



THIRD SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
AND
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)
Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Randy Weekes
Speaker



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
3rd Session — 29th Legislature

Lieutenant Governor — His Honour the Honourable Russ Mirasty, S.O.M., M.S.M.

Speaker — Hon. Randy Weekes

Premier — Hon. Scott Moe

Leader of the Opposition — Carla Beck

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Bonk, Steven — Moosomin (SP)

Bowes, Jennifer — Saskatoon University (NDP)

Bradshaw, Fred — Carrot River Valley (SP)

Buckingham, David — Saskatoon Westview (SP)

Carr, Hon. Lori — Estevan (SP)

Cheveldayoff, Ken — Saskatoon Willowgrove (SP)

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Eyre, Hon. Bronwyn — Saskatoon Stonebridge-Dakota (SP)

Fiaz, Muhammad — Regina Pasqua (SP)

Francis, Ken — Kindersley (SP)

Friesen, Marv — Saskatoon Riversdale (SP)

Goudy, Todd — Melfort (SP)

Grewal, Gary — Regina Northeast (SP)

Hargrave, Joe — Prince Albert Carlton (SP)

Harpauer, Hon. Donna — Humboldt-Watrous (SP)

Harrison, Daryl — Cannington (SP)

Harrison, Hon. Jeremy — Meadow Lake (SP)

Hindley, Hon. Everett — Swift Current (SP)

Jenson, Terry — Martensville-Warman (SP)

Kaeding, Warren — Melville-Saltcoats (SP)

Keisig, Travis — Last Mountain-Touchwood (SP)

Kirsch, Delbert — Batoche (SP)

Lambert, Lisa — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)

Lawrence, Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)

Lemaigre, Jim — Athabasca (SP)

Love, Matt — Saskatoon Eastview (NDP)

Makowsky, Hon. Gene — Regina Gardiner Park (SP)

Marit, Hon. David — Wood River (SP)

McLeod, Hon. Tim — Moose Jaw North (SP)

McMorris, Hon. Don — Indian Head-Milestone (SP)

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

Meyers, Derek — Regina Walsh Acres (SP)

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

Morgan, Hon. Don — Saskatoon Southeast (SP)

Mowat, Vicki — Saskatoon Fairview (NDP)

Nerlien, Hugh — Kelvington-Wadena (SP)

Nippi-Albright, Betty — Saskatoon Centre (NDP)

Ottenbreit, Greg — Yorkton (SP)

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

Ritchie, Erika — Saskatoon Nutana (NDP)

Ross, Alana — Prince Albert Northcote (SP)

Ross, Hon. Laura — Regina Rochdale (SP)

Sarauer, Nicole — Regina Douglas Park (NDP)

Skoropad, Hon. Dana — Arm River (SP)

Steele, Doug — Cypress Hills (SP)

Stewart, Lyle — Lumsden-Morse (SP)

Teed, Nathaniel — Saskatoon Meewasin (NDP)

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

Vermette, Doyle — Cumberland (NDP)

Weekes, Hon. Randy — Biggar-Sask Valley (SP)

Wilson, Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (Ind.)

Wotherspoon, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)

Wyant, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)

Young, Aleana — Regina University (NDP)

Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

Vacant — Regina Coronation Park

Standings

Government Caucus: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 47; Opposition Caucus: New Democratic Party (NDP) — 12;

Independent: Saskatchewan United Party (Ind.) — 1; Vacant — 1

Clerks-at-the-Table

Clerk — Iris Lang

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

Deputy Clerk — Kathy Burianyk

Principal Clerk — Robert Park

Sergeant-at-Arms — Lyall Frederiksen

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CONTENTS

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Ruling on a Point of Order

The Speaker.....	3243
Wotherspoon	3243
Harrison, J.....	3243

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Tell	3243
Keisig	3243
Merriman	3243
Mowat	3244

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Nippi-Albright.....	3244
Friesen	3244
Mowat	3244
Teed.....	3244
Bowes	3245
Ritchie.....	3245

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

International Women's Day

Bowes	3245
Young, C.....	3245

Indigenous Women's Collective

Nippi-Albright.....	3246
---------------------	------

Métis Nation Hosts Multicultural Celebration

Nerlien	3246
---------------	------

University of Saskatchewan College of Medicine Expands Regina-Based Training

McLeod	3246
--------------	------

Premier's Trade Mission to India

Grewal	3246
--------------	------

Saskatchewan Leading in Export Growth

Jenson	3247
--------------	------

QUESTION PERIOD

Provision of Health Care for Expectant Women

Mowat	3247
Hindley.....	3247

Management of the Provincial Economy

Mowat	3248
Harpauer	3248

Recruitment and Employment of Newcomers

Ritchie	3248
Harrison, J.....	3248

Access to Reproductive Health Services

Bowes	3249
Merriman	3249

Funding for Child Care

Conway	3249
Duncan.....	3250

Funding for Second-Stage Shelters

Sarauer	3250
Eyre	3250

Interpersonal Violence Rates

Sarauer	3251
Eyre	3251

False Claims of Indigenous Ancestry

Nippi-Albright.....	3251
Wyant.....	3252

POINT OF ORDER

Harrison, J.....	3252
Bowes	3252
Sarauer	3252
The Speaker.....	3252

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Expansion of Rural Fibre Initiative

Morgan3252

Wotherspoon3253

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on the Economy

Young, C.3253

Marit3253

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 101 — *The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 2022*

Wotherspoon3254

Carr (referral to Human Services Committee)3254

Bill No. 103 — *The Accessible Saskatchewan Act*

Wotherspoon3254

Bill No. 104 — *The Local Improvements Amendment Act, 2022*

Ritchie3255

Carr (referral to Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice Committee)3255

Bill No. 105 — *The Local Government Election Amendment Act, 2022*

Ritchie3255

Carr (referral to Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice Committee)3256

Bill No. 106 — *The Police Amendment Act, 2022*

Mowat3256

Bill No. 107 — *The Provincial Protective Services Act*

Teed3257

Bill No. 108 — *The Pension Benefits Amendment Act, 2022*

Conway3257

Bill No. 109 — *The Trespass to Property Amendment Act, 2022 (No. 2)*

Teed3258

Bill No. 116 — *The Plant Health Act*

Teed3259

Bill No. 117 — *The Saskatchewan Firearms Act*

Love3259

Bill No. 118 — *The Warrant Compliance Act*

Love3260

Bill No. 120 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Health Professions) Amendment Act, 2022*

Wotherspoon3260

Harrison, J. (referral to Human Services Committee)3260

Bill No. 122 — *The Saskatchewan Revenue Agency Act*

Love3261

Bill No. 124 — *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2022*

Loi modificative de 2022 sur la réglementation des boissons alcoolisées et des jeux de hasard

Mowat3261

Bill No. 125 — *The Cannabis Control (Saskatchewan) Amendment Act, 2022*

Love3261

Bill No. 126 — *The Summary Offences Procedure Amendment Act, 2022*

Wotherspoon3262

[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Ruling on a Point of Order

The Speaker: — Yesterday, March 7th, 2023 the Opposition House Leader raised a point of order regarding multiple infractions and I committed to reviewing the record. I have done so and am ready to make my ruling.

In her point of order, she stated that the Premier had called the member from Regina Rosemont “the member from Regina whatever.” In reviewing the *Hansard*, I found that the Premier indeed misspoke in referring to the member but immediately corrected himself. I therefore find this point of order not well taken.

The Opposition House Leader went on to state that the Government House Leader had used multiple unparliamentary phrases during question period. In reviewing the record, I found that the Government House Leader did in fact use inflammatory and provocative language.

This Assembly has had multiple rulings relating to disputes over facts, which are expected in the course of debate. However no imputation of intentional falsehood is permissible. This has been at the core of numerous Speakers’ rulings and is well known by the members. In fact I myself have ruled against the use of phrases that include inflammatory language such as “misrepresented” and “disinformation.”

When reviewed as a whole and in context, the Government House Leader’s comments yesterday stray well beyond what is acceptable in this Chamber, as they repeatedly call into question the honesty and integrity of opposition members. As such at the end of my comments, I would ask the Government House Leader to withdraw and apologize for his remarks.

The comment made by the member from Regina Rosemont on page 3228 of *Hansard*, where he stated, “. . . that government actually ripped off nuns, ripped off taxpayers, and are now sticking ratepayers with the bill” was also inflammatory and caused disorder in this Chamber. While I did caution him on his language yesterday, a similar comment by the member from Regina Rosemont was ruled out of order by Speaker Docherty on March 11th, 2020 and again by myself on November 16th, 2022. As this was not the first time that this statement was brought to the member’s attention, at the end of my comments I would ask him to withdraw and apologize for it again, hopefully for the last time.

On another matter, yesterday I asked the Government House Leader to withdraw and apologize for a statement he made during question period. Rather than doing so, the Government House Leader chose to challenge the ruling of the Chair.

The Speaker is charged with maintaining order in the Chamber and preserving the dignity of our Legislative Assembly. To challenge a ruling of the Speaker shows disrespect for fellow

members as well as the very institution in which we serve. I would like to remind members that if they wish at any time to challenge a ruling of the Speaker, they should do so by way of formal motion.

I ask the member from Regina Rosemont to withdraw and apologize.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I withdraw and apologize.

The Speaker: — I ask the Government House Leader to stand and withdraw and apologize.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Mr. Speaker, I withdraw and apologize.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you and to all members of this Assembly, I’d like to introduce to you a group of grade 4 students — 24 of them actually — from W.S. Hawrylak School in the west gallery. I so look forward to meeting with you later and answering your questions. And hopefully I am able to walk down to you to get my photograph taken with you. Anyway I’d like all members to join me in welcoming them to their Assembly. Thank you.

