



THIRD SESSION - TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

of the

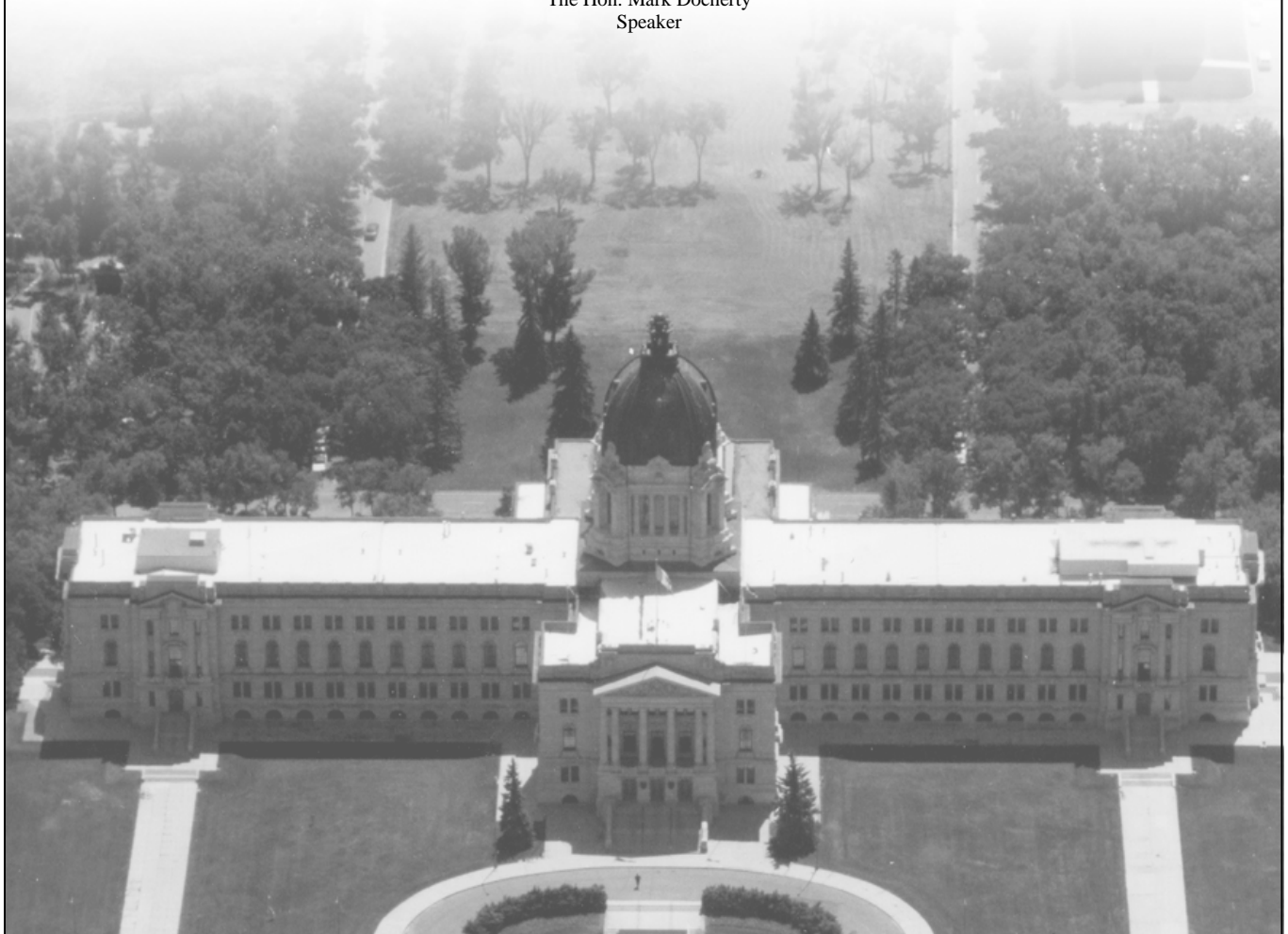
**Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan**

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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**  
**3rd Session — 28th Legislature**

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

<b>Beaudry-Mellor</b> , Hon. Tina — Regina University (SP)	<b>Makowsky</b> , Hon. Gene — Regina Gardiner Park (SP)
<b>Beck</b> , Carla — Regina Lakeview (NDP)	<b>Marit</b> , Hon. David — Wood River (SP)
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<b>D'Autremont</b> , Dan — Cannington (SP)	<b>Olauson</b> , Eric — Saskatoon University (SP)
<b>Dennis</b> , Terry — Canora-Pelly (SP)	<b>Ottenbreit</b> , Hon. Greg — Yorkton (SP)
<b>Docherty</b> , Hon. Mark — Regina Coronation Park (SP)	<b>Pedersen, Yens</b> — Regina Northeast (NDP)
<b>Doke</b> , Larry — Cut Knife-Turtleford (SP)	<b>Rancourt</b> , Nicole — Prince Albert Northcote (NDP)
<b>Duncan</b> , Hon. Dustin — Weyburn-Big Muddy (SP)	<b>Reiter</b> , Hon. Jim — Rosetown-Elrose (SP)
<b>Eyre</b> , Hon. Bronwyn — Saskatoon Stonebridge-Dakota (SP)	<b>Ross</b> , Laura — Regina Rochdale (SP)
<b>Fiaz</b> , Muhammad — Regina Pasqua (SP)	<b>Sarauer</b> , Nicole — Regina Douglas Park (NDP)
<b>Forbes</b> , David — Saskatoon Centre (NDP)	<b>Sproule</b> , Cathy — Saskatoon Nutana (NDP)
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<b>Goudy</b> , Todd — Melfort (SP)	<b>Steinley</b> , Warren — Regina Walsh Acres (SP)
<b>Hargrave</b> , Hon. Joe — Prince Albert Carlton (SP)	<b>Stewart</b> , Lyle — Lumsden-Morse (SP)
<b>Harpauer</b> , Hon. Donna — Humboldt-Watrous (SP)	<b>Tell</b> , Hon. Christine — Regina Wascana Plains (SP)
<b>Harrison</b> , Hon. Jeremy — Meadow Lake (SP)	<b>Tochor</b> , Corey — Saskatoon Eastview (SP)
<b>Hart</b> , Glen — Last Mountain-Touchwood (SP)	<b>Vermette</b> , Doyle — Cumberland (NDP)
<b>Heppner</b> , Nancy — Martensville-Warman (SP)	<b>Weekes</b> , Randy — Biggar-Sask Valley (SP)
<b>Hindley</b> , Everett — Swift Current (SP)	<b>Wilson</b> , Hon. Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (SP)
<b>Kaeding</b> , Hon. Warren — Melville-Saltcoats (SP)	<b>Wotherspoon</b> , Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)
<b>Kirsch</b> , Delbert — Batoche (SP)	<b>Wyant</b> , Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)
<b>Lambert</b> , Lisa — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)	<b>Young</b> , Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)
<b>Lawrence</b> , Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)	

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**Party Standings:** Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 48; New Democratic Party (NDP) — 13

**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

**Sergeant-at-Arms** — Terry Quinn

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'm pleased today to rise to welcome a group of 2018 high school and post-secondary graduates who have experience in care of Social Services and are seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. During this past school year, 43 youths in care reached this milestone.

This group has overcome many obstacles to reach their goals, and I know that they have bright futures ahead of them. Their strength and perseverance is inspirational, Mr. Speaker. Their success highlights the good work that happens in our system each and every day.

