FIRST SESSION — THIRTIETH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

(HANSARD)
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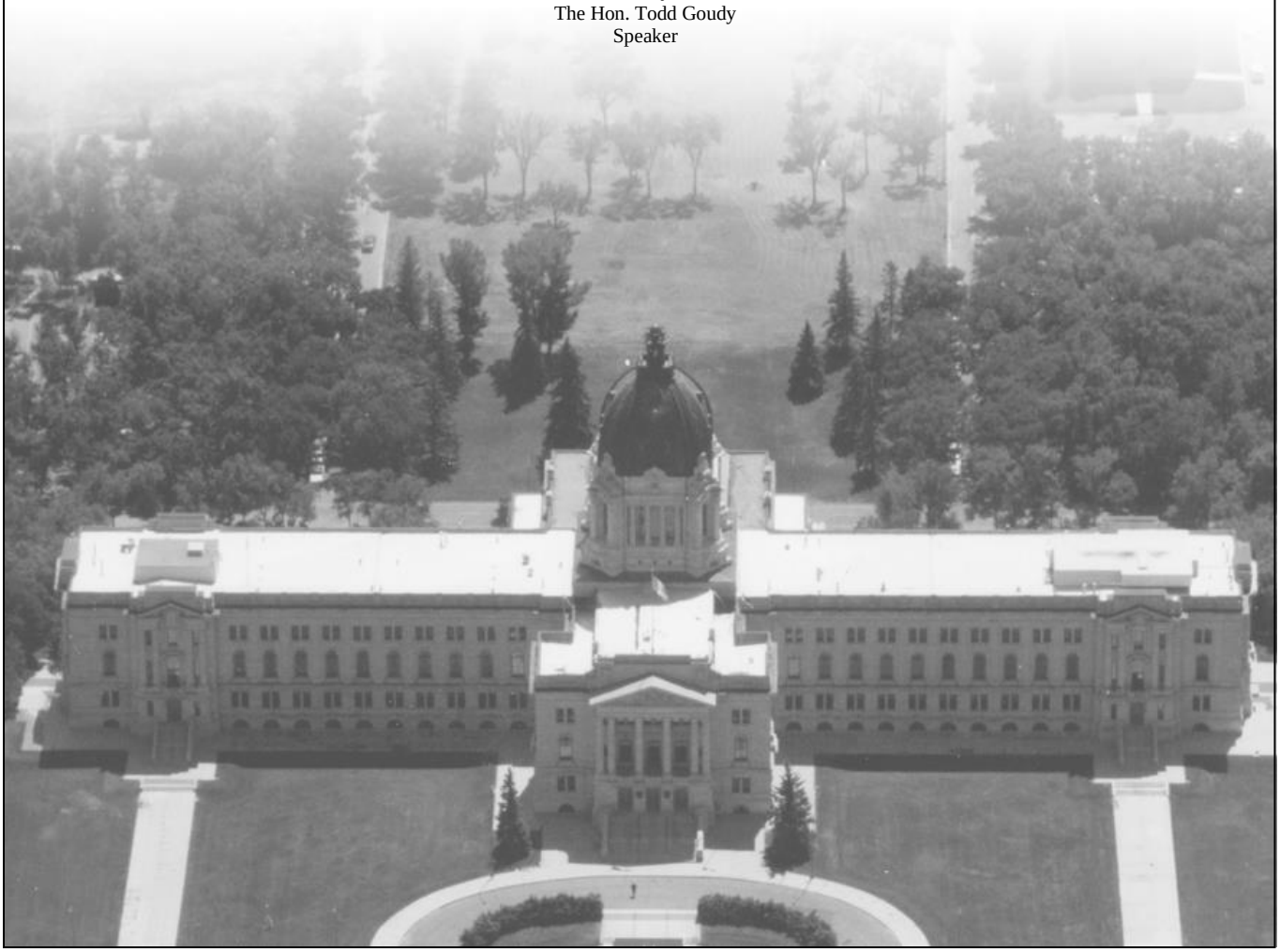
Speaker



N.S. VOL. 66 **NO. 17A MONDAY, MARCH 31, 2025, 13:30**

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
1st Session — 30th Legislature

Lieutenant Governor — Her Honour the Honourable Bernadette McIntyre, S.O.M.

Speaker — Hon. Todd Goudy
Premier — Hon. Scott Moe
Leader of the Opposition — Carla Beck

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Brar, Bhajan — Regina Pasqua (NDP)
Breckner, Kim — Saskatoon Riversdale (NDP)
Bromm, Terri — Carrot River Valley (SP)
Burki, Noor — Regina Coronation Park (NDP)
Carr, Hon. Lori — Estevan-Big Muddy (SP)
Chan, David — Yorkton (SP)
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken — Saskatoon Willowgrove (SP)
ChiefCalf, April — Saskatoon Westview (NDP)
Clarke, Jared — Regina Walsh Acres (NDP)
Cockrill, Hon. Jeremy — The Battlefords (SP)
Conway, Meara — Regina Elphinstone-Centre (NDP)
Crassweller, Brad — White City-Qu'Appelle (SP)
Gartner, Kim — Kindersley-Biggar (SP)
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Hilbert, Racquel — Humboldt-Watrous (SP)
Hindley, Hon. Everett — Swift Current (SP)
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Kaeding, Hon. Warren — Melville-Saltcoats (SP)
Kasun, Kevin — Prince Albert Carlton (SP)
Keisig, Hon. Travis — Last Mountain-Touchwood (SP)
Kropf, Barret — Dakota-Arm River (SP)
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Ritchie, Erika — Saskatoon Nutana (NDP)
Ross, Hon. Alana — Prince Albert Northcote (SP)
Rowden, Darlene — Batoche (SP)
Roy, Jacqueline — Regina Northeast (NDP)
Sarauer, Nicole — Regina Douglas Park (NDP)
Schmalz, Hon. Eric — Saskatchewan Rivers (SP)
Senger, Brittney — Saskatoon Southeast (NDP)
Steele, Doug — Cypress Hills (SP)
Teed, Nathaniel — Saskatoon Meewasin (NDP)
Thorsteinson, James — Cut Knife-Turtleford (SP)
Warrington, Darcy — Saskatoon Stonebridge (NDP)
Weedmark, Kevin — Moosomin-Montmartre (SP)
Weger, Michael — Weyburn-Bengough (SP)
Wilson, Sean — Canora-Pelly (SP)
Wotherspoon, Trent — Regina Mount Royal (NDP)
Young, Aleana — Regina South Albert (NDP)
Young, Hon. Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Hon. Warren Kaeding: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I could get leave for an extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Hon. Warren Kaeding: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members of the Assembly, I would like to introduce, seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Olaf Kjelsen, ambassador of Switzerland to Canada and the Commonwealth of the Bahamas. He has served in this role since October of 2022. Accompanying him, I would like to introduce Mr. Thomas Schneider, consul general of Switzerland in Vancouver. And he has served in this role since September of 2023.

I was pleased to meet with both the ambassador and consul general earlier today to discuss a very important relationship that our jurisdictions share. They have had a full morning engaging with various ministers and community representatives, and will additionally be meeting with many of our esteemed research institutions in the next few days.

Saskatchewan has the food, fuel, and critical minerals that the world needs, and nowhere is that more evident than our agri-food and uranium industry. In 2024 Saskatchewan exported $2.2 million worth of products to Switzerland. This is a 151.7 per cent increase compared to 2023. Top commodities included wild rice, mustard, and lentils. Saskatchewan also imports $15.1 million from Switzerland, mostly made up of specialized industrial equipment.

As we look to strengthen ties abroad, especially throughout Europe, we look forward to continued collaboration between Saskatchewan and Switzerland, both now and into the future. And I hope that both the consul general and ambassador will get the opportunity to see the very best of what Saskatchewan has to offer, and enjoy our warm hospitality during their stay. I do know that they've been enjoying the BKT World Men's Curling Championship in Moose Jaw over the weekend, and we may have to bet some Toblerones on the result of the Canada versus Switzerland match on Thursday.

This is the ambassador's first official visit to Saskatchewan and the consul general's second visit, so I'd ask all members to welcome them to this Assembly.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Regina South Albert.

Aleana Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to all members, I'd just like to add our welcome on behalf of the official opposition to Ambassador Kjelsen and Consul General Schneider. Welcome to Saskatchewan.

The minister spoke quite eloquently about some of the exports and resources that we have and we enjoy and we're privileged to have here in Saskatchewan. Of course I think our most valuable resource are the wonderful people who call this province home.

So thank you again for your presence here. I hope you have a wonderful visit to Saskatchewan, and I'd just like to ask all members to join us in extending an additional welcome to these fine gentlemen up in the gallery.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Jeremy Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to welcome, sitting up in your gallery, some folks from CUPE [Canadian Union of Public Employees] 5430 here in the province, including Bashir Jalloh, president of CUPE 5430.

There's also some familiar faces of course, Mr. Speaker. I see a young man from my community, Mr. Dexter Mercer. Dexter, good to see you. I had a chance to sit with your dad on Friday at the gang prevention forum back in North Battleford, one of the many events that we had going on over the weekend, Mr. Speaker.

Again the CUPE 5430 members play an important role in health care facilities right across our province, Mr. Speaker. And as a quick note, I'd just like to thank Bashir and his team actually for responding to our invitation a couple weeks ago for the patient-focused nursing team task force. We're still waiting for responses from a couple others, but we look forward to getting to work with CUPE and the other sector partners on that patient-focused task force.

I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming these folks to their legislature.

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

Vicki Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join in with the minister opposite in welcoming this group of medical technologists and technicians to their legislature here today.

They've joined us from all corners of this province and do some really critical work within the system. When we are waiting to find out what's wrong with us, when we're, you know, sitting at the hospital, sitting in an emergency room, waiting for surgery, it's these fine folks who are making the diagnostics happen, who are getting those answers for us about our own patient journey and our loved ones. And I want to thank them for all the work that they put in day in and day out on behalf of the people of this province.

And of course, thank you to the CUPE 5430 leadership as well and Bashir Jalloh for his leadership over the years in bringing forward issues related to these health care workers and not being

afraid to set foot in this legislature to bring those voices forward. So I would ask all members to join me in welcoming this fine group of folks to their Legislative Assembly.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from White City-Qu'Appelle.

Brad Crassweller: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, seated in the west gallery, I'm pleased to introduce several guests who have come here today from Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan. I have 20 grade 3/4 students from James Hamblin school, accompanied by their teachers Mrs. Winter, Ms. Sandberg, Mr. Smith, and Mr. Nerland.

As a new MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly], I'm very excited to be able to introduce these students for the first time. So we have 20 students here today with their teachers. And, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to meeting with these students after question period and answering any questions they have for me as an MLA. And they'll be pleased to know that the Minister of Environment is providing us with ice cream to enjoy our visit.

So I would ask all members to join me in welcoming this group to their Legislative Assembly.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Environment.

Hon. Travis Keisig: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I want to join with my colleague from White City-Qu'Appelle and welcome these students to this their Legislative Assembly. I have a little bit of a story to tell, Mr. Speaker. I'll keep it very quick.

These students are part of a program called Fish in Schools. They learn about the entire process of stocking trout as a part of the Fish in Schools program. This is in partnership with the Indian Head Wildlife Federation, the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, and the Fort Qu'Appelle fish hatchery. These students have the opportunity to learn about the process. They observe the trout life cycle. They clean the fish tanks, and everything else that's involved with it, Mr. Speaker. They are going to release the fish later on in the spring in one of the many stocked lakes all across Saskatchewan.

I really want to take this time, Mr. Speaker, and thank the teachers, thank the Indian Head Wildlife Federation, the Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, and the Fort Qu'Appelle fish hatchery for providing these students with this wonderful educational opportunity. And thank the students for all their hard work in raising these cute little fishies to be released into Saskatchewan's wonderful lakes and rivers. So with that, Mr. Speaker, to you and through you, I want to join with my colleague and welcome these students to this their Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

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

Jared Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to join with the minister in welcoming these students. I wanted to just speak a little bit about the FinS [Fish in Schools] program because as a former teacher, before I got elected, I also participated in the FinS program and got to have my class raise rainbow trout in my classroom. And we did that for a number of years. And I knew my students always enjoyed watching the fish go from the little egg, right, and hatch in your classroom, and then grow up to be a fingerling about as big as your finger, right. And then you're going to get to release them. We released our fish into Buffalo Pound and at Southey trout pond. So it's going to be a very exciting day for you.

I just want to speak, you know, just a moment to the importance of bringing things like that experience of raising trout into the classroom. It's so important for young people, for students to learn about our natural environment, to learn about hunting and fishing in the province, and just a wonderful experience to enrich school.

And so thank you to the teachers for doing that extra bit because I know how much effort and energy goes into keeping that tank clean. Because those fish are dirty. So anyways I would like to just extend that welcome to this classroom and to the teachers who do that work, that go that extra mile for these students from Qu'Appelle. Thank you.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Megan Patterson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I would like to introduce Peter Branetzki to this his Legislative Assembly. I had the opportunity to meet Peter at the Premier's barbecue in Moose Jaw last summer. Peter quickly became a good friend and ardent supporter.

He works as a direct support worker at Turning Leaf in Moose Jaw. Turning Leaf is an organization that provides crisis intervention, treatment, and support services to people living with mental illness and cognitive challenges. Peter is a wonderful person who has devoted his life's work to supporting people and enhancing the lives of those in need.

So to everyone in the Assembly, I would like to ask you to welcome Peter to this his Legislative Assembly.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Dakota-Arm River.

Barret Kropf: — Mr. Speaker, up in your gallery I would like to introduce two really important people, part of my life. On the left up there in the second row is my oldest son Jalen. And most of the veterans here in the Assembly will recognize him as he's served in a couple of ministries, one in Ag and then over with Policing and Corrections. And Jalen is my oldest. We celebrated his birthday this weekend. And he is just getting prepared to serve with our Canadian Armed Forces. So if you'd welcome him to his Legislative Assembly.

And seated beside him is the patriarch for my crew, my father, Bob Kropf. Bob spent 43 years keeping the power on in this province. He worked as a heavy maintenance foreman for SaskPower and that meant that he toured all the coal-burning facilities in the province year-round and did all the overhaul, including the major project down in Estevan with the coal carbon capture process that still is world leading in its technology today.

And so my dad is now retired and living with his wife in

Medicine Hat. But he loves coming back to the province because Wilkie is his hometown and where his parents homesteaded to give me the chance to be a Saskatchewan-born-and-raised fella and serve in this legislature. And so please welcome my father, Bob Kropf.

Speaker Goudy: — And I would just like to say a few short words about our two friends from Switzerland we have here today. I was really delighted to spend some time hearing about your collaborative government style and your dialectic debate you have in Switzerland. And it may not be known to all, but Ambassador Kjelsen is a swordsman of types. And so I don't know if you realize the reason why, here in our combative Chamber, we are more than two swords' lengths apart. And if Dan D'Autremont was here, he could wax eloquent on why that is, but I'm the new Speaker.

So anyways, appreciate you being here today, and we've always appreciated the friendship that we have with the Swiss. So welcome here today.