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

Mr. Keisig: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I would like to introduce sitting in your gallery, Sheldon Olech. He is a member of the International Union of Elevator Constructors Local 102. He works at Regina Elevator service. We had a good discussion on issues facing the industry this morning, and it was a very productive conversation, Mr. Speaker. He is also a recipient of the Smartest Radio Listener award, Mr. Speaker, a popular radio program that the Leader of the Opposition was on this morning.

Like many of my generation, Mr. Speaker, he left Saskatchewan in the ’90s for Alberta for greener pastures, but he came back 10 years ago and we are very happy to have him. So please join me in welcoming Sheldon to this, his Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Seated in the west gallery, I’d like to welcome former mayor Michael Fougere, who is the current CEO [chief executive officer] of the pharmacy association, to his Assembly.

Pharmacists are among one of the far-reaching health care providers in our province. They touch every community. I’ve had the opportunity, myself and the Minister of Rural and Remote Health, to work with Mr. Fougere and all of his counterparts across the province on exciting opportunities like expansion of

scope, Mr. Speaker, but also making sure that pharmacists have all the tools.

And I want to thank the pharmacists, through Mr. Fougere, for all that they did through us through the pandemic and distribution of vaccines. So I'd like to welcome him to his Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join in with the Minister of Health in welcoming Mr. Fougere back to his legislature, and echo his comments around the thanks to the pharmacists for the work they did during the pandemic and continue to do as vital members of the health care team. So thank you, and thank you for coming today.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to present the following petition calling for duty-to-consult legislation. The folks who signed this petition wish to bring to your attention the following: the Government of Saskatchewan is currently selling off and offering long 33-year leases on Crown lands that have been used by Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities for ceremony, agriculture, hunting, fishing, trapping, medicines, and recreation; the current process of mailing out notices and hand picking recipients when Crown lands are posted for lease or sale is deeply flawed; without clear duty-to-consult legislation in this province, the Government of Saskatchewan alone is responsible for recognizing when the duty-to-consult is triggered, contributing to a lack of engagement with First Nation and Métis communities with little accountability for the provincial government and often ending in lost court battles.

The first right of refusal needs to be offered to First Nations involved in the TLE [treaty land entitlement] process when Crown lands are being sold or leased; Saskatchewan only has 10 per cent Crown land left; Saskatchewan is a growing province; the unoccupied Crown lands we do have need to be protected for First Nation and Métis peoples to exercise their constitutionally protected treaty rights; the lack of duty-to-consult legislation leaves the taxpayers of this province footing the bill for this government's failed mistakes and losses in the courts.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan . . .

The Speaker: — Petition, we're done. I recognize the member from Saskatoon Riversdale.

Mr. Friesen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention the following: that the NDP [New Democratic Party]-Liberal federal government continues to infringe on the constitutional rights of the province of Saskatchewan and implement policies that are detrimental to our province's

economic well-being; that the commitments and the actions of the federal government have made the control of Saskatchewan resource rights unclear; that an unsupportive federal government will continue to impede Saskatchewan's potential to play a global role in providing resources to the world market.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to call upon the Government of Saskatchewan to implement Saskatchewan-first policies and legislation that will support the development of Saskatchewan as a global supplier of food, fuel, and fertilizer without federal infringement on Saskatchewan's constitutional authority.

The undersigned residents reside in Yorkton, Wadena, Wynyard, and Elfros. I do so present.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly calling for the funding of in vitro fertilization treatments in Saskatchewan. These citizens wish to bring to our attention that one in six couples in Canada experiences infertility; that IVF [in vitro fertilization] treatments are prohibitively expensive for many, with one cycle typically costing at least \$10,000; and that despite the public health care being a right in Canada, there is no government financial support for Saskatchewan couples requiring IVF treatments; that Saskatchewan people's ability to conceive should not depend on their socio-economic status; investing in people determined to grow their families here in Saskatchewan makes good economic sense; and other provinces have created programs that financially assist in providing IVF treatments to those who are struggling to conceive.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan immediately move to cover the financial burden of two rounds of IVF treatments for Saskatchewan people experiencing infertility.

Important every day, Mr. Speaker. Especially important today on International Women's Day. This petition is signed by individuals from Weyburn. I do so present.

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

Mr. Teed: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today on International Women's Day 2023 to present our petition calling for pay equity legislation. This year's theme for International Women's Day is "women supporting women." As an ally in the fight for equity, I rise today to bring voice to this petition.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is one of only four provinces that does not have pay equity legislation. Saskatchewan has one of the highest gender wage gaps in Canada, which is a result of systematic gender discrimination in compensation for work that must be corrected with pay equity legislation.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to introduce pay equity legislation.

The signatories reside in Prince Albert and Regina. The time is now, Mr. Speaker. I do so present.

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

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to stand today to present our petition calling for universal access to birth control. Mr. Speaker, it was one year ago today that the opposition launched this petition. We've brought forward hundreds of signatures from Saskatchewan residents all across the province. We'll continue to do so until this government heeds our call to action.

The undersigned would like to bring to our attention the following points: that Saskatchewan has some of the highest rates of adolescent pregnancy in the entire country — that's youth aged 12 to 20 years old; that cost is one of the biggest barriers to accessing contraceptive birth control in Saskatchewan, especially among adolescents; that having consistent and affordable access to contraceptive options is essential for promoting bodily autonomy, preventing unwanted pregnancy, and saving money on sexual and reproductive health care; that sexual and reproductive health and rights are human rights.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to adopt a policy making no-cost prescription contraceptive available to all Saskatchewan people.

[13:45]

I'll note that BC [British Columbia] has just done so, and I would like Saskatchewan to follow suit and be leaders in this country. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today on International Women's Day to present a petition calling for improved access to midwifery services in Saskatchewan. The undersigned residents wish to bring to your attention that midwifery provides a model of care that is individualized, community centred, and cost-effective. Wait-lists for midwifery care in Saskatchewan are extensive, and many people who wish to access midwifery care services are unable to do so. I can personally attest to the value that midwifery care has provided to my family, and I would like to see other families benefit as well.

According to the Canadian Association of Midwives, 53 per cent of people seeking midwifery care in Saskatoon are turned away due to lengthy wait-lists.

I will read the prayer:

We call on the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to introduce a post-secondary midwifery training program in the province.

And this petition is signed by residents of Saskatoon. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

International Women's Day

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to commemorate International Women's Day. I wish I was standing here today to speak about how much progress has been made towards equality for Saskatchewan women since this day last year, but the truth is that the same injustices that women faced last year persist today.

We still have the highest rates of domestic violence in the entire country, Mr. Speaker, and despite this, that government refuses to fund second-stage shelters. Still they refuse. Even after Colin Thatcher's enraging invitation to this House last year, Mr. Speaker, there's been no action from this government, only hollow, forced apologies from the Sask Party government. That's all they can bother to muster up for Saskatchewan women.

We have one of the highest rates of sexual assault in Canada still. Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit people in Saskatchewan continue to go missing and be murdered at alarming rates. Our province's gender wage gap remains one of the worst in the entire country, Mr. Speaker, and we remain one of the few provinces that has refused to bring in pay equity legislation for women.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan women have been neglected for far too long due to this government's ugly indifference. If they refuse to get the job done for the women of our province, we'll be happy to take their place in 2024.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

Ms. C. Young: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Embrace Equity, this year's focus on International Women's Day. On March 2nd I hosted some wonderful women leaders in my community for a livestream conference organized by the Saskatchewan Science Centre and moderated by our own Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

Guest speakers to this conference were prominent and successful women in our province. We boast the longest-serving female cabinet minister. This province has the first female Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

But I would also like to take this opportunity to recognize and thank the seven amazing women who work in our caucus office. Kim is our comms legend, focused and thorough. Nulee is our social butterfly, bubbly and enthusiastic. Jana is a git-'er-done woman who can solve any problem. Shelby is our champion roper with deep rural roots and is discovering her love of politics.

Priya, the newest member of our team, she's the first person to welcome you when you come in the door, and always with a smile. Last but not least, the leader of our caucus team, affectionately called Boss Lady. She is mighty yet caring and focused. These women come here every day and give it their all. They get us where we need to be, rein us in when they need to, and make our office feel like home.

Today we celebrate the power and potential of women and girls. We recognize their courage, resilience, optimism, and leadership, and mark the progress being made to embrace equity. So to our caucus women and all the women who work in this building on both sides of the House, thank you for all you do each and every day and for your service to the people of Saskatchewan.

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

Indigenous Women's Collective

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker. I'm honoured to rise in this House on International Women's Day to recognize and give thanks to a group I am proud to be part of: the Indigenous Women's Collective. As matriarchs we have been vocal in calling out pretendians. These pretendians are taking space and making decisions while undermining what it means to be an Indigenous person. For those that don't know, pretendians are white people claiming to be Indigenous to further their careers and take up space in influential arenas. There are many in academia, government, and organizations.

These pretendians gain accolades and prestigious positions off the back of Indigenous people and in far too many cases, off Indigenous women. Pretendianism is an act of colonial violence against Indigenous people.

The Indigenous Women's Collective has been vocal and successful in calling universities to rescind honorary doctorate degrees they bestowed on one of the most recognized individuals in this province and in this country — Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond. This pretendian claimed to be a treaty Indian for over 30 years. She fooled many of us in this province and country. She has hurt the Indigenous community in the most horrendous way by claiming our trauma as her own, and by claiming to be a treaty Indian when in fact she was and is a white woman.

I ask all members to join me in thanking the Indigenous Women's Collective for speaking truth. miigwech.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Kelvington-Wadena.

