



SECOND SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

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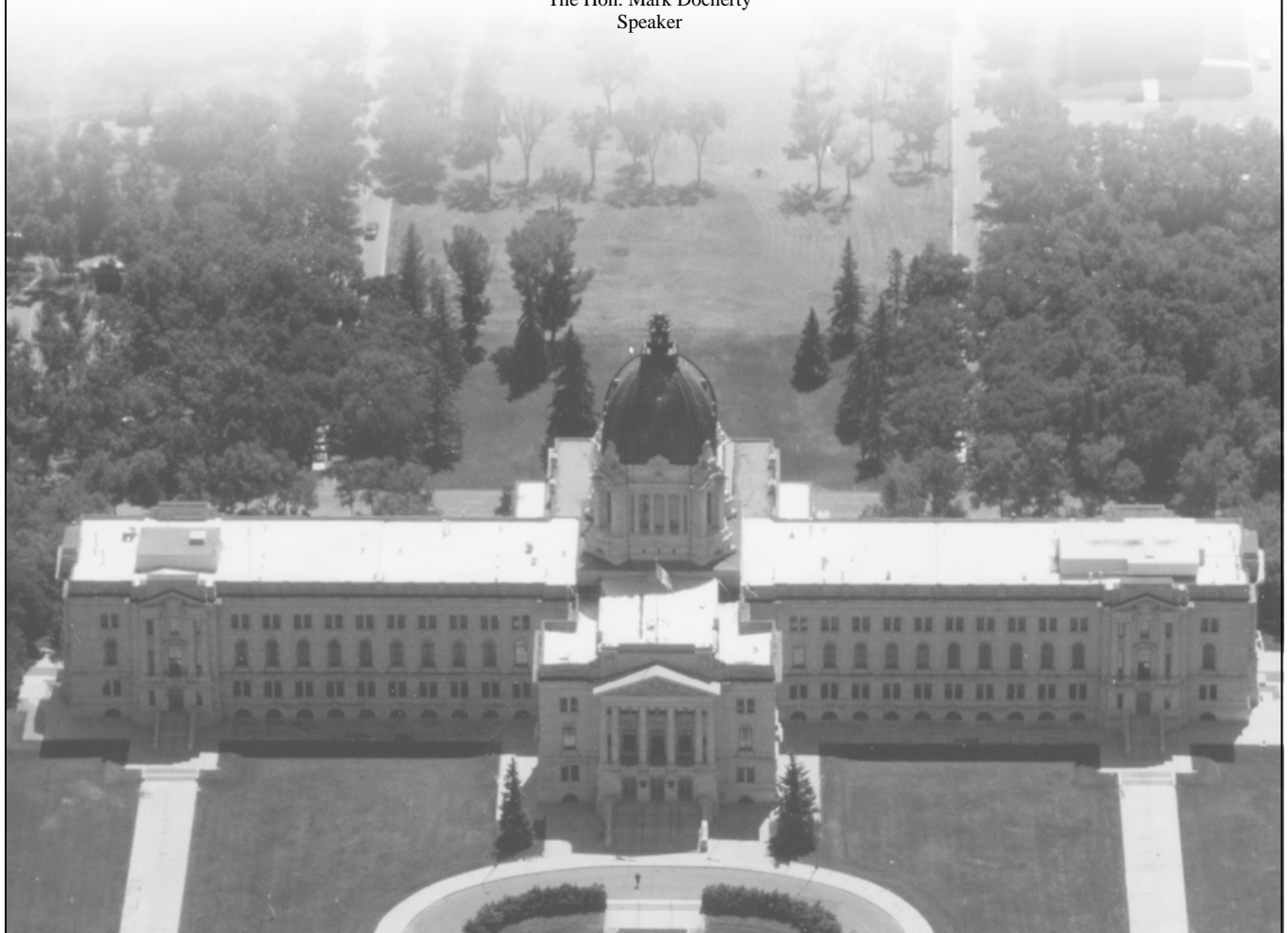
**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

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**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

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



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

**Speaker** — Hon. Mark Docherty  
**Premier** — Hon. Scott Moe  
**Leader of the Opposition** — Ryan Meili

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<b>Lambert</b> , Lisa — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)	<b>Young</b> , Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

Vacant — Regina Northeast

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

**Clerks-at-the-Table**

**Clerk** — Gregory A. Putz

**Law Clerk & Parliamentary Counsel** — Kenneth S. Ring, Q.C.

**Principal Clerk** — Iris Lang

**Clerk Assistant** — Kathy Burianyak

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Hon. Mr. Kaeding:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and all members of the Legislative Assembly, I'd like to welcome in the west gallery today the grade 10 students history class from Melville Comprehensive School. I'd also like to mention at this time that Melville Comp rocked in the Sask school trades competition as well held in the province.

They're led today by a teacher and also a city of Melville councillor, Andrew Rondeau, who has brought numerous classes through the legislature, and Dan Alspach. I'd like to welcome the Melville Comp students to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the House, I want to introduce several guests that are here, present to raise issues. They go informally by the title Transportation for All. It's a community group that has been meeting regularly to discuss transportation issues, particularly for people with disabilities, but for all of us it's a major issue.