At this point we have petitions.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize — we've got all sorts here — the member from Regina Coronation Park.

Noor Burki: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention the following: that evidence shows that older adults in Saskatchewan want to age in their own homes and communities; that the factors that drive older adults from their homes often go beyond their health needs, and the provincial subsidized home support program could not help older adults with practical needs; that providing support for older adults in their homes comes at significant lower cost than providing institutionalized care; that other jurisdictions have successfully implemented home support programs that reduce the strain on long-term care and improve outcomes for older adults.

[13:45]

We read in the prayer:

> We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to call on the Government of Saskatchewan to work with older adults, stakeholders, and municipalities to design a home supports program that will allow seniors to age with dignity and autonomy in their homes and communities.

The signatories of this petition reside in Regina and Saskatoon. I do so present.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from White City-Qu'Appelle.

Brad Crassweller: — We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention the following: that the province of Saskatchewan exports over 4.3 billion in goods to China in 2024; nearly 1 billion of these exports are in canola products; further, that the devastating 100 per cent tariff on Canadian-produced canola, pork, and peas by China will have a disproportionate effect on Saskatchewan producers and the province's economy.

> We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: that the Government of Canada take immediate action to remove the harmful tariffs on canola, pork, and peas that are disproportionately affecting the producers and farmers of the province of Saskatchewan; that the federal government immediately engage in meaningful dialogue with representatives of the Chinese government to eliminate tariffs that harm Saskatchewan producers.

The undersigned are residents of the RM [rural municipality] of P.A. [Prince Albert]. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Jacqueline Roy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition about mental health and the addictions crisis.

The undersigned residents wish to bring to the attention of this province that Saskatchewan has the highest suicide rate among all the provinces; that Indigenous people die by suicide at 4.3 times a higher rate; that Saskatchewan continues to break its own records when it comes to overdose deaths. One in four youth in Saskatchewan have reported engaging in self-harm, and one in four youth have considered suicide in the past year, with 10 per cent having attempted.

I will read the prayer:

> The people below call on the Government of Saskatchewan to work with experts and community leaders on evidence-based solutions to the mental health and addictions crisis.

Mr. Speaker, they reside in Saskatoon. I do so present.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Westview.

April ChiefCalf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise in the Legislative Assembly to present this petition to remove lead waterlines in Regina. The undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan wish to bring your attention to the following: that the province of Saskatchewan is responsible for ensuring the safety of our drinking water; that many citizens of Regina do not have safe drinking water because the pipes that deliver the water to their homes are both old and made of lead, resulting in high concentrations of lead leaching into their drinking water; that this situation has unequal impacts on the health of vulnerable people, including children, low-income residents, Indigenous people, seniors, renters, and new Canadians living in Regina's urban core.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I will 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 ensure access to safe drinking water for all Regina residents by providing

supports to the city of Regina to replace lead water mains quickly and safely.

Mr. Speaker, the signatories to this petition reside in Regina. I do so present. Thank you.

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

Jared Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to rise today to present a petition calling on the Saskatchewan government for duty-to-consult legislation. The undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan wish to bring to our attention the following.

Saskatchewan needs legislation to ensure the provincial duty-to-consult is fulfilled and is carried out with the honour of the Crown. The Sask Party government has voted against duty-to-consult legislation. The current duty-to-consult policy in Saskatchewan is not effective. And the Saskatchewan Party government continues to move forward in duty-to consult processes without fulfilling constitutional obligations set through many court cases that have shaped how duty-to-consult should be observed in present day, including multiple Supreme Court rulings.

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 enshrine duty-to-consult into law by enacting meaningful duty-to-consult legislation.

Mr. Speaker, the signatories reside in Yellow Quill. I do so present.

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

Meara Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition calling on the Government of Saskatchewan to fix the crisis in our health care system. The undersigned signatories of this petition wish to bring to the government's attention that there were 951 health care closures across rural Saskatchewan between August 2019 and July 2023. We know that there have been hundreds more since then, Mr. Speaker. That 407 of those closures were to Saskatchewan emergency rooms. That for the first time an emergency room in one of our major cities shut down due to staff shortages — Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker. And I think of the code orange that was declared right here in Regina just a few weeks ago.

One of the pillars of our health care system, medical technologists and technicians — we have a number of them with us here today — they are an unseen but critical part of our health care system in terms of diagnostics, in terms of treatment. We sat with them this morning. We heard stories of them being pushed beyond the brink, disturbing stories of burnout, but hope as well in that they come to the table with solutions. If only they had a government for whom those solutions were not falling on deaf ears, Mr. Speaker.

So that is why the signatories of this petition are calling on the government to:

Immediately address short-staffing in health care, and work, work with health care workers on solutions to improve patient care.

The signatories of this petition reside in Regina. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Regina Coronation Park.

Celebration of Eid al-Fitr

Noor Burki: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to celebrate the end of the holy month of Ramadan for Muslims in Saskatchewan and around the world. Ramadan is a time to reflect and practise self-discipline through fasting from dawn to sunset for a month. As Muslims, we fast for an act of worship and a chance to get closer to God. It's a reminder of the importance of service, empathy, compassion for those in need.

Yesterday Muslims across Canada celebrated Eid al-Fitr. Eid is a celebration, one of the most important in our Muslim faith, but it's also a chance to recommit to build a better future in this province and around the world. Our provincial motto is "from many peoples, strength" and the Muslim community exemplifies this motto. I am incredibly proud to be a part of this community, and I am honoured to stand in this House as a Muslim MLA.

I invite all members to join me in celebrating Eid al-Fitr. And please help me to give thanks to the Muslim community across Saskatchewan for all they do for our beloved Saskatchewan.

Thank you. Eid Mubarak.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

Queen Elizabeth Scholars Program Supports International Exchange

David Chan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Government of Saskatchewan is investing in the next generation of leaders. I am pleased to announce that our government is providing $100,000 to the Queen Elizabeth Scholars program in 2025-26.

Mr. Speaker, this program provides funding for students to participate in educational exchange programs abroad, giving them the opportunity to gain valuable international and intercultural experiences. These are leadership experiences with a research focus that not only benefit Saskatchewan students but also our post-secondary institutions and ultimately our communities. In fact the Queen Elizabeth Scholars program has awarded $2.7 million to more than 220 students from the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan since it began in 2012.

Mr. Speaker, our government's investment will help further leverage additional private and public donations, providing more opportunities for Saskatchewan students to access the program. Our contribution demonstrates our government's commitment to promoting education and leadership opportunities for students. It

also shows our commitment to supporting initiatives that help strengthen Saskatchewan's relationships internationally and promote cross-cultural exchange.

Enhancing opportunities for our students sets our province up for success. I look forward to seeing more Saskatchewan students benefit from this program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

International Transgender Day of Visibility

Jacqueline Roy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to acknowledge the International Day for Transgender Visibility with words crafted alongside my colleague from Saskatoon Meewasin.

In 2009 Rachel Crandall wished to bring attention to the fact that the only day, the only day that centred around transgender people was the Day of Remembrance, one devoted to mourning and to lost lives. How sad and sorrowful is that? So Crandall desired to establish a day that would honour those in the community who were alive, thriving, and contributing members — not only here in Saskatchewan but around the world.

Transgender people have always existed and they will continue to exist. But they urgently need our help. At a time when there is an increase in violent rhetoric and an increase in language that is hurtful and an increase in targets on transgender people, I am proud to honour their community.

And I do remain hopeful. I do remain hopeful, Mr. Speaker, that we are on a path forward that will allow all people to live as their authentic selves. Because after all, Mr. Speaker, isn't that all we want, to be able to live as our authentic selves?

I ask all members, all members here in this House to join me in commemorating this day. Thank you.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Investments in Moose Jaw Contribute to Local Economy

Megan Patterson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to start by thanking the Peepeekisis Cree Nation Chief Dieter for this beautiful beaded medallion. In March 2025 the Moose Jaw Events Centre was renamed the Temple Gardens Centre following a naming rights agreement between the city of Moose Jaw and Peepeekisis Developments Ltd., the economic arm of Peepeekisis Cree Nation. They also own Moose Jaw's Temple Gardens spa and hotel.

I would like to thank them for making these investments in Moose Jaw and for their contribution to our local economy. The Temple Gardens Centre is home to the Moose Jaw Warriors and also has an eight-sheet curling rink plus meeting and banquet facilities.

From March 29th to April 6th, Moose Jaw is hosting the BKT World Men's Curling Championship. So far Brad Jacobs and his Canadian curling team are undefeated.

[Applause]

Megan Patterson: — Yay, clapping. Come to Moose Jaw this week to see some world-class curling. Go underground with all three tours at the Tunnels of Moose Jaw, and shop in Moose Jaw's most notoriously charming and friendly downtown. You'll love your stay so much that you'll want to come back this summer for trolley rides and a stay at the Temple Gardens Hotel. Hope to see you there.

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

Standing in Solidarity with Ukraine

Erika Ritchie: — Last weekend the city of Sumy, Ukraine endured a devastating missile strike that injured at least 28 individuals, including four children. The attack targeted an industrial facility causing significant damage to nearby residential areas, with children seeking refuge in shelters during the assault. This senseless violence has deeply affected countless families, including that of a dear friend of mine whose young family resides in Sumy. Their pain is immeasurable, and our hearts go out to all those suffering in Ukraine during these harrowing times.

In Saskatchewan we stand in solidarity with our Ukrainian community, including recent newcomers who have sought refuge from this crisis. Organizations like the Saskatchewan branch of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress have been instrumental in providing essential language support and integration services to these individuals.

The agreement brokered by President Donald Trump to restore Russia's access to global agricultural and fertilizer markets is deeply troubling. This deal is heavily favouring Russia over Ukraine, pressuring Ukraine to make concessions while Russia significantly benefits.

And our commitment to the people of Ukraine is steadfast. We will always stand with them, and we remain unwavering in our condemnation of actions that compromise peace and security regardless of political convenience.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Carlton.

Community Wellness Buses Offer Access to Primary Care

Kevin Kasun: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government is launching a new way to access primary care in the province with the introduction of our new mobile community wellness buses. With a bus about to become operational in Prince Albert, these community wellness buses will provide basic primary health care, mental health and addictions care, and will be staffed and run by SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority].

[14:00]

Services offered by these new wellness buses will be varied based on population, but some services offered may include basic health assessments and wound care. The buses will also be able to refer individuals to housing, social services, and to addictions

and mental health treatment. Staff on the bus will include a nurse practitioner, a licensed practical nurse, and assessor coordinators who offer referrals to community supports. One community wellness bus has already been operating here in Regina since February 12th, with a third expected to launch in Saskatoon this spring.

Mr. Speaker, this government is committed to making critical investments in health care. Mr. Speaker, this wellness bus will be able to deliver health care directly to the people who need it in Prince Albert. Along with the record investments into health care this year, this government is delivering for you.

Thank you.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Dakota-Arm River.

Senior Hockey Dynasty in Kenaston

Barret Kropf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you and my colleagues know, the constituency of Dakota-Arm River is the heartland of hockey in Saskatchewan. With our government's commitment to increase the community rink affordability grant — the $5,000 for 577 ice rinks in this current budget — we see many male and female minor hockey and curling teams finding great success throughout the winter.

During the cold winter months, the refuge for every rural community is their ice arena. Thousands of fans pack local arenas in every corner of the province to watch their minor sports teams participate.

I want to congratulate the Davidson Cyclones on winning the Senior B provincial championship a few weeks ago.

And just up the highway on Highway 11, the community of Kenaston is another story. Kenaston is the birthplace of the Super Draft Hockey Pool founded by local leader Barry Firby and his community board. From its humble beginnings in 1984 to now being a sporting phenomenon copied in communities across North America, they have raised millions of dollars for their local community.

Last night another phenomenon occurred when the Kenaston Blizzards senior hockey team captured the double crown. Earlier in the spring they captured the Sask Valley Hockey League championship, and last night won the provincial Senior A championship against the Round Lake Bears.

Mr. Speaker, winning the double crown is a great accomplishment in one season. However the Blizzards have now accomplished this feat for an astounding four years in a row. The Kenaston Blizzards team is now considered a dynasty and have done an incredible job in entertaining the great folks of Dakota-Arm River.

Join me in congratulating their players and their staff and their general manager, Chad Firby, on this great season.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Provincial Budget and Removal of Carbon Tax

Carla Beck: — The Sask Party's budget projected a razor-thin $12 million surplus. Last week by scrapping the Sask Party's carbon tax, the Sask Party blew a $432 million hole in own budget. Now the Sask Party claims that the budget is still balanced. But, Mr. Speaker, the math simply doesn't add up.

A simple question for the Finance minister: what does he plan to cut to make up for the half-billion-dollar hole they blew in their own budget?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Jim Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, every time the price of oil goes up and down, it can impact revenues both positively and negatively for the province. Mr. Speaker, every time the price of potash goes up or down, it can impact revenues. Every time the price of uranium goes up or down, it can impact revenues. Mr. Speaker, we are not going to rewrite the budget every time something like that happens.

Mr. Speaker, talking about budgets though, here's the budgets that are significantly impacted by this carbon tax change for the good, Mr. Speaker: the budget of every household in this province; the budget of every municipality in this province; the budget of every business in this province, Mr. Speaker, especially small businesses. Mr. Speaker, this change last week is going to positively impact the budget of every residence of this great province. And do the NDP [New Democratic Party] support it?

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

Carla Beck: — Well, Mr. Speaker, the Finance minister suggests that it's just an ordinary day when they blow half a billion dollars in their own budget, Mr. Speaker. I think the people of Saskatchewan see right through it.

Now his budget already contained cuts to health care and to education. And now the minister says — and he said it again — the budget is still balanced even after that half-a-billion-dollar hole. It simply doesn't add up. The only way to balance this budget, Mr. Speaker, is going to be more cuts to the services that Saskatchewan people rely on.

So my question to the minister is this: what is he going to cut to balance this budget?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Jim Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, there are no cuts that the member is referring to. Health care, Mr. Speaker, is increased by 6.4 per cent; education, the transfers to the school divisions that go directly to the front lines for education, Mr. Speaker, 8.4 per cent. Mr. Speaker, I know the members would like that to happen, but there are no cuts in this budget, Mr. Speaker.

Do you know who else supports the elimination of the carbon tax, making Saskatchewan the only carbon tax-free province in the country, Mr. Speaker? You know who else supports that? The Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce, the Saskatchewan Realtors Association, the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, Mr. Speaker, and most of the people of this great

province.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Regina Mount Royal.

Trent Wotherspoon: — Hey, Mr. Speaker, the minister well knows that this official opposition has been fighting to end the carbon tax for years, Mr. Speaker. But that Minister of Finance needs to, I don't know, use a calculator or ask a classmate for some help. It's his credibility that's on the line here.

Now work with me, Mr. Speaker: 12 minus 432 doesn't equal balance. Why does the Finance minister keep trying to suggest otherwise?

Speaker Goudy: — I'm just going to remind us all, belittling to the level of a classmate . . . Let's work together today.

And I will ask the Minister of Finance, I recognize you.