I want to thank the families, caregivers, foster parents, friends, teachers, and workers that fed into lives of the youth that are here today. Your dedication to their success and well-being does not go unnoticed.

Today after the sitting I'm looking forward to meeting with the graduates here today to learn a little bit more about them and their accomplishments. Please join me in welcoming this group to your Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join briefly with the minister in welcoming and congratulating these post-secondary graduates to their Legislative Assembly, and just congratulate them on, as the minister said, the perseverance and overcoming many obstacles, I'm sure, to reaching this milestone.

Thank you also to all of those who supported these graduates. And we'd like to, on behalf of the official opposition, welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Assembly, it's my pleasure to once again celebrate on Monday. It's Ottenbreits in the legislature day again. I've got some more family members visiting today in your gallery, upper left-hand side there. I'll just get them to wave when I introduce them. First is my cousin Rod Ottenbreit and his wife, Irene. With them is their daughter Pam Matties and her son Zachary, and also their son Marland and his wife, Leslie, with their daughters Annika, Peyton, and Lauryn. And of course, with them is my mom, Pat. So I ask all members to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a tremendous pleasure to introduce a group of students and teachers seated in the east gallery from Kitchener Community School. We've got 23 grade 6, 7, and 8 students. They're good looking, hard working, smart talking. I can attest to this in person, Mr. Speaker. I had the chance to come out and meet with the class earlier this year. So it's not just the hyperbole that goes with, you know, the schools that are attached to your own riding. It's the actual fact, Mr. Speaker.

But I do want to say a special word of thanks to their teachers, Jordyn Leib, Meghan Machuik, Matthew McKee, educational assistant Kim Pollock, and the author of this whole thing, teacher Devin Floyd. And we're all here because of the good work of others in our lives, often as not teachers, Mr. Speaker. And certainly you've got some folks that exemplify that.

And to the students I say this: it was just 30-odd short years ago that I was seated exactly where you are, wondering what the future might hold. So for you to come here to return the visit, I say welcome. It's your legislature. Don't be scared of anything here. And I look forward to meeting with them later on, Mr. Speaker. But if all members could join me in welcoming these very important guests to their Legislative Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Last Mountain-Touchwood.

**Mr. Hart:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am particularly pleased this afternoon to be able to introduce a group of students from the Cupar School. Mr. Speaker, Cupar is my hometown. My constituency office is a short block away from the school. It's a school that I attended, all of my children attended, and now I have grandchildren attending this school. We have 24 students, grade 11 and 12 students, who are today accompanied by their teacher, Ms. Peggy Laurie.

Mr. Speaker, some members may wonder if there are any students with the last name Hart. And there are two in the group. One is my nephew's daughter Ellie. And if you wouldn't mind giving us a little wave, Ellie. And the second is my granddaughter Alyx, who is seated in the front row. I must say this isn't Alyx's first time in the legislature. She was here many, many years ago. It was a fall sitting when the Christmas tree was up, and at that time she referred to the Assembly as grandpa's big office. She doesn't do that anymore. She's, I'm sure, a little embarrassed. And I'd ask all members to welcome them to their Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Regina Pasqua.

**Mr. Fiaz:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, to all the members of the Assembly, I would like to introduce very special friends of mine and the friends of the community. Seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker: Amandeep Singh Guru; Sandeep Singh Sidhu; Kushminder Singh and Jatinder Brar; Anterpreet Singh Johal, also known as Lovely.

Mr. Speaker, these folks are arranging the Guru Nanak Free Kitchen every Sunday on the street of Albert Street and Angus avenue from 2 o'clock to 4:30. Mr. Speaker, I ask everyone from the House to welcome them in their legislature and encourage the work they do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the member from Regina Pasqua and welcome and thank these members from the Sikh community for all the great work that they do throughout the whole community, but certainly the good work of sharing food and that human comfort with folks in North Central every Sunday like clockwork. It's a good thing that they're doing. So I'd like to say, on behalf of the official opposition, welcome to these individuals and thank them for the work that they do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Request leave for an extended introduction.

**The Speaker:** — The member's asked for leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

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

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is an honour and a pleasure to rise in my place this afternoon and welcome the Sheldon-Williams football club, coaching staff, and trainers to their Legislative Assembly. I will be doing a member's statement about their season just a little bit later, but I wanted to say a few thank yous and make a couple of introductions.

First we have Nolan Nadarajah, the D-back [defensive back] coach with us today; team manager Russ Cushway; and no stranger to this Assembly, head coach Eric Anderson, or as the team affectionately calls him, E.A. And thank them for all of their dedication to this group of boys, this season and beyond.

There was also — I've been following Twitter — a couple of announcements, exciting announcements that this group has had recently, with signings with university teams. The U of S [University of Saskatchewan] Huskies gained both an arm and a leg with Keegan Kaytor, who is a quarterback and also a punter and kicker. And his favourite target is going to be playing for the U of R [University of Regina] Rams' Mason Novik in the fall. So exciting there.

And along the family theme today, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to embarrass my son Nolan and welcome him as well to his Legislative Assembly. And I'd invite all members to welcome this team, coaching staff, and trainers to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Michelson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in the west gallery is a constituent of mine, Leo Beaulieu. Leo is here today just to watch the proceedings.

Leo has created a remote-controlled flagger to control traffic around construction sites for efficiency and, most of all, for the safety factor. It offers a whole dimension of safety. He tells me

there's 100,000 construction sites in North America on any given day, so that safety factor with a remote-control flagger would be a real asset.

Leo spent about three years designing, creating, and building this machine, and it's another example of Saskatchewan ingenuity and inventiveness. So I ask all members to welcome Leo to his Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to introduce to you and through you to all members of the House someone who's a very frequent visitor of the Legislative Assembly. Gary Tinker's on the floor here. He's here to witness the proceedings today. We know him as a very strong advocate for those in the disabilities. And today being international day of people living with disabilities, it's very fitting that he'd be with us today. Thank you, Gary, for making the long trip here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join the member from Saskatoon city centre in welcoming Gary to his Legislative Assembly. I've had the opportunity to meet Gary a couple of times, and I know the Minister of Finance has also met with Gary several times, Mr. Speaker. And thank you very much for travelling down on international day of disabilities, and we will have a member's statement honouring that day coming up very soon. So again, welcome to your Legislative Assembly, Gary. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to join the critic for disabilities and of course the minister responsible in also welcoming a constituent of mine, Mr. Gary Tinker. I can tell you that we've had a long, long friendship over the years, and the admiration and respect I have for our great northern champion is boundless. And I want to point out that after 30 years since his walk, Mr. Speaker, which will be celebrated next year, that he continues to advocate for all people with disabilities across the province but a special focus on the North.

So I too want to thank him for travelling here and to commend him for his continued work and to say how proud I am of him as his MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly]. And I would ask all members of the Assembly to once again honour him by welcoming him to his Legislative Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport.

**Hon. Mr. Makowsky:** — Mr. Speaker, just briefly I'd like to, along with the member opposite, welcome Sheldon-Williams Collegiate football team to the legislature today. It's great to see this group here, 3A city champs. And thanks to all the volunteers and coaches that make these teams go, and we thank them for all their time put forward.