I want to introduce the folks that are on the floor of the gallery, and I hope I get everyone: Charlene Eger and Tina Millar and Terri Sleeva, Heatherdawn Caswell, Jaime Ellis. And as well, up in the west gallery we have Catherine Robertson, Shelly Alderson, Judy Winship, Shane Haddad, Martin Wooldridge, JoAnn Jaffe, Shannon O'Toole, Dylan Morin, Florence Stratton, Tennille Richard — or maybe Tennille's on the floor, I think; she's down here, right — and George Wooldridge. And I hope I got everyone.

Also a special shout-out I want to say to Tina and Shane. I know them from People First as well, a very strong organization that's been meeting for several years. So I would ask all members to give a warm welcome to these folks to their legislature.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join the member from Saskatoon Centre in welcoming the Transportation for All group that are seated here on the floor with us, and up in the gallery. And I just want to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly and thank them for all the work that they do on behalf of the people that they represent. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

## PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Mr. Vermette:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition in support of mental health and addiction services in the North. Northern Saskatchewan has some of the highest suicide rates in the country. The Children's Advocate has put out a report stating the lack of services in the North. The suicide rate is six times higher for First Nation boys than non-First Nation boys between the age of 10 and 19; and 26 times higher for First Nation girls than non-First Nation girls.

I will read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call upon the Sask Party government to treat northern Saskatchewan residents with respect and dignity and to immediately invest in more mental health and wellness programs and facilities in the North.

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

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

**Ms. Lambert:** — 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 Regina, and Esterhazy. I do so present.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling for the restoration of public intermunicipal transportation for persons with disabilities. And the people signing this petition, and many are here today, want to bring to our attention the following: that the cruel and heartless Sask Party government budget of 2017 cut public intermunicipal transportation services for persons with disabilities, including all people with various abilities. This decision left persons with disabilities stranded and isolated in both urban and rural communities; and that since cutting the transportation services for persons with disabilities, the Sask Party government has failed to replace this service in any meaningful way.

We know that the Sask Party government failed to perform an

audit of their decision and do not fully understand the economic and social costs of cutting STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company].

Mr. Speaker, *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* states that “Access to equal, dignified transportation is essential to the achievement of equality for persons with disabilities.” And it also goes on to say that “Persons with disabilities have a human right to adequate, dignified public transportation services on an equal basis.” The code guarantees the right to equal treatment with respect to services without discrimination based on disabilities.

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

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan immediately restore public intermunicipal transportation services for persons with disabilities.

Mr. Speaker, the people signing this petition today come from the city of Regina. I do so present.

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

**Ms. Mowat:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition calling on the Sask Party government to restore the rental housing supplement. These citizens wish to bring to your attention 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 had no assurance that a change in circumstance won't lead them to lose their supplement; that this cut comes after previous cuts to the SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability] program that have already affected hundreds and left people living with disabilities with fewer supports; and that rents remain unaffordably high 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 petition is signed by individuals from Moose Jaw, Regina, and Saskatoon. I do so present.

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

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise to present a petition today calling on the Sask Party government to appoint a seniors' advocate. The petitioners point out that for too long the concerns of Saskatchewan seniors have not been a priority of this government. They point out that many Sask Party cuts directly impact seniors, like the cut to STC, like the hearing aid plan cut, the increases in drug costs, increases in long-term care fees just to name a few, Mr. Speaker.

The petitioners point out that Saskatchewan does not have legislated minimum care standards in our long-term care facilities. And even with the government's continued reports, and concerns from families and employees in facilities on the issues in long-term care, the government has failed to ensure safety, quality of life, and dignity for seniors. And they also point out that other provinces have seniors' advocates who successfully work to ensure seniors have the supports they need and deserve. They point out that a seniors' advocate would provide vital support for seniors and their families across the province.

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 appoint a seniors' advocate to ensure the rights of seniors are upheld and that all seniors across the province have the supports they need and deserve.

Mr. Speaker, this petition today is signed by citizens of Regina. I so present.

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Land Donation Provides Conservation Legacy

**Mr. Forbes:** — Mr. Speaker, like many aging landowners in Saskatchewan, Robert and Shirley Gordon were faced with a difficult decision about their land. For the Gordons, my constituents of Saskatoon Centre, it boiled down to two basic options: continue cultivating the land or connect it to a greater purpose.

Looking out onto the seas of cultivated land that dominate Saskatchewan's landscape, Robert felt moved to do the latter. He said, when you look around and see these little fragments of prairie being broken up you think, no, I have to do something. And he had an opportunity to do something.

The land is now transformed into a wildlife sanctuary. They planted natural vegetation, added trees, and built a dam. Robert and Shirley created their own little oasis on the prairie. Yet, they knew as they aged that they would not be able to hold on to this land forever. The Gordons decided to place their land in the hands of conservation. The Gordons contacted the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, who have a proven track record in land conservation and, on January 27, 2017, their dream became a reality.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation Habitat Trust foundation was established in 1978. To date, they have protected over 65,000 acres.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join with me in thanking the Gordons for their generosity in helping biodiversity here in Saskatchewan for generations to come, and as well recognizing the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation for the outstanding leadership in this truly critical area of land conservation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

[13:45]

### Early Childhood Educators Appreciation Day

**Ms. Lambert:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to stand to recognize today as Early Childhood Education Day. On this day, we show recognition to the thousands of early childhood educators across this province who contribute to the physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual development of our children.

