SECOND SESSION — THIRTIETH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

(HANSARD)
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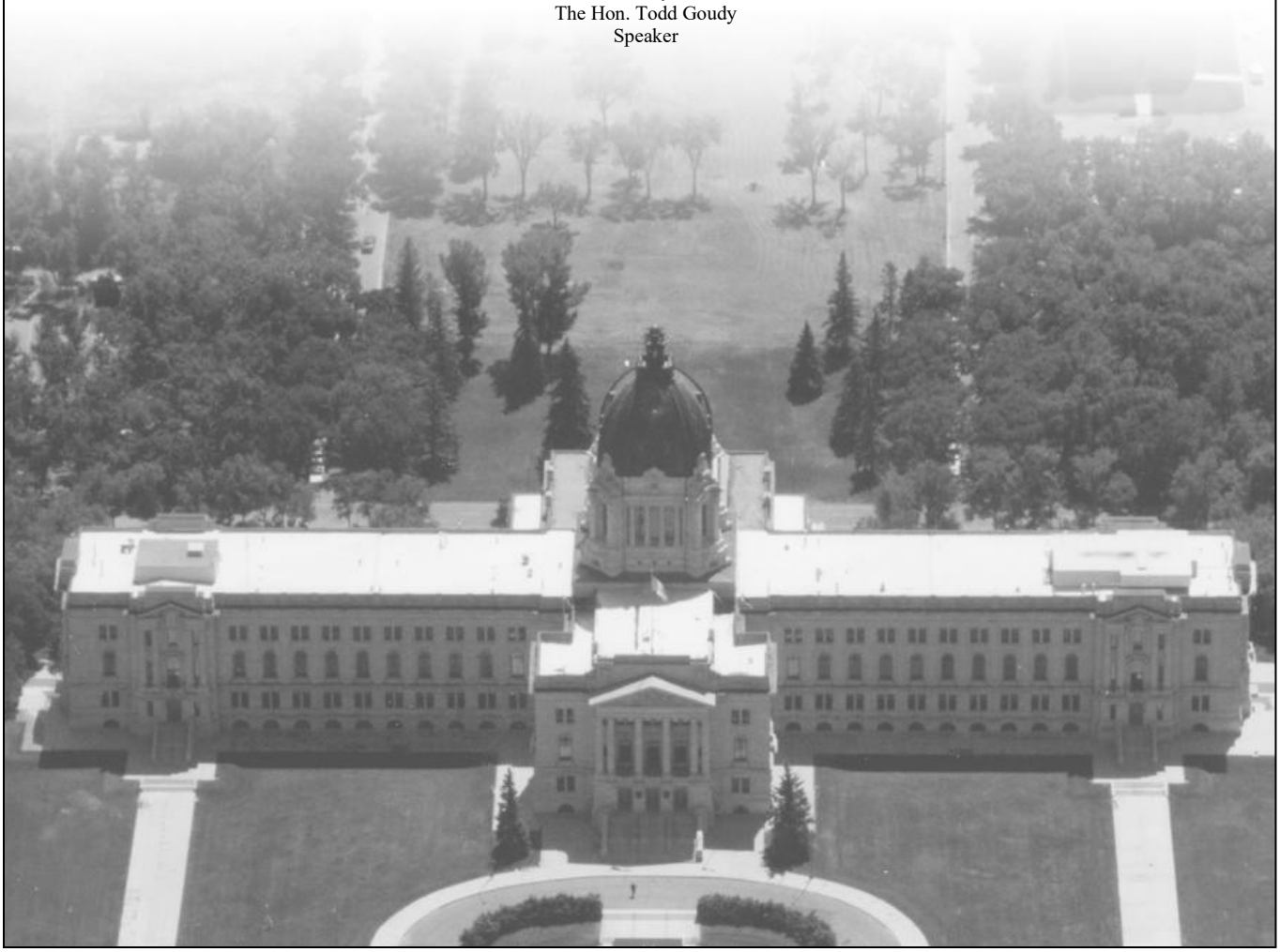
Speaker



N.S. VOL. 67 **NO. 29A THURSDAY, MARCH 5, 2026, 10:00**

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
2nd 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, Hon. 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)
Carr, Hon. Lori — Estevan-Big Muddy (SP)
Chan, David — Yorkton (SP)
Cheveldayoff, Hon. Ken — Saskatoon Willowgrove (SP)
ChiefCalf, April — Saskatoon Westview (NDP)
Clarke, Jared — Regina Walsh Acres (NDP)
Cockrill, Hon. Jeremy — The Battlefords (SP)
Conway, Meara — Regina Elphinstone-Centre (NDP)
Crassweller, Brad — White City-Qu'Appelle (SP)
Gartner, Hon. Kim — Kindersley-Biggar (SP)
Gordon, Hugh — Saskatoon Silverspring (NDP)
Goudy, Hon. Todd — Melfort (SP)
Grewal, Tajinder — Saskatoon University-Sutherland (NDP)
Harrison, Daryl — Cannington (SP)
Harrison, Hon. Jeremy — Meadow Lake (SP)
Hilbert, Racquel — Humboldt-Watrous (SP)
Hindley, Hon. Everett — Swift Current (SP)
Housser, Sally — Regina University (NDP)
Jenson, Hon. Terry — Warman (SP)
Jorgenson, Keith — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (NDP)
Kaeding, Hon. Warren — Melville-Saltcoats (SP)
Kasun, Kevin — Prince Albert Carlton (SP)
Keisig, 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)
McBean, Don — Saskatoon Chief Mistawasis (NDP)
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, Hon. 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, Hon. Michael — Weyburn-Bengough (SP)
Wilson, Hon. Sean — Canora-Pelly (SP)
Wotherspoon, Trent — Regina Mount Royal (NDP)
Young, Aleana — Regina South Albert (NDP)
Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)

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

Clerks-at-the-Table
Clerk — Iris Lang
Deputy Clerk — Robert Park
Principal Clerk — Danielle Humble-Selinger
Clerk Assistant — Miranda Gudereit

Sergeant-at-Arms — Lyall Frederiksen

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[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Joan Pratchler: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to request leave for an extended introduction.

Speaker Goudy: — The member has requested leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Speaker Goudy: — Carried.

Joan Pratchler: — Today seated in your gallery is Lucas Frison, and he's a constituent of Regina Rochdale . Lucas, as you know, was here last year and we celebrated him for his outstanding work as a filmmaker, scriptwriter, film director, and for his outstanding documentary work for Telefilm Canada, CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation], AMI, and he also compassionately documented the Humboldt Broncos tragedy in the TV series *We Were Broncos*. And now he has another accolade, which I will talk more about in my member's statement.

Lucas and the film industry are here and continue to set a high bar, leading the way in putting a spotlight on Saskatchewan, and this time doing the inaugural Moose Jaw Film Festival. I invite all members of the House to join me in welcoming Lucas to his legislature.

And while I'm on my feet, I would also like to welcome several child care providers. We have Cara Werner, who is the president of Child Care Now Saskatchewan and the advocacy lead for the Southeast Saskatchewan child care directors. She has her own child care centre as well. And Kayla Kopacz, the director of Wawota & Community Early Learning Center. Along with her is Julia Harper, the board Chair for that centre as well. Bailey Fleck is here, and she's Chair of the Southeast Sask Directors Association with the Weldon Childcare that's located in Bienfait. I'd like everyone to welcome them to this, their legislature, as well. Welcome.

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

Hon. Alana Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to welcome Lucas Frison to this House today and thank him for all the work that's being done, you know, that he's doing within the film industry. You know, we are very proud of the film industry that we have in Saskatchewan and the support that our government is able to provide for the film industry. And we've had some wonderful, wonderful productions. And just thank you for all the good work you do. I know it's very much appreciated by the residents of Saskatchewan.

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

Hon. Alana Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, and while I'm on my feet I request leave for an extended introduction.

Speaker Goudy: — The minister has requested leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Speaker Goudy: — Carried.

Hon. Alana Ross: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, it is my pleasure to introduce a number of guests in the House today. Joining us are many women from all walks of life, leaders from the private sector, the public sector, and charitable and non-profit organizations. I will introduce them. And some are still on their way, I understand, but I will introduce them all in no particular order. And I do apologize if I make a mistake in the pronunciations.

Joining us today we have Jackline Akareut from UCAS & African Descent Professional Associates; Elizabeth Adejoh from Daughters of Africa Resource Center; Linda Allen-Hardisty from Allen-Hardisty; Lisa Bird-Wilson from SK Arts; Cindy Kobayashi from United Way; Roxanne Korpan from SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association]; Theresa Kuzina from Conexus; Pam Larson from Clarence Campeau Development Fund; Chelsea Iatridis from K+S.

Kelsey Lonie, author and historian; Kerri Lovelace, track and field star; Ritu Malhotra from March Consulting; Penny McCune from SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance]; Jessica McNaughton from memoryKPR; Penelope Popp from Pyvot Consulting; Cheryl Ring, visual artist; Tessa Ritter from LB Strategies; Lori Romanoski from Brown; Maddie Sanderson from PATHS [Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan]; Leanne Schinkel from Discover Saskatoon.

Elder Liz Settee from the Indigenous Women's Council in Prince Albert; Tobi Strohan from Praxis; Jill Stroeder from Mosaic; June Verhelst from Graham; Samantha Yaholnitsky from Momentum Strategies; Cari Bodi from South Country Equipment; Sharon-Ann Brown and Carol La Fayette-Boyd from Saskatchewan African Canadian Culture Heritage Museum; Hasmin Abdul Cader and Kellie Fay from Cultivator.

Mary-Lynn Charlton from Martin Charlton; Andrea Crittenden from Sixteen Safety; Brigith Da Silva from Daughters of Africa; Erin Dean from Creative Saskatchewan; Navjeet Dhillon, Bernadet Hamill, Larisa Murray, and Stephanie Smith from the Status of Women; Rosemarie Falk, MP [Member of Parliament] from The Battlefords and Lloydminster, and her daughter Annabelle Falk; Shannon Friesen from CASK [Construction Association of Saskatchewan]; Dana Harris from BHP.

Patty Hughes from the P.A. [Prince Albert] chamber; Kerrie Isaac from Saskatchewan Sexual Assault Services; Miriam Johnson from WESK [Women Entrepreneurs Saskatchewan], Sarah Johnston from Atlas York; Joan Kanigan from

WDM [Western Development Museum], Sam Karikas from the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] Heritage Centre; Chantel Kaufmann from Inpower Regina; and Tracy Knutson from STOPS to Violence [Saskatchewan Towards Offering Partnership Solutions to Violence].

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to speaking with them all later at the reception session today, and you will hear more about International Women's Day in a member's statement. I ask all members in joining me in welcoming these fine women leaders to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you.

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

Jacqueline Roy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would love to join with the member opposite in welcoming so many wonderful women to our legislature here today — not only from one area but across a variety of sectors, which is proof of the strength and fortitude of the women in this province. We see leaders across the economic sectors; we see leaders in housing; we see leaders in affordability initiatives; we see leaders in education; we see leaders in local councils and local communities; and we see leaders on elected boards.

Women deserve a place in this legislature, Mr. Speaker. This is their House too. They are welcome here. I greatly look forward to talking to more of you today along with my colleagues. And welcome, welcome here again.

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

Darcy Warrington: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave for an extended introduction.

Speaker Goudy: — The member has requested leave for an extended introduction. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Darcy Warrington: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Joining with the members in welcoming all these strong female voices to their legislature, I think it's so important that we highlight every single person with their name in *Hansard*. And it gives me great pride to add another name to that *Hansard*.

Speaking of another strong female voice, Tammy O'Brien, seated in your gallery, is here with us today. I've had the amazing opportunity to know Tammy as not only her MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] over the last year, but as a friend. Tammy has served in the Canadian Armed Forces in the reserves in the late '80s. She's a single mother of two and has two college diplomas and holds a Bachelor of Arts in psychology. She has experience in pediatrics and addictions counselling.

Like her MLA, she enjoys playing guitar, playing songs, and while I've had the chance to jam with her several times already, I believe our experiences will continue to overlap. I know we'll collaborate not only on our focus to widen the availability of financial supports for those travelling outside of Saskatchewan for life-saving medical treatment, but we'll also join forces to hit up a free stage in Saskatoon to play our favourite protest songs. If there's anyone out there that encompasses the motto used by many to bring about societal change, "three chords and the truth," it's Tammy.

