up Incentive Act* be committed to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

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

Bill No. 124

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Duncan that **Bill No. 124 — *The Environmental Management and Protection (Environmental Handling Charges) Amendment Act, 2018*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Forbes: — I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise to enter into this debate on Bill No. 124, *An Act to amend The Environmental Management and Protection Act, 2010 respecting environmental handling charges*, and it's quite a handle. It's a very short bill, very important though.

You know, in Saskatchewan we take a lot of pride in how we deal with our recycling, particularly when it comes to different containers. We have a long history, some 30 years or more, of having a good recycling ethic here in Saskatchewan. It is very positive and it's one that I know both sides of the House support.

And we have a really good partner with Sarcan who've done some outstanding work in terms of leadership to be effective stewards, and really have come to understand the issues that surround recycling. And I can say, as a former minister, that we look to them for leadership and their insights or comments, whether we were talking about recycling paint, electronic goods, a whole host of things, that they would have a good eye, a good way to approach this that ordinary people in Saskatchewan would say, hey that makes a lot of sense and we need to continue that.

But I do have some comments here because it's a piece of legislation that can be very confusing in terms of that many people don't understand all the charges that are on a container, and that you may end up paying fees and taxes and that kind of thing that you didn't really expect when you would be in a certain type of store, you know. There's even a difference whether you buy a 1-litre milk or 1-litre juice in a grocery store, a bigger store than, say, what's designated as a small container of juice in a convenience store.

For example, the convenience store scenario, you would have someone buying a small container of juice, and they may be just popping in to buy some things for lunch the next day. Well they would be paying now an increase in PST, a 1 per cent increase, thanks to last year's budget going from 5 per cent to 6 per cent.

They would also be paying an increase in the deposit. And quite often we think of the deposit as really basically a flow through: the customer buys a pop or a can of something or whatever and there's a deposit on it. And you pay that up front, and whether it's 5 cents a container or 10 cents a container, you're eligible to get it refunded to you if you take it to Sarcan. So it's really you get the whole deposit back. You get the whole deposit back.

Now interestingly last year, not this year but last year's budget saw an increase in that deposit. And so it's one of those things that happens where you, you know, the government says, well we're not making any money off that because that's just a flow through; we're holding that money for when people come to the Sarcan and they'll get their money back. Fair enough. Fair enough. That's true. But the fact is, and we are a really good province for recycling, but the fact is we don't all take our bottles back. We don't all take our containers back. So some money is left. Some people do. Some people do, yes. But some people don't. I think the number is about 85 per cent; 85 per cent of containers are recycled. So that means 15 per cent aren't recycled and that money stays with the government.

[14:45]

So in this case we know, and we've got answers to this, that the government collects somewhere between 55 and \$60 million in terms of the deposit. So if they get to keep 15 per cent, this money flows into the GRF and then comes out of the GRF to Sarcan when they have to . . . when they make their claims of who's come forward with their containers. That 15 per cent is some \$9 million, Mr. Speaker. That is significant. That is significant.

Now the other thing that happened last year when we saw the deposit increase . . . two things happened actually. One was interesting. One was that there was an increase in terms of almost a doubling of that deposit. Now I don't know who was asking for that deposit to be increased, but that's more money flowing out, maybe more money flowing in. But clearly, more money was staying with the government because we know that there was significantly more money that the government would be able to keep.

The other thing that happened last year — and this is a good thing — is milk containers and milk-kind of containers became eligible for deposits. So they had to pay for their environmental handling charges and the deposit charges.

So, Mr. Speaker, I've talked about two and now I want to talk about the third charge that's on these containers, and that is the environmental handling charge. And we know that the government has collected on average about 25, \$26 million dollars last year. It's \$27 million that they had collected for environmental handling charges for beverage containers. And that's a significant amount of money. And that is what they will use to negotiate contracts with Sarcan, because clearly Sarcan cannot make it just . . . I mean, there's no money in the deposit because the deposit is a flow-through. They act as agents for people to get their deposit money back.

But who is paying for the buildings, the power, all those other things, and the wages of the people who work at Sarcan? And clearly those have gone up. And we understand there's negotiations going on, and hopefully those negotiations will be done well.