Optimizing the early years of children's lives is one of the best investments we can make as a society in ensuring their future success. Mr. Speaker, we understand that the quality of early childhood education is crucial to the overall development of a child and the adult they will become. I'm proud of this government's record when it comes to early childhood education. Since 2007 we have seen an increase of 6,839 new child care spaces, a 73 per cent increase. We have also chosen to invest over \$100 million in the early years in this year's budget, the largest budget in the history of our province.

Mr. Speaker, so many lives have been positively impacted by the work of early childhood educators. They often wear many hats and might not always receive credit when it is due, and to them I say thank you. I ask everyone in this Assembly to join me in thanking early childhood educators and all they do for our children across Saskatchewan. Thank you.

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

### Mental Health Week

**Ms. Chartier:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, May 7th to 13th marks the Canadian Mental Health Association's Mental Health Week, an annual event that encourages Canadian people to reflect on all issues related to mental health. However, Mr. Speaker, reflecting is simply not enough. That's why the theme for this year's Mental Health Week is Get Loud.

Mental health is about more than mental illness. One in five Canadians live with mental health problems, mental illness, or addiction. But the reality is, five in five of us have mental health, just like we all have physical health. We can all benefit from celebrating, promoting, and acknowledging the role that good mental health plays in living a full and meaningful life.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is amongst the lowest of provinces funding mental health services as a percentage of the health budget. We have the lowest number of psychiatrists per capita in Western Canada, and our lack of access to proper mental health care in our rural and remote communities has led to a tragic and preventable epidemic of suicides in the North.

This is why, Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Mental Health Association is encouraging Canadians to get loud by writing to their government representatives, speaking out on social media, and donating their time or money to mental health services. By using our voices, we can help create change and build mental health support for people across Canada, and here at home in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join me in recognition of National Mental Health Week, and in getting loud, raising awareness, and creating change for those suffering with mental health issues here in our province. Thank you.

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

### Aquatic Invasive Species Awareness Week

**Mr. Cox:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. May 6th to 12th is Aquatic Invasive Species Awareness Week. It's aimed to educate our residents and the visitors to raise awareness of the risks to our province's water bodies.

Saskatchewan has thousands of beautiful lakes and rivers and is a popular place for tourists and residents to enjoy fishing and other water-based activities. These activities are dependent on a healthy aquatic ecosystem. Aquatic invasive species, or AIS, such as zebra and quagga mussels pose a serious threat to lakes and waterways in Western Canada.

Invasive mussels and other AIS can be impossible to eliminate if they become established in a water body and can cost millions of dollars to manage.

Prevention is the most effective solution to AIS. This week and all year long, we want to continue to raise awareness and educate boaters, anglers, and other recreational water users to clean, drain, and dry boats, watercraft, fishing gear, and water equipment. The Environment ministry purchased and will deploy six mobile watercraft decontamination units around the province to support our inspection and decontamination program.

Mr. Speaker, education and awareness on aquatic invasive species is the foundation of our prevention program, and we use Aquatic Invasive Species Awareness Week as an opportunity to engage the public. Through these efforts, Saskatchewan residents and visitors can continue to enjoy the abundant aquatic resources our province has to offer, and we are helping to ensure these resources are protected for our future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Opening of Rosthern District Food Bank

**Mr. Weekes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On April 20th I had the pleasure of attending the grand opening celebration of the new Rosthern District Food Bank on behalf of our Premier. The RDFB has been providing emergency food relief to families within Rosthern and the surrounding communities since 2011.

Mr. Speaker, thanks to a recent donation and extensive community-driven renovation to the historic *Valley News* building in Rosthern, a larger food bank with increased space is now ready to operate. This multi-purpose building has an increased storage space, a new kitchen that can host cooking classes, as well as areas to prepare and serve meals which can be enjoyed in the new dining space. This room can also be used

as a classroom and will hold weekly indoor market events where entrepreneurs can sell food, plants, crafts, and much more.

Local food banks are so much more than just a resource for food. They serve as a space for cities and towns to come together, lend a hand, and grow as a community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that members please join me in thanking Nadine Ens, community catalyst for the RDFB, and Wilmer Froese, a board chairperson to the RDFB, for their hard work on the grand opening of this new food bank, as well as the community of Rosthern and surrounding area for their continued support over the years to this program. Thank you.

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

#### **Kindersley Brothers Excel in Hockey**

**Mr. Francis:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in the House today to acknowledge the achievements of two exceptional hockey players from Kindersley. The Close brothers, Braden, 23 and Justen, 20, have both seen immense success in hockey over the years and this past season has been no exception.

Mr. Speaker, for several generations the Closes have been a very successful sporting family. But for Braden, following that path has been significantly more challenging. Braden was born with spina bifida, a birth defect which leaves many quite debilitated, but not Braden, Mr. Speaker. Many of us in Kindersley have watched him battle and conquer that fight, and for many years Braden has competed in several sports alongside his classmates and friends. And arguably, no one works harder than Braden Close.

