



FIRST SESSION — THIRTIETH LEGISLATURE

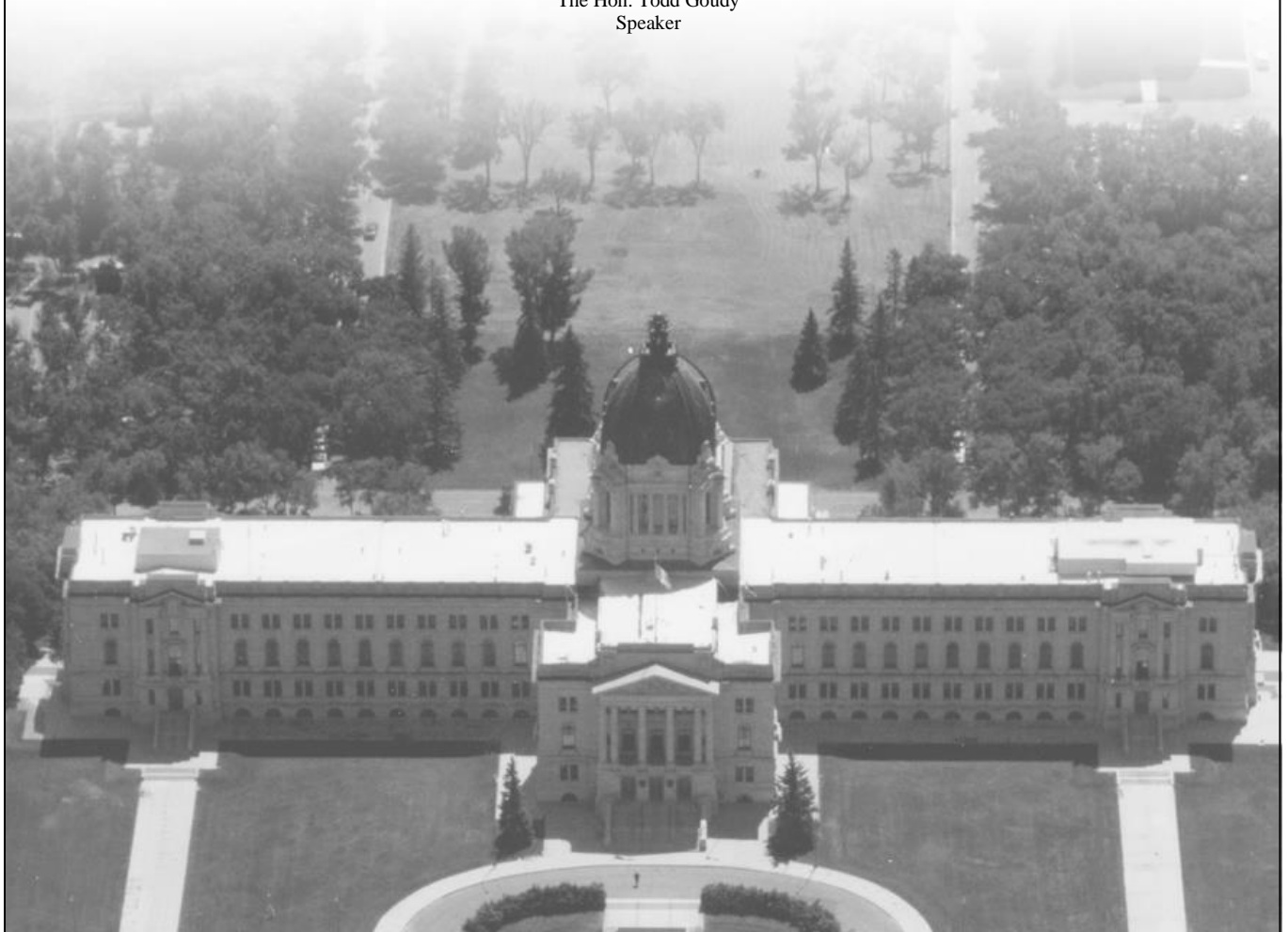
of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
AND
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)

Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Todd Goudy
Speaker



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

Beaudry, Chris — Kelvington-Wadena (SP)
Beck, Carla — Regina Lakeview (NDP)
Blakley, Brent — Regina Wascana Plains (NDP)
Brar, Bhajan — Regina Pasqua (NDP)
Breckner, Kim — Saskatoon Riversdale (NDP)
Bromm, Terri — Carrot River Valley (SP)
Burki, Noor — Regina Coronation Park (NDP)
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Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken — Saskatoon Willowgrove (SP)
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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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Grewal, Tajinder — Saskatoon University-Sutherland (NDP)
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Hindley, Hon. Everett — Swift Current (SP)
Housser, Sally — Regina University (NDP)
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Jorgenson, Keith — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (NDP)
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)
Laliberte, Leroy — Athabasca (NDP)

Love, Matt — Saskatoon Eastview (NDP)
Marit, Hon. David — Wood River (SP)
Martens, Hon. Jamie — Martensville-Blairmore (SP)
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McLeod, Blaine — Lumsden-Morse (SP)
McLeod, Hon. Tim — Moose Jaw North (SP)
McPhail, Jordan — Cumberland (NDP)
Moe, Hon. Scott — Rosthern-Shellbrook (SP)
Mowat, Vicki — Saskatoon Fairview (NDP)
Nippi-Albright, Betty — Saskatoon Centre (NDP)
Patterson, Megan — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)
Pratchler, Joan — Regina Rochdale (NDP)
Reiter, Hon. Jim — Rosetown-Delisle (SP)
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)

Standings

Government Caucus: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 34; Opposition Caucus: New Democratic Party (NDP) — 27

Clerks-at-the-Table

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Principal Clerk — Robert Park
Clerk Assistant — Danielle Humble-Selinger

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[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

TABLING OF REPORTS

Speaker Goudy: — I would like to table the annual report from the Ombudsman and Public Interest Disclosure Commissioner pursuant to section 38(1) of *The Ombudsman Act, 2012* and section 23(1) of the public interest disclosure commissioner Act. The Ombudsman has submitted the annual reports for the year 2025.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Tim McLeod: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This morning, to you and through you I'd like to introduce some guests seated in your gallery. We have Crystal Fajt, Camille Harrison, Patrick Charles, Derrick Wiwcharuk, and Chris Clemett.

Mr. Speaker, Crystal, Camille, Patrick, and Derrick are from the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency operations team. And joining them is Chris, who was here with us earlier this week. He's the SPSA [Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency] executive director of engagement and enterprise projects.

Our guests are here today joining us to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of our public safety operations officials and firefighters as we approach yet another wildfire season. Mr. Speaker, we recognize and appreciate the vital roles these individuals have in protecting the people, the property, and the resources of people here in Saskatchewan as well as abroad.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the government I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome Crystal, Camille, Patrick, Derrick, and Chris to their Legislative Assembly, and thank them for their work and their dedication to the province of Saskatchewan. I would ask all members to please join me in this welcome.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Opposition House Leader.

Nicole Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to join with the minister on behalf of the opposition in welcoming this fine group of SPSA ops folks here to their Legislative Assembly. As the minister had stated, we can't say thank you enough for the hard work that you and the entirety of the public service does, especially in the area of public safety.

But especially leading into wildfire season — we know this is an incredibly busy time for you — so thank you for all the work you have done and all the work that we know that you will do as we lead into this very busy season here. Your work is very valuable and very much appreciated. I ask all members to join me in welcoming these fine folks to their legislative gallery.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Jeremy Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to introduce a young woman up in the west gallery, Megan Betteridge. Megan, I've gotten to know. She works in my office here at the Legislative Building. She's from the constituency of White City-Qu'Appelle. I'm going to have more to say about Megan and some recent accomplishments of hers in a member's statement a little bit later. But I'd ask all members in the House to join me in welcoming Megan Betteridge to her Assembly.

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

Vicki Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join in with the Minister of Health in welcoming Megan to her Legislative Assembly on behalf of the official opposition.

And while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I would also like to join in with the minister opposite in welcoming Camille Harrison to her Legislative Assembly. I've had a chance to meet Camille. My constituency assistant is her cousin, so our paths have crossed at several Harris family gatherings. I want to thank her for her work in helping to protect people from wildfires and ask all members to join us in welcoming her to her Assembly today.

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

Megan Patterson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to introduce Vidit Soni, seated in the west gallery. Vidit was a student of mine at Sask Polytech. He was an excellent student — bright, hard-working, engaged, and a leader among his peers.

Over the years we've come to know him and even had the pleasure of meeting his parents from India. Vidit has become a close friend to our family and we are now honoured to be his family away from home. In fact, Mr. Speaker, Vidit also moonlights as the unofficial IT [information technology] support for my parents and has made many attempts to teach me to cook.

I am so proud of his success. Vidit now works as a project co-ordinator at Graham Construction at the Jansen mine. He has been there less than a year and has already been promoted. Vidit is an outstanding example of the way in which diversity brought into our province through immigration enriches lives like ours and contributes to our growing economy. I would like now to ask the Assembly to welcome Vidit to this his Legislative Assembly.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood.

Keith Jorgenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to my feet to introduce Teresa Sandeski. I had a rather heartbreaking trip to Weyburn to meet her. She's come to her legislature today. And I do sincerely hope one day to meet her under less tragic circumstances. But I wish all the members in the legislature to give her and her friend a warm welcome to their legislature.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Weyburn-Bengough.

Michael Weger: — Yes, to you and through you, Mr. Speaker, I

would also like to acknowledge Ms. Sandeski here today. Of course I have had many conversations with her husband, Fred, through the last few months. And you know, I do just want to extend my wishes to your family through the tough times you're going through, and again ask all members to join me in welcoming Teresa Sandeski to her Legislative Assembly.

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

Meara Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be on my feet to welcome the grade 8 class from Albert Community School seated in the east gallery. They're here today with their teachers Ms. A. and Ms. Woodroffe, and they are the proud home of the Eagles.

This is a wonderful community school, Mr. Speaker. It's just around the corner from my constituency office in the heart of North Central. I had a moment to just see the kids as I was walking in and I challenged them to come up with some tough questions. And I'm really looking forward to meeting with them after and hearing their thoughts on today's proceedings. I've asked everyone to be on their best behaviour in light of the fact that you're here, so we'll see. Please join me in welcoming Albert School, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Government Relations.

Hon. Eric Schmalz: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to also make an introduction today. We have Mr. Michael Aman seated in the west gallery. He's been working in our office the last couple of months and today is his last day in the building. He will continue to work for the government, Mr. Speaker, but he is going to be taking on a different role.

An Hon. Member: — The opposition role.

Hon. Eric Schmalz: — No. No. He is going to continue his education in Saskatoon. So I would like to request that the House and all members welcome him to the Assembly and congratulate him on his new endeavour.

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

Nicole Sarauer: — Thanks, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I have a school group as well in the east gallery, 15 students from Prairie Sky School. Feel free to give a wave. They're grades 5 to 8 students, and they're joined by their teachers Michaela Frencham, Irwin Preet, and Trent Moen.

I hope you have a wonderful morning here at the legislature, and I hope you've also prepared some tough questions that either I will be answering or one of my colleagues will be answering, depending on what's going on in the Chamber at the time. But really looking forward to seeing you all later, and I ask all members to join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Joan Pratchler: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd also like to introduce some guests, child care providers here in our city. Today we have two gals from Stepping Stones Child Care, and they represent 270 spaces here in Regina — Donna Rice and Annette Yowney. I'd also like to recognize Jennifer Kostur from Solid Futures Learning Centre and Allison Tholl from Sandcastles Childcare. These provide over 145 spaces. So in total they represent nearly 500 spaces right here in Regina and over 100 years of collective child care provision for our city. Please join in welcoming these gals who do such wonderful service for the children.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Everett Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to take this opportunity to join the member for Regina Rochdale on the behalf of the provincial government to welcome the child care providers who are here today — Donna, Annette, Jennifer, and Allison — to thank them for the important work that they do when it comes to child care here in Regina and surrounding area and Saskatchewan.

A lot of debate of course around the future of the child care program, and I just want to reassure our guests that the government is looking forward to renegotiating the next step of that particular deal with our federal counterparts, Mr. Speaker. So to you and through you, I'd ask all members to welcome these child care providers and thank them for the great work they do in Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Goudy: — And I also have a few introductions today. We have someone who has been working very hard as many of the members and ministers have been at SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association] the last number of days.

We have Sharon H. Pratchler, K.C. [King's Counsel], Ombudsman and commissioner to her Legislative Assembly. In 2024 the Office of the Ombudsman received 4,064 requests for assistance from members of the public. A position of Knowledge Keeper was added to the team — the only office in Canada, ombudsman that has one.