But what's interesting is, this 2 cent increase in the environmental handling charge leads to the promise that the government has made that 1 cent will go to Sarcan. That's worth about 5 million. And that 1 cent will stay with the government in the GRF [General Revenue Fund]. So that's \$5 million. So if you take that \$5 million and then you add the \$9 million because of the retained or unclaimed deposits on beverage containers, you're up to 14 million. And then if you add that 1 per cent that's been added to it, so all of a sudden you're starting to see we're in the 15, \$17 million ballpark of new money.

Now interestingly the *Leader-Post*, in an article that was March 23rd, when the government did a bit of a pre-budget release of fees, called this the "Bottle drive." And you know, of course the deficit is much bigger than some 10, \$15 million, and this is not going to be really . . . put that big of a dent into the debt that this government is developing.

But it's interesting that many people don't understand there's been three hits. So when you go to a convenience store and you pick that bottle of juice up for your lunch tomorrow, there's been three hits on that container that wasn't there two years ago: the PST has gone up on it, the deposit's gone up on it, the environmental handling charge has gone up on it. I don't think a lot of people in Saskatchewan, when they think about the cost of living, go, "This has happened."

And this is sort of that kind of — how did the Regina city councillor call it? — thief-by-night type of thing where you come in quietly and you do this kind of, kind of without a lot of fanfare. And people have a right to know, and I don't think they're quite aware that all these things are going up a little bit here, a little bit there, a little bit here, a little bit there. And all this is leading to a very high cost of living in Saskatchewan for some people who really don't . . . who have some real serious concerns about where their money is going and how this government is managing it. Who asked for the increase in the bottle deposit last year? Who asked that it would go up from 5 cents to 10 cents?

Now maybe they'll get their money back. And I see members over there raising their hands that they will be participating in that, they're going to get their money back. And that's good. Good for them, because that's exactly positive environmental

stewardship. But we know 15 per cent of the funds are not collected, and that gets to stay in the GRF.

So we will have lots of questions about this bill in the committee, because this is complex and it's not straightforward, and I think consumers in Saskatchewan aren't aware of how these folks are nickel-and-diming them, literally, literally when it comes to beverage containers. And it's not just one way, it's just not two ways, but it's three ways.

And I think that they have a lot to answer for about what are they going to do with this extra money that really they're just holding onto. But boy they sure can find different ways to do it that are questionable, or maybe not in the best interests. But we know that they are piling higher interest on the debt and they have to find a way to make these things happen, so we're talking about 14, \$15 million-plus that they're now accruing that they weren't two, two and a half years ago.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude my remarks. We're willing to see this bill go to committee. Thank you.

The Speaker: — Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the minister that Bill No. 124, *The Environmental Management and Protection (Environmental Handling Charges) Amendment Act, 2018* be now read a second time. 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 minister.

Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I designate that the Bill No. 124, the environmental management and protection amendment Act, 2018 be committed to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

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

Bill No. 114

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Hargrave that **Bill No. 114** — *The Vehicles for Hire Act* be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Forbes: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter into Bill No. 114, an Act respecting vehicles for hire and consequential amendments to other Acts. A very important piece of legislation before us, as we know, that the minister who introduced this really framed this as an issue, an

opportunity, an innovation to deal with drinking and driving. That in Saskatchewan this may be an opportunity for vehicles that we typically don't think of that would be working in rural Saskatchewan or small cities, and we're talking about Uber or Lyft and those types.

It's an interesting piece of legislation, because we see Uber and Lyft coming under a lot of questions in other major cities about whether their employees that work for their . . . And we had our own circumstance, our own tragic circumstance where we now have seen, twice, drivers being injured in their course of their work as taxi drivers here in Regina, and the gap between WCB [Workers' Compensation Board] and SGI and what that really means.

And so this is one that will be interesting when we get to committee with questions about this, because really we've seen the minister present information that really portrays the alternate vehicles for hire as an attractive choice, but we have a lot of questions about whether he's fully considered the question of taxis.

And this has been a long-standing tradition around the world and we know this is really a domain of municipalities, that they're the ones who license and develop bylaws around taxis and vehicles for hire. And so this action by the Minister for SGI to enter into this caught a few people off guard. We're always aware that he's trying to make things better in terms of curbing drinking and driving, but the logic here has left many people wondering what's the real intention here and will it actually help. We see a government that has increased the number of outlets for alcohol throughout the province, but at the same time is caught up in the quandary of what to do about drinking and driving.