I would like to also amplify Keegan Kaytor. I was able to coach him a couple years ago in spring league, and he and Mason Novik

also represented Saskatchewan in the under-18 gold medal . . . They were gold medallists this past summer, and so they have a bright future. And again to all the players and coaches, congratulations on your great season and all the best in the future on behalf of the government side. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to introduce, seated in your gallery, members of the Sixties Scoop Indigenous Society of Saskatchewan. These are advocates for survivors of the Sixties Scoop, who've done an amazing job of leading the conversation regarding that issue and all of those who have suffered through the years because of the Sixties Scoop.

With us today are Patricia Whitebear, Norine Tourangeau, Melissa Parkyn, and Anna McArthur Parent, as well as Sharon Okeewehow — as a long-time friend of mine, great to see Sharon again — and Betty Ann Adam, a well-known and award-winning journalist in Saskatchewan who has been advising the SSISS [Sixties Scoop Indigenous Society of Saskatchewan] over the years. And I'd like to ask the members of the legislature to join me in welcoming them warmly to their legislature.

[13:45]

And while I'm on my feet, I would just like to acknowledge one other person that you might not be able to see right now, but should stick his head out and say hello. This is our top political adviser for the New Democratic Party, Mr. Abraham Meili, who is joining us today to observe the proceedings. He also joined us last night for the Sask Party-NDP [New Democratic Party] hockey game and observed those proceedings as well. He said he's expecting a far more impressive performance from his father tonight than he saw last night. Thank you, and could everyone please join me in welcoming Abraham to his legislature.

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

**Hon. Mr. Kaeding:** — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you I as well would like to thank and welcome the members of the SSISS group here today. We had a fulsome discussion this morning, and certainly appreciate the efforts that they have put into bringing an apology to our Sixties Scoop survivors in the province. I'd certainly like to put a shout-out to Melissa Parkyn and Robert Doucette, the Co-Chairs of the Sixties Scoop survivor group that have been invaluable in the process in bringing this forward today. I would like all members to welcome the Sixties Scoop survivor group to their Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Vermette:** — Mr. Speaker, to you and through you I'd like to welcome a guest that's in your gallery. Jordan McPhail is here. He's a member with the Lac La Ronge Indian Band in La Ronge, in my constituency. He also sits on the town of La Ronge council, and he's a very young, interesting young man who wants to do his part to serve his community and to represent the best interests of his community, and I give him credit for the good work he's done. It's not always easy being a young individual, and he's learning the ropes. And I just want to acknowledge him and thank

him for the good work he does, and in sports. Last night he was here as well, and he played a little bit of hockey.

So I just want to welcome him to his Legislative Assembly, and thank him for the great work you do in honouring the people that you represent. Anyway, welcome to your Assembly, Jordan. We wish you all the best.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too want to join our leader in welcoming young Abe to the Assembly today. And after our performance last night, we were kind of dejected in the dressing room trying to figure out how we lost. And we all asked each other, asked each other there, how did we lose? And young Abe spoke up and said, maybe because they had better players than you guys. So perhaps he might be an NHL [National Hockey League] coach today. So I want to welcome Abe Meili to the Assembly as well.

**The Speaker:** — I think everybody got introduced. Everybody? Yes. If not, that's okay. We'll get you next time.

## PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

**Mr. Olauson:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm 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 devastating carbon tax on the province.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by citizens of Asquith and Saskatoon. I do so present.

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

**Mr. Vermette:** — Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a petition in support of the Pelican Narrows airstrip. This petition is supported by the local leadership in the community and has hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of signatures in light of the situation wherein Manitoba, Flin Flon Hospital, as of November the 18th they will no longer be delivering babies in the hospital that Pelican Narrows and surrounding communities relied on for safety. So the community is concerned and want their airport looked at.

So I will 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 recognize that the community of Pelican Narrows is in dire need of upgrades to their airstrip to meet air medevac standards and provide access to health

services, and commit to immediately provide resources for upgrading of the current airstrip.

It is signed by hundreds and hundreds of people from the community. I so present.

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

**Mr. Wotherspoon:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise once again today to present petitions on behalf of concerned citizens and local businesses all across Saskatchewan as it relates to really what's the epitome of a job-killing tax — the hike and expansion of the PST [provincial sales tax] by the Sask Party onto construction labour, something that's devastated the job front, that's hurt investment. The consequences are real. Permits are down all across the province. Thousands of jobs have been lost, Mr. Speaker. And this is all at a time where we need nothing more than good jobs and investment in the province.

The prayer reads as follows:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Sask Party government to stop saddling families and businesses with the costs of their mismanagement and immediately reinstate the PST exemption on construction and stop hurting Saskatchewan businesses and families.

These petitions here today are signed by concerned residents of Griffin, Regina, and Regina Beach. I so submit.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm rising today to present a petition calling for a public inquiry into the GTH [Global Transportation Hub] land deal. The people who have signed this petition are wishing to bring to our attention the following: the Sask Party has refused to come clean on the GTH land deal, a deal where Sask Party insiders made millions flipping land and taxpayers lost millions; the Sask Party continues to block key witnesses from providing testimony about the land deal; and it's Saskatchewan people who footed the bill for the GTH land deal and deserve nothing less than the truth.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Sask Party to stop hiding behind partisan excuses and immediately call for a judicial inquiry and a forensic audit into the GTH land deal.

And, Mr. Speaker, the individuals who have signed this petition today are from the city of Regina. I so submit.

**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. The undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan want to bring to our attention the following: that Saskatchewan's outdated election Act allows corporations, unions, and individuals, and even those living outside Saskatchewan, to make

unlimited donations to our province's political parties. And we know and we believe that the people of Saskatchewan deserve to live in a fair province where all voices are equal and money can't influence politics.

But, Mr. Speaker, over the past 10 years, the Saskatchewan Party has received \$12.61 million in corporate donations, and of that, \$2.87 million came from companies outside Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan politics should belong to Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, and we know that the federal government and the provinces of Alberta, Manitoba, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and now British Columbia have moved to limit the 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 that 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 the petition today come from the cities of Swift Current, Regina, and North Battleford. I do so present. Thank you.

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

**Ms. Mowat:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today to present a petition in support of in-house security services at Saskatchewan's health care facilities. These citizens wish to bring to our attention that the Government of Saskatchewan security services review in the Saskatchewan Health Authority appears to be driven by a desire to contract out and cut costs rather than improve safety in health care, and that safe, quality health care means having an adequately staffed, properly trained and equipped in-house security team, not cutting jobs and contracting out to the lowest private bidder.

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 government to commit to maintaining quality publicly funded, publicly delivered, and publicly administered security services.

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

#### STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

#### Sheldon-Williams Spartans Win High School Football Championship

**Ms. Beck:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to recognize the Sheldon-Williams Collegiate Spartans, the 2018 3A Regina High School Football champions. Located in the great

constituency of Regina Lakeview, Sheldon was first opened in 1956 and they have had a rich football tradition ever since.

Led by second-year head coach and Spartan alumni Eric Anderson, the Spartans finished the regular season undefeated, managing to outscore their opponents 308 to 89. Sheldon earned the number one seed and received a first-round bye for the playoffs before taking on the Martin Monarchs in the semifinals, where they were victorious 44 to 8. And from there it was on to the finals against the defending city champions, the Greenall Griffins. Mr. Speaker, it was a hard-fought game at Mosaic Stadium, but the Spartans prevailed 24 to 3. The 3A city title was Sheldon's first since 1976.

Unfortunately the perfect season was cut short with the last game of the year when the Spartans lost the 3A provincial final to the very tough BJM [Bishop James Mahoney] Saints of Saskatoon. But, Mr. Speaker, it was an incredible season nonetheless for this historical school and the players, students, trainers, and coaching staff should all be proud.

