



FOURTH SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

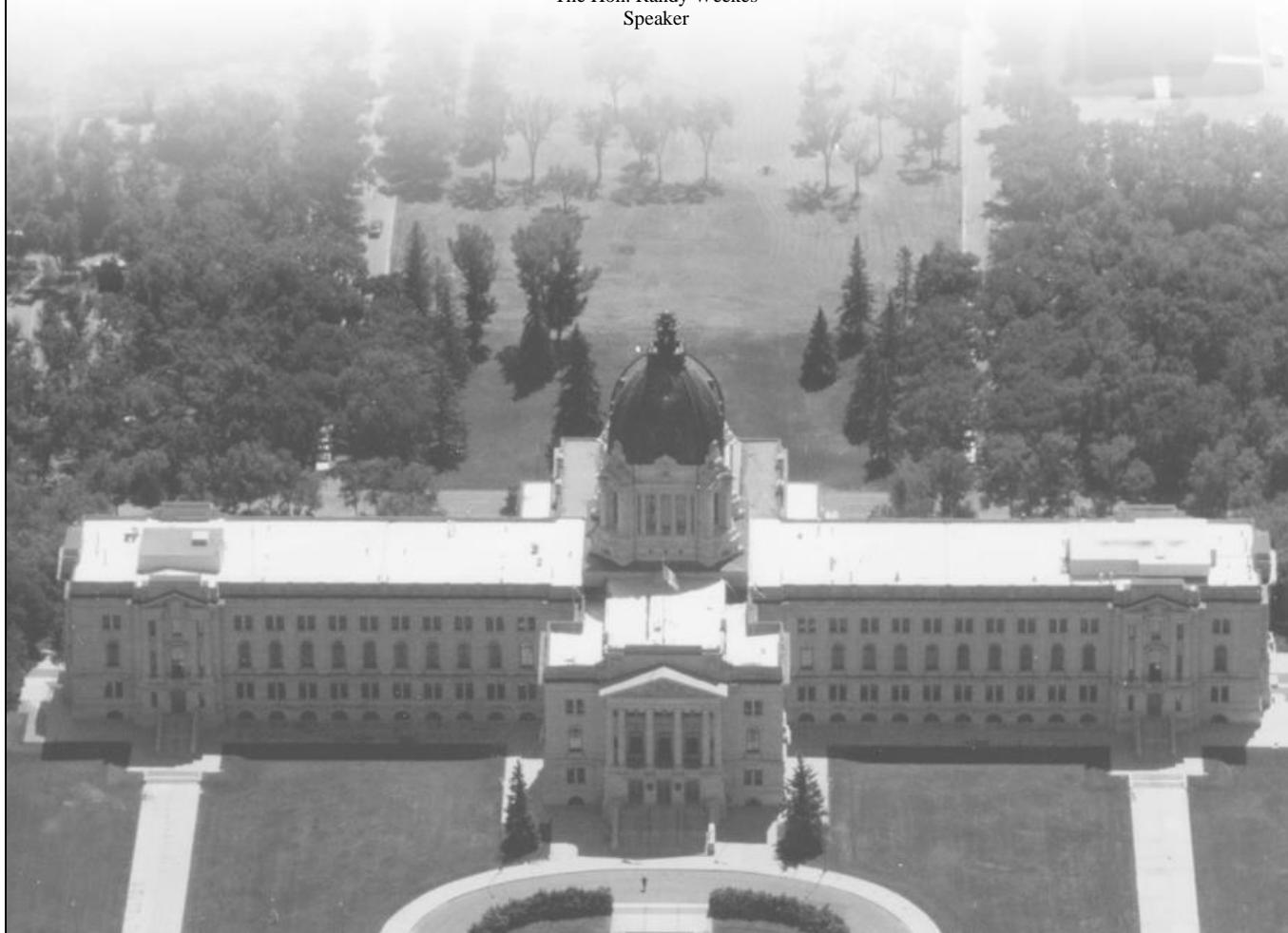
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Randy Weekes
Speaker



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
4th 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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Hargrave , Hon. Joe — Prince Albert Carlton (SP)	Steele , Doug — Cypress Hills (SP)
Harpauer , Hon. Donna — Humboldt-Watrous (SP)	Teed , Nathaniel — Saskatoon Meewasin (NDP)
Harrison , Daryl — Cannington (SP)	Tell , Hon. Christine — Regina Wascana Plains (SP)
Harrison , Hon. Jeremy — Meadow Lake (SP)	Vermette , Doyle — Cumberland (NDP)
Hindley , Hon. Everett — Swift Current (SP)	Weekes , Hon. Randy — Biggar-Sask Valley (SP)
Jenson , Terry — Martensville-Warman (SP)	Wilson , Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (Ind.)
Kaeding , Warren — Melville-Saltcoats (SP)	Wotherspoon , Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)
Keisig , Travis — Last Mountain-Touchwood (SP)	Wyant , Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)
Kirsch , Delbert — Batoche (SP)	Young , Aleana — Regina University (NDP)
Lambert , Lisa — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)	Young , Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)
Lawrence , Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)	

Standings

Government Caucus: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 46; Opposition Caucus: New Democratic Party (NDP) — 14;
Independent: Saskatchewan United Party (Ind.) — 1

Clerks-at-the-Table

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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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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Request leave for an extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Hon. Mr. Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I had the honour of joining a number of colleagues from both sides of the House last night to join the Saskatchewan School Boards Association at their banquet as part of their fall assembly last night here in Regina.

I notice today we have a number of school board trustees from across the province joining us in the gallery. I see Donna Banks from Saskatoon Public; Diane Boyko, Chair at Greater Saskatoon Catholic; and then I also see Angela Bothner and Kate Kading from Prairie Spirit.

So I just want to thank these four women for being here and joining us today, and thank all the many school trustees from the 27 school division boards that we have across our province. They do important work each and every single day. So I'd ask all members to welcome these guests to this, their legislature. Thank you.

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

Ms. Beck: — I request leave for an extended introduction, Mr. Speaker.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Ms. Beck: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to first introduce a couple of guests to their Legislative Assembly, seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. It is a great honour for me to stand today and introduce Margaret Blakeney and her son, Ben.

Mr. Speaker, Margaret is the youngest daughter of Anne and Allan Blakeney. And Allan, as members will know, was an MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for Regina Elphinstone for many years and the premier of Saskatchewan, one of the finest premiers this province has had. By the time Margaret was 10, she remembers being able to sit quietly and feign interest

while political people prattled on and on, sometimes for hours, in her home — I think a fate that many political children can relate to, Mr. Speaker.

Margaret has lived in Ottawa since 1999 and is the senior policy analyst with the Secretariat on Responsible Conduct of Research with the Government of Canada. She has brought along with her today, Mr. Speaker, her 18-year-old son, Ben. And Margaret says they rarely get back to Saskatchewan and to Regina. So this is a big occasion for Margaret and for Ben to be here with us today, and we are so honoured that they chose to join us.

They're visiting Margaret's mother, Ben's grandmother, Anne Blakeney, who is 96 years old, Mr. Speaker, and just as sharp, sharp as the days when her husband stood here in this Assembly.

Margaret is visiting a few high school friends and to see a few places that she frequented during her childhood, including the old elementary school where her family was so involved in that community on Elphinstone, Mr. Speaker, Wascana School, which now of course has become the Allan Blakeney Adult Campus. And she also wants to show her son some places that were important to her family and to his grandfather, Mr. Speaker.

And I would invite all members to join me in welcoming Margaret and Ben to their Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet, I would also like to join with the minister in welcoming the guests who have joined us both in your gallery and in the west gallery today. We have with us, of course, Diane Boyko from Greater Saskatoon Catholic, long serving, long dedicated to children, to students in this province. And with her is Donna Banks from Saskatoon Public.

Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of serving with both of these two leaders in so many capacities over so many years when I was a trustee. And I want to say they really do exemplify a dedication to ensuring that children, regardless of where they live in this province, have access to a quality education that will set them up for a bright, bright future. Of course they were in town for the SSBA [Saskatchewan School Boards Association], as has been mentioned.

And I want to also say thank you to Angela and Kate from Prairie Spirit here today, showing that same dedication to students in our province and showing the importance of local voice in education in our province. I would invite all members to join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly and thanking them for their service.

And last but not least, Mr. Speaker, because this is what it's all about, we have joining us in the east gallery today 30 grade 6 students from Curtis-Horne Christian School here in Regina, in Regina Lakeview, Mr. Speaker. They are accompanied by their teacher, Debbie Ashworth; also by Rebecca Landry, Sheila Deer, Olena Didchenko, Mr. Speaker.

I want to welcome all of these students here and thank them for coming to their Legislative Assembly to see the proceedings here today, Mr. Speaker, and I invite all members to join me in welcoming them here today.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would join with the Leader of the Opposition in first welcoming our students here today, grade 6 students from the community of Regina, all of those that are serving on the Saskatchewan School Boards Association. Special note to Kate Kading who is down from the constituency of Rosthern-Shellbrook. Kate served as a town councillor in Rosthern prior to serving on the school division there. And so thank you to each of you for what you do in making our communities, making our schools stronger.

And a special introduction to Margaret and Ben, family members of the one and only Allan Blakeney that stood on the floor of this Assembly, led this province. As today — myself being the 15th premier, Mr. Speaker — once you've served in the position, you reserve the ranking of the other 14 to others and you don't weigh in on that, Mr. Speaker.

But I would like to thank Margaret and Ben more specifically — and I often do on the floor of this Assembly, but I think it's very notable today with you joining us in the province — for your support. No one serves on the floor of this Assembly alone. They only serve with the love and support of their family. That includes their children, Mr. Speaker, which often this job takes the individuals wherever you serve, Mr. Speaker, takes individuals away from the time being spent with their family.