Accompanying the Ombudsman today are members of her team who assisted in handling those files and in the operations of the office: Knowledge Keeper Jim Pratt, Ryan Kennedy, Charlene Mouly, Ashley Thompson, Zuhail Latif, and Laurie Taylor. I ask all members to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

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

Civil Forfeiture Program Helps Support Victims of Crime

Megan Patterson: — Mr. Speaker, last Friday I had the pleasure of joining the Moose Jaw Police Service to announce several new initiatives being funded under the province's civil forfeiture program.

Since 2009 the civil forfeiture program has redirected the proceeds seized from criminal activity and put them to good use through our police agencies and community programs. This

program ensures that assets linked to illegal activities, such as cash from drug trafficking, is seized and repurposed for public benefit. This year, out of the 1.1 million being redistributed, over 564,000 of this will go to police services across the province, as well as Search and Rescue Regina.

The Moose Jaw Police Service and Victim Services are receiving \$223,000. With a focus on protecting Saskatchewan children, this funding will help support the opening of the new Moose Jaw child and youth advocacy centre, which will be staffed by personnel specifically trained in this area. This funding will also go towards investigations and persecutions of child internet exploitation.

Mr. Speaker, our communities are our homes and everyone deserves to feel safe. Our government is committed to offering support to victims of crime and delivering a safer Saskatchewan.

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

Easter Blessings

Joan Pratchler: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the past six weeks many of the Christian religions have been observing Lent. It is a time when we put away the alleluias in our lives and work on inner growth through prayer, almsgiving, and fasting.

[10:15]

In my parish of Holy Rosary Cathedral here in Regina, as in all parishes across the world, Holy Thursday commemorates the Last Supper of our Lord in a stark, austere atmosphere, punctuated not by the sound of the majestic organ, which will be silent, but by limited haunting melodies of Gregorian chant. The washing of feet, re-enacted to remind us of our call to serve others, is followed by the reception of the Holy Eucharist, and we exit in sombre silence.

Tomorrow is Good Friday, where the scriptures will retell the Passion of Christ, followed by the veneration of the cross and prayer vigils that go well on into the night.

Holy Saturday, or Easter Vigil night, is an explosion for the senses, marking the highest feast day in our Christian faith. It begins with a massive flame outside the cathedral, which is used to light the paschal Easter candle, along with some of the most majestic music of organ and choir. Incense is abundant and arises with the voices of everyone to announce in no uncertain terms that yes, indeed, Christ has risen. Let us rejoice and be glad.

This is the true meaning of Easter, and because of that, Christians around the world will again say in one joyful voice, alleluia to everlasting life. Alleluia.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from The Battlefords.

Business Students Represent Saskatchewan at International Competition

Hon. Jeremy Cockrill: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to rise today to recognize an inspiring young woman from the

constituency of White City-Qu'Appelle, Megan Betteridge.

Megan's currently studying business with a major in accounting at the University of Regina's Hill School of Business. And just last week, she and her teammates Olivia Chmelowski, Jayla Koshykowski, and Emma Snider represented the University of Regina at the prestigious William & Mary Women's Stock Pitch competition in Williamsburg, Virginia.

This international competition brings students together from some of the world's most renowned institutions, and the event celebrates diverse perspectives in investing and provides students with a truly unique experiential learning opportunity, along with mentorship from leading professionals in the finance industry.

Now while teams from other prestigious schools were busy pitching the next big thing in AI [artificial intelligence], Megan and her crew brought it back to the prairies with a stock pitch on John Deere. Because in Saskatchewan we don't just talk about growth — we plan it, we plow it, and we harvest the returns.

Mr. Speaker, out of 22 teams Megan and her teammates placed eighth, an incredible achievement, especially considering this was the University of Regina's first time at the competition. They truly have put Saskatchewan on the map.

But Megan's accomplishments don't just stop in the classroom or a stock pitch competition, Mr. Speaker. She's also making a meaningful impact in public service. Currently she works in my office here at the Legislative Building, where she handles casework and addresses constituent concerns with a level of compassion and professionalism well beyond her years.

Mr. Speaker, Megan Betteridge and her teammates are a shining example of the talent, determination, and leadership that's growing right here in Saskatchewan. Thank you.

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

Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association Holds Annual Convention

Jared Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This week the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association held their annual convention in Saskatoon. I had the privilege to attend all four days along with many of my colleagues, including the Leader of the Opposition.

An impressive 1,100 mayors, councillors, and municipal staff from across the province gathered to learn, network, and share their successes and challenges. Through my numerous conversations the energy, enthusiasm, and passion that each of them brought to Saskatoon as they represented their community was keenly felt.

One message that I heard repeatedly, Mr. Speaker, was the need for much greater support for the housing and mental health and addictions crisis that so many communities are grappling with, and I hope the Sask Party government heard that message, too.

And I hope the Minister of Government Relations heard the message from keynote speaker Dr. Gabor Maté about addictions

and takes what he learned back to the caucus table. I want to extend my congratulations to re-elected SUMA president Randy Goulden. And I also want to say thank you to SUMA staff, including Jean-Marc Nadeau and the SUMA board of directors for organizing a fantastic event.

I invite all members of this Legislative Assembly to join me in congratulating SUMA and all the delegates on a successful convention. And I want to thank all of the municipal leaders for what they do for Saskatchewan people each and every day in this province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Firefighters and Public Safety Officials Provide Exceptional Service

Barret Kropf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to take this opportunity to recognize some exceptional people in our province. Every year skilled and experienced Saskatchewan firefighters and public safety officials are deployed to help protect Saskatchewan and our neighbours from wildfires and related dangers. These individuals have been deployed across Canada and the United States. While away from their home, they help protect the people, property, and resources of another jurisdiction. For weeks, sometimes months, they protect and support communities that are hundreds or thousands of kilometres away from their communities.

I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the firefighters and the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency operations team for their past service and for proudly representing Saskatchewan on each of their deployments. We are currently in the month of April, which means that another wildfire season will soon be under way. And as such, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to also thank the firefighters and public safety officials for their hard work and sacrifices that they are about to make in the coming months both here and abroad.

I ask all members to please join me in thanking these wonderful men and women for the work that they do. We greatly appreciate firefighters and public safety officials for being there and for helping a neighbour when they're in need the most. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Undefeated Regina Pat Canadians Earn Spot in Telus Cup

Trent Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, this season the Regina Pat Canadians won the Sask under 18 AAA hockey league. And they went undefeated to become the western regional champs and earned their spot in the Telus Cup, Hockey Canada's U18 [under 18] national championship which begins next week in Chilliwack.

This Regina Pats Cs squad are an incredible team. We had the pleasure of watching them throughout the year, and trust me, they're a sight to behold. In the playoffs they were the hottest ticket in town, sold out with C6 stacked to the rafters. They're led by Head Coach Ryan Hodgins.

Led on the ice by a player that the eyes of the hockey world are watching, Maddox Schultz. He's a phenom, a generational player and talent born and raised in Regina. This year as an underage player that was granted exceptional status to play U18, he remarkably led the league in scoring as a 14-year-old rookie, Mr. Speaker. Earned the league's title as Most Valuable Player, scoring leader, Rookie of the Year, and first all-star team.

The team is stacked with high performers. Eli Johnson was named the league's top defenceman and first all-star team; Jonah Sivertson, the league's top forward and second all-star team; Chase Surkan, second all-star team. They're rock-solid between the pipes with Taylor Tabashniuk.

Mr. Speaker, let's let the Pat Cs know our entire community and province are proudly behind them and cheering them on. I ask all members of this Assembly to celebrate this team and offer our best wishes to them as they head off to compete in the Telus Cup next week in Chilliwack, BC [British Columbia].

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

Easter Blessings

Brad Crassweller: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This weekend around the world, billions of people will celebrate Easter weekend. Churches throughout our province, hundreds of them, will be gathering to celebrate Good Friday and Easter Sunday. Families will gather together this weekend, and many may travel a considerable distance just to be together.

Mr. Speaker, when I think of Easter, there's plenty of things that come to mind. But for me, there's a few words that speak to me about what Easter is all about, words that our world needs right now.

The first is that of hope. Easter is all about hope. Good Friday was a pretty dark day in history, but without it, there'd be no resurrection. There would be no hope.

The second is that of peace. Easter makes the reality of peace, internally and externally, a reality if we choose it.

The third is that of forgiveness. Easter is all about forgiveness and the length that God would go to achieve the ability for there to be forgiveness for the world.

Hope, peace, and forgiveness. Three things that made a difference so many years ago at that first Easter celebration, and those same three words can still make a difference some 2,000 years later.

Easter is the pinnacle of events on the Christian calendar. And may we all take some time to reflect and think about the impact that Easter can have in our hearts and our lives.

I wish everyone in the province and each of my fellow MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] and their families a very Happy Easter, and I hope it's a weekend that's filled with love, laughter, listening, and of course some chocolate. Mr. Speaker, Happy Easter to you and your family. God bless you, and God bless Saskatchewan.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Government Procurement from Canadian Suppliers

Carla Beck: — Mr. Speaker, how long does it take for the Premier to count to zero?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Scott Moe: — Sorry, I didn't hear the last part of that question, Mr. Speaker.

Carla Beck: — How long does it take for the Premier to count to zero?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Scott Moe: — So now, Mr. Speaker, I don't understand what the question is.

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

Carla Beck: — Mr. Speaker, let me explain. On March 5th, on a rare day when the Premier at least pretended to stand up to Donald Trump, he held a news conference, and he promised to get tough on contracts with United States companies. He promised that he would cancel these contracts whenever possible.

So last week we asked the government how many US [United States] contracts had been cancelled. Late yesterday — that's 41 days later — the Sask Party responded that it would need six months to give us an answer. Mr. Speaker, is that because he hasn't cancelled a single contract?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Scott Moe: — Mr. Speaker, I would, just off the top of my head, what I would point to is what has happened not just in Saskatchewan but in alignment with other provinces when it comes to the wholesaling of beer, alcohol, and liquor, Mr. Speaker, in stores in Saskatchewan as well as across the country in conjunction with other provinces.

Mr. Speaker, I'd point to the number of VLTs [video lottery terminal] that were ordered by SLGA [Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority] which, Mr. Speaker, are not . . . They have about a \$40 million contract, Mr. Speaker, which was cancelled and looking at other suppliers.

I would also point, Mr. Speaker, to the work that our centralized procurement agency, SaskBuilds, has been doing, Mr. Speaker. And the minister had spoken on the floor of this Assembly with respect to some of the good work that they do on an ongoing basis in procuring not only Saskatchewan but Canadian companies, Mr. Speaker. In fact when it comes to executive government, 95 per cent of all of the procurements that executive government make are from Saskatchewan suppliers, Mr. Speaker. When you go back over the last five years, 99 per cent of those procurement contracts that are handed out are to Canadian suppliers.

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

Carla Beck: — Mr. Speaker, in BC Premier Eby has issued a series of directives to cancel US contracts, even going as far to cancel contracts for software and magazines. In Manitoba, Premier Kinew cancelled a contract with a Texas-based firm running their park registration. Yes, the very same firm, Mr. Speaker, this government continues to defend paying to run our parks. In Ontario Premier Ford cancelled a \$100 million contract with Elon Musk.

Mr. Speaker, these premiers are standing up for Canada. Why won't Saskatchewan's?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Scott Moe: — Maybe a fair question for each of those provinces, Mr. Speaker, is over the course of the last year do they, one, do they have a centralized procurement agency that is watching where we are contracting our services and our capital expenditures, Mr. Speaker, on an ongoing basis? I don't know if British Columbia, Ontario, or other provinces have a record of 95 per cent of their procurement of executive government coming from agencies and offerings from companies within the provinces of Ontario and British Columbia, Mr. Speaker.

And I would just point, there are some services that governments are making decisions with respect to not interrupting the service that is being provided to the people that they serve, Mr. Speaker. In the case of LifeLabs, not only Saskatchewan is continuing with the service that LifeLabs is offering, but so is the NDP [New Democratic Party] government in British Columbia continuing with that service that LifeLabs is offering the constituents there. Because, Mr. Speaker, in cases like that they just simply aren't easily replaced.

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

Eligibility for Long-Term Care

Carla Beck: — Mr. Speaker, today on the floor of this Assembly we're joined by Teresa Sandeski. Teresa's husband, Fred, has late-stage COPD [chronic obstructive pulmonary disease], congenital heart failure, epilepsy, blindness, diabetes, celiac disease, and Fred requires constant medical care.

Yesterday the Sask Party evicted him from his Weyburn care home. Mr. Speaker, why?

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

Hon. Lori Carr: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I welcome Teresa to her floor of the Assembly today, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's just important to correct the record a little bit on this because some of what's being reported and what's being said across the way is not completely accurate.

[10:30]

Mr. Sandeski was not evicted from the Weyburn Special Care Home. Mr. Sandeski has been utilizing a respite care bed in that

facility, and he was given a two-week notice on April 1st, an extension to what he had already had, that he would need to vacate.