The Spartans coaches were also named the 3A Stewart Conference Coaching Staff of the Year, presented by the University of Regina Rams at their annual awards banquet. And this award is voted on by all the coaches in the conference.

I want to congratulate all of the players, coaches, trainers, and teachers and I ask all members to join me in recognizing the Sheldon-Williams Collegiate Spartans football team, the 2018 city champions. Go Spartans.

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

#### **International Day of Persons With Disabilities**

**Mr. Buckingham:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today is International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Today Saskatchewan will join the rest of the world to proclaim our commitment to improving supports and services to people with disabilities. This year's theme is Empowering Persons with Disabilities and Ensuring Inclusiveness and Equality.

Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan disability strategy is the framework for this work in Saskatchewan. Since its release in 2015, progress has been made on a number of recommendations. Mr. Speaker, a few highlights that our government has accomplished in 2018 to promote inclusion of persons with disabilities include launching the autism spectrum disorder individualized funding program in July, supporting 34 people to transition out of Valley View Centre into communities of their choice, and increasing home care individualized funding by 1.2 million annually. Mr. Speaker, we have a vision of Saskatchewan being an inclusive province that is welcoming, responsive, innovative, and accessible.

I'd also like to thank Dorothy and John Wikstrom who have been nationally recognized for their 30 years of volunteer work with the Special Olympics and are winners of the Jim Thompson Award.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members of the House join me in recognizing the commitment and valuable contributions of

communities and organizations working across the province to make Saskatchewan more inclusive for people with disabilities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to recognize International Day of Persons with Disabilities, which has been observed annually on December 3rd since 1992. This year's theme is Empowering Persons with Disabilities and Ensuring Inclusiveness and Equality. This is inspired by the 2030 agenda for sustainable development set out by the UN [United Nations] development program. It is vitally important that we as legislators take these themes and ideas to heart and ensure that we create disability-inclusive policies in every area of our work.

Over the summer I had the opportunity to meet with several groups and individuals from the disability community. I consistently heard that we as a society have come a long way, but there's still much more work to be done in terms of inclusiveness and accessibility.

Mr. Speaker, when we think about our province's development and expansion of housing, infrastructure, public transportation, and services, it's crucial that we always keep accessibility and inclusiveness in mind. There are no excuses for persons with disabilities to be denied the same opportunity and access to services as anyone else. We must continue to listen to those most impacted by issues of accessibility and ensure that their voices are heard when we have these crucial conversations.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members join me in recognizing International Day of Persons with Disabilities and continue working to build a more inclusive society. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Regina Pasqua.

[14:00]

#### **Humanity First Canada**

**Mr. Fiaz:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I wish to talk about a fantastic organization, Humanity First Canada. For those unfamiliar, Humanity First Canada is an organization whose focus is on humanitarian relief efforts. Mr. Speaker, the organization is registered in 50 countries across six continents and has been working on human development projects and responding to disasters since 1995.

On November 17th myself, along with my colleagues from Saskatoon University, Saskatoon Westview, and Saskatoon Eastview had the pleasure of attending a fundraiser for Humanity First Canada. I am pleased to say that an impressive amount, \$32,000, was raised to ensure the important work they do can continue.

Mr. Speaker, most recently Humanity First has created a new innovative resource, an online food bank. This online ordering system will allow those in need to place a food order and have them delivered to their doorsteps within 48 hours. It is such a simple concept but it can make all the difference.

Mr. Speaker, Humanity First truly exemplifies our provincial motto, “from many peoples, strength.” With thanks to all the volunteers and the donors, I ask members to join me in commending Humanity First Canada for all the important work they continue to do for the people of Canada and around the world. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Arm River.

#### **Davidson Residents Distribute Gifts to Children in Gambia**

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I wish to speak about the generosity of Davidson residents Dave and Colleen Spelliscy and Bonnie Jean Low, people I am privileged to represent. Because of the kind efforts of Bonnie Jean, Colleen, Dave, and several charity organizations, 1,891 children in the small West African country of Gambia were able to experience the simple joys that children all over the world experience.

In October the Spelliscys and Ms. Low travelled to Gambia with other volunteers to distribute shoeboxes filled with toys, games, hygiene items, and school supplies to underprivileged children through a program called Operation Christmas Child. Mr. Speaker, Operation Christmas Child is organized every year by Samaritan’s Purse. In addition to the shoeboxes filled with gifts, donations were also collected to purchase items like soccer balls, Frisbees, and skipping ropes for the children to play with.

During their stay, the Spelliscys and Ms. Low were graciously hosted and made to feel at home. This was the Spelliscys’ third trip and Low’s second trip to travel and deliver the shoeboxes in person.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in thanking Bonnie Jean, Dave, and Colleen for the continued efforts to bring joy and laughter to the children in West Africa.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Moose Jaw Wakamow.

#### **Inclusion Centre Opens in Moose Jaw**

**Mr. Lawrence:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week on Wednesday I had the pleasure of attending the opening of the Kinsmen Inclusion Centre in my community. The new centre houses a day program run by Moose Jaw Families for Change. This day program supports people with intellectual disabilities through recreational activities and life skills training. It also is a safe and welcoming place for folks to meet new people and make new friends. Our government was pleased to provide \$200,000 for this facility, and it was money well spent.

Mr. Speaker, Moose Jaw Families for Change is a non-profit organization that provides services for people with varied abilities in Moose Jaw. The organization focuses on building meaningful relationships rooted in mutual respect and community inclusion. In addition to the day program, they also operate two group homes and a group living home. The inclusion centre will allow people from different homes to come together and interact with one another.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the Assembly to join me in

recognizing Moose Jaw Families for Change for its continued commitment to providing quality, sustainable day programming services for individuals with varied abilities in Moose Jaw. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Regina University.

#### **Exciting Golf and Great Hospitality at Women’s Open**

**Hon. Ms. Beaudry-Mellor:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well there’s snow on the ground now, but it wasn’t so long ago that the Wascana Golf Club played host to the 2018 CP Women’s Open for a few days of really exciting golf and world-class hospitality. Several of my colleagues supported the championship golf event, Mr. Speaker, which was streamed to an audience with a reach of about 500 million people and leveraged the work of over 1,000 volunteers from our community.

Of course I want to again congratulate Canada’s own Brooke Henderson who took home the championship in spectacular fashion. It was easy to see where she was playing throughout the tournament, as she had a very big fan base of excited supporters and young athlete hopefuls who followed her the entire week.

While the athletics was outstanding, this event was so much more than just a golf event. It brought millions of dollars in tourism and visitors to our province and, especially along the south side of Albert Street, for the restaurants and hotels that border my constituency. Mr. Speaker, I’d like to thank all the corporate sponsors in this community who can always be counted on to step up, the organizing committees, the Wascana Golf and Country Club and spectators for making this event the event of the year and for showcasing our city of Regina and our province of Saskatchewan so very well. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

#### **QUESTION PERIOD**

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

#### **Effects of Price Differential on Saskatchewan Oil Production**

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week we asked the government to engage with industry and the Government of Alberta’s envoys to explore options to address the differential for Canadian heavy oil. Last night the Premier of Alberta announced oil production in that province will be cut by 8.7 per cent as a means of closing that differential. Jason Kenney, the leader of Alberta’s official opposition, was calling for further cuts and is calling on those cuts to be made in Saskatchewan as well.