And so I want to thank, in particular Margaret, but both Margaret and Ben for joining us here today, thank them for their family's commitment to this province — what we can always agree on is it is the greatest province in the Dominion of Canada, Mr. Speaker — and welcome them home.

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

Mr. Jenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to join the Premier in welcoming Kate Kading to her Legislative Assembly this afternoon. Joining Kate is Angela Bothner, and Angela is a trustee for subdivision No. 5 in Prairie Spirit School Division. Those are the schools Perdue, Lord Asquith, as well as Eagle Creek and Sunnydale colonies. We've had some great conversations over the last number of weeks. We had a great conversation last night at dinner. I want to thank you two for the time spent and looking forward to more of those conversations to come.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to introduce, in the west gallery this afternoon, two guests from Saskatoon. We have Darlene Brander who is the CEO [chief executive officer] of Wanuskewin Heritage Park. And joining Darlene this afternoon is Jenaya Chutskoff. And Jenaya is a CPA [chartered professional accountant] and, more importantly, she is the lead on the UNESCO [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization] bid for Wanuskewin Heritage Park. We had some good conversations with some of my colleagues this morning, and we're looking forward to having some more of those conversations leading up as they formulate their quest for UNESCO designation for Saskatchewan.

With that I would encourage all of my colleagues in the House today to welcome Kate, Angela, Jenaya, and Darlene. Thank you,

Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Ms. L. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join my colleague in welcoming Darlene and Jenaya. The work they do at Wanuskewin is outstanding, and we want to thank them for their dedication to ensuring that Saskatchewan's story is going to be told, told around the world. So thank you so much for your perseverance and your dedication to ensuring that Wanuskewin is going to be cemented in everyone's memory. So thank you so much.

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

Mr. Teed: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with the members opposite and the Minister of Parks, Culture and Sport in welcoming Darlene Brander and Jenaya to their Legislative Assembly. In a previous life, Mr. Speaker, I worked at another cultural institution in Saskatoon, Remai Modern, and we always had such a warm relationship with Wanuskewin Heritage Park. I served under one of their colleagues, Tara Janzen, while she was director of development at Remai Modern, and she always spoke so, so highly of her time at Wanuskewin.

Mr. Speaker, we are so supportive of the efforts that Wanuskewin is taking to find its designation as a UNESCO heritage site, and I just want to join with members and welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Friesen: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with the Minister of Education, and I'm particularly happy to be able to introduce a friend, a neighbour in the community of Riversdale, Diane Boyko, and thank her for all the hard work she does.

She's very active in her community, Mr. Speaker. And one of the interesting things that happened shortly after I got elected, we had a pretty significant snowfall. And she's one of my neighbours, and she actually texted me a picture of her driveway and asked if that was one of the duties that I had as an MLA. But I'd like all members to join me in welcoming Diane to her Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from . . . from where? Canora-Pelly.

Mr. Dennis: — I know I don't get up that often. Sorry.

We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to you the attention of the following: whereas the Trudeau Liberal-NDP [New Democratic Party] coalition carbon tax is one of the main causes of the affordability issues and inflation in the nation of Canada; and the federal government has signalled that the carbon tax does affect Canadians differently, being issued an exemption on home heating taxes in the Atlantic Canadian provinces; further that the people of Saskatchewan, 85

per cent of whom rely on natural gas to heat their homes, are unfairly left without support by the Liberal-NDP coalition who continue to drive up the cost of living with the prices on carbon.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: call upon the Government of Canada to immediately remove the carbon tax from all home heating costs across Canada to reduce the inflation and drive down the rising cost of living faced by all Canadians, coast to coast.

The below undersigned are residents of Canora, Theodore, Buchanan, and Endeavour. I do so submit.

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

Mr. Teed: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present our petition calling on the Government of Saskatchewan to fix the rural health care staffing crisis.

We, the undersigned, would like to bring to your attention that recruitment and retention of health care professionals is a particular issue in Saskatchewan's rural health care facilities, leading to many emergency room, acute lab, and X-ray service disruptions. The ongoing pandemic has created burnout and led to early retirements and resignations which has rippling effects through small cities and towns. Health care workers and their families are valuable assets in Saskatchewan communities and local economies. At SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities] convention, over 94 per cent of rural leaders voted to support a resolution acknowledging the nursing and health care worker shortage across Saskatchewan.

[13:45]

Mr. Speaker, 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 fix the rural health care staffing crisis.

Mr. Speaker, the undersigned live in Vanscoy and Delisle. I do so present.

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

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present our petition calling for the government to address the affordability crisis facing Saskatchewan residents.

The undersigned residents would like to bring to our attention the following: that inflation is the highest it's been in more than three decades; that half of Saskatchewan residents were living pay cheque to pay cheque before transportation and food costs skyrocketed in 2022; that the Sask Party government's 32 new tax and fee hikes make life more expensive, all while harming struggling industries across this province, and while other provinces acted, the Sask Party government ignored the opposition's call for a gas price relief plan.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer read as follows, call on the Government of Saskatchewan to meaningfully address the affordability crisis in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the signatories today reside in Regina. I do so present.

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

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition calling for the improvement of labour laws.

The undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan wish to bring to your attention the following: that even after the October 1st, 2023 increase, Saskatchewan's minimum wage will remain the lowest in Canada at \$14 an hour; that the official opposition was calling for a \$15-an-hour minimum wage as early as 2018 and has twice introduced paid sick leave legislation since the onset of the pandemic, calling for a minimum of 10 paid sick days each year and 14 days after a public health crisis; that paid sick leave has proven to save employers money while making workplaces healthier and safer for all workers; and that 71 per cent of workers in Canada have experienced workplace violence and/or harassment.

The Canadian Bar Association recently adopted a resolution discouraging the use of nondisclosure agreements to silence whistle-blowers and victims of abuse, discrimination, and harassment in the workplace, and that more needs to be done to ensure workplaces in Saskatchewan are harassment free. That has been further backed up by a bill that was introduced last week by the member for Regina Douglas Park, Bill 613, the employment fairness workplace Act.

So:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly call on the government to improve conditions for workers by passing legislation to increase the minimum wage, guarantee paid sick leave, limit nondisclosure agreements which could silence survivors of workplace harassment . . .

The Speaker: — Way over time. I recognize the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms. Beck: — I'll wait.

The Speaker: — Oh. I recognize the member from Yorkton.

Mr. Ottenbreit: — Mr. Speaker, I wish to present a petition for a private bill on behalf of petitioners from the Lutheran Collegiate Bible Institute. The prayer of the petition requests to amend an Act, the *Statutes of Saskatchewan, 1960*, to revise the membership and officers of the Lutheran Collegiate Bible Institute, name the board of regents as responsible for the business of the Lutheran Collegiate Bible Institute, and update some administrative processes:

Wherefore your petitioner humbly prays that your

honourable Assembly may be pleased to amend *An Act to Incorporate the Lutheran Collegiate Bible Institute* in chapter 90 of the *Statutes of Saskatchewan, 1960* accordingly.

And as in duty bound, your petitioners will ever pray.

The petition is signed by the president, the board members. I am pleased to present it on their behalf.

The Speaker: — Pursuant to rule 101, this petition is referred to the Standing Committee on Private Bills.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Celebrating Saskatchewan Baseball All-Stars

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, I'm thrilled to rise today to celebrate a couple of all-stars. The Saskatchewan Baseball Association recently awarded their 2023 male and female players of the year. And for a second year in a row, the male player of the year is Carnduff, Saskatchewan's very own Carter Beck. Now I may be biased, Mr. Speaker, because he's my nephew, but we're all very, very proud of him.

Carter is playing at the University of Mary in Bismarck on a baseball scholarship, and he recently signed with the Saskatoon Berries of the WCBL [Western Canadian Baseball League].

I also want to congratulate the female player of the year, Victoria Bateman. Victoria is a constituent of mine, and she is a truly outstanding baseball player. More than that, she's a team player on and off the field, and I know that her parents Lyle and Cris are very proud of her. I offer my congratulations to both of them and all the other winners at this year's awards.

But I also want to take a moment to recognize the other people who make Saskatchewan baseball great. That's the dedicated coaches, the volunteers that ensure these games happen, and the fans in the stands that bring the energy and support to keep the players going. It's a beautiful game with a beautiful history in our beautiful province. To everyone involved I say thank you, and play ball.

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

Saskatchewan Football Teams Win Championships

Mr. Cheveldayoff: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well they say it's a badge of honour to play football in November in Saskatchewan, and what a great weekend it was. I'm proud to speak of two of my favourite football teams.

On Saturday the Saskatoon Hilltops won their 23rd national championship, defeating the British Columbia Westshore Rebels 17 to 10. The Hilltops have a strong history in the Saskatoon community and have been a staple in junior football in Canada since 1947. Congratulations to legendary coach Tom Sargeant and his outstanding coaching team and all of the players. Your

community and your province are proud of you.

And, Mr. Speaker, after victories over Big River, Macklin, Kerrobert, and Cupar, the Hafford-Blaine Lake Vikings beat the Lemberg Eagles 57 to 54 for their fifth provincial championship in a row in the 1A 6-aside division. Congratulations to head coach Ryan Barnstable and his coaching team. Winning five straight provincial titles is quite an accomplishment.

Mr. Speaker, as the football season comes to a close in our province, I would like to thank the many coaches, volunteers, players, and sponsors for providing great entertainment and helping young men and women become outstanding adults. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Initiative Supports Trauma Victims

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, it's my honour to rise today and recognize the work of OSI-CAN [Occupational Stress Injury-I can] in inspiring hope and contributing to the continuous well-being and recovery process of veterans, community first responders, and public safety personnel.