Thanks for being an advocate for folks dealing with incredible health and financial pressures in our province. And with that, I encourage both sides of the legislature to welcome Tammy O'Brien to this, her Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Betty Nippi-Albright: — Miigwech, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to present the following petition.

We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention the following. We're calling on the Saskatchewan government to take immediate action to stand up for Indigenous children and all vulnerable students by advocating for the full restoration of funding previously supported by Jordan's principle. Instead of stepping up to fill this gap, the 2025-2026 provincial budget reduces education funding, budgeting 4.428 billion, less than what was actually spent the previous year. This is an alarming move at a time when our schools are already stretched to the breaking point due to chronic underfunding and short-staffing.

I'll read the prayer:

> We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan commit to sustainable, predictable, and equitable provincial funding for inclusive education across Saskatchewan; ensure education support workers have the resources and staffing they need to keep classrooms safe and support every student's learning journey.

The folks who signed this petition reside in Prince Albert, Sturgeon Lake. I do so present.

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

Joan Pratchler: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present our petition calling for the acceleration of the construction of the new joint-use school in the Harbour Landing area of Regina.

The undersigned residents would like to bring to the attention the following: that there's currently no timeline for the completion and the opening of the second joint-use school in Regina's Harbour Landing; that the Harbour Landing School and St. Kateri Tekakwitha School in Regina were over capacity in their first year of operation; that essential resources like the library have had their size reduced to accommodate temporary classrooms; and of course that all children have a right to a well-rounded education and a safe environment.

I'll read the prayer:

> We, the prayer that reads following, respectfully request the

> Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to immediately provide the support needed to complete and open the second joint-use school in Harbour Landing as soon as possible.

Mr. Speaker, this petition has been signed by residents of Regina. I do so present.

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

Erika Ritchie: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to deliver a petition to the Assembly of Saskatchewan to fix the funding crisis in the disability sector and for community-based organizations.

The undersigned residents wish to bring to your attention the following: the disability service sector faces a funding crisis that threatens CBO [community-based organization] workforce stability and ability to provide essential services due to the underfunding for transportation, meals, technology, and maintenance; that direct support for professionals working for CBOs in the disability service sector make significantly less and have far fewer benefits doing similar work in health care and within homes for people experiencing disabilities that are directly operated by the Government of Saskatchewan; and that the Ministry of Social Services funds CBOs for benefits at approximately 16 per cent of salary funding, and this rate has remained relatively unchanged for 20 years.

[10:15]

> We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request and call on the Government of Saskatchewan to commit to a three-year funding plan that strengthens CBO capacity and stabilizes the sector, while simultaneously collaborating with CBOs on a job analysis for the disability service sector, as well as a full review of the operational funding standards to ensure adequate funding for areas including, but not limited to, transportation, maintenance, technology, food, insurance, and audit.

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

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

Jacqueline Roy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition to prohibit conversion therapy.

The undersigned residents wish to bring to your attention that conversion therapy uses discredited and abusive practices which attempt to actively change sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender protection, which *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* protects. The practice of conversion therapy, or reparative therapy as it were, is seriously harmful to individuals and is opposed by the Canadian Psychological Association, the American Psychological Association, the World Health Organization. It has led to self-harm and it has led to suicide.

I will now read the prayer:

> We in the prayer reads as follows that they call on the Government of Saskatchewan to ban the practice of conversion therapy and prohibit the active transport of youth and adults outside Saskatchewan for such purposes.

The undersigned residents live in Saskatoon, Mr. Speaker. I do so present.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon Chief Mistawasis.

Don McBean: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly to implement rent control now.

We, the undersigned residents, wish to bring to the attention and call upon: that Saskatchewan tenants are currently experiencing the highest level of rent increases in the country; that rent in Saskatchewan has risen by 4 per cent the last year alone, far outpacing any wage growth and putting more pressure on families, seniors, students, low-income residents; that without rent control landlords can implement unchecked rent hikes, making housing increasingly unaffordable and unstable; that with rent control residents can budget more effectively, potentially putting them in a position to save for a down payment of their first home; and that the provinces of British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, and Prince Edward Island have already implemented rent control measures to protect tenants and maintain housing affordability.

I'll read the prayer as follows:

> To call upon the Government of Saskatchewan to adopt fair and effective rent control legislation that limits annual rent increases, ensures housing stability, and protects tenants from being priced out of their homes.

The signatories today are from Regina. I do so present.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Clerk: — According to order, a petition concerning the adoption of fair and effective rent control legislation that limits annual rent increases presented on March 4th, 2026 has been reviewed and, pursuant to Rule 16(7), is found to be irregular and therefore cannot be read and received.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Martensville-Blairmore.

International Women's Day

Hon. Jamie Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize International Women's Day this Sunday, March 8th and to honour the women who continue to shape the future of our province. Across Saskatchewan women strengthen the province in so many ways. They build businesses, lead classrooms, guide families, support neighbours, deliver important public services, and contribute to every part of our economy.

Mr. Speaker, when I look back over my lifetime, the changes women have made in our society and to our economy are

remarkable. Women are pursuing careers in science, technology, skilled trades, policing, health care, and entrepreneurship at rates we have never seen before. They are leading corporate boards, community councils, and organizations that make life safer and stronger for everyone.

Our government remains committed to supporting this momentum. We continue our commitment that helps women live safe, healthy, and prosperous lives across Saskatchewan. And we continue efforts that reduce barriers so more women can participate fully in the economy and be recognized for their leadership in society.

And, Mr. Speaker, as we mark International Women's Day I want to thank the women who came before us, the women leading today, and the women who will lead this province in our future. Thank you. Saskatchewan is stronger because of them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Representation of Women in Government

Jacqueline Roy: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now International Women's Day was born from protest, not from praise. And unfortunately today I do rise in disbelief. Saskatchewan has the lowest proportion of women in a government caucus in all of Canada, at just 18 per cent. That matters because if we are not at the table, we are not heard.

It is not acceptable that women's health research dollars remain critically inadequate, federally and provincially, while conditions affecting half the population are underfunded, understudied, and then dismissed. It is not acceptable that in the midst of a domestic violence epidemic in this province — double the national average — domestic violence death review recommendations by that government are not implemented year after year.

It is not acceptable that the government claims it has a strong economy built from everybody's strength when women still receive 83 cents to the dollar in this province and when women entrepreneurs need more help. They're not done yet, Mr. Speaker.

This affects half of Saskatchewan's population. In fact, over half. Women in my riding. Women in the Premier's riding. Women whose child care concerns are dismissed. Women who don't feel safe in their own homes. The urgency is real, Mr. Speaker, but does that government require or does that government have the political will to do something? That government says Saskatchewan is strong, safe, and secure, but did it forget over half of the population?

Women don't want thank yous or platitudes today. They want . . .

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

Indigenous Business Gathering in Saskatoon

Brad Crassweller: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the last couple of days, our government hosted the Indigenous Business Gathering in Saskatoon. This was their fifth year running and their largest turnout ever, a sold-out event with over 1,100 people representing their companies or themselves, over 150 booths from across the country. Employers from travel agencies to energy companies and everything in between filled the World Trade Center at Prairieland Park. There were great discussions between employers and potential employees about the economic potential of our province.

Mr. Speaker, 5 per cent of all private sector businesses in Saskatchewan are Indigenous owned. This ranks third amongst the provinces and above the national average. Mr. Speaker, president and CEO [chief executive officer] of Sixteen Safety Services, Andrea Crittenden, had this to say about the conference:

> The IBG is one of the most impactful events we participate in each year. We've proudly attended since the beginning, and it undoubtedly continues to create meaningful economic opportunities by directly connecting Indigenous businesses with organizations seeking trusted partners. The relationships built here continue to strengthen not only our organization but communities across Saskatchewan.

I was also very happy to hear that Xtended Hydraulics, a company from the great constituency of White City-Qu'Appelle, was represented at this conference. They export hydraulic products around the world.

On behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, I want to thank all the employers, business leaders, and workers for attending this year's Indigenous Business Gathering. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Constituent Named Best Director at Moose Jaw Film Festival

Joan Pratchler: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to highlight Lucas Frison, a rising star, filmmaker, and award-winning constituent, Regina Rochdale. And his awards just keep coming.

You may well know the work of Lucas in his 2019 documentary of *Humboldt: The New Season* as it was nominated for Best Documentary Program, 2020 Canadian Screen Awards. It's an honest and compassionate documentary by Lucas following the Humboldt Broncos bus crash survivor Ryan Straschnitzki as he pursues his dreams.

Well Lucas has done it again. Lucas's six-part TV series, *We Were Broncos*, had garnered him Best Director at the glitzy inaugural Moose Jaw Film Festival, held at the historical, majestic Mae Wilson Theatre this past weekend. The member from Regina Wascana Plains and I were honoured and delighted to be invited to present an award.

We would be remiss if we didn't thank the dedicated team of organizers, Nick Lamb, Tim Lenko, Jeremy Ratzlaff, and Karla Weber, who brought this evening into being. And oh, on what a scale. The organizers had received 109 Saskatchewan-made

entries. The diversity of the names of the nominees showcases the wealth and breadth of the talented creators in our community here in Saskatchewan.

Congratulations to Lucas. And congratulations to Moose Jaw on your most successful inaugural film festival.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member for Yorkton.

Yorkton Heritage Society Preserves Historic Flour Mill

David Chan: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to recognize a fantastic group of people who've worked hard to preserve a vital piece of history in the great city of Yorkton. The Yorkton Brick Mill Heritage Society has been working since 2012 to restore the Yorkton brick flour mill and build an interpretive centre that tells the story of agriculture in the region.

They have raised over $3 million through fundraising efforts and support from the Yorkton Tribal Council, the city of Yorkton, the Government of Canada, and our provincial government. But what is most important is the dedication the community has shown in preserving the agricultural legacy of Yorkton's flour mill.

In 1898 John J. Smith built the mill to support the, at the time, fledgling settlement of Yorkton. Over 100 years later, after changes in ownership and disuse, the mill stands. It still stands as a testimony to the agricultural roots and pioneering spirit that the city of Yorkton embodies.

Now the site will host an interpretive centre that future generations can access to learn more about an important piece of our province's history. They also host community events like soup and bread lunches, cultural days, and the annual heritage dinner.

I want to once again thank the Yorkton Brick Mill Heritage Society for their commitment to honouring our city's heritage. Thank you to Larry Pearen, the president, and Thom Weir, vice-president, for your leadership. And again thank you to the many people who have donated to make this all possible.

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

Economic Circumstances of Saskatchewan People

Aleana Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Now yesterday the Minister Responsible for Social Services, he suggested that families and seniors in Saskatchewan are better off under the Sask Party government. So I thought a brief history lesson might be in order for that minister.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan has a child poverty rate of 27 per cent and an overall poverty rate of nearly 20 per cent. Poverty in Saskatchewan has increased each and every year since 2020 and is presently the highest amongst provinces. Thirty-two per cent of people in Saskatchewan are broke each month after paying their bills, and another 24 per cent have less than $300 remaining. And those bills, Mr. Speaker, keep getting larger, no thanks to the Sask Party government.

In 2018 this government implemented the largest tax increase in the history of the province, a tax grab of close to $2 billion. And just yesterday when the opposition attempted to bring forward legislation to give families and seniors in this province a break, this government attempted to ensure there isn't even a vote on that bill.

What is even more concerning, Mr. Speaker, is that later this month this government will release a budget that shows deficits in both '25-26 and '26-27. And these are going to be large deficits, Mr. Speaker, deficits that continue to increase the provincial debt, which is likely $40 billion and counting. So let's not fool ourselves, Mr. Speaker. Debt and deficits are simply future taxes. Are families better off? Who can say?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Lumsden-Morse.

Remembering James Pratt

Blaine McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honour the life and the legacy of James — also known as Jim — Pratt, a well-respected Indigenous police officer, Elder, and bridge builder. Jim's passing has indeed left a deep, deep void in our province.

Now Jim served with the Regina Police Service for 25 years, joining in 1983 and retiring in 2008, and then served as an instructor for Sask Polytechnic's Aboriginal police prep program for 16 years. Most importantly he was widely known for his humility, his sharp wit, and extraordinary ability to connect with people across communities.

Regina police chief Lorilee Davies remembered meeting him as a new recruit in 1996, saying that "Despite his intimidating experience [and I quote], as soon as you had a chance to talk to Jim, you just really knew how humble he was." She added, "I know his legacy will live on in the Regina Police Service for years to come."