Hon. Jim Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, the Finance critic says that we know full well that the opposition supported the elimination of the carbon tax, Mr. Speaker, but I wonder if he could explain why not very long ago when we were challenging the carbon tax in court, they were calling it a pointless crusade, Mr. Speaker. I don't know how you justify that.

Mr. Speaker, there are many challenges. The first item I raised in the budget speech last week, Mr. Speaker, was the fact that tariffs could have a significant impact on our budget, could push us into a deficit position. There's a number of things.

There's also things that can happen positively. I mentioned about commodities and if they increase, what that does for the budget, Mr. Speaker. Again we're not going to rewrite the budget every time one of those things happen.

But, Mr. Speaker, we're very proud of what we did for affordability for every resident of Saskatchewan by making Saskatchewan the only carbon tax-free province in the country.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Regina Mount Royal.

Trent Wotherspoon: — 12 minus 432 doesn't equal balance, Mr. Speaker. And that so-called $12 million surplus that they reference, you know, it wasn't real to start with. But it's even less real when you look at the $432 million hole that they blew through their budget.

You know, this budget, it's not worth the paper it's written on. Saskatchewan people deserve a budget that they can count on, not this nonsense, Mr. Speaker. When will that Finance minister bring forward a budget that addresses the real challenges Saskatchewan people face that's based on the facts and that steps up to the tariffs we face from both the US [United States] and China?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Jim Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, we're very proud of this budget. I mentioned earlier, increases for health care, increases for education, Mr. Speaker.

We are addressing the concerns that people told us during the election campaign that we were privileged to form government after, Mr. Speaker. That's going to continue. We're going to continue to listen to the people of this province.

And you know what else the people of this province told us was important to them? Affordability. Mr. Speaker, there is no better way right now to address affordability than the elimination of the carbon tax, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan, the only carbon tax-free province in the country.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Regina Mount Royal.

Trent Wotherspoon: — Yeah, Mr. Speaker, they cared so much that they forgot to put it in the budget, Mr. Speaker. We've been fighting against the carbon tax and all the tax increases of that mismanaging Sask Party government for years, Mr. Speaker.

Now if he really cared about the future of Saskatchewan, he'd focus on that future. He would take this budget and he would put it right through the shredder, Mr. Speaker. I've got one he can borrow over here, Mr. Speaker. Now will the minister . . .

Speaker Goudy: — I just want to remind the member that props are not allowed. Yeah, no, I appreciate . . .

Continue on.

Trent Wotherspoon: — Will the minister withdraw his make-believe, nonsense budget and go back to the drawing board and bring something forward that actually steps up for Saskatchewan people? Yes or no?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Jim Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, this budget delivers for the people of Saskatchewan. It delivers increases in health care, increases in education, increases in affordability measures, Mr. Speaker. The income tax cuts let people keep more of their own money in their own pockets to use as they see fit, Mr. Speaker.

Again, this is going to be a very bumpy year with the tariff war going on, Mr. Speaker. There's going to be many changes that are going to impact the budget. But, Mr. Speaker, we're not going to rewrite the budget every single time that happens. But what we are going to do, Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to be here for the people of Saskatchewan. We're very proud of that carbon tax cut last week, Mr. Speaker. It's going to help everyone in this province.

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

Health Care Staffing

Vicki Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, this budget fails Saskatchewan people across the board, and nowhere is that more clear than in health care. Medical technologists and technicians from all corners of this province have travelled to Regina today to attend their legislature to raise alarm on a system in crisis. They say that chronic understaffing is pushing them to the brink, jeopardizing patient care across the province.

These health care workers play a vital role in our health care system. Without them our system will collapse. Mr. Speaker, what is the Sask Party government's plan to address understaffing and retention of these essential health care workers?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Jeremy Cockrill: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government's plan is exactly the plan that I've spoken about several times in this House, Mr. Speaker. It's our health human resources action plan, the most ambitious plan in the nation of Canada, Mr. Speaker. As part of that plan, Mr. Speaker, we have significant incentives . . .

[Interjections]

Speaker Goudy: — Order. I will remind members to listen when the questions are being given and the answers are being given. Thank you.

Hon. Jeremy Cockrill: — Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, as part of that ambitious health human resources action plan, we have incentives for medical technologists: $40,000 for a three-year return of service in rural and remote communities right around the province, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we also are adding more training seats so that we can train more Saskatchewan kids close to home so they can get a fulfilling career in the health care world, Mr. Speaker. We've doubled over the last two years our number of seats at Sask Poly in the MRT [medical radiation technologist] program.

Mr. Speaker, it's these sort of investments that are starting to move the dial when it comes to health care. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Vicki Mowat: — It's not working, Mr. Speaker, and these workers are shaking their heads in the gallery at that minister.

Mr. Speaker, CUPE 5430 released findings from a recent survey of medical technologists and technicians today. The findings are shocking. Eighty per cent of medical technologists and technicians report working short-staffed. Seventy-four per cent say the government's failure to fill vacancies is leading to burnout. Seventy-two per cent report doing unpaid work to keep the system running. Ninety-one per cent say that increased workload has had an impact on the health of their patients. And, Mr. Speaker, half have witnessed service closures due to short-staffing.

How does this government expect to fill vacancies and keep the system running when they can't retain the workers they already have?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Jeremy Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when it comes to filling MRT positions, over the last five years we've actually increased the number of MRT positions by 9 per cent in the province, ensuring that patients — wherever they are in the province, whether they're in a larger centre or a rural community — have as easy and convenient access to the important imaging procedures that they need in terms of getting access to health care, Mr. Speaker.

[14:15]

Mr. Speaker, as I said in my previous answers, this is the most ambitious health human resources action plan in the country, Mr. Speaker. Combination of training seats, combination of incentives, Mr. Speaker — these things are starting to make a difference in communities right across the province. It's something that this government's going to continue doing. Thank you.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Silverspring.

Hugh Gordon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, these workers are being overworked, and it's impacting the health and the safety of not only their patients, but of the workers themselves. One medical radiation technologist from that minister's own constituency told a harrowing story this morning of being forced to work 50 hours straight due to severe short-staffing. Mr. Speaker, Dexter Mercer was so tired that after working those 50 hours straight that he crashed his car.

What does the minister have to say to the countless workers who joined us today that are so overworked and underappreciated?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Jeremy Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'll just start by thanking Dexter and all the folks up in the gallery for the important work they do when it comes to imaging and diagnostics at facilities all across the province.

Mr. Speaker, I've actually had the opportunity to speak with Dexter when he reached out to me several years ago, Mr. Speaker, about some of the challenges that we have at our department at BUH [the Battlefords Union Hospital], Mr. Speaker. We continue to have some challenges in the Northwest. We've made some progress, Mr. Speaker, but there continue to be challenges, Mr. Speaker.

I can let the entire House know that the diagnostics and imaging leadership from the Saskatchewan Health Authority will be touring Prince Albert, Lloydminster, and North Battleford in early April, Mr. Speaker. I've asked them to take a look at those specific departments and understand what we could be doing better and what we need to do to attract more people into those departments. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Silverspring.

Hugh Gordon: — Mr. Speaker, working 50 hours for anyone in any profession is outright dangerous. By forcing our health care workers to work hours and days on end, you're not only setting up poor patient care; you're single-handedly putting your own workers at risk.

Part of any retention plan should be looking to ensure that

workers are safe, but it should also ensure that those workers are able to make it home.

Speaker Goudy: — I just want to mention, I don't . . . But when you're talking about single-handedly doing these things, that would be a comment towards the minister. And I don't think you can be accusing of those kinds of things, that's he's putting these people's safety at risk.

Continue on.

Hugh Gordon: — Mr. Speaker, part of any retention plan should be looking to ensure that workers are safe, but it should also ensure that those workers are able to make it home safe to their families when they hit the road after a shift.

Mr. Speaker, our health care workers and our patients deserve so much better. Will the minister meet with these medical technologists and technicians that are here joining us today and make a plan to fix the crisis in our health care system?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Jeremy Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I'd be happy to meet with the folks here today as the afternoon schedule allows and look forward to the conversation that we'll have with them today. Thank you.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Westview.

Provision of Housing

April ChiefCalf: — Mr. Speaker, they're not just failing on health care. Last week Regina City Council voted 6 to 2 to recognize that the city is dealing with a houselessness crisis. By their most recent count, 824 people slept on the streets in just one night. That is horrifying, Mr. Speaker.

Does the Minister of Social Services acknowledge that nearly 1,000 people sleeping on the streets in one city is indeed a crisis?

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

Hon. Terry Jenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issue of homelessness in our province is something that this government takes extremely seriously, serious to the point where we have invested $40.2 million over two years in a planned provincial approach to homelessness. This plan has developed 155 new supportive units for those who require more than just a home; they require wraparound supports.

Mr. Speaker, each of these individuals that find themselves in this situation — and I think the opposition would agree — they are individuals. They all have their own story. They might have an addiction. They might have a mental health issue. Each of these individuals needs proper assessment. They need the proper supports. And at that point we can get them into long-term supportive housing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Westview.

April ChiefCalf: — Thank you. Mr. Speaker, it is beyond inappropriate for the Minister of Social Services to skate past the provincial capital city's cry for help. It's true there is a crisis in this city. So I'll ask the minister a simple question: will he commit to emergency action to address this crisis?

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

Hon. Terry Jenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can think of 40.2 million reasons why this government takes this issue very seriously, and I'll point to the supportive housing units that we have put in place.

We have 55 spaces in Saskatoon operated by the Saskatoon Tribal Council. We have 20 spaces in place with the friendship centre here in Regina; 10 spaces operated by the Saskatoon Crisis Intervention Services; 20 spaces at Lovering Place here in Regina operated by Phoenix Residential Society; 34 spaces at Robinson Manor, a Sask Housing-owned building in Saskatoon, owned by Crocus Co-operative.

And, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about the housing continuum and the success that we're having with PATH [provincial approach to homelessness], I'll point to this: the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation and the Regina Housing Authority were continuing to reduce vacancies in social housing units. As of December of 2024, the Regina vacancy rate was 14.8 per cent. That's a decrease of 4.9 per cent from the previous year. I think we are doing the appropriate things. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Regina Wascana Plains.

Brent Blakley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, unlike a number of the members opposite, I actually read the budget. I didn't see the words "emergency funding" or "housing crisis" anywhere.

Speaker Goudy: — At this time I'll ask the member to apologize and withdraw that. You're insinuating that the government didn't read their own budget, and I'd ask you to apologize and withdraw.

Brent Blakley: — I apologize and withdraw, Mr. Speaker.

That minister did not budget for a crisis. Now that he has a crisis on his hands, he needs to do more. Mr. Speaker, will the minister take the situation as serious as it deserves, and will he commit to emergency funding to address the houselessness crisis in Regina?

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

Hon. Terry Jenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, just in case the members opposite forgot, we have a provincial approach to homelessness . . .

Speaker Goudy: — I would ask that the minister also apologize and withdraw.

Hon. Terry Jenson: — I apologize and withdraw, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the issue of homelessness in Saskatchewan is a serious issue, and it's one that we put $40.2 million towards with

the provincial approach to homelessness. This provincial approach to homelessness makes sure that the government, the ministry, community-based organizations are all working together with municipalities, Indigenous partners, and more to ensure that we are doing what we can to get people into long-term, permanent housing. This is a plan that we put to work last year. We're going to continue making those investments, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Regina Wascana Plains.

Brent Blakley: — Mr. Speaker, I know the Minister of Finance isn't willing to revisit his worthless budget, but I expect more from the Minister of Social Services. I'll remind him there are . . .

Speaker Goudy: — I think you're seeing I'm calling it quite tight, but I think we all can think critically and form our questions and our answers appropriately that it doesn't always have to be so adversarial. I will speak to the House leaders later if I'm calling it too tight, but I'll ask you again to watch our words, Member.

Brent Blakley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll remind the minister there are 435 vacant public housing units in Regina. 404 households are on a wait-list; 364 of the units are in a state of disrepair. The minister has committed to fixing 285 of them over a number of years. Mr. Speaker, does he understand that this is not enough?

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

Hon. Terry Jenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this budget that we just delivered last week and voted on last week is a budget that is going to deliver more housing units in Regina; 285 will begin in Saskatoon, Regina, and Prince Albert. We are investing $88 million in '25-26 into repairs and renovations.

In the '25-26 Saskatchewan Housing Corporation budget, 9.6 million in provincial funding to repair major building components; 9.2 million in provincial funding to start multi-year repair and renovation projects; $41.3 million in operating maintenance capital; and 28.2 million for general maintenance — that's minor repairs, fixes, and maintenance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Regina Wascana Plains.

Brent Blakley: — Mr. Speaker, if the minister objects to the fact that he needs to do more faster, he can take it up with the Provincial Auditor. That's a direct quote from her.

Mr. Speaker, it's also a fact that things are getting worse and worse in Regina. The city's unhoused population has gone up 250 per cent in the last decade — 250 per cent. My question for the minister is simply, is that not enough? Mr. Speaker, how much higher does that figure have to rise before the minister finally takes emergency action?

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

Hon. Terry Jenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our government is actively addressing affordable housing. We're not going to be sidetracked by those members opposite. We're improving the social housing program in this province. We're cutting red tape, removing barriers so that those in greatest need get housed on a priority basis, Mr. Speaker.

Sask Housing's occupancy rate has been steadily rising, with over 87 per cent of units occupied as of January. In this budget we've set aside $88.4 million to ensure rent-ready units are available across the province. That includes 9.2 million of that in Saskatoon, Regina, and Prince Albert.

We're also partnering with trusted community organizations that provide tenants with not only housing but services, wraparound services, that they may need. Our focus remains on creating a more responsive and accessible housing system for all. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Overdose Deaths and Treatment for Addictions

Betty Nippi-Albright: — This Sask Party government continues to fail to address the ongoing drug crisis. Saskatoon's drug crisis alone has resulted in deaths, hundreds of overdoses, and the closure of two public libraries.

The services that keep people alive have had to close temporarily so that staff could catch a breath. It is suspected that there were nine overdose deaths in Saskatoon this month. There have been 741 overdose calls in Saskatoon since January. Last year there were 291 overdose calls in Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, when will this Sask Party government deliver meaningful supports to address this ongoing drug crisis?

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

Hon. Lori Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, any death caused by an overdose is truly a tragedy, Mr. Speaker. And that's why you're going to find that this government is focused on recovery, a recovery-oriented system of care, because the best help that we can give someone who finds themself in trouble or facing an addiction, Mr. Speaker, is the opportunity for recovery.

And that's why we are working towards 500 treatment beds. It's a five-year plan, Mr. Speaker. We already have 221 of those beds open, and we have several more that we're just waiting for the organizations to be able to set up those services, Mr. Speaker. And we're going to reach those 500 beds. Mr. Speaker, the best path to recovery is through a recovery-oriented system of care and that's what we're committed to doing.

Thank you.

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

Trent Wotherspoon: — Prior to orders of the day, I seek leave to move a motion under rule 61.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

[14:30]

Hon. Tim McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave to move a motion regarding the reappointment of the Advocate for Children and Youth.