OSI-CAN is a support initiative for operational stress injury and post-traumatic stress. Their targeted demographic includes, but is not limited to, former and serving members of the Canadian Armed Forces, the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police], front-line protectors, fire protection services, health care workers, social workers, coroners, Indigenous emergency management, volunteer first responders, and other persons who in the performance of their jobs are exposed to trauma, as well as their spouses and partners.

The organization offers peer support groups, family support groups, assistance with service dog acquisition, and equine therapy programs. The support groups provide a free, safe, confidential, non-judgmental environment where conversations about mental health can happen openly.

OSI-CAN offers a unique approach to assist the youth of veterans through video games. They also offer an online community which offers a safe place to reach out and have conversations about mental health with other adults living with PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder] and other operational support injuries.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of this Assembly to join me in thanking OSI-CAN for bringing a positive change and fighting the traditional mindsets and empowering these groups. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Saskatchewan Football Teams Find Success

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. Over the weekend, several Saskatchewan football teams found success. We've heard about the Hilltops and their 23rd championship on Saturday. But on that same day several high school championship games took place, and I'll mention the results quickly.

We heard about Hafford and Blaine Lake, their fifth provincial title. Clavet won the 2A 6-aside, Lumsden the 4A 9-aside. The Weyburn Comp Eagles, they won the provincial 5A right at home, with a 35-15 victory over the Aden Bowman Bears.

In the 6A final, the Miller Marauders from here in Regina — I have a little bit of a bias with this team, Mr. Speaker, I coach the O-line [offensive line] there; I'm very lucky to do that — they took on the Holy Cross Crusaders from Saskatoon. It was a defensive game, a field position-type game. Very hard-fought at Gordie Howe Bowl. This game came down to the wire. With 32 seconds, the Crusaders gave up a safety touch that helped the Marauders to a 12 to 10 victory. This was after the Crusaders stormed back to tie the game at 10. I would note this is the third-straight provincial title for the Miller Marauders.

So, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Legislative Assembly, I want to congratulate all the teams from this weekend, but really all the teams from the entire season, and all the good work that happened with the players, coaches, parents, volunteers, who all came together to give our young athletes a chance to compete this season. Thank you very much.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cypress Hills.

Film Showcases Saskatchewan's Southwest

Mr. Steele: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, on October 13th, I attended the world premiere of the film called *A Cowboy Christmas* in Maple Creek. This movie was filmed in March of 2023 in the community of Maple Creek, and as well as the Historic Reesor Ranch located in the Cypress Hills.

Locals welcomed this movie production and opened their arms up and participated as extras in the movie that showcased historic downtown Maple Creek. Producer Jessica Watch of Trilight Entertainment, based out of Regina, was thrilled with the support from the community and surrounding area, mentioning how everyone welcomed the cast and crew with open arms. Creative Saskatchewan invested 172,000 into this production with an estimated economic return of 800,000 coming into the province and region.

This production showcased the heart of the Southwest and the community of Maple Creek. People from across the world will be introduced to our Saskatchewan grasslands and attractions like this: Historic Reesor Ranch and Cypress Hills and the town of Maple Creek.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that all the members join me here to congratulate the town of Maple Creek and the Historic Reesor Ranch and Trilight Entertainment on the success of this production. The Cypress Hills region is open for business. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Lloydminster.

New Facility Promises Innovation and Opportunity to Lloydminster

Ms. C. Young: — Mr. Speaker, whether it's a new hospital, a new school, a new long-term care facility, a municipal wastewater treatment plant, replacing bridges and culverts,

decommissioning landfills, improving and upgrading water systems, or building a community recreational event facility, this government is making significant investments into communities and the people of this province.

I was honoured to bring greetings at a major announcement for the community of Lloydminster this June. The Government of Saskatchewan through the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program has allocated 700 million of provincial funding to 480 projects across the province. And the city of Lloydminster was fortunate to receive 16.6 million towards a significant project.

What started out being called Lloydminster Place soon became the Cenovus Energy Hub when Cenovus CEO Jon McKenzie surprised the community with an additional 5 million for the naming rights. Cenovus has been a part of the Lloydminster community for more than 80 years now. Their contribution shows an ongoing commitment to supporting the community and surrounding region.

New investments in communities across Saskatchewan are important for job opportunities and growth in our economy. The groundbreaking in August marked a new chapter in Lloydminster's growth. Construction is well under way, and I look forward to the opportunity, innovation, and prosperity this facility will create for Lloydminster. Thank you.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Kindersley.

Saskatchewan Wins Business Council's Member of the Year Award

Mr. Francis: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan continues to punch well above its weight in the trade and export development category. Last week our Premier accepted the Canada-India Business Council award for Member of the Year on behalf of the province.

India continues to be a very important trading partner for Saskatchewan. C-IBC [Canada-India Business Council] president and CEO, Victor Thomas, had some very positive things to say about the province, and I quote, "When you look at the things that India seeks and Canada offers, Saskatchewan rises to the top."

And he goes on to say:

The province has significantly strengthened its ties in the last several years, punctuated with a new office in India. This comes at a time when businesses and provinces like Saskatchewan are needed more than ever in this pivotal economic relationship.

Mr. Speaker, we know the opposition thinks our trade missions and our trade offices are a complete waste of time, money, and resources. We beg to differ. Despite the lack of support from them — and even worse, the disastrous foreign economic policy of our federal government — Saskatchewan continues to thrive and flourish on the international trade stage.

I'd like to recognize the efforts of our Premier, our Trade and Export Development minister, the ministry staff, and all others that help promote our province around the world every single day

and congratulate them in receiving this prestigious award. Thank you.

[14:00]

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Management of Health Care System

Ms. Beck: — This tired and out-of-touch government is failing to deliver on health care. Last week the fire department had to write up St. Paul's Hospital for fire code violations. And then last week, 118 health care workers wrote to the Premier with their dire concerns. I quote:

We've been crippled by the increasing number of medicine patients being boarded in emergency. We've been over 100 per cent capacity 100 per cent of the time for many months.

Mr. Speaker, health care workers have raised these concerns with this government time and time again. When will the Premier work with health care workers to fix the crisis in our emergency rooms?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, a number of things. I think the Saskatchewan Health Authority, who is the operator of the health care system that we have in Saskatchewan, they receive just under, I think, four and a half billion dollars of investment on behalf of Saskatchewan people to deliver health care in our communities across the province, Mr. Speaker.

I believe they were out communicating on this very topic this morning with respect to some of the initiatives that they are currently undertaking today that are going to help alleviate some of the pressures that we have specific to a few hospitals in Saskatoon and Regina, our urban centres. But also across the province, Mr. Speaker, what they are looking to do over the course of the next number of weeks, and then what they're committing to do over the next number of months.

It includes many of the asks and solutions that were provided by a number of health care workers, including the addition of beds, addition of ambulatory care, Mr. Speaker.

And so we appreciate the input from our front-line health care workers and are going to do everything we can to ensure that the Saskatchewan Health Authority at all levels, including the management levels, are engaging with those front-line workers so that we can continue to offer the care that Saskatchewan people expect in their community, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, despite all of that, this Premier, this government is failing to listen to health care workers.

Now this weekend they cooked up a plan of their own, but it's doomed to fail, doomed to fail because they aren't listening to

the very health care workers who see the problems in our ERs [emergency room] every day. They need more staff and they need more space to ensure that their patients get the dignified care that all people in this province deserve.

Why won't this Premier sit down with health care workers and come up with a real plan to fix the crisis in our emergency rooms?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — I'll . . . [inaudible] . . . to send over the SHA, the Saskatchewan Health Authority news release, Mr. Speaker. Because a number of the things that were in that news release that the Saskatchewan Health Authority is currently working on or committed to working on in the very near future include the temporary deployment of existing staff to address some of the challenges that we have in certain areas; enhanced weekend staffing at Saskatoon facilities; add temporary emergency department staffing, Mr. Speaker. That's all adding staff to ensure that they're able to deliver on the 84 additional beds that they are bringing into service, the additional ambulatory care that is coming into service, Mr. Speaker.

And all of this is in the scope of the broader investment that the government is making, Mr. Speaker, that the Saskatchewan Health Authority ultimately will operate in the case of, for example, urgent care centres that are going to alleviate some of the pressures that we have in our emergency rooms, never mind the mental health and addictions entrance point that we will have in those particular centres, Mr. Speaker.

The expansion of the Victoria Hospital in Prince Albert is going to be a significant addition of beds to our provincial capacity, Mr. Speaker. Again a provincial investment, there to support the operating arm of our health care system in this province, Mr. Speaker, which is the Saskatchewan Health Authority.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, all of this is in the scope of the failure after failure on the health care front from that government. This is a tired and out-of-touch government that's been in government for 16 years. The crisis is on them and this is their record, Mr. Speaker. They've allowed short-staffing to become the norm in our hospitals right across this province.

And instead of spending time to fix the crisis in our emergency room, we saw this Premier call an emergency session to deal with kids' pronouns. Mr. Speaker, again this is a government clearly not focused on the things that matter to Saskatchewan people.

When will this Premier accept any responsibility for the mess, the mess that the Sask Party has made of our health care system?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, the education policy that was passed by this government — in a response to a policy that was no longer active — is a policy that ensures that parents do have a right to be involved in their child's education and their child's life.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to our health care centres today that

are operating — I would add, with 5,000 additional nurses than they did the day before we took government in 2007, 1,000 additional physicians, a couple hundred physicians recruited this past year — there definitely has been the investment, Mr. Speaker. Notwithstanding some of the current challenges that we're seeing not just in Saskatchewan, challenges across the nation of Canada. Even in the NDP BC [British Columbia], there are challenges in their health care system, Mr. Speaker. Those challenges are across Canada.

That's why last week we were in Halifax, Nova Scotia meeting with the other premiers to work on what is working, whether it be in the health human resource plans that we have, Mr. Speaker, comparing notes with other provinces and certainly working with the other premiers to build a Canadian system, a Canadian health care system that is strong and vibrant from coast to coast to coast.