Mr. Speaker, Jim's commitment to community and culture will continue to inspire us. His memory will live on in the countless lives that he touched. I ask that all members join me in remembering the life of Jim Pratt and thank him for his decades of service to our province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[10:30]

QUESTION PERIOD

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

SaskPower Rates

Vicki Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people are struggling to pay their bills, and the Sask Party government is making things worse. They've piled taxes on kids' clothes and groceries, and they're jacking up costs on power bills and car insurance. But the Sask Party government doesn't want to talk about any of that. In fact they're pulling out all the stops to try to shut down debate on our bill to lower power bills and car insurance.

Instead of playing procedural games, why won't the Sask Party just scrap their power and car insurance hikes?

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

Hon. Jeremy Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm obviously not going to be commenting on a decision that is in front of the House and in front of the Speaker right now.

But what I will say, Mr. Speaker, with regard to SaskPower, we have a energy security strategy that we have laid out that is one of the most in depth and detailed in this entire country, Mr. Speaker. Prioritizing energy security, prioritizing affordability, and prioritizing reliability in our power grid, Mr. Speaker, that is going to see significant investment into generation and to extending the life of our legacy thermal generation assets, into transmission as well. We saw a great announcement on that yesterday, Mr. Speaker, from my friend Stephen Lecce.

We're going to continue to make those investments, Mr. Speaker, to make sure that the people of this province have the power they need, and also that we have the opportunity to continue to grow our economy.

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

Vicki Mowat: — Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan people do not want higher power bills, but the minister doesn't have to take my word for it. He can listen to Bill Huber, president of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities. He wrote to the rate review panel about the unfair impact this hike will have on farms and community rinks, and he said these rate hikes "directly erode farm viability, rural economic stability, and impact food security."

If the Sask Party government won't listen to the opposition, will they listen to the concerns of rural leaders at SARM [Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities]?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of CIC.

Hon. Jeremy Harrison: — Well thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would say with regard to community rinks, for example, this government has made significant investments into supporting community rinks through our community rinks affordability grant, Mr. Speaker. And I would note further to that that that opposition voted against that grant every single time that they have had the opportunity, Mr. Speaker. So the credibility that they have on that is really very, very minimal coming from a opposition that is not serious.

But you want to talk about a plan for higher power bills. That is their plan, Mr. Speaker, which is to shut down 1 500 megawatts of thermal power generation in this province tomorrow, Mr. Speaker; put 1,400 people out of work; devastate two communities; and destroy the reliability of our power grid while doubling power rates at the exact same time. That's their plan, Mr. Speaker. We're going to stick with our energy security strategy.

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

Community Safety and Library Worker Concerns

Vicki Mowat: — Just nonsense, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this government isn't listening when it comes to power bills, and they're ignoring those who are speaking out about safety at libraries.

Yesterday I asked the Minister of Social Services if he would work a shift at the library in downtown Saskatoon to see what workers face day in and day out. The member for Estevan answered for him, but didn't say when. When will we see the minister working a front-line shift at the downtown library in Saskatoon?

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

Hon. Terry Jenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And when it comes to community safety, Mr. Speaker, this is a government that's made some big investments not only into homelessness but also into the community safety aspect, Mr. Speaker.

On the homelessness front, we began with foundational funding of $40.2 million over two years. In November we added to that with another $20 million. In Saskatoon alone, $23 million is being invested into homelessness services.

That includes outreach services that have been expanded, Mr. Speaker: sawêyihtotân, operated by Saskatoon Tribal Council. We have outreach workers that do attend the different downtown facilities, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatoon, as well as streets up and down Saskatoon.

That's the work that we're going to continue to do, Mr. Speaker. And we're going to continue to make our streets safer, and we're going to protect the most vulnerable in our society. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Vicki Mowat: — No answer from that minister, Mr. Speaker. It's incredibly disappointing. Now the Minister of Social Services also brushed off the serious concerns that library workers are raising when he spoke to reporters on Tuesday, concerns like threats, violence, attempted abductions, and machete attacks where a person lost a finger.

This is no laughing matter, Mr. Speaker. Will the minister apologize to these workers who are speaking out about their safety? And more importantly, will he make the investments that workers are calling for to keep library staff and patrons safe?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Community Safety.

Hon. Michael Weger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Protecting the residents of Saskatchewan is a priority of this province, Mr. Speaker. And what we're doing, Mr. Speaker, is we're adding 100 new police officers through the safer communities and neighbourhoods initiative. We funded 160 municipal police

officers, and we're hiring more Saskatchewan Marshals Service, Mr. Speaker. We're putting boots on the ground, which is a presence in the community, and that leads to crime prevention, Mr. Speaker.

We're also expanding training at our Saskatchewan Police College. And just last week, we launched a national advertising campaign to recruit more police officers to the province of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

This government takes community safety very seriously.

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

Out-of-Province Travel for Medical Treatment

Keith Jorgenson: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday I raised the case of Tammy O'Brien, a woman that had to pay out of pocket for travel costs for life-saving care.

Yesterday, Tammy met with the Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. Tammy asked the minister a really, really simple question. She asked her, if somebody can't afford travel costs for life-saving care, should they die?

You know what, Mr. Speaker? The minister didn't answer. Will she now? Should somebody that can't afford live-saving care, travel costs for life-saving care be allowed to die, Mr. Speaker?

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

Hon. Lori Carr: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course people shouldn't die, Mr. Speaker, but when I did have the opportunity to speak with Ms. O'Brien yesterday, we did canvass the conversation around the resources that are out there and available for individuals to be able to get the money that they need to be able to access the care that they need, Mr. Speaker.

I referenced Hope Air which provides free flights, accommodations, air transfers, meal vouchers for families and individuals who must travel for medical care, Mr. Speaker. There's also another program under Kinsmen Foundation and TeleMiracle. And they provide travel assistance for residents in need of vital medical treatments outside of their province, Mr. Speaker, and outside of their community, so even within Saskatchewan.

And that's what the people donate to TeleMiracle for. They know that they're donating that money so that people can access those funds for exactly this purpose, Mr. Speaker.

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

Keith Jorgenson: — Mr. Speaker, Tammy told the minister yesterday that she found that it was demeaning to ask somebody who's gravely ill to essentially beg for money to be able to access life-saving treatment.

Mr. Speaker, Tammy is a lifelong musician. She's going deaf and losing her balance due to a brain tumour, robbing her of an essential part of who she is. This is unbearably difficult for her.

And what did the minister say to Tammy yesterday? She told her that "You look well." What a horribly insensitive thing to say. Tammy is furious, and she's returned to her legislature asking the minister to apologize for these insensitive remarks. Will the minister apologize?

Speaker Goudy: — I don't know what to say. Minister of Remote and Rural Health.

Hon. Lori Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I was speaking to Ms. O'Brien in kindness. And yes, I did tell her that she looks well because I thought she looked well, Mr. Speaker. And for the member opposite to insinuate anything other than the kindness that I felt in my heart for her is rather insulting, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Child Care Agreement with Federal Government

Joan Pratchler: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well back in November the Minister of Education announced that he had successfully negotiated the extension on the child care deal with the federal government. I'll quote from that news release:

> The extended agreements included expanded age eligibility so that children in child care who turn six while attending kindergarten can continue to receive $10-a-day care until they complete the school year.

But just last week parents of children who turned six this year learned they're being shut out. Why is the Minister of Education failing these little ones and their families so badly?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Everett Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government continues to put Saskatchewan families and the child care sector first by ensuring that we delivered on that promise to negotiate a better deal with the federal government on the national affordable child care program, Mr. Speaker, one that benefits parents and operators across this province.

Mr. Speaker, we were able to negotiate some improvements to that particular agreement, improvements on the existing agreement which is in place until March 31st. So about three more weeks left, Mr. Speaker, in the existing agreement, of which there is not a provision for coverage for children who turn age six.

The new agreement which takes effect April 1st of 2026 — next month, Mr. Speaker. Under that agreement is where this new provision takes effect and provides coverage for those particular children who turn age six while they're in kindergarten until the end of the school year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Joan Pratchler: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. He's the minister.

He's the one that could fix it, and he needs to fix it. Parents were promised by that minister that they would be eligible for the $10-a-day child care. Now parents are facing costs three times higher or even more. That minister is breaking a promise.

When will he fix that mess and ensure that these parents get the child care he promised them?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Everett Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Government of Saskatchewan strongly advocated for this change in the new agreements and that this issue be addressed and successfully negotiated as part of the new and better agreements, Mr. Speaker, that will take effect on April 1st.

As I had said previously, we are operating under the provisions of the existing agreement until the end of March, and then at which time, April 1st, the new agreements will take effect for five years for families and for child care operators across Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

And I would remind the House that this was an important agreement. And had we signed the agreement that the members opposite were advocating for, we wouldn't even be having this conversation today, Mr. Speaker.

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

Joan Pratchler: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when a person makes a promise they're supposed to keep it. Even the six-year-old children that we are speaking about know this. The minister promised their parents that this new child care deal would include all the children turning six, and he's breaking his word. He's the Minister of Education, and he's the minister responsible. He has the power to make it right for this group of children and their families now.

Parents and children shouldn't have to pay the price for the fact that it took so long to negotiate a deal and to get it implemented properly here for everyone. Will the minister make it right today?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Education.

Hon. Everett Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will explain again that the new, better agreement that was negotiated by this government with the federal government takes effect April 1st, and that's where this provision will then take effect. This is something that did not exist, does not exist, in the agreement that we are currently operating under with the federal government on child care, Mr. Speaker.

So again, the agreement takes effect April 1st. That's the start of the new agreement, the improved agreement, with changes to it — changes that this government and its team through the Ministry of Education were able to negotiate successfully on behalf of families and child care operators right across this province, Mr. Speaker. One that is a better agreement than what the members opposite have been advocating for. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Release of Third Quarter Financial Report

Trent Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, the Sask Party is failing to deliver on child care and they're failing to deliver anything close to competent management of our finances. The Premier has presided over doubling our province's debt. The so-called $12 million surplus that the minister claimed last year could now be a $1 billion deficit.

[10:45]

Of course we've seen this movie before. It doesn't end well, and it's always the people of Saskatchewan that are left footing the bill for the mismanagement of that government. But the Finance minister won't tell us the true state of our finances because he won't release the third quarter report.

Why won't that Finance minister release the third quarter financial report, give the people of Saskatchewan the straight goods and the true state of our finances?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Jim Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, that member, that Finance critic for the NDP [New Democratic Party], Mr. Speaker, has been critic for a long time. In fact he's been an MLA for a long time. In fact, I believe, I believe that he has set the record for the longest serving NDP/CCF [New Democratic Party/Co-operative Commonwealth Federation] MLA to never serve in government, Mr. Speaker. I congratulate him for that. I hope it continues for a long time.

Mr. Speaker, his point about the third quarter. He's been here a long time; he knows the third quarter is released on budget day, Mr. Speaker. If he doesn't know that, he should.

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

Trent Wotherspoon: — You know, Mr. Speaker, I have been around for a few years, as has that member. And you know, that minister, the new Minister of Finance — of course big swing and a miss this year on his budget, a billion-dollar miss — but he should also know, had he been paying attention, that that Sask Party government used to report the third quarter financial report, as governments previous did as well. They cancelled it about seven, several years ago.

You know, the Minister of SaskPower and SaskTel, you know, despite all of his shortcomings — many, many shortcomings — he was able to file those third quarter reports for those important Crown corporations.

If he can do that, Mr. Speaker, why can't the Finance Minister do the same? Why won't he provide the people of Saskatchewan the true picture of our finances, how bad he missed the mark, and how big his deficit is?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Finance Minister.

Hon. Jim Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, obviously the opposition's

kind of short of questions today. This is a long-standing practice, Mr. Speaker. He knows full well; he's known for months, for years in fact when it would be released, Mr. Speaker.

He prefaced his question with "a swing and a miss." Here's a swing and a miss for you, Mr. Speaker. I'd just like to remind the member opposite — I'm sure he was involved. He's the most senior member on that side; we were elected at the same time — I'm sure he was involved in developing their election platform, Mr. Speaker, the one that got revenues and expenses mixed up.