Speaker Goudy: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice that we reappoint the Advocate for Children and Youth.

An Hon. Member: — Requested leave, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Goudy: — Oh, sorry. Leave has been requested. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

MOTIONS

Reappointment of Advocate for Children and Youth

Hon. Tim McLeod: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Assembly for leave.

I would now move:

> That pursuant to subsection 3(5) of *The Advocate for Children and Youth Act*, Lisa Broda be reappointed for one additional term of five years as the Advocate for Children and Youth effective April 1st, 2025.

I so move.

Speaker Goudy: — It has been moved by the Minister of Justice

> That pursuant to subsection 3(5) of *The Advocate for Children and Youth Act*, Lisa Broda be reappointed for one additional term of five years as the Advocate for Children and Youth effective April 1st, 2025.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Speaker Goudy: — Carried. I recognize the member from Regina Mount Royal.

MOTION UNDER RULE 61

Removal of Output-Based Performance Standards and Effect on Provincial Budget

Trent Wotherspoon: — I seek leave to move a motion under rule 61.

Speaker Goudy: — Will the member briefly state the purpose of the motion and read the text of the motion?

Trent Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is an important motion about our province's finances in this provincial budget.

> That the Assembly recognizes that the policy decision by the Government of Saskatchewan to remove the output-based performance standard will result in $432 million less in revenue than the budget presented by the Finance minister; and the Assembly calls on the Finance minister to present a revised fiscal forecast that reflects this reality.

Speaker Goudy: — So the member from Regina Mount Royal has requested leave to move without notice a motion of urgent and pressing necessity under rule 61. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

Speaker Goudy: — Leave is not granted. Next item of business. I recognize the Minister of . . . Oh, sorry. Why is the minister on his feet first of all? Sorry.

Removal of Carbon Tax and Effect on Provincial Economy

Hon. Travis Keisig: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek leave to move a motion under rule 61.

Speaker Goudy: — Will the minister briefly state the purpose of the motion and read the text of the motion?

Hon. Travis Keisig: — Mr. Speaker, last week our government announced our intention to pause the industrial carbon tax that was forced on us by the federal government. In light of the federal election, our government believes all parties need to be clear about their intentions with the quiet carbon tax on Saskatchewan industries. Will they allow the provinces to regulate in this space? Or are we going to continue to be subject to the Ottawa-knows-best attitude that we have experienced for the last decade?

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would move the following motion:

> That this Assembly supports the government's actions to make Saskatchewan the first carbon tax-free province in Canada by pausing the industrial carbon tax under its output-based performance standards, or OBPS, program, a decision that will provide immediate financial relief to families, farms, businesses, and industries; and further,
>
> That this House believes that the federal government should provide authority to provincial governments to decide their own industrial carbon tax policies without a federal backstop.

Speaker Goudy: — The Minister of the Environment has asked request leave without notice a motion of urgent and pressing necessity under rule 61. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Speaker Goudy: — Leave has been granted. The member may proceed.

Hon. Travis Keisig: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate this opportunity to speak to this motion, and I am very proud to announce to the House that Saskatchewan is the very first carbon tax-free province in the entire country of Canada.

Effective April 1st, 2025 Saskatchewan is the first province to be a carbon tax-free jurisdiction in Canada. From day one our government and this Premier led against this harmful tax, and once again we are taking the lead in delivering for the people of Saskatchewan.

It will be six years tomorrow since this carbon tax was imposed on all Canadians. At that time there were seven provinces and one opposition that supported and intervened in the case, taking it to the Supreme Court of Canada. The members opposite had called our court case a pointless crusade, Mr. Speaker. We on this side of the House know that the fight against this punitive tax was not a pointless crusade but a fight this government took on to protect our industries and all of our families.

The carbon tax was never an environmental policy. It was always a taxation policy. Our output-based performance standards program was put in place to protect the competitiveness of Saskatchewan businesses from the federal carbon tax. This program was put in place so we would not allow policies created in Ottawa to harm our industries here in Saskatchewan.

That is why we are taking action on April 1st to remove the carbon tax from your SaskPower bills. This will save Saskatchewan families and businesses around 10 per cent a year. These are incredibly important savings for Saskatchewan residents during these uncertain times when the cost of living is truly top of mind.

We will also be pausing compliance payments for industrial emitters regulated under the provincial output-based performance standards program. The pause on industrial emitters will help protect all regulated industrial emitters from the financial uncertainty from potential trade actions.

The plan, very material to Saskatchewan families, is to scrap the Liberal-NDP carbon tax in this province — the visible one and the very quiet one, Mr. Speaker. We urge all parties running in the ongoing federal election to commit to allowing the provinces to regulate in this space as they see fit.

It will help ensure that Saskatchewan businesses remain competitive and will help reduce the cost of consumer products that have industrial carbon tax built right into their price. Our government will engage with all of our stakeholders that are impacted by the OBPS program. We believe that their feedback is crucial to determine what the future of the OBPS program looks like.

I want to take a moment, Mr. Speaker, and speak about our industries and the world-class products they produce. We know that Saskatchewan produces some of the most sustainable products in the world, products everyone in the world needs. The amount of CO_2 sequestered in agricultural soils is the equivalent to almost 92 per cent of the total carbon emissions of Saskatchewan's agriculture sector.

The carbon footprint of Saskatchewan canola is 67 per cent lower than the global weighted average of our competitors. For durum and wheat our carbon footprint is 78 per cent and 62 per cent lower than competitive jurisdictions. For peas produced in Saskatchewan, their carbon footprint is 96 per cent lower, and for lentils it's 130 per cent lower than the average of all global competitors. And, Mr. Speaker, I spoke with the Swiss ambassador this morning, and they were very excited to learn about all of the great opportunities in Saskatchewan's agri-food industry.

Saskatchewan potash mines produce half the emissions per tonne compared to other jurisdictions globally. We want to create the environment to produce more of these products right here in Saskatchewan. Now that we are currently in a federal election cycle where the two major federal parties and their leaders have announced their plans to remove the carbon tax from consumers, we need to ensure that our industries are more competitive during these uncertain times with American and Chinese tariffs looming. We want to make our industries more competitive in the face of these tariffs and have the ability to protect and create jobs. Making Saskatchewan a carbon tax-free province would do just that, Mr. Speaker.

I hope all parties running in the federal election would agree that this is the top priority. We would also ask that they would allow the province to regulate in this area without imposing the federal backstop during these very uncertain times.

I'm going to finish reading the motion now, Mr. Speaker:

> That this Assembly supports the government's actions to make Saskatchewan the first carbon tax-free province in Canada by pausing the industrial carbon tax under its OBPS program, a decision that will provide immediate financial relief to families, farms, business, and industries; and further,
>
> That this House believes the federal government should provide authority to provincial governments to decide their own industrial carbon tax policies without a federal backstop.

Speaker Goudy: — So the minister has moved:

> That this Assembly supports the government's actions to make Saskatchewan the first carbon tax-free province in Canada by pausing the industrial carbon tax under its output-based performance standards, OBPS, program, a decision that will provide immediate financial relief to families, farms, businesses, and industry; and further,
>
> That this House believes that the federal government should provide authority to provincial governments to decide their own industrial carbon tax policies without a federal backstop.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Mount Royal.

Trent Wotherspoon: — Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Certainly this official opposition, we've been very clear that we don't support the federal carbon tax. We've been calling for it to

be ended for a long period of time. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people have been paying that bill. Of course it's now being ended, and we've called for that and that's a good thing.

But we also don't support the Sask Party OBPS carbon tax either, Mr. Speaker. You know, the Sask Party's carbon tax, the one that we're talking about here today, it's been a slush fund for that Sask Party. And it has really been used to pad their budgets year after year. You know, a government that's really struggled with the finances, Mr. Speaker, and they failed to use . . .

Speaker Goudy: — Sorry, I'll ask the member to refrain from "slush funds" and "padding their budgets" and just the connotations you're saying here, please.

Trent Wotherspoon: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. The Sask Party's OBPS carbon tax — their carbon tax, the one they've stuck Saskatchewan people and industries with for a long period of time — has caused inflation of the budget to present a rosier picture, Mr. Speaker. And they've failed to use those dollars that they were taking from Saskatchewan people and industries to deliver affordability for people or reduce emissions. Really it's the worst of both worlds, what we see under this Sask Party.

Now with this move, this change of the Sask Party to end their Sask Party government's carbon tax, it's also clear that this blows a $432 million hole in the budget. And they did that — not in the budget, not planned, not delivered in the budget — they did that last week before the vote on this very budget, before the ink was barely dried on this budget that's simply not worth the paper that it's printed on.

[14:45]

They say the budget's still balanced, Mr. Speaker. "They" as in like the only people on this planet, but "they" as in that Sask Party government, Mr. Speaker, somehow suggesting, you know, that their already very meagre, so-called surplus of 12 is still intact, which is just ridiculous, Mr. Speaker. Twelve minus 432 certainly doesn't equal a balanced budget, Mr. Speaker.

You know, and if that government is suggesting it's going to somehow still be balanced after they blew this kind of hole in it, it begs the question what they're planning by way of big cuts or tax hikes again, Mr. Speaker. So maybe that's what they're suggesting is in the offing from that Sask Party government again, Mr. Speaker.

And I say "again" because of course that's what we've seen from this Sask Party government time and time again. Big tax hikes, Mr. Speaker, and cuts to the things we count on. This Finance minister needs to come back to the Assembly with a real plan that protects people, producers, and workers, and a budget that reflects this reality.

And as so, I move an amendment to the motion from the government:

> That the following words be added:
>
> > And further, that the Assembly recognizes the policy decision by the Government of Saskatchewan to remove the output-based performance standard will result in $432 million less in revenue than the budget presented by the Finance minister, and the Assembly calls on the Finance minister to present a revised fiscal forecast that reflects this reality.

I so move.

Speaker Goudy: — It's been moved by the member for Regina Mount Royal a motion:

> That the following words be added:
>
> > And further, that the Assembly recognizes that the policy decision by the Government of Saskatchewan to remove the output-based performance standard will result in 432 million less in revenue than the budget presented by the Finance minister, and the Assembly calls on the Finance minister to present a revised fiscal forecast that reflects this reality.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the Minister of CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan].

Hon. Jeremy Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and it's a pleasure to rise in debate on this particular topic. And I will say in advance that I will not be supporting the amendment but will be supporting the motion. And frankly, I have to say it's a bit disappointing that the opposition would actually move an amendment to this motion which is really a very straight-up motion and was crafted and drafted in such a way that I was hoping there would be all-party support for the motion, in that it is very much straight up.

And I'll read it just because I'm sure folks who are following along would like to know what it is. But this is the motion that the NDP amended and couldn't support:

> That this Assembly supports the government's actions to make Saskatchewan the first carbon tax-free province in Canada by pausing the industrial carbon tax under its output-based performance standards program, a decision that will provide immediate financial relief to families, farms, businesses, and industry; and further,
>
> That this House believes that the federal government should provide authority to provincial governments to decide their own industrial carbon tax policies without a federal backstop.

That is the motion that the NDP have sought to amend, that they cannot support, which I must say is disappointing but perhaps not entirely surprising. And we'll maybe get into a little bit about why the not surprising part. But I did speak to that a few days ago, so we won't go through the whole thing, Mr. Speaker.

But what I am very proud to say, and as my colleague, the Minister of Environment made clear, tomorrow is going to be a great day here in Saskatchewan. It's going to be a great day here because tomorrow will be the day on which we become the very first province in the entire country that is carbon tax-free. So that means, Mr. Speaker, whether you be on a family farm, whether that you be a small-business owner, whether you be in your own household, you will not be paying carbon tax as of tomorrow,

Mr. Speaker. This is a great thing.

And for a lot of people this is very significant, Mr. Speaker. This is probably over 10 per cent of your bill, depending on a few factors. But this is over 10 per cent of your power bill, that you would see on your SaskPower bill whether you be a household, business owner, a farmer, or a company that's employing literally hundreds of people, like Evraz, which is an example that I would like to point to. Because this is a company directly impacted by 25 per cent tariffs already, a company that employs hundreds of people, that really is a significant part of the base of our economy in the entire province, but without question a very, very significant part of the industrial base here in Regina.

And this company was very much at threat and is very much at threat, continues to be at threat — 25 per cent tariff on the products that are produced here in this city. It's some of the highest quality steel in the entire world that is exported around the world but primarily exported into the United States. The 25 per cent tariff, that really imperils the economics of the company of Evraz, meaning the hundreds of individuals, hard-working members of the United Steelworkers, who I had a chance to meet with this morning by the way, Mr. Speaker. I had a great discussion with the USW [United Steelworkers] who are very supportive of the direction that we're going in on this.

But by taking this carbon tax off of a large employer which would be characterized by the federal Liberals — and had been characterized by the members opposite — as a big polluter, as a big polluter, I'm going to talk a bit about what Jonathan Wilkinson had to say about that just over the last couple of days, Mr. Speaker.

Evraz is going to save literally millions of dollars per year into the future by not paying that industrial carbon tax. And what does that do in an industry probably representative of a number of others who are export-based industries exposed to global trade issues? It means they're going to be more competitive.

And this was the argument that we have made as a government from day one. That what this carbon tax actually does at the end of the day, it's not actually an environmental policy. This was a taxation policy. This was a wealth-transfer policy — that the Liberals supported by the federal NDP, supported by the federal Bloc Québécois — only opposed at the provincial level by this government from day one, Mr. Speaker. That this policy was going to be destructive of wealth, it was going to be destructive of jobs, and it was going to be destructive of the household ability to pay for goods and services of individuals.

We've been making that argument from the very, very beginning, and we were ridiculed, we were criticized, we were excoriated from across the floor and from Ottawa for doing so. But we were the only ones. We were the only ones from day one who went out and said, this is the wrong policy.

And do you know what, Mr. Speaker, what has been proven to be the case? What has literally been admitted by all of those who were criticizing the position that we had taken on day one, is they have admitted that we were right. In fact all of the federal parties — except I think, actually, the federal NDP — of all of the federal parties running in this election, they've all admitted that the consumer carbon tax was a complete and utter failure, and they have backed away from it.

We are the first ones to say it was going to be a failure. In fact we actually moved on it last year on home heating by taking the consumer portion of that carbon tax off of home heating, which really mirrored a policy that the federal government had initiated for Atlantic Canada, Mr. Speaker. But we were all alone in doing this. This isn't an arguable point. The members are laughing and that sort of thing opposite. This is not an arguable point.

Mr. Speaker, I could remember — I've been around for a while in this place, 18 years now — I can remember when we walked out, and the Premier, as minister of the Environment, walked out of the meeting, left the meeting in protest, after Catherine McKenna, federal minister of the Environment, told the gathering of environment ministers "Oh, by the way, we're going to be introducing a carbon tax despite the fact we said we were never going to do that."

He left the meeting and said, this is wrong. Only Environment minister in the country. What happened when he came back into this House: Premier Wall standing in his place, I can remember, day after day. The leader of the opposition standing up in their place across the way, demanding that this government sign on to the Trudeau carbon tax. That is a fact, Mr. Speaker. That is undeniable.

