



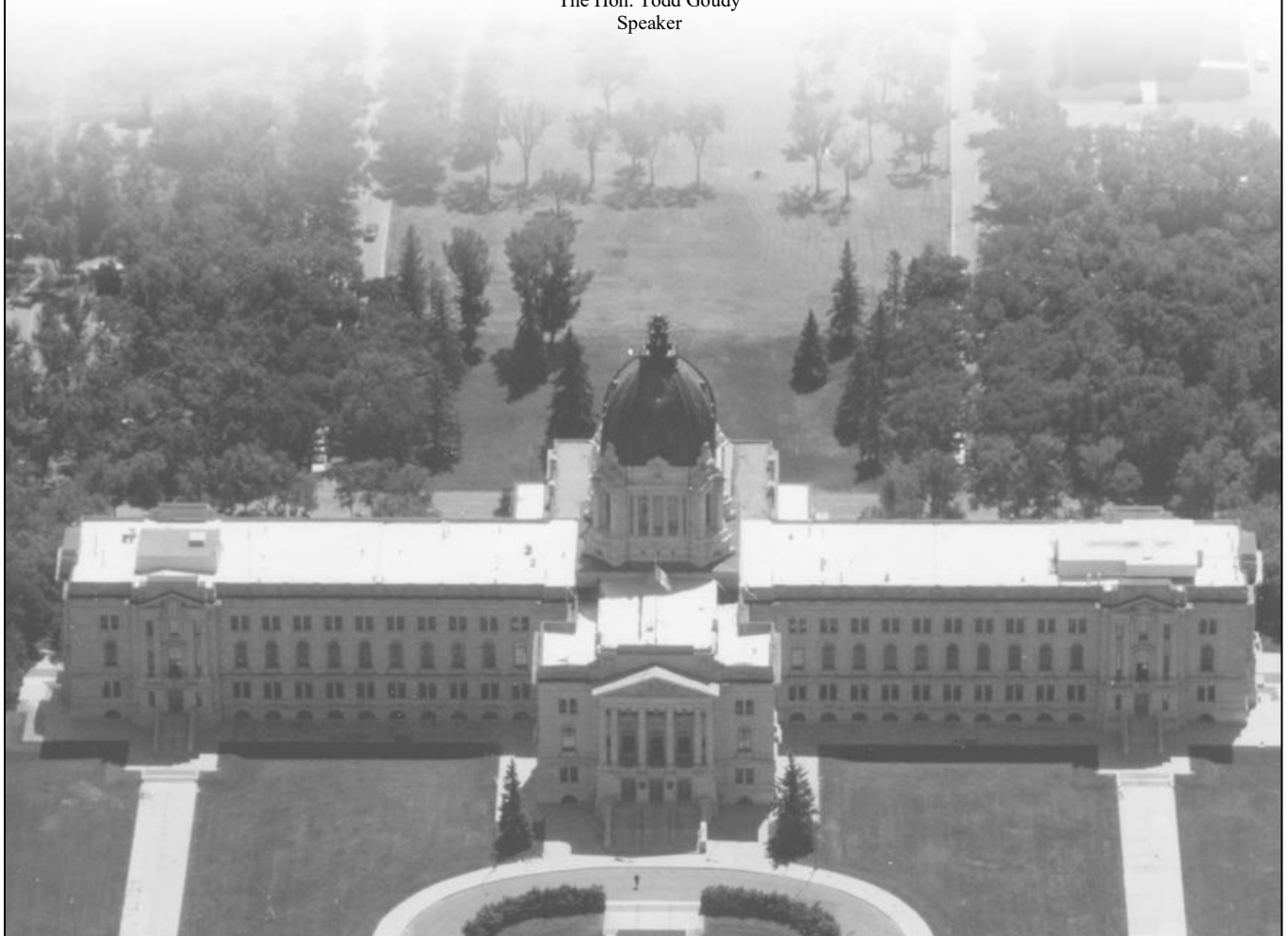
SECOND SESSION — THIRTIETH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
AND
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)
Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Todd Goudy
Speaker



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
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

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Senger, Brittney — Saskatoon Southeast (NDP)
Steele, Doug — Cypress Hills (SP)
Teed, Nathaniel — Saskatoon Meevasin (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) — 26; Independent (Ind) — 1

Clerks-at-the-Table

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Deputy Clerk — Robert Park
Principal Clerk — Danielle Humble-Selinger
Clerk Assistant — Miranda Gudereit

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[The Assembly met at 10:00.]

[Prayers]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Hon. Jeremy Cockrill: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you I'd like to welcome several guests seated in your gallery today. Earlier this morning in the Saskatchewan Gallery we had an opportunity to welcome these folks to their Legislative Building here in the capital city to mark World Ovarian Cancer Day, which is happening tomorrow. Well obviously as we don't sit on Fridays, we had an opportunity to welcome these guests and make mention of that and bring highlight to some of the work going on in our province, thanks really to the advocacy of these guests.

I'll introduce them now and just ask them to give a quick wave. And apologies in advance if I miss anybody or mispronounce the names. We have Stephanie Gosselin from Ovarian Cancer Canada joining us as well as many Teal Sisters joining us in the gallery: Heather Stirling, Jackie Cherwenuk, Lynn Baumann, Belinda Wrobel, Kathy Szarkowicz, Karen Synesael, Brenda Tunstead, Shirley Muhr, Gwen Cowie, and Yvonne Sinclair.

Mr. Speaker, you know, again thanks to the advocacy of folks who have been diagnosed with ovarian cancer and are undergoing treatment or have survived ovarian cancer, Mr. Speaker, the advocacy has really encouraged this government to invest \$2 million since 2020, you know, specifically targeting research happening at the University of Saskatchewan. Some incredible research going on with many folks there, again trying to address the needs of getting to better treatment options for Saskatchewan women.

We always know that there's more work to do in this space. And that's why we'll continue working with the Teal Sisters and their families right across the province and listening to them and understanding what the next steps are to improve outcomes for Saskatchewan women.

I was joined by many MLAs [Member of the Legislative Assembly] at the event this morning. I know the Premier and myself will have an opportunity to sit down with these ladies later today. But I would ask all members of the Assembly to join me in welcoming these guests to their legislature.

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

Jared Clarke: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to be joining the Minister of Health in welcoming these women to their Legislative Assembly. I want to say thank you on behalf of the official opposition for your work and advocacy around ovarian cancer. We know that this is the most lethal form of gynecological cancer and there needs to be much more done in terms of research and support for women who are experiencing this cancer.

I know my colleague from Regina Northeast is a fierce advocate in her role for women's health, and this is something that's certainly on her radar. And we appreciate the advocacy that you're doing on this important issue for women in this province. So on behalf of the opposition, thank you for being here today. And we will be thinking about ovarian cancer tomorrow for World Ovarian Cancer Day.

So again I ask all members to join me in welcoming these women to their Legislative Assembly.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Justice.

Hon. Tim McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. 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.

Hon. Tim McLeod: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, today I am very pleased to introduce to the Assembly Elyce Simpson-Fraser, who is in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. Elyce is the president and CEO [chief executive officer] of Simpson Seeds Inc., which is a proud Saskatchewan company that's rooted right in my home community of Moose Jaw.

Elyce represents the third generation of leadership at Simpson Seeds, and under her leadership the company continues to grow as a global leader in pulse processing. Mr. Speaker, Elyce was recently awarded with Moose Jaw's MJBEX [Moose Jaw Business Excellence Awards] Business Leader of the Year award in recognition of her outstanding contributions not only in business but to our entire community. Elyce was also awarded the Pulse Promoter of the year for her leadership in promoting and strengthening Saskatchewan's agri-food industry internationally.