We worry a lot about the issues around the drivers, particularly how important it is in Saskatchewan in all sorts of weather and all sorts of road conditions, and whether or not this will actually meet the needs of someone who finds themselves having drunk a little too much, and it's Friday night or it's Saturday night or maybe it's Monday or Tuesday night in a small town in Saskatchewan looking for a ride home. Is this really going to be the work that they need to do?

So the government does set out some ideas. Of course, clearly, drivers must have a driver's licence, vehicles must be registered, a transportation network company must prove they have insurance. Now this is again the question: do they have insurance? They hopefully, obviously, for the vehicle, for the passengers, but will they have insurance for the drivers? This is where we're finding the gap when it comes to drivers that were injured here in Regina. There was no insurance and there was no requirement for them to have insurance for their drivers.

And somehow the question became, well if they are not the owners, are they employees? And you know, we were of the belief that if you're an employee, the onus is on the employer to make sure you have the workers' comp insurance in place before you start. You can't sort of go halfway, then have an accident and then say, well now I want to have workers' comp. You've got to have it before you start if you're an employer in a company.

So government has regulating powers defining vehicles, prescribing classes of driver's licence, that type of thing. Again though, I think that it's important that we think about what are the communities, what do they want to have for this kind of thing? And I think that, as I've said, you know, taxi companies have developed for decades, decades, really know their communities and they can protect both the public and the drivers in the circumstances that we have.

And we have situations right now where the drivers are asking for Plexiglas to separate the passengers from the drivers to avoid the kind of tragic accidents we've had where knives have been used. Even on, even on, I believe the accident happened on a Friday morning shortly after 9 a.m. where you would think, you would not think at that point in time that there would be a challenge. So, Mr. Speaker, we are not saying no to ride sharing, but the regulations must be in place, must be in place to ensure the safety of consumers, of drivers.

And I think that's the role of the provincial government, and we want to make sure it works. This is not about picking winners and losers. And in this question, this type of thing, it sounds very much like that might be the case where the minister has made up his mind. And we're worried about, what are the unintended consequences when you see a government that has made up its mind and is not looking fully at the consequences and looking at a broad range of research, not just from one or two areas, but a broad range of research.

So, Mr. Speaker, we're going to be looking forward to seeing this in committee, but I do know that many others on this House will want to speak to this. So this one is a bill that I will now move adjournment on, Bill No. 114. Thank you.

The Speaker: — The member for Saskatoon Centre has moved adjournment on Bill No. 114, *The Vehicles for Hire Act*. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Hon. Mr. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In order to facilitate the work of committee both this afternoon and this evening, I move that this House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — It was moved that this Assembly be now adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 15:00.]

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Reiter	4233
Chartier	4233
Moe	4233
Stewart	4233
Cheveldayoff	4234
Vermette	4234
Eyre	4234
Belanger	4234
Wotherspoon	4243
Beaudry-Mellor	4243

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Weekes	4235
Vermette	4235
Beck	4235
Forbes	4235
Mowat	4236
Belanger	4236

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

World Ovarian Cancer Day

Carr	4236
------------	------

North American Occupational Safety and Health Week

Rancourt	4236
----------------	------

Fundraising Walk for Multiple Sclerosis

Young	4237
-------------	------

Early Childhood Education Month

Beck	4237
------------	------

Charles Knight Youth Mentorship Program

Ross	4237
------------	------

Wedding Anniversaries

Lambert	4237
---------------	------

Family First Radiothon in Moose Jaw

Michelson	4238
-----------------	------

QUESTION PERIOD

New Hospital for Prince Albert

Meili	4238
Moe	4238

Changes to Rental Housing Supplement

Meili	4238
Merriman	4239

Discontinuation of Athletics Programs at the University of Regina

Wotherspoon	4239
Beaudry-Mellor	4239

Funding for Education

Beck	4240
Wyant	4240

Provincial Sales Tax on Used Vehicles

Beck	4241
Harpauer	4241

Privacy Commissioner's Recommendations Concerning Global Transportation Hub

Sarauer	4241
Morgan	4242

Wait Times in Health Care

Chartier	4242
Reiter	4242

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 129 — *The Saskatchewan Technology Start-up Incentive Act*

McCall	4244
Cheveldayoff (referral to Economy Committee)	4245

Bill No. 124 — *The Environmental Management and Protection (Environmental Handling Charges) Amendment Act, 2018*

Forbes	4245
Cheveldayoff (referral to Economy Committee)	4246
Bill No. 114 — <i>The Vehicles for Hire Act</i>	
Forbes	4246

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