And I can tell you this as well. If the NDP had been in government in 2015, 2016 when Justin Trudeau moved forward with the carbon tax, I can tell you not only would the carbon tax have been implemented in Saskatchewan, they would have been its biggest cheerleaders, Mr. Speaker. There is no question that they would have been the biggest cheerleaders. Not just for the consumer carbon tax but for the industrial carbon tax, which is what we're talking about here today, that we have removed, and that we encourage the Government of Canada to remove as well.

And I'm concerned. I can tell you, I'm concerned, because I think the . . .

Speaker Goudy: — Sorry, I'm considering here, and I just would ask the minister to . . . I don't know if we can say for sure that . . . and when we're calling people cheerleaders, maybe that's a little offside.

Continue please, Minister.

Hon. Jeremy Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of my concerns, I can tell you . . . I mean, we have a federal election under way right now. We have parties that have taken different positions on the industrial carbon tax. What I am asking, what we are asking, what the Premier has directly asked, is that the leaders give the authority to provinces, where it rightfully belongs, to decide what is right for their jurisdiction.

And for some jurisdictions they very well may keep an output-based pricing system in place. Their decision; they're accountable to their voters for the decision that they take on that. And if their voters are supportive of that direction, fine. For us it isn't the right policy. That's why we have paused and are seeking to exit that program, working with our stakeholders on how that exit works.

But the federal government continue to have the authority through the federal backstop to impose the industrial carbon tax on Saskatchewan. They continue to have that authority. What we are asking is that that authority be rightfully devolved and rightfully given to provinces to make that decision for themselves.

And that's what this motion very explicitly makes clear. And this is important. I actually think this is important that the House speaks with one voice on this because, depending on how the election goes, I think this is actually going to be material to how the discussion with the Government of Canada goes on.

Clearly one party is committed to exiting the industrial C-tax. You know, Mark Carney has made clear though he views this as being a tax that would be increased. So I think that this is going to be a significant vote for this House to determine what that future is going to look like, and why I'm concerned as well about what the approach of a . . . If there is to be and if there, you know, I obviously . . . I announced in this House the other day I would be supporting, you know, the Conservative Party in the election, which I know shocked a lot of members around here, Mr. Speaker, that I would be so brazen as to make that announcement. But I obviously am supporting that.

What I'm worried about though, I saw a statement from Jonathan Wilkinson, you know, who's a federal cabinet minister who I think a number of us on this side of the House have dealt with personally; who I think is a competent person, frankly; who I've actually worked with pretty closely personally on a number of fronts.

But you know, Minister Wilkinson put out a statement. This was just three days ago after we made the announcement that we did on the output-based program. And I'll read you the quote: "But now, just like Donald Trump, Pierre Poilievre and Scott Moe think big polluters should get a free pass and everyday Canadians should pay the price."

This is unhelpful, Mr. Speaker. This is entirely unhelpful for a federal cabinet minister, who actually has authority over this area of policy within the Government of Canada. I get it's an election campaign — rhetoric is what it is — but this is just beyond what is reasonable. I mean, Wilkinson can make clear he disagrees with the direction, but this was really, really unhelpful, which I am concerned and I am worried is going to indicate the path that the Government of Canada are going to take with regard to industrial carbon pricing after the election.

And you know, their plan had been to continue to increase. And I should make clear as well, I said, with regard . . . Think big polluters. Well so Evraz, that's your target, is you want to increase the carbon tax on Evraz not just by, you know, where we're at right now — $95 a tonne as of April the 1st — but you want to increase that to 170. So the competitive challenges that we have right now in trade-exposed industries are going to double. And this in the next three years. This isn't like some 20-year time period. This is in the next three years.

What does that directly lead to? It directly leads to hundreds of people's jobs being in peril, and for what? And for what? Evraz has one of the most environmentally friendly processes for . . . I mean, Mr. Speaker, we're trying to have a serious discussion and clearly members opposite have no desire to have . . . What is being characterized as big polluters are industries in this province that employ hundreds and thousands of people, that would be directly imperilled by a continuance in the increase of the carbon price. For what? For what?

[15:00]

The other part of the Liberal argument is, well, there's the price signal, that therefore it's going to change behaviour and somehow, you know, have a different outcome. Well you know, in Saskatchewan, what is literally 70 to 80 per cent of the industrial carbon price? Where does that fall on? It falls on SaskPower. So literally the federal government are taxing another level of government. For what end?

Does it actually change through a price signal your investment decisions? No, because your investment decisions about your power generation mix are really based on what is going to be most efficient for your province. This is why we're looking at extending the life of coal right now, Mr. Speaker. This is exactly why. What makes sense for the people in this province from a reliability and affordability perspective? Well by taxing another level of government through an output-based system which is 70-plus per cent of the carbon price, you're not changing anything other than just taxing people. That's literally what you're doing.

And this is what really had been so adamantly supported by the Liberals and the New Democrats, and it makes no sense. And we've been talking about this for years and being criticized vociferously by those across the way and in Ottawa for making that argument. But it doesn't make any sense. And you know, at the end of the day there is going to be a recognition that this makes no sense. That's actually where this is all going to end up eventually.

But we're going to be continuing to go through this fight. If we were not prepared to undertake this fight, though, I guarantee you we wouldn't be at where we're at right now. I guarantee you Mark Carney would not have been taking off the consumer carbon tax had we not initiated what the members opposite characterize as a hopeless crusade. I guarantee you that wouldn't be the case, Mr. Speaker.

So you know what? We're going to continue. We're going to continue this fight on the industrial carbon pricing. I do hope, I sincerely hope we can speak with one voice from this House because I actually think it matters that we speak with one voice from this House on the motion. I'm deeply disappointed that we would have had an amendment on a straight-up motion that very clearly says that we are just seeking to get rid of the industrial carbon price. I think it's unfortunate.

But what I can say, Mr. Speaker, is our position has received almost unanimous support from stakeholders across the province. Our position has been vigorously supported, and I want to thank those in the private sector, amongst labour, amongst our stakeholders in municipal government for their support in moving in this direction, because this is going to continue to be a fight. It's going to continue to be a fight. I'm hopeful that . . . I know that at the end of the day we are going to be successful in this, but we can't just take that for granted.

So I want to thank members for their support as well. I look forward and I hope we're going to have unanimous support for the main motion. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I will take my chair. Thank you very much.

Speaker Goudy: — So the question before the Assembly is the proposed amendment moved by the member from Regina Mount Royal:

> That the following words be added:
>
> > And further, that the Assembly recognizes that the policy decision by the Government of Saskatchewan to remove the output-based performance standard will result in $432 million less in revenue than the budget presented by the Finance minister, and the Assembly calls on the Finance minister to present a revised fiscal forecast that reflects this reality.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

Speaker Goudy: — Well it is defeated. Oh sorry, there's two . . . I am sorry. Call in the members. I didn't see.

[The division bells rang from 15:04 until 15:05.]

Speaker Goudy: — Would all those in favour of the amendment please rise.

[Yeas — 25]

Beck	Ritchie	Burki
Nippi-Albright	Mowat	Wotherspoon
Young, A.	Clarke	Laliberte
McPhail	Breckner	Sarauer
Conway	Blakley	Grewal
ChiefCalf	Jorgenson	Brar
Gordon	Warrington	Pratchler
Housser	Senger	Roy
McBean		

Speaker Goudy: — Would all those opposed to the amendment please stand.

[Nays — 31]

Harrison, D.	Kaeding	Marit
Cockrill	Reiter	Hindley
Harrison, J.	Jenson	Young, C.
Cheveldayoff	Keisig	Thorsteinson
Martens	Hilbert	Steele
Schmalz	Ross	McLeod, T.
Carr	Wilson	Weedmark
McLeod, B.	Crassweller	Kropf
Weger	Patterson	Bromm
Rowden	Chan	Gartner
Kasun		

Clerk Assistant: — Mr. Speaker, those in favour of the amendment, 25; those opposed to the amendment, 31.

Speaker Goudy: — So the amendment is defeated. And the question before the Assembly is now:

> That this Assembly supports the government's actions to make Saskatchewan the first carbon tax-free province in Canada by pausing the industrial carbon tax under its output-based performance standards, OBPS, program, a decision that will provide immediate financial relief to families, farms, businesses, and industry; and further
>
> That this House believes that the federal government should provide authority to provincial governments to decide their own industrial carbon tax policies, without a federal backstop.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

Speaker Goudy: — So the question before the Assembly is the motion by the Minister of Environment. Will the Assembly take the motion as read? All of those in favour of the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Speaker Goudy: — All of those opposed? Call in the members.

[The division bells rang from 15:11 until 15:12.]

Speaker Goudy: — Would all of those in support of the motion please rise.

[Yeas — 56]

Harrison, D.	Kaeding	Marit
Cockrill	Reiter	Hindley
Harrison, J.	Jenson	Young, C.
Cheveldayoff	Keisig	Thorsteinson
Martens	Hilbert	Steele
Schmalz	Ross	McLeod, T.
Carr	Wilson	Weedmark
McLeod, B.	Crassweller	Kropf
Weger	Patterson	Bromm
Rowden	Chan	Gartner
Kasun	Beck	Ritchie
Burki	Nippi-Albright	Mowat
Wotherspoon	Young, A.	Clarke
Laliberte	McPhail	Breckner
Sarauer	Conway	Blakley
Grewal	ChiefCalf	Jorgenson
Brar	Gordon	Warrington
Pratchler	Housser	Senger
Roy	McBean	

[15:15]

[Nays — nil]

Clerk Assistant: — Mr. Speaker, those in favour of the motion, 56; those opposed to the motion, zero.

Speaker Goudy: — I declare the motion carried.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 3 — *The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Amendment Act, 2024*

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Tim McLeod: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of the safer communities and neighbourhoods, or SCAN, amendment Act, 2024.

The SCAN Act deals with residential and commercial buildings and lands that are sources of chronic community problems such as drug use, trafficking, or gang activity. Under the Act, SCAN investigates complaints received from the public regarding activities occurring at a particular property. The Act provides for the resolution of complaints by agreement, informal action, or a community safety order. The Act, however, does not authorize taking action against abandoned or vacant nuisance properties.

The proposed amendments will empower the SCAN unit to identify and address nuisance properties that are unfit for human habitation and negatively affect neighbourhoods where those properties are located. The amendments will authorize SCAN to apply to the court for either a rehabilitation order to demolish a nuisance property or a forfeiture order to seize the property prior to demolishing it.

SCAN will also have the discretion to attempt to remedy the condition of the property with the owner prior to initiating the application process. The amendments will also empower SCAN to use the existing community safety order process to target properties that are being used to store and exchange stolen goods or have high incidence of graffiti. These changes will ensure the SCAN program continues to provide an effective means to reduce crime in our neighbourhoods and help ensure the safety of our residents.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of *The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Amendment Act, 2024*.

Speaker Goudy: — It has been moved that Bill No. 3, *The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act, 2024* be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Jared Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a privilege to enter into debate on Bill No. 3, *The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Amendment Act, 2024*. As the minister just outlined, this is a bill that gives powers to deal with nuisance properties, rehabilitation orders, and forfeiture orders.

You know, people in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, are struggling with maintaining their property. We have the worst-in-Canada mortgage arrears, the fastest rising rents in the country, and people are struggling. And we've been in this Assembly for a week debating the budget and affordability measures that aren't going to cut it for Saskatchewan people. And I think it's important as we discuss this bill about, you know, just making sure that we're addressing the root causes of why people are struggling, right. Think about poverty; think about mental health and addictions; think about crime, the cost-of-living crisis.

And certainly in my constituency people are talking about the creeping issue of crime that's creeping into neighbourhoods. And that's certainly an issue that needs to be dealt with, but certainly thinking about those root causes. And one of the things that I point to that in my capacity as a shadow minister for municipal affairs, everywhere that I have gone, when we talk about poverty, when we talk about housing, folks point back to the changes that the government made in 2017 around SIS [Saskatchewan income support] and SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability] and as really kind of the root cause of those things. And I'm just going to touch on those things very briefly here.

There were three changes that were made back in 2017 around direct payment, around changes to the utility bill payment from exact billing to average bundle; and then establishing a help desk instead of one-on-one approach for clients and a social service worker.

So I'd really encourage the government to be looking at some of those issues around SIS and SAID when we're talking about nuisance buildings, you know, folks who are using those, and really looking at the bigger picture, kind of a root cause of why we're seeing a number of these issues in our community.

I know our team is working hard to talk with stakeholders about this bill, and we have amendments that are being put forward. And I look forward to more discussion and more debate on this bill, but with that, Mr. Speaker, I will move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 3.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Speaker Goudy: — Carried.

Bill No. 6 — *The Safe Public Spaces (Street Weapons) Act*

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Tim McLeod: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I will now move second reading of *The Safe Public Spaces (Street Weapons) Act*.

This fall we announced a comprehensive plan to promote safer communities and neighbourhoods within the province. This bill forms part of that commitment. Items such as bear spray or large knives and machetes can be used as legitimate tools that serve important purposes. Unfortunately we continue to see incidents where these items are being used as street weapons. Mr. Speaker, this bill allows Saskatchewan municipalities and First Nations to choose to opt in to rules that will help ensure these items are used for their intended purpose and not as street weapons.

Part 2 of the bill prohibits persons from possessing street weapons in public urban spaces. Persons are also prohibited from defacing or altering street weapons or possessing an altered or

defaced street weapon. People in breach of these rules can be charged with a provincial offence.

Part 3 of the bill provides peace officers enhanced powers to seize and impound street weapons from people in public urban spaces if the weapon constitutes a threat to public safety. These seizure powers exist whether or not a person is charged with an offence under the Act. This would reduce the immediate risk of the weapon being used in a harmful manner. If the owner is not charged or convicted of an offence under the Act, they may apply for return of the item; otherwise it becomes forfeited to the province.

These laws will apply to the individual municipalities and First Nations that choose to opt in to the legislation. This approach ensures that communities have flexibility to adopt these provisions based on their own unique circumstances. By opting in to the Act, municipalities and First Nations will give police officers the ability to tackle street weapons through uniform provincial rules and offences rather than relying on enforcement through individual bylaws or First Nation bylaws.

Mr. Speaker, this past February the government passed regulations to address the improper use of bear spray. This bill expands on those regulations and will replace them. This bill provides an additional tool for law enforcement that will help officers carry out their duties. The new rules ensure that large knives, bear spray, and other similar items are used for their intended purpose and not as street weapons.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of *The Safe Public Spaces (Street Weapons) Act*.

Speaker Goudy: — It has been moved that Bill No. 6, *The Safe Public Spaces (Street Weapons) Act* be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Jared Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my privilege to rise again and enter into debate on Bill No. 6, *The Safe Public Spaces (Street Weapons) Act*. Again as we heard from the minister there, this is a bill that's hoping to tackle some of the issues around street weapons and not allowing civilians to carry street weapons in public urban spaces, openly or concealed.