Mr. Speaker, as if that wasn't enough, Elyce is also the president of the Moose Jaw Farm & Food Partnership initiative which brings agriculture-focused businesses together to attract investment and strengthen Moose Jaw as a hub for agri-value, processing, and innovation.

Her leadership builds on a proud family legacy while positioning Moose Jaw and Saskatchewan at the forefront of the agri-food production. Mr. Speaker, Elyce Simpson-Fraser exemplifies the forward-thinking leadership that defines our province. I ask all members to join me in welcoming Elyce Simpson-Fraser to this, her Legislative Assembly.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Regina Mount

Royal.

Trent Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a real pleasure to join with the minister to welcome Elyce Simpson-Fraser to her Assembly and to honour her and to send our thanks for all of her leadership in this province with respect to agriculture. Of course this week here now we've got a beautiful day out there. Many down in southern Saskatchewan are into the fields with seeding. I was chatting with a kid from Rosetown here, and their families are rolling here today. And this is a massive undertaking and so important to the province.

Elyce, I want to say to you, through your leadership with Simpson Seeds and on the pulse side, I want to thank you for all your leadership to agriculture in this province, to producers, and to your province as a whole. I want to thank you as well for your leadership with the Moose Jaw farm and food initiative, the work to capitalize on the opportunities as working together and creating that hub. So on behalf of the official opposition, I ask all members to join with me to give a very warm welcome and a great hearty thanks to Elyce Simpson-Fraser to her Assembly.

While on my feet, Mr. Speaker, there's a young guy seated in the east gallery. He's a tough D [defence], Mr. Speaker. I want to give a shout-out to my D-man this year on the Royals, Alex Kenschuh. I see him up there with his class. They'll be introduced here shortly.

This is a rock-solid kid, awesome guy, great big baseball guy as well. Hard-working on the ice and I know a hard-working student and just a wonderful kid. His parents, Brittney and Braden, they give back to the community as well through sport and the university and through agriculture as well, Mr. Speaker, so just a wonderful family. So I ask all members to join with me in welcoming them.

And at the same time to recognize there's a couple young girls up there. I recognize them from the ice last night. We had a big game. I was coaching the Puck Hogs. We took on Timmy Tuff Knuckles, Mr. Speaker. Two of those girls that are seated up there, they laid a licking on us here last night, Mr. Speaker. So I want to welcome them to their Assembly as well, Mr. Speaker. And I hope we don't play them any time soon.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Deputy Premier.

Hon. Jim Reiter: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you to this Assembly, I am absolutely delighted to introduce some guests in the west gallery, Mr. Speaker, because those guests are 40 grade 8 students from the great community of Rosetown, my home. We're thrilled to have them. They're accompanied by Madison Armstrong, their teacher, and some parent chaperones.

Mr. Speaker, it's a long drive from Rosetown. I do it every week. It's over three hours each way, Mr. Speaker. So much looking forward to having a chat with them after question period, and I hope they have a great day, Mr. Speaker. I'd ask all members of this Assembly to please give these grade 8 students from Rosetown a warm welcome to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Brent Blakley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just starting off, as the member opposite says and I'm sure members on this side would agree, it's a great day in Saskatchewan. I want to introduce, up in the east gallery there's a school group here. There is a school group here, 58 grade 7 students from St. Theresa School. I'd just like to welcome them on behalf of the member from Regina Northeast. She could not be here today, so she asked me to fill in or sub. I'm a substitute introducer, as they say in the teaching world.

I just want to welcome Mike Zylak and Mara Routley, the teachers, and the parent chaperones and all the kids from St. Theresa School. Welcome to your Legislative Assembly.

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

Hon. Michael Weger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce again and recognize some individuals seated in the front row of the west gallery. Of course it's Richelle Beaudry and her three daughters, of course the spouse and children of the member from Kelvington-Wadena.

And I just wanted to say a thank you today, Mr. Speaker, because on Monday afternoon the Minister Responsible for the Water Security Agency and myself took off on a tour of Canora, Quill Lake, Melfort, and Tisdale. And along the way I was on my hotels app trying to find a hotel near Saint-Front. No such thing I guess.

So thankfully Richelle and her family made room, and they did a pop-up bed and breakfast for us. We were able to spend the night there. And a couple girls had to sleep on the couches, but we greatly appreciate their hospitality. So I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

Speaker Goudy: — I have a few friends here today as well. Braden Kinch. So there comes a time in your life where your kids become some of your best friends. When they're little, they're cute and fun, but they get a little older and they become some of your best friends in life. And so their friends become your friends, and Braden Kinch is one of those people in my life. Brilliant young man taking his M.B.A. [Master of Business Administration] at the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] there, came in to visit last night, and he's here. So would you welcome him to his Legislative Assembly.

And the fellow to his left with the heavy accent — you can't speak in here but if you did, we'd know you're not from around these parts — but he is a person that the Minister of Education told me about. I was talking about debate. I love debate, and he said oh my goodness, you need to connect with SEDA [Saskatchewan Elocution and Debate Association]. So he told me about . . . he had been in the past to the tournament. And so I had the pleasure and the privilege of attending the youth debate club at their tournament this year and was extremely impressed.

He's here for the day. So we've got 75-minute debate. He's going to be sitting in. He's going to be listening and the 25-minute question period too. So Peter Hedley, very thankful to know you. Thank you for all your hard work you do raising up that next generation of debaters and critical thinkers. And so please

welcome Peter Hedley to his Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

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

Brittney Senger: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present a petition calling on the Government of Saskatchewan to step up for Indigenous students in Saskatchewan.

The undersigned residents wish to bring to your attention the following: that Indigenous children and vulnerable students are advocating to restore funding previously supported by Jordan's principle.

Jordan's principle was established to ensure that First Nations children have equitable access to the services they need, including supports in schools. The loss of federal funding will leave a significant gap in classrooms, especially for Indigenous students who rely on inclusive education supports to thrive. The provincial budget reduces educational funding, less than what was spent in the previous year. This is an alarming move at a time when schools are already stretched to the breaking point.

I shall read the prayer:

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

The undersigned residents reside in Sturgeon Lake and P.A. [Prince Albert]. I do so present.

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

Noor Burki: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to present our petition to proclaim October of each year as Islamic Heritage Month.

[10:15]

We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention the following: that Islam is the second most common religion in Saskatchewan, accounting for 2 per cent of population; between the 2001 census and 2021 census, the Muslim population of Saskatchewan grew elevenfold; that the first Muslim organization in Canada was registered in Regina, Saskatchewan in 1934 by Lebanese immigrants; that Muslims across the province contribute to Saskatchewan's culture, economy, and communities; that the Muslim community must currently reapply every year to have October recognized as Islamic Heritage Month; that the governments of Canada, Alberta, Ontario, Manitoba, Newfoundland and Labrador have all proclaimed October as Islamic Heritage Month.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to proclaim October each year as Islamic Heritage Month.

Mr. Speaker, the signatories of this petition reside in Regina. I do so present.

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

Kim Breckner: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I present a petition calling on the Government of Saskatchewan to reverse the ban on third-party educators from publicly funded schools.

The signatories to this petition wish to bring to our attention the following: that on August 22nd, 2023 the Saskatchewan government banned all third-party educators from publicly funded schools; that the topics that these organizations teach include consent, healthy relationships, and child sexual abuse prevention. With Saskatchewan's worst-in-the-nation rates of intimate partner violence and sexual abuse, this government should be doing everything it can to reduce these rates, including prevention education. The decision to ban these educators will make Saskatchewan's rates of intimate partner violence, sexual violence, and sexual abuse worse, not better.