Those are precisely the discussions that we were having on what is working in our provincial investment, where that is working, Mr. Speaker, and most certainly sharing those ideas with other Canadian provinces.

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

Fuel Tax and Government's Fiscal Management

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier's sunny ways are not going to fix this, and neither is the self-congratulation. This is a government that clearly is not focused on what matters to families. They're not focused on health care and they're not focused on the cost of living.

Families are paying more in this province as a direct result of that government's tax and fee hikes, but this Premier isn't offering any real relief for families. But, Mr. Speaker, soon he'll have a chance. The member from Regina Rosemont has just submitted a notice of motion calling for a six-month break on the gas tax. This would save families in this province an average of \$350.

Will the Premier finally act and give families this much-needed break on the price of gas?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, in addition to the unprecedented investment that we are seeing in this province in health care — which is only possible due to the strength of our provincial economy — it has been very much the focus of this government to ensure that we have some of the lowest utility rates in the nation of Canada, Mr. Speaker, of which today Saskatchewan through our Crown utilities is offering the second-lowest bundle of utility rates in the nation. We're under NDP BC by \$700, a family of four, Mr. Speaker; under Quebec by \$1,300; under Ontario by \$3,700; \$4,700 lower than Nova Scotia annually; and \$5,500 less than Newfoundland.

Very shortly, I would ask the Leader of the Opposition . . . There is going to be a piece of enabling legislation put onto the floor of this Assembly to ensure that Saskatchewan families are equivalent to Atlantic Canadian families and are not submitting the carbon tax on their home heating fuel, Mr. Speaker. Is the Leader of the Opposition going to support that piece of legislation?

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, I think we've been pretty clear on our position on the carve-out on the heating tax. But right now in this province, Saskatchewan people are struggling more than people in any other province. We lead the nation in mortgages in arrears because of this government's choice to hike costs for families. This tired and out-of-touch government could choose to act and offer relief, saving hundreds of dollars for families, but, Mr. Speaker, it sounds like they're choosing not to.

Instead of acting to put money back in the pockets of families, this Premier decides to spend a million dollars on a pavilion in Dubai. Why won't this Premier scrap the tax on fuel and help struggling Saskatchewan families today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I went through the savings that Saskatchewan families incur using our Crown utilities, the second-lowest utility bundle in the nation of Canada.

In addition to the record investment in health care that we have seen over the last decade and a half, Mr. Speaker, we've been able then also to remove 112,000 low-income families, low-income individuals from the provincial tax rolls altogether. The way that we are able to do this is to ensure that we are encouraging an environment for investment which results in a strong and vibrant economy, which results in jobs, Mr. Speaker.

And the way we're able to do that — most notably this last week being recognized by the Canada-India Business Council, Mr. Speaker — is to engage, engage with our customers around the world. Engaging at COP28 [Conference of Parties 28] is most certainly just what we are going to do to provide a platform for Saskatchewan industries to tell their story, not just about what they're producing but about how they are producing some of the most sustainable products that you can find on earth.

And, Mr. Speaker, what is the goal of that investment? The goal behind that investment is to continue to ensure that — this past month we had 6,600 more jobs created in this province — that that is the rate of job increase in this province, not just a one and done.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — The question from the Leader of the Opposition to that Premier was, would he support our motion to scrap the gas tax? All bluster and spin and distraction from that Premier, but no delivery for the people of Saskatchewan.

Meanwhile families in Saskatchewan today are breaking the bank just to fill the tank, for necessities, to get to work, to get kids to activities, or to get to town. On top of that, they're paying hundreds of dollars more in power bills and PST [provincial sales tax], all as a result of the choices of that tired and out-of-touch Sask Party government.

But the Sask Party could be making different choices. They could choose to act today to take the tax off gas and diesel for six months and give Saskatchewan families a break at the pump, a

bit of relief. That's what we're calling for today.

Will the Sask Party finally offer some relief and give families a break?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite well knows that we did make a choice. We made a choice to invest \$450 million. And for that family with two adults, they got \$1,000 which is far more than what he's asking for today.

But you know, each and every day, they come in here and they say that Saskatchewan's unaffordable even though there's numerous reports that say otherwise, and they totally ignore those facts. But every once in a while, every once in a while, Mr. Speaker, they slip up and they tell the real story. Like recently when the member from Meewasin said SaskPower, SaskEnergy, and SaskTel have, and I quote, "some of the most affordable rates in the country."

Or last September, quite frankly, when the NDP leader said Saskatchewan has, and I quote, "the most affordable housing in the country."

Well we have the most affordable housing, Mr. Speaker; we have the most affordable utility rates; we have the lowest taxes in the country. So now we're going to take the Trudeau-NDP carbon tax off of SaskEnergy bills. Will the members opposite acknowledge that that is how we make life more affordable for Saskatchewan?

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, spin and again denying the reality that Saskatchewan people know all too well when it comes to the cost of living. Of course we've stood united and opposed to the federal carbon tax, Mr. Speaker, but that tired and out-of-touch government has hiked taxes and costs for people on front after front.

On top of the carbon tax, they brought in the largest tax hike in Saskatchewan's history, doubling the take of the PST, more than \$1.5 billion more out of the pockets of Saskatchewan people — and on their backs — all while sitting on record revenues. People in our province today need some relief with respect to the crushing cost of living, and the right thing to do is to offer some relief at the pumps.

Why won't the Finance minister suspend the fuel tax for six months and help families struggling to get by?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Again, Mr. Speaker, and I think they keep on forgetting it, but they know that we invested \$450 million — went straight to Saskatchewan taxpayers — \$450 million, which is far more than what they're suggesting. Because they've never had a plan. They always come too late to the party.

But you know, I found out that they do have a plan, and it's the

same as Trudeau's plan. They think that we should all get a heat pump, Mr. Speaker. The NDP member for Elphinstone-Centre retweeted just recently a promotion on heat pumps.

[14:15]

Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to take home heating advice from the member opposite. Instead I think I'll listen to someone like Jim Niebergall of Johnson heating and plumbing in Estevan, who says heat pumps just don't work very well in Saskatchewan. He says they are expensive to install and expensive to repair and don't work that well at minus 10.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the most economic way to heat in Saskatchewan is natural gas, and that makes a lot more sense than a Trudeau-NDP heat pump.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Of course we've stood opposed to the actions of the federal government on this front, Mr. Speaker. You know, but that Finance minister, in denying Saskatchewan people fuel tax relief, she should take those lines out to the doorsteps or out to the rinks or out to the grocery stores or out to the gas stations, Mr. Speaker.

It just shows how out of touch that lot has become. They're completely ignoring the number one issue, the number one biggest challenge that people are facing today — the crushing cost of living. Families need a break so they can pay their bills, often to keep their heads above water. Our plan for a six-month pause on the fuel tax would save the average family \$350. That's real money for real people.

Why does that Sask Party government think those dollars are better off in their coffers than in the pockets of hard-working Saskatchewan people?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, again the members, when they're not using their rhetoric here in the House, do acknowledge that housing is most affordable in Saskatchewan, that our utility rates are among the lowest in the country, our housing is the lowest in the country. And they have to acknowledge that our income tax is the lowest in the country, Mr. Speaker.

That is all measures that this government has taken, as well as the \$450 million investment straight to the residents of our province, to make life more affordable.

It's the first time they've come up with a plan. And the last time they did a plan, quite frankly, they had an idea even to pay for it, because usually they don't. And their plan, if we would have tracked it, would have generated \$5 million. That's it. That's it, Mr. Speaker. It was going to be that 1 little wee per cent surcharge on our natural resources. Guess what that would have generated? Five million.

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

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, it's all spin and storytelling, but in the real world, Saskatchewan people are hurting with the crushing cost of living and the tax hike and cost hike on front after front from that government. And they're looking for their government to offer some relief, not more costs and taxes as we've seen time and time again from that Sask Party government.

But what are that government's priorities right now? An emergency session to strip away the rights of kids, vulnerable kids in this province; an \$11 million settlement with one of the Sask Party's largest donors; nearly a million dollars for a pavilion in Dubai; all while offering no cost-of-living relief for families. Just higher bills and higher costs.

What's changed for the Sask Party? How have they become so out of touch with Saskatchewan people?

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

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Some great news from Statistics Canada that we just got on Friday, I believe, showing that our economy last year grew by 6 per cent. It's the highest growth of any economy, any provincial economy in the entire country, Mr. Speaker.

What's important to remember as well, that same study showed \$72 billion of GDP [gross domestic product] in the province. What we export out of that \$72 billion is \$53 billion. That puts into stark relief, Mr. Speaker, how dependant and reliant we are on international markets and international engagement and why it is so important that we be engaging with our partners around the world.

What it means, Mr. Speaker, is jobs, 19,000 jobs created year over year. That's electricians working at the BHP mine at Jansen Lake. That's AGT Foods in Rosetown. That's foresters working for Mistik . . .

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

Government Attendance at Conference of Parties 28

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This minister can spin all he wants to justify a trip around the world. But it's apparent that this government can't afford to give families a break on the cost of living but they've got nearly a million dollars for a pavilion in Dubai. It doesn't make any sense, Mr. Speaker.

The Premier has already said that he doesn't care about climate change, but this tired and out-of-touch government is making Saskatchewan people foot the bill for their \$765,000 pavilion at a climate change conference. It doesn't make any sense.

How does the Sask Party government justify spending so much public money on a conference that they've shown they care so little about, based on their own record of inaction on climate change?

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

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Well the NDP demonstrate day after day after day why they are so out of touch with the realities of our economy, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to say it again: \$72 billion GDP in this province; \$53 billion of that is because of exports. That means we need to engage with our partners who buy those products around the world, Mr. Speaker. It is absolutely central to what we do.