Braden's determination and dedication first began to pay dividends when the sledge hockey program came to our community over a decade ago. To say Braden excelled in this sport is quite an understatement. He has won two national championships with Team Alberta and most recently has been named to Canada's National Para Hockey Development Team.

Justen, star backstop for the SJHL [Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League] Kindersley junior Klippers, was not to be outdone by his older brother this year. He has also had a great season himself, sharing the SJHL Top Goaltender Award, leading the league in games played and minutes played.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating the Close family on their success and wish them the best as they go forward proudly representing our hometown, our province, and our nation. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Martensville-Warman.

#### **Prairie Sky Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Awards**

**Ms. Heppner:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you know, the cities of Warman and Martensville have grown exponentially over the last few years, and the number of businesses have also grown. A few years ago the chambers in Warman and

Martensville joined forces and created Prairie Sky Chamber of Commerce because their businesses really do serve the whole area.

It was an honour to attend the Prairie Sky's Business Excellence Awards on Friday along with my colleagues from Saskatoon University and Saskatoon Westview. Steve McLellan and Shawna Nelson of the Saskatchewan chamber did a great job emceeding this exciting evening.

The quality of the nominees speaks to the many amazing businesses in my constituency. And there have to be winners, and the winners are Non-Profit of the Year, Martensville Community Recreation Project. Community Involvement award went to Affinity Credit Union. Customer Service winner was Finelite Photography in Warman. New Business of the Year was Santosha Yoga and Wellness Therapy in Warman, and the Business of the Year was SAS Home and Floral Boutique in Martensville. The owners are sisters who were inspired by their mother who is sadly no longer with us, as she lost her battle with cancer, but they were inspired to create a beautiful space in her honour.

Thank you to the Prairie Sky Chamber of Commerce for putting on a great event, and congratulations to all the nominees and winners at this year's Business Excellence Awards.

**The Speaker:** — Just before we get into question period, the emergency broadcast system is going to go off at 1:55 p.m. So at that point I'm going to pause proceedings. We'll let it continue on, and the clock will stop. We'll go from there. That's just to remind.

#### **QUESTION PERIOD**

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

#### **Government Response to Shooting in La Loche**

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Two years ago the then premier addressed the tragedy in La Loche and said that the government was "... investing in a range of programming that will foster hope and opportunity and enable more residents to lead independent, self-sufficient lives. Together, we are building a stronger La Loche."

Two years later, community leaders are speaking out to say that they're still waiting. Mayor Robert St. Pierre said, "The community is still grieving and still waiting for the support we were promised years ago." And in her statements yesterday Judge Janet McIvor called the situation in La Loche "... a travesty. It's yet another victimization of all involved. It's not fair. It's not right." She went to say "... what I heard was that counselling services aren't available. I heard that people aren't having counselling any more because they can't afford counselling."

Mr. Speaker, these strong words should serve as a wake-up call. To the Premier: how is it that the promises of two years ago are ringing so hollow today? What happened to the range of supports that was promised two years ago? And what is the Premier doing today to ensure that the people of La Loche have what they need to finally begin to heal from this tragedy?

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, I remember that time in the days after that tragedy in northern Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. I had the opportunity on a number of occasions to visit the community of La Loche with the then minister of Education, now Attorney General; now the Finance minister, Mr. Speaker, was then the minister of Social Services. And I know others on both sides of the House did visit the community of La Loche to show their support for that community, Mr. Speaker.

And we worked very closely with the community leadership at that point in time, Mr. Speaker. We consulted with them on the supports that would be required in the weeks and the months and the years ahead, the supports in the way of mental health, and the more lasting supports in the way of investing in education and investing in that community's next generation, Mr. Speaker.

And we moved, at the request of the people in the community, Mr. Speaker, with \$4 million invested into the school. We increased the counsellors in the school from two to five. Mr. Speaker, we increased the administrative supports in the schools themselves. We added additional funding in the community healing plan, as well as mental health and first aid training, investments in the La Loche Friendship Centre, Mr. Speaker. And there are other investments in education and in supports for that community, Mr. Speaker, but as always, more to do.

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

#### Provision of Transportation Services

**Mr. Meili:** — Mr. Speaker, this government is failing to meet the needs of the North, and we see that with growing troubles with mental health situations and with ongoing frustration in La Loche. They are not feeling that they've had their tragedy addressed.

And, Mr. Speaker, that's not the only community that's not getting their needs addressed. The loss of the Saskatchewan Transportation Company a year ago has hurt many across the province, but people living with disabilities have been hit particularly hard.

Joining us today are members of People First Saskatchewan, a disability rights group whose members have experienced first-hand the impacts of the loss of STC, and who have been speaking out on the issue. They tell us that with only limited and expensive options for travel, and that only between major centres, provincial meetings of that group have become all but impossible. These community leaders spoke of being prisoners in their own city. And they've said that "Our quality of life and our dignity have been taken away by this government."