Mr. Speaker, there are assessments that have been done on Mr. Sandeski, and unfortunately he does not qualify for long-term care, but the Saskatchewan Health Authority has been working very closely with the family to find the options that are available in the community for them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Carla Beck: — Mr. Speaker, this is a man who has dedicated his life to his community. His friends and his family, they've held fundraisers and they've stood by his side — some are even here today — while he's been hit with roadblock after roadblock to simply get the care and to get the housing he needs, and frankly the housing he deserves.

Teresa has serious medical conditions and she can't care for Fred on her own. Yesterday after being thrown out of his house, Fred told the media "I'm scared of dying alone."

Mr. Speaker, no one should face dying alone. Will the Premier personally see to it today that this decision to evict Fred is reversed? Let's let this incredible man go home.

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

Hon. Lori Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think I talked to the issue of eviction and being thrown out, Mr. Speaker. Fred has been assessed. And these assessments that take place, it's called the resident assessment instrument, and it's a standardized assessment that happens right across Canada. The tool does measure the physical and mental functions as well as the functional capacity, personal care needs, current and past challenges to determine what services are most appropriate for that individual.

And the assessments were completed by the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority], Mr. Speaker. The assessments consider the input of the client and the providers that will need to take care of the client in the community at that point in time, Mr. Speaker.

And we will continue to work with the Sandeski family on supports that are available in the community for him, Mr. Speaker. At any point in time, if his circumstances change he can be reassessed. And at that time may qualify, but for now he does not qualify for long-term care.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood.

Keith Jorgenson: — Mr. Speaker, I have to correct the minister. I apologize. I was there yesterday. Unlike no one on that side of the Chamber, I was there yesterday, and I saw him evicted. That is not accurate.

Mr. Speaker, I've been advocating for the Sandeskis for months, and I know, I know it was difficult for Teresa to come here today. And I thank her for being here today. She's dealing with her own serious medical challenges. And this government has had

months, months, to help these two incredible people, and yesterday I watched Fred get kicked to the curb because this government says he's not yet sick enough. Can you imagine such a thing?

If this is really true, will the government change the rules so that people like Fred don't fall through the cracks? This man's dying, dying, and he needs a place to live out his final days in dignity.

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

Hon. Lori Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was talking a little bit about the resident assessment instrument that is used, standardized right across Canada. Mr. Speaker, this assessment for long-term care was actually originally introduced under an NDP government, Mr. Speaker.

[Interjections]

Speaker Goudy: — Order, please.

Hon. Lori Carr: — It was introduced under an NDP government in 1999, and then in 2000 . . .

[Interjections]

Speaker Goudy: — I just had given a warning that we need to have order, and I would hope that we will respect the position of the Chair.

Please continue on.

Hon. Lori Carr: — And then in 2005, the resident assessment instrument was introduced, once again by an NDP government, Mr. Speaker. It's been adjusted over the years as needs arise, and it's based on the best clinical practices and guidelines that are in place, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood.

Keith Jorgenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again I need to correct the minister. Last night I talked to two CPAS [client patient access services] workers, the people who do these assessments. Perhaps if the minister talked to front-line health workers, we would avoid such tragedies as we see playing out today.

The MLA for Weyburn told the Sandeskis that while he wanted to help them, the minister responsible would not lift a finger, yet he continues to stand with the minister . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . sorry . . . instead of doing what's right. I know the MLA can't answer for himself, but he was elected by the people of Weyburn to help the people of Weyburn, not his Sask Party colleagues.

Will someone over there in the Sask Party cabinet stand up and explain to the people of Weyburn — all the people of Saskatchewan, for that matter — why they won't help this dying man and his ailing, heartbroken wife?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Remote and

Rural Health.

Hon. Lori Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with regards to the member from Weyburn-Bengough, as soon as he heard about the situation that Mr. Sandeski was in earlier in December, he came to me immediately, and we started working immediately with the Sandeskis to try and find solutions for what they were dealing with at that point in time. And he has been working continually, I talked to Mr. Sandeski on a call, I know that the member from Weyburn-Bengough has been working with him. At no time has anybody not been there for him when he has wanted to have a conversation, Mr. Speaker. We've had those conversations.

Mr. Speaker, we have a long-term care system in the province of Saskatchewan. We have people sitting on waiting lists that are waiting to get into long-term care that have been assessed, through the process that the member opposite just noticed, by those assessors, and they are waiting to get into long-term care because they have qualified, Mr. Speaker. What he's asking is that we have someone jump the line.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood.

Keith Jorgenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Teresa has been supporting her husband, Fred, as much as possible during these impossible times, Mr. Speaker. I think it's hard to imagine what this family's going through today. She came to our legislature because she wants to be heard today.

Forget the minister; she clearly will not help him. Will the Premier stand here today and tell us here and now that he will meet with Teresa after the session today and help her Fred get the care that he deserves?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Scott Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I want to join with others in welcoming Teresa to the floor of this Legislative Assembly, Mr. Speaker. What we have here, Mr. Speaker, is an individual — that happens many times across the province — that is assessed for one of the long-term care beds that we have in this province. Beds that we are working very hard to expand, not only the number but renew the continuum of long-term care beds that we have in Saskatchewan. Off memory, I think it's just a little less than 13,000 beds, if I'm not mistaken, across Saskatchewan.

And so we use a national assessment tool, have adopted a national assessment tool in this province, like other provinces across Canada, Mr. Speaker, and it's qualified health care professionals, as was referenced by the member opposite, that conduct those assessments.

If there is, you know, questions with respect to how that assessment was conducted or the information that is provided in that assessment might change, there's new information that needs to be included with that, what I would say is the minister is very happy to meet not only with Teresa, alongside her MLA from Weyburn-Bengough, Mr. Speaker, to advocate for maybe a reassessment if situations have changed, Mr. Speaker, if there's additional information that should be provided.

In saying that, Mr. Speaker, in saying that, it is not going to be politicians, nor do I believe it should be politicians that should be making decisions ahead of health care professionals that are following a national assessment tool, a national assessment tool that all provinces are utilizing, Mr. Speaker.

And so, Mr. Speaker, that's the position of the government. I would hope it's the position of the opposition as well, is to trust the health care professionals we have. But when there is additional information that may come to light, certainly we would advocate for that information to be brought to those health care professionals.

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

Supports for Educational Assistants

Matt Love: — Mr. Speaker, that shameful and heartless response from this government is not good enough for the people of Saskatchewan.

Speaker Goudy: — I would ask the member to apologize and withdraw the comments.

Matt Love: — Apologize and withdraw, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday at SUMA a councillor from Prince Albert asked the Minister of Education a great question. He asked the minister what this government was doing to bridge the gap now that dozens of EAs [educational assistant] across our province have been laid off due to changes in Jordan's principle funding. The minister's answer was weak.

The students we're talking about need and deserve these supports. So today, Mr. Speaker, I'm giving the minister another chance. What is this government doing to fill the void left for Indigenous students who have lost their Jordan's principle funding?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Everett Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And as the member referenced, this question came up at the SUMA convention yesterday in Saskatoon. As indicated then at that time, education is a joint-shared responsibility between the provincial government, the federal government, and our school divisions and school board partners, Mr. Speaker. It's disappointing for us to hear that the federal government has made some changes with respect to the funding through Jordan's principle, Mr. Speaker.

This government has provided substantial funding however, Mr. Speaker, and continues to do that through record increases to school operating funding and capital as well, Mr. Speaker, in the budget to be able to make sure that we are supporting students in this year's budget. Funding to help continue to expand the specialized support classroom project to hire more EAs in classrooms to make sure that we're building on K to 3 [kindergarten to grade 3] literacy, Mr. Speaker.

These are the things that this government is focused on, highlights and priorities for students right across this province

regardless of where they live, Mr. Speaker. And this government will continue to make sure that that's a priority for our students, that their success is key. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Matt Love: — Mr. Speaker, I'm truly appalled at the lack of forethought in that response. A strong education system is the backbone of our province and our economy. This is our province's future that we're talking about, Mr. Speaker.

The role of an educational assistant in our schools is invaluable, yet these people are underpaid. And they're severely overworked due to the growing complexities in our classrooms. And still EAs show up day after day to put the needs of our children ahead of their own needs.

What does the minister have to say to the educational assistants across Saskatchewan who have lost their jobs?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Everett Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government values the work being done by professionals in the education system right across this province, whether they're teachers, whether they're educational assistants and other professional support staff, doing this valuable work on behalf of students and families right across Saskatchewan.

And, Mr. Speaker, I would say this. There are 4,900 EAs in our schools today; 1,300 more since this Premier took office, Mr. Speaker; 400 more than last year. In 2021 we created a targeted EA fund adding \$7 million in annual targeted EA funding, Mr. Speaker.

We continue to make investments in this area, building up the complement of staff in our schools, whether it's teachers, whether it's EAs, whether it's other professional support. That's what I hear, I know, when I consult and meet with school divisions, school boards, Mr. Speaker. And we're going to continue to provide that support and work closely with our education partners. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Matt Love: — Well we just heard it straight from the minister. He's taking credit for Jordan's principle EAs, but he's not taking responsibility when they lose their jobs. Mr. Speaker, when we first caught wind of the changes to Jordan's principle funding, other provinces began sounding the alarm. But of course the Sask Party government stood by and pretended everything was fine. And of course things were not fine.

In Newfoundland the provincial government agreed to step in and bridge the gap for Jordan's principle recipients. Why isn't the minister willing to do the same thing for Saskatchewan kids?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Everett Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I've said previously, this government has made significant investments

and commitments to our education system on the capital side but most importantly on the staffing and support side, Mr. Speaker. And we continue to do that. It's disappointing that the federal government has decided to make some changes in this regard, Mr. Speaker.

[10:45]

And I've spoken previously about the investments, targeted investments that we have made particularly directed towards the classroom, which includes supports for learning, includes educational assistants, Mr. Speaker, a record increase, record funding in the budget, in this year's budget specifically for the education system, building on last year's record budget investment into education, Mr. Speaker.

We're going to continue to do that. We recognize that this is a priority for this province, but we also expect that our federal counterparts would have some responsibility in this area as well to provide some consistency and stability for the education sector. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Equalization Formula and Management of the Provincial Economy

Trent Witherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the Premier talks a good game about standing up to Ottawa and their damaging policies, but their record speaks for itself. It's the Sask Party government, of course, who dropped the lawsuit to get a fair deal on equalization.

Unlike that Sask Party, we've stood and fought for fairness on equalization for years — unwavering, Mr. Speaker. Our leader wrote to all federal leaders, all federal parties, calling for equalization fairness once and for all. The fact is the Conservative Party of Canada are running on the status quo, offering no change to equalization.

Why has the Sask Party government been missing in action on this crucial file at this important time?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Jim Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, Newfoundland has started court action to question the constitutionality of the equalization formula, Mr. Speaker, and our government is supporting that with intervenor status. So that'll play out in the courts, I understand, and I think it's going to start this fall.

But, Mr. Speaker, obviously we don't agree with the system as it is now. But what we focused on as government, Mr. Speaker — growing our economy. For years, decades under the NDP, Mr. Speaker, we were always a have-not province, receiving equalization. Under this government, Mr. Speaker, our economy's grown. Mr. Speaker, we're going to continue to focus on that.

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

Trent Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, that Sask Party government folded like a cheap lawn chair on equalization years ago, and they won't say boo to the federal leader. Now the federal Conservatives are promoting the status quo on equalization, no change. And actually they were also the first to call for Chinese EV [electric vehicle] tariffs as well.

Here's a headline, August 9th, 2024: "Conservative leader wants Canada to match US tariffs on Chinese EV vehicles." Those tariffs need to be scrapped so we can get our canola and peas to market, Mr. Speaker. But when we asked the Ag minister and the Trade minister about the Conservative stance on EV tariffs, they didn't have a clue.

Why hasn't the Sask Party called on the Conservatives with respect to equalization and Chinese tariffs? Why should Saskatchewan people trust that Sask Party to stand up to Conservatives when they're on the wrong track, when they're unwilling to do so on such crucial files like these?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Jim Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, for years under the NDP, Saskatchewan received equalization. We've focused on building our economy so we wouldn't be a have-not province anymore, Mr. Speaker.

And he wants to delve into federal politics, Mr. Speaker. Here's where we're at right now. Very soon the advance polls are going to . . .

[Interjections]

Speaker Goudy: — Order, please. Let's hear the answer.

Hon. Jim Reiter: — Very soon, Mr. Speaker, the advance polls are going to open. There's one party in the federal election that's talking about developing our resources, talking about an energy corridor, Mr. Speaker, and it is not the federal NDP or the federal Liberals. I wonder what the member has to say about that, about where he's going to be voting in the federal election.