With that, I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to call on the Government of Saskatchewan to immediately reverse its decision to ban third-party educators in Saskatchewan schools and consult with experts in developing a comprehensive curriculum for all Saskatchewan students.

The signatories to this petition reside in Saskatoon. I do so present.

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

Don McBean: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly to fix the crisis in health care.

The undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan wish to bring to the attention the following: that in the past five years, health care closures across rural Saskatchewan disrupted services for a total of 8,613 days, and that 3,953 of those days were disruptions to Saskatchewan emergency rooms; that Saskatchewan has the longest wait times for knee and hip replacement surgeries; and that it is unacceptable women in this province are being forced to travel out of province for routine breast cancer diagnostic care.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to immediately address the short-staffing crisis in health care, and work with health care workers on solutions to improve patient care.

The undersigned today are from Saskatoon. I do so present.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Cumberland.

Jordan McPhail: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, with rent now, over 40 months consecutive rent increases in Saskatchewan, I'm proud today to stand and present a petition to implement rent control now.

The undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan wish to bring to your attention the following: 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 in the last year alone, far outpacing wage growth and putting more pressure on families, seniors, students, and low-income residents; that with rent control residents can budget more effectively, potentially putting them in a position to save for a down payment on their first home; and that provinces such as British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario, and Prince Edward Island have already implemented rent control measures to protect tenants and maintain housing affordability.

With that, I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on 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 to this petition today, Mr. Speaker, reside in Regina. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Moosomin-Montmartre.

National Aboriginal Hockey Championships

Kevin Weedmark: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I want to recognize the National Aboriginal Hockey Championships taking place this week in Regina and hosted by Ochapowace First Nation. This outstanding national event brings together male and female midget teams from across Canada, each proudly representing their province or territory. It's a celebration of athletic excellence, Indigenous culture, and the important role that sport plays in building community, leadership, and pride among our youth.

I was honoured to attend the opening ceremonies at the Brandt Centre on Sunday where I had the privilege of bringing greetings on behalf of our government. The energy and the excitement in that arena was a powerful reminder of just how meaningful this championship is, not only for the players and their families, but for Indigenous communities across the country.

Hosting this championship on Treaty 4 territory here in Saskatchewan is a tremendous honour and a reflection of the deep hockey tradition our province is proud of. Ochapowace is a great hockey community, home to the Round Lake Bears and the Ochapowace Thunder. And it's always fun to be at a game there

where Cadmus Delorme sometimes works the merch table and Chief Bear pushes her snack cart.

So it's great to see them host this national event. And I want to extend sincere thanks and congratulations to Chief Shelley Bear, Ochapowace council, and all of the organizers and volunteers who worked so hard to bring this event to Saskatchewan.

And to every athlete competing this week, play hard, play proud, and enjoy every moment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Acknowledging Psychological Injuries as Part of Workplace Safety

Nathaniel Teed: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Each year on April 28th we gather to mark the National Day of Mourning. We remember those who lost their lives to workplace injuries and occupational disease, and we recommit ourselves to safer workplaces for all.

But there is a gap in how we remember. Too often workers who die by suicide are not recognized as workplace fatalities even when their deaths are shaped by unsafe working conditions. We know that work can harm mental health. Chronic stress, harassment, bullying, job insecurity, and exposure to trauma, especially for those on the front lines can take a profound toll.

Yet our systems struggle to acknowledge that psychological injuries can be just as real and just as fatal as physical ones. Families are often left to fight for recognition, navigating complex processes to prove that work can contribute to loss of life in ways that we do not always see.

Mr. Speaker, if we are serious about workplace safety, we must expand our understanding of what that means. Psychological safety must be treated with the same urgency as physical safety. Let us commit to recognizing all workers lost, including those whose struggles were invisible, and ensure that no family is left without acknowledgement or support.

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

Local Processing Company Nourishes the World

Megan Patterson: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to recognize the importance of Simpson Seeds to Moose Jaw and the province of Saskatchewan. Simpson Seeds is Saskatchewan's largest independent and family-owned processor and exporter of specialty crops and premium pulse flour ingredients. Their core purpose is nourishing the world, and from Moose Jaw Simpson Seeds has become a global leader in processing and exporting lentils, peas, and other crops, helping feed millions around the world while supporting our local economy.

Mr. Speaker, what makes Simpson Seeds stand out today is its leadership in value-added agriculture. The company has invested in advanced processing, including a lentil and chickpea flour plant that transforms Saskatchewan-grown crops into high-quality ingredients for global food markets, capturing more value

here at home.

Beyond flour production, Simpson Seeds continues to expand — cleaning, splitting, and packaging operations, creating more jobs, supporting families, and driving innovation and strengthening our agri-food supply chain. These investments mean more opportunities for local producers; more skilled employment in Moose Jaw; and a stronger, more diversified provincial economy. Simpson Seeds demonstrates how Saskatchewan can lead, not just in growing food, but in processing it, innovating it, and exporting it to the world. Thank you.

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

People Step Forward to Support Saskatchewan

Erika Ritchie: — Last night the official opposition said something that stuck with me: when a government is failing, when they're in free fall, there will be signs of desperation, of miscalculation, of a group that will try anything, say anything, and commit to anything to hang on to power.

The Premier rose in this Chamber yesterday and he couldn't bother to talk about his budget. He couldn't point to one single thing he's doing to help the people of Saskatchewan as they face an unprecedented health care crisis, a cost-of-living crisis, and a drug crisis that claims a life every day. Instead he flung mud; he huffed and he puffed. Then a few minutes later, the Premier looked stunned. He was at a loss for words as we tabled evidence of his massive \$26 billion coal catastrophe.

How did we possibly find out about this? Well it's because incredible, brave people who care about this province are stepping forward. We can't keep up with the leaks — manila envelopes, screen grabs, tips from anonymous sources — and all of it true every single time. Thank you to the people stepping forward in support of Saskatchewan. There will be signs, Mr. Speaker. There will be signs.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Yorkton.

New Television Series Spotlights Indigenous Culture

David Chan: — Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a remarkable television series that is shining a spotlight on the Indigenous culture while also putting Yorkton on the map. *Grandma Sherry's Kitchen* premiered on May 5th on APTN [Aboriginal Peoples Television Network]. It features Yorkton resident Sherry Whitehawk, known affectionately as Grandma Sherry. Through her love of cooking and storytelling, she invites viewers across Canada into a home filled with warmth, tradition, and grandma's cooking.

What makes this series so impactful is that it reaches far beyond the kitchen. Each episode shares Grandma Sherry's personal journey of reconnecting with her Dakota language; it offers audiences an opportunity to learn alongside her; and through every dish she prepares, to connect and reconnect to their culture.

Many in our community already know of Grandma Sherry from her online presence where she has built not only a following, but an extended family. Through sharing recipes along with

messages of kindness and healing she is reaching people around the world, especially youth. Her content has gone viral online and if you've seen her posts, you'll know that she has become Canada's Indigenous Grandma.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to recognize Creative Saskatchewan and their talented production team who supported this series, as well as local partners and organizations in Yorkton who helped bring this celebration to life, including the organizers of the watch party at Sacred Heart High School and the Yorkton Friendship Centre.

I ask all members to join me in congratulating Grandma Sherry and everyone who helped bring *Grandma Sherry's Kitchen* to homes across the world.

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

Cost of Refurbishment of Coal Plants

Don McBean: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You all know that I'm a proud father and grandfather and that I believe very strongly in the notion that our job always — and especially in public service — is to leave things better than we found them. So I was stunned last night to learn of this Premier's \$26 billion price tag to refurbish coal plants.