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

Construction of a New Yorkton Hospital

Jared Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me start with a simple statement of fact. The people of Yorkton need a new hospital. Now, the government has an 840-page report on the condition of the Yorkton hospital that they are keeping secret, claiming cabinet confidences. Now I think it's fair to say, Mr. Speaker, that if the report was positive, this government wouldn't be working so hard to keep it secret. But I dare the minister to prove me wrong.

If the Yorkton hospital is in good condition, will the Premier agree to waive cabinet confidence and table that report today?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of SaskBuilds.

Hon. Sean Wilson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government always puts the people of Saskatchewan first. Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago I was just in Yorkton, touring the facility with a few of the maintenance workers and the MLA for Yorkton. Our government has said we will build a new hospital in Yorkton as part of our overall commitment to delivering health care as close to home as possible. When our government commits to building a health care facility, the Yorkton replacement will come.

The Yorkton hospital replacement project is in the pre-design phase, and we will continue to make investments in the planning and development of the Yorkton hospital. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Jared Clarke: — Oh, it's in the pre-design phase. Now it makes sense, Mr. Speaker.

Now last year at this time, the Minister of Finance stood in this House and claimed to have balanced the budget but, as we've come to learn, this Finance minister promised a $12 million surplus and so far has delivered a $1 billion deficit. He was a billion dollars off.

So given the track record, it's no surprise that people are a little suspicious of the Finance minister's claims. So the question is, will a new hospital be funded in the upcoming budget, or was it sacrificed to pay for a government's fiscal disaster?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Jim Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, the member opposite well knows that we don't reveal the contents of the budget until budget day, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of the budget we're going to deliver. Saskatchewan is not immune to economic headwinds that the rest of the country and indeed around the world are facing because of geopolitical issues, Mr. Speaker.

But I'll tell you what won't be in the budget, Mr. Speaker. We won't be like the NDP in British Columbia, Mr. Speaker. We won't be breaking promises, Mr. Speaker, and we won't be delivering huge tax increases like the NDP in BC [British Columbia]. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Goudy: — Okay, hang on a second. I know it's Thursday, first week back. But honestly, we have a whole bunch of lady leaders for the province. I was kind of hoping we would kind of . . . So let's show some decorum. I can tell you as the Speaker, I hear back from what the people of the province think some days about our decorum in this place, and I think we can all up our game. So please, let's have questions and answers and show some respect for the institution.

Member from Regina Walsh Acres.

Jared Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure the people of Yorkton were hoping for the promise that the hospital would be in the pre-design phase for 18 years. Now this government has failed to mention the hospital in their Throne Speech. They failed to announce it or move forward on it at all in the last 16 months since the last election.

Now when we form government, Mr. Speaker, we've committed to start working on that hospital immediately.

So can someone over there in that tired and out-of-touch government explain to the people of Yorkton how long they should wait for a new hospital, a hospital that they deserve?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Jim Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, our government is very proud of our record, Mr. Speaker. When we've announced health care facilities or capital projects are going to be built in this province, Mr. Speaker, we have delivered.

We have announced that the Yorkton hospital will be going ahead, Mr. Speaker. Regardless of all the bluster on that side of the House, Mr. Speaker, the Yorkton hospital will be built.

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

Measures to Curb Spread of Tuberculosis

April ChiefCalf: — Mr. Speaker, for years tuberculosis has had a disproportionate impact on people in northern Saskatchewan. TB [tuberculosis] has run rampant through northern communities where there's often a shortage of housing.

But now the Saskatchewan Health Authority is hiring a TB nurse clinician in Saskatoon to deal with rising cases in our city. This is alarming. TB can be prevented through vaccines, and we

should see cases going down, not up.

What's going on with tuberculosis in Saskatoon? And what's the Sask Party government's plan to deal with it?

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

Hon. Lori Carr: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we recognize that accessing reliable and high-quality care is important for the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

When it comes to tuberculosis or any other kind of disease, Mr. Speaker, we ensure that we're hiring the professionals that we need to help deal with those. And as the member opposite mentioned, that's exactly what we're doing, Mr. Speaker. And we will keep up that work.

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

April ChiefCalf: — Now, Mr. Speaker, despite the government's claim that they are investing record amounts of money into homelessness, Saskatoon's recent point-in-time count showed that there has been a tragic increase in unhoused people in Saskatoon. Over 1,930 individuals, up from the 1,500 people identified in 2024 and from the 550 identified in 2022. One in five are under the age of 24. And we know about the impact that infectious diseases like tuberculosis can have on people who are homeless.

So can the minister please outline what steps the government is taking to protect the increasing number of unhoused people from diseases like tuberculosis? Thank you.

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

Hon. Terry Jenson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And when it comes to, you know, individuals that find themselves in that situation, Mr. Speaker, this is a government that's making tremendous investments not only within social services to address getting people into housing, to also get people into some programming.

We also work with the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions. They're working on additional treatment spaces. Mr. Speaker, this is a government that is putting the people who are most vulnerable, who need the help the most, we're putting them first in Saskatoon, Regina, and right across this province, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Government House Leader.

Hon. Tim McLeod: — Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Goudy: — And what's your point of order?

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. Tim McLeod: — Mr. Speaker, during question period the Deputy Leader of the Opposition referred to a point of order that is currently under your review for consideration as "playing procedural games." Mr. Speaker, Beauchesne's at paragraph 71 and paragraph 168 indicate that to maintain the impartiality of the Speaker and give due respect to the role, the Speaker should be protected against reflections on their actions. Such reflections may be punished as breaches of privilege. This includes both commenting on past and future rulings and decisions of the Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would submit that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition was attempting to influence your decision by implying that the *Rules and Procedures of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan* and section 54 of the *Constitution Act, 1867* are undemocratic by playing games, Mr. Speaker. To publicly imply that these rules are undemocratic and playing games before you have even made your ruling is an attempt to influence your ruling and a violation of your privilege as the Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that you please hold the Deputy Leader of the Opposition accountable. Make her withdraw and apologize to yourself and this Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Vicki Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let the record show that I was referring to the government ministers for playing procedural games. In no way was I commenting on the rulings of the Speaker or trying to pre-empt a ruling of the Speaker. I hope that you find this point of order not well taken.

Speaker Goudy: — Okay, so there are rules that we do need to follow. And you know, I'm good friends with all of you. I really like every single one of you in here. And I don't think any of you are trying to influence me one way or the other, but the Government House Leader is correct — there are rules. And just because the Speaker is friends, and I understand where you're coming from, doesn't mean that you don't have to show respect to the position.

And so, you know, as much as we all are glad to be here and get along and understand the intentions, we do need to follow the rules to the best of our ability. And so we do need to be very careful when we make comments about rulings and things that are still . . .

You know, I'm going to tell you it's not that easy to just make judgments when especially two lawyers, my goodness, they're the Opposition House Leader and the Government House Leader. And I've got great Clerks helping out.

But please, I don't think she was trying to influence me, truly. And yet I understand the rule. So could you withdraw that statement and apologize for that.

Vicki Mowat: — I withdraw and apologize.

STATEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Ruling on a Point of Order

Speaker Goudy: — We may as well deal with this. So before

introduction of bills, on Wednesday, March 4th, 2026, during first reading of Bill No. 612, the Government House Leader raised a point of order requesting that, pursuant to Rule 67(1), the bill be ruled out of order and not be permitted to proceed on the grounds that it does not have a Royal Recommendation. The Opposition House Leader alleged that the bill does not require a Royal Recommendation and requested that I review the bill and the rules prior to making a ruling.

[11:00]

I've reviewed the matter and I am prepared to make my ruling. As noted in my ruling on November 3rd, 2025, until the bill has been introduced and read a first time the Assembly is not in possession of that bill. I'm unable to rule on the contents of the bill as they are currently unknown. I will remind members of Rule 67(2), which states, ". . . consideration or debate on any bill that requires a recommendation of the Crown may proceed up to the motion for second reading." Therefore I find the point of order not well taken.

I would ask the member to introduce the bill. And once it's introduced in the Assembly, the bill can be examined to determine if it requires a Royal Recommendation. Objections or points of order may be raised once the Assembly has had an opportunity to review the contents of the bill.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 612 — *The Lower Power Bills and Car Insurance Act*

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

Aleana Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I move that Bill 612, *The Lower Power Bills and Car Insurance Act* now be introduced and read a first time.

Speaker Goudy: — It has been moved by the member from Regina South Albert that Bill No. 612, *The Lower Power Bills and Car Insurance Act* be introduced and read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Speaker Goudy: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First reading of this bill.

Speaker Goudy: — When shall this bill be read a second time?

Aleana Young: — At the next meeting of this Assembly.

Speaker Goudy: — Next sitting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

Welcoming Newcomers to Saskatchewan

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

Aleana Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. At the first 75-minute debate of this term and always the highlight of my week, let me just kick this off by saying what a pleasure it is to be back amongst colleagues and here to debate what I think is a critical piece for Saskatchewan, for our economy, for our future, and for our growth.

But before I get into that, Mr. Speaker, today is my youngest son's third birthday. Sweet baby Kit is officially three years old. I spent last night making some absolutely horrifying-looking cupcakes I'm willing to show pictures of to any of the members in this Assembly. My son wanted cat cupcakes. And if you've ever seen the TV show *Nailed It!*, the cupcakes that I managed to make at about 10 o'clock last night do look decidedly haunted.

But outside of the cupcakes and my son's birthday today, of course he's off to daycare, where he goes every day. He goes to the YWCA where he just receives incredible care. And he receives incredible care from a team made up of entirely newcomers to Canada.

All of the workers at my son's daycare are just the most extraordinary women — and as I said all newcomers — many of them who get up early to take the bus to the Y to be there for 7 for the child care facility to open. And they love my son. They provide him and all of his colleagues with just the most extraordinary wraparound level of care. And they're some of the kindest and most hard-working people that I have the privilege to see every day.

And of course we're here, Mr. Speaker, to talk about the divisive rhetoric that we see coming from Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, rhetoric concerning hard-working immigrants and newcomers to Canada. And when I saw the referendum questions, when I saw Premier Smith's televised address laying out what she would like to see come to referendum in Alberta, what she wants people to vote on, I felt sick, Mr. Speaker. I felt sad and I felt angry.

And I thought immediately of these incredible women who care for my children every day while I'm here, people who have left their homes, left their families to move here to work, to build a better life for themselves, to build our economy, to look after our children, to staff our hospitals, to be our engineers, to be our public servants, to work in our restaurants, to lead our chambers of commerce, to keep our hospitals afloat. These are the people being targeted by that kind of rhetoric, Mr. Speaker.

And for folks who may be new to this conversation and hear Premier Smith saying — and I think it's important to hear what she said — she said, "Throwing the doors wide open to anyone and everyone across the globe has flooded our classrooms, emergency rooms, and social support systems with far too many people, far too quickly."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what she's doing is clear. She's seeking to divert attention from her multi-billion-dollar deficit, from the record fiscal mismanagement that we see next door in Alberta. And she's doing this through a classic tactic of scapegoating. She's looking at someone to blame. And when we look at the struggles that public services across Canada are facing, she is putting the blame squarely on new Canadians, on the people who have moved here, many of them temporary workers. And she's

saying they're the reason that hospitals are overrun. They're the reason that schools are overrun, Mr. Speaker.

And now let's talk about temporary workers. They face a lot of restrictions already, Mr. Speaker. Depending on the circumstances, many of their spouses can't work, their children are unable to work, not because they don't want to but because they're not permitted to, Mr. Speaker. They may face limits already on accessing social programs or benefits. They have limited job mobility, limited status, fewer benefits or work rights, and their travel can be restricted.

I think of my son's favourite caregiver, his favourite teacher at daycare, who finally got her PR [permanent residence] this year after working for it for years, Mr. Speaker. People don't just come in like a revolving door. She's been working for this for years. And she got to go home to see her mother for the first time since she was 18 years old. And when she told me she'd finally gotten her PR, she literally wept in my arms because she was so desperate to see her mom. This is a young woman, Mr. Speaker, who hadn't seen her mom in I believe it was five years.

These are hard-working people, Mr. Speaker, people like my dad; people like my grandparents who moved here, immigrated to obtain a better life for their children.

And so here in Saskatchewan we see a government that will often mimic what we see next door under the UCP [United Conservative Party] government. And as I've said, what we saw from Danielle Smith recently is classic scapegoating, punching down on workers, on the doctors, the teachers, the scientists, the drivers, the cooks, the caregivers who keep our economy growing and keep our provinces strong. Next door in Alberta one in five people in Alberta is a newcomer. I think that's remarkable, Mr. Speaker. That is cause to celebrate.