Métis Nation Hosts Multicultural Celebration

Mr. Nerlien: — Mr. Speaker, on February 11th, Métis Eastern Region 2 hosted a very successful event in Porcupine Plain which they titled Unity in Our Community — Breaking Bread Together in Reconciliation. This multicultural celebration showcased Métis, Ukrainian, Filipino, and Norwegian presentations which included food sampling, displays of art, and demonstrations of each culture. Performances of each culture's traditional song and dance were enjoyed by upwards of 400 people who came through the doors during the day.

The event was praised by all attending with everyone being eager to learn how each of these unique cultures represent the past, the present, and the future of Saskatchewan. The representatives from each culture proudly shared their history, answering questions posed along the way.

Mr. Speaker, our provincial motto is "from many peoples, strength." It is part of our provincial coat of arms and represents our open doors throughout our history as we build a stronger province in the nation of Canada. This is not accomplished without challenges, but we can recognize that we are stronger by working together and truly understanding each other.

I'd like to thank regional director Brent Digness and his colleagues for displaying what unity in our community can and should look like, their extraordinary efforts to build awareness of the Métis community and to share conversation about opportunity for all of us in a strong, healthy Saskatchewan. Thank you.

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

University of Saskatchewan College of Medicine Expands Regina-Based Training

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday the ministers of Health and Advanced Education attended a ribbon cutting at the Regina General Hospital to celebrate the USask [University of Saskatchewan] College of Medicine Regina campus expansion. We now have an advanced teaching environment to educate first-year medical students in Regina and to offer a full four-year medical degree in southern Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, the Regina campus also provides high-quality postgraduate residency training in several key areas including family medicine, pediatrics, psychiatry, internal medicine as well as obstetrics and gynecology.

Providing accessible, high-quality medical education to future physicians is important to our government, and by increasing Regina-based education and programming, we are supporting our province's recruitment and retention efforts aimed at those physicians. Each year Saskatchewan is training more doctors right here at home. We offer 100 medical student seats, and this year we expanded medical residency seats through the University of Saskatchewan from 120 to 128. This complements the four-point plan that we announced last September to recruit, train, incentivize, and retain health care workers of all designations.

Mr. Speaker, we know the members opposite won't want to hear it, but this government is working with our partners to ensure that our economic growth results in health care investments that work for everyone. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Premier's Trade Mission to India

Mr. Grewal: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak about our Premier's recent trade mission to India. This was such amazing news that many local Indian newspapers covered it with front page stories, Mr. Speaker. Our Saskatchewan delegation showcased our Smart Seeder equipment. In Pehowa, Haryana,

Northern Farmers Mega FPO purchased and demonstrated the made-in-Saskatchewan ag technology from Clean Seed.

Mr. Speaker, farmers in India have been modernizing their equipment over the last 50 years. In 2022 total exports to India were valued at 1.4 billion. As Saskatchewan is the world's largest supplier of potash, the CEO of Canpotex also joined the Premier on this mission to bring focus on increased sustainability and growing exports to India. The Premier also met with Department of Atomic Energy and IREL [Indian Rare Earths Limited] officials in Mumbai.

As Saskatchewan produces 100 per cent of Canada's uranium, they had engaging discussions on decarbonizing the energy sector and further strengthening collaboration in uranium supplies and critical minerals. Representatives from Saskatchewan Polytechnic also joined the Premier as they look to further expand their presence in the country.

Mr. Speaker, over the past five years through SINP [Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program] nearly 10,500 Indo-Canadian applicants and their families have achieved permanent residency here, while more than 41 per cent of international post-secondary students in Saskatchewan are from India. That's the growth that works for everyone, even globally, Mr. Speaker.

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

Saskatchewan Leading in Export Growth

Mr. Jensen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan companies and our government are telling Saskatchewan's story around the world and those efforts are paying off. Saskatchewan has what the world needs, and the world is looking to Saskatchewan to buy what they need.

New numbers out today from Stats Canada show Saskatchewan is leading the nation in export growth, up a whopping 56 per cent from January 2022 to January of this year. That's on top of a 41 per cent increase in 2022 over 2021. We have the food, fuel, and fertilizer that the world needs and more.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan's exports are up in every category. We're exporting more agricultural products. We're exporting more energy products. We're exporting more minerals and resources. We're exporting more forestry products. We're exporting more farm machinery and parts. We're exporting more electronics, more vehicle and aircraft parts, and more consumer products. And all of those exports abroad, Mr. Speaker, mean more jobs here at home.

That's something to be proud of, and we're going to keep telling that story across the world. Mr. Speaker, more exports, more jobs, more opportunities — that's growth that works for everyone.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Provision of Health Care for Expectant Women

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, this government is failing to deliver on health care across the province. And on International Women's Day, let's take a look at the ways this government has been failing on women's health.

Women in Meadow Lake and area are forced to drive for hours to give birth because there aren't enough staff at the hospital, or, like Kendal Carlberg, give birth on the side of the road. It's completely unacceptable and it's happening under this government's watch.

Why is this government continuing to force women in rural communities to go without the maternal health care they need?

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

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government recognizes it's important for women right across this province to be able to access the health care that they need. That includes expectant mothers, Mr. Speaker, and some of these cases specific to Meadow Lake. We know that obstetrical services have been disrupted from time to time, which is not acceptable, Mr. Speaker. It's why we are working closely with the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority]. I continue to meet with the SHA senior leadership as recently as this morning. The Minister of Health and I did that to talk about the obstetrical services in that community, but also in other communities across this province, Mr. Speaker.

In Meadow Lake the SHA continues to actively recruit and utilize RNs [registered nurse] on a contract basis as well and is actively training and upskilling nurses to ensure that the hospital there is in the best position possible to provide full coverage for expectant mothers in Meadow Lake and the surrounding area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, it's not from time to time. This has been an ongoing issue for years in this community, and that minister needs to sort this out.

It's not only women in Meadow Lake who are being left behind. According to an SHA memo we've received, there's no access to epidurals overnight at the Moose Jaw hospital. I'm not sure why this government can't understand, but women can't decide to come back in the morning to give birth.

Again, this Premier's record of understaffing our health care system and failing to deliver is hurting women and it's hurting families. Does the Premier think that it's acceptable for women in Moose Jaw to go without access to basic care when they are giving birth?

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

[14:00]

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This would be one of the issues that we're addressing with our four-point action plan to recruit, train, incentivize, and retain health care workers right across this province to ensure that we're not only stabilizing but also enhancing the services that are available in all the communities that we have right across Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we know that there are challenges there, and we're committed to addressing those challenges, Mr. Speaker. And we know, as I said previously, that it's important that we provide that service for expectant mothers right across Saskatchewan when it comes to the health care that's available in the communities that is closest to them, Mr. Speaker.

As I said in my previous answer, we are working very closely with senior leadership at the SHA to identify not only the challenges that we face now, but also the challenges that we potentially could face in the future. Mr. Speaker, we know as an example that there is a national shortage of anesthesiologists, and that is creating some pressures as well right here in Saskatchewan. And there are active measures being undertaken right now as we speak to make sure that we're addressing any shortfalls that we are currently experiencing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Management of the Provincial Economy

Ms. Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Auditor was crystal clear that that plan is not enough.

This is a Premier that would rather talk about anyone's record instead of his own, and we saw that yesterday when it comes to the economy. There were a lot of excuses, but zero contrition about the fact that this Premier has the worst economic record in Canada. Dead last in economic growth. Dead last in job growth. When will the government finally face the music and admit that this Premier is failing to deliver for Saskatchewan people?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, although I quite respect the members opposite, I have to say when it comes to the economy I'll take the advice of others over theirs. And let's talk about what the Conference Board of Canada report said, *Bucking the Trend*, on January 18th, 2023. And they had this to say, and I quote:

Saskatchewan's three-year recession has come to an end. We expect the province not only to outpace the national average but to lead all provinces in growth in 2022 and 2023.

Mr. Speaker, we are leading in a number of fronts. That's due to the hard work of the people of Saskatchewan. We have faith in the people of Saskatchewan. And we're going to continue to believe that Saskatchewan is the best province in which to grow the economy which then pays for the services that our citizens deserve. That's growth, Mr. Speaker, that works for everyone.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Leader of the

Opposition.

Ms. Mowat: — No ability to defend their record, Mr. Speaker, because they can only go up from here.

Yesterday the Premier accused us of blaming farmers for his worst-in-the-nation economic record. Mr. Speaker, we've never blamed farmers for anything; that's the MO [modus operandi] of this government. It was this government that blamed farmers for the deficit in 2021 and who penned a letter to APAS [Agricultural Producers Association of Saskatchewan] that basically said that they were too stupid to understand the budget process.

This Premier and this tired, out-of-touch Sask Party government will do anything to distract from their record of failure. When will this Premier quit the games and finally get to work for Saskatchewan people?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I'm not even going to address the alternative facts that that member used in her preamble, but let's just talk about some facts of how our province is doing well.

Mr. Speaker, in merchandise exports, quite frankly we've seen an increase of 56.7 per cent in January of this year over January of last year. In wholesale trade, an increase of 24.1 per cent in December of last year to December of the previous year. In manufacturing sales, an increase of 25.5 per cent. Investment in building construction, Mr. Speaker, an increase of 16.4 per cent.

I don't think those statistics mean that our economy is failing, Mr. Speaker. I think those statistics show that our industry and our people in our province are working very hard to see that we are growing.

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

Recruitment and Employment of Newcomers

Ms. Ritchie: — Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Premier was referencing RBC [Royal Bank of Canada] reports. Well here's a headline: Saskatchewan struggles to put skilled newcomers to work, RBC report shows. And the CEO of the Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce put it well:

The current process and framework is clumsy and cumbersome. It is not doing what we want it to do, which is get skilled and credentialed people into jobs for which they are qualified.