The provincial budget's just a hair over 22 billion — the entire budget. The province's entire debt dating back to 1905 when this province was formed, even before my time, is \$44 billion. We will pay for this now certainly, but it's our children and grandchildren that will pay for it even more.

Imagine the funding that could be devoted to health care, to public safety, to cutting families a break, to education. You know, I was a principal and I've lived first-hand and watched the pain growing in our classrooms after a decade of Sask Party cuts. And now we're choosing coal over kids. We're choosing coal over health care. We're choosing coal instead of working to build a bright future for everyone. The Premier could be ashamed. His minister should be removed.

There is good news. Our official opposition will not be the opposition much longer, and we will scrap this \$26 billion coal plant and get back to working for the people of Saskatchewan. Thank you.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Carrot River Valley.

World Ovarian Cancer Day

Terri Bromm: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I rise to recognize May 8th as World Ovarian Cancer Day. About 3,000 Canadian women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer each year, including 90 Saskatchewan women. Investments in earlier diagnoses and treatment mean stronger outcomes for women with ovarian cancer, ensuring the right care is available in the right place at the right time.

Mr. Speaker, providing access to high-quality cancer care to Saskatchewan patients remains a priority for our government.

Since 2020 our government has invested \$2 million to Ovarian Cancer Canada, OCC, to support research and clinical trials that will improve patient access to diagnostic testing, treatment options, and overall outcomes. Mr. Speaker, our government will continue to put patients first and invest in cancer services to improve access to diagnostic and surgical care across our province.

[10:30]

I would like to request all members to join me in thanking Ovarian Cancer Canada, the research and development teams, and all the volunteers for offering their support and resources to patients, families, and caregivers across our country. Together we will accomplish so much as we continue to protect and improve outcomes for patients facing critical diagnoses. Thank you.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Power Generation Plan Costs

Carla Beck: — Mr. Speaker, first this Premier's coal plan was set to cost \$900 million. Then that number jumped to \$2.6 billion. Yesterday we revealed that the true cost is a staggering \$26 billion. Mr. Speaker, that is more than the entire budget for Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier is either going to pile on another \$26 billion to the debt for the people of this province, or he's going to have to raise that through \$26 billion in power hikes. It can't be neither, Mr. Speaker. Which is it?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Scott Moe: — Mr. Speaker, now we have, on full display for the people of Saskatchewan, why no one can take this NDP [New Democratic Party] opposition seriously. What they are stating, Mr. Speaker, what they are stating is the full amount of all of the operational costs, all of the fuel costs, all of the carbon tax costs that they would put on that fuel, Mr. Speaker, and including that in the upfront costs.

Let's compare this to, Mr. Speaker, when a Saskatchewan family might buy an automobile. There is the price of that automobile. What the NDP are including is the cost of all of the fuel that you would purchase over the next 25 years; all of the oil changes and the service that you would purchase over the next 25 years; all of the insurance costs that you would have over the course of the next 25 years; and saying, that's the actual cost that you'd need to pay today to use that vehicle over the course of the next 25 years, Mr. Speaker.

The families in Saskatchewan know that isn't how you calculate the cost when you buy a vehicle, Mr. Speaker. And families in Saskatchewan know the same, and that's why they don't take the NDP seriously.

[Interjections]

Speaker Goudy: — I'm going to warn the members. We have

students in the Chamber. Questions are given, respectfully listen. Answers are given, respectfully listen, please.

Leader of the Opposition.

Carla Beck: — Mr. Speaker, when we tabled those SaskPower board documents in the Chamber, well first the Premier, he called them dated. Then he said that they were SaskPower's secret plan, not his. Then he claimed that it was our plan, Mr. Speaker. Well for the record, our plan is available at gridandgrowth.ca, and I guarantee the people of this province it does not include \$26 billion to spend on coal refurbishment.

When the Premier is done pointing fingers and trying to avoid responsibility, will he admit that the fault for this \$26 billion boondoggle lies with him and with that minister?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Scott Moe: — We went through this for likely about an hour yesterday with respect to the Hatch report, which has about a \$2.6 billion capital cost, Mr. Speaker, on the cost of refurbishing our existing assets . . .

[Interjections]

Speaker Goudy: — Member from Regina South Albert and the member from Saskatoon Silverspring, please come to order.

Premier.

Hon. Scott Moe: — Mr. Speaker, we discussed this for over an hour yesterday. And this is precisely as the analogy that I just provided with the ongoing costs of an automobile for 25 years. When a family is buying an automobile, they don't include the 25 years of insurance costs, fuel costs, maintenance costs, Mr. Speaker, in the upfront cost of that vehicle. And, Mr. Speaker, this is why people in this province do not take this NDP opposition seriously.

However, Mr. Speaker, I would say that I do agree with the Leader of the Opposition when she says there will be signs, Mr. Speaker. The NDP opposition are doing everything that they can do to detract from the terrible session that they have had, Mr. Speaker — whether it be splicing videos with the president of SUMA [Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association], whether it be sending out emails, Mr. Speaker, that are asking people to hate individuals serving on this side of the House.

Mr. Speaker, I agree with the Leader of the Opposition when she says there will be signs, Mr. Speaker. Her former colleague is sitting in as an independent. That is a sign, Mr. Speaker. And I would say now there's an online petition that is asking, asking for the Leader of the Opposition to resign.

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

Carla Beck: — Mr. Speaker, it's clear why no one trusts this Premier. This coal number has changed over and over again. That Premier stood in this Assembly and promised that there would be no rate hikes, and then slapped the people of this province — the farms, the families, the small businesses — with a \$136 million hike just five weeks later.

Mr. Speaker, I've got a suggestion for the Premier. If there really is nothing to see here, will he commit to tabling every single costing document from SaskPower by the end of business today? If not, what is he hiding from the people of this province?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Scott Moe: — Mr. Speaker, with respect to this government being credible and accountable, Mr. Speaker, most certainly when it comes to the power rates in this province, we are making every effort and making decisions driven by ensuring that we have reliable and affordable power for Saskatchewan families today and into the future, Mr. Speaker. That's our energy security strategy, Mr. Speaker.

And when it comes to credibility and accountability of this government, this is a government that has put forward the patients-first initiative on behalf of the people across this province, Mr. Speaker, 50 action items to improve outcomes in our health care.

The credibility and accountability of this government is ensuring that our communities are safe; those that have fallen into a life of addictions have an opportunity for recovery, Mr. Speaker, opening up every access point to improve the life of Saskatchewan residents. Improve the economy in this province to ensure that we can make those investments in that patients-first initiative, Mr. Speaker. Make those investments in ovarian cancer research, Mr. Speaker, and make the investments in ensuring that our communities are safer and everyone has an opportunity to aspire to a better life.

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

Aleana Young: — Mr. Speaker, from 1905 to date the provincial debt is \$44 billion. Nearly all of that debt — for the record, Mr. Speaker — has been piled on by Conservative and Sask Party premiers, including \$25 billion by that Premier alone. But apparently, Mr. Speaker, it's not enough. That Premier wants to spend another \$26 billion on refurbishing the coal plants.

Mr. Speaker, how can the Premier justify another \$26 billion of public money?

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

Hon. Jeremy Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This opposition demonstrates every single day in here why they are taken seriously by nobody in this province, Mr. Speaker. What they demonstrated yesterday with great fanfare is that they actually don't know the difference between capital and operating, Mr. Speaker. Which shouldn't maybe surprise us, given the fact that they didn't know the difference between LNG [liquefied natural gas] and natural gas, Mr. Speaker, or they didn't know the difference in their campaign platform between revenue and expenditure.