Our jobs are dependent on that and it's working, Mr. Speaker. Over 19,000 jobs created last year. GDP growth of 6 per cent annualized, Mr. Speaker, the highest real GDP growth in the country. That means jobs for people who are working at Mistik Management as foresters, who are exporting those commodities around the world. That's people working for AGT in Rosetown, where major investments are being made because those commodities are being exported to India, Mr. Speaker.

That's why we have to engage. That's energy workers in Lloydminster. That's farmers in Carrot River, Mr. Speaker. These are real people and real jobs, and that's why we're engaging.

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

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To be clear, we're not saying it's a mistake to go to COP. We're saying it's a mistake to spend nearly a million dollars of public money on a pavilion while you're doing so, especially, Mr. Speaker, especially when you look at what other provinces across this country are doing. Alberta, Quebec, BC — they're all attending the COP28 conference in Dubai and are using the federal pavilion instead of making their residents pay the price for a pavilion of their own.

None of those provinces, Mr. Speaker, have a Liberal government. Why couldn't the Sask Party government do the same and save the public three-quarters of a million dollars?

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

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — How out of touch the NDP are is really remarkable, Mr. Speaker. We have 40 businesses that are going to COP. This is their platform, Mr. Speaker. This is their platform of 40 businesses to tell their story.

I can guarantee, Mr. Speaker, that Justin Trudeau isn't interested in hearing stories about sustainable energy production, of sustainable oil production, of sustainable natural gas production, of sustainable forestry production, of sustainable uranium production, of sustainable potash production. This is not something that Steven Guilbeault, Justin Trudeau, or those members opposite have any interest in hearing, Mr. Speaker.

We're providing a platform, our own platform, a Saskatchewan platform for those companies to be able to tell those stories, and I can't wait to start telling those stories here, Mr. Speaker. And we're going to be working with those companies to make sure that the world knows how we do things in the best way, the most sustainable, the most responsible way of anywhere in the world.

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

Overdose Deaths and Treatment for Addictions

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, new numbers from the Saskatchewan Coroners Service show the terrible toll that the overdose crisis is taking on communities across Saskatchewan. So far this year 202 overdose deaths have been confirmed by the coroner and 193 are suspected and still under investigation.

We're only in the middle of November, Mr. Speaker, but at 395 total deaths we're on track to beat what was once a record of 403 deaths set in 2021. These aren't just numbers, Mr. Speaker. They're people — parents, brothers, sisters, sons, and daughters — lost to an overdose crisis that is growing out of control.

When will this government finally bring forward an evidence-based plan to stop the harm ripping through our province?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions.

Hon. Mr. T. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank my friend for the question. Our government recognizes that mental health and addictions is a very serious concern, not just in Saskatchewan but across the country. And that's why we have unveiled a five-year plan for mental health and addictions. It's a plan that is going to see more than double the number of addictions treatment spaces in this province.

But it's not going to stop there, Mr. Speaker. We're going to make it easier for individuals who might be struggling with addiction to access those spaces. And when they're in those spaces, we are going to focus on recovery and treatment so that these individuals can live healthy lives beyond their addiction, in recovery. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 150 — *The Securities (Saskatchewan Investors Protection) Amendment Act, 2023*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill No. 150, *The Securities (Saskatchewan Investors Protection) Amendment Act, 2023* be now introduced and read a first time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that Bill No. 150 be now introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — When shall the bill be read a second time? I recognize the minister.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Next sitting of the Assembly.

The Speaker: — Next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 148 — *The Film Content Information Act*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of *The Film Content Information Act*. The proposed bill will replace *The Film and Video Classification Act, 2016*.

Mr. Speaker, the film industry has undergone significant changes since the existing film classification system was originally implemented. Digital technologies, streaming platforms have changed how media is being distributed and consumed. Increasingly film content is being downloaded over the internet or streamed on demand rather than being viewed at theatres or at home. We all remember the days of video tapes and DVDs [digital versatile disc]. That said, the film industry has also seen something of a renaissance since the pandemic.

The current Act, Mr. Speaker, requires classification of films before they are exhibited to the public or sold or rented. It also requires that advertising associated with films be approved. Film exhibitors and distributors must also currently register with and submit an annual return to the director of film classification with the Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority. Additionally exhibitors and distributors must pay a fee of up to \$440 per film for the classification of a film unless it's exempted from classification in Saskatchewan. This Act will remove that fee, resulting in savings to operators of about \$65,000.

There is a lot of red tape for cinema operators currently, Mr. Speaker. National exhibitors must at times pay multiple sets of classification fees in different provinces for a film to be viewed in Canada. Film industry stakeholders in Saskatchewan have asked the government to consider ways to reduce the burden and costs for film exhibitors, big and small. We listened.

Bottom line, Mr. Speaker, this Act will modernize film classification, remove cumbersome and expensive requirements for cinema operators, and ensure that Saskatchewan filmgoers continue to make informed viewing choices. Exhibitors will now be required to provide information about a film's content to consumers in advance of exhibition.

It's also important to note that the bill will still require that adult films be reviewed and approved by an entity authorized to approve adult films. And, Mr. Speaker, this proposed bill will continue to ensure that consumers are provided with film content information that they need to make informed viewing choices, but will also reduce unnecessary red tape and compliance costs for businesses.

Also important to note, Mr. Speaker, that the legislation and accompanying regulations will still require that film exhibitors provide detailed information on a film's content with the public, including the age of the intended audience; adult themes; violent, coarse, or obscene language; and substance use.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of *The Film Content Information Act*.

The Speaker: — It has been moved that Bill No. 148 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

[14:30]

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise today and enter into the debate on Bill No. 148. I appreciate the minister's second reading comments. It helps to give us an overview of the legislation. As she had mentioned, the bill is a replacement of the current film classification system. As we all know, the film industry and technology around their work has been modernized over the years. The way entertainment is consumed and sold these days has changed even from, I would say, five years ago.

The minister mentioned that this has been done at the request of the film industry. I know that my colleague is going to do some work in terms of engaging the stakeholders to ensure that all of their requests have been met.

I will say we're happy to see the government listen to the film industry now. They certainly didn't listen to the film industry when they asked them not to kill the film tax credit. That happened over a decade ago, and the film industry in Saskatchewan is still reeling from that government's decision to do that at that time, Mr. Speaker.

I know I have quite a few other colleagues who are looking to enter into the debate on Bill No. 148. In order to facilitate that work, I will move now to adjourn debate on Bill 148.

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. 149 — *The Franchise Disclosure Act*

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of *The Franchise Disclosure Act*. Saskatchewan's business community, needless to say, is dynamic and there are more opportunities than ever for new businesses to come into the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. There are also opportunities for Saskatchewan-made businesses to expand, both within and outside the province.

Saskatchewan is currently the only Western province without franchise disclosure legislation, which is used to regulate the franchise marketplace and protect all parties within a franchise agreement. At its root, it addresses the perceived power imbalance between franchisor and franchisee.

Mr. Speaker, this proposed Act will create disclosure requirements for those who enter into franchise agreements in Saskatchewan. It will also include a duty of good faith imposed

on all parties and the right of franchisees to associate with each other. The proposed Act follows the *Uniform Franchises Act* adopted by the Uniform Law Conference of Canada, and which is largely reflected in legislation currently in place in British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of *The Franchise Disclosure Act*.

The Speaker: — It has been moved that Bill No. 149 be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise today and enter into the debate on Bill No. 149. I appreciate the minister's comments at second reading. I was very interested in reading this piece of legislation the other day, and the regulations and the rules around essentially what looks like protecting franchisees as they enter into these sorts of agreements into the future.

I have colleagues who have better connections to business owners than myself, to be honest. I'm looking forward to their dialogues with those stakeholders to hear about their thoughts and concerns, their experiences in the world of franchising, and what sort of information they would have liked to have presented to them, and things that they would have liked to have known prior to entering those sorts of business agreements.

Looking forward to that consultative work. I know that there are a lot of my colleagues who are looking forward to entering into the debate on this piece of legislation. And in order to facilitate that along with the consultation that will be ongoing, I'm prepared now to move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 149.

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.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 138

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. McMorris that **Bill No. 138 — *The Workers' Compensation (Extending Firefighter Coverage) Amendment Act, 2023*** be now read a second time.]

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Mr. Vermette: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, to join in on Bill No. 138, *The Workers' Compensation Act, 2023*. I want to give a little bit of credit to the firefighters and paramedics association that have done amazing work with lobbying and bringing forward concerns from both sides of the Assembly as they, for years, have met and have raised concerns about extended coverage for cancer, certain types.

And in here this legislation refers to six areas that they're going to be moving forward on. And so I want to thank the firefighters association, the president and the whole team, those groups that came and advocated, and the reason why, and listening to their concerns and what they felt for their members. We know that our front-line workers like firefighters, paramedics, they do amazing work. You know, as we're all leaving and people are trying to get out of the fires, they're the ones that go in to protect us and save lives and save property. So I just want to acknowledge the good work they do.

This is the right way. And I think the minister talked in his comments about the process of the duty to make sure their concerns are being heard, and the time that he's spent in communications, consulting back and forth. And I know one of my colleagues talked about that as she commented on the bill, that that's the right thing to do. When the government and we're debating legislation, let's make sure that we're consulting and we're talking with those individuals that will be impacted and that we are, government is doing the right thing.

And I know members opposite on this side make sure we talk to individuals to make sure that certain legislations . . . Is it the right fit? Is there concerns? And we ask them to get a hold of us as our critics, as members opposite, to hold government accountable to make sure government has it right. We want legislation that, Mr. Speaker, is what's best for Saskatchewan people, whether it's workers, residents. And that's important, and I know there's a whole bunch of other stuff that they're looking at in this package of legislation that they brought forward.