So the question is, when will we see a real plan that helps get people into the jobs they were trained to do, into good jobs with bigger paycheques?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Trade and Export Development.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This question is a prime example why the NDP have no credibility on economic questions.

If they had read the report, Mr. Speaker, not just the headline, they would have realized the report did not even mention Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. But clearly they did not actually read the report. The reality is, is that Saskatchewan is actually leading Canada in having newcomers attached to the labour market, Mr. Speaker. That's a fact.

Our legislation that we passed last year has led the country. We instituted a regulatory regime, Mr. Speaker, that will ensure newcomers have their credentials considered within 20 days — 20 days of making application, Mr. Speaker — and have a very clear path to having those credentials recognized and approved and upgraded if necessary. That is leading the country, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Ritchie: — This tired and out-of-touch government is failing to ensure newcomers can reach their full potential with new jobs. And again, the StatsCan data back that up.

Outside of Atlantic Canada, we have the worst rate of immigrant retention in the country. At this rate, of the people who come here in the last few months, 40 per cent of them will be gone in five years' time. We're losing thousands every year to other provinces, and the Premier won't even admit there's a problem.

What is the plan to keep people here in Saskatchewan for the long term?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Trade and Export Development.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Well, another example, Mr. Speaker, of why these members have zero credibility on the economy. The member continued reading her question, but she couldn't actually read the report, Mr. Speaker, which didn't even reference the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the reality is, is that we have attracted a tremendous number of newcomers to this province, Mr. Speaker. We have grown the provincial nominee program in a very, very significant way.

The other reality that the members opposite continuously forget, they had virtually zero international in-migration to this province when they were in government. Virtually zero, Mr. Speaker. We have a provincial nominee program that is now at 6,000 spots per year.

And I would encourage members to stay tuned because I think we're going to have some more good news on that front going forward, Mr. Speaker. And that has contributed tremendously to the fastest growth in the history of this province that we are seeing right now today.

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

Access to Reproductive Health Services

Ms. Bowes: — Mr. Speaker, last year hundreds of pro-choice

advocates joined us here in this legislature and on the steps outside. They came to demand improved access to abortion services in this province. And sadly, frustratingly, this tired and washed-up Health minister said he was considering changes. But nothing has been done. Nothing at all. He's failed to deliver yet again.

So when will the Health minister actually do something, anything, to make abortion more accessible for women in Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And of course this government does certainly respect women's access to all of their reproductive rights, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, the SHA has identified this as an issue. They are going to work on this, as they do with other policies that need to line up across the province, after the amalgamation of the other districts, the former health regions, Mr. Speaker. They are lining up this amongst other procedures across the province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Bowes: — Mr. Speaker, all talk and no action again from that minister. Mr. Speaker, promises were made; promises were not kept. The Health minister said back in November that he would look at expanding surgical access to Prince Albert, and that he would fix the problems when it comes to the different rules for accessing abortion in Regina and Saskatoon. There has been zero progress on either front. No surprise. Why is this Minister of Health refusing to do anything to expand abortion access across Saskatchewan for the women of our province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And again, I'll reiterate that we do support women's reproductive rights, Mr. Speaker. I ask the opposition . . . This is a serious subject, Mr. Speaker.

Yes, as I identified in my earlier answer, Mr. Speaker, the SHA is looking at this as part of their ongoing process once the health regions were amalgamated to make sure that there was continuity across all of the health regions, Mr. Speaker, into the SHA. The SHA is looking into this and I'll trust they'll do the right thing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Funding for Child Care

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That was a promise that was made in last session, so it's very disappointing to hear the Minister of Health reference changes that were made years ago.

Mr. Speaker, I see the Minister of Education shuffling some papers there. I hope that he's prepared to table the information that he promised yesterday on the provincial and federal breakdown of child care dollars, Mr. Speaker, because

investment in child care leads to more jobs and bigger paycheques for the women of Saskatchewan.

It is only because of federal funding that the cost of child care has come down across the province, Mr. Speaker. Access to care in rural Saskatchewan is a particular problem right now. As the director of a child care centre in Moosomin notes, their wait-list is as long as the spaces they have, and it's getting longer.

Mr. Speaker, federal dollars are nice, but why won't the government of this province put a cent of their own towards greater child care accessibility?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, but in fact we do that, Mr. Speaker. This past year, the budget that is just about to close, Mr. Speaker, \$61.738 million in provincial dollars, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we have signed a number of bilateral agreements: \$17.456 million on the first bilateral agreement from the federal government; \$5 million in a one-time workforce agreement, Mr. Speaker; and of course the \$203 million that we acknowledged from the federal government, Mr. Speaker.

But we know that there is one taxpayer, Mr. Speaker. Provincial residents in Saskatchewan pay federal taxes, Mr. Speaker. We're rescuing those dollars back from Ottawa, Mr. Speaker, to spend here in Saskatchewan.

And I can say, Mr. Speaker, in November we announced child care spaces in, we announced child care spaces in Avonlea, Bruno, Carlyle, Biggar, Cowessess First Nation, Davidson, Indian Head, Langenburg, La Ronge, Lake Lenore, Maple Creek, Midale, Melville, Mossbank, Nipawin, Melfort, Muenster, Shaunavon, Outlook, Oungre, Rosetown, Rockglen, Southey, Sturgis, Swift Current, Warman, Watrous, Yorkton, as well as Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, it's rich to hear the member opposite talk about rescuing federal dollars when they abandoned the equalization lawsuit when their federal counterpart said jump, and they said, how high, Mr. Speaker.

Child care facilities across Saskatchewan struggle keeping the spaces they have open because they can't find and retain staff. We know this, Mr. Speaker. And it's not just Moosomin. It's Shellbrook. It's La Ronge. It's Saskatoon. It's across the province. People want to do the work, but the child care centres don't have the support from this government to better recruit and retain their workers or to create the spaces that families desperately need.

Lower fees are of course welcome, Mr. Speaker, but what's the plan to actually expand access to child care spots in this province and fix these issues?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Mr.

Speaker, so these were just the most recent, the 2,000 spaces that we announced in November, Mr. Speaker. That built upon the additional roughly 3,000 spaces that we announced earlier in last year, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, so we are expanding spaces but we know that we need staff, Mr. Speaker, to be able to staff those spaces, Mr. Speaker. That's why we're providing free tuition for people that want to become early child care educators in the province. That's why we did a wage enhancement last year of up to \$5 per hour, Mr. Speaker, depending on their level of training, Mr. Speaker.

That's why we're offering a number of grants for start-up, Mr. Speaker, child care start-up grants, space development grants, fire and safety and health and nutrition increase, Mr. Speaker, equipment and programs, enhanced accessibility, Mr. Speaker. And that's why we're also concentrating this year on a wage grid, Mr. Speaker. We know that it will take a competitive wage grid to staff these positions. That's why we're working with the sector, Mr. Speaker, on this five-year agreement, Mr. Speaker, and utilizing the federal dollars.

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

[14:15]

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, I heard some numbers earlier, and it's a yes-or-no question. Is the province now contributing fewer dollars towards child care than they were before they signed the federal agreement?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Duncan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No.

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

Funding for Second-Stage Shelters

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, on International Women's Day, on both sides of the aisle we all talk about making life better for Saskatchewan women. Unfortunately, from this old and tired government we hear a lot of nice words but don't see a lot of action.

Saskatchewan had the highest rates of intimate partner violence in the country last year and the year before that and the year before that. With a record like that, you'd expect the government to be scrambling to provide as much support as possible to women fleeing their abusive partners. And yet Saskatchewan is one of only a few provinces in Canada not to provide operational funding to second-stage shelters. Will they commit to providing that funding today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And yes, we will. Mr. Speaker, in the upcoming budget we will be expanding our commitment to second-stage shelters beyond capital funding as we continue to look at ways to address second-stage housing,

how best to do that around the best fits, building on the emergency and other shelter services that we currently have in the province, Mr. Speaker.

Contrary to what the member opposite has suggested, there are of course connections between the capital and operating side of this issue in terms of wraparounds. In January we announced \$3.3 million in new funding to the YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association] for women and families here in Regina, and that builds on current services, Mr. Speaker. We have spent, over the past year, \$24 million invested in interpersonal violence and intervention. Twenty-four million and more to come.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, glad to hear this finally being announced. Advice — just say yes. Take the win. That's fantastic news.

Mr. Speaker, what took so long? Why did we have to wait years and years for this announcement to happen? Why did so many organizations have to struggle, have to fight, fundraise for the money to be able to provide this much-needed service? Why did this take so long?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Previously I've quoted the member for Regina Rosemont who has said that "I think many of the resources that are pouring into the system could actually be rerouted. It wouldn't even be a question of putting more dollars on the table."

But, Mr. Speaker, in the upcoming budget, we will be. And we feel the money we've invested as a government, \$24 million last year alone, has been well spent when it comes to protecting women and people and families at risk. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Interpersonal Violence Rates

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, we have the highest rates of intimate partner violence in the country. We have the highest rates of intimate partner homicide in the country. But we don't stop at that. We also have the second-highest rates of sexual assault in Canada, Mr. Speaker. Stakeholders and those who have been working with sexual violence survivors have been calling on this government for years to come forward with a provincial gender-based violence strategy. Crickets from this government.

When will this government commit to finally creating a provincial gender-based violence strategy so Saskatchewan women can thrive?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Minister for the Status of Women has been very committed

on this front. Certainly the two ministries have been working together, along with the Ministry of Corrections and the Minister of Corrections and Policing.

Mr. Speaker, as we speak, the Minister of the Status of Women is in New York working around just those issues and addressing them. She has been key in co-chairing the Government of Saskatchewan's inter-ministerial committee for interpersonal violence and abuse, representing Saskatchewan to endorse the national action plan to end gender-based violence, with Women and Gender Equity in November.