What they have done is conflated and included operational expenditures over 25 years, Mr. Speaker. That includes things like maintenance, sustainment, operating, salaries. Although they wouldn't be paying the salaries I guess, Mr. Speaker, because

they're going to fire 1,400 people . . .

[Interjections]

Speaker Goudy: — Order, please. The rules of debate are the rules of debate, and somehow I have the responsibility to keep us to those. What I'm finding is that there's a lot of noise coming from the opposition when the answers are being given. So I would ask that we respectfully listen to the responses, please.

Hon. Jeremy Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Again demonstrating why nobody takes them seriously. They included as capital expenditure 25 years of operational expenditure, which includes things like maintenance, sustainment, operating, salaries, mining, fuel, transmission. Mr. Speaker, these are costs that would be incurred regardless of the source of power generation in this province. Whether it be gas, whether it be renewable, those costs are incurred regardless on the operating side, Mr. Speaker.

We've been very clear and very transparent. The capital cost of refurbishing and life-extending, repowering our coal fleet is \$2.6 billion, Mr. Speaker. It's going to keep 1,400 people employed. It's going to keep two communities healthy, and it's going to keep the lights on here in Saskatchewan.

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

Aleana Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Let's be crystal clear in regards to what the minister just did. He confirmed that the cost of his coal plan is \$26 billion. \$26 billion, Mr. Speaker. For \$26 billion Saskatchewan can and should be building out entirely new generation assets. They could be modernizing transmission. They could be supporting emerging technologies, supporting power solutions designed to attract and retain investment, rather than discourage it.

Instead this Premier and that minister are spending more than the entire annual budget of the province to run these units until, theoretically, nuclear comes online. How can the Premier justify spending \$26 billion and hiding it from the province?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Crown Investments Corporation.

Hon. Jeremy Harrison: — You know, the NDP demonstrate every single day that they don't have a grasp on this issue, Mr. Speaker. They now are conflating capital and operational expenditure.

The reality, Mr. Speaker, if they want to compare apples to apples, their plan would be massively more expensive than our plan of life-extending and repowering our coal fleet. Mr. Speaker, massively more expensive, and expose us to enormous risk on the cost of fuel over the long term, which we are importing 100 per cent, nearly 100 per cent, Mr. Speaker.

We're not going to be doing that. We're going to be using Saskatchewan resources to produce power for Saskatchewan people as we move to nuclear power, powered by Saskatchewan uranium to produce power for the Saskatchewan public. The position that we've taken, Mr. Speaker, has resulted in enormous

investment into this province. Industry has shown their confidence in our plan going forward by making billions of dollars of investment, Mr. Speaker, investments that would be entirely impossible under their plan.

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

Aleana Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Sask Party math is back. \$11.4 billion for capital; \$13 billion for fuel; \$1.4 billion for transmission; 393 in initial sustaining capital. What does that add up to, Mr. Speaker? \$26 billion.

This is a government that told the people of Saskatchewan they would not be raising power rates. They raised power rates. This is a government that said the cost was \$2.6 billion. We know it is \$26 billion. The people of Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, they deserve honesty. They deserve accountability. They deserve some basic transparency when it comes to \$26 billion. Where is the transparency and accountability from this Premier and that minister?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of CIC.

Hon. Jeremy Harrison: — Well, Mr. Speaker, they demonstrate every single day why they are not qualified to sit on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, and they just did it again. They have conflated operating and capital, Mr. Speaker. They don't understand the difference between those two things. Not a surprise though, Mr. Speaker. They did not understand the difference between LNG and natural gas. They didn't understand the difference between revenues and expenses.

Mr. Speaker, the capital cost we have been very clear on with regard to our path forward on thermal coal regeneration: \$2.6 billion. What they are including is all of the operational expenditures, Mr. Speaker, and claiming that's capital. If they want to compare apples to apples, then their plan is massively more expensive.

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

Aleana Young: — \$26 billion, Mr. Speaker. I guess that math is hard for the minister to keep up with. But if we're wrong, Mr. Speaker, what about the major industries here in Saskatchewan? Because they have already been publicly warning about the high power costs here and the uncertainty that it is creating for investment.

Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan cannot position itself as a world-class destination for investment in mining, in manufacturing, in agriculture, in data, in major industrial expansion while simultaneously pursuing the most expensive electrical grid in North America.

Has the Premier reached out and told the industries in Saskatchewan that rely on affordable power that his coal refurbishment costs are \$26 billion?

[Interjections]

[10:45]

Speaker Goudy: — Before the minister responds, I'm going to ask again. I don't even know how many names or how many members to mention, but there's a lot of noise coming.

Minister of CIC.

Hon. Jeremy Harrison: — Well thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I can tell you industry are voting with their investment, their confidence in this province and this government. \$60 billion of investment under way right now, Mr. Speaker: two uranium mines, a potash mine, a copper mine which is just going in to production right now, Mr. Speaker, and a \$12 billion data centre — which they oppose — that is moving forward, moving dirt right now as we speak.

These investments, Mr. Speaker, simply would not have been made by some of the largest companies in the world but for the fact that they have confidence in the direction that this government is leading this province into, Mr. Speaker. And I can tell you this as well. Those projects would never have been announced if they were in office, and we know that because they never were when they were in office.

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

Sally Housser: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Tomorrow is the 44th anniversary of the swearing in of Grant Devine as premier. Grant Devine inherited a balanced budget and low debt, and over nine long, corrupt years he left the province billions in debt and nearly bankrupt.

But this Premier's billion-dollar plan is going to make Grant Devine look like a financial wizard. Will the Premier learn from history, stop trying to repeat it, and spare the people of Saskatchewan this \$26 billion boondoggle?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Jim Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, the minister has explained the math behind it that the NDP are struggling with, Mr. Speaker. But it shouldn't be a surprise, it shouldn't be a surprise, Mr. Speaker, because that's the same party that during the election campaign got confused between revenue and expenditures, Mr. Speaker.

The fact of the matter is — as much as the members opposite try to spin this, try to torque this, Mr. Speaker — here are the facts. Mr. Speaker, we have the best credit rating in the country. We have the second-best debt-to-GDP [gross domestic product] in the country, Mr. Speaker. That's why those major projects. That's why companies are choosing to put their capital in Saskatchewan.

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

Sally Housser: — Mr. Speaker, the arrogance coming from this government is staggering. Not only is this going to saddle the province with \$26 billion in debt, it is going to drive jobs and investment out of this province.

Mining companies can choose to invest anywhere in the world,

Mr. Speaker, but they won't choose Saskatchewan if we don't have competitive power rates. Electricity costs are one of the largest input costs for oil and gas producers. They can deploy capital anywhere in North America. And we want them to be choosing to produce more barrels here, but this \$26 billion mess will drive rates through the roof and investment out of Saskatchewan.

Has the Energy and Resources minister told the SaskPower minister just how bad this plan is for the energy sector here in Saskatchewan?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Jim Reiter: — Mr. Speaker, that's just wrong right from the very get-go, Mr. Speaker. Talking about losing investments? The minister just talked about all the mines that are coming in Saskatchewan. A new potash mine, Mr. Speaker, the largest in the world. A new copper mine, more uranium mines, Mr. Speaker, and the list goes on.

Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of being a business-friendly government because that's what generates the revenue that pays for our health care, our social services, our education, Mr. Speaker. That's why all those projects are coming to Saskatchewan to employ people.

Mr. Speaker, they're fixated on the number 26. I think it's obvious why — 27 minus 1 equals 26.