But the one area I wanted to talk to, you know, was really important, was about the adding the six areas where they're going to be covering cancer for firefighters and paramedics. So again I know this is very important. They've advocated very hard, and it's the right thing to do, and I want to acknowledge them and say that. And again the minister made comments, my colleague made comments about making sure when we introduce legislation . . . I wish this government truly would spend more time, when they want to introduce legislation, that they've talked to those individuals that are impacted.

And I just want to give examples before I go on because this is positive and I want to leave it on a positive note. But I also want to remind government and remind the members opposite that our First Nations and Métis, a meaningful duty-to-consult and, you know, accommodate legislation is important. I know my colleague from Saskatoon Centre has pushed that, and we'll always continue to push that, and that is legislation that would have . . . legislation with teeth.

And I just want to refer to that. That's important, and I think many of our leaders have been asking for that, the meaningful . . . Our trappers, they struggle, and they would like to be . . . Whether you're harvesting wood products, whether you're in their traditional territories, they would like to have legislation. And I know they've raised concerns and will continue to raise concerns. Their association, our Northern Trappers Association, they talk about that.

So there's legislation like this. So when you have legislation like this and you have a government that consults and says they did great consult, I wish they would do the same with our northern

trappers, our northern people, when legislation that impacts our North . . . And the government would like to go after the industry and our northern people. We encourage that for the jobs and we want to work.

Our trappers, our northern leaders, they want to work with government, with industry, but they want to make sure that they're consulted in a meaningful way. So when the government says that they have done the work, consulted with firefighters, and that's how they come up with this legislation that will truly be something that our firefighters advocated for, this is important. That's the way to do it.

And I hope on that file we'll have a government willing to work with our northern leaders, our northern people, our trappers, those who live the traditional lifestyle, and will consult and make sure . . . Before you impact their jurisdiction, you make sure that there's meaningful legislation that has teeth that makes sure industry and everybody has to abide, and that one day I hope will come. And I just want to use that as an example, Mr. Speaker, just to show back and forth, you know, the way some of this good work is done and the way some of the good work should be done. And that's what I was doing by that.

I don't have much more. I know more of my colleagues will have things to talk about this and look at. And the critic will have the ability to ask some questions and consult with people, seeing how this legislation will impact those areas. So I'm prepared at this time, Mr. Speaker, to move adjourned debate on Bill 138.

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. 140

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Eyre that **Bill No. 140 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal Act, 2023*** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Clarke: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be on my feet today to enter in debate on Bill 140, *The Miscellaneous Statutes Repeal Act*. This is an Act that looks to repeal a number of private bills and public bills that were created back in the 1920s, 1940s. So you know, in favour of the bill here today to clean up some of the Acts of government.

I do think it's a good time though, Mr. Speaker, to reflect on some of these bills and where we're at as a province today. We see, you know, the Act to incorporate Sacred Heart Academy in 1920. This is a faith-based school in the education system, and I think it's an important time to think about where we are in the education system.

As a former teacher, the state of education is definitely one of the reasons why I've gotten involved in politics here, because as a

public school teacher for eight years, I've watched the system crumble around me as a teacher and around my students. And so I do think it is a good time to think about, you know, how we can do better.

And the members opposite often like to talk about building schools, which is great. We do need that infrastructure for our growing province. However when we hear from teachers, when we hear from school divisions, when we hear from parents, we hear that there is a need to staff those schools, to have the supports in those schools that students need, like counsellors, like psychologists, and the supports like EAs [educational assistant] in the classroom. So I would like to take a moment to hopefully implore on the government to consider how they can best fund our struggling education system here.

One of the other Acts that's being repealed here is the Wildlife Foundation of Saskatchewan. And as Environment critic and someone who's been involved in conservation in this province for the last couple decades, you know, this government has a record of weak commitment to conservation in this province, whether that's the sale of Crown lands . . . You know, we've seen this government wholesale auction off huge amounts of land that was held for the public good to conserve that habitat and conserve Indigenous access to the Crown land. It's important.

One of the other things that we don't see is protection for endangered species in this province. And most importantly I think, or timely, is the lack of a wetland policy. And so I would call on the government to really . . . As we repeal the Wildlife Foundation of Saskatchewan Act, I would implore the government to think about how we can protect wetlands across this province instead of the agricultural drainage policy that we see the government bringing in through the Water Security Agency.

As far as I know, Mr. Speaker, we still do not have a response to the 2,200 letters that were signed and delivered to the Premier a month and a bit ago. We still don't have a response to that, and that's pretty sad for all of those thousands of residents who are calling on this government to put together a wetland policy for all the right reasons. So with that, Mr. Speaker, I'll wrap up my comments and move to adjourn debate on Bill 140 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.

[14:45]

Bill No. 141

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Eyre that **Bill No. 141 — The Statute Law Amendment Act, 2023** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise

and enter in on the debate on Bill No. 141. Now my understanding of this piece of legislation, it's largely a housekeeping bill, fairly inconsequential changes to the legislation. For example, replacing references to Her Majesty the Queen with the Crown, something we've seen in several other bills replacing this type of legislation. Good to see that it's changing to a generic language so we don't have to table this kind of legislation and amend all legislation moving forward.

It's also an interesting one that I won't comment on too much but I thought it's something that bears noting, is that they're also changing any mention of "his" or "her" to "their," to be gender neutral. Hmm. Interesting, Mr. Speaker. Glad to see it, Mr. Speaker. It makes sense in this modern world.

Mr. Speaker, I know I have several other colleagues who are interested in entering into this debate. Looking forward to their thoughts. At this time I am prepared to move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 141.

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. 142

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Duncan that **Bill No. 142 — The Miscellaneous Statutes (Utility Line Locates) Amendment Act, 2023** 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 briefly with respect to Bill No. 142, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Utility Line Locates) Amendment Act, 2023*. Mr. Speaker, this bill relates to excavation and safety, Mr. Speaker, and it relates to very important Crown corporations in our province — SaskTel, SaskPower, and SaskEnergy — Crowns that provide such exceptional value and service to the people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

As we talk about those Crowns, we need to always be mindful, Mr. Speaker, that it was just a few years ago that that Sask Party government showed their true colours, Mr. Speaker, and took a direct run at selling off and privatizing our Crown corporations. And I just want to say thank you to the people of Saskatchewan once again, from corner to corner to corner in Saskatchewan, that rose up, that spoke out along with this spirited and strong official opposition to stop that short-sighted sell-off that would have sold out the best interests of Saskatchewan people and all the value and economic opportunity and jobs and affordability that we should be able to ensure with our Crown corporations.

We know this is a government that has not been kind to our Crowns. They've been running them into the ground, Mr. Speaker, through mismanagement, through the choices, political choices of that Sask Party. But those points are secondary to this bill, Mr. Speaker.

In the weeks to follow certainly we'll engage to make sure that this change makes sense. What this does is makes the notice for a line locate, extends it from 48 hours to three working days, Mr. Speaker. The minister suggested this would be good for standardization, Mr. Speaker. We'd have questions on that.

Certainly it's very important that Saskatchewan people order a line locate when they are going to do any work, Mr. Speaker, whether they're digging a hole in the backyard or where someone's going to be building a fence on a farm. This is about safety for the people of Saskatchewan, and we want to make sure that that's done in a real efficient way, in the way that Saskatchewan people can count on and trust.

I know the current situation, Mr. Speaker, is one that a lot of people comment that they really appreciate the performance of the line location and the Crowns on this front, Mr. Speaker. It is very important that we continue to really build that culture that ordering that line locate is an essential part of any excavation project, Mr. Speaker.

So we'll review this through committees and with stakeholders, Mr. Speaker, and make sure that if there's ways to improve this legislation, certainly that will be our aim. With that being said, Mr. Speaker, I'd move to adjourn debate.

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. 143

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Cockrill that **Bill No. 143 — The Child Care Amendment Act, 2023/Loi modificative de 2023 sur les garderies d'enfants** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to be on my feet, entering into debate on Bill No. 143, *The Child Care Amendment Act*. As you'll recall, Mr. Speaker, this is following on the heels of the historic agreement that was signed between the federal government and our provincial government to bring in \$10-a-day daycare for Saskatchewan families, that being back in April of this year.

And I mean, I think I would be remiss if I didn't give credit where credit is due on the historic development that this bill is reflecting, and that of course being the federal NDP and their work to ensure that our federal Liberal government, as part of the contract and supply agreement that they signed with our federal NDP counterparts, would ensure affordable child care for Saskatchewan families. And it's because of that contract and supply agreement between the federal and Liberal parties on the federal level that we are able to see such general funding of 1.2 billion being provided to the early-year sector to improve access to child care spaces across the province.

Now certainly our provincial government was very quick — surprisingly quick in fact, Mr. Speaker — in how quickly they jumped at the chance to receive that federal money, and yet not so quick to have a plan put in place to ensure that there is access for those additional 6,000 spaces that this money is expected to create.

We continue to have child care deserts across the province, particularly in our rural communities but not just rural, but urban as well. It affects all constituencies, including my own in Saskatoon Nutana. And there's been a lot of unintended consequences because of the quick manner in which the Sask Party government took in bringing forward a program to provide affordable access, and that being its impact on part-time children in licensed daycares and now they become ineligible. And so there's certainly been some problems with the way that this has been rolled out.

I take note that the minister indicated that there has been consultation that has occurred on this amendment Act. And I'm very curious to know who indeed was consulted, because certainly when we have been speaking with child care operators here in the province, they have brought forward numerous concerns and things that have not been contemplated with this rollout. And certainly we know that consultation with affected stakeholders is always good practice. And I'm sure that our critic will have many questions for the minister in the content of those consultations, who they consulted, and how that feedback has been incorporated in the legislation we see before us here today.