Mr. Speaker, these community leaders are looking to the Premier for answers. Are people living with disabilities in our province to be prisoners in their own towns and cities, or is this government going to do something to remedy this theft of their quality of life, of their dignity?

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, this government made a decision in the months gone by, Mr. Speaker, to wind down the operations of our provincial bus company, Mr. Speaker. It was a decision that was made on a financial basis, saving some 85 to \$100 million over the next five years, Mr. Speaker. And notwithstanding the difficulty of making that decision, we continue to invest to ensure that those that need . . . those living with disabilities have the opportunity to travel, Mr. Speaker, to travel and ensure that they can get to the appointments that they have, and they can get, you know, around their community and around the province when need be to different meetings and to different things that are required, Mr. Speaker.

We funded \$32 million just this past year on the transit assistance for people living with disabilities, Mr. Speaker, to our communities, to some 78 communities across the province of Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, this is up 33 per cent over the course of the past year. But this is well-placed supports, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that those living with disabilities are able to be mobile within their community and within the province.

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

#### Changes to Rental Housing Supplement

**Mr. Meili:** — Mr. Speaker, it's very difficult to hear those words — the Premier trying to tell us that they've dealt with the situation and helped people with disabilities get to where they need to get to — because that's simply not the case. And the people here today are telling us exactly that.

Mr. Speaker, this cut, this closing down of STC is very similar to the rental housing supplement cut. It was done without any plan for replacement. And as a result, we've got people all over this province who are unable to meet their needs, unable to get where they need to go. Why does this government insist on cutting programs, on shutting down programs with no plan to replace them?

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Social Services has said a number of times, we're working with the federal government, Mr. Speaker, as they are moving into the housing space, Mr. Speaker. We are now faced also with a vacancy rate here in the province of about 7 to 9 per cent, Mr. Speaker. When the rental housing supplement was brought in, Mr. Speaker, was to address the very tight vacancy rates that were in our communities here in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, it's important for all of us to remember that nobody is being cut off of this supplement. As we move forward, there is vacancy rates, Mr. Speaker, and there are opportunities for people to find places to live.

And for our community's most vulnerable, Mr. Speaker, we continue to provide the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation units that we have that are currently at a 13 per cent vacancy rate. So we would like for those in our communities that are requiring housing, Mr. Speaker, we will make those places available.

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

### Provision of Transportation Services

**Mr. Meili:** — Mr. Speaker, it's certainly no surprise that the private sector hasn't been able to step up and meet what STC was able to offer. You know, if the Premier were to tell the chamber of commerce that passenger and freight service for a province as large and sparsely populated as ours represented a lucrative business opportunity that would affordably fill the gap left by STC, why he'd be laughed out of the room.

Private companies have not filled the gap, and the loss of this vital public service is hurting people and costing us all. A year ago, STC connected people and provided freight service to 200 communities across the province. Today it's only a handful, and only the largest centres. We've seen a crippling and costly loss of a connection between our communities with these cuts to freight and passenger service. It's just one more example of the members opposite taking rural Saskatchewan for granted.

Is the Premier going to allow this to continue? Is the government actually going to step in and subsidize the private sector to provide these services — fewer services, less accessible services — that STC used to proudly and so ably deliver? Or will the Premier finally admit that closing STC was a costly mistake and bring back publicly owned freight and passenger service to Saskatchewan?

[14:00]

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

**Hon. Mr. Hargrave:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the decision to wind down STC was a not an easy one, Mr. Speaker, and it's one that we did not take lightly. I know the members opposite argue that this was meant to be a public service and not to make money, but I note that nearly half the province, Mr. Speaker, weren't even served by STC. And that's partially due, Mr. Speaker, to the cuts to routes made by the NDP [New Democratic Party] party in the '90s, Mr. Speaker.

And I know, Mr. Speaker, the new leader of the NDP has promised a new transportation system, and the member from Regina Rosemont has said this would only cost \$10 million, Mr. Speaker. Well, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that number . . .

**The Speaker:** — To remind the minister to refer to the opposition as the opposition. I'd also remind the guests in the galleries to not participate in the debate on the floor. And with that, Minister, I'll recognize the minister again.

**Hon. Mr. Hargrave:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to remind the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, you know, that this cost \$85 million over the next five years, Mr. Speaker. Our officials estimate it would cost \$50 million to restart that, Mr. Speaker. So I'm not sure how they plan on doing this, Mr. Speaker.

I think it's probably to do with instituting a carbon tax, you know, a job-killing carbon tax that would kill the jobs for Saskatchewan people. And I should remind the members opposite, Mr. Speaker, that Grand Chief Ron Michel out of Prince Albert just opened a transportation system just last week.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister says it wasn't an easy decision. Well it wasn't a smart decision, and they should have taken more time with it. Farmers are losing days in the field because they can't get parts or they're having to take loved ones to town for appointments. Local businesses are struggling . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Talk to farmers; I'm talking to lots of them. Local businesses struggle to ship their product to rural communities. Patients and medical supplies are travelling . . .

[Interjections]

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is remarkably unsightly to see the government across the way fail to recognize that farmers are losing days in the field. Farmers are not able to get parts the way they could. They're losing days taking loved ones to appointments, and they're telling us about it and they're frustrated.