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

Kim Breckner: — Mr. Speaker, the companies that the CIC minister and the Finance minister keep referencing, they're speaking out against this Premier's plan. They wrote the rate review panel back when we thought the cost was just 2.6 billion. Now it's 26 billion. Higher costs at SaskPower mean higher rates for SaskPower's customers, hurting our ability to compete in new markets and grow our exports.

The Premier dismissed these concerns with a laugh and a smirk. Will the Premier be apologizing to the job creators and workers who have been blindsided by the Premier's \$26 billion fumble? Or does he think bankrupting the province will be good for job creation?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Crown Investments Corporation.

Hon. Jeremy Harrison: — Wow. Coming from a trade critic who says we shouldn't trade with our largest trading partner, this is the approach of the NDP, Mr. Speaker.

The reality is that companies are making billion-dollar investments into this jurisdiction. Twelve billion dollars, the most recent one by Bell Canada, building a 300-megawatt data centre right here in this province.

Does anybody really believe, Mr. Speaker, that Bell would be making a \$12 billion investment if they didn't have faith in the path that this government is on with regard to energy policy and with regard to the investment climate? Of course they wouldn't,

Mr. Speaker.

They could make this investment anywhere in the country. And I can tell you they were being chased by NDP jurisdictions, and they made that investment here for a reason, Mr. Speaker. As have the largest miners in the world: BHP, Mr. Speaker, making a multi-billion-dollar investment building a new potash mine here; Foran Mining coming online with a new copper mine.

All of these investments would not have been made but for the fact that these companies have great faith in the direction this government has taken this province in.

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

Kim Breckner: — Mr. Speaker, who to believe, really? This government promised right before Christmas that rates would not be increasing. That wasn't true. This government promised that their plan would cost \$900 million. That wasn't true either. This government then promised that their plan would cost \$2.6 billion, and we know that's not true. The minister who made all of these promises, who talks about who to believe, also said that he didn't bring a gun into the legislature. Well we know that wasn't true either.

Can the Sask Party keep their story straight? And how does driving power bills through the roof do anything to help our economy?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of Crown Investments Corporation.

Hon. Jeremy Harrison: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. These members demonstrate every single day why they are literally taken credibly, taken seriously by nobody in this province, Mr. Speaker. Their plan, their power plan introduced by . . . Hardly paid attention to, by the way, Mr. Speaker. Their plan, hardly paid attention to by anybody when they introduced this, Mr. Speaker, would be massively expensive.

They confused the difference between LNG and natural gas because I actually think they didn't know the difference between the two of those, Mr. Speaker. They mixed up and are conflating operation and capital expenditures, Mr. Speaker. These members opposite literally don't have a clue.

Speaker Goudy: — I'd just pause. I think we're getting a little bit too back and forth-ish. I'd ask the minister . . . To say they don't have a clue, I think we're getting a bit insulting. I'd just ask you to apologize and withdraw that one.

Hon. Jeremy Harrison: — Withdraw and apologize.

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

Nathaniel Teed: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Well it started off costing \$900 million. Then we saw it raised to \$2.6 billion. And now we've learned that it's going to cost Saskatchewan taxpayers \$26 billion. This is what Saskatchewan people have come to expect from a government that can't keep its promises and a minister who forgot that he brought a gun into

the legislature. Did he forget that it was going to cost 26 billion to bring those coal plants back online?

Twenty-six billion is a lot of money and could pay for a lot of health care. So my question is to the Minister of Health: how many nurses could he hire with \$26 billion?

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the Minister of CIC.

Hon. Jeremy Harrison: — Well again why these members are just not taken seriously, Mr. Speaker. What they have done and what they are trying to conflate are capital and operational expenditures, Mr. Speaker. They're saying that the maintenance cost; that the sustainment cost; the operating cost; the salary cost which I mentioned earlier, they're right because they would get rid of all of the 1,400 employees that SaskPower has at Coronach and Estevan; the mining cost; the fuel cost — for 25 years, Mr. Speaker, they're including that as the upfront capital cost.

That makes zero sense, Mr. Speaker. That is like saying — the Premier well put — the price of a vehicle, the actual price is 25 years of fuel, of car washes, of insurance, of all of those things. Mr. Speaker, nobody takes them seriously because that's how they do math.

Speaker Goudy: — I recognize the member from Athabasca.

Access to Addictions Treatment for Northerners

Leroy Laliberte: — Mr. Speaker, in northern Saskatchewan many people are struggling without the mental health and addiction supports that they need. When people reach out and finally ask for the help that they need for their addictions in drugs and alcohol, they face long waits for treatment.

This government hasn't invested to create the treatment spaces in the North, Mr. Speaker, and to keep people alive. \$26 billion, Mr. Speaker: imagine what that could do for the people in northern Saskatchewan and the people in this province battling those addictions. My colleague from Cumberland and I spend most of our time on Thursdays going north and attending funerals.

The people that we're losing every week: now this is a serious topic, Mr. Speaker. We've seen this time and time again where the government has neglected the people of the North. This is another time now today that we're actually teaching them a bit of budgeting. How many lives, and I'm going to ask this to the minister, how many lives could be saved if just a portion of that \$26 billion went to the addictions treatment in this province?

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

Hon. Lori Carr: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we as a government take this issue very seriously — mental health and addictions, suicides, all of it, Mr. Speaker.

The member opposite talked about the investments being made in this area. We have an 8 per cent increase over last year's budget, which was an 8 per cent increase over the budget before, Mr. Speaker. We're continually investing in this space. We are putting addiction treatment spaces in throughout the entire province including in the North, Mr. Speaker: Muskwa Lake,

Onion Lake, Mr. Speaker.

We already had 500 beds. Over the past three years we've added 312 beds. This year we're adding another 200 spaces, Mr. Speaker, and some of those will be in the North, Mr. Speaker. We will continue to make investments for individuals to be able to get into a life of recovery so that they can live healthy lives with their families, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker Goudy: — Just going to make a quick comment. It was disappointing today. There were veiled comments going back and forth. I made one member — it wasn't a grievous comment — apologize. There could have been lots of apologies today.

But the noise level and the amount of heckling from the opposition today, I would ask tomorrow that we have questions and answers, answers and questions, and we focus on listening to the questions and listening to the answers, please. Thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill No. 624 — *The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2026*

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

Trent Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I move now that Bill No. 624, *The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2026* now be introduced and read a first time.

Speaker Goudy: — It has been moved that Bill No. 624, *The Provincial Sales Tax Amendment Act, 2026* be now 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?

Trent Wotherspoon: — At the next sitting of the Assembly.

Speaker Goudy: — Next sitting.

Why is the member on her feet?

MOTION UNDER RULE 61

Release of Documents regarding Power Plant Refurbishment

Aleana Young: — Mr. Speaker, before orders of the day, I seek leave to move a motion under rule 61.

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

Aleana Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This is an important motion that I hope we can all be united on regarding

accountability in our Crowns for the sake of ratepayers in the province, Mr. Speaker. It's an opportunity for the minister and this government to provide some accountability.

If leave is granted, Mr. Speaker, I would move the following motion:

That the Assembly calls on the Minister for CIC to release all documents relating to the real cost of rebuilding SaskPower's coal-fired power plants.

Speaker Goudy: — Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

Speaker Goudy: — Leave is not granted.

[11:00]

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SEVENTY-FIVE MINUTE DEBATE

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

Legislation Proposed by the Official Opposition

April ChiefCalf: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today in the legislature to speak to the many private members' bills that our team has introduced into the legislature this session and to make a case for passing these bills.