This afternoon the Premier announced that his government won’t be mandating production cuts for Saskatchewan heavy oil production. So my question is, has he discussed that decision with Premier Notley prior to announcing it? Has the Premier examined the full range of impacts this decision could have for our province as well as on the effectiveness of Alberta’s plan to address the differential? And if this is not the road he wishes to take, what plans does he have over the short term to address this important differential?

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



**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the member opposite for a question of very large importance in this time and days of a very important industry to the province of Saskatchewan. The answer is, we have been in touch with Premier Notley's office as well as a number of other premiers' offices over the course of the last number of weeks. And we understand why Alberta is taking this very drastic action in light of an industry in crisis, and that is the Prime Minister's words, Mr. Speaker. But we understand why Alberta is taking this drastic action because of the frustration that the industry and Alberta and Saskatchewan shares, the frustration that we have with the federal government and some of the policies that they have put forward.

But we have had a look at curtailment here in the province. We have talked to our industry representatives here in the province, Mr. Speaker, our industry partners here in the province, and we don't feel it would be effective here in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan has a very different mix of oil production as well as a different mix of markets that we send our energy products into. For example, we have no oil sands, no active oil sands production here in Saskatchewan. So cutting production and leaving that oil in the ground, so to speak, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan would actually have no real effect or impact on the price differential, but it would have an impact on the energy sector jobs in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

So to clarify, we've been in touch with Premier Notley's office. We'll continue to work with the province of Alberta to ensure that we can fend off some of these policies, Mr. Speaker. And ultimately the correction is to have access to our markets through additional pipeline capacity.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Premier is absolutely correct. We have a different mix of oil here in Saskatchewan than in Alberta. It's a smaller percentage that is heavy oil here; however, it is still a significant percentage of what's produced here in Saskatchewan. And it was just not many days ago that the Premier was taking to Twitter to raise alarms about the differential and saying that this was a national crisis and a huge issue. And yet today we hear that it's not such a big deal. So that's really what I'd like the Premier to clarify today. Is the differential a big issue for Saskatchewan or isn't it?

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

**Hon. Mr. Moe:** — Mr. Speaker, in no way, shape, or form am I indicating that the differential does not impact Saskatchewan industries. What I'm saying is curtailment in this province — from the industry perspective, Mr. Speaker, and the advice that we're receiving from the industry — will not be effective in narrowing that gap, Mr. Speaker. But the differential is affecting our industries and our jobs, Mr. Speaker, to the tune of \$300 million directly through royalties and taxes to the Government of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

This is an industry in crisis. The Prime Minister has acknowledged so, Mr. Speaker, and he should have a serious look, Mr. Speaker. And we will continue to advocate to ensure that we're not moving forward with further headwinds on this industry and other industries in Western Canada.

What the Government of Saskatchewan is doing, Mr. Speaker, is working very closely with the industry so that we can ensure that we make the policy decisions that are beneficial to the long-term health and sustainability of the industry, not only from an economic perspective but also from a sustainability perspective, Mr. Speaker.

And I offer to the members opposite and to the province to stay tuned this week as we'll be moving forward with some of the initiatives that have been created in consultation with the industry, Mr. Speaker. And we'll be moving forward on them on behalf of all of the energy sector workers in communities right across this province.

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

### Provision of Social Services Programming

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Poverty. Illness. Crime. Last week's fiscal update confirmed what we've been saying since the 2017 budget was released and again with the 2018 budget. This government's choices lead to more crime, more children being taken into care, and more people experiencing illness. We see this cost in the numbers with the increase of \$23 million in the mid-year update for Social Services. And we know that these numbers point to a far greater toll in the lives and health of Saskatchewan men, women, and children. We know that the number of newborns being taken into care has increased each of the last five years.

With the increased demand for supports for vulnerable people in our province, Mr. Speaker, I ask the Premier, how many more people are on the Saskatchewan assured income for disability program today? How many more are on the Saskatchewan assistance program? And how many are relying on the transitional employment allowance to make ends meet?

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

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member opposite for the question. Our numbers actually on our SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability] program have stabilized over the last 12 to 18 months, Mr. Speaker. We're hovering in and around the 15,000 mark.

As far as our transitional employment, that has increased over the last few years, Mr. Speaker, and it is in and around 7,300 people currently on our TEA [transitional employment allowance] program.

As far as our SAP [Saskatchewan assistance program] program, Mr. Speaker, that does fluctuate quite often, but we are in and around the 16,000, but I can get the exact numbers for the members. I'm sure they've got lots of questions coming up in supplemental estimates tomorrow, and I'll be happy to provide them to them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Meili:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently the minister briefly acknowledged that there was a problem, acknowledged increases in poverty, acknowledged the worsening of mental health and addictions problem here in Saskatchewan. But now,

Mr. Speaker, he appears to be back to the line that everything's just fine.

But the greater utilization and greater costs don't lie, Mr. Speaker. The austerity approach has created worsened economic performance and increased public costs. Will the Premier acknowledge that this approach is leading to higher levels of poverty, of illness, and crime, and clearly lay out his plan to change course for the good of Saskatchewan people?

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

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's not what I said at all when I was out in the rotunda, Mr. Speaker. What I was saying is, they were talking about child and family regulations changing and the legislation changing; and I said that we are dealing with a different problem in Saskatchewan, with rural crime and other extenuating circumstances like economic headwinds that are putting pressure on our system, Mr. Speaker.

What I said is, we were dealing with things differently in 2018 than when this started in 2012, Mr. Speaker. This continually evolves, and we will continue to work with our stakeholders to make sure that we have the proper legislation to make sure that every child in this province is safe. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Access to Health Care and Transportation for Northerners With Disabilities

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Despite all odds, our northern communities can manage high food costs, resource industry layoffs, huge power bills, and a lack of transportation options. However, Mr. Speaker, one issue that continues to challenge northerners is a lack of access to health care services, including mental health supports.

This lack of support also extends to those living with disabilities. We are joined here today by Gary Tinker from Pinehouse. Gary has cerebral palsy and has been fighting to improve the lives of northerners with disabilities for decades.

Does the minister agree that people with disabilities should be granted fair access to care to meet their needs regardless of where they live?

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

**Hon. Mr. Merriman:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And again, welcome, Gary, to his Legislative Assembly.

[14:15]

Mr. Speaker, I can talk about some of the things that we have done in northern Saskatchewan, and everybody with a disability has to be treated equally across our province, Mr. Speaker. We just announced in this year's budget that we had \$250,000 for a group home in La Ronge for five adults, Mr. Speaker. We've also funded 25 community-based organizations that serve northern communities, providing day programming, group homes, and other services. Mr. Speaker, we've also increased funding to \$30 million for CLSD [community living service delivery] and CBOs

[community-based organization], Mr. Speaker. And the number of group homes with supportive living spaces in the North with CBOs has increased by 197. That's 73 per cent. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Belanger:** — In 1989, Mr. Speaker, Gary completed a 650-kilometre walk on crutches to raise awareness about the lack of services for people with disabilities in the North. Almost 30 years later, things are getting better because Gary's now hitchhiking to raise awareness about people with disabilities in the North because the Sask Party cut disability funding to his organization and scrapped STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company].

And while the minister has pointed to a number of start-offs as some kind of half measure to replace STC, we know those routes don't extend into the North and don't fully accommodate people with disabilities. What does the minister have to say to disability advocates like Gary who sees this government's action as nothing short of a violation of their constitutional and human rights?