What we see next door, what we see coming from Premier Smith is the worst kind of dog whistling, Mr. Speaker. And as my leader said, it's not a dog whistle anymore. This is a fog horn flooding classrooms. Do the children of newcomers not deserve to go to school, Mr. Speaker? Flooding emergency rooms. Try staffing our emergency rooms. Flooding social support systems. As I've said, newcomers are public servants. They're engineers. They're continuing care aides. They're the people caring for spouses, parents, and grandparents of so many across this country.

In essence what Premier Smith is doing is she's arguing that the immigration levels set by Ottawa are just too high for Alberta.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this is remarkable considering her government was, up until very recently, spending public money advertising — advertising — asking people to move to Alberta, saying Alberta is calling. Not only were they spending money running ad campaigns begging people to move to Alberta — promising higher wages, a better quality of life, access to doctors, to education — they were offering $5,000 as a relocation bonus to eligible workers. They were paying people to move to Alberta.

But now we see again the worst kind of scapegoating, targeting people who will be more vulnerable, people who we already see. I'm sure we all see this online. I know I see it on my social media all the time, people saying, "Well you know what the real problem is, huh?" and pointing at newcomers.

Here in Saskatchewan we are a province whose very motto speaks to the strength of diversity, Mr. Speaker. A province whose very motto is "from many peoples, strength." We are made stronger here in Saskatchewan by diversity and by the critical economic contributions made by newcomers to Saskatchewan. I don't think I have to list off again all of the ways in which hard-working people continue to move our economy forward.

And again I think of my kids, Mr. Speaker. My daughter came home from kindergarten the other day and asked me if we could celebrate Diwali next year because it was her favourite holiday that she got to learn about at preschool. I actually don't know the answer to that, Mr. Speaker. I don't know if we can celebrate Diwali in my house, but I am committed to bringing her out with me to join with the community here in Saskatchewan as they celebrate Diwali.

My son is learning about Ramadan. My daughter was asking me today if it's kind of like Thanksgiving where, you know, you're grateful for what you have, and if everybody who celebrates Ramadan had big family dinners every night. And I think that's wonderful, Mr. Speaker. I think that's great for our children to learn. I think that's great for us to learn.

I know I'm not alone. One of the best parts of this job in getting to serve the province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the ability that we have to go out and learn from other communities across this province, whether it's Indigenous communities, whether it's newcomer communities, whether it's faith communities that aren't our own.

But again, that's not what we see in Alberta, Mr. Speaker. We see Premier Smith playing politics with the lives and the livelihoods and the safety of the very people who have moved there for a better quality of life, working hard not just for themselves, but for the province and for their children.

So the reason, Mr. Speaker, that we're debating this motion today in the 75-minute debate is because, as I said off the top, often we see legislation in Saskatchewan, political tactics in Saskatchewan, mirror those that we've seen in Alberta. This is not new. And again, when Premier Smith introduced these referendum questions, I think for many of us, our hearts sank.

And we know in Saskatchewan that the budget that is coming will not be a good budget, Mr. Speaker. The Premier has said this. And while in some ways this is nothing new — this is a government who couldn't balance the books at the best of times — the fact that they're out there signalling that this is going to be a bad budget suggests that they may be looking for someone to blame.

This is not an economy that's working for everyone in Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker. We know that whether it's through the record mortgage arrears, one in four people having to borrow money for food, the lack of progress on credentialing for so many educated newcomers who move here — we all know these stories, Mr. Speaker. Increases in power bills, grocery bills, cost of living, the cost of survival in Saskatchewan continues to rise.

And this, Mr. Speaker, is one of the challenges for this province and our economy. Because when we look at immigration in

Saskatchewan . . . And this is a province that this government has set a target, a population growth target of 1.4 million people, a laudable goal, Mr. Speaker. Yet how, how will they achieve that target without international immigration?

[11:15]

And we've already seen some of this rhetoric start. We've seen it from the Minister of Advanced Education when trying to explain the layoffs at Sask Poly. He's pointed to the decline in international students in this province as the reason that there are layoffs at Sask Poly. The post-secondary system, Mr. Speaker, in Saskatchewan wasn't created to exist based on the level of international student tuition being paid. The post-secondary system in Saskatchewan, our technical colleges, Sask Poly, these exist to provide quality education, vocational education, trades-based education to Saskatchewan people and those who live here, close to home.

We can't look at our post-secondary system and blame immigration or the lack of. We can't look at health care and blame immigration. We can't look at education in our classrooms and blame education, Mr. Speaker, because I know very well that school boards have been calling for support in those classrooms since 2012.

The Minister of Advanced Education is heckling from his seat, saying that the federal government has cut immigration. We know that's true, and what have you done about it? Other provinces have done more. Manitoba's gotten a carve-out, and all we've heard from this government is, oh there's nothing, there's nothing to be done.

Mr. Speaker, this is a government that presides over one of the worst immigrant retention numbers in the country, which is something that we should get into here today. For every two people who come here, one of them leaves within two years, Mr. Speaker. That's not great for this province, Mr. Speaker. This is a province that loses more people to other provinces than every other jurisdiction in Canada. This is a province that is dependent on international migration for growth and for our economy.

So, Mr. Speaker, what we are going to be debating here today is about the future of this province, it's about the future of the economy, and it's about what kind of politics this government is going to practise going forward. Whether or not they will monkey see, monkey do like Premier Smith next door and look for somebody to blame instead of taking responsibility for their own actions. And I hope, Mr. Speaker, that it is not the hard-working newcomers of Canada.

And with that, I will move the motion:

> That the Assembly reject the divisive rhetoric from Alberta Premier Danielle Smith regarding the hard-working immigrants and calls on the Government of Saskatchewan to ensure Saskatchewan is a welcoming place for newcomers with quality public services and a growing population.

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — It has been moved by the member from Regina South Albert:

> That the Assembly rejects the divisive rhetoric from Alberta Premier Danielle Smith regarding hard-working immigrants and calls on the Government of Saskatchewan to ensure Saskatchewan is a welcoming place for newcomers, with quality public services and a growing population.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Prince Albert Carlton.

Kevin Kasun: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Saskatchewan is a welcoming place for newcomers, and we offer quality public services and a growing population. Saskatchewan has always and will continue to welcome newcomers to our province. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this province was initially built with immigration and growth in mind. Immigration helps support Saskatchewan's labour market, fills job vacancies, and helps bolster population growth. Immigration is an essential component of our labour market strategy, which contributes to Saskatchewan maintaining the strongest economy in Canada.

But let's take a bit of a history lesson on immigration in the Prairies. Mr. Deputy Speaker, when Saskatchewan became a province in 1905 the federal government was actively encouraging settlement of the Prairies. Major groups arrive and included Ukrainians, Germans, Scandinavians, British settlers, Americans. Even with the history of my own family from both my father and mother's sides coming from what our oral history called the old country to the United States and then up into Canada. By 1911, Saskatchewan's population had surged dramatically due to the agricultural settlement.

In 1967 Canada introduced the points-based immigration system, removing racial and ethnic preferences. This changed Saskatchewan's immigration patterns. We had increased immigration from Asia — which is India, China, and the Philippines — Africa, the Middle East, which brought the growth of South Asian and Filipino communities. Movement shifted strongly towards cities rather than the rural farming communities.

However Saskatchewan experienced slower population growth compared to other provinces like Ontario or Alberta during the '80s and the '90s. A major turning point came with the Saskatchewan immigration nominee program or what is also known as SINP. I'll speak to that in a moment. The program allowed Saskatchewan to nominate immigrants based on local labour needs. This helped to fill shortages in health care, trades, agriculture, and service industries.

Immigration increased significantly in the 2000s and the 2010s. Today a majority of the newcomers come from India, the Philippines, China, Nigeria, and of course Pakistan. Saskatchewan's communities are now much more diverse than they were in the early 1900s.

Now the Saskatchewan immigration nominee program or SNIP is important — and I'll say it again — because immigration is the key component of our labour market strategy and the strategy which contributes to Saskatchewan having the strongest economy in Canada.

At present the federal government continues to allocate a reduced number of nomination spaces to Saskatchewan. So far the federal

government has granted us 4,761 nomination spaces for 2026. This translates to a 40 per cent reduction in nominations from their peak in 2024. This reflects the fewest nomination spaces we've been granted over the last 12 years.

Nevertheless recruiting and retaining the talent we need to sustain economic growth in our province remains the priority for this government. The SNIP program has been adjusted to navigate these reduced spaces while maintaining focus on labour market demand. These changes prioritize the retention of talent that is already living and working in our province.

Where other provinces have removed pathways to permanent residence for many front-line roles, we have taken a fair and balanced approach to nominations through our intake window for individual capped sectors. These sectors are in trucking, accommodations, retail trade, and food sectors. This sharpened focus for the SNIP reserves acts as an overseer for candidates filling critical positions in priority sectors like health care, agricultural, and skilled trades.

I just have to pause for a moment. I got a new set of bifocals and every once in a while my notes go out of focus, so that's my pause.

This strategic and deliberate approach to our nominations makes certain we are protecting Saskatchewan industries and businesses while our province continues to have the strongest economy in Canada.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are disappointed that the federal government is reducing supports for newcomers they are permitting to enter. Our government remains committed to giving newcomers in Saskatchewan their best start through continued investment and our settlement service providers.

The Ministry of Immigration and Career Training has allocated 13.8 million for settlement agreements in the 2025-26 budget, supporting the work of 26 providers and engaging nearly 17,500 newcomers. The work these agencies do is critical in supporting employment, developing language skills, and ensuring foreign qualifications can be utilized in the Saskatchewan labour market.

In 2025 the employment rate for new immigrants in our province outpaced the national average, affirming our commitment to supporting settlement agencies in our province. The Government of Saskatchewan will continue to support our newcomers and the hard work of the settlement agencies across our province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is important to keep the integrity of immigration. Protecting the integrity of the Saskatchewan labour force and immigration system is a key priority for this government. Immigration is an essential part of Saskatchewan's labour market strategy, and maintaining the integrity of our immigration system is critical to success and sustainability.

That's why in 2024 this government introduced *The Immigration Services Act*, which increased investigative authorities and enforcement measures to tackle immigration fraud, including increased maximum fine amounts for offences and authorizing administrative monetary penalties for non-compliance, which also strengthened protections for foreign workers against exploitation and oversight of recruiters, immigration consultants, and non-compliant employers, improving the integrity of our immigration program, and enhanced the province's ability to provide a full suite of settlement services from pre-arrival support to longer-term retention assistance.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, not all jurisdictions in Canada have provincial legislation for immigration which protect the foreign workers. With this Act, Saskatchewan's immigration system sets a new standard resulting in the most robust program integrity framework in the entire country. The Act has already been effective in penalizing bad employment practices, with several fines and charges having been imposed across the province since its introduction.

Provincial oversight regarding immigration continues to be a priority for this government. We will continue to make necessary changes to protect newcomers and their families that want to build a life here in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to speak for a moment specifically on the Ukrainian people. Under the Canada-Ukrainian authorization for emergency travel status, no province has done more for displaced Ukrainians than Saskatchewan. Since 2022 this government has coordinated five flights for help to displaced Ukrainians to help them relocate in Saskatchewan, and over 8,000 displaced Ukrainians have chosen to make Saskatchewan their home since the Russians' invasion of the Ukraine.

The Government of Saskatchewan remains committed to supporting displaced Ukrainians, having invested over 2.6 million to aid Ukrainian migrants since 2021-2022 through services provided by the Ukrainian Canadian Congress.

Changes to the SNIP program resulted from the federal government failing to provide sufficient nomination spaces to meet the labour market demand in our province. These changes do not disproportionately impact the Canada-Ukrainian authorization for emergency travel status visa holders though.

With these federal cuts impacting jurisdictions across Canada, Saskatchewan is one of the only provinces to continue providing nominations to workers in many front-line sectors. These policies reflect government's commitment to programs that are fair and equal for everyone who calls Saskatchewan home.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government has demonstrated our commitment to newcomers time and time again. This past budget alone, we provided 13.8 million in settlement services for nearly 17,500 newcomers to develop language skills, have their qualifications recognized, and build employment skills. Immigration continues to be a key component of this government's labour market strategy, a strategy which contributes to Saskatchewan having the strongest economy in the country.