And people for Saskatchewan, who I'm sure would appreciate an answer from the Premier on this one, is calling for a full accounting of just how much the closure of STC has cost the people of Saskatchewan. And we proudly add our voices to that call, Mr. Speaker, because again and again, again and again this government's short-sighted approach is to cut the things our prosperity depends upon while spending wildly on pet projects that only enrich their friends. Eleven years of this approach has left us deeper in debt and lagging behind the rest of the country in growth and employment.

**The Speaker:** — That was enough of the question. Thanks for not . . . Anyway, looking forward to a response. I recognize the Premier.

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, it's a few minutes after 2. I'm a little concerned about our Canada-wide emergency alert that has not quite arrived yet. But, Mr. Speaker, we're expecting it shortly.

Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, the opposition NDP, talking about supports for rural Saskatchewan and talking with farmers across this province and ensuring that they are out undertaking the great megaproject that we do every year in this province. Mr. Speaker, the same members across that support a Justin Trudeau carbon tax that would hurt that industry and hurt other industries in the province of Saskatchewan, and the same party that's closed 52 hospitals, most of them in rural Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, the same party, the same opposition party, Mr. Speaker . . .

[Interjections]

**The Speaker:** — Next question. Recognize . . . Okay, we'll pause to the end of the broadcast.

I recognize the Premier. I recognize the Leader of the Opposition. Sorry, you were up.



**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Those answers continue to ring more and more hollow in rural Saskatchewan, where people are increasingly frustrated with the lack of answers, including on STC, Mr. Speaker, and we really would like an answer on this. From unpaid severance payments to employees; higher costs in the justice system, which is now sending released inmates by taxi or by plane; and the increased costs in the health field; increased costs to local businesses who can't ship their product. Mr. Speaker, the hasty decision to close down STC is costing us in ways that are becoming increasingly and increasingly clear.

Will the Premier commit to a full audit, a full economic analysis of the costs of this government's hasty decision to shut down STC?

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, we are doing a full economic audit on what the cost of an NDP government in this province would be, Mr. Speaker, if they should ever be on this side, Mr. Speaker. Never mind a carbon tax that they support by Justin Trudeau, Mr. Speaker. Never mind their lack of support to rural Saskatchewan in closing down 52 hospitals across this province, Mr. Speaker.

It's members on this side of the House that support 900 more physicians in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. It's members on this side of the House that support building 15 rural health care facilities, Mr. Speaker, in communities across the province — a children's hospital, a hospital in Moose Jaw, a new Saskatchewan Hospital in North Battleford. And it's this government, Mr. Speaker, that has approved \$4.4 billion in supports to those living with disabilities in the province of Saskatchewan. That's a 161 per cent increase over the time when they were government, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### People With Disabilities Working in Government

**Mr. Forbes:** — You know, Mr. Speaker, the less the Premier has got to say, the less he's got to say, the louder he gets, the louder he gets.

Well I've got a question. Transportation is only one of the many challenges facing people with disabilities. Earlier this week, we raised concerns about the sharp decline in the number of people with disabilities working across government. Currently, only 2.1 per cent of the government workforce identify as having a disability. This is a far cry from the target of 12.4 per cent. The government says they will consult public servants to determine whether anyone with a disability has been missed. The Premier has promised to do better.

Would he agree that doing better doesn't just include finding more people with disabilities in the public service, but actually developing concrete plans to hire more people too?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And let me say at the outset that we as a government

certainly value the good work that is done by people with disabilities living with a disability in the province. Our goal is to have a representative workforce, and we are working towards that.

As the member indicated, and as I've had a chance to talk both inside and outside the House, currently the only opportunity employees have to self-declare as a person living with a disability is when they apply for a job. And in order to be more accurate in the people living with disabilities that are working within the government, the government is rolling out a new online self-declaration process this summer to allow employees to confidentially self-declare at any time that they have a disability.

Mr. Speaker, we're doing all that we can. There is more to do. You know, we're very proud of programs like Sarcan, for example, that are heralded across the country, where over 60 per cent of the people working there have an intellectual disability. More work to do, Mr. Speaker, but indeed we are on the job.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Mr. Speaker, the declining number of public servants with disabilities has caught the attention of disability advocates. Paralympian Miranda Biletski took to social media this week to highlight the challenges and stigma people with disabilities face in finding work, calling on the Premier to include the disability community in developing a strategy.

There are lessons out there to increase representation. Alberta this week announced that they will be hiring their first disability advocate. And our own post-secondary institutions have seen 72 per cent more students with disabilities for the same five years. What is this government's strategy to recruit more people with disabilities to our public service?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And as we do in many areas, we look at best practices across the country, examine what other provinces are doing, and if it makes sense to do it here, we indeed will do that. But at this current time, the Ministry of Social Services, for example, is undertaking a pilot project with Winston Knoll to ensure that people living with disabilities that are of high school age or are entering the workforce have every skill and every ability to gain those jobs.