Certainly given that Saskatchewan is one of the top provinces for violent crime, you know, year after year, we certainly do support regulations of dangerous weapons. Again as I spoke to in the last bill, I think it's important though to be tough on crime but also tough on the root causes of crime.

And so again what I spoke to just previously around poverty, around the cost-of-living crisis, the government needs to make sure that they're addressing these issues at the same time as making these penalties on people who are carrying street weapons. So I guess the question is, what else is the government doing, especially in this budget, to address the root causes of crime?

As I said before, we will continue through our work as critics on this side of the House to engage with stakeholders across the province and hear if they believe amendments need to be made on this legislation and how effective the penalties will be. And we're curious. We'll work closely with those folks to hear more from them. So with that I'll move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 6.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Speaker Goudy: — Carried.

Bill No. 7 — *The Court of Appeal (Residency) Amendment Act, 2024/Loi modificative de 2024 sur la Cour d'appel (résidence)*

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Tim McLeod: — Thank you again, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to move second reading of *The Court of Appeal (Residency) Amendment Act, 2024*.

Mr. Speaker, beginning in 1915, Saskatchewan's Court of Appeal Act has provided that Regina is the judicial centre for every application, motion, or appeal to the Court of Appeal. In 1953 the Act permitted that certain sittings may be heard at the judicial centre of Saskatoon. Today the Act permits that any application, motion, or appeal related to an action or matter heard in the judicial centres of Battleford, Melfort, Prince Albert, or Saskatoon may also be heard in Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, the proposed amendments will allow Saskatoon to be considered the residence for a set number of Court of Appeal judges. The maximum number of judges who may have a deemed residence in Saskatoon will be set out in the regulations, and the Chief Justice will consent to which members of the court will be considered located in Saskatoon for the purposes of travel reimbursement.

As in the provinces of Alberta and Quebec, where the residence of the Court of Appeal judges is split between the two major cities in those provinces, the proposed amendments recognize Saskatoon as the other significant population centre here in Saskatchewan. Creating a residency in Saskatoon for a limited number of judges will also broaden the pool of potential applicants for positions on the Court of Appeal.

The proposed amendments do not change the default that the Court of Appeal sits in Regina and certain matters, including appeals related to prosecutions pursuant to federal legislation, shall be entered for hearing and heard at the sitting of the court in Regina.

Mr. Speaker, the proposed amendments also include housekeeping changes such as removing gendered language from the Act.

I am pleased to move second reading of *The Court of Appeal (Residency) Amendment Act, 2024*.

Speaker Goudy: — It has been moved that Bill No. 7, *The Court of Appeal (Residency) Amendment Act, 2024* be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

Erika Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be on my feet and enter into debate on Bill No. 7, *The Court of Appeal (Residency) Amendment Act, 2024*. I thank the minister for that brief introduction of the reasons for the amendments that have been listed in this Act.

Certainly, you know, times they are a-changing, and seeing that we have more sort of gender-neutral language reflected throughout this bill is always a good step in the right direction. And certainly today, on a day where we're honouring Transgender Day of Visibility, certainly we can contemplate perhaps, if not now, sometime in the future, that future judges on the Court of Appeal will feel honoured and respected by the changes in this legislation.

Perhaps equally substantive are the other amendments listed to, as the minister mentioned, increase the pool of eligible judges to sit on the Court of Appeal by the residency requirements being brought into a certain number in Saskatoon.

[15:30]

I did hear that the number that would be allowed in Saskatoon would be subject to the regulations, and I think that's something that'll be important to understand or question and ensure we've got a good balance.

I think the final thing I'll perhaps mention is around the removal of Humboldt as one of the northern centres for hearing appeals. And there will certainly be some questions around whether or not there will be a transition for people in and around Humboldt who may now struggle to access these kinds of important services.

Certainly mobility and getting around the province has been significantly impacted in a negative sense with the removal of the public Saskatchewan transportation system a number of years back. That, in many respects, does create serious and significant hardship, especially for vulnerable populations that may be party to any sort of appeal being able to get to courts in other locations from the Humboldt area.

And so that's always an issue that I'm sure we'll have many more questions about as we continue to debate this bill going forward here in second reading. And I think with that I will move to adjourn debate on the bill. Thank you.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Speaker Goudy: — Carried.

Bill No. 10 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Public Registries Enhancement) Amendment Act, 2024*

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Tim McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I now move second reading of *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Public Registries Enhancement) Amendment Act, 2024*.

This bill makes several important updates to our public registries, including the corporate registry, land titles registry, and the personal property registry. Public registries play a crucial role in Saskatchewan's legal and economic systems. As a result, it is important that the registries remain modernized, secure, and efficient.

In Saskatchewan the public registries are provided by Information Services Corporation pursuant to an agreement with the government. Under the extension agreement with the government, Information Services Corporation is required to update the registry IT [information technology] systems. Mr. Speaker, these amendments accommodate those IT updates in two key areas.

First, the amendments grant registrars express authority to verify the identities of persons who conduct registry searches and submit registry documents and who are referred to in registry documents. This would promote registry security and integrity with both search and registration activities. Verification information would not be available to the public, but in appropriate cases registrars may share the information with law enforcement bodies.

Second, the amendments grant registrars authority to accept documents signed using digital signatures in appropriate circumstances. Digital signatures can enhance registry security and increase convenience for stakeholders.

Mr. Speaker, the amendments also make general updates to improve the operation of Saskatchewan's public registries. The amendments will create new regulation-making authorities to address requests for large volumes of information. This approach is similar to existing authorities under *The Land Titles Act, 2000*. The amendments will also correct an inconsistency under *The Personal Property Security Act, 1993* respecting registered security interests in crops for creditors who finance agricultural inputs.

Additionally, these amendments will update *The Libel and Slander Act* to remove the register of newspapers from the Act. This registry is obsolete, as its contents are available through other portions of the corporate registry in a more accurate and up-to-date form. The register of newspapers is unique to Saskatchewan, and no other jurisdiction has a comparable registry in place. Removing the register of newspapers at this time will ensure that it does not need to be modernized as part of the new IT registry updates. This will result in cost savings and eliminate confusion within the registries.

Finally, the amendments make administrative updates to clarify the operation and intent of registry legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to move second reading of *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Public Registries Enhancement) Amendment Act, 2024*.

Speaker Goudy: — It has been moved that Bill No. 10, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Public Registries Enhancement) Amendment Act, 2024* be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Jared Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be

on my feet to enter into debate on Bill No. 10, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Public Registries Enhancement) Amendment Act, 2024*. Certainly we hope that the new authority that is presented in this bill that gives digital signatures authority in these registries will make the lives easier for individuals and businesses who are doing work across the province.

The minister also spoke about the termination of the registry of newspapers. And certainly a phenomenon that we're seeing across the province and across the country is the loss of local newspapers, which is a true shame, Mr. Speaker. We've seen that, you know, in Estevan where they've lost their local newspaper. And really a hit to democracy when newspapers in small communities across this province disappear.

You know, having that local voice to report on what's happening in those communities, the local voice to hold local government to account and make sure there's transparency in the decisions that are being made on behalf of taxpayers but also citizens in those communities, is really important and a key component to democracy. So anything that the government can be doing to support newspapers and local media across the province, certainly would encourage them to continue to look at that.

Also, as I've said with all of these bills, we'll continue to do the work to engage with stakeholders across the province to make sure that these bills being presented are in the best interests of Saskatchewan people, and getting feedback, especially around looking for clarity of what security interests cover for the good of farmers that have been mentioned in this bill today.

And yeah, with that, Mr. Speaker, I will move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 10. Thank you.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Speaker Goudy: — Carried.

Bill No. 11 — *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Public Registries Enhancement) Amendment Act, 2024 (No. 2)/Loi modificative diverse (amélioration des registres publics) de 2024 (n° 2)*

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Tim McLeod: — Well thank you once again, Mr. Speaker. I now rise to move second reading of *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Public Registries Enhancement) Amendment Act, 2024 (No. 2).* This bill updates bilingual legislation to make the same registry enhancements and large-volume search updates that were previously discussed. In particular, *The Co-operatives Act, 1996* and *The Non-profit Corporations Act, 2022* are amended in the same manner as the other registry-related legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Public Registries Enhancement) Amendment Act, 2024 (No. 2).*

Speaker Goudy: — It has been moved that Bill No. 11, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Public Registries Enhancement) Amendment Act, 2024 (No. 2)* be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Jared Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Here we go again. It's a pleasure to be on my feet to enter into debate on Bill No. 11, *The Miscellaneous Statutes (Public Registries Enhancement) Amendment Act, 2024 (No. 2)*. As the minister's comments were brief, mine too will be brief as we are covering similar topics to Bill No. 10. We will continue to do the work with stakeholders to engage on this bill here, but with that I will move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 11. Thank you.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Speaker Goudy: — Carried.

Bill No. 4 — *The Workers' Compensation Amendment Act, 2024*

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Jim Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of Bill No. 4, *The Workers' Compensation Amendment Act, 2024*. This bill provides two key amendments along with small housekeeping changes to improve clarity and consistency within the Act.

The first proposed amendment expands the occupational disease presumption to include wildland firefighters. On March 19, 2024, our government passed a bill that expanded the occupational disease presumption for firefighters to include 22 types of cancer. This change makes Saskatchewan a leader across Canada. Today we want to extend that coverage to wildland firefighters as well. Only three other jurisdictions currently cover wildland firefighters. But, Mr. Speaker, we know that the work of all firefighters comes with high risk, and their occupation exposes them to potential carcinogenic materials. This is the right thing to do as all firefighters help protect our lives and our communities.

The second amendment this bill proposes is voluntary coverage for out-of-province workers whose usual place of residence is in Canada. Mr. Speaker, this amendment will ensure that we're able to provide the same protection for workers outside our province but who work for a Saskatchewan-based company as we do for local employees.

The amendments proposed today will establish Saskatchewan as a strong leader in protection and coverage for employees. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of Bill No. 4, *The Workers' Compensation Amendment Act, 2024*.

Speaker Goudy: — It has been moved that Bill No. 4, *The Workers' Compensation Amendment Act, 2024* be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Nicole Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise this afternoon and enter into the debate on Bill No. 4, *The Workers' Compensation Amendment Act*. Mr. Speaker, as the

minister had just mentioned, this bill makes some substantive and some less-substantive changes to the legislation. I'm going, for the purpose of my remarks this afternoon, to focus on one of the changes in particular, and that is the one that extends compensation coverage to wildland firefighters.

Now as the minister had mentioned in his remarks, about a year ago or so, presumptive coverage was extended on many cancers for firefighters in Saskatchewan — something that we were very supportive of. I know that both sides of the House heard from those who sacrifice, put their lives on the line every single day for the safety of the citizens of this province, on the need to extend this coverage.

So we welcomed those amendments when the government introduced those. And this amendment, which will expand the coverage to cover more firefighters, to include wildland firefighters, will also be welcomed by those who expressed their concerns to both sides of the House about a year ago, Mr. Speaker, because we heard at that time that there was still more work to be done. So welcome to see this. I had the honour of being the Labour critic for a little while last term, Mr. Speaker, and at that time heard a lot of concerns from people in the province about access to Workers' Compensation and challenges that they were facing.

So there is certainly a lot of work to be done in terms of ensuring that there is appropriate coverage for all workers, Mr. Speaker, and that workplaces are as safe as possible, and that when there is an injury that they're able to get the benefits that they are entitled to, Mr. Speaker.

I know that the critic will be working really hard and is working really hard in reaching out to stakeholders to gather feedback on this proposed legislation. And to further his work I am prepared now to adjourn debate on Bill No. 4.

[15:45]

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Speaker Goudy: — Carried.

Bill No. 5 — *The Saskatchewan Employment Amendment Act, 2024*

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Jim Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to move the second reading of Bill No. 5, *The Saskatchewan Employment Amendment Act, 2024.* As Saskatchewan continues to grow, we know the important role that fair and safe workplaces have in our province. Our employment legislation needs to create a fair and balanced working environment for both employers and employees. Mr. Speaker, today we are introducing amendments to *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* to modernize and update the employment standards provisions. There are a number of amendments in this bill that I will speak about today.

One of the amendments will provide employers flexibility to define a day for the purposes of overtime and hours of work as a calendar day, or to continue to use the existing definition of 24 consecutive hours. This change provides flexibility and aligns Saskatchewan with their neighbouring provinces. This bill creates a new provision that prevents employers from deducting or withholding tips from employees. This amendment will help protect the earnings of employees.

The bill changes the group termination notice threshold so that employers have to give employees, the minister, and the union notice if it's terminating 25 or more employees. This is an increase from the current minimum of 10 employees and reduces the administrative burden for employers.

The bill will give the director of employment standards the authority to reinstate an employee or provide compensation for lost wages when an employer is found to have taken discriminatory action against an employee. Currently only the courts can order reinstatement or compensation for lost wages in these circumstances, which can be a lengthy process. To ensure fairness, the director's decisions can be appealed to an independent adjudicator. This amendment would put Saskatchewan in line with other jurisdictions in Canada.

The amendments restrict when an employer can request a medical note from a doctor, and will ensure sick notes can only be requested when the employee has been absent for more than five consecutive working days or has been absent twice for two or more days in the preceding 12 months. This will reduce administrative burden for the health care system.

Mr. Speaker, this bill also introduces a number of changes to employment leaves, including creation of a new 16-week unpaid interpersonal violence leave in addition to the existing 10-day leave; extending the duration of long-term sick leave from 12 to 27 weeks, which will ensure employees have job protection while accessing employment insurance benefits; extending maternity leave to employees who experience a loss of pregnancy up to 20 weeks before the estimated due date instead of the current 13 weeks; allowing access to bereavement leave within six months of a death, rather than a week before or after the funeral. Employees will also be able to take bereavement leave for the death of a person the employee considers to be like family, as well as for the loss of a pregnancy of an employee or an employee's immediate family.

The bill also introduces housekeeping amendments and simplifications. Mr. Speaker, reducing the red tape in our employment Act will allow workers and employers alike to focus more on the important work they do and less on cumbersome paperwork. I want to thank the organizations and individuals who shared their perspective and views with the ministry when feedback was sought on these amendments in 2023. Those responses have helped inform the amendments included in this bill.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move the second reading of Bill No. 5, *The Saskatchewan Employment Amendment Act, 2024.*

Speaker Goudy: — It has been moved that Bill No. 5, *The Saskatchewan Employment Amendment Act, 2024*, be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

Erika Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As always it's a pleasure to be on my feet and enter into debate on Bill No. 5, *The Saskatchewan Employment Amendment Act, 2024*. This is an Act respecting employment standards, occupational health and safety, labour relations, and related matters. So the Act itself, the primary Act, of course is a very important piece of legislation governing work here in Saskatchewan. And the amendments that we see before us here today sort of span the gamut. We sort of have the good, the bad, and the yet to be determined. And so I'll maybe just take a moment to speak to some of these amendments.

First off, employers cannot take, withhold, deduct from, or make employees return tips. And certainly I know I've heard from those in the service sector that this had been a concern for a variety of reasons. And so I believe these amendments are a step in the right direction.