We've helped establish the victims advocate case review pilot project. We have worked to address missing and murdered Indigenous women in terms of their work, including attending, speaking at a national, federal, provincial, and territorial national round table. And on it goes, Mr. Speaker. The efforts are across the board. They're across ministries, and they're ongoing, literally as we speak.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, as the minister just mentioned, this government is great at attending photo ops. They're great at shaking hands with the feds and taking credit for federal dollars when that comes to Saskatchewan. The national action plan that the minister just mentioned, the federal program, could provide some much-needed resources to Saskatchewan people. When will this government sign on to that national action plan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Mr. Speaker, I reject the premise that there haven't been tangibles in this and related areas. Mr. Speaker, family information liaison unit; missing persons liaison program; supports for families of missing persons; victim services responders; gender-based violence crisis hotline which was recently announced, Mr. Speaker; domestic violence victim services; enhanced residential programs — the list, Mr. Speaker, goes on and on.

Last session we announced 150,000 to Hope Restored Canada to address the terrible reality of human trafficking. And, Mr. Speaker, those efforts by the Minister of the Status of Women to work to put Saskatchewan on the map at those tables in terms of the resources that we can best use in regard to that national strategy are ongoing and they are prime of mind.

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

False Claims of Indigenous Ancestry

Ms. Nippi-Albright: — miigwech, Mr. Speaker. First Nation and Métis women across Saskatchewan have been outraged by the stories of false claims of Indigenous ancestry made by people like Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond and Carrie Bourassa. We all know that those aren't the only two out there. The provincial government, the Crowns, the Saskatchewan Health Authority employ thousands of people but rely only on self-declaration for Indigenous identity. There's no accountability when false claims

are made. The status quo isn't good enough anymore.

When will we see a plan to ensure people taking up spaces for white ... for First Nations and Métis peoples are actually Indigenous?

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

Hon. Mr. Wyant: — Mr. Speaker, Mr. Speaker, we take these concerns very seriously, as the member will know. The University of Saskatchewan took this very seriously when it came to the issue at the university, Mr. Speaker, developed a policy. We know that the University of Regina has taken it very seriously as well, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the recent removal of the doctorate degree, Mr. Speaker.

We share these concerns, Mr. Speaker, and we encourage anyone who has any concerns with respect to the issue to bring them forward, Mr. Speaker, to be dealt with by the appropriate authorities, Mr. Speaker. We are encouraged by the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina for taking bold steps, Mr. Speaker, to identify the issue and taking steps to resolve it.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Point of order.

The Speaker: — Please state your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. A point of order arising out of question period. During question period the member for Saskatoon University referred to a minister as the washed-up minister, clearly out of order under 51(c) and (k). The member may think it's hilarious, laughing from her seat right now, but it's a clear breach of decorum and order in the Chamber. I'd ask her to stand in her place and apologize and withdraw.

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

Ms. Bowes: — Mr. Speaker, I apologize and withdraw for my comments calling the Health minister washed up.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — State your point of order.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During question period today, the Minister of Finance used one of the phrases that you had just deemed unparliamentary as part of the litany of phrases used by the Government House Leader yesterday — "alternative facts." Mr. Speaker, I ask that you find that phrase unparliamentary and ask the minister to apologize and withdraw.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Yeah. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I listened very closely to your ruling and to the phrases

and words that you've cited in that ruling. I did not hear that phrase cited in your ruling. Therefore I think it's safe to presume that that is a parliamentary phrase, but we would defer to ... if the Speaker has further consideration on that particular one.

The Speaker: — I'll take it under advisement.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan].

Expansion of Rural Fibre Initiative

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to update the House on our government's commitment to ensuring that the people of Saskatchewan have access to the highest quality internet services. Access to reliable high-speed internet is no longer a luxury. Broadband has become a critical component of modern society as more and more people are using the internet to work, shop, attend medical appointments, receive an education, and connect with loved ones.

As a government, we support SaskTel and their commitment to being the best at connecting the people of Saskatchewan to the world. That is why this past fall we directed SaskTel to double their investment in the rural fibre initiative to \$200 million.

Through the rural fibre initiative, SaskTel will expand their blazing fast optic network infiNet to an additional 110,000 residents and businesses across more than 130 rural communities. This investment will help further narrow the digital divide in Saskatchewan and contribute to our growth plan goal of tripling the growth of the technology sector.

In addition, upgrading SaskTel's networks will better enable the Crown to deploy future enhancements and keep pace with customers' evolving connectivity needs. Once complete, SaskTel will have invested over \$900 million to bring infiNet service to more than 160 communities, and fibre will reach approximately 80 per cent of homes in Saskatchewan. That's growth, Mr. Speaker, that works for everything.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that earlier this morning, SaskTel released the names of the 48 communities that will receive fibre as part of the rural fibre initiative, phase 6, and they include: Allan, Arcola, Asquith, Avonlea, Bethune, Blaine Lake, Borden, Bruno, Cabri, Central Butte, Clavet, Colonsay, Craik, Cupar, Cut Knife, Duck Lake, Eastend, Eatonia, Edam, Elrose, Hafford, Hanley, Kenosee Lake, Kyle, Lampman, LeRoy, Manitou Beach, Marshall, McLean, Muenster, Naicam, Nokomis, Norquay, Paradise Hill, Pierceland, Ponteix, Qu'Appelle, Radisson, Raymore, Rouleau, Springside, St. Walburg, Sturgis, Turtleford, Vanscoy, Vibank, Vonda, and Yellow Grass.

Mr. Speaker, we expect construction to begin in these communities later this year with all communities included in the rural fibre initiative being connected by the end of March 2025.

The continued expansion of fibre along with the rollout of 5G networks will ensure that Saskatchewan remains one of the most well-connected provinces in Canada. Our government will

continue using the strength of our Crowns to improve the quality of life for people right across this province and to create growth that works for everyone. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to see the minister using some of the language that I've been using around the importance of high-quality internet and connectivity to the province, referencing the fact that it is not a luxury in 2023, that in fact it's an essential service and has the ability to provide transformational opportunity, economic opportunity, quality of life to all of Saskatchewan, importantly rural Saskatchewan, to our small towns and Indigenous communities, to our First Nations, and to our far North, Mr. Speaker. Connectivity is essential, Mr. Speaker.

And SaskTel, that incredible Crown corporation that is so valuable to the people of the province today and tomorrow and well into the future, is instrumental in making that happen, Mr. Speaker, which is why we've been pushing this government to actually treat it as the priority that it is. Not just have the rhetoric, Mr. Speaker, but put their money where their mouth is, Mr. Speaker.

We've seen year after year, Mr. Speaker, that government continue to raid a very large dividend from SaskTel at a time where we should be advancing connectivity as the priority that it needs to be. We see a reduction of that here this year.

That being said, this government continues to raid tens of millions of dollars from SaskTel when we should be making this a priority for all of Saskatchewan. It's not in our economic interest as an entire province, and certainly not in the interests of our small communities and rural communities and First Nations communities and northern communities to have connectivity slow-walked. I know SaskTel itself is leveraging and doing everything they can on this front, but we need a government that's going to treat this as the priority that it needs to be, Mr. Speaker.

[14:30]

So we'll continue to push on this front, Mr. Speaker. And again just recognizing the value of that Crown corporation, Mr. Speaker, that's the Crown corporation built by and for Saskatchewan people, Mr. Speaker, one that the Saskatchewan NDP will always ensure the strength of, the viability of, and a bright future for, Mr. Speaker, that very Crown corporation that that government opposite, the Sask Party government, took a direct run at selling off, Mr. Speaker, just a short few years ago, Mr. Speaker.

When it comes to the importance of connectivity and the strength of SaskTel, there'll never be any question where this side of the House stands and we'll keep fighting for both. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

Standing Committee on the Economy

Ms. C. Young: — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on the Economy to report Bill No. 96, *The Leafcutter Beekeepers Registration Repeal Act* without amendment.

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

Hon. Mr. Marit: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and that the bill be now read the third time.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 96, the leafcutter beekeepers registration repeal Act and that the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

Ms. C. Young: — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on the Economy to report Bill No. 100, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Accretion) Amendment Act, 2022* without amendment.

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

Hon. Mr. Marit: — I request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill and that the bill be now read a third time.

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 100, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Accretion) Amendment Act, 2022* and that the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 101

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Makowsky that **Bill No. 101** — *The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, 2022* be now read

a second time.]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter in with respect to Bill No. 101, *The Child and Family Services Amendment Act* this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, and speak to the priority that children need to become in Saskatchewan and their intersection with the responsibilities of government, Mr. Speaker.

We have a whole lot of failing on this file, Mr. Speaker, by this government, and it's costing young people in very tragic ways, Mr. Speaker. And it costs them often their potential, and it often costs them as well . . . costs our province its potential, when young people aren't able to live up to theirs.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at the failings of things like SIS [Saskatchewan income support], Mr. Speaker, and the callous choices of this government that have impacted and disrupted so many households and so many lives and impacted so many children in such a negative way, Mr. Speaker, it just baffles many that a government can't see the error in their way, the fault in their approach, and fix a problem that right now is causing so many in this province to face tragedy and cruel indignity, Mr. Speaker.

We just see the same with the lack of interest in using the tools at our disposal, the housing assets that we have to address housing and homelessness, and understanding how important that is for young people, you know. And their understanding that if we want young people to be able to live up to their full potential and learn in classrooms, that we need to make sure that there's food in their bellies and a safe, stable roof over their heads, Mr. Speaker. There's so much more that we need to be doing as a province on this front, and it's on this government, who failed to take up the interest on this front but also make matters worse for so many.

We know as well that things like the elimination of the public transportation system in Saskatchewan has really left many children, many families isolated, Mr. Speaker, socially and economically and in more vulnerable situations. It's a lifeline for many people, many families, certainly seniors, certainly children, certainly families, Mr. Speaker.