Now I will note, Mr. Speaker, that often the 75-minute debate is meant for a bit of fun in the legislature. And I want you to know that I'm all up for bit of fun and a good debate, and I actually have a great sense of humour, Mr. Deputy Speaker. However today I'm going to start off this debate in a more serious tone.

Mr. Speaker, we only have one more week of session before us, and that means that the official opposition only has a few more days to put forward the concerns of the people of the province that are brought to us. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I take these concerns very seriously, and I know everyone on this team, on the official opposition, takes these concerns seriously as well.

We are here to fight for the people of this province, especially those who are vulnerable and those who are struggling. We aren't here to gaslight people and tell them how affordable the province is when in fact people are struggling to pay for their rent, their groceries, their utilities, and their gas.

Mr. Speaker, I want the people of this province and of my riding of Saskatoon Westview to know that their concerns and experiences do matter. And our MLAs have been listening to people, and we've put forward a number of bills this session that, if passed, would truly help the people in this province. Bills that address continuous, unregulated rent increases. Our private members' bills address concerns with affordability, foreign landownership, wildfires, jobs, and consumer protection. All of these bills make good sense and would meet the needs of the

people of this province. And that's why we are here, Mr. Deputy Speaker — to create legislation for the betterment of people's lives.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can't speak to all of these bills in detail, so I'm going to give more attention to my bill on rent control and then touch on these other bills and again emphasize how these bills work for the people of this province and should be supported. Before I dive into discussing rent control though, I want to outline the process for how we came to determining these bills were needed and how we came to draft them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, these bills were not created in a vacuum. People come our offices every day with critical issues affecting their lives: affordability, wildfires, struggling with cancer, finding employment. And when these issues are brought to our attention, we take them seriously and we propose to our team to create a private member's bill to address these issues. And because we are in opposition, we cannot propose anything that costs the government money. So there are limitations to this process, and I want people to know that.

We consult with stakeholders and people impacted by the respective issue. And then we work with legal experts who can help us draft a bill that meets the needs of that issue. Again, Mr. Speaker, we take these quite seriously. A significant amount of time, thought, and consultation goes into these bills.

And we also take it very seriously when we consider whether or not to support a bill proposed from the other side of the legislature. We need to really consider whether that piece of legislation is truly going to make things better for people.

And I want to just take a moment to thank my colleagues on this side of the legislature. Mr. Speaker, I recently shared a very tragic story about something that happened to a family member of mine living in another province, who likely died of an overdose. And when I shared this experience with the people in my caucus, they were very supportive and empathetic and gave this personal tragedy very significant reflection.

Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we don't do anything lightly on this side. And we know the most important role we have is that of listener. But we are also here to take action. And you know, when I had so many people contacting my office, especially seniors — seniors, Mr. Deputy Speaker — and my colleagues also had people contacting their offices about their struggles to pay rent, we knew we had to do something to support them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, rent has now risen in Saskatchewan 43 months in a row. And you can talk till the cows come home about how affordable this province is, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But if you listen, if you listen, you will hear people are struggling to pay the rent.

Seniors who have worked their whole lives, Mr. Deputy Speaker, should not be going to the food bank. And my colleagues and I volunteered last Friday in Moose Jaw at a mission, and we saw seniors coming there for meals. They come there every day because they are struggling with affordability. Seniors should not have to sell their vehicles or move in with their children because they can't afford another \$70-a-month rent increase.

So we listened, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we heard that overall the issue isn't the average mom-and-pop landlords. The problem, Mr. Speaker, is out-of-province large corporate landlords that come into Saskatchewan, buy up existing rental properties — they're not building new properties; they're buying existing rental properties — and start raising rents every six months so that seniors are grappling with double-digit rent increases every year. And their pensions aren't going up by that same amount.

We then consulted with stakeholders and drafted our bill. Now our bill, Bill 608, *The Rent Control Act, 2025*, would tie rent increases to inflation. It does not prohibit landlords from raising rent, but rather it supports predictable, reasonable rent increases that allow both landlords and tenants to budget accordingly.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we aren't just worried about seniors. We know that people on social income supports such as SIS [Saskatchewan income support] and SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability] are one rent increase away from being on the street. And in our recent estimates session with Social Services, when we asked why those income supports are not keeping pace with the cost of living, we were told that SIS is only meant to be a temporary measure until people transition into employment.

But you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, not everyone in our province is going to be able to work for whatever reason. Single parents, people with disabilities that don't qualify for SAID might not be able to work. And in a recent visit to a shelter in Saskatoon, the shelter director noted that a lot of clients at that shelter likely had undiagnosed acquired brain injuries or cognitive disabilities.

Getting and maintaining a job and even just dealing with basic life skills is a struggle for some people, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and these people often fall between the cracks of a system that believes keeping people in abject poverty will somehow get them out of abject poverty.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I see some of these people on Sunday mornings when I gather with Feed the People to feed the people. And they are struggling with poverty, housing insecurity, food insecurity. Rent control, along with other supports through social services, would help people get a place to live.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as soon as we said "rent control," there was a strong reaction on the other side of the room, and reports and literature were cited. And you know, Mr. Speaker, this is actually a very predictable response. People opposed to rent control make the same arguments every time. We saw them coming a mile away.

The first is supply and demand. If you increase supply, the demand goes down, and the argument is that rent goes down. We also heard the argument that rent control disincentivizes construction. But then we actually did some research and found that nearly every province with rent control in Canada has seen more new housing investment than Saskatchewan.

Another argument put forward by the Sask Party government is that rent control discourages landlords from repairing and maintaining their property. Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can tell you, in my riding there are mom-and-pop landlords who do not raise rent, but they keep that property maintained and provide a

safe, affordable house for their tenants. And there are out-of-province corporate monopoly landlords raising rents every six months while their properties deteriorate.

But the point of this bill, Mr. Speaker, is to help people, to ensure they have a roof over their heads. Because, Mr. Speaker, people are not thriving under the current system, and many are not surviving. And the well-being of my constituents takes precedence over the profits of out-of-province corporate landlords. I ask the Assembly to support *The Rent Control Act*.

Now, Mr. Speaker, mindful of the time — I could apparently speak to rent control all day — but I want to move on to some of the other bills that have been put forward by my colleagues this session. And I want to speak to *The Saskatchewan Wildfire Strategy Act*, Bill 609.

Now, Mr. Speaker, having lived through a major wildfire event in 2015 and having been evacuated and displaced from my hometown at the time of La Ronge, I believe I do bring some expertise to the table. And I want to support all my colleagues from northern Saskatchewan: the member from Athabasca, who introduced this bill, and the member from Cumberland, who works so tirelessly to represent his constituency.

And on the topic of listening, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need to listen to the people from the North. They know their land and environment. They are the experts. They went through a very traumatic situation last summer, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and this should never happen again. And one of my friends from La Ronge still hasn't received any money from the SPSA [Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency]. Supporting this bill would ensure that the government is taking the issue of northern wildfires seriously.

And I just want to let everyone know that in my time in the North, I came to know many people who were wildland firefighters. And in many cases, this was a family tradition. Every summer they fought these fires. They got on top of them right from the start.

But since the Sask Party government has been in place, people from the North aren't getting certified to fight fires. And we need those people to be on the front lines. We need planes. We need people. We need government support. We need a strategy. Again we need to listen to people of the North, and we need to support Bill 609.

Bill 612, *The Lower Power Bills and Car Insurance Act* would go a long way in helping people with affordability. This makes good sense in a province where the cost of living is constantly increasing. As you can see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, these bills are common sense. These bills will help people in our province.