Due to the misalignment between federal and provincial immigration priorities, our government maintains that Saskatchewan would benefit from having greater autonomy over immigration in our province.

But you know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Time after time the opposition has chosen to spread uncertainty. This government by contrast has demonstrated an ongoing commitment to protecting

the interests of everyone living and working in Saskatchewan. As far as Alberta goes, this is why you can't take the opposition seriously. They're once again focused on what is happening in Alberta and projecting their concerns onto our province rather than focusing on the facts.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Alberta governs Alberta. Saskatchewan governs Saskatchewan. Once again, the opposition is more concerned with criticizing the actions of Alberta's Premier than the concerns of residents living and working in Saskatchewan. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Meara Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to weigh in on this motion moved by the member from Regina South Albert.

I actually learned a lot preparing for this debate about the sort of history of, in particular, the SINP [Saskatchewan immigrant nominee program] program here in Saskatchewan, and I hope to get to that in a moment here. But of course, as we've heard canvassed by other individuals here today, Canada and Saskatchewan in particular have always relied on economic immigration to build our population, to build our economy. This is not new. And of course if you're not indigenous to Saskatchewan, every person and every family has their story, really, Mr. Speaker.

And I want to just speak for a second about one of the stories in my family, and that's of my paternal grandfather who came to Moose Jaw as a boy under the Thomas John Barnardo program. He was called the Barnardo boy. Look it up; it's a very interesting part of Saskatchewan history.

[11:30]

These boys . . . They set up orphanages in Britain. These were for either orphans or children from very poor families whose parents couldn't afford to take care of them. And they were sent overseas to Canada to work as labourers on farms. They came over as farm labourers, as did my paternal grandfather.

And of course there were mixed results. Some of these boys were really welcomed into families, treated like one of the family. Some of them were subjected truly to unspeakable exploitation and abuse. And it's an interesting example of the necessity of immigrants in building out that prairie economy, but also the vulnerability of immigrants when we don't have protections and rights in place for these individuals. And of course on this side we're very concerned with getting that right.

You know, there was one thing that I did agree with the member opposite, the member from P. A. Carlton, about. He mentioned the SINP, which was a major turning point in Saskatchewan for economic immigration. I couldn't agree with him more.

And sitting through this — you know, being present in this House since my election in 2020 and not having had Immigration as a portfolio — I always heard the current Minister of CIC, former Immigration minister, member for Meadow Lake who talked often about the SINP program. And I just kind of assumed that, like, this program had kind of . . . this was his program, the way he talks about it.

I learned so much about this program, Mr. Speaker. It actually came in under the Saskatchewan NDP. Back in the late '90s, there were discussions with the feds. Of course immigration was historically a federal domain, but in the 1960s the federal government sort of handed some of those powers over to the provinces. And so a lot of this is done, kind of done hand in hand.

And what we saw in Saskatchewan, as a result of this provincial program which started in the late '90s under a Saskatchewan NDP government, is population started to tick up in the early 2000s under the Saskatchewan NDP program. So again we see like so much . . . You know, we did see some really good work on the ground setting a good precedent here under the Saskatchewan NDP, which of course we saw this Sask Party government take a lot of credit for. But a lot of that before work, that ground was laid by a Saskatchewan NDP government.

And another interesting thing I learned. You know, we talk about the incredible Filipino community in Saskatchewan. One in four newcomers in Canada, one in four people that are born in another country are from the Philippines. They are by far the leading and the growing . . . by far the population that is growing most rapidly in Saskatchewan, and they account for the highest number of folks here in Saskatchewan.

The first MOU [memorandum of understanding] that was ever signed by the Government of Saskatchewan with another country was with the Government of Philippines, and this was done by none other than former minister Pat Atkinson in 2006. And we see that that agreement laid an incredible groundwork for the contributions that we continue to see from the Filipino community here in Saskatchewan, be it in health care, be it in highly skilled areas, and as well in some of our lower wage sectors, Mr. Speaker.

We on this side, we couldn't agree more that the SINP was a major turning point in Saskatchewan. But I just wanted to get some of that history on the record because it was a history that wasn't even really fully known to me, Mr. Speaker.

Of course other immigrants in Saskatchewan, we see a high number of individuals from India, from China, from Nigeria, from Pakistan, as was canvassed by the member opposite. But one of the things I think that it's important to remember is that, yes, we have some highly skilled immigrants working in different sectors where we see labour shortages, but we also see an over-representation of newcomers in kind of low-wage areas, Mr. Speaker. Economic immigration really functions to construct low-wage labour markets.

And I think that's something we can't forget. These are . . . You know, I looked at the top employers of temporary foreign workers in Saskatchewan — Subway, Tim Hortons, A&W. You know, when we look at what percentage of the overall population newcomers are it's about 12 per cent, but they are vastly over-represented in these low-wage sectors.

And you know, I really do think, Mr. Speaker, if someone is good enough to come here and cook for us and wipe down our tables — and frankly wipe other things, Mr. Speaker, that I'm not going

to put on the record — but we all know that these are the folks that are taking care of oftentimes seniors; they're working with our children, as the member who moved the motion talked about. If these folks are good enough to do that, they are good enough to be welcomed into our community. They are good enough to be our friends and neighbours, and they are good enough to see a path to permanent residency, Mr. Speaker.

And I think that Saskatchewan has put its . . . has sort of differentiated itself in terms of focusing on that SINP program, which is a strong program that offers dignity to people. But I will note that we have seen a concerning growth around some of our other more temporary streams under this government, and we need to really look at the vulnerabilities there.

And I know that the member talked about how they have strengthened protections for temporary workers, but you know, I think of some of the actions that maybe belie a recognition of the vulnerability of some of these folks. I think about the case that we saw recently in the news of human trafficking an individual that was highly vulnerable — didn't have immigration status, was subjected to wage theft, sexual assault — reached out to her local MLA, the member from Cypress Hills. And of course this was reported and covered in a trial. We saw some flirtatious texts exchanged and really, really inappropriate behaviour from that member, Mr. Speaker, which belied an obliviousness to some of the vulnerabilities these individuals find themselves in. And I think obliviousness is maybe a very kind way of putting it, Mr. Speaker.

So I note here that I only have two minutes remaining. I think what we're really looking for from this government, Mr. Speaker, who have followed Danielle Smith's suit in the past — they followed down that path of Danielle Smith very often and we see a growing rhetoric of scapegoating newcomers, be it under Donald Trump, be it under Danielle Smith — I think what we're looking to them to show is some leadership in terms of, you know, we can call it condemn or we can just simply say we want to see you reject that kind of scapegoating, that kind of blaming the real challenges seen in our communities on newcomers.

They are an integral part of our economy. We look at rural depopulation in Saskatchewan. This is something they don't want to be talking about over there, Mr. Speaker, but it is a fact. We are dealing with serious rural depopulation in Saskatchewan. And it is due to the hard-working newcomers that many of those businesses are even up and running, Mr. Speaker, serving those communities. It's just a fact.

So what we want to see from this government is for them to stand tall and for them to stand proud with our newcomers and reject this hateful, divisive rhetoric that we're seeing from Danielle Smith. Truly it is the very least that they can do. Because yes, Alberta governs Alberta; Saskatchewan governs Saskatchewan. But this kind of rhetoric does put a target on the backs of newcomers. They are then subjected to increased discrimination, racism. People hear this, and it gets perpetrated and repeated, this narrative in our communities, even though it is based in . . . not in fact. It's ignorant, Mr. Speaker.

So as leaders in our community we are asking them to stand tall and stand proud and speak loudly against that kind of hateful rhetoric. Truly it is the very least that we could expect from this Sask Party government, for them to stand with the hard-working newcomers of Saskatchewan who are keeping our economy afloat.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to support the motion from my colleague.

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Megan Patterson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Immigration is a critical part of our province. Our province was built on immigration. It is critical to the growth of our province. Since the government was formed by the Sask Party in 2007 we've been strong supporters of a well-managed immigration system.

Thanks to our government's commitment to strong economic policy, there are over 600,000 people employed in Saskatchewan on average each month, an all-time high and an increase of 15,200 jobs from 2024. With business booming and new jobs being created in our province every day, we need people to fill those jobs. That's why our government has the labour market strategy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our strategy has three pillars, but let's focus on pillar 3, which highlights our government's commitment to sustainable immigration through the Saskatchewan immigration nominee program.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are investing $4.63 million in newcomer employability supports; 5.12 million for general settlement support, including navigating the Canadian workplace and job market; and 2.92 million for language assessment and programming to build the communication skills necessary for our labour market. These are the investments we are making to welcome and retain newcomers in our province.

I want to take a moment to talk about the tone of our politics and the way we speak to each other as colleagues. Where I come from in Moose Jaw, we are known as The Friendly City. And in this province we have always been known for something simple but powerful — we look out for each other.

In cities and communities across this great province, you grow up learning that it doesn't matter what someone's job is, what party they vote for, or where they come from. If they need help, you lend a hand. That's the province I know.

But when we talk about divisive language, we need to be honest about what that actually means. Standing up for the people you represent is not division. Division happens when someone deliberately tries to pit neighbour against neighbour, like we see here with the opposition's motion today, when politics becomes less about solving problems and more about scoring political points. And today the opposition is playing the politics of division to try and score points.

But let's look at what's actually happening here. Our government clearly supports a well-managed immigration system. The benefits of bringing newcomers to our province is not just about building a stronger, more vibrant community for everyone. Immigration is a key component of our growth plan to ensure that

Saskatchewan continues to have one of the strongest economies in Canada.

Saskatchewan's motto, "from many peoples, strength," recognizes the value diversity brings to our province. I worked as an instructor at Sask Polytech prior to being elected, and taught hundreds if not thousands of international students. I got to know a number of these students on a personal level, and I want to highlight the diverse perspectives that they bring to our communities.

International students come to Saskatchewan for a higher quality of life. They come here for opportunity because that's what we have in our province — opportunity and a higher quality of life. Recruiting and retaining the talent that we need to sustain economic growth in our province through strategic targeted immigration is a key pillar of our growth plan. The immigration system of the last 10 years under the NDP-Trudeau coalition, which is quite ironic since the NDP brought the motion forward, was not a well-managed immigration system. Prime Minister Carney said so himself in his budget last year. Prime Minister Carney said:

> Our immigration system was built to standardise and evaluate newcomers so that admission was based on a person's merits. Over time, this system has evolved — its complexity has grown and its efficiency has waned. In recent years, the system . . . [has become] even harder to manage and less functional, and the pace of arrivals began to exceed Canada's capacity to absorb and support newcomers in the way we are used to doing.

It goes on to say:

> We are taking back control . . . [of] the immigration system and putting Canada on a trajectory to . . . [build] immigration back to sustainable levels — allowing us to fulfill the promise of Canada to those who call it home.

Now, here in Saskatchewan, our government has been clear. We are seeking a system much like that in the province of Quebec — one that gives us greater control over immigration. We believe that provinces are far better attuned to their own needs and can act and react quicker to ensure a fair and well-managed system that works for everyone.

[11:45]

In the 2026 Saskatchewan immigration nominee program, targeted priority sectors include energy, mining, manufacturing, and technology alongside health care, agriculture, and skilled trades. We rely on a strategic and deliberate approach to our nominations to make certain that we are protecting Saskatchewan industries and businesses while our province continues to have the strongest economy in Canada.

What our government cannot understand is why the opposition would take the opposite position on this important matter. We heard rhetoric that turns complex issues into simple slogans, and we've seen attempts to frame political disagreements as moral failings rather than just honest differences of opinion. That isn't leadership. And frankly the people of this province are tired of it. Because the people I talk to aren't interested in your political theatre. They want practical solutions. They want leaders to work with others even when they don't agree on everything. They want politics that reflects values that we grew up with — respect, fairness, and common sense.

I've always believed that the strength of our province comes from our ability to pull together when things are difficult. We've done it through floods, through economic downturns, and through challenges that affect entire communities. And each time, we didn't ask someone who they voted for. We helped them. We simply showed up. That's community, and it's exactly the kind of spirit we should be bringing into politics.

Now let's be clear: there are real issues facing our province, issues people care about deeply. It's why our Premier shows real leadership. He's focusing on things that matter, things that we can affect. And that's why he is overseas making historic trade agreements with some of the biggest markets in the world. And he is working with the Prime Minister to get unfair tariffs removed from our agricultural products. He is working to get uranium deals for our province and an energy corridor agreement with other provinces. Because what we do across this country matters, and how we do it matters just as much. And it matters to the people in my town and it matters to people across the province.