The amendments around sick notes, requiring them only after more than five consecutive days or where sick for two or more consecutive days at least twice in a year, certainly will alleviate an unnecessary burden on our primary physicians. Certainly as we all know, one in six Saskatchewan residents does not have access to a family physician. When they do, there's long wait times and so it's really not practical. But what we've also been hearing from labour representatives is that it's a really unnecessary requirement, and so it's something they've been asking for for a number of years. And so this does appear to be a step in the right direction.

I also see that the bereavement leave that has been extended to cover death of any person prescribed in the regulations, including a pregnancy loss, have also been extended. And I think that these provisions reflect a more compassionate and realistic step in terms of the makeup of families and the type of supports that are needed at a time of loss.

Compassionate care for violence victims now offers long-term leave — option of up to 16 continuous weeks. And again that is a welcome amendment.

Some things that I know our critic for Labour will be speaking to stakeholders about and have more to say is in regards to the change to the requirement for written notice for mass firings and layoffs, moved up from 10 to 25 employees. Certainly this kind of a change, while listed as sort of, you know, removing an administrative burden, I think that there is a lot to be debated on whether or not this truly fits that description or not. And I know I certainly have questions around, you know, what the overall impact this might be in such an unfortunate set of circumstances of a business needing to scale back its operations and lay off employees for whatever reason.

And certainly of course as we stare down the current and potentially mounting threat of tariffs very soon here in a couple of days, and given the projections around what those implications or impacts are going to be, this is something where, you know, members on this side of the Assembly certainly are very focused on protecting workers' rights and ensuring that they understand what their rights are in such circumstances, and that we're moving forward in ways that ensures that their rights are being addressed.

I'll also in the same vein note that there are changes to requirements for work schedule notice and meal breaks. And sort of in a similar vein, now unions will not be notified unless there is a special agreement. I think any time that we're limiting the rights of workers, there's always the risk of harm. And so I know that our critic will have more to say and be reaching out to our stakeholders to understand those implications and debate these issues.

I'll touch very briefly on a couple more things here. I think paying wages in cash is potentially problematic, particularly in cases where there is a need to garnish wages for child support. I think that was a very hard-fought and -won provision that, you know, such a move would be seen as regressive in those cases. I know our shadow minister will have more to say on that.

And as I say, these are consequential amendments on a bill that is important to the welfare and the safety and rights of workers in this province. Not to be taken lightly. I know that our critic will have much more to say on these amendments. And with that I will move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 5.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Speaker Goudy: — Carried.

Bill No. 13 — *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2025*

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Jim Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to speak to *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2025*. These amendments deliver on key election platform commitments and new initiatives that were announced in our '25-26 provincial budget. The changes reflect our government's continued focus on making life more affordable and supporting economic growth. They also ensure that our tax system remains efficient, clear, and aligned with the Canada Revenue Agency administrative requirements.

This will include the fertility treatment tax credit. This is a significant step forward for families in Saskatchewan who are facing the challenges of infertility. We know that fertility treatments can be costly, and we believe that this initiative will provide hope and opportunity for families who wish to have children. Saskatchewan families deserve this support, and we are delivering it. Starting January 1st, 2025 this credit will provide meaningful financial relief covering 50 per cent of eligible fertility treatment costs and related prescription drugs, up to a maximum benefit of $10,000 per individual.

I'm also pleased to introduce the small and medium enterprise investment tax credit, an important initiative for Saskatchewan businesses. Small and medium-sized businesses are crucial to the economy. And this three-year pilot program will help fuel investment in key industries, including food and beverage manufacturing as well as machinery and transportation equipment manufacturing.

Starting in July of '25, investors who acquire an equity stake in these businesses will receive a 45 per cent non-refundable tax

credit on eligible investments. This means more opportunities for entrepreneurs, more businesses scaling operations in Saskatchewan, and more jobs for our people. We're continuing to position Saskatchewan as the best place in Canada to start and grow a business, and this tax credit will help in achieving that goal.

In addition to these exciting new programs, this legislation includes some housekeeping amendments. For example, at the request of the Canada Revenue Agency, we are making updates to tax credit formulas to ensure indexation adjustments are applied smoothly in the coming years. We're also extending the Saskatchewan commercial innovation incentive program's new application window for two more years, ensuring continued support for businesses bringing new technologies to market.

Mr. Speaker, these legislative amendments reflect our government's commitment to deliver for Saskatchewan. Whether it's helping families afford fertility treatments, giving businesses the support they need to thrive, or ensuring our tax system remains fair and effective, these changes provide a brighter future for our province.

Mr. Speaker, I now move second reading of *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2025*.

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — It has been moved that Bill No. 13, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2025* be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

[16:00]

Nicole Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my honour to rise this afternoon and enter into the debate on Bill No. 13, *The Income Tax Amendment Act*, and I appreciate the minister's second reading speech.

As he had mentioned, the provisions — I think most if not all of the provisions in this legislation — stem from commitments made by the government during the course of the past election. There are several changes in this bill. I will just focus on a few.

One in particular, Mr. Speaker, that is interesting to see is the fertility credit, which provides a tax credit up to $10,000 or 50 per cent of a fertility treatment, whichever one is less. Mr. Speaker, infertility challenges can be absolutely devastating for families. I know this is something that my colleague the member for South Albert has been advocating on, quite strongly I might add, for the last few years. She's tabled many petitions in this Chamber that were calling for some financial relief for those who are seeking fertility treatment, who are struggling with infertility.

Mr. Speaker, I know that she, as have other members on this side of the House spoken to many families who were both devastated by the news that they were going to have challenges in their fertility, their ability to have a family, Mr. Speaker, and then hit with the extra devastation that it would be financially difficult or financially impossible for them to seek the fertility treatment necessary to at least have a shot, Mr. Speaker.

The other piece that I wanted to talk about that the minister had mentioned was the small and medium enterprise tax credit, which provides some return on equity investments in eligible small and medium enterprises. Mr. Speaker, we know on both sides of the House that small and medium businesses are some of our major, most important economic drivers in this province. They really fuel not just our economy but our communities, and anything that we can do to help grow those businesses is incredibly important for this province, Mr. Speaker.

I know that the critic is working hard combing through the finer details of this legislation, and he very much looks forward to asking questions of the minister and his officials at committee. But in order to facilitate the work that he's doing on gathering feedback, I am prepared now to move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 13.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — Carried.

Bill No. 16 — *The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2025*

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Jim Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I rise today to move second reading of *The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2025*. This bill expands the provincial sales tax base to include the taxation of vapour products. Currently provincial sales tax applies to traditional tobacco products and does not apply to vapour products. Expanding the provincial sales tax base to vapour products will provide equitable tax treatment to tobacco products.

Vapour product use is becoming more prevalent in Saskatchewan, particularly among the youth population. The use of vapour products has the potential for long-term health impacts such as harming healthy brain development and a higher risk of addiction to other substances. The increased cost will help discourage vaping, similar to the impact that increased tobacco taxes had on tobacco use.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I now move second reading of *The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2025*.

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — It has been moved that Bill No. 16, *The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2025* be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Jared Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's an honour to be on my feet to enter into Bill No. 16, *The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2025*. Mr. Speaker, this bill today takes me back to one of the first months that I was in this Assembly back in November of 2023 when the House together moved to push through *The Tobacco and Vapour Products Control Amendment Act* to raise the minimum age for purchase of vaping purchases.

This was Youth4Change who had come into the Assembly and lobbied with both sides of the House to see this legislation come to pass. And so we of course on this side of the House do support removing the PST [provincial sales tax] exemption on vaping products to continue to encourage Saskatchewan people to choose healthy lifestyle choices.

Of course while the minister is looking at the PST Act, we would like to see more supports for Saskatchewan people to make life more affordable. Certainly during the election, our side of the Assembly called on the government to cut the PST on groceries and children's clothing. Certainly we're disappointed that that hasn't happened in this bill.

But one of the other pieces, as I've learned and we've been calling for for a long time, Mr. Speaker, is the elimination of the PST on construction. As municipal affairs shadow minister, Mr. Speaker, that is one thing that I have heard in all corners of this province, about how municipalities are burdened by the PST on construction goods.

That PST that municipalities pay then goes into the PST pot of the provincial government, and then the provincial government then uses that PST revenue to give municipalities a share of the municipal revenue-sharing agreement. So municipalities are spending a lot of money. In some instances the same amount of money that they get from municipal revenue sharing is what they are paying to the government on PST on construction, Mr. Speaker.

And I heard the minister this afternoon talking about, you know, how ridiculous it is for one level of government to be taxing another level of government. And this is a perfect example, one very questionable example of the PST being charged on another level of government in Saskatchewan, one that this government, the Sask Party government, continues to keep in place, and one that I know municipalities across this province would love for the Sask Party government to remove but to continue to maintain that funding of municipal revenue sharing.

With that, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to consult with folks across the province on this bill, as we will with every other bill. And I will move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 16. Thank you.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — Carried.

Bill No. 8 — *The Child Care (New Facilities) Amendment Act, 2024/Loi modificative de 2024 sur les garderies d'enfants (nouveaux établissements)*

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Everett Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am here today to speak to Bill No. 8, *The Child Care (New Facilities) Amendment Act, 2024*. We as a government recognize the importance of ensuring the expansion of available regulated child care spaces across the province of Saskatchewan. The purpose of this bill is to update the Act to be in line with the vision and objectives within the Canada-Saskatchewan Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement and the Bilateral Early Learning and Child Care Agreement.

These agreements provide funding for early learning and child care programs in Saskatchewan until 2025-2026. These amendments to the Act demonstrate that we are committed to improving access to regulated child care spaces for all Saskatchewan families.

Of note, section 2 updates definitions within the Act and adds in definitions for "alternative child care services" and "preschool." In addition the number of spaces available in a group family child care home will be increased from 12 to 16. Section 5 determines what types of child care services require a licence to operate. The amendment adds alternative child care services to this section.

Section 6 is amended to include the authority for the ministry to create regulations to limit the number of children in an alternative child care services centre or preschool.

The new section 7.1 details the operational and licensing conditions for preschools to be consistent with other child care services. Also new is section 10.1 which was added to address parental involvement in licensed preschools and to be consistent with parental involvement in other types of child care services.

Finally, section 23 was amended to allow for the sharing of personal information with the federal government as required by the bilateral agreements.

These amendments were identified through an internal review and through consultation with the child care sector last summer. I'd like to thank the Ministry of Social Services as well and our early learning and child care stakeholders who provided input on these amendments. The amendments will further support families and continue to drive strong economic growth in the province.

And with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I now move second reading of *The Child Care (New Facilities) Amendment Act, 2024*.

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — It has been moved that Bill No. 8, *The Child Care (New Facilities) Amendment Act, 2024* be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Regina Douglas Park.

Nicole Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my honour to rise this afternoon and enter into the debate on Bill No. 8, *The Child Care (New Facilities) Amendment Act, 2024*. And I thank the minister for his second reading remarks, Mr. Speaker.

As has been mentioned by the minister, the bill makes several changes. The one that I have a question on that I see isn't actually clarified in the legislation was the minister's remarks about adding the definition and inclusion of alternative child care services centres, which is added to the list of eligible centres. So I checked the definition section of the legislation quickly, just while I was listening to the minister, to see what that meant because I didn't know what that meant. And the definition says:

> **" 'alternative child care services centre'** means a facility that is approved as an alternative child care services centre by the minister in accordance with this Act and the regulations.**"**

So it's one of those circular definitions that doesn't actually explain what it is but says that it will be explained — well possibly will be explained — in the regulations. So I'm interested to see the conversation that goes on around what that means and what that is intended to allow for. And I know that our shadow minister will be asking questions about many different things at committee, Mr. Speaker, and there's the chance that that might come up as a question.

Mr. Speaker, I know that my colleague the member from Rochdale, the critic for this legislation, has been fielding numerous calls from stakeholders in this area, from service providers, Mr. Speaker, from parents as well who are very concerned about this government's slow-walking of extending or agreeing to the extension that every other province has signed on to. It's left a lot of concern and fear amongst service providers and parents.

I know I spend a lot of time at . . . well I did; now my kids' gymnastics just finished. But if you've ever been to Amazing Adventures, Mr. Speaker, on the weekend in Regina, it is parent and kid central there. It's remarkable how many families move through that facility in a morning on the weekend, Mr. Speaker.

And what I heard from a lot of folks that I chatted with, there were just questions about what was going on. Why hasn't this been signed yet? What is this going to mean for my child care? Does this mean that the fees are going to go up again? I know fees were, you know, $900 a month for one kid in some locations depending on the age, and the drop down to $217.50 was an incredible opportunity for families to be able to access child care that they needed and that they may not have otherwise gotten before.

[16:15]

Now there is a real challenge in this province right now with being able to access child care. So, as the critic has been pointing out very well, I will say we need more spaces and we need more workers and we need to ensure that those workers are treated fairly and treated well in this province, considering they are being entrusted with our most valuable resource, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So to say there is a lot of work that needs to be done in this area is very much an understatement. I know that the critic is doing incredible work right now gathering feedback from stakeholders, from providers, from families on this area more broadly but this legislation as well. And in order to allow her to continue on with that good work, I am prepared now to move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 8.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — Carried.

Bill No. 9 — *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2024*

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — I recognize the Minister of Crown Investments Corporation.

Hon. Jeremy Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today, and at the conclusion of my remarks I will be moving second reading of *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2024*.

The Traffic Safety Act is the legislation that outlines the Saskatchewan drivers licensing and motor vehicle operation rules. It ensures the roads in our province and the people travelling on them are safe.

The Act also outlines administration requirements and expectations for SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] and customers, including when and how we communicate important information. Currently any document required by legislation to be provided to a customer must be delivered by either mail, registered mail, or in person. This documentation includes customer notifications of driver's licence suspensions, vehicle inspections, vehicle impounds, and requirements that need to be fulfilled to maintain or regain a driver's licence or vehicle registration.

The proposed amendment will enable SGI to provide documents to customers electronically if the customer provides their consent to do so. This amendment to the Act will provide an additional and convenient method to deliver important information to customers. Customers who prefer to receive notice via mail can continue to do so. Notifications via email or text message are expected in today's digital world, and are timelier in alerting customers to critical and time-sensitive requirements.

In fact this is something that SGI customers have been requesting. Letters sent via regular mail are becoming obsolete processes in many industries. They are not always timely or reliable. If these amendments are passed, SGI expects savings in paper and mailing costs as customers move to electronic notifications. SGI mails an average of 300,000 customer letters that could be replaced by electronic notification.

To ensure customers' personal and private information is secure, SGI would text or email customers to advise them to visit the secure MySGI account to view an important notice. That way, sensitive information is not contained in the email or text message itself.

These changes will help ensure customers receive important documentation quickly, and also it's a great alternative for those who forget to update their address or file when they move. These amendments will deliver greater convenience for customers at cost savings for SGI, and with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move the second reading of *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2024*.

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — It has been moved that Bill No. 9, *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2024* be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

Erika Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's an honour once

again to be on my feet this afternoon and enter into debate on Bill No. 9, *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2024*. And I did listen very closely to the minister's remarks where there was quite a bit of explanation provided into a number of the questions that I had about this bill, particularly, you know, a piece of legislation that is responsible for ensuring the safe operation of vehicles, the licensings of drivers and motor vehicles on those highways.