Also we can look at other examples, the CBOs [community-based organization] in the provinces. Social Services partners with groups that provide employment opportunities. I'll give you a couple of examples: Handi-Works in Nipawin, Multiworks in Meadow Lake, the Clare Parker Home in Regina, and Southwest Homes in Swift Current, Mr. Speaker. And as a government, through the Ministry of Immigration and Career Training, they have allocated over \$9.5 million for the employability assistance program for people with disabilities, Mr. Speaker. And just to put that in perspective, that's a 64 per cent increase over what members opposite did just a few short years ago.

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

### Global Transportation Hub and Provincial Job Numbers

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, we've heard a lot of fanfare from the other side about the GTH. We've seen ribbon cuttings and we've seen fancy, albeit inaccurate, maps and we've heard them boasting about the great economic project the GTH is supposed to be. It's supposed to grow our trade, our transportation, and warehousing industry. But, Mr. Speaker, with the mismanagement we see from the Sask Party government, it's never good news at the GTH.

Since this time last year, our province has seen over a 7 per cent decrease in employees working in transportation and warehousing. So with a focused project like the GTH, how is the province not growing this industry?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, we've had some enormous success with the GTH. We'd like to see the Global Transportation Hub grow and prosper even further.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell the members opposite that during construction there were 1,800 jobs, \$485 million in private investment. Now that it's complete, over 860 full-time jobs. Every week 4,800 trucks move in and out. Of the 1,800 acres that comprise the Global Transportation Hub, over 700 acres are already sold or in operation by clients. There are currently 12 clients there. There are opportunities for more clients to come.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite went out there. They did a tour. They saw the variety of people that were working there and, Mr. Speaker, I hope that they value and respect that. And we'll continue to look for and support growth in the Global Transportation Hub.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, there have been hundreds of millions of taxpayers' dollars dumped into the GTH, and it's not doing what the Sask Party government says that it is supposed to do. The number of employees working in transportation and warehousing is actually lower than it was five years ago.

Mr. Speaker, of course Loblaw is a significant employer, but what's concerning is the limited growth that's happened at the rest of the GTH. Those empty lots of land they can't sell employ no one. And their pipe dream for a world-class logistics hub creating thousands and thousands of jobs isn't reflected in these job numbers.

Now ten years ago the minister responsible for GTH at the time, Wayne Elhard, said the GTH could be "... of equal importance to the future of Saskatchewan's transportation as the coming of the railway was in the 1880s." Well, Mr. Speaker, it just hasn't lived up to the hype.

How is it that after all this time and taxpayers' money, there are actually fewer people working in warehousing and transportation?

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

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Well, Mr. Speaker, that question touched on a number of topics, but what I will focus on is jobs, Mr. Speaker. What we saw last month was a jobs report showing 4,200 more people, more jobs in this province than the month before. Fifteen hundred more jobs year over year, Mr. Speaker, a rate of job creation that is one of the highest in Canada, largest percentage increase in the country in fact, Mr. Speaker.

We've seen GDP [gross domestic product] growth of over 20 per cent since 2007, the third highest in the entire country. We've seen significant population growth in this province, historic population growth in this province over the course of the last decade, Mr. Speaker, over 165,000 newcomers to Saskatchewan.

Over the course of that same period of time when the members opposite were in government, Mr. Speaker, what did we see? Over 20,000 people leave Canada. We saw the worst rate of job creation in the entire country, Mr. Speaker. This is recognized by the voters of this province, and that's why we're never going back to the NDP. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — Your ending statement's out of order. I recognize the member for Saskatoon Fairview.

[14:15]

### SaskJobs Website

**Ms. Mowat:** — Mr. Speaker, since the minister decided to wind down his SaskJobs website, job seekers and employers have grown increasingly frustrated. We've asked the Trade minister over and over again, where are the jobs, and still no answers. We heard examples today about how the wind-down of the STC has worked out for Saskatchewan people and, just like the minister of STC, the minister from Meadow Lake just doesn't seem to get it. We know that when SaskJobs website was operating ... [inaudible interjections] ... the member from Meadow Lake ...

**The Speaker:** — Pick one.

**Ms. Mowat:** — Sure. And just like the minister of STC, the member from Meadow Lake just doesn't seem to get it. We know that when the SaskJobs website was operating in February of this year, there were 7,325 jobs posted for the entire province. As of this morning, the minister's Ottawa-based site has only 1,767 jobs posted.

So to the minister: have we really lost 5,000 jobs in three months, or will he admit that it was a mistake to take down saskjobs.ca?

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

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Well the reality is we created 4,200

jobs month over month, Mr. Speaker. I have acknowledged that there are concerns, legitimate concerns with the user-friendliness of the national Job Bank. We've heard from employers in that regard, and for that reason, Mr. Speaker, I gave direction yesterday that saskjobs.ca be put back up. It's back up as of right now. Clearly the members opposite . . .

**The Speaker:** — I remind the people in the gallery to not be taking photographs of the Assembly. I recognize the minister.

**Hon. Mr. Harrison:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To that end, I gave direction yesterday that saskjobs.ca be put back live, and it has been for some period of time now. Clearly members opposite didn't check prior to coming into question period. But we will be maintaining that site for the next number of months. We're going to be working with employers with regard to a transition to national Job Bank, and it's something that we've heard from employers on, and from potential job seekers. We heard the message and we're moving forward.

### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Human Services.

#### Standing Committee on Human Services

**Mr. D'Autremont:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Human Services to report Bill No. 94, *The Saskatchewan Advantage Grant for Education Savings (SAGES) Amendment Act, 2017* without amendment.

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

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

**The Speaker:** — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 94, *The Saskatchewan Advantage Grant for Education Savings (SAGES) Amendment Act, 2017* without amendment and that the bill be now read a third time. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

### THIRD READINGS

#### Bill No. 94 — *The Saskatchewan Advantage Grant for Education Savings (SAGES) Amendment Act, 2017*

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

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 94 be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Question.

**The Speaker:** — Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

**The Speaker:** — I'm advised that His Honour the Lieutenant Governor is here for Royal Assent.

All please rise.

### ROYAL ASSENT

[At 14:21 His Honour the Lieutenant Governor 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, to which bills I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

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

- Bill No. 77 - *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Superannuation Plans) Amendment Act, 2017*
- Bill No. 78 - *The Municipal Employees' Pension Amendment Act, 2017*
- Bill No. 79 - *The Public Employees Pension Plan Amendment Act, 2017*
- Bill No. 80 - *The Municipal Financing Corporation Amendment Act, 2017*
- Bill No. 108 - *The Statute Law Amendment Act, 2017*
- Bill No. 109 - *The Statute Law Amendment Act, 2017 (No. 2)/Loi n° 2 de 2017 modifiant le droit législatif*
- Bill No. 74 - *The Evidence Amendment Act, 2017/Loi modificative de 2017 sur la preuve*
- Bill No. 96 - *The Choice of Court Agreements (Hague Convention Implementation) Act/Loi sur les accords d'élection de for (mise en œuvre de la Convention de La Haye)*
- Bill No. 101 - *The Agricultural Implements Amendment Act, 2017*
- Bill No. 102 - *The Agri-Food Amendment Act, 2017*
- Bill No. 72 - *The Privacy Amendment Act, 2017*
- Bill No. 75 - *The Electronic Communications Convention Implementation Act/Loi de mise en œuvre de la Convention sur les communications électroniques*
- Bill No. 87 - *The Data Matching Agreements Act*
- Bill No. 95 - *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal and Amendment Act, 2017*
- Bill No. 97 - *The Arbitration (Family Dispute Resolution) Amendment Act, 2017*

Bill No. 98 - *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Family Dispute Resolution) Amendment Act, 2017/Loi modificative diverse (résolution des conflits familiaux) de 2017*

Bill No. 104 - *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, 2017/Code des droits de la personne de la Saskatchewan de 2017*

Bill No. 105 - *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Consequential Amendment Act, 2017*

Bill No. 94 - *The Saskatchewan Advantage Grant for Education Savings (SAGES) Amendment Act, 2017*

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

**The Speaker:** — May it please Your Honour, this Legislative Assembly has voted the supplies required 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. 130 - *The Appropriation Act, 2018 (No. 1)*

to which bill I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

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

[His Honour retired from the Chamber at 14:25.]

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

## WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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

**Mr. Lawrence:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to order the answers to questions 253 through 257.

**The Speaker:** — Ordered 253 to 257.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

## ADJOURNED DEBATES

## SECOND READINGS

### 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 Fairview.

**Ms. Mowat:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter into adjourned debates on Bill No. 114, *The Vehicles for Hire Act*. This bill defines ride-sharing companies like Uber and Lyft as transportation network companies and distinguishes these companies from taxis as separate categories of companies with their own sets of rules.

This bill proposes to allow municipalities to license and create bylaws for this industry, but ultimately it is up to our province to ensure safety of our communities, consumers, and workers. For decades we have developed regulations that affect taxi companies to protect the drivers and members of the public. Considering the dangerous attacks that have taken place in the past five years and the continued advocacy that members of the United Steelworkers 2014 and taxi area council continue to take on to fight for safety shields and insurance coverage for injured drivers, I think we can say there is still work to be done on these regulations.

Mr. Speaker, certainly no one is saying no to bringing in ride-sharing companies, but regulations need to be put in place to ensure the safety of consumers and to protect all workers in the industry, and that is the role of the provincial government. What protections will be place for workers of these companies is yet to be seen. We've heard from transportation network companies, the Saskatchewan Taxi Cab Association, United Steelworkers 2014, and the taxi area council on these matters. I understand that the Saskatchewan Taxi Cab Association is concerned about the implication of creating a two-tier system, and I understand that union folks continue to be quite concerned with existing regulations in the taxi industry that impact worker safety and protection and the impact this legislation could have on their industry.

We will have a number of questions in committee to ask for clarification from the minister on some of these points and to find out what input has been received from all stakeholders involved. But with that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to move that we adjourn debate on Bill 114, *The Vehicles for Hire Act*.

**The Speaker:** — The member of Saskatoon Fairview has moved to adjourn debate 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 Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that this House do now adjourn so committees may do their good work.

**The Speaker:** — The Government House Leader has moved to adjourn the House. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — This House stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:30.]

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# GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

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**President of the Executive Council**

**Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs**

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