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

Member's Comments and Support for Sikh Heritage Month Legislation

Bhajan Brar: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that Sask Party government has failed the Sikh community of Saskatchewan. They did not hold the member for Humboldt-Watrous to account for her racist comments. She still sits on the Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice Committee. She's still in caucus. Today the Sask Party government has a chance to demonstrate if they have any good gestures for Sikhs in this province. They can pass *The Sikh Heritage Month Act* to make April Sikh Heritage Month every year.

My question to the Premier is, will that Sask Party government support this bill or will they continue to fail this community? I want to place this question again. Will the Sask Party government support this bill or will they continue to fail this community? Thank you.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Scott Moe: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for the question, Mr. Speaker. And I would just say with respect to the consequences of comments that were apologized for on the floor of this . . . inappropriate comments that were apologized for and withdrawn on the floor of this Assembly, we have discussed that on the floor, Mr. Speaker. And I'll leave that where it is, Mr. Speaker.

The Government of Saskatchewan each and every year has proclaimed Sikh Heritage Month in the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, done that each and every year up to and including this year. It is my understanding there's second reading of a private member's bill that will occur today which will do in legislation what we have been doing as a government by proclamation, Mr. Speaker.

And so I'm happy to inform the House, Mr. Speaker, through yourself, that the Government of Saskatchewan will not only be supporting that private member's bill, but we'll be asking for it to move through all stages and passing today.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

Doug Steele: — Mr. Speaker, I introduce, instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies, to report Bill No. 9, *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2024* without amendment.

Speaker Goudy: — When shall this bill be considered in Committee of the Whole on Bills? I recognize . . . Bill No. 9.

Hon. Jeremy Harrison: — Sorry. I had a different order. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would request leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on this bill.

Speaker Goudy: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 9, *The Traffic Safety Amendment Act, 2024* and that the bill now be read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

THIRD READINGS

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

Hon. Jeremy Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that the bill be now be read the third time and passed under its title.

Speaker Goudy: — It's been moved by the minister that the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Speaker Goudy: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this bill.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

Doug Steele: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 13, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2025* without amendment.

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

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

Speaker Goudy: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bills on Bill No. 13, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2025* and that the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

THIRD READINGS

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

Hon. Jim Reiter: — I move that the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

Speaker Goudy: — It has been moved by the minister that the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Speaker Goudy: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this bill.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

Doug Steele: — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 16, *The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2025* without amendment.

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

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

Speaker Goudy: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 16, *The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2025* and that the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Speaker Goudy: — The minister may proceed on the moving of the third reading.

THIRD READINGS

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

Hon. Jim Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, I move that the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

Speaker Goudy: — It has been moved by the minister that the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Speaker Goudy: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this bill.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies.

Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

Doug Steele: — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing

Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report that it has considered certain estimates and to present its second report for the thirtieth legislature, which is including the 2025-26 estimates and '24-25 estimates on no. 2. I move:

That the second report of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies for the thirtieth legislature be now concurred in.

Speaker Goudy: — It has been moved by the Chair:

That the second report of the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies for the thirtieth legislature be now concurred in.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Speaker Goudy: — Carried.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

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

Standing Committee on Human Services

Michael Weger: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Human Services to report Bill No. 8, *The Child Care (New Facilities) Amendment Act, 2024*, a bilingual bill, without amendment.

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

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

Speaker Goudy: — The minister has requested leave to waive the consideration in the Committee of Whole on Bill No. 8, *The Child Care (New Facilities) Amendment Act, 2024* and that the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

THIRD READINGS

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

Hon. Everett Hindley: — I move that the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

Speaker Goudy: — It has been moved by the minister that the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Speaker Goudy: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this bill.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

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

Standing Committee on Human Services

Michael Weger: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Human Services to report that it has considered certain estimates and to present its first report to the thirtieth legislature, which includes the 2025-26 estimates and 2024-25 supplementary estimates no. 2. I move:

That the first report of the Standing Committee on Human Services for the thirtieth legislature be now concurred in.

Speaker Goudy: — It has been moved by the Chair:

That the first report of the Standing Committee on Human Services for the thirtieth legislature be now concurred in.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Speaker Goudy: — Carried.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Government Whip.

Sean Wilson: — I wish to order question no. 4.

[11:00]

Speaker Goudy: — Question no. 4 is ordered.

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

Support for Business and Entrepreneurs

Brad Crassweller: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the opportunity to address you today by entering into my first 75-minute debate. I'm incredibly thankful that we live in a country where we can stand in this House and we can have open and honest debate, dialogue, discussion, and even disagreement. Democracy is an incredible gift and one that I hope none of us ever take for granted.

Now, Mr. Speaker, before I get to the issue today that I'd like to debate, I'd like to begin by taking a moment to pause and reflect because I think reflection is imperative to framing this debate. You know, the older I get, the more I find myself somewhat more reflective. At times I try to slow down enough to reflect on my life, to reflect on all that's happening in my life, to reflect on where I'm at in life.

And, Mr. Speaker, this is actually hard for me. I don't do still or slow very well, but it's something that I've had to learn that I need in my life. And for me the good part is that when I actually take the time to slow down and think and evaluate, I learn some pretty key things about life, things that my dad taught me about life and ultimately how to do life.

At 56 years old, Mr. Speaker, some would say I might be in the second quarter of my life. Some would say I might be in the third quarter. But either way I know that halftime has definitely passed, but I do believe I've got a lot more life left to live, Lord willing. But you know, as I think about my life, I have so much to be thankful for. My wife and I just celebrated 35 years of marriage on April 7th and I'm pretty excited about that, pretty excited that she stuck with me this long.

As I reflect upon the many things that I've enjoyed in life, whether that be hobbies or high-speed adventure-type sports or ultimately my work life, there seems to be one common thread, Mr. Speaker. And this thread allowed me to enjoy these things in life and, I would say, to even be successful at those things.

That thread, Mr. Speaker, allowed me to be on my high school wrestling team, to some surprise in this room. It allowed me to play soccer for many years throughout my life and even at the collegiate level. It allowed me as I got older to choose some what I like to call high-speed hobbies. And probably my most favourite was my desire to learn how to barefoot water ski. What a feeling. What a thrill. And oh, what a feeling when you crashed barefoot on the water.

But that thread, Mr. Speaker, allowed me to build two small businesses from the ground up: a landscaping company and the company my wife and children currently operate, Cedar Creek — a greenhouse, petting zoo, minigolf, corn maze, and our Christmas store. And, Mr. Speaker, it's really a family-run, family fun destination in this province.

But that thread also allowed me to run for this provincial election for this government and win. And, Mr. Speaker, without that

thread running throughout my life and woven throughout my life, that critical thread for everything in my life, I would not have accomplished those very things that I just talked about.

And, Mr. Speaker, that thread was not something that I just figured out on my own. It was something I had to pursue. It was something I had to battle through at times. And it was most importantly something that my father taught me, and for that I'll be eternally grateful. What is that thread? Well, Mr. Speaker, it's one word, and that one word is commitment.

Commitment is an interesting word. It's a word that's really easy to say but not so easy to actually make good on at times. And I think many times if you look around our world you will see commitment to so many varying degrees. But along with that, Mr. Speaker, you see the ramifications or the consequences of that varying degree of commitment. Commitment can make or break a business, a sports team, maybe the Montreal Canadiens — I apologize — relationships.

But commitment is so key. Commitment is vital. It's crucial to success in life. And you know, Mr. Speaker, we saw an incredible example of this on Tuesday of this past week, where we all had the privilege to meet Klara Belkin, a 95-year-old survivor of the Holocaust. What an incredible lady who could tell us a thing or two about commitment.

So today, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about this government's commitment, which is a strong commitment, a solid commitment, a commitment that's been long-standing, a commitment to the small businesses and entrepreneurs in this province. You know, Mr. Speaker, this commitment goes back a long ways.

As a matter of fact, I have to take you all the way back to the forming of the Sask Party, back to guiding principle no. 1. And that guiding principle said this: that economic growth and job creation through the private sector, not the government, will be the engine of the economy. And, Mr. Speaker, it was this commitment to this principle that has gotten us in this province to the position that we're in today.

Let me just highlight a few things for you. When we talk about small businesses in our province, it's unbelievable. It's an incredible story. Mr. Speaker, almost 99 per cent of the businesses in this province are small businesses that employ about 30 per cent of our workforce. In 2023 there were over 147,000 small businesses operating in this province, contributing 25 per cent of the province's GDP [gross domestic product].

And, Mr. Speaker, these businesses are as diverse as our province. You have small businesses in so many forms of retail; small businesses in services; small businesses in manufacturing; small businesses in agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting; small businesses in real estate and rental leasing.

Mr. Speaker, small businesses in this province have grown 51 per cent since 2011, and that is an amazing number. And that comes from a commitment that this government made many, many years ago that economic growth and job creation through the private sector would be the engine of this economy.

Mr. Speaker, let me continue. Without this commitment to

ensuring that our small businesses and entrepreneurs flourish, we've seen our women-owned small businesses grow by 41 per cent from 2009 to 2019, an incredible accomplishment. Mr. Speaker, that commitment that started so long ago, it's still there. This government is committed to our small businesses, to our entrepreneurs.

So let me just talk about a few ways that we're continuing to commit and support small businesses and entrepreneurs in this province. The first thing I would like to talk about is the establishing of the new small and medium enterprise investment tax credit. Mr. Speaker, what an opportunity for businesses in our province, an opportunity where Prabha Ramaswamy, the CEO [chief executive officer] of the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce, said this:

We are pleased to see this government's investment in business priorities. The announcements made today will help to fuel growth of SMEs, promote entrepreneurship, and strengthen Saskatchewan's economy for the future.

Allow me to add to this quote with a quote from Mike Tate, the president of the Regina & District Chamber of Commerce. He said:

The introduction of the small and medium enterprise investment tax credit will have a positive effect on the Regina and Saskatchewan business communities. By introducing tax relief and incentives, the amendments will reduce the financial burden on businesses and allow for reinvestment in innovation, expansion, and job creation. This will enable local businesses to thrive while attracting new investments in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, all I can say is, what a commitment from this government, a commitment that shows that we're delivering for individuals, we're delivering for businesses, we're delivering for entrepreneurs, and we're doing so through the small and medium enterprise investment tax credit.

I'll just say that this includes a 45 per cent non-refundable tax credit for individuals or corporations who invest equity in eligible small- and medium-sized businesses in Saskatchewan. This credit focuses on sectors such as food and beverage manufacturing as well as machinery, transportation, equipment manufacturing sectors.

Mr. Speaker, I have to take us back again to a commitment that this party made when it was founded, that economic growth and job creation by the private sector, not the government, will be the engine of this economy. So true, Mr. Speaker, and with incentives like this one, we'll do exactly that with a commitment from our government to our small businesses and our entrepreneurs.

But, Mr. Speaker, our commitment doesn't end there to our small businesses and entrepreneurs, so let me talk about another commitment. That commitment is the introduction of the Saskatchewan young entrepreneur bursary. Mr. Speaker, this commitment will provide an annual grant of \$285,000. It'll provide 57 bursaries for young entrepreneurs over the next three years.

Mr. Speaker, there's more. This government has made a decision to keep the small-business tax rate at 1 per cent. Thirty-five thousand small businesses will benefit, saving 50 million in income tax annually. A competitive business tax is so very important to our economy, to our growth, to our small businesses. And the Saskatchewan corporate tax rate continues to be among the lowest in the country.

Mr. Speaker, all I can say is, that's commitment — a commitment to our small businesses. And, Mr. Speaker, again it aligns with our guiding principle that economic growth and job creation through the private sector, not the government, will be the engine of this economy. I know there's small businesses everywhere that are celebrating this commitment, a commitment that's permanent, not temporary.

And, Mr. Speaker, one more we've heard a fair bit about lately, and I'm very proud of the government's commitment for how hard we've gone after this issue. We've had strong, steady, stable leadership on this one. And it's paying off in spades. I'm referring to the fact that all of our small businesses, all of our families, all of us in this province now live in a completely carbon tax-free province. Mr. Speaker, make no mistake, this commitment is absolutely monstrous for our small businesses. I can tell you stories of businesses, when they heard this announcement they took out their energy bills, they took out their power bills, and they took a look at how much money they were paying in carbon tax. And the smile on their face says it all.

One small-business owner said, "I'm saving \$12,000 over this next year." A thousand dollars a month back in his pocket. But, Mr. Speaker, I don't think it's money he's just going to put back in his pocket. I believe he'll reinvest that, because that's what small-business owners do. I believe he'll buy more products. I believe he'll hire more students. He'll turn that money back into our economy and it will come back to us tenfold.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's very clear that this government is committed to our small businesses, to our entrepreneurs. And there's so much more that could be said, and I'll save some of that for my colleagues.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if I could just share some of my personal story. Having started two small businesses from scratch and having my wife and children taking over the current business and running it, I'm just tremendously encouraged that this government is committed to our small businesses and to our entrepreneurs. Mr. Speaker, I have a mentor in my life. And many times throughout my journey in building my businesses when things got tough, when things were challenging, when you were putting in incredibly long hours, he would often say to me, if it was easy, everybody would do it.