And I do note that the amendments in question, 284 and 287, are quite a ways near the back of that parent Act. You know, sort of really speaking to the comprehensiveness of this Act, *The Traffic Safety Act*, and its overall importance.

So certainly, yes, drivers in Saskatchewan are certainly looking for convenience and timely receipt of documentation. And in cases, obviously, especially where there is remoteness to their location from a service agent, having the ability to consent to the receipt of these kinds of documents and services via email is, I'm sure, quite a welcome one.

I recently just went through the process of updating my own driver's licence and having to get the photo retaken and then having that reissued through the mail. And you know, it took a little longer because it was January, and we were still just getting over from the Canada Post strike, which I think really kind of put a fine point on the need for us to move along with these kinds of amendments.

And so I guess really my biggest question is what took us so long? It seems like such an obvious modernization in these times when people are used to receiving documents in this way, you know, including such things as signing real estate agreements and financial documents. We're seeing all sorts of things being offered through secured sites. And so I did pick up on that piece here in terms of ensuring that there is security.

And I know that our critic will have many more questions of this nature to ask and ensure that, as these kinds of amendments go forward and then are prescribed within the regulations as has been indicated, that we ensure that this does indeed provide for a convenient and timely process that ensures the security of users. I myself rely on my SaskTel account for, you know, much of my personal email communication, and I rely on this Crown corporation to ensure the security and robustness of that service. And I want to see it continue on, as do many of my constituents.

And you know, so at every point along the way — whether that's through our email provider or the licensing agency SGI or whomever — we want to ensure that there is security of the portals and of the services, our information is protected, that privacy is protected. And you know, it may be a little bit of devil in the details or in the implementation where, you know, some of these things can start to fall apart. So that's where we will be looking to ensure the due diligence in the implementation if that does go ahead.

And that will be sort of the nature of the questions I'm sure our critic will have on this bill. They'll be reaching out to stakeholders and doing that good work. So with that I will conclude my remarks and move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 9.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — Carried.

Bill No. 14 — *The Power Corporation Amendment Act, 2025*

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — I recognize the Minister of Crown Investments Corporation.

Hon. Jeremy Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. At the conclusion of my comments I will be moving second reading of Bill No. 14, *The Power Corporation Amendment Act, 2025*.

These proposed amendments will ensure that SaskPower continues to meet its capital investment commitments to continue delivering safe and reliable electricity for Saskatchewan families and businesses. Specifically this legislation will amend subsection 43(1) of *The Power Corporation Act* to increase SaskPower's borrowing limit from 10 billion to 14 billion; add a new section to the Act to provide SaskPower with the express authority to make loans and advances to and guarantee the indebtedness of its subsidiaries; and amend subsection 3(3) and section 4 of *The Power Corporation Act* to clarify that SaskPower's subsidiaries are agents of the Crown.

To provide some background, SaskPower's current borrowings are approximately 9.3 billion as of January 2025 and are forecast to increase above the current borrowing limit later this year. Borrowing is necessary to support capital investments that ensure SaskPower's electrical grid remains reliable and affordable. By making these investments, we are delivering for the people of our province, maintaining a strong, dependable grid that meets the needs of today and supports future growth. Without this amendment, SaskPower will be unable to proceed with essential capital projects to maintain, upgrade, and expand its transmission and generation facilities.

Regarding the amendment which provides SaskPower with the express authority to make loans and advances to its subsidiaries and guarantee their obligations, with the recent creation of SaskNuclear as a subsidiary corporation to SaskPower, this change is necessary to proceed toward a go-no-go decision for the SMR [small modular reactor] project in 2029. By granting SaskPower these powers, we remove any interpretational risks and ensure that third parties, including federal regulators, equipment suppliers, lenders, and investors can confidently participate in the SMR project.

As a statutory corporation, SaskPower only has those powers which are expressly or impliedly granted under the Act. Any action taken which is not expressly granted could be challenged in court and/or dissuade third parties like regulators from approving or participating in nuclear projects. To remove all interpretational risk, given the scope and magnitude of the SMR project, this legislative amendment is required.

Finally amendments to existing provisions in subsection 3(3) and section 4 of the Act are proposed to make it explicit that SaskPower subsidiaries are agents of the Crown to avoid legal uncertainty on the issue. The amendments will align *The Power*

Corporation Act with *The SaskEnergy Act* and make certain that SaskPower subsidiaries are agents of the Crown in right of Saskatchewan.

In conclusion, these legislative amendments are crucial for SaskPower's continued success and our province's energy future. By increasing the borrowing limit, providing authority for loans and guarantees for subsidiaries, and clarifying that subsidiaries are agents of the Crown, we are paving the way for significant advancements in our infrastructure and energy projects.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I move second reading of *The Power Corporation Amendment Act, 2025*.

Speaker Goudy: — It has been moved that Bill No. 14, *The Power Corporation Amendment Act, 2025* be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

Erika Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again it's a pleasure to be on my feet for Bill No. 14, *The Power Corporation Amendment Act, 2025*. As has already been explained, this is an Act that will increase SaskPower's borrowing limit from 10 billion to $14 billion.

And it makes explicit what we already knew in that SaskPower and its subsidiaries are agents of the Crown, their profits are property of the Crown, and SaskPower can lend and advance money to its subsidiaries and demand repayment. So you know, I guess it removed some uncertainty, I heard the minister say, around the ability of those SaskPower agents to enter into funding arrangements on deemed and potentially planned upcoming projects, and for that to be able to go forward without any encumbrance.

[16:30]

And so you know, on the face of it, it would seem a fairly administrative kind of an amendment to ensure that those go, no-go decisions can move forward. And certainly we know that there will be a number of critical investments needed to be made in the coming years to ensure the stability of our power grid, whether that is power generation, power transmission, so on and so forth. And I know that there's a number of projects that are currently under consideration and we'll see, I guess, in the fullness of time where those projects get to.

I know that our critic is deeply, deeply engaged on these matters, engaging with stakeholders and constituents, and will have much more to say and ask regarding these amendments. And so with that I'll move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 14. Thank you.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Speaker Goudy: — Carried.

Bill No. 15 — *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2025/Loi modificative de 2025 sur la réglementation des boissons alcoolisées et des jeux de hasard*

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

Hon. Alana Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my privilege to rise today for second reading of Bill No. 15, *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2025*.

This bill will implement two policy changes identified in the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority's 2025-26 budget submission: to increase the maximum administrative penalties from $10,000 to $25,000 and to authorize the SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority] to charge interest on overdue accounts.

Mr. Speaker, amendments to this Act will raise the maximum administrative penalty for liquor permittees and gaming registrants who fail to adhere to the terms and conditions of their permits or certificates of registration. The maximum penalty will be raised from $10,000 to $25,000. This change is long overdue, as the penalty amount has not been updated in more than 20 years, reducing its effectiveness as a deterrent to non-compliance.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that Saskatchewan has one of the lowest maximum administrative penalty fees in Western Canada. Additionally the maximum penalty for liquor is notably less than that of cannabis, which is also set at $25,000. By implementing this proposed change, we will not only bring Saskatchewan in line with our neighbouring provinces, but also create an equitable framework between liquor and cannabis, ensuring consistent and fair regulatory enforcement throughout the region.

To be clear, Mr. Speaker, this change will only impact those permittees that have repeatedly or egregiously failed to comply with the rules under which they operate. Raising the maximum penalty directly supports SLGA's mandate to promote responsible service of alcohol. It also aligns with our government's commitment to tackle the social and health challenges associated with excessive alcohol consumption by enhancing regulatory measures. A higher penalty will act as a strong deterrent against violations, encouraging individuals and businesses to comply with the regulations.

The second amendment will authorize SLGA to charge interest on delinquent accounts, significantly enhancing financial accountability. Mr. Speaker, charging interest on outstanding balances not only motivates timely payments, but also strengthens SLGA's collection efforts. When interest is applied, customers are more inclined to settle their debts promptly. In today's high-interest-rate environment, businesses often prioritize paying off loans and suppliers that impose those interests and penalties, making it very important for SLGA to adopt similar practices.

Furthermore other Crown corporations in Saskatchewan already apply penalties and interest on delinquent accounts. By aligning SLGA's policies with these organizations, we enhance our financial responsibility and promote a fair and effective approach.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I now move second reading of Bill No. 15, *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act,*

2025. Thank you.

Speaker Goudy: — It has been moved that Bill No. 15, *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2025* be now read for a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Nicole Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to rise today and enter into the debate on Bill No. 15, *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2025*. And I thank the minister for her second reading speech and comments on the changes in this legislation and why the changes are being made.

Just to highlight a few of the changes that she had mentioned, Mr. Speaker, these proposed amendments will allow for SLGA to charge interest on late payments, so to deal with any delinquencies that they are currently faced with, Mr. Speaker. She spoke to the reasonableness of why that is a necessary amendment. She also mentioned that the maximum penalty is going to be increased from $10,000 to $25,000, Mr. Speaker. We know that SLGA is a very valuable Crown doing very good work, and it's important to see them empowered to get the money that they're owed, Mr. Speaker.

The minister also commented on the importance of ensuring that there is uniformity in jurisdictions, especially the ones that we are neighbouring, so interested to see that development. I know that's something that's talked about a lot, about the importance of uniformity in legislation across Canada, Mr. Speaker.

I know that the critic is doing really important work reaching out to stakeholders and gathering feedback with respect to these legislative amendments. In order to facilitate that good work I am prepared now to move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 15.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Speaker Goudy: — Carried.

Bill No. 17 — *The Saskatchewan Commercial Innovation Incentive (Patent Box) Amendment Act, 2025*

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

Hon. Warren Kaeding: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to move second reading of *The Saskatchewan Commercial Innovation Incentive (Patent Box) Amendment Act, 2025*.

Mr. Speaker, this unique incentive is often referred to as the patent box program or SCII [Saskatchewan commercial innovation incentive]. The program is intended to incentivize medium and large businesses to commercialize new products at scale right here in Saskatchewan.

For a successful applicant, Mr. Speaker, the program will reduce the provincial corporate income tax rate to 6 per cent for income generated in Saskatchewan for commercialized intellectual property. This tax incentive is open to any company operating in any sector from anywhere in the world, regardless of where or when the research and development for the qualifying intellectual property occurred.

Mr. Speaker, SCII incentive continues to be one of the first of its kind in North America. This patent-box-style incentive applies to a wide variety of intellectual property types, including patents, plant breeders' rights, trade secrets, and copyrights such as computer programs and algorithms.

Mr. Speaker, the legislative change being brought forward is to extend the SCII incentive by two years until June 30th, 2027. Mr. Speaker, this change creates no incremental cost to the government, as the program is refunding taxes that the Government of Saskatchewan otherwise would not have received. Last year the program was extended to allow for an external review with stakeholders aimed at improving the program's eligibility requirements and simplifying the application process.

With the review now complete, Mr. Speaker, the SCII is being extended for an additional two years and will be expanding access to the program by eliminating the economic eligibility criteria. This means more medium and large businesses will benefit from the incentive. Mr. Speaker, these adjustments will make it easier for businesses to qualify, helping drive even more innovation and investment to Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, this is another example of how this government is delivering to the people of this province. With these enhancements, the SCII will continue to support businesses in bringing their ideas to market, creating jobs, and contributing to Saskatchewan's economy. Through these strategic improvements, Mr. Speaker, we are reaffirming our commitment to innovation, economic resilience, and ensuring Saskatchewan remains one of the most competitive and prosperous places to do business.

The new and improved SCII continues to make Saskatchewan one of the best jurisdictions to commercialize intellectual property. With these changes, Mr. Speaker, applicants may directly own the intellectual property or hold a recognized licence for the intellectual property and/or the related goods, services, or processes.

Mr. Speaker, the SCII is a key part of *Securing the Next Decade of Growth*: *Saskatchewan's Investment Attraction Strategy*. Programs like this make Saskatchewan one of the most attractive places in Canada to invest, start, and grow a business. It's also just another example of how we are building a strong and resilient economy for the benefit of all Saskatchewan people.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to now move second reading of *The Saskatchewan Commercial Innovation Incentive (Patent Box) Amendment Act, 2025*.

Speaker Goudy: — It has been moved that Bill No. 15, *The Alcohol and Gaming Regulation Amendment Act, 2025* . . . Oh, sorry. I'm sorry, Mr. Kaeding. It has been moved that Bill No. 17, *The Saskatchewan Commercial Innovation Incentive (Patent Box) Amendment Act, 2025* be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

I recognize the member from Saskatoon Nutana.

Erika Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again it's a pleasure to be on my feet and enter into debate on Bill No. 17, *The Saskatchewan Commercial Innovation Incentive (Patent Box) Amendment Act, 2025*. I think, as the minister mentioned, what this bill is about is extending the incentive for what's been deemed the patent box for another two years, and then also notably removing from the program requirements the economic eligibility test, which certainly sort of piqued my interest in terms of that significant change which I'm sure was part of the overall due diligence for these applications.

I mean certainly, you know, we want to see innovation occur and be incentivized to medium- and large-sized businesses here in the province that is a driver for growth, and we want to see growth. We want to see jobs in that innovation space, you know, in technology space. Because those are good, mortgage-paying jobs at the end of the day, and that's good for business. It's good for workers here in Saskatchewan. It draws on the good work that's being done at our universities and our advanced education sector, in our research, R & D [research and development] sector, being able to commercialize innovation and take it to the stage where it is contributing to the GDP [gross domestic product] here in Saskatchewan. Those are all really good things.

And certainly right now as we are looking at, again, threats of increasing tariffs by the Trump administration on our exports into their country, and needing to find ways to bolster our economy, ensure that we're promoting interprovincial trade, building up those businesses with other markets across the globe, incentivizing innovation is key to that.

And also, obviously very happy to hear that there was a review that occurred of this program to see sort of where the barriers were to adoption and applications coming forward. I guess I do have some questions about just how successful the program has been so far, and certainly if there were issues with attracting investors that, you know . . . Change is good, but certainly also we do want to make sure that it's being done in a prudent fashion.

And so I know that our critic will be exploring those sorts of questions with the minister to ensure the robustness that we're continuing with appropriate due diligence, ensuring that those applicants coming forward to access a program have the financial and business wherewithal to be successful in their business endeavours, and we're not in a situation where we're funding projects that, you know, have a low prospect of success or aren't going to use the funds in the intended way.

[16:45]

So you know, I think it's about checks and balances at the end of the day. I want to see business incentivized, innovation in particular. As I mentioned, those are a way to grow our economy, ensure that we're creating good mortgage-paying jobs that contribute to the economic base here in Saskatchewan.

And with that, I'll leave those questions for our critic in the area and move to adjourn debate on Bill No. 17.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Speaker Goudy: — Carried. I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Tim McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To facilitate the work of committees, I move that this House do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Speaker Goudy: — Agreed. Carried. We will adjourn tomorrow at 1:30. Thank you.

[The Assembly adjourned at 16:46.]

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