It has already been mentioned that, as I say, we do have child care deserts. And the pace at which those new spaces are being opened up is disturbingly slow, and much will need to be done to address those shortcomings. But certainly it is a vital, vital measure to ensure not only that we have the funding, but also amendments to *The Child Care Act* to ensure that these 6,000 spaces can be provided, because this is important for Saskatchewan families. It's important for our economy to make sure that families have access to affordable child care in order so that they can continue to work, provide for their families, put food on the table.

We've already heard today that this government has no interest in providing affordability relief in the form of a six-month rollback on the gas tax and other areas as well. Certainly by ensuring affordable child care, which as I say is because of the good work done by our federal counterparts to ensure that this legislation finally makes it across the boards after 30 years of multiple failures, not the least of which was what happened after the change in government to a Harper-led Conservative government that this party, the Sask Party had supported, that cancelled the agreements that had been in place.

And so it is also notable that there is federal legislation going forward to ensure that if we do see a change in government again that it won't be as easy for these measures to be rolled back. And I certainly want to make sure that everything is done in that regard.

I know certainly this legislation comes 30 years too late for my family. My kids are grown up, and you know, it was extremely quite a big hardship. It took up a big portion of our family income in order for us to have child care while my children were small.

But I look with optimism and hope for my children's children and their ability to ensure that they can have an affordable access to daycare moving forward.

It's also important to mention though that when it comes to not just the affordability for families, that this also impacts on the medium pay that early childhood educators are receiving. Here in Saskatchewan, based on the best available data, early child care workers are making between \$15.26 and \$17.44. A wage grid is part of the agreement that is coming forward to ensure that we have affordable child care. And I just want to say that that is going to be a vital part of this framework, one that will ensure that there are wages that reflect the valuable work that early childhood educators perform and that we recognize their professional credentials in that.

I will note though, however, that there is nothing there to address benefits like pension and paid sick days. Those are things that are missing. And I know that our critic will have many questions about what is in this child care amendment Act and what isn't, because these are things that matter as well.

I know that our critic will have far more to say on this bill and will undertake the consultation with stakeholders to understand how this bill will come to meet the mark in terms of ensuring that we have a robust child care system here in Saskatchewan that supports families and supports our economy. And I'll leave them to do that good work. And with that I'll move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 143.

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. 144

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Mr. Merriman that **Bill No. 144 — The Police (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act, 2023** 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 briefly today with respect to Bill No. 144, *The Police (Miscellaneous) Amendment Act, 2023*.

Now this bill is a result of the Sask Party's approach to policing, Mr. Speaker, with the announcement that they're going to be building out a marshals service in Saskatchewan. Now of course we've canvassed this well in this Assembly, and our critic has been very vocal on this front, as has the policing community. This service and this approach is, you know, really political, Mr. Speaker, but is the result of really no consultation at all with the policing community, with those on the ground that know a thing or two about community safety, Mr. Speaker.

[15:00]

Now we know the Sask Party has a really bad record when it comes to crime and community safety, Mr. Speaker, and acting on the ways that they could to make sure that people are safe in communities and homes and farms across our province. You know, there was no consultation with police officers, nothing with police chiefs, nothing with the RCMP, Mr. Speaker, nothing with respect to all those that are involved in addressing the root causes of crime as well, all the organizations that know the reality all too well in communities across Saskatchewan.

So now what we're stuck with, Mr. Speaker, is another political action from this government, a whole bunch of taxpayers' money being let out the door, Mr. Speaker, but a government that's missing the mark when they should be turning the dial in responding to communities' concerns around crime and community safety.

The dollars that they're deploying on this front, Mr. Speaker, for their marshals service — we know it's been panned, if you will, Mr. Speaker, by leaders in the policing community, Mr. Speaker — would be much better deployed and go much further in making a difference and make community safety safer by working directly with the RCMP and municipal forces across the province, with police on the ground, Mr. Speaker, making sure they have the resources, making sure that they're able to address the concerns around call response times, Mr. Speaker, making sure the service is there when people need it in communities across the province, and then very importantly making sure that a portion of these dollars that this government is, you know, going to be spending for, you know, a very costly police force, and you know, bureaucracy and equipment and uniforms and badges and tools, Mr. Speaker, instead of deploying those in a more efficient, effective way with the RCMP and with municipal forces, Mr. Speaker.

They could have then also been investing to address the root causes of crime, Mr. Speaker, mental health and addictions, poverty most certainly, Mr. Speaker, working with those that are involved on the ground in communities across Saskatchewan around community safety, Mr. Speaker. So this really represents a real lost opportunity, a government that's been failing on community safety and on crime, Mr. Speaker, and that's doubling down with a more costly approach than one that would ensure better performance and safety and value for the people of Saskatchewan.

And this is sort of the way this current lot operates, Mr. Speaker. They've been a real tax-and-squander bunch, Mr. Speaker, on front after front where they take the hard-earned tax dollars of Saskatchewan people — ever growing if you look at the increases of that government, the biggest tax hike in Saskatchewan's history, Mr. Speaker, by way of the PST alone — and then stick people with that bill and then squander so many of those dollars as well.

We see that of course in the way they mismanaged the GTH [Global Transportation Hub], Mr. Speaker, or the bypass. We see it of course on many of the IT [information technology] projects that have just gone sideways under this government, Mr. Speaker, and so many dollars lost or wasted, Mr. Speaker. And we see it as well with things like the Saskatchewan revenue agency, Mr. Speaker, that should have been recognized as a costly, bad idea from the get-go. But not with these guys, Mr.

Speaker. They want a whole bunch more red tape for businesses and farms across Saskatchewan and a whole bunch more costs on those businesses and farms across Saskatchewan as well, Mr. Speaker.

But that's not the end of it. They want to of course then spend millions of dollars on top of that out of operations, Mr. Speaker, out of the Saskatchewan budget to operate that revenue agency. We see an approach from this government, Mr. Speaker, that's often detached from reality. It's certainly detached from common sense, Mr. Speaker. And we've seen that in the costly approach and their failures to better support policing, the root causes of crime, and to keep people safe.

With that being said, Mr. Speaker, I'll move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 144.

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. 145

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Eyre that **Bill No. 145 — The Funeral and Cremation Services (Legal Decision-Maker Protection) Amendment Act, 2023** be now read a second time.]

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

Mr. Teed: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour to enter into adjourned debate on Bill No. 145, *The Funeral and Cremation Services (Legal Decision-Maker Protection) Amendment Act, 2023*.

I want to first say a thank you to the minister for her comments in her second reading speech, and I want to thank my colleagues who have already previously put comments on the record as it relates to this amendment.

Mr. Speaker, we're talking about funeral and cremation services and some of the legalities around that. I just want to first, you know, recognize that anyone who is experiencing the loss of a loved one, you know, that process is never easy. Whether it is a surprise or something that you've seen coming, to have to go through that situation — and we all have — is a terrible, never an easy situation to be in. And I know, Mr. Speaker, you know, when things like this happen in our lives, there are always so many decisions to be made. And from past experience, Mr. Speaker, you know, those decisions happen in a blur. And I couldn't imagine, Mr. Speaker, if there was ever a dispute during that process. And so we welcome this legislation that just updates *The Funeral and Cremation Services Act* to a more modern lens.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation looks to make the process more clear when there are disputes over the disposition of human remains. The current legislation sets out an order of precedence, and in the case of conflict, looks to the oldest of a parent or guardian set. Now we realize that this is an archaic process. It doesn't reflect

the modern needs of our modern society. And our family structures, they're becoming more diverse and modern as the time goes on.

And so, Mr. Speaker, in this legislation we're seeing an amendment to the funeral and cremation services to replace the words "parent or legal guardian," replace with "legal decision-maker." So if the deceased had two separated parents who disagree over what to do, control goes to the one who has been raising them.

You know, like as I mentioned, it used to be the parent or guardian who was older, which in some cases allowed an estranged parent to take control of the remains in spite of an active parent being involved in that person's life. And, Mr. Speaker, we had seen this issue happen recently. Advocacy was brought forward to my colleagues, the member from Regina Douglas Park and my colleague, the member from Regina University, wherein this had happened.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we are so happy to see this legislation brought forward amending this so that folks having to go through this situation will have clarity, will be able to take care of their loved ones, and will have peace of mind during what can be a very stressful, emotional, and painful experience.

As I mentioned, this is something that had been advocated on this side and we very much welcome this legislation. And I just want to say that my heart goes out to all those folks who may be even dealing with this situation right now or dealing with the loss of a loved one. I really hope that this change is something that will make that process easier for them.

Mr. Speaker, I know that my colleagues will have more to say and we'll certainly be looking over the legislation. And our critic will be speaking to it, and so at this time I will move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 145, *The Funeral and Cremation Services (Legal Decision-Maker Protection) Amendment Act, 2023*.

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. 146

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by the Hon. Ms. Eyre that **Bill No. 146 — The King's Bench Consequential Amendments Act, 2023** be now read a second time.]

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

Ms. Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be on my feet to enter into debate on Bill No. 146, *The King's Bench Consequential Amendments Act, 2023*. So this is a bill, as you know. It is a companion bill to *The Queen's Bench Act* that was passed in the last session as a result of the succession of the Throne. And in the meantime we've all been getting used to singing "God Save the King" not "God Save the Queen,"

referring to the King's Court instead of the Queen's Court, or King's Bench and so on and so forth. I'm even now starting to get confused trying to go back and forth interchangeably.

But you know, I thought that I would just take a moment to talk about that relationship with the Crown. You know, certainly last year in 2022, we had the wonderful opportunity to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee with the awarding of medals to deserving Saskatchewanians. We all received I think it was 40-plus medals in each of our constituencies to honour and recognize constituents who have given exemplary service or given back to their communities. And it was a touching way in order for us as subjects of the Crown to honour and recognize both the long service of the former Queen Elizabeth and recognize constituents for their work in contributing to their communities — and it was such a wonderful opportunity, given her subsequent passing.