Mr. Speaker, running a small business is anything but easy. It's a serious commitment. And I'm so thankful that our government has that same amount of commitment to making sure that our small businesses continue to succeed, continue to grow, continue to lead the way, and continue to be a significant part of the GDP in this province.

Mr. Speaker, allow me to share this quote from our Minister of Trade and Export Development. He said this: "Small- and medium-sized businesses are foundational for the strength of our

provincial economy, during a time when increasing local investment is more important than ever.” He went on to say that with this new incentive, more smaller, medium-sized business will be able to build equity, allowing them to grow, which leads to more jobs for our growing workforce. This is just one of the ways that our budget delivers for the people of our province.

Mr. Speaker, our minister and this government and this cabinet is committed to our small businesses and to our entrepreneurs. And I love talking to him and hearing him talk about the people that he’s meeting with, the young people he’s talking to, the innovative ideas that they have. Mr. Speaker, our Minister of Trade and Export Development is like a kid in a candy store. I heard him say he’s got the best job on the planet. It’s fun to watch. He’s passionate. But, Mr. Speaker, most of all he’s committed to the people of this province, to the small businesses, to this province. And so to that I say, thank you, Mr. Minister. Small businesses, of which I am one, and so many of my friends and colleagues who own small businesses, appreciate champions like you in our corner.

Mr. Speaker, as I begin to wrap up, I’d like to double back just for a minute and focus on this one word — commitment. To the more than 147,000 businesses operating in this province, thank you for your commitment to what it takes to own and operate a small business. It’s a day-in, day-out, 24-7 commitment. Your heart, your determination, and your contribution to this province are greatly appreciated. And I hope that when you look back at the commitments that your government has made, you’ll see that we’re committed to seeing you and your business continue to grow and thrive.

To our young entrepreneurs: we’re with you. We’re behind you. And I look forward to the future years where I will stand in this Assembly and give a member’s statement on yet another incredible small business that’s thriving and growing in our province. And perhaps, Mr. Speaker, it started from the young entrepreneur bursary.

So, Mr. Speaker, I’d also like to point out one last thing. It’s to highlight something else with regard to being the first completely carbon tax-free province. There’s so many great things about this province, but that one thing, Mr. Speaker, saves each and every household in this province a lot of money. Many of our small businesses, Mr. Speaker, in business are supported by people’s discretionary income.

And the removal of the carbon tax on home heating and power and your gas at the pump is putting money back in people’s pockets, I believe, money that will allow a family to spend more money on fun things — going to the Milky Way for ice cream, going to a movie, going and supporting the many small businesses that operate in this province who rely on people who have discretionary money to spend. Many small businesses are not a necessity in anyone’s life, but they sure are fun or they make some incredible food, incredible treats. And people’s discretionary spending is crucial to the success of many of those small businesses.

So, Mr. Speaker, in closing, I’ll read the motion. I move:

[11:15]

That this Assembly recognize the government’s commitment to supporting businesses and entrepreneurship by establishing the new small and medium enterprise investment tax credit and the Saskatchewan young entrepreneur bursary, maintaining the small-business tax credit at 1 per cent, and becoming the first carbon tax-free province in all of Canada.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this time to address you.

Speaker Goudy: — It has been moved by the member for White City-Qu’Appelle:

That this Assembly recognize the government’s commitment to supporting businesses and entrepreneurship by establishing the new small and medium enterprise investment tax credit and the Saskatchewan young entrepreneur bursary, maintaining the small-business tax credit at 1 per cent, and becoming the first carbon tax-free province in Canada.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member for Saskatoon Silverspring.

Hugh Gordon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the member from White City-Qu’Appelle for bringing this motion forward to the Assembly. And even though I think he’s the best-dressed guy on the other side, a snazzy dresser indeed, I’m not going to get swept off my feet with his words of . . . his arguments in favour of the motion.

Also, I guess I should also say thank you to the other side for having adopted some of our great ideas about maintaining the small-business tax credit at 1 per cent and also removing the carbon tax. That’s all those good ideas. I’m glad you guys have finally got on board.

I’ll just start, Mr. Speaker, by saying, you know what? Both myself and in particular my wife are small-business owners, as are many of my colleagues on this side. We all understand the important contributions that our small- and medium-sized businesses make. Many of us are very sensitive to the incredible pressures and the difficulties that they face in running those businesses in this province, making them grow, hiring people, investing back into their communities.

But things aren’t as rosy as this government says it is on the economy, as many of these small businesses, in particular many of my wife’s friends — female entrepreneurs who own many of their own home-based businesses — they are struggling. Many have had to downsize. Many have had to let people go. Many have had to unfortunately close their doors.

So talk of tax credits, you know, may not help businesses today. It’s not a cure-all, particularly when these businesses need help immediately. The issue with respect to these tax credits is that businesses will have to apply, and they will need to get approval first from the ministry before going forward. And there’s also a limit about how much can be claimed in any given year. And another issue is that they are not targeted. So the question is, how does this really help businesses when they need help right now?

And for the most part, Mr. Speaker, tax credit measures the

government announced in their budget, other tax credit measures, people won't even know if they qualify for these benefits until next year. Right? I mean they're not going to know until they're doing their taxes, and then and only then will they qualify.

And again, these tax credits only really apply in situations where people earn an income and, in the case of businesses, only if they earn a profit. Tax cuts, tax credits, when you break even, you have zero net revenue, or you lose money, they don't help.

So you can talk all you want about tax credits this and bursaries that, which we can generally support, Mr. Speaker, but you can't just look at one side of the economic equation and hope that these meagre trickle-nomic measures will save our businesses and industries from the difficulties they face.

What they really need, what small-, medium-size businesses like my wife's, like the member's opposite, is more customers, more people in the province with more money in their pockets, ideas like removing the PST [provincial sales tax] off of kids' clothes and groceries. How about removing the PST off of used cars and insurance? How about removing the PST off of sporting and entertainment events?

And how about taking the PST off of construction so we can build all the infrastructure that the Sask Party government supposedly says it wants to build? You might want to submit some kind of plan for that, by the way. When I said in the highways budget committee, estimates committee, there was no talk about an infrastructure plan.

How about signing on to the \$10-a-day child care program so that parents can use more of their disposable income to spend on local businesses, pay off their bills, save for retirement or, God forbid, take a vacation — hopefully somewhere in Saskatchewan or in Canada.

They could also use some reprieve from the fastest-rising rental rates in the country, Mr. Speaker, with a government who provides more affordable housing. We know there's a plan to restore 280 government-owned homes in this province in this budget, but we also know that there's hundreds and hundreds more that need renovation.

Ensuring folks in Saskatchewan can get timely access to health care when they need it and where they need it is also important so that people aren't dropping thousands of dollars of their own cash on trips out of the province to do so.

All these measures I just mentioned, Mr. Speaker, will help not only more people, workers, and families than these tax credits, but also more small-, medium-size businesses that rely on their customers returning again and again and frequenting their businesses.

By the way, removing the OBPS [output-based performance standards] or the industrial carbon tax is also a good step forward, one which we support. But it's still unclear how this government's going to ensure that these industry savings are going to be passed along to the public. We've seen in other jurisdictions where tax is removed, like at the pumps, only to see industries and companies pocket the better part of the difference. And there is no government action to ensure that these savings

are rightly passed along to consumers. So what is the government's plan for that in the removal of their industrial carbon tax? And by the way, removing a tax you brought in and imposed on people isn't something you should high-five yourself about.

And by the way, Mr. Speaker, last night I was surprised to hear the Finance minister telling the committee last night that the cutting of the industrial carbon tax was only "a pause." So which is it? Is Saskatchewan really carbon tax-free? Or is it just carbon tax-free for now? Is it carbon tax-free for a little bit? Will it be back? If so, when? Who knows? The Finance minister didn't say, probably because he doesn't know. Sounded like he could even change his mind. So perhaps the members opposite might want to ask the Finance minister about that before they go spiking the football.

And like I said, Mr. Speaker, this was a tax that should never have been. And it's kind of like what many of my very good conservative friends would have said about this, that this form of taxation was just another form of theft. And by the way, this government runs the finances of the province poorly. And that by continually running deficits and piling on the debt, one really has to wonder just how long this government can keep these promises. I mean, these guys still think they've got a balanced budget over there. Cue the laugh track, Mr. Speaker.

And everyone knows, or should know, that today's debt is tomorrow's taxes and cuts. And the clock is ticking and it's getting louder and louder every day. Kind of reminds me of the old axiom, Mr. Speaker — what the government giveth today, it taketh away tomorrow.

And why is the amount of debt a problem, Mr. Speaker? It's because business, industries, investors all know the higher the province's debt goes, the more future taxes they will have to endure. So what do they do? They hedge their bets and soften their commitments in places where the finances get out of control.

What businesses hate more than anything else, Mr. Speaker, is uncertainty. And the current tariff climate is handing them uncertainty by the boatload. An investment tax credit might be worthwhile for businesses, but what really matters is the underlying foundation of that business. Like does the business have access to resources and supplies without interruption? And do they have a strong labour pool to draw from? And most importantly, do they have access to markets they intend to do business with? And do they have the proper infrastructure to get those products into those markets?

Again no plan from this government on paper about expanding our rail and our facilities on our rail, getting access to ports, and even bringing up our paving standards in this province. And so what we're seeing now . . . Sorry, Mr. Speaker. If the answer to these things is that tariffs may prevent our businesses from full, unfettered access to our export markets like the United States, then this will give investors pause for concern.

And what we're seeing now is that even with the mere threat of potential tariffs that could disrupt supply chains or access to markets, it's more than enough for investors to hold back from investing here and park their money somewhere else until there

is more clarity in the situation. What might assist those investors to make their decisions as to whether to put their money in Saskatchewan or not is having a government that had adequately prepared a tariff contingency plan to support our businesses and workers.

A lot of the measures that we voted on in this Assembly to address tariffs was merely a start, but clearly it wasn't enough. And most of those measures were ad hoc in nature, which apparently is the hallmark of this government. But more needs to be done. Saying you'll lobby the federal government or ask Donald Trump — really nice — to remove the tariffs on our products just doesn't cut it.

Having a bona fide program, a plan to support our Saskatchewan businesses and industry deal with tariffs, a plan made in advance, and not some kind of knee-jerk reaction, would make the decision to invest in this province way more attractive in the first place. Then and maybe only then do I think these investment tax incentives stand a chance of succeeding.

We also need more infrastructure which is needed to attract that investment. And again, where's the plan for that? So if this government truly means what it says about carbon taxes, are they prepared to reimburse all the businesses and industries the money this government effectively confiscated from them to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford.

James Thorsteinson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm happy to rise today and join the 75-minute debate in support of the motion brought forward by the member from White City-Qu'Appelle.

Mr. Speaker, our government has supported small business from day one. We recognize that small business is the backbone of our continually growing economy, employing hundreds of thousands of people across the province and providing the paycheques that people need to feed, house, and raise their families.

That is why we are continuing our commitment to keep business taxes low for our small-business employers by freezing the small-business tax rate at 1 per cent. When coupled with the 2018 increase in the small-business income threshold from 500 to \$600,000, the second-highest threshold in the nation, we're ensuring that our Saskatchewan small businesses remain competitive and viable in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

Corporate tax rate competitiveness is also key to attracting and maintaining investment in our province, which in turn creates jobs and economic opportunity. Saskatchewan has among the lowest corporate tax rate in Canada, and that competitiveness is paying dividends to the people of our great province. Even though we've kept our corporate tax rate low, our corporate tax base — or the amount of money coming into the province to pay for education, health care, and other necessities — continues to grow year after year. This is due to our strong economic growth and record-high levels of capital investment.

Mr. Speaker, it's hard for me to think of a large corporate business that doesn't have its roots in small business. Often a

small idea can turn into something far larger than what was originally conceived. Two examples of this immediately come to mind. Now I'm no geologist, but I don't think anyone will be surprised to hear that areas of Saskatchewan are blessed with items that have been building character in young people for generations, and both of these examples centre on this particularly. Of course I'm talking about rocks.

In 1962 in a barn near Raymore, Wilf began working on something that would revolutionize what used to be — and still is, to be honest — the bane of many a farm kid over the years. He developed his first rock picker, a simple yet rugged machine that could be pulled behind the tractor and would scoop the rocks off the field for transport to a different location.

His basic philosophy of “the fewer number of parts and complexity the better,” and “when you build something, build it right, build it heavy, and build it to last from top to bottom.” And that has taken Degelman Industries from their simple beginnings to what is now a major player in the North American equipment industry, while maintaining their head office right here in Regina.