There's changes in this legislation that I know our critic will speak to and address in committee. I know our effort around these fronts and her efforts are to make sure we take every opportunity to fight for children across this province, for fairness for young people, and to improve legislation like this in their interests.

And I know our critic, the member for Elphinstone-Centre, has held significant consultations, has listened to many. And I invite and encourage anyone who cares about this file — and I know there's many — about children in Saskatchewan to connect directly with that critic, because she's put her heart and soul into this work and is passionate about it and will work to strengthen this legislation.

She'll be representing those concerns, those opportunities to strengthen legislation and to improve services and care for children at committee, Mr. Speaker. And I'll close my remarks at this time.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion

by the member that Bill No. 101 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this bill be committed? I recognize the Deputy House Leader.

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Standing Committee on Human Services.

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

Bill No. 103

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Makowsky that **Bill No. 103 — *The Accessible Saskatchewan Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll rise briefly here on Bill No. 103, Mr. Speaker. This is an important piece of legislation. And certainly there's some changes here that we've called for and that we support, and then there's some opportunities to go further and, you know, really make things better.

I know that our critic, the member for Regina Elphinstone-Centre, has been very active in consultation on this front with broad stakeholders and community and committees across this province. I know she'll be bringing that to this debate, Mr. Speaker, looking for every opportunity to strengthen legislation and accessibility in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

I would, you know, speak to the fact that the shuttering and scrapping and sell-off of STC [Saskatchewan Transportation Company], Mr. Speaker, was a betrayal for many in this province and it had a dramatic impact for families and those across Saskatchewan, already struggling with accessibility. It was a lifeline and instrumental, Mr. Speaker, to connect people to services, to health care, to families, to education and training, and jobs, Mr. Speaker. And the action of this government to scrap and sell off STC has left so many people isolated and it really hurt accessibility in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, there's many other aspects that the critic will be speaking to, but at this point in time, I'll move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 103.

The Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 104

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. McMorris that **Bill No. 104 — *The Local Improvements Amendment Act, 2022*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure for me to be on my feet this afternoon and enter into debate on Bill No. 104, *The Local Improvements Amendment Act*.

The bill is going to be removing detailed definitions of what counts as local improvement projects and also will no longer require the Saskatchewan Municipal Board to approve notices of intention, bylaw, cost determination, lifetime rates, and assessments. And so these constitute essentially streamlining amendments to provide some, I suppose, some expediency to the process.

In my consultations with municipal leaders over the past several months, the things that I've been hearing in regards to that are some concern for the loss of checks and balances that this may create, for the sake of expediency. And so certainly, when we get into committee with this particular bill, I will be looking to investigate further some of the implications that are associated with some of these measures.

I think one of the main things that I've been hearing from municipal leaders is around the exemption to school boards and schools from having the levies apply to them for local improvements that may be occurring in their area. It's creating issues around burden shifting in terms of who then will pick up the costs and pits one body against another in terms of, you know, the fiscal responsibility and the balance that creates.

So certainly it's also a question of, you know, when we remove some of these oversight provisions that it is predicated on the notion that, you know, that there is the capacity and the competency at that municipal level to ensure that, you know, there is due process and proper consideration for these types of changes. And what I've been seeing and what I've been hearing is that, you know, that's not always the case. And I think the concern I have right now is the exposure that it creates for municipalities, for all levels of government when we have those oversight provisions removed. And so I'll be looking to explore that more thoroughly once we get into committee on this particular bill.

Those are some of my main concerns at this time. I would note that in my conversations with municipalities that many of the leaders that I spoke with were unaware of these amendments, that they had not been notified. That is a common theme that I'm hearing when I am reaching out to communities, that they often feel like they have not been consulted adequately, that if indeed they have been it's often been more late stage, last minute, oh by the way, just heads-up, this is what is going ahead tomorrow and hope, you know, you'll be supportive of the measure. And that's been very frustrating for them.

They also make mention of the fact that, you know, these

amendments aren't communicated. It requires that the municipalities go in search of bills and amendments. And so really just a lot of surprise on behalf of the councils that I've spoken with around amendments going forward that impact their municipalities in which they haven't been adequately notified.

So just wanted to make that comment right now. At this time I will conclude my remarks and look forward for more fulsome discussion when we go into committee on this bill. I will conclude my remarks and recommend that it continue to committee at this time.

[14:45]

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the member that Bill No. 104 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this bill be committed? I recognize the Deputy Government House Leader.

Hon. Ms. Carr: — To the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

The Speaker: — The bill stands committed to the standing committee on intergovernmental justice committee.

Bill No. 105

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. McMorris that **Bill No. 105 — *The Local Government Election Amendment Act, 2022*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pleasure to be on my feet again on Bill No. 105, *The Local Government Election Amendment Act*, sort of a companion piece to the bill that I just spoke to.

In summary, this bill will give powers to determine polling places for returning officers, not school boards or municipalities, to avoid improper influence. It also gives powers to returning officers for such things as emergency powers to change poll hours, dates, and locations. Returning officers will have to advise someone of deletion from a voter list only if they're removed after the list is published. It also provides for the RO [returning officer] to decide the form and manner of a poll book, and the authority over voting in hospitals and care homes plus those who are homebound.

Really in terms of those suite of amendments, nothing on the face of it that is really of concern there. Beyond that though, it will be creating a framework for voter registry data use, revision, and

protection, as well as same-day registration for unregistered voters. And municipalities with more than 20,000 people will have the option to increase candidate nomination deposits of up to \$500.

I do want to sort of move into, you know, some of the more substantive feedback that we've received so far on this bill. Certainly of course we're very supportive of efforts to streamline the voting process, and in particular, when it comes to municipal voting which has seen very low turnout rates in the past. Anything that can be done to ensure that people are exercising their democratic right is welcome.

Our biggest disappointment with this Act however, and it's something that has been clearly identified by the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association, is that the date for municipal elections was not changed in this Act. This was something that they had asked for very expressly and has gone ignored. There's been some bizarre reasons given for that that really don't hold water at the end of the day. There's certainly lots of flexibility within the Act to ensure that municipal, and in particular, urban municipalities can have election dates that will ensure the best possible outcomes for the municipalities.

They've spoken at length on the issues around the individuals who they contract to or that the elections officers contract to carry out the elections and that, you know, when you have municipal elections occurring two weeks after the provincial election, it is a question of burnout. It's also an issue of confusion on the doorsteps. And I'm sure all of us experienced that during the last election where people were very perplexed about which election and what the time frame was, and so it really made it difficult to engage with voters and ensure that they were exercising their democratic right. And so in many ways it's a regressive outcome and omission in this Act. And that really is sort of the main point that I wanted to bring across this time.

Certainly the expanded powers during by-elections is something that, for the returning officer, we certainly welcome. And as you know, Mr. Speaker, we were very pleased to bring a new member into our caucus at the last by-election in Saskatoon Meewasin and of course we know that there will be two more coming up here soon and perhaps more remains to be seen. And you know, we're optimistic that the voter use will be used to keep our elections efficient in those by-elections. And on this side I guess just really look forward to those opportunities to, you know, see some of these improvements bear fruit and improve upon the process.

And I'll have more to say once we reach committee on these two bills, but at this time I would like to conclude my remarks.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is the motion by the member that Bill No. 105 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this bill be committed? I recognize the Government Deputy House Leader.

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

The Speaker: — This bill stands committed to the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice.

Bill No. 106

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Tell that **Bill No. 106 — *The Police Amendment Act, 2022*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pleasure to be on my feet again today, this time talking about Bill No. 106, *The Police Amendment Act, 2022*. I had a number of comments on Bill No. 107 yesterday that I think still apply in this case. Essentially this bill paves the way for the marshals bill. And we sort of canvassed well yesterday the conversation around how this minister loves to create additional police forces and hasn't consulted our existing police forces or given them an opportunity to fill the perceived gap that exists here.

There's significant concerns around the municipalities having to pay for this, you know, why we're not working with the municipal police forces and RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] and instead creating structures outside of those existing structures. And yeah, I think it's largely a head-scratcher and something that we haven't heard anyone ask for, Mr. Speaker. I have a lot of questions and concerns about why this is necessary, and I don't think I'm the only one here.

Certainly I have a ton of respect for municipal police forces, coming out of Saskatoon, all of the work that the police chief and company have put in. And really looking for meaningful ways to address root causes of crime I think is the work that we need to be strengthening rather than looking at this from a sort of Americanized tough-on-crime approach when we know that the way to find success in reducing crime is to address root causes within our society.

So I would encourage the minister to do a bit of reading and do a bit of consultation and make a different decision moving forward about how to address crime across the province. We will have many more things to say, but with that I would move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 106 for today.

The Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Yes. Carried.

Bill No. 107

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Tell that **Bill No. 107 — *The Provincial***

Protective Services Act be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Teed: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today and enter into adjourned debate on Bill No. 107, *The Provincial Protective Services Act*, the bill that my colleague from Saskatoon Fairview was mentioning, the bill that she was just discussing leads into this Act. I'd quickly like to thank our critic for the work she has done. I know that her and my other colleagues have put important comments on the record as we critique this bill.

Mr. Speaker, this is a really important bill, and we have heard a lot of concerns. I've heard a lot of concerns from the public. In conversations with folks I've had, this bill has come up many a time. And I think, Mr. Speaker, when bills propose large funding, large spending like \$20 million, you start to see the people of Saskatchewan take close attention. So I just want to put some of those concerns on the record today in my comments.

You know, the first concern, what I've really been hearing from folks, is just a surprise at how big this government is becoming. And it seems like in its later years, we're just seeing bigger and bigger and bigger government. It's seemingly that their conservative ideals have kind of gone out the window.