Unfortunately the opposition still refuse to see the way that they conduct themselves matters, and prefer to play games in the hopes that division can be politically convenient. They have spoken out against our trade offices, offices which have played a crucial role in encouraging immigration and promoting Saskatchewan as a place of opportunity.

But their approach comes at a cost. It erodes trust. It weakens communities. It pushes us farther away from the province that we want to live in. The province I believe in and the one I think most people in this room believe in is one where we can disagree but still work together, help each other out and remain a community, where leaders bring people together instead of tear them apart.

That's the kind of leadership we're committed to on this side of the House, leadership that focuses on solutions and not slogans. So let's debate ideas. If we want a stronger province tomorrow, we're going to have to build it together. And we're proud of the story of immigration in our province.

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — I recognize the member from Regina Coronation Park.

Noor Burki: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my pleasure to be on my feet to enter into debate on this . . . [inaudible] . . . So I will be starting from here that I am the first-generation immigrant to this country. Just to let you know why I came to this country, what bring me here, I was in grade 4, about like six, seven years old. I was working with my father. He was a school teacher. We were working in the field to grow potatoes.

One day I told my father that yesterday there were some NGO [non-governmental organization] non-profit government organization that came to our school and they give us a small bottle of canola oil, which was 50 ml, and the teacher was telling that this came from Canada. And I told my dad, can we go somewhere to Canada? And he gave me a nice smile. He said,

well it's very far. I said, won't be far; about two or three mountains. He said, no, son, it's far. I said, well if you can take the bus, we will be there in two hours. He said, no, son, it's still far. Train? No.

Anyway so he came on the side of the shadow of the tree. He sit down. He said, well if you want to go to Canada, you have to get wings. And I was curious how I can get wings, how I can be a bird. So that member from Walsh Acres like me. It's very hard. And when he sit with me, he was a very reasonable person. I have very high respect for him.

And today whatever am I, whatever my brothers are, if they got achievement, I think it's due to him. He said that you have to work hard, get a very good education. You will be able to go anywhere in the world. And that was true. I worked very hard. I was not smart, but I was hard-working. I went to college, got the first position at college. When I went to university, I got the third position, and I was selected to one of the best university in our country Pakistan, Quaid-i-Azam University.

Still since childhood I heard about Canada, and it was my dream to go there. I graduated from computer sciences, worked with PRA, Pakistan Revenue Agency, as a software engineer. And then I got into the good moment. We were in one big meeting with the World Bank, IMF [International Monetary Fund]. A lot of leadership from our country were there. And we got one person that was a foreigner, and his name was Mr. Roud. Basically he was not rude, and he was from Canada. We were sitting in the meeting, so all of a sudden he just excused to go out from the meeting.

So when he was coming out at that time, the chairman said to him, "You just went outside to grab a glass of water?" And he said, yes. And he told Mr. Roud, "There is a button. If you want anything, you press the button. The peon will come and they will pour water into your glass and you can drink." Mr. Speaker, what he said, his word was that I'm not that luxury. I love that.

When I was in the United Nations, I had a few colleagues from British Columbia. I was really inspired. Canada is not just a country; it's a culture. I was in Dubai at the airport. A small family were walking in front of me. All of a sudden they dropped a bag and the passports were scattered everywhere. So I just bent on my knee and I was putting the passports together. When I put everything together and gave it back to her she said, "Are you Canadian?" I said, "Do you think I look like a Canadian?" She said, yes, the act you did.

I'm so proud of this country. I choose this country to raise my children. I'm the first generation. I might not give that much back to this country, but yes, my second generation will pay the cost. They will pay back to the community.

I was sitting one day with my daughter in Cathedral arts centre, Artesian centre. She told me, "Dad, can you go with me? There is some event." I said, okay, I will go with you. When we sat in the chairs, she came to the podium and that was a poetry competition. And I was sitting, and I was not knowing what she's talking about. It was very hard for me to know the poetry of the same language that I have learned. The guy was sitting beside me and he told me, "Who is she?" I said, that's my daughter. And he told me, "Why are you not clapping?" I said, well I don't have that skill of English, what she's saying. He said, she's amazing.

I was talking to my daughter, "When you started this poetry and stuff?" She told me, "Dad, you don't know? I'm the second position holder in North America in teenage poetry competition." I said, "Well thank you very much for that, for letting me know."

My other daughter, she is doing a Ph.D. [Doctor of Philosophy] in biomedical sciences. She was the only one from Toronto university among 20 scholarships that went to the US [United States] for Ph.D.

When she was doing a master's in biomedical sciences, she got a project to reduce the timing for an MRI [magnetic resonance imaging] from 30 minutes to as much as you can reduce it for pediatric patients. She worked on that, and she reduced the timing from 30 minutes to 3 minutes. And it's already installed in many academic colleges. And last August she installed it in Hawaii as well.

So the bottom line is, we're immigrants. We're working hard, as my colleague said — second, third, fourth generation — but we want to make sure we have to give them respect. We make sure that we have to keep their feet down over here in this province.

I've been a driver educator, been teaching a lot of people throughout rural areas. And I know how many people, immigrants, that they are working in rural areas, keeping alive, keeping moving on the businesses, whether they are in retail, whether they are in the gas stations or they're working in health care or they're working in daycare or in clinics.

So, Mr. Speaker, immigration is one of the most important ones, but we make sure we have to use it wisely as well. People I've seen, met with them, that they are very skilful. They are very high professional people, but they are not getting into the jobs that they should have. It is a little investment to make sure we can improve their skill, we can take advantage.

And we will be using economic immigration right to the point where we want. People will be not misled. They will be not going to odd jobs. They will be not frustrated. They will stay here in the province. Well if they are not retraining, they will not live in our province.

Mr. Speaker, as the member from Prince Albert Carlton has said, Saskatchewan is governed by Saskatchewan and Alberta is governed by Alberta. I will say that there was a lot of disappointment when people saw those kinds of comments from the leader. I know there will be hard times coming in life, but true leadership is making sure that you're not blaming another. Take responsibility. That's the true leadership that I heard.

And true leadership is when you are bringing people together, not dividing. Division is the short-term solution for the long term. We've been through painful situations when countries have been divided. I've seen in many restaurants where it says, "We are divided by boundary, but we are not divided on the food table." So these are something really not optimistic, not great for the countries. So make sure that we have to be not supporting those kinds of things.

Mr. Speaker, I have a lot to say, a lot of things that I have in mind.

But I will say our provincial motto is, "from many peoples, strength." If we are together, if we are aligned, we can do a lot of good things. And I will say that we make sure that we should make our province stronger. And it will grow only stronger when both sides of the House are appreciating good things, and commenting and bringing up those things that are not working well for us.

I had one fellow that came, Mohit Gupta. He has a really good plan how we can enrich our rural areas with medical health. He was here with me, and yesterday I told him that we are in opposition. If he did want to talk, talk to the Minister of Health and the Minister of Education. So probably he will be coming soon to meet with those two ministers, and hopefully he will be doing something great for this country.

With that, I will be supporting the motion of my colleague from Prince Albert South. Thank you.

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — I recognize the member from Martensville-Blairmore.

Hon. Jamie Martens: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I enjoyed hearing the story from the member from Regina Coronation Park. I believe that leadership is bringing people together and not dividing as well.

I thank you for that story because it shows exactly how diverse we truly are here in Saskatchewan. I'm a lover of history and I love learning about so many different cultures and countries. And I'm very, very . . . I think we are very blessed, very, very blessed in Saskatchewan for the individuals that we have and for the people that explain to us why they came to this province, Saskatchewan.

[12:00]

I'd like to start by saying that what a better way to promote Saskatchewan than to speak about it here in the House. I'm honoured to talk about the land of opportunity. Because in the late 1800s and early 1900s, Canadian government encouraged people to move west. After the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1885, the Prairies became accessible to thousands of immigrants and settlers. People came from many places like Ukraine, Germany, Poland, Norway, Sweden, and other parts of Canada, dreaming of a land that they could call their own.

Through the denomination lands Act, settlers could receive 160 acres for a small registration fee if they farmed it and built a home. Well for many families who had faced poverty or oppression in Europe, this was a life-changing opportunity. This included my family, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The courage to start from nothing. When settlers arrived, the prairies were beautiful. It was also harsh. There was no towns, no roads, and often no trees. Winters were brutally cold, summers were hot, and the wind seemed endless. Many families lived in sod houses built from thick blocks of prairie grass and soil because wood was scarce. Life meant long days of breaking tough prairie soil with horses and plows, but settlers kept going. They believed that every field they planted and every fence they built was a step towards a better life for their children.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they started building communities. Slowly the empty prairies turned into thriving communities. Schools, churches, grain elevators, and towns began to appear across the landscape. Cities like Regina and Saskatoon grew as centres — centres of farming, culture, and education. The settlers didn't just farm the land; they built a society based on co-operation and hard work. Neighbours helped neighbours during harvests, storms, and difficult times.

The spirit of community became a defining trait of Saskatchewan. They kept strength through hard times, and the settlers faced enormous challenges. During the 1930s, the Great Depression and the dust bowl devastated farms across the Prairies. Crops failed but dust storms darkened the skies. Many families struggled to survive. Many people died from sickness. Yet they stayed. They adapted, improving farming methods, and rebuilt the land. Their determination shaped the province as we know it today.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the lesson that their story teaches is a powerful lesson: great things often begun in difficult conditions. They arrived with little money, few comforts, and many risks. But they carried something more powerful: hope, hard work, and belief in the future.

Today Saskatchewan farms feed millions across the world. The towns, roads, and communities that exist today stand as proof of persistence and courage that can transform even the toughest landscapes into opportunities. Their story reminds us, if the people with so little could build so much, imagine what is the possibility if we face challenges with the same determination. I know my government continues with the determination of our forefathers. We continue with being true to Saskatchewanians. We continue to be positive, to believe in Saskatchewan people.

Saskatchewan has remarkable talent. It treats "newcomer" as a temporary condition because you arrive as a stranger and before you know it, you start getting invited for coffee, offering directions that you didn't ask for, and explaining the difference between a Roughrider game and a regular Tuesday. What makes the province special isn't just opportunity, it's attitude. There's a steady confidence. No need for flashy billboards, just a quiet assurance that says, come on in; there's room for you.

And as for popularity, Saskatchewan might not shout about itself, but the world keeps noticing. People from across the globe come here to study, to work, to build businesses, and to raise families. They arrive and they stay because they find community, because they find kindness, and because they find a place that values hard work, good humour, and the province that was built by immigrants.

There's something universally admired about this place that doesn't just tolerate difference, but we welcome it. Saskatchewan government understands that diversity isn't a buzzword, it's a strength. So if you're thinking of moving somewhere that offers wide horizons and even wider smiles, come to this prairie gem. Because in Saskatchewan, you're not just moving to a location on a map. You're joining a community that believes that there's room for you, a government that accepts the potential that you have, and neighbours that can't wait to tell you about what makes Saskatchewan special.

Newcomers often ask, is Saskatchewan really that friendly? Well let me put it this way. We'll wave at you on the highway even if we don't know you. We'll say hi to you at the mail and ask how you're enjoying the province so far. Because around here, human connection is something that we still hold dear. And if you ever get stuck in a ditch — statistically speaking, it'll be through November to April — expect not one but three strangers that will appear. And from over 150 countries now calling Saskatchewan home, we've turned stranger into neighbour faster than you say "Saskatchewan is easy to spell," and it may be impossible to pronounce the first time you try it . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Easy to draw.

So when you arrive, whether you're from Manila, Mumbai, Madagascar, or just Manitoba, we welcome you. We welcome all newcomers, all new cultures. And we notice one thing that we never really knew our potluck was lacking. You bring new recipes, new music, new ways to complain about the wind — because trust me, we need some of that. And I have also come to appreciate a lot of new flavours. In return we offer affordable housing and many different services, including working with agencies that develop language skills, employment support, and ensuring foreign qualifications. Thank you.

Let's be real. We have a country and province built on immigrants. So how is it that anyone would think that Saskatchewan is not welcoming? I am truly proud of living here in Saskatchewan, and I thank everyone for moving and choosing Saskatchewan as their home.