Frank was born in 1924 and raised on a family farm near St. Brieux. An inventor at heart, at just 17 years old Frank began to build and develop tools that would make life on the family farm easier.

[11:30]

The rocky soil of the area made fieldwork difficult, and most of the readily available equipment was not built to withstand the conditions in those areas. Frank developed the first dual-use cultivator, which could operate almost trouble-free in the rocky soils around St. Brieux, doing in one pass what would otherwise require a farmer using a chisel plow and then a field cultivator two or even three passes over the field to accomplish.

In 1973 F.P. Bourgault Industries was incorporated and began selling these cultivators throughout the province. Bourgault Industries has now grown into an international agricultural manufacturing company with offices in the United States, Australia, and Europe. But their head office remains in St. Brieux.

This is but two examples of the entrepreneurial spirit that so many in Saskatchewan share. That is why our government is establishing the small and medium enterprise investment tax credit. This commitment allows small and medium businesses, beginning with the food, beverage, machinery, and transportation sectors, to leverage investment from individuals and corporations to help them grow their business, create jobs, and build the future of our great province.

This program will allow individuals and corporations to claim a 45 per cent non-refundable tax credit on equity investments into qualifying small- and medium-sized enterprises. That investment can be used by those businesses to expand their business, increase production, and diversify product lines. In turn that will result in more jobs for more people right here in the province of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we're also investing in the Saskatchewan young entrepreneur bursary to assist those inspiring young

entrepreneurs across the province to continue to contribute to economic development across Saskatchewan. This program, administered by the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce, will award up to 57 new business owners between the ages of 18 and 35 a \$5,000 bursary which can be used to help them grow their ideas and their business.

These are just a few of the many commitments our government is delivering on to help the hard-working small-business owners of Saskatchewan grow their business, grow their workforce, grow Saskatchewan, and keep their business profitable now and into the future.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite seem to think that being profitable is a bad thing. In fact when they last had the opportunity to be in government, thankfully not in recent memory and neither in the foreseeable future, the corporate tax rate was an unbelievable 17 per cent, driving industry and business, and in turn jobs and people, out of our province.

Of the companies and industries that did stay, the NDP government of the day would nationalize their industry, stifling economic investment in our province for decades. Now they regularly rise and criticize companies that are for profit, claiming that only government should be delivering services to the people of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize that profit is a good thing. It is what creates the jobs and the lifestyle that the people of Saskatchewan have come to expect. And it's helping draw people from outside the borders here, resulting in record population growth, having recently surpassed 1.25 million people now calling Saskatchewan home. We also recognize that our small for-profit businesses contribute in so many ways to their local communities by volunteering, donating to local charities, coaching local sports teams, and so much more.

The best way to increase profit is to decrease costs. One way to do this is by creating efficiencies which could be addressed with the small and medium enterprise tax credit which I have discussed earlier. Another way is by reducing operating costs. Now, Mr. Speaker, our government is reducing those operating costs for every business, large or small, by making Saskatchewan the first carbon tax-free jurisdiction in Canada. Not only are businesses seeing these savings, but so is every family, every non-profit, every NGO [non-governmental organization]. Every person in Saskatchewan benefits.

It is clear that our government is committed to supporting the hard-working people of Saskatchewan, and I expect full support of our motion from members on both sides of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker. That is why I am supporting — and I hope the members will as well — the motion from the member from White City—Qu'Appelle that states:

That this Assembly recognize the government's commitment to supporting business and entrepreneurship by establishing the new small and medium enterprise investment tax credit and the Saskatchewan young entrepreneur bursary, maintaining the small-business tax credit of 1 per cent, and becoming the first carbon tax-free province in Canada.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Deputy Chair of Committees Beaudry: — I recognize the member from Regina Rochdale.

Joan Pratchler — When the member over there says that we don't believe in profit as NDP, that is simply not true. What we do believe in . . . We don't believe in offering a staggering debt to the people of this province that will cripple an economy and hurt its people. And we've seen that over the years, and that's not good enough.

Of course we need profit. You need profit so that businesses can do what they need to do and that you can support the social services that we need for our people in this province. That's why they elected us. That matters.

We do not support the carbon tax, and we are not against the removal of the provincial carbon tax. We ran on freezing the small-business tax rate for four years in the 2024 election. We know that Saskatchewan does not have a revenue problem; it has a management problem. And that's evident. But there's nothing to take into account the multiplier effect of \$1.6 billion from the federal government to be given to child care.

The party opposite won't provide relief to the people in their tax returns until 2026. Here's a news flash: the tariff crisis is right now. They produced a budget not worth the paper it's written on because there is lack of actual math in the cost of their tax credits or even the multiplier effect. It hurts small businesses by delaying the promise to freeze the small-business tax rate until the election.

We know that reliable access to child care is essential for the growth of business and entrepreneurship in this province. It simply can't be lost on any of you that I've been bringing child care providers into this building for the last three weeks. They represent thousands and thousands and thousands of child care spaces that are needed so moms and families can get to work. They represent hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of cumulative hours of child care providers for children for decades and decades in this province so that families could support themselves with dignity.

Child care is integral to supporting businesses. When I talked to the people of Humboldt about a variety of things over the last while, talked to them about the mine, there are two issues that are critical to that mine's success. One of them is housing, and Mayor Muench is working on that with his colleagues. But the number two one is child care. And I asked him, well why are you talking to me? He says, because you're the one that will do something about it.

They don't have enough child care spaces in Humboldt, and they need them. And they need them for the mine there. They need them for Jansen. They need them for Lanigan. They need them for Colonsay. Where are the child care spaces?

And when you make a system, or try to make a system, that is somewhat tenuous when people don't know if that's going to be signed this year, next year — they don't know — they're not going to start their entrepreneurship to start their child care business. And neither will the parents be able to support the

economy of that entire area. Humboldt and every other place in this province deserves a good-news story. And the best news story is one that women tell, and that is: I can go to work and I can do good and right by my family and support them.

I've always told my teachers and my staff that it is your problem when your neighbour's house is on fire. And the child care house is ablaze. There is so much uncertainty out there by over half the people in this province. And it's like, what has to happen before you're going to do something about the fire? Because the heat is on. And when women are upset, mind yourselves.

We introduced the buy local Act to help stimulate the economy. We wanted to see investment into health care and education in the budget, which are key to long-term growth. As is child care.

Are you aware that in Regina alone over 800 spaces are going to be empty in the next four to six months? Do you know what that means when 800 children have to be taken care of by moms and dads at home? That's critical to a city. And it's not just here. Same thing we see in Prince Albert. Same thing we see in Saskatoon. Same thing we see in rural Saskatchewan. They need those spaces.

Sask Party government has failed working parents. It's failed working moms by not signing on to that deal and giving them that confidence that it needed to be done. And that affects consumer confidence, which I think some people in this House have yet to realize. When mama can't buy something, it ain't going to go.

The Sask Party has not committed to the buying local Act. They failed to invest in the future by pulling funding for Ignite, which encourages high-risk people to get the skills they need to join the workforce. They've cut funding to education and health care.

We have called for strong response to tariffs from the beginning because we plan ahead. And if you're going to think that there might be tariffs, not tariffs, well plan ahead. What if they didn't happen? Pull it off the shelf and put it through the shredder. Oh, wait, that's busy with the budget.

We need to know that our business owners in this province are scared. They're scared in the future because they don't have a clear answer on what the heck tariffs are going to mean to them and their families. We called to tariff-proof our economy, plan ahead, plan ahead. And we need rail lines, power lines, pipelines, and highways to make sure things get moving the way they need to move.

The Sask Party government completely failed to budget for tariffs. It's not that hard. It's been meek and weak in the face of provocation from Trump and the separatists. That's not okay. That's scary.

The motion says that they have a "commitment to supporting businesses and entrepreneurship." A commitment that flagrantly ignores the fact that women have just as much right for input into the economy and they need supports like they've given to the men for all these years to go to work?

They also suggest that they want to establish something that makes new small and medium enterprise investment tax credits

work for people to build their own businesses. Well if you don't have someone minding the kids, how much work can you actually put into your company? There's work day and night to starting up a new company and growing it. I know. You stay awake at night wondering, to make sure that you've done all the things, you've dotted all the i's, and you've invested where you could. But what have we done? There's a lot of people that can't do that now because they don't know if they have the time to do it because they don't have child care.

If you can keep your business alive, yes, yes, you'd probably benefit from the tax credit, 1 per cent. Funny how that came partway through the election and didn't come right at the beginning because that matters.

[11:45]

And I suppose they think they're going to be the first carbon-free province in Canada. Yes? Well we don't support the carbon tax, and we're not against removal of the carbon tax either. We're here to support families. We're here to make sure that profit runs alongside with what the social services are that we need to apply here in our country and in our province. You need to have money to do that, and that's what the resources of our province should help to do.

That's important. That's what we need; that's what we stand for. And I think I've said enough.

Deputy Chair of Committees Beaudry: — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Megan Patterson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to speak to this motion. One of the guiding principles of this party that attracted me to it is that the private sector is the engine of the economy. Only through a strong private sector can this government generate the revenue that we need to deliver strong health care, investment in education, safe highways, and the social programs that our citizens rely on.

In every budget, this government invests in programs that will help to unleash the power of the private sector and grow our economy. A strong and growing economy allows this government to deliver the health, security, and programs that our Saskatchewan residents need and deserve.

In the '25-26 budget, our government introduced a small and medium enterprise tax credit. This tax credit will offer a 45 per cent non-refundable credit to individuals or corporations who invest in the equity of an eligible SME [small to medium-sized enterprise] to assist with scaling up operations or expanding. This tax credit will enable businesses with fewer than 50 employees who invest in business development to receive a tax credit they can use to either pay down debt, reinvest, or pay to another local company.

In this budget, our government also introduced the young entrepreneur bursary program in partnership with the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce. This program will provide a cash injection for new businesses that could take them to the next level. It will encourage new business development and contribute to economic growth. Each of the province's local chambers of commerce is eligible to present a \$5,000 bursary to

one qualifying young entrepreneur. This program will stimulate business development in our province, encourage job creation, and maybe even provide the start-up funding for the next AGT Food, which Murad started in his parents' basement.

Our government will permanently keep the corporate business rate tax at 1 per cent, one of the lowest corporate tax rates in the country. This will benefit over 35,000 small businesses and save them over 50 million in corporate income tax annually. This, combined with Saskatchewan having the highest income threshold for businesses in Canada to reach before they even start paying corporate taxes, will enable Saskatchewan to continue to attract high levels of capital investment.

In the '25-26 budget, this government removed the carbon tax from business customers, becoming the first carbon tax-free province in Canada. This will immediately lower SaskPower bills for all businesses and residents. Removing the carbon tax on everything for everyone will give residents more money in their pockets that they can use to do things like support local contractors, renovate their homes, or take their family out to a local restaurant for dinner. Families that choose to renovate their homes can also take advantage of the home renovation tax credit. Eliminating the carbon tax on businesses will immediately lower their fixed costs, freeing up dollars for them to invest in their business.

The combination of making the business tax rate permanently 1 per cent and the elimination of the carbon tax will continue to attract private investment in Saskatchewan. In 2024 Saskatchewan had the second-highest level of capital investment among provinces, reaching nearly 20 billion. Our government will consistently invest in strengthening the economy by providing business tax credits, keeping taxes low, and keeping our regulatory environment stable. The people of this province can count on it because it is only through a strong economy that our government can continue delivering for the people of this province.

Our province continues to show strong growth in the labour market. 19,800 jobs were added year over year in March. Saskatchewan is leading the nation with a 3.4 per cent employment growth rate. Saskatchewan also has the lowest unemployment rate among provinces at 4.9 per cent, well below the national average of 6.7 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, this means that our plan is working. More Saskatchewan people are working than ever before, and we continue to be one of the most attractive investment jurisdictions in the country. The ability of our government to invest in social programs, supports for workers, education, and health care is only possible because of this growth. Year over year, full-time employment increased by 5,400 jobs, an increase of 1.1 per cent versus a year ago.

There are more women working in Saskatchewan than ever before. Female employment reached an all-time high of 287,000, which is up 4.1 per cent. This government knows the importance of supporting women to help them get into the workforce, and that's why we have said we will be signing the child care agreement once we can get it done after the federal election.

This province continues to see economic growth in other areas.

In January 2025 Saskatchewan ranked first among provinces for growth in new motor vehicle sales at 17.3 per cent, and second for growth in retail sales at 11.5 per cent. In the first three months of this year, Saskatchewan also led the nation in housing starts.

We will continue to support our Indigenous business sector. First Nations and Métis citizens represent over 17 per cent of Saskatchewan's population, which underscores the crucial role Indigenous-owned businesses and communities play in fostering economic growth in this province. In the fourth quarter of 2024, 4.7 per cent of Saskatchewan private businesses were majority owned by Indigenous people. This was the third-highest rate among provinces and above the national average of 3.2 per cent.