And it also provided an opportunity for there to be broader conversations about that relationship with the monarchy. Whether that be a queen or a king, they are each sovereign. And certainly it was a long time coming. King Charles must be a very patient man, I'm sure, to have waited his whole entire life to move into this vital and important role.

And I think, as I say, it does provide this fitting opportunity to acknowledge our system of government here in Canada and indeed in the province of Saskatchewan, where we have a constitutional monarchy with the sovereign as the head of our government, and that certainly when we have our elected governments and our executive government, represented by the Premier, that we do so in a way that is upholding the duties and rights of the Constitution and the monarch.

And we all have such an important role to play as we respect the three branches of government. And certainly that was something that came to be very seriously tested in this Assembly during the recent emergency session that concluded a few weeks back. And you know, we had the invoking of the notwithstanding clause. We had legislation that our judiciary, another branch of our government, had indicated that there was potential for serious harms on vulnerable youth. Our judiciary had a role to play in that process. And so as we move to now recognize the King's Bench, the King's role as our sovereign, it's this opportunity to recognize the important role that each branch of our government plays.

[15:15]

And so I've kind of touched on that at a high level, but I do feel it's important at this point, given the time on the clock. I am going to use this opportunity to just highlight, you know, what our system of government is and the role that the King plays here in Saskatchewan through its representative, our Lieutenant Governor, because I think it bears mentioning in light of what recently did transpire in this Assembly under that Sask Party government, under that Premier, who has really called into question the rights and privileges of this government at this time as we transition over to the King as our sovereign, and as we move forward with these amendments to the King's Bench and consequential amendments.

So I will begin. So as is stated . . . And part of this is verbatim.

I'll kind of go off verbatim as I read this out, but this is what is stated on our Legislative Assembly's website about our system of government.

So first of all it acknowledges that we belong to a constitutional monarchy. And you know, as a layperson — I'm not a lawyer, you know; you'll have to leave that to others in the Assembly with a legal background — but this is quite easy to follow and easy to understand in terms of what a constitutional monarchy is here in Saskatchewan. So here's what it says, Mr. Speaker:

While the Prime Minister and the premiers of Canada's provinces are heads of government, His Majesty King Charles III is Canada's formal head of state. This is in contrast to the system of government in the United States, where the president is the head of both government and state.

So that right there is a very crucial difference and distinction between . . . You know, when we try to bring American concepts into a Canadian context, they don't always compute because of that difference in our system of government.

So it goes on to say that:

In the Canadian Constitution, government is declared "to continue and be vested in the King." The Saskatchewan legislature consists of the Legislative Assembly and the King, or the Lieutenant Governor who ordinarily represents the King.

So that kind of explains why all these consequential amendments are necessary, because they do now currently refer to the Queen's Bench, not the King's Bench, and that important role that they play.

Now I'm sorry. I don't mean to bore you with all this, Mr. Speaker. I'll try to keep it a little more lively so that, you know, we're not falling asleep in our chairs or anything. But I'll go on. So here's an important piece. So it says:

It is significant that the Lieutenant Governor has the power to dissolve or dismiss a legislature. Our Constitution was intentionally framed to place the supreme power of the state with the Crown, beyond control of the partisan political process.

Okay, so I'll stop there because I think this is important . . . [inaudible] . . . Because I think, you know, oftentimes we hear, well do we still need a monarchy or not? Like what role do they play? Are they necessary? And it's a good question. And I think if you don't really understand our system of government and the roles and responsibilities of the three branches, it may seem frivolous — that the King's role and his representative, the Lieutenant Governor, doesn't have a significant role to play. But I think that there are arguments to the contrary.

And that's not to also ignore the fact that that relationship with the Crown is complex. It is. And I know I certainly have had very heated debates with individuals who have felt wronged by the Crown. And certainly when it comes to the duty of the Crown and as that relates to our treaty relationships, it's been fraught with problems, absolutely. And so the monarchy not only just

represents, you know, that power and our system of government, but it also represents those treaty relationships, those treaty obligations. And certainly when it comes to things like the duty-to-consult — and we've heard a lot about duty-to-consult in these chambers over the last little while, whether it's sale of Crown lands, the gaps in the duty-to-consult framework — it's a policy framework. It's not legislation.

The member for Saskatoon Nutana had tried to address those shortcomings with a bill, Bill No. 610, *The Meaningful Duty to Consult Act*, that would enshrine that important relationship between the Crown or their sovereign and treaty people, and, most notably, First Nation Indigenous, Métis Indigenous rights holders here in Saskatchewan.

And so, you know, this is an enduring and ongoing relationship, and it's one that is still being sorted out. Certainly, as I say, we have called for legislation to more firmly entrench and define what that duty on the Crown to consult looks like. And yes of course, you know, there is a lot of legal precedent out there right now that speaks to that, but it remains unsatisfactory, and much needs to be done to ensure that when things like Crown land sales happen, that that is a fair process that respects our treaties. And that is why the member for Saskatoon Centre brought forward that bill, because in her work as critic, you know, there had been many, many concerns, many shortcomings identified that she wanted to bring forward.

But let me go back to where I started from and just say that, you know, it does have to do with that duty-to-consult and the honour of the Crown, and it's been a complicated relationship.

And then certainly as a member of this Legislative Assembly, alongside of my counterparts here, we all signed an oath to serve honourably in honour of the sovereign. And that is an oath that we all should be taking very seriously. And certainly I endeavour to do that, and I look to my counterparts to do the same. And some of us, you know, have more roles and responsibilities than others, depending on where they fit in this process, and in particular on the Premier as, you know, the head of our government.

So symbolically, as I mentioned earlier, every Act is passed by the Legislative Assembly in the name of the King. In principle the Crown is the custodian of our Constitution and the guarantor of our democratic rights and can, in exceptional circumstances, protect the Legislative Assembly and the people from abuse of power.

So I mean, I think that's pretty awesome and far-reaching in terms of those powers on the sovereign in those cases that are described here. And certainly I think this also bears mention as we look at these amendments, that we all have a responsibility to ensure that we do not abuse our powers.

And going back to the parental rights bill that came forward, many concerns and criticisms were brought forward, and there's court cases still outstanding saying that this is an abuse of power. You know, the judiciary had upheld their role in saying that this legislation goes too far, and they worked as a counterbalance.

And in the absence of that, the sovereign also has the ability, theoretically anyways. I mean it's never been tested before. But

you know, as we start to see more of these power grabs as they've been called, power overreaches happening, it's important to remind ourselves that the sovereign, you know, whether it's a king or a queen, does also hold that responsibility to ensure that we have a functioning democracy, one that is upholding the Constitution as it has been defined here in Saskatchewan.

We talked a lot, you'll recall, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure. We had 40 hours of debate on the subject where we talked about the rights that are enshrined in our Constitution and must be upheld. And some people talk about a collision of rights. You know, I've heard those arguments but at the end of the day we have a constitution. You know, it does get tested from time to time. There is a notwithstanding clause.

But I would say that this government made a grave, grave error in their knee-jerk decision to bring forward a bill that would use the notwithstanding clause and, I think, probably brings us kind of close to where, you know, the King's Bench and the King might have a role in saying that's too far. And according to this description, it is something that is in place. So "... power is given by the Crown only temporarily and in trust, and can be revoked if abused."

Again I've never seen where that's ever happened. I don't know what it would take or what that would even look like if it did, honestly. Because I mean, I don't think anybody has ever really seriously contemplated that that ever could happen, right? I mean no one ever thinks like, oh my gosh, like . . . No, no, no.

You know, we believe in the rule of law here in Canada. Surely we'd never have to, you know, test those provisions. But you know, I think we've come dangerously close, and that is a concern is that, you know, we'll get closer and closer to that line where it may be tested.

I'll say a little bit more:

The fundamental democratic principle that gives life to our Legislative Assembly is responsible government, meaning that government must answer for its actions to a legislature of members elected by the people.

The concept of responsible government evolved over time. Originally, the cabinet was composed of people who did not hold seats in the legislature.

I'll skip this part. It's kind of non-relevant. So:

While cabinet's purpose was to control government policy and find and maintain support, its closer relationship with parliament provided a direct opportunity for members to scrutinize, question, and publicize government's actions.

The crucial feature of this interaction between government and parliament was that cabinet could be defeated by a majority decision of the Assembly. Today, when a cabinet loses the confidence of the Assembly, it is usual that the people be given an opportunity to elect a new Assembly and government.

It then goes on to talk about how the Saskatchewan government is made up of, you know, the three branches which are, as I've

already mentioned, the executive, the legislative, and the judiciary. And all of these components are linked through the Crown, which is the head of state.

Back to the proposed amendments in this bill. That is why, while this may look like it's just something that is, you know, just a matter of course — you know, I'm just going to change out the word "Queen" with the word "King" and there's nothing more to this — I think it's important that we do understand that important function and role that the Crown plays in our system of government.

So, Mr. Speaker, I do want to thank you for your indulgence in allowing me to take this time to go over this little bit of basic, you know, information around our system of government here in Saskatchewan and the important role that the King plays and will continue to play for as long as foreseeable here in Saskatchewan. God rest his soul.

And with that, I will move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 146.

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: — I move that this House do now adjourn.

The Speaker: — The Government 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 stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow.

[The Assembly adjourned at 15:30.]

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

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President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Lori Carr
Minister of Highways

Hon. Gene Makowsky
Minister of Social Services

Hon. Jeremy Cockrill
Minister of Education

Hon. David Marit
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Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Water Security Agency

Hon. Dustin Duncan
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Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Government Insurance
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Saskatchewan Power Corporation
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