We've also heard concerns about just how outrageously expensive this bill is proposing. And folks also have just been very surprised that police services weren't even seemingly consulted in this expansion of this bill. Surely if police services were consulted in any way, they would have asked that any number of that \$20 million be sent in their direction.

So, Mr. Speaker, I ask, you know, why not, instead of investing \$20 million into a brand new marshals service, why not put that \$20 million into the RCMP, because we know they've been asking for this money. We know they've been asking for increases in funds. The RCMP know their communities; they're set up to do the work. They're quite ready to accept additional funding to continue to provide safety and security to the people of Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, I think any time a bill proposes any kind of financial element, my thoughts as I look to this, I always like to examine where else that money could be probably better spent. And you know, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about crime, we have a government that's rooting a tough-on-crime agenda and then you see them inviting a convicted wife murderer to the Throne Speech, Mr. Speaker.

So I'm going to say, let's propose spending \$20 million on how we can prevent crime. The real root of the issue here that we're trying to solve here, with a \$20 million marshal service, is crime. And what causes crime in our province comes down to poverty, disparity, inequity. These are the roots of crime in our province. In any conversation about police and crime, we must look at those root causes.

So I propose, why not spend \$20 million on the crime prevention? We have homelessness in our province that we're seeing very little investment in. In fact we have thousands of

units in our social housing left vacant, so much to the point where houses are exploding in our cities.

[15:00]

We have poverty in our province that is only exacerbated by criminally low SIS and SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability] programs. These programs are not lifting people up. They are pushing them into homelessness. They are pushing them into poverty. And, Mr. Speaker, another core issue, when we're looking at crime and what leads to crime, are the mental health issues that we're seeing in our province.

Mr. Speaker, this money could be invested in helping folks in mental health services. Mr. Speaker, we have fantastic critics in our side who are working on the mental health file, and we hear the stories every single day about the needs for more mental health services.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will not be voting in favour of Bill 107. And I'm going to quickly discuss it a tiny bit, just for those folks at home who need a little bit of a broader look at Bill 107.

This is a bill that really is looking to unite a lot of different policing organizations. We are looking at traffic officers, conservation officers, safer-community officers, deputy sheriffs. You know, this is a bill that's also giving them the duties of cops, and it gives the minister the power to create police services, provide financial, admin, tech support, coordinate research again. Just bigger, broader government, Mr. Speaker.

And as I've laid out, I don't believe this is where we should be spending this money, Mr. Speaker. I know that our critic will be engaging with more questions in committee, and on that I move to adjourn debate on Bill 107, *The Provincial Protective Services Act*.

The Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 108

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Eyre that **Bill No. 108 — *The Pension Benefits Amendment Act, 2022*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to enter into debate on Bill No. 108, *The Pension Benefits Amendment Act, 2022*. Mr. Speaker, as my generation knows too well, there's nothing more important than a good pension. And unfortunately . . . Yeah, yours too, right? And unfortunately we're seeing, you know, many folks going without a pension. And I worry about the many men and women across this province, young people and others, who don't have a pension to be there when they are too old to work, too tired. And so there's really nothing more important in my view than good pensions, Mr. Speaker.

So I know that the critic will be taking a good look at this piece of legislation. We will have to be doing some consultation because in reviewing this Act, you know, we basically . . . This piece of legislation provides for pension investigators to really go anywhere, ask anything, demand any type of record, require any type of person to present themselves, and can enter any premises with a warrant. So these are very extreme powers, Mr. Speaker. So we will have to be taking a very close look at this bill, and I know that the critic, the member for Regina Rosemont, will be doing just that, Mr. Speaker.

With that I don't have much more to add on this, Mr. Speaker, except really to reinforce the importance of this area, and looking forward to the good work that we'll be doing on this side of the House in the weeks ahead. With that I'll move to adjourn Bill No. 108, *The Pension Benefits Amendment Act, 2022*.

The Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Agreed.

Bill No. 109

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Eyre that **Bill No. 109 — *The Trespass to Property Amendment Act, 2022 (No. 2)*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Teed: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We had an attempt to have the men in the caucus here today support the women by taking on a primary role in adjourned debates today. Of course we had to have a few, brought them in, but we want to make sure that they have a little bit more of a relaxing afternoon on this International Women's Day.

Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to wade into the debate on Bill No. 109, *The Trespass to Property Amendment Act, 2022 (No. 2)* second in a duology from this government. I have a lot of thoughts about this piece of legislation. In summary, what we're looking at is a bill that's saying, feds, don't trespass on our private land.

That's basically the gist of this legislation. But when I was getting deeper into, you know, analyzing and thinking about it, I just kept thinking about how this is just a continued legislative agenda from this government that's just meant to divide, to other, to further increase disparity in our province. Just another spat with the federal government to distract from an abysmal record.

I'm going to echo the comments from my colleague from Saskatoon Centre at just the shock at how quickly this government acted when it was found that federal employees were sampling water. You know, these are federal employees who work for the betterment of our country and yet a Saturday afternoon when we're all probably meeting with constituents or at events, this was a government that was able to throw an order in council out right there, right then.

And I'd like to remind this government that these federal employees that they're throwing orders in councils at and making duology of bills about trespassing, these are people who live in Saskatchewan. These are Saskatchewan residents who work and live here. And many of them, this negative attention was quite scary for them. This just isn't what a statesman government should be doing. It's just a poor, poor look. This energy should be better used to address the real issues that are facing Saskatchewan people.

I wish the government would act that quickly on our cost-of-living crisis. I wish they would act quickly for folks who are looking to find family doctors in our cities, across Saskatoon, a nearly impossible task now that they've taken the website offline. The last time I used that website was this summer when I was helping someone. I was door knocking and they told me they'd lost their family doctor. And I pulled up the website and I said hey, here, look, there's one clinic left finding family doctors. And I swear that was probably the last time that website was functioning.

And, Mr. Speaker, I wish that this government, instead of doing order in councils on Saturday to punish federal employees, I wish that they would look at the worst-in-the-country economic record that they've been sitting on for the last five years.

You know, we need a government working on these concerns instead of a government that is drafting legislation that's essentially pushing Indigenous folks off lands and they're breaking down the treaty rights that they have the right to access lands for hunting and fishing. We're continuing to see this trespass legislation infringe on those rights. So I would appeal to the government to abandon their divisive agenda.

Mr. Speaker, of course we agree that federal employees, like provincial employees, should follow trespass laws. But as I mentioned, these federal employees are residents of Saskatchewan. It's alarming and irresponsible of the government to be whipping up sentiment against their own people, people who . . . their livelihoods depend on these jobs.

Mr. Speaker, the rights and the dignity of landowners in this province are extremely important to us. That's why we will continue to work with stakeholders to protect their interests. You know, we've seen huge megaprojects like the GTH [Global Transportation Hub] scandal when the Saskatchewan government took advantage of small landowners. This, this just doesn't jive here, Mr. Speaker.

So I know I want again to thank our critic and for my colleagues for just putting fantastic comments on the record today.

I will adjourn now on this debate on Bill No. 109, *The Trespass to Property Amendment Act*.

The Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 116

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Marit that **Bill No. 116 — *The Plant Health Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Teed: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today on another bill, Bill 116, *The Plant Health Act*. Mr. Speaker, *The Plant Health Act*, No. 116, lays out a lot of regulations and powers to the ministry such as being able to declare animals, insects, disease dangerous to plants or crops, or pests, appoint a pest control officer to take care of it, order the destruction of those at-risk plants, and declare states of emergency.

You know, they're laying out stipulations in this that the ministry must pay for those destroyed crops. Municipalities can also appoint these PCOs [pest control officer] and order compliance, but ministry regulations will always beat those municipal bylaws. PCOs can go anywhere except private dwellings. Their authorized persons must ask permission unless the minister has declared an emergency.

Mr. Speaker, I wonder how this regulation will sit with the trespassing Act that I just read about. You know, who knows if these PCOs will get in trouble if they're trespassing?

This bill also lays out that PCOs can make orders for prevention or destruction, so long as the ministry approves. There's some regulations about failure to comply. And potentially, pest-carrying material or equipment can be transported to unaffected areas. You know, they're looking at . . . this lays out legislation about how they can be transported between these areas if it's enclosed.

Mr. Speaker, as an agricultural province it's important to prevent and contain pests that threaten our farmers' crops. Pests and blight cause tremendous damage to our farming industry. You know, the last thing we need are pests causing food scarcity, causing food prices to rise even higher than they already are.

It's interesting that they're allowing, you know, municipal and provincial pest control officers free access to any land, as I mentioned. You know, I just spoke to the trespassing amendment banning federal agents. It will be interesting to see how these PCOs engage with that new legislation.

And on that, Mr. Speaker, I don't have much more to add, and I know that my colleagues will be doing a great job asking questions in committee and have put comments on the record. So I will move to adjourn debate on Bill 116, *The Plant Health Act*.

The Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 117

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Tell that **Bill No. 117 — *The Saskatchewan Firearms Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll be brief today with comments on Bill 117, *The Saskatchewan Firearms Act*. I recognize that there's, you know, really a number of provisions laid out in this legislation that we stand mostly in support of. And again some of the changes brought about at the federal level, and I think again we see kind of the same, I think, mistakes being made by our federal government, the federal Liberal government, that we often see from the government that sits opposite. And that's just a failure to consult with folks and gather the information that needs to be gathered before mistakes are made.

And so we've seen the federal government make that mistake when it comes to regulating firearms, and we see this government opposite make that mistake every day that we continue to point out their failures in consulting, every day in this Assembly.

So that's one comment I wanted to make here, but by and large, you know, we see with this legislation again a failure of the Sask Party government to consult with Indigenous, First Nations, and Métis hunters on this legislation, which is a bit of a track record for them.