I had the honour of attending the Moose Jaw MJBEX [Moose Jaw Business Excellence] Awards last night and presenting the New Business Venture Award. I want to congratulate the Moose Jaw Chamber of Commerce and Wow Factor Media for an amazing event. The Moose Jaw Chamber of Commerce has over 600 small-business members. Small businesses are truly the backbone and the heart of Moose Jaw. There were over 400 people at the banquet last night to celebrate business excellence and the wonderful contributions that small businesses make to our economy and our community. And it is these businesses that support our community through sponsorships, fundraising, and volunteerism.

There were over 90 businesses nominated for the awards. There were 55 finalists. I had the honour to present the New Business Venture Award on behalf of SaskTel to Canadian Wool Pellets. They repurpose sheep wool to create wool pellets. The wool pellets act as a fertilizer in soil, increase water retention, and repel bugs. Their distribution and sales are growing monthly. Canadian Wool Pellets exemplify how small businesses drive efficiency and innovation.

This government will continue to support small businesses to foster innovation, grow jobs and economic security for Saskatchewan families. Through the Saskatchewan Indigenous Finance Corporation, the province is increasing access to capital for Indigenous communities and entities to participate in natural resource development and value-added agriculture.

We're proud of the work that we do keep our small businesses in this province strong and vibrant. This strong economy allows us to deliver the services that people of this province need and deserve. With that I will be supporting the motion put forward by the member from White City-Qu'Appelle.

Deputy Chair of Committees Beaudry: — I recognize the member from Regina Coronation Park.

Noor Burki: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, my colleagues. And I will say thank you to members opposite who moved the motion to giving relief to the small businesses to make sure they can thrive, which I think it is really important that we have to be more supportive for small businesses.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we did a lot of reading, a lot of things. I will start with a small story which will cover the whole thing what we're doing today and what is our intention for the small-business profession, business owners, to give them relief.

In 1966 a young person came from Hungary and landed at the airport of Toronto. That young man, when he came to the airport, the people at the airport they asked him, how much money did you bring along with you? And the guy said he was not able to speak English. He opened his pocket and showed it and said, "I have no money." Well it was a language barrier, but the cashier over there, she brought \$5 or \$10 to give it to him to make sure he can spend the night and get fresh so he can make his way toward to his job.

Because of the culture values, he refused to take that money because the cashier was giving money like that, but he didn't want to put his hand like that. So she went back, and she asked her colleague that something is going like that, and then he said, "Okay I will go with you." That gentleman came and he said, "Don't give it like that. Give it in a way, like put it on the table and give it in a respectful way." Some people, some cultures, they are so sensitive with this.

That young man takes the money as a loan from the Government of Canada, whatever the amount was — \$10 or \$15. He started working. He was a handyman. He was a toolmaker. He started working at a basement where he was living. He started from that and he grew his business. His company name is Linamar. Linamar has almost 70 locations worldwide, and their revenue in 2022, I was looking on that, was over \$8 billion. His name is Frank. Linamar is named for his wife named Linda and his two children, Nancy and Margaret. And his company is providing manufacturing products worldwide. And he has right now — I was looking into their website — they have almost 31,000 people worldwide working with them.

I agree with that, that small businesses are the backbone of our economy, and we need three, four small businesses that we can invest in them, and they will be our big pillar. And we know that our province needs a lot of those kind of actions to make sure we can retain those business owners.

[12:00]

Mr. Speaker, when I came here in 2008, my friend had completed his Ph.D [Doctor of Philosophy] in Germany, and he was only relying on me. I came from Toronto. He said, "I will come with you to Saskatchewan as well." He came with his Ph.D. degree with valuable qualifications. He is still over here and worked with SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance], and he did a lot of innovative things with SGI. But unfortunately lack of research that we don't have in our province to keep those people, skilful people, so they can do their research, enhance them, and they can be a productive person for our province.

Unfortunately in 2012 he left to Ontario. He worked a little with the University of Ottawa in the research centre. Right now Mr. Khan has a really good company. He's providing a senior care home. In the senior care home, they are providing such services that any doctor worldwide can know the statistics of the patient, and they can do the things accordingly as well. So it's amazing.

So I will say that I am also by myself a small-business owner, and I've been hearing a lot from small-businesses owners — their issues, their concerns as well. And one of the biggest things that I can say that for employers, employees is their fuel. We can't go anywhere if we are driving a car without fuel. We need, always,

the fuel. So that is their fuel. But we have heard from many companies, many places that they have this deficiency.

And I will tell you one example. We were sitting at one restaurant in Saskatoon and the guy, he came to us and he said, "Well I took a little bit more time to prepare food because my hand is injured. I can't work efficiently. And I'm waiting, and I have applied for a few people so they can come and join us through SINP [Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program] program."

Small businesses, they need support in each and every point. Small businesses are exactly like we can grow a small, fruitful tree. You have to be taking care for the first few years. You will have to give the water to them. You will have to do everything around, guard them from so many things to make sure. And after 10, 15 years, that will give us fruit. We should not expect from small businesses that they will be giving right now, they will be giving you the benefit to us, to the government.

Due to the increasing cost in the past one or two years — the utilities, the gas price, the grocery, and the property taxes — that went so high, and it was very hard for them to run with them. And they were really having a hard time. They closed their businesses. Or most of them, they moved out of the province, which is heartbreaking. I will say that.

And one business owner who is living in Regina, he told me that, "I applied for SINP. My people are not coming. I'm ready to give the keys to the government. They have to run my shop for two months. And if they can see that, how it saw . . . Come to our level and they should have to see us."

And I would say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the burden of the taxes . . . The Sask Party government put a PST on insurance in businesses, used cars, groceries — some groceries, not all — and recreationals, and children's clothes, and they put it on some utilities as well. So basically if you want to make sure that we are promoting our small businesses, the bottom line is that we have to give relief to them.

Small businesses are the backbone of our economy. I totally agree with you. These are the people that they can become really a big pillar in the communities. And they are not just making this profit; they give it back to the community as well in different ways. They will hire people locally. And they will have to be giving them salaries, and the money will be staying in the community. And this is the real way. And they will be paying different taxes like to the city, to municipality, and property taxes. They will have to do that.

Mr. Speaker, the shortage of labour is one of the biggest challenges for many transportation companies. I heard from many trucking companies. They have brought this complaint to me. I heard loud and clear from those people. They're in salon and truck professions. They were also really complaining about that, this salon professional: they can't go through the SINP program, which is really very hard for them.

And again, Mr. Speaker, we have to make sure we have to promote buying local, investing local. And we all request all members: when you see a local person, new businesses, go there. Buy them. Encourage them and support them. They definitely rely on that. All motivation will be really something bigger for

them. We have to encourage them. We have to tell them that we are on your side. We'll be amplifying anywhere at any time to support you, to make sure you can thrive. With that, thank you.

Deputy Chair of Committees Beaudry: — The 65-minute period has expired. The ten-minute question-and-answer period will begin. I recognize the member from Prince Albert Carlton.

Kevin Kasun: — Mr. Speaker, in our most recent budget, this government followed up on our campaign promises to providing support for young entrepreneurs, small businesses, and providing cost-of-living relief for Saskatchewan people. However the opposition voted against these measures and attempted to deny these supports for Saskatchewan businesses and families.

To the member from Saskatoon Silverspring: why did you vote against this budget that removes the carbon tax on everything and supports small businesses and keeps life affordable?

Deputy Chair of Committees Beaudry: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Silverspring.

Hugh Gordon: — Thank you for the question, Mr. Speaker. Fact: that measure was not in the budget. That was an ad hoc measure after. We did not vote on that because that was not in your budget. So if you really support it, put your money where your mouth is and put it in the budget.

Deputy Chair of Committees Beaudry: — I recognize the member from Regina Rochdale.

Joan Pratchler: — How many business owners did the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow talk to about the impact of losing hundreds of child care spaces because they're on the verge of closing in her own city alone? And how many said that they think her government is doing a bang-up job on child care?

Deputy Chair of Committees Beaudry: — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Megan Patterson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the question. Actually I just met with the director of Southwest Day Care in Moose Jaw yesterday, last night. And we hugged, and I'm going to come see her. And she told me that you invited her to this Assembly, so thank you for doing that. I'm going to meet her afterwards.

I told her that in fact we are going to sign the child care agreement, that we've made that clear numerous times. That what we're doing is we're just waiting until after the federal election, and then we want to improve the contract. Usually when you sign a contract you want to ensure that what you want is in the contract before signing it. So that is the process we're going to take. But thank you for the question, and thank you for inviting her here.

Deputy Chair of Committees Beaudry: — I recognize the member from Batoche.

Darlene Rowden: — There are many items in this budget which help Saskatchewan small businesses — and the opposition claims that they want to support small businesses — such as our

commitment to keeping the small-business tax rate at 1 per cent. My question to the member from Saskatoon Silverspring: why does your party claim to support small businesses while at the same time calling our vital affordability measures, which help small businesses, worthless and not worth the paper they're printed on?

Deputy Chair of Committees Beaudry: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Silverspring.

Hugh Gordon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well you know what? Thanks for finally catching up with our ideas on that one.

The reason why we couldn't support this budget quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, is because the \$12 million surplus was evaporated on the same day that they got rid of the OBPS and they didn't account for that properly. And there's no measures in this budget either to support small businesses with respect to tariffs and the uncertainty that they're facing. And by the way, these tax credits that they're proposing are no good next year. They need this relief right now.

Deputy Chair of Committees Beaudry: — I recognize the member from Regina Coronation Park.

Noor Burki: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will ask the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford, won't you pass the buy local Act, buy local day Act, which will stimulate our local businesses across the province?

Deputy Chair of Committees Beaudry: — I recognize the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford.

James Thorsteinson: — Thank you, mister deputy deputy speaker. Every day in Saskatchewan is buy local day.

Our government supports small businesses across the province every day in every way, and there is so much in the budget and in this motion that discusses how we are supporting those small businesses, whether it's through the entrepreneurship grant, keeping the small-business tax rate at 1 per cent, and most importantly, Mr. Speaker, making Saskatchewan the first carbon tax-free province in Canada.

Deputy Chair of Committees Beaudry: — I recognize the member from Carrot River Valley.

Terri Bromm: — Our government's budget includes the small and medium enterprise tax credit, which gives even more supports for small businesses to start and grow in our province. The opposition's election platform offers no similar incentive and gives no kind of tax credits to any kinds of small businesses.

To the member from Regina Coronation Park: why does the opposition claim to support small businesses while creating a platform that lacks the most supports that businesses would benefit from?

Deputy Chair of Committees Beaudry: — I recognize the member from Regina Coronation Park.

Noor Burki: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That was a very good question from the member opposite, but just to let you know that

we heard from the people on the doorstep. We keep ourselves with their difficulties, their hard times, and we moved in 2023 from this side. My fellow from Regina Walsh Acres, he moved the motion against the carbon tax. And we did it, and removed it.

And I will say that we're always supporting with our small-business communities. I am a small-business owner and I know how difficult we have. This government is failing small-business owners by having a lot of taxes in PST and that, and they make your life harder and harder. But we will be making sure that we hear, we will amplify, and we will be doing the same thing as we're doing. Thank you.

Deputy Chair of Committees Beaudry: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Silverspring.

Hugh Gordon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow. I was wondering if today the government and if the member would put their money where their mouth is finally about the industrial carbon tax, and are they prepared today to reimburse every business and all the industries that this money . . . of the money that the government has effectively confiscated from them through this program since 2019 to the tune of billions of dollars?

Deputy Chair of Committees Beaudry: — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Megan Patterson: — Thank you for the question. This government will continue investing revenues that we generate into our small businesses and offering our small businesses programs such as the tax credit for small and medium businesses and keeping the corporate tax rate at 1 per cent, allowing us to grow the economy.

Deputy Chair of Committees Beaudry: — I recognize the member from Canora-Pelly.

Sean Wilson: — Affordability measures support small businesses like our income tax reduction which will keep more money in the pockets of Saskatchewan residents. More money that they will be able to spend at Saskatchewan small businesses.

To the member from Regina Coronation Park: why has the opposition failed yet again to propose incentives in their election platform that allows Saskatchewan residents to spend more in our local economy and spend more buying from our tremendous small businesses?

Deputy Chair of Committees Beaudry: — I recognize the member from Regina Coronation Park.

Noor Burki: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A good question from Canora-Pelly. I love the question they ask and . . . [inaudible] . . . you know. We stick with the people with their current issues. And businesses have issues, and it will be not just solved by giving relief a little bit in the taxes.

And the tax is not right away. They will have to wait until next year, and I don't know what will happen with this party that they won't be putting back tax again. The last one year, in two years they increased the utility hike three to eight times, and again they put the PST on old cars and so many things that they put it on,

and I put over here . . . the list goes on and on.