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

**Hon. Mr. Hargrave:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll be very, very pleased to answer that, Mr. Speaker. The federal government announced the other day, Mr. Speaker, that they have some funding. I talked to the federal minister in relation with that and said, would he switch that over to more help people with disabilities? And they are looking at that.

So, Mr. Speaker, this province, as I mentioned to the federal minister, we're not interested in getting into a provincial bus system any longer, Mr. Speaker. No province in the country has a provincial bus system, and this government is not interested in getting another provincial bus system.

There's many organizations, many companies that have started transportation systems throughout the province, Mr. Speaker. There's one in from La Ronge down to Prince Albert and Saskatoon that's working very effectively, Mr. Speaker. There's several going across the province, Mr. Speaker. One of the complaints that they have had is that nobody was using them, Mr. Speaker. But I've been working on it very, very diligently, you know, continue to work on it, Mr. Speaker, and we'll see how it works out. Thank you.

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

#### People With Disabilities in the Public Service

**Mr. Forbes:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. But six months ago the Premier publicly committed to an initiative over the summer to address this government's dismal record of hiring and retaining public servants who live with disabilities. The numbers not only told us that people with disabilities represented only 2.1 per cent of Saskatchewan's public service, a far cry from the government's targets of 12.4 per cent, but also that representation has been getting worse, dropping by 27 per cent since 2014.

Now the Premier recognized the problem and said his government needed to do better. We agree, Mr. Speaker. Can the Premier update this House on the findings of the Public Service Commission's summer review and table the latest numbers on how many people with disabilities are working in the public service today?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for his question. As he indicates, it's very important for us within the Public Service Commission to ensure that we're representative of people in the province, those visible minorities, those with disabilities. And we have been working really hard. We have set goals and those goals are somewhat difficult to achieve, but certainly we've made that a priority.

And to answer the member opposite's question, we do have some very positive news. Numbers are moving in the right direction, especially with visible minorities. Numbers are up substantially from where they were last year, as I indicated to the member during estimates last year. And we certainly will continue to make it priority. We want the Public Service Commission to be as reflective as it can be of the great people of Saskatchewan. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Forbes:** — Now, Mr. Speaker, if there was in fact an initiative, as the Premier committed, those numbers should be readily available. So we would ask the minister to in fact table those numbers. Please do so.

We appreciate the effort to make sure no one was missed. A meaningful commitment to do better also includes targeted initiatives to recruit, retain, and accommodate more people living with disabilities into government. These are invaluable perspectives that have a potential to enlighten us all.

If this government wants to encourage inclusion of those with disabilities in workplaces across the province, it will take leadership right from the top. What new strategies will this government be implementing to start moving these numbers in the right direction and better represent those across our province living with disabilities in government?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you very much again for the question. And I think all of us in this Chamber are committed to ensuring that our public service is representative of people in the province and those that have disabilities and make that known to their employer. Certainly that has been a priority.

I was just informed of some of the numbers very, very recently, and I'd be happy to share those numbers as we're able to with the members opposite. But the goal remains to ensure that we make this a priority, that we have diversity within the public service, and that we hire the very best individuals to make sure that, you know, we're using taxpayers' dollars to hire these individuals to make sure that it is money well spent.

So we will work together, as I indicated to the member opposite, again last year in estimates, that if they have any ideas we're very willing to take those ideas and work on it. But again it is a priority. It's the Premier's priority. It's this government's priority. It's this minister's priority, and it will continue to be so.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

### Workplace Fatalities in Saskatchewan

**Mr. McCall:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister Responsible for Labour and Workplace Safety. By the end of September of this year the number of workplace fatalities and workers' deaths had reached 40. It's an alarming number, Mr. Speaker, and it's up significantly over recent years and should be a cause for concern for us all. To the minister: what is the number of worker fatalities as of today?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Thank you for the question, Mr. Speaker. We have an unacceptably high number of injuries in our province and an unacceptably high number of fatalities in our province. Most of the years in the previous 10 years, the number has dropped and dropped fairly steadily, as it has across Canada. This year our province and a number of other provinces have had an upward spike; I don't have an answer as to why that's happened. But currently we have 45 fatality claims in our province.

As of August 31st, we had 37 fatality claims. I've got a breakdown as of that date: 24 per cent were related to motor vehicle accidents; 21.6 were a result of acute injuries; 43 per cent were related to occupational diseases. Mr. Speaker, it's unacceptable. It's something the people at occupational health and safety are working on. We've increased the number of occupational health and safety officers. We've increased budgets in that ministry. And, Mr. Speaker, we want to see that the numbers go back down rather than going up.

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

**Mr. McCall:** — I thank the minister for that answer. In the face of this crisis, Mr. Speaker, Lori Johb, the president of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, is calling for an emergency meeting of this government, the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, and relevant players to devise a comprehensive worker fatalities crisis strategy. I know that this invitation has been extended to the minister. Will his answer be yes?

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

**Hon. Mr. Morgan:** — Mr. Speaker, I met with Lori Johb last week, had discussions with her about our unacceptably high injury rate. As a matter of fact, we talked about a number of things, and I raised that specifically with her as something that was of incredible importance to this government.

Mr. Speaker, these are some things that we have done. We have 63 OHS [occupational health and safety] officers. We've increased the fines. Fines for a corporation in our province have gone up from 500,000 to a maximum of 1.5 million. Individuals,

the maximum fine has gone up to 300,000 from 120,000. We have the highest maximum fines in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, the previous government didn't increase fines. We want to work with industry. We want to find best courses, best practices for training, best practices for educating our workers, and do everything we can to do it. And I'd be pleased to meet with the Federation of Labour, the opposition, or anyone else to discuss the matter further, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Move to a Single Provincial Archives Office

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, the Central Services minister has been awfully busy this year. Whether it's evicting peaceful protesters or taking control of the board of Wascana Park, the minister has had his fair share of questionable decisions.

On top of that, we now know that the minister is looking to make closures to the very office that records these kinds of historical decisions. Mr. Speaker, the minister has decided that the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan will close its Saskatoon office next month and move its entire Saskatoon collection, long housed on the University of Saskatchewan campus, to Regina. My question to the minister: how does this serve the best interests of the public and does he really think this is the right choice to preserve Saskatchewan history?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The Provincial Archives are committed to serving the public and the research community in this province, province wide. The Provincial Archives are consolidating their office and records storage sites into one location in Regina. Saskatchewan is the only jurisdiction in Canada other than Quebec that's been offering more than one location for the delivery of the services. All options have been considered for the delivery of the services, including distance research, increased digitization of records as well as access and, well, development. A single location provides an opportunity for better protection of the records, increased storage capacity, while reducing the lease costs by \$570,000 in '20-21. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Ms. Sproule:** — Mr. Speaker, experts and academics are very concerned. The Saskatoon office has existed as an important part of the university's research network since the Archives Board was created in 1945. Many people have signed an open letter to the minister, noting that the closure of the Saskatoon office will make it even more difficult for researchers to access necessary records. The office in Saskatoon has served academics, genealogists, local historians for decades and that service will be lost if this move to Regina takes place. Such a closure would be a loss for students, faculty, and the general public at the University of Saskatchewan. Does the minister really think that closing offices and reducing staff hours will help preserve our history?