And the other thing I wanted to point out — this'll probably be my last comment here — is, you know, we see this government take initiative on a number of things that, you know, may or may not be important, but I would love to see the same initiative, the same energy given to providing health care for seniors in Saskatchewan. I would love to see the same initiative put forward. You know, how quickly they will jump to action over a small number of issues in this province. I'd love to see that same energy and initiative brought forward to ensuring that every child in this province is getting their needs met when they walk into one of our schools.

[15:15]

And I think that I can't get out of debate on *The Saskatchewan Firearms Act* without pointing out that I think that the speed in which they move over a number of small issues stands in stark contrast to the things that really matter to people: good jobs, not being satisfied with an economy that's in last place under this Premier's watch, and providing health care for people where they need it and when they need it.

So that being said, I'll continue to listen to my colleagues in opposition as they share their comments. But at this time I move that we adjourn debate on Bill No. 117, *The Saskatchewan Firearms Act*.

The Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 118

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Tell that **Bill No. 118 — *The Warrant Compliance Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Happy to put a few comments on the record for Bill 118, *The Warrant Compliance Act*. Again I think that you'll see support in principle from the opposition on this as we have certainly seen the need for changes in the wake of the tragic violence at James Smith Cree Nation and other instances like that that have taken place in our province in the past.

And I think it is, you know, to state the obvious, certainly our responsibility to ensure that we do what we can as legislators to prevent acts like that in the future. But I'm not sure that the execution of this Act is going to meet the intended consequence which is, you know, to locate and to ensure that folks who are on outstanding warrants are not able to commit future acts of violence. And by cutting off their benefits, I am not sure that we have fully considered the consequences of that, and I think that we will watch as this Sask Party government moves forward with this legislation to see how it will be enacted.

I want to point out something that was concerning to me when I read a news story from SaskToday in which the Minister of Corrections was quoted as saying that this legislation "creates an intelligence team which will be comprised of a number of people from government or enforcement, probably Social Services." She goes on from there.

And you know, it just doesn't invoke the kind of confidence that this has been fully thought out. Maybe this and this and perhaps that. You know, it comes across as very wishy-washy and perhaps not going to get at the intention of this new Act.

And I also need to think about, on International Women's Day, who could be impacted by these changes, by revoking benefits. We know, we know that women are disproportionately victims of violent behaviour and that men are almost always statistically the perpetrators of violence. Now that's not unique to Saskatchewan, but we have uniquely high levels, compared to other provinces, of interpersonal violence, assault, homicide in which women are victims.

But we also know that in this case, removing the benefits from folks who have outstanding warrants, that there may be others impacted, in particular their partners and possibly children. So we need to keep eyes on these changes to ensure that we don't have folks move from a vulnerable situation to an even more vulnerable situation as a result of having their benefits removed.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude my remarks and continue to listen to those of my colleagues. But I move that we adjourn debate on Bill 118, *The Warrant Compliance Act*.

The Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn the debate.

Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 120

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Merriman that **Bill No. 120 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Health Professions) Amendment Act, 2022*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll be brief with respect to Bill No. 120. The role of regulators in health care is certainly very important, and we really value all the organizations that fulfill that role and that are aiming to fulfill that role across Saskatchewan, the integrity that they ensure for their profession and for patients across our province. Our critic will be following up at committee, will be ensuring that all relevant statutes are in line with the needs of the sector.

Certainly something that's a real challenge in Saskatchewan right now under this government, through a time of cuts and disregard on this front, and that's the retention and recruitment and training of health care workers. Mr. Speaker, it's left terrible voids, terrible gaps, and terrible challenges for patients, those needing care across Saskatchewan in communities small and large, Mr. Speaker, rural and urban.

Our health care critic has been propositional on this front. She's been meeting and advocating and fighting for communities, for patients, and for health workers, for all of us on these fronts, Mr. Speaker. I know she'll be following up with due diligence and questions at committee on this front, and at this time I conclude remarks.

The Speaker: — The question before the Assembly is a motion by the member that Bill No. 120 be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

The Speaker: — To which committee shall this bill be committed? I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — To the Standing Committee on Human Services.

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

Bill No. 122

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed

motion by the Hon. Ms. Harpauer that **Bill No. 122 — *The Saskatchewan Revenue Agency Act*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Bill No. 122, the Saskatchewan revenue Act. Oh boy, where to start here? What a mess. I won't have a lot to say, but I hope the next couple of minutes will be memorable for the members opposite who are already chuckling.

You know, gee, where to go from here with this one. So you know, I'd like to say that this is the result of being completely washed up and out of touch as a government, to come forward with something that no one has asked for.

And it is going to make life tougher for folks. It's going to add costs for businesses. It's going to add administrative costs for the government. And that they haven't been able to provide that information of the true costs of this to the people of Saskatchewan, they're governing from a platform from which they were not elected to govern from. This was not communicated to the people of the province before the last election, and it's a real doozy.

I would say that this is like absurdly vague in terms of what this is both trying to accomplish and why. And why is the big question here. Who asked for this? Now I started saying maybe it's because no consultation took place, but you know, that might not be totally true because there was an autonomy tour which discussions were held behind closed doors, led by a known separatist, and this is all being done under the guise of provincial autonomy.

But you know, we know that this is not a Sask Party government that plays well with others. We know that they, you know, struggle to collaborate and do things that are good for the people of Saskatchewan, but they also love to take credit when other folks get the job done that benefits folks here in Saskatchewan. I'm just not sure where this fits in.

So lots of questions here yet to be answered. I think it's another, another step down the path to bigger and more cumbersome government that is spending money on priorities that simply don't matter to Saskatchewan people. I have never, ever been asked about this or anything like it on the doorstep. I've never been approached at a public event and had these concerns brought to me as an elected person. And so I just got to wonder what was said in those closed-door meetings.

Mr. Speaker, I'll conclude there. And you know, I am looking forward to hearing comments from my colleagues, but at this time, I'll move that we adjourn debate on Bill 122, the Saskatchewan revenue Act.

The Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 124

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Carr that **Bill No. 124 — *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2022/Loi modificative de 2022 sur la réglementation des boissons alcoolisées et des jeux de hasard*** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to enter into debate today on Bill No. 124, *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act*. A number of different pieces that are being amended here, including allowing municipalities, regional park authorities, and the PCC [Provincial Capital Commission] to designate outdoor public places as drinking-permissible areas.

Again this will put the responsibility on municipalities to make that decision according to their communities. It also will allow for special occasion liquor licences to serve, but not sell, homemade beer or wine — I know my partner and I enjoy doing the homemade wine on occasion, and that makes quite a difference, especially if you're running a big family event or something of that nature — modernizing recorking laws; changing permit applications in places where there's been no store or permitted premises for the last 12 months; and changing the fact that liquor licence applications no longer have to be published in a newspaper, which seems like a prudent modernization step; and craft producers being subject to the same regulations as retail stores and permitted premises.

So a lot of changes that are being included here, Mr. Speaker. We're definitely in favour of the modernization pieces, but we have a duty to consult all concerned parties in this case. I know that the critic has been working with stakeholders and will continue to do that work, but with that I would move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 124 for today.

The Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 125

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Carr that **Bill No. 125 — *The Cannabis Control (Saskatchewan) Amendment Act, 2022*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Happy to be on my feet again to put some comments on the record, this time for Bill 125, *The Cannabis Control (Saskatchewan) Amendment Act of 2022*.

You know, first look at these amendments, you know, I think lots of support from the opposition in ensuring that First Nations

cannabis authorities are able to regulate on-reserve retail and distribution of cannabis that aligns with other places in our province, ensuring that there's similarity in how that's regulated while, you know, ensuring that First Nations authorities don't need to apply for an SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority] permit. And obviously some thoughtfulness going in there.

Couple things I do want to point out here. You know, I understand that all cannabis retailers, whether First Nations or not, only need to check ID [identification] for folks who look under 25. Now, Mr. Speaker, I know what you're thinking. I know that I don't look a day over 24, but it's not me that I'm worried about. It's colleagues like my colleague from Saskatoon Meewasin. Look at that handsome mug. This guy gets carded when he goes on a roller coaster.

[15:30]

So you know, obviously there's some things in here that we need to ensure are similar across the province, and hopefully having a good time with my colleague who's having a chuckle behind me.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's important that this province always endeavours to work with stakeholders in a way that serves the people well and that all consequences of these amendments are considered. You know, I think that there's enough here that I'm interested in supporting this legislation to move forward. But as always, we'll look forward to hearing further comments from members of the opposition as it proceeds through adjourned debates. At this time I will move that we adjourn debate on the cannabis control amendment Act.

The Speaker: — The member has moved to adjourn debate. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Bill No. 126

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Eyre that **Bill No. 126 — *The Summary Offences Procedure Amendment Act, 2022*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to weigh in briefly on Bill No. 126, *The Summary Offences Procedure Amendment Act*. I know in this piece of legislation our very able Justice critic, the member for Regina Douglas Park, is engaged in consultation with stakeholders and First Nations on this front, Mr. Speaker. That's, I think, real important.

We know there's pilot projects going on with Muskoday and Whitecap Dakota First Nations, which are important for us to all learn from and learn from that experience, Mr. Speaker. Our critic will continue to consult, but I would urge and invite others as well that have thoughts and that have expertise on this matter, those that are directly impacted, to engage with us. Certainly it

will be our aim to be as constructive as we can be and to improve legislation whenever possible, Mr. Speaker.

With that being said, I'll adjourn debate with respect to Bill No. 126.

The Speaker: — The member has 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. J. Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I move that this House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — House Leader has moved to adjourn the House. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

[The Assembly adjourned at 15:33.]

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