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — The 65-minute period has expired and the 10-minute question-and-answer period will begin. And I'll just remind the members that the same rules that apply in question period also apply here. You will listen when the questions are asked and you will also listen when the answers are given.

I recognize the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Travis Keisig: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The 2026 federal budget acknowledges that in recent years Canada's immigration system has become harder to manage, less functional, and the pace of arrivals has begun to exceed the country's capacity to absorb and support newcomers. To the member from Regina Coronation Park: do you agree with the federal government's assessment?

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — I recognize the member from Regina Coronation Park.

Noor Burki: — Well thank you very much, member opposite, for a good question. When we're talking about immigration, yes, it's a federal portfolio as well and provincial as well. So I think if you both are aligned at one point we can do way better. If you think we are supporting in 2026 immigration, I think we should work very closely with the federal government.

And if you're talking about Manitoba, they take incentives, they take a deal with the federal government. They are giving extensions of work permits for two years and many other promises they requested. And they get their demand . . . [inaudible] . . . more in the past last year.

We have to make sure to work with coordination of the federal government. There's no hesitation. If you're talking about this province, I won't care who is sitting in the federal. How are we taking care of our province? Well all provincial governments should have to take a stand on that, work for that to make sure we can get the things that we need for our province. Thank you.

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Meara Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow: does she think the challenges in Saskatchewan hospitals and schools are caused by immigration?

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Megan Patterson: — First of all, thank you for the question. Immigration is a key part of our growth strategy. We support and believe in a well-managed immigration system. It's an important part of ensuring that we have sustained economic growth, and we want to work with our federal counterparts to ensure that we have a sustainable immigration system that meets the needs and capacity of our province. Thank you.

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — I recognize the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford.

James Thorsteinson: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government has always been committed to the idea that Alberta takes care of Alberta and Saskatchewan takes care of Saskatchewan. Yet the opposition continues to use divisive rhetoric and focus on issues in other provinces.

How does the member from Regina South Albert expect Saskatchewan residents to take the opposition seriously when you're more worried about what is happening in Alberta than here at home?

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — I recognize the member from Regina South Albert.

Aleana Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the member for the question. What you see on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, is a laser focus on affordability, strong focus on the crisis in health care, and a focus on making sure that Saskatchewan is the best place to raise your family, to start a business, and to make a difference.

There is nothing more serious than people's ability to pay their bills and look after their family, Mr. Speaker, and you will see nothing but that from the Leader of the Opposition and this team.

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — I recognize the member from Regina Coronation Park.

Noor Burki: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will ask a question to the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow. Will the member condemn Danielle Smith's comments on immigration?

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Megan Patterson: — Thank you for the question. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as well. So on this side of the House, we're actually focused on results. We're focused on collaboration. We're focused on doing what matters. We're spending time impacting things that we can impact.

That's why our Premier has been gone for the last week, if you guys haven't noticed. And did you know he actually made a historic, huge deal for our province in uranium to generate more revenue so that we can do a better job to meet the needs of people in this province?

Instead of condemning, you know, we look to collaborate. We look for ways that we can actually work with people to get the results that the people in this province deserve. Thank you.

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — I recognize the member from Carrot River Valley.

Terri Bromm: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Our government has clearly advocated for supports for newcomers to our province. We've invested millions into newcomer support and have recently announced that we will continue to offer domestic tuition rates to Ukrainian post-secondary students.

To the member from Regina Coronation Park, will you agree that Saskatchewan has been a welcoming place for newcomers like Ukrainian refugees?

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — I recognize the member from Regina Coronation Park.

Noor Burki: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and thank you, member opposite, for asking a very good question.

No doubt that I'm proud of that, and I will say with support to my colleague from University-Sutherland for raising this issue. The Ukrainian communities, Ukrainian students, where they came from such a country that is war affected, and you know how it is. They left everything behind. Even some of them, they left behind their parents, their seniors, their relatives on the war zone.

And when they were paying three times higher, they came to us, and we amplified that one. I'm not going to that one, but I will say thank you to both, and this is a very positive thing. And I will say together we can make this province a welcoming place for the immigrants. And so far I will say there is some concerns, but I will not amplify that.

But yes, keep the hard work to make sure we can accommodate people and listen to them and listen, understand their problems, their issues. For small reason their case should not be rejected. Thank you.

[12:15]

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — I recognize the member from Regina South Albert.

Aleana Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow, does she think that Saskatchewan's immigration has been well managed, or does she think there are too many newcomers in Saskatchewan? Yes or no?

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow.

Megan Patterson: — Thank you for the question. Immigration is a key part of our government's growth strategy. It is key to ensuring that we can continue to support industry and businesses, and bring over the skilled labour that we need in this province to sustain the economic growth that is driving the results that we have.

We have one of the strongest economies in the country, and we will continue along that path. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

David Chan: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Our population has grown significantly since this government formed in 2007. Every year we see more people choosing Saskatchewan as home, more people driving our economy, more people moving here, more people working. That's just a fact. The NDP could not attract people to Saskatchewan. In fact they drove people to leave out of desperation.

To the member from Regina Coronation Park: does the opposition condemn this government for creating an environment and economy that is clearly attractive for people to move to?

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — I recognize the member from Regina Coronation Park.

Noor Burki: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And thank you, Member opposite, for a very good question. Thank you for this good question. I will say that on 13th May, 2005, the first time immigration family nominee sponsorship was announced and was initiated by the NDP. In 2008 I came to this province for the sake of this program to sponsor my family.

So this was one of the best programs that was working. And the first time, due to this program, the population of Saskatchewan got increased. And after 2012 when this government . . . they blocked this program. They put a lot of restrictions. And the restriction was that the person should have a job here in this province; they can come. How someone can get a job offer that is not here? We don't know. It was very hard. They make things really harder and harder, and that's why.

Now at this time I will say, people are not staying in the province because . . . due to these hard things that we are finding in immigration. We have to make sure. We have to invest in our young people, so retaining here in the province so we can . . .

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — I recognize the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre.

Meara Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, there's been some really clear questions to the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow. And we haven't seen a clear answer to, is Saskatchewan immigration well managed?

So again to the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow: newcomers are telling us they now feel they have a target on their back. Can she offer any insights about how she feels about the divisive rhetoric from Danielle Smith? Is she concerned at all with those comments?

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw Wakamow. Time's up. Oh, it is so. The 75-minute has expired, and we'll move to the next.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion No. 1 — Support for Development of Pipeline to West Coast

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by Barret Kropf.]

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — I recognize the member from Humboldt-Watrous. Thank you.

Racquel Hilbert: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. An oil pipeline to the West Coast can satisfy perpetually hungry emerging Asian markets across the Pacific Ocean. It is a much-needed investment into the Canadian economy. The global demand for oil increases by about a half a billion barrels annually. A pipeline to the West Coast would increase Canada's ability to supply the growing global demand.

This much-needed investment into Canadian economies, into jobs, job security, which translates into family stability . . . When a barrel of bitumen is pumped through the safest conveyance system, it relieves railway congestion and competition for track space. More pipeline terminals give another layer of insulation against labour disputes, extreme weather events, mechanical malfunctions, social and political upheavals both provincially and federally.

Just like the importance of a diverse economy, we don't want to rely on just one system to transport our goods to world markets. From 2018 to present there have been five major railway disruptions, from strikes, road blockades, and extreme weather events. The railway blockades in 2020 cost the American economy a reported — by CBC — about 0.3 per cent, which was equal to Canada's GDP [gross domestic product] growth for the late 2019.

Let's be clear: that growth we can never get back. This inability to get goods to hungry markets weakens international confidence in Canada, and it drives away investment into other global markets. The Premier, his team, and our international trade offices have diligently rectified this to once again make Saskatchewan a destination for reliable investment with conscience.

With a safe, reliable conveyance system for bitumen it would relieve bottlenecks and help in other areas of transport for various goods when those disruptions do occur. We will be able to catch up faster and safer when the inevitable disruptions transpire. Farmers and producers will face less penalties for not delivering on time. More ports, terminals, and shipping lanes leads to less congestion in coastal regions.

The biggest benefit for a new pipeline is the discount for the Western Canadian Select would be lessened, possibly removed entirely, because of the added competition for Western Canadian bitumen. I have read a number of articles that show that this discount costs Western Canada almost $20 billion every year. This is not just money. It is schools. It's health care. It's social programs. It's investment into infrastructure and future projects. It is sustainability during difficult times. This discount can take away our ability to engineer ourselves into our future when we only look and focus on the present and the problems of the past.

The discount is not because our product is inferior or damaged; it is because we don't build to change it. The discount is on some of the world's most sought-after, environmentally sound, and socially conscious bitumen on the planet.

The blocking of this pipeline through over-regulating, never-ending, and ever-changing red tape is a problem. The bar is moved ever higher to suffocate investment, stagnate economy, and eviscerate our future, while shackling Canadian sovereignty to one market. I call it a disservice to all the hard-working Canadians who believe in our own sovereignty and destiny. Our government will continue to stand up and defend more than 26,000 families, workers who depend on jobs created by that upstream oil and gas industry.

Pipelines are 4.5 times less likely to have a safety incident. Over 70 per cent of the uncontrolled releases are one cubic metre or less. Injury requiring hospitalization is 30 per cent less for pipelines. The energy required to move bitumen on rail is significantly higher: 60 to 77 per cent more emissions. Eighty-three per cent of spills are usually at pumping stations or terminals, where they are dealt with quickly and controllably. Other unintended releases usually occur away from heavily populated areas.

In contrast, train derailments are usually in remote areas, and spills are quite often more significant and are in populated areas, where people's lives could be at a risk. And they're usually caused by human error.

In my constituency we've had two derailments. In late 2019 and early 2020, there were two catastrophic train derailments near the hamlet of Guernsey. In the first derailment, there were 33 railcars that left the track and caught fire. 1.77 million litres of oil was released and ignited. It burned for 24 hours.

In the second derailment, 31 cars left the track. 1.2 to 1.6 million litres were spilled and ignited in another massive fire, which is usually the case with oil tanker car derailments. And thank God there were no injuries reported. And a big thank you and shout-out to the first responders for keeping everyone safe and managing the situation as additional supports came to help.

Eighty-five residents of Guernsey were evacuated. And the second derailment occurred very close to the hamlet of Guernsey. The massive fire and smoke could be seen for miles in all directions as the millions of litres burned off. Cleanup and remediation took several months, and the environmental

monitoring went on for years.

Pipelines can transport significantly higher volumes over longer distances than conventional rail. Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you can do something that is safer, lower the environmental footprint, safer, cheaper, generate more wealth for all Canadian people, why don't we?

Here is some math. If we put 500,000 barrels of bitumen in a pipeline, that's 750 cars off the tracks every day, which is 273,000 railcars per year. I wonder if that would alleviate some of the congestion and backlogs on the railway.

When a province is approached with the potential of a $1 billion investment into a potash handling facility in BC, that NDP Premier could have supported it, completed the maintenance of the channels and the ports, increased the stability and investment in shipping, thus giving BC much-needed investment and added value, attracting more investment and giving the economy of BC much added stability.

When the BC Premier is looking for someone to blame for lack of foresight, put on some glasses if things are too blurry and look in the mirror. When pointing fingers, I learned that often when you're pointing, you have three pointing back from your own hand. That investment could have produced a return that could be used for hospitals and schools, but instead it won't be there. And all that will remain is the cost to service a $13 billion deficit by an NDP government.

So like I said before, when we can do something that is safer with a lower environmental footprint, faster, cheaper, generate more wealth, stability, and more jobs for hard-working Canadians, why don't we do it? Let's build it.

I support the motion put forward by my colleague from Dakota-Arm River and seconded by my colleague from Prince Albert Carlton:

> That this Assembly call upon the Government of Saskatchewan to support the development of a new Canadian pipeline to carry Saskatchewan and Alberta oil to the West Coast of Canada.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move to adjourn the debate on the motion.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — Carried. I recognize the Government House Leader.

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — Carried. The Assembly now stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30, March the 9th. Thank you.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:29.]

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN
CABINET MINISTERS

Hon. Scott Moe
Premier
President of the Executive Council
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Chris Beaudry
Minister of Energy and Resources

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

Hon. Ken Cheveldayoff
Minister of Advanced Education
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Minister Responsible for the
Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board

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Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission
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Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency

Hon. Sean Wilson
Minister of SaskBuilds and Procurement
Minister Responsible for the
Global Transportation Hub Authority