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

**Hon. Mr. Cheveldayoff:** — Thank you very much for the question. And yes indeed, this decision also addresses current issues with water, pest, and rodent infiltration as well as the lack of environmental and security controls, including fire protection. Currently the University of Saskatchewan advised of its intention to raise the rates to market-competitive rates.

Mr. Speaker, I'd offer a couple of quotes for the members opposite to listen to. From Linda McIntyre, the Provincial Archivist:

A single location, a full consolidation, it presents an opportunity to provide better protection to legacy records and to restore the capacity. We're full at all sites right now.

This is a good decision. Again, historian and author Merle Massie:

Will . . . [we] miss having an archive close? Absolutely. Do I think in the long term . . . [that my] short-term loss or even the loss of it locally will in the end be a good thing? Yes — if they do it properly.

Mr. Speaker, I can assure members opposite this government will do it properly. Thank you.

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

#### Access to Medical Care in the North

**Ms. Mowat:** — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births is 5.8. The national average is 4.5. This is 29 per cent higher than the national average, and that's unacceptable. Saskatchewan babies and mothers should have the same access to care and the same or better level of health outcomes as elsewhere in this country.

This government has no plan to address this issue. Recently the minister indicated that mothers from northern Saskatchewan should plan their labour to allow for travel to Prince Albert or Saskatoon. The minister just doesn't get it. What is this government's plan to address the unacceptably high infant mortality rate? And what's the plan to ensure that mothers in the North will have timely access to obstetric care?

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

**Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member opposite mustn't have been listening to my full answer last week, or it might have been the week before. The option is also . . . The Pas is very nearby, about 100-and-some-odd kilometres from Flin Flon for the interim, for those that would choose that service, Mr. Speaker. The providers are speaking with the different mothers to see what would best suit their different needs, Mr. Speaker.

[14:30]

So The Pas is one answer for them, as well as Prince Albert if they should so wish, Mr. Speaker. The professionals are asking those mothers to make plans ahead of time for those services, Mr.

Speaker. Also I did point out last week that we've been told by the minister in Manitoba that they feel confident that should an emergency arise, they could handle the emergency, Mr. Speaker. But they are planning to reinstate those services as soon as they can put safe and sustainable services in place with the proper professionals.

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

**Ms. Mowat:** — Mr. Speaker, in the financial update we learned that this government is going to have to spend millions more because more people are getting sick. Access to medical care is important, but it is only one element that leads to good health. Housing, mental health supports, and access to good-paying jobs are key determinants of people's health outcomes. The evidence is clear that this government seems to only pay lip service to this evidence. They cut the rental housing supplement. They continue to provide inadequate mental health supports. And they don't believe that Saskatchewan workers deserve a \$15 minimum wage until 2052.

Is it any surprise that more people are getting sick as a result of this government's austerity approach? When will this government stop making choices that create conditions that contribute to our province's unacceptably high infant mortality rate?

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

**Hon. Mr. Ottenbreit:** — Mr. Speaker, when we look at this government's investment in northern health, I think the record speaks for itself. Is there challenges from time to time? Absolutely. If we look across the country, we find that any area that has rural and remote areas have trouble attracting professionals from time to time. This province actually has a very good record. That's why we've offered the Minister of Health in Manitoba any expertise we can offer to help them maybe attract and retain some of their professionals, Mr. Speaker. When we look at this government's record, a 61 per cent increase in our health care budget. Some of the areas in the North, up to 83 per cent increase with a 13 per cent increase in population, Mr. Speaker.

We've been investing heavily in the North. We've expanded our training opportunities to better attract some of those professionals to the North, so they see that as a career opportunity. We've invested heavily in remote-presence technology to make sure that those patients have better access to care if they're not able to travel, Mr. Speaker. We've increased the funding for transportation and other initiatives, Mr. Speaker. So we're looking at improving over time, but we're happy with our record.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill No. 163 — *The Legal Profession Amendment Act, 2018***

**The Speaker:** — I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** — Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill No. 163, *The Legal Profession Amendment Act, 2018* be now introduced and

read a first time.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the Government House Leader that Bill No. 163 be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried.

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

**The Speaker:** — When shall this bill be read a second time? I recognize the Government House Leader.

**Hon. Mr. Brkich:** — Next sitting of the Assembly.

**The Speaker:** — Next sitting.

#### TABLING OF REPORTS

**The Speaker:** — Just before orders of the day, pursuant to section 80(3) of *The Legislative Assembly Act, 2007*, in accordance with the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan*, I now table Legislative Library annual report for the period of April 1st, 2017 to March 31st, 2018.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### GOVERNMENT ORDERS

#### SECOND READINGS

**Bill No. 162 — *The Irrigation Act, 2018***

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

**Hon. Mr. Marit:** — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, at the end of my remarks I will move the second reading of *The Irrigation Act, 2018*. Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes the potential for the irrigation sector to contribute more to the overall agriculture sector and the prosperity of the province.

Having access to water allows our farmers to protect their yields by adding the right amount of water at the right time. It also allows them to diversify into higher value crops. In turn, these benefits put more profit into irrigators' pockets and support communities by attracting agribusiness and investment. Such irrigation opportunities align with our government's vision for a profitable and sustainable economy.

Mr. Speaker, to help the irrigation sector get to where it needs to be, government is responsible for developing modern and relevant legislation. In this case the legislation is *The Irrigation Act*. *The Irrigation Act* has not overcome significant revisions since 1996. In the two decades since, agriculture has seen significant advancements.

Mr. Speaker, the intent of the Act is the same now as it was in 1996. The Act is about government continuing to promote, develop, and sustain irrigation with our farmers and industry

partners.

Our updates to the Act fall into four main areas. First, the Act will strengthen government's ability to transfer government-owned irrigation assets to those that benefit the most from the irrigation, the irrigation districts. The current Act has sufficient but minimal provisions regarding the transfer of assets to irrigation districts. As such, the new Act will allow government to set terms and conditions around asset transfers. For example, we will clarify that land associated with the assets can also be transferred. We are also proposing restricting subsequent transfer of assets to other private entities if not deemed to be in the best interest of the public.

Second, we are also strengthening the language around the responsibility of irrigation districts to maintain, replace, and decommission their irrigation works. Irrigation districts need to collect sufficient funds to maintain these valuable assets for future generations. During our consultation with industry, it was clear that some irrigation districts do not see owning assets as their responsibility. We appreciate this perspective. To help with this transition, we have made changes to the Act that empower the irrigation districts. One example is to strengthen our irrigation districts' ability to enter into agreements with other persons for non-irrigation purposes as a way of diversifying and attract investment.

Irrigation districts also expressed their concern with accepting increased liabilities that are associated with the irrigation assets. In response, we will provide improved immunity and liability protection. The irrigation works will also remain exempt from taxes.

Third, we will update and clarify the respective roles of government ministries and agencies in *The Irrigation Act* that have changed since 1996. This includes Saskatchewan Water Corporation, the Water Security Agency, and the Ministry of Agriculture.

We will increase the fines for contravention of the Act from 5,000 to \$100,000 to deter non-compliance and more accurately reflect the cost of damages. We will also ensure that the Irrigation Crop Diversification Corporation, a provincial industry group, can collect its levies from non-district irrigators and continue their applied research and demonstration of irrigation crops.

Finally, we are reducing unnecessary government red tape that is administratively burdensome to both the irrigation districts and industry groups. This includes the removal of legal district boundaries, the requirement for district members to pay fees for district reports, allowing the districts to set their fiscal year, more flexibility in districts' audit schedule, more time for districts to complete their annual reports, allowing districts to post reports to websites, and allowing districts to amend their bylaws without government consent.