[12:15]

So we always will be amplifying and we will be representing the demands or the concerns of the constituents, and we will be amplifying in this Chamber, and we will be doing over and over.

And I will repeat again that they didn't remove the carbon tax. We removed the carbon tax. And they can do it before that, but they didn't do it because they wanted to keep the carbon tax money in their pocket.

Deputy Chair of Committees Beaudry: — I recognize the member from Regina Rochdale.

Joan Pratchler: — If the Sask government opposite was so . . .

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

SECOND READINGS

Bill No. 601 — *The Sikh Heritage Month Act*

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

Bhajan Brar: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am humbled and honoured to rise today in support of Bill No. 601, *The Sikh Heritage Month Act*. This bill is not merely symbolic; it is long-overdue recognition of the profound contribution that the Sikh community has made to our province and our country. It is also a statement of our shared value as a legislature, as a province, and as a society that we believe in justice and inclusion and a respect for all.

Mr. Speaker, first I want to thank the Sikh Society of Regina and the Sikh Society of Saskatchewan for requesting that I bring this bill forward and for their tireless dedication to advocating for the Sikh community. I also wish to recognize my colleague, the member for Regina Mount Royal, who introduced a similar bill in 2019.

Each year members of Saskatchewan's Sikh community must petition for April to be recognized as Sikh Heritage Month. Yet no legislation has been passed to make this designation permanent, as has already been done by the federal government and by the governments of Ontario and Manitoba.

In this current political climate, permanent recognition matters. It sends a clear message that we see, value, and stand with our Sikh neighbours, not just for a day or a year but always.

Mr. Speaker, Sikhs have made up around 2 per cent of the Canadian population, proudly standing as the fourth-largest religious community, a small yet vibrant part of the country's diverse cultural fabric is the fourth-largest religion in Canada.

The Sikh Canadian journey began in 1897 with Kesur Singh, a Risaldar-Major in the British Indian Army, who we recognize as the first Sikh settler in Canada. Here in Saskatchewan Sikh families have lived and worked since 1957. At that time most were teachers or doctors. Today Sikhs are also farmers,

engineers, small-business owners, truck drivers, taxi drivers, entrepreneurs, and front-line workers. They help build our province, grow our economy, and enrich our communities. Saskatchewan is their home, and they're proud to be residents of this great province.

The story of Sikh Canadians is a story of preservation and triumph among many remarkable individuals — Baltej Singh Dhillon, the first turban-wearing RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] officer and now a Canadian senator; Private Buckam Singh, one of the Sikh soldiers to serve in World War I; Dr. Naranjan Singh Dhalla, an Order of Canada recipient for medical research; Palbinder Kaur Shergill, the first turban-wearing Sikh woman judge on the BC Supreme Court; Rupinder Kaur, a globally acclaimed poet.

Mr. Speaker, as a proud Sikh Canadian I am honoured to be part of this rich history. I came to Canada in 2005 and, like many newcomers, faced many challenges. Despite those I chose to stay in Saskatchewan to build a better future for my children and grandchildren. Today I stand here as one of the first turban-wearing Sikh members of the Assembly along with the member from Saskatoon University-Sutherland.

Sikh Canadians exemplify values that resonate deeply with the Saskatchewan spirit — *sarbat da bhala*, the well-being of all; *seva*, selfless service; *kirat karo*, honest living; *vand chakko*, sharing with others.

Mr. Speaker, one shining example of these values is the work of the Sikh Society of Saskatchewan. Every day volunteers from the Sikh community prepare and serve meals to anyone in need, no questions asked. This is not charity; it is our responsibility. That is the Sikh way. It is about equality, dignity, and community. It reflects the very values we claim to hold dear in this province.

April holds deep significance in the Sikh faith as it marks Vaisakhi, the celebration of the birth of the Khalsa Panth in 1699 by Guru Gobind Singh Ji. On that day the guru formalized the Khalsa and introduced the Amrit Sanchar ceremony. He created a community rooted in courage and equality, assigning the surnames Kaur and Singh to eliminate caste and gender distinctions.

Baptized Sikhs are recognized by the five Ks: *kesh*, uncut, covered hair; *kangha*, wooden comb; *kara*, steel bracelet; *kirpan*, ceremonial sword; *kachera*, undergarment.

Mr. Speaker, culturally, Sikh Canadians bring vibrancy and warmth to our communities. We celebrate Vaisakhi and host Nagar Kirtan, where a colourful procession fills the stage with music, prayer, and unity.

But recognition alone is not enough. We must also confront the need for repair. This bill comes before us at a time when the words spoken in this very Chamber have caused deep hurt. The comment made by the member from Humboldt-Watrous referring to a dastar Sikh as a terrorist was more than offensive. It was dangerous and a clear example of anti-Sikh hate. It echoed disinformation regularly disseminated by foreign governments and promoted stereotypes that Sikh Canadians have worked tirelessly to overcome.

Mr. Speaker, the Guru Nanak Jahaz, also known as the Komagata Maru incident, is a historical example of the discrimination Sikhs have faced. In 1914, 376 passengers, mostly Sikh, were denied entry into Canada due to racial immigration laws. An official apology did not come until 2016.

This is why we must pass this bill. Hate grows in the absence of understanding. Recognizing Sikh Heritage Month permanently gives us the opportunity to celebrate, educate, and connect, to break down prejudice with knowledge, to foster understanding through shared stories.

Passing this bill tells every Sikh child in Saskatchewan that their heritage matters, that their identity is not only welcome but woven into the fabric of this province.

Saskatchewan's motto is, "from many peoples, strength." This bill honours that vision.

Mr. Speaker, let me conclude with the words from Guru Granth Sahib Ji, written by Guru Arjan Dev Ji.

[The hon. member spoke for a time in Hindi.]

No one is my enemy, and no one is a stranger. I get along with everyone. Whatever Waheguru does, I accept that as good. This is the sublime wisdom I have obtained from the company of the holy.

Let us honour that wisdom by passing this bill. Let us declare April as Sikh Heritage Month in Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Waheguru ji ka khalsa Waheguru ji ki fateh.

Happy Easter. Thank you.

Speaker Goudy: — It has been moved that Bill No. 601, *The Sikh Heritage Month Act* be now read a second time. Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Martensville-Blairmore.

Hon. Jamie Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you so much for the member opposite from Regina Pasqua for your passion and your drive towards the subject. I have had the honour of meeting many Sikhs over the last three years learning about their heritage and much more. The Sikh religion was founded more than 500 years ago. Their belief is everyone is equal before God. Sikhs believe that our actions are important.

And I quote:

"Our government values the cultural richness, hard work and community spirit that the Sikh community contributes to Saskatchewan," Parks, Culture and Sport Minister Alana Ross . . . [has stated]. "That is why I am pleased to announce that . . . the Government of Saskatchewan has proclaimed the month of April as Sikh Heritage Month."

Sikh Heritage Month provides opportunities to learn about Sikh culture and traditions while educating future generations. Not to mention trying some of the amazing food. I'd have to say that I make a pretty good pakora by this point.

And, Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes the importance of the Sikh community here in our province. Our government recognizes that actions do matter. And our government believes in equality for all humankind. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon University-Sutherland.

Tajinder Grewal: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a great day in Saskatchewan. On April the 1st, my colleague the member for Regina Pasqua introduced a private bill, Bill No. 601, *The Sikh Heritage Month Act*. It looks like this bill will pass today.

Our province's motto is "from many peoples, strength," and this Act reflects that principle. When we celebrate diversity, it strengthens us.

I would like to say a couple of thanks today. Thanks to our leader; she's very caring. Thanks to our House Leader, walking us through this whole process. There are many members on this side and the other side that are new, and we are walking through a new process, how to pass a new member's bill. It was a good process to walk through, and thanks to our House Leader.

Also thanks to my whole new family. The last number of days was tough for us and very tough for the whole community. And your love, your support as we went through it, I really appreciate that. Thank you very much.

I also would like to thank the Premier and the members opposite for supporting this bill. It means a lot to us. It means a lot to the Sikhs in Saskatchewan, not only in Saskatchewan, in Canada and worldwide. It recognizes our rich history, our culture, our heritage because as we say that our history is to fight for food and freedom for everyone.

As our first guru said, we're all one; we're all equal. We believe in equality. And when somebody calls us something different, then it hurts us. So today you are saying you're recognizing our culture and our history. It means a lot. Thank you very much.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to support this bill today.

[12:30]

Speaker Goudy: — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the member for Regina Pasqua that Bill No. 601, *The Sikh Heritage Month Act* be now read a second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Speaker Goudy: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Second reading of this bill.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from . . . Why was the member on her feet . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Speaker Goudy: — Call in the members.

[The division bells rang from 12:31 until 12:34.]

Speaker Goudy: — The question before the Assembly is the motion moved by the member from Regina Pasqua:

That Bill No. 601, *The Sikh Heritage Month Act* be now read a second time.

I would ask that all those in favour would please stand.

[Yeas — 49]

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
Beaudry	Crassweller	Kropf
Weger	Patterson	Bromm
Rowden	Chan	Gartner
Kasun	Beck	Ritchie
Burki	Nippi-Albright	Mowat
Wotherspoon	Love	Young, A.
Clarke	McPhail	Conway
Blakley	Grewal	Jorgenson
Brar	Gordon	Pratchler
Housser		

Speaker Goudy: — All those who would be opposed to the motion please stand.

[Nays — nil]

Speaker Goudy: — I declare the motion carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Second reading of this bill.

Speaker Goudy: — To which committee shall this bill be committed?

Bhajan Brar: — I move that Bill No. 601, *The Sikh Heritage Month Act* be now read a second time. I designate this Bill No. 601 committed to the Committee of the Whole on Bills, and the said bill shall be considered immediately.

Speaker Goudy: — This bill is committed to the Committee of the Whole on Bills. I do now leave the Chair for the Assembly to go into Committee of the Whole on Bills.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE ON BILLS

Bill No. 601 — *The Sikh Heritage Month Act*

Deputy Chair Beaudry: — The item of business before the committee is Bill No. 601, *The Sikh Heritage Month Act*. Clause 1, short title, is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Deputy Chair Beaudry: — Carried.

[Clauses 1 to 3 inclusive agreed to.]

[Preamble agreed to.]

Deputy Chair Beaudry: — His Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, enacts as follows: Bill No. 601, *The Sikh Heritage Month Act*. I recognize the member for Regina Pasqua.

Bhajan Brar: — Mr. Speaker, I move the committee report the bill without amendment.

Deputy Chair Beaudry: — It has been moved that the committee report Bill No. 601, *The Sikh Heritage Month Act* without amendment. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Deputy Chair Beaudry: — Carried. I recognize the member for Regina Pasqua.

Bhajan Brar: — Chair, I move that the committee rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again.

Deputy Chair Beaudry: — It has been moved by the member for Regina Pasqua that the committee rise, report progress, and ask for leave to sit again. Is that agreed?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Deputy Chair Beaudry: — Carried.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Deputy Chair of Committees.

Chris Beaudry: — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the committee to report Bill No. 601, *The Sikh Heritage Month Act* without amendment.

Speaker Goudy: — When shall this bill be read the third time? I recognize the member from Regina Pasqua.

Bhajan Brar: — Mr. Speaker, I request leave to move third reading for Bill No. 601 immediately.

Speaker Goudy: — The member has requested leave to move third reading of Bill No. 601 immediately. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Speaker Goudy: — Leave has been granted. The member for Regina Pasqua may proceed to move the third reading.

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 601 — *The Sikh Heritage Month Act*

Bhajan Brar: — I move that Bill No. 601 be now read a third time and passed under its title, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Goudy: — It has been moved that Bill No. 601, *The*

Sikh Heritage Month Act be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Speaker Goudy: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this bill.

Speaker Goudy: — When shall the committee sit again? I recognize the member from Regina Pasqua.

Bhajan Brar: — Mr. Speaker, next sitting.

Speaker Goudy: — Next sitting.

[12:45]

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Tim McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move that the Assembly do now adjourn.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Speaker Goudy: — Carried. This Assembly will adjourn not this Monday, but the one after that at 1:30 in the afternoon.

Happy Thanksgiving. Did I just say that? Happy Easter. God bless you all and have a great time with your families and friends.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:46.]

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

CABINET MINISTERS

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Premier
President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Lori Carr
Minister of Mental Health and Addictions,
Seniors and Rural and Remote Health

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff
Minister of Advanced Education

Hon. Jeremy Cockrill
Minister of Health

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Minister of Agriculture
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Water Security Agency

Hon. Jeremy Harrison
Minister of Crown Investments Corporation
Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Government Insurance
Minister Responsible for
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Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board

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Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority
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Hon. Eric Schmalz
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First Nations, Métis and Northern Affairs
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