The changes to the Act reflect the changing mindset for both irrigators and government. As such, the Ministry of Agriculture has conducted a number of consultations with irrigators, both independent and those representing irrigation districts; the two irrigation associations, the Irrigation Crop Diversification Corporation and the Saskatchewan Irrigation Projects Association. Interested agencies included the Water Security

Agency, and other stakeholders included municipal councillors and businesses.

In general, the two irrigation industry associations that represent irrigators across the province are supportive of moving forward with the new Act. We have appreciated their comments and have made adjustments they have suggested.

The largest irrigation district, the South Saskatchewan River irrigation district, has provided questions and comments about the new Act. They have indicated that they need infrastructure funding prior to agreeing to asset transfer. We appreciate and recognize the South Saskatchewan River Irrigation District's concerns and have been working to achieve a mutually agreeable transfer of assets since 2012. For example, we have developed a cost-shared formula program to support them and the other four irrigation districts identified for asset transfer. This program will help ensure they have the funds to sustain their infrastructure and remain financially viable. We believe the new Act will benefit all of our irrigation districts and support their continued success for future generations.

To summarize, Mr. Speaker, modernizing *The Irrigation Act* will help drive Saskatchewan toward our vision of a sustainable and profitable irrigation industry. It will help reduce financial risk to the public and to government by promoting financial stability for irrigation districts and managing risk for both government and irrigation districts. It will also allow us to focus our government resources on what we do best — provide oversight of the legislation and build the capacity of Saskatchewan irrigators through targeted programming and services.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move that *The Irrigation Act, 2018* be read a second time. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 162 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Athabasca.

**Mr. Belanger:** — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I just wanted to point out from the official opposition that this bill is going to garner a lot of our attention. Because there is so much at stake when we talk about *The Irrigation Act* itself, but more so how we interact with our water management concept throughout the province of Saskatchewan.

The official opposition has long maintained that it is time for Saskatchewan to embark on a massive water management strategy that includes many, many partners and many, many parts and pieces of what Saskatchewan is today. No question in our minds, Mr. Speaker, that the agricultural community, the agricultural economy is the mainstay, the backbone of our provincial economy overall. So we must find the means in which we would protect and ensure that the growers of our province — the food basket of the world, as we're often referred to — continue having access to fresh, clean water.

This irrigation Act is part and parcel of the solution for many parts and many aspects of being government to provide that lasting solution to the agricultural community. We all know that there is much to balance when we look at the resource base of the province of Saskatchewan. We're also very familiar with the illegal agricultural drainage problem that the provincial

government currently is ignoring and not really responding to, Mr. Speaker.

So as we add another player, *The Irrigation Act, 2018* and the irrigators of the province of Saskatchewan, we must ensure that it is lock-stepped with other initiatives to make sure that we have a seamless, interactive, and very efficient water management system throughout the entire province.

This is something that is really in the back of many people's minds is, how do we begin to work on a lasting solution for generations to come? There's no question in our minds, Mr. Speaker, from the official opposition, that that work must continue. But in order for us to be effective on water management, as this bill implies another player to be part of the solution, we must all guide ourselves to one goal, Mr. Speaker, and that is to ensure that we're all rowing in the same direction, so to speak, when it comes to management of our water because we're finding that on many occasions . . . A good example I would use is the illegal drainage on agricultural lands problem. This is an issue that just simply won't go away, Mr. Speaker. And as I listen to the minister speak about the powers being inferred upon an irrigation district, Mr. Speaker, does that complement all of our efforts or does it create some challenges for all of our efforts? We must undertake an assessment of that to see how it fits in the overall water management plan that Saskatchewan definitively needs, Mr. Speaker.

I would also point out the fact that you look at the province overall, there's some areas of the province and in particular the Southeast where there is just a massive problem with flooding, Mr. Speaker. And we see that the illegal agricultural lands drainage problem isn't helping the matter any because people will continue to drain water from their lands. And we're not talking a simple shovel and pick job, Mr. Speaker. People are using massive excavators and very large equipment to drain water from their lands and this is creating more and more problems for communities, for RMs [rural municipality], for farmers, and for families further down the path where the water is being diverted to.

[14:45]

Then you look at the central west part of the province and there you see on many occasions that we have a severe drought problem, Mr. Speaker. So in one area of Saskatchewan we have massive water problems. On the other area we have drought problems and then you look at the rotating and effect of climate change, the effect it has on different areas of the province.

So you can see water management, freshwater management from our perspective is something that has to have our utmost attention. And of course a great priority in how we interweave different players that are coming on board like *The Irrigation Act* as being described by the minister today, how does that all add to the solution overall? This is why it's important, Mr. Speaker, again from the official opposition's perspective, is that we must make sure that we're highly interactive with all parts of the effort to look towards a final solution towards our water management crisis in the province of Saskatchewan. Now I also find it strange that the Minister of Agriculture is proposing this particular Act. And how is his interaction with the Minister of the Environment? How is his interaction towards the Minister of the Economy?

This is exactly our point, Mr. Speaker, is that as you look at water management strategy overall, it has the most significant opportunity yet poses the greatest threat to our agricultural base. So there should be a high, high level of interaction between all departments within the Saskatchewan Party government. And we have found evidence, Mr. Speaker, that they really can't see beyond the stovepipe mentality of their departments, that that interaction is not occurring.

And this is why it's important, Mr. Speaker, that the official opposition points this out to the people of Saskatchewan, that we must do better and we must place a heavy priority on how we manage our water. Because, Mr. Speaker, as we mentioned, we boast and we brag about our great effort, and we are very proud of the effort of Saskatchewan being viewed as one of the primary players in being the breadbasket of the world, Mr. Speaker, the food basket of the world. So in order for us to retain that status and that reputation and that well-deserved crown, Mr. Speaker, we must ensure that water management is of our utmost priority, and that this shouldn't be relegated down to regional irrigation projects or an initiative here and there by various parts of the current government, Mr. Speaker.

We must make sure that we're highly interactive, highly intelligent in our approach and, Mr. Speaker, again all highly motivated to seek one main objective, and that is to build a fair and an equitable and a very environmentally conscious water management system, Mr. Speaker. Because our producers deserve it, our economy needs it, and certainly as I pointed out time and time again, our grandchildren deserve to have that gift afforded to them, in a sense that they needn't worry about these challenges in the future.

So again, Mr. Speaker, as I look at the bill, it has many moving parts. It's part of a larger challenge that we face as a province, Mr. Speaker. And it's one problem in making sure we have adequate water supply. Then we've got a secondary problem making sure we're getting our resources to market. And on both efforts, Mr. Speaker, as this bill would dictate, the Saskatchewan Party again get a big, fat F in their efforts to try and figure out the solutions to what's ailing our province, Mr. Speaker.

And this is yet another example of how they've come down to nitpicking on certain parts of their legislative agendas and doing a little bit of tweaking, if you will, of their rules around *The Irrigation Act*, Mr. Speaker. So we must do better, we must do more, and we must all strive to achieve that one objective as I spoke about earlier. So on that note we have a lot more to say about this particular bill, and I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 162, *The Irrigation Act, 2018*.

**The Speaker:** — The member's moved to adjourn debate. 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. So that the committees may continue the good work today, I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

**Some Hon. Members:** — Agreed.

**The Speaker:** — Carried. This Assembly now stands adjourned until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:50.]





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