The provincial health authority banning parking fees, Bill 615, is actually one I want to focus on as well, Mr. Speaker. Now I've mentioned in the legislature previously that my son had a cancer diagnosis in 2021. And I want to say that one thing that helped us navigate this whole process — believe it or not — was the simple thing of having a parking pass, where we could park at the cancer clinic in Saskatoon worry free. Because getting parking on campus can be a real hassle and it's expensive. Now he's doing well and we're feeling positive that his treatment has

been successful. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, people with cancer should not be worrying about paying for parking while they are getting treatment. They have other things they need to focus on.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm running short of time and I want to let my colleagues speak to some of these bills as well. But I just want to tell a brief story here for a moment. As I was signing the paperwork for today, I noticed that the date is May 7th. May 7th, tomorrow is the nine-year anniversary of my having a major cardiac event, a heart attack, due to a spontaneous coronary artery dissection. I experienced that one week after getting my layoff notice from NORTEP [northern teacher education program].

I woke up one morning with this burning sensation in my chest and excruciating pain in my back, and I went to the local ER [emergency room] in La Ronge. And they were absolutely overwhelmed with people who were sick with pneumonia and the flu. There was one doctor in the whole hospital and one nurse in the ER, and they didn't have time to see me. I waited five hours for them to realize I was having a heart attack.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know what it's like to be a person that falls between the cracks, that needs help. And that's one of the reasons I ran to be a politician and to represent people in this legislature. And the bills that we are putting forward here are meant to help those people falling through the cracks.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move:

That the Assembly call upon all members to quickly pass the legislation brought forward by members of the official opposition this session.

Thank you.

[11:15]

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — It has been moved by the member from Saskatoon Westview:

That the Assembly calls upon all members to quickly pass the legislation brought forward by members of the official opposition this session.

Is the Assembly ready for the question? I recognize the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford.

James Thorsteinson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I am very happy to rise and enter debate here today. It's always a great opportunity to get a few comments on the record and express our various ideas.

But I do find it a touch strange, Mr. Speaker. This is likely the strangest motion that I have ever seen put forward in 75-minute debate. In the past, 75-minute debates have been used to highlight what is important to the people of Saskatchewan, those which we all have the honour to represent. That could be government policy, social issues, even geopolitical issues. But this motion asking the government to push through all of the opposition's proposed bills is a perfect example of why no one takes the NDP opposition seriously.

They like to call themselves the government-in-waiting, Mr.

Deputy Speaker. But to be honest, it's pretty clear they can't even do the job of opposition properly. I have a few examples of this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in particular when it comes to bills and legislation.

The past few days there have been a number of bills go to committee after second reading, where the opposition is able to ask questions about the bill and get any clarification surrounding it. Bill 48, *The Compassionate Intervention Act* was just recently before the Human Services Committee.

The opposition put forward 17 amendments to that Act. Now that's all well and good, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but there's one problem. Most of the amendments put forward were already addressed within the Act. Maybe they should actually have read the bill before they got to committee and proposed redundant amendments.

Bill No. 57, *The Information Services Corporation Amendment Act, 2026* was before the Crown and Central Agencies Committee just a couple nights ago, a committee, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I am proud to serve on. This piece of legislation enhances the Government of Saskatchewan's position by strengthening the golden share, ensuring that intellectual property, offices, and jobs all remain here in Saskatchewan.

The opposition critic, the member from Regina South Albert, began by asking a series of questions based on hypotheticals, Mr. Deputy Speaker, asking about a report that the ISC [Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan] board is putting together but is not yet complete.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, how is someone supposed to answer questions on a report that isn't even written yet? And when the minister of CIC said as much, the member from Regina South Albert took that as her opportunity to make up her own answer. Then as we were wrapping up, she put forward an amendment that would have potentially weakened the position of the government and its stake in ISC. Mr. Deputy Speaker, those are but two very recent examples of why no one takes this opposition seriously.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a government that listens, that is willing to take good ideas from the members opposite and work with them to ensure the best outcomes for the people of Saskatchewan. One very recent example of this would be Henry's Law. Following the tragic loss of a young child, it was obvious to members on both sides of the Assembly that changes needed to be made to *The Building Code Regulations*.

The Minister of Government Relations worked closely with the family as well as the opposition member from Saskatoon Nutana to make meaningful adjustments to those regulations, ensuring that families are kept safe where they should feel the safest — in their homes. When we work collaboratively we can make meaningful change for the people of Saskatchewan.

Our government is also happy to pass opposition bills when they make sense, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Last sitting we passed the Sikh heritage Act, which was brought forward by the member from Saskatoon University-Sutherland. Later that sitting our government went one step further, Mr. Deputy Speaker, passing *The Heritage Recognition (From Many Peoples, Strength) Act*,

which recognizes the diversity which makes up our great province and the many different people and cultures that make Saskatchewan home.

However, Mr. Deputy Speaker, often there are bills brought forward by the opposition that we can't support. Maybe they're redundant. Maybe they just don't make sense. Let me start with Bill 606, *The Provincial Health Authority (ER Closure right-to-know) Amendment Act*.

Mr. Speaker, our government believes that people do have a right to good health care and they deserve to know when the ER is open or closed. And that is why last fall we directed the SHA [Saskatchewan Health Authority] to put that out every day, all the ER closures. Then here just recently, Mr. Speaker, the SHA was directed by the Minister of Health to now do that twice a day. Also people are able to call 811 and they will be directed to the nearest emergency room through that service.

We responded to what we heard from the people of Saskatchewan, what the members opposite brought forward. And we responded to that and took it forward. And I think that's a good showing of what our government does and how we listen and how we can work with the opposition.

There are a few things, Mr. Speaker, that do sound a little strange to me in some of their bills. And there is a long list here, Mr. Speaker, so I'll get through as many as I can. For example Bill 621, *The Public Works and Services (Prioritizing Local Jobs) Amendment Act*. Mr. Speaker, over 90 per cent of government procurement is awarded to Saskatchewan suppliers, and in the past five years we've awarded more than 99 per cent of procurements to Canadian companies. And when a company comes in and they may not be from Saskatchewan and they're working on a job, they quite often hire Saskatchewan people. Those are still Saskatchewan jobs, Saskatchewan taxpayers raising Saskatchewan families.

Now the members opposite like to talk about supporting local and everything else. But during the last election, they spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on out-of-province campaign managers, media executives, everything else. They spent a pile of money out of province in the last election. This party and our government is proud to support local.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the member for Saskatoon Westview just recently spoke on *The Rent Control Act*. We know very well that rent control does not work. It does dry up investment in rental properties. And they talk about where rent control has been put in place — BC [British Columbia], Ontario. Well go downtown Vancouver; go downtown Toronto. Rent an apartment and compare that to what it costs here in Saskatchewan. Significantly less than what it would cost downtown Vancouver.

[Interjections]

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — I'm going to ask for order in the House. Way too much conversation happening back and forth here at this point in time. I'll have none of it. Thank you.

James Thorsteinson: — Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is no question that rent control dries up investment in rental properties. It's been proven time and time and time again in every

jurisdiction that it has been tried.

Bill 611, the constitutional questions, notwithstanding clause referral, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this really boggles my mind how the opposition thinks they want to remove . . . We should quit using the notwithstanding clause that protects the rights of Saskatchewan people. And it was something brought forward and made sure it was there in the Constitution by the Premier of Alberta and the Premier of Saskatchewan, who was NDP. But now they think it's not something that we should be using, and I just don't see how that makes sense in my mind, Mr. Speaker.

I see I'm running very close to being out of time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so I'll end with this: I think it's pretty obvious no one takes this opposition seriously, and our government will not and cannot push all these bills and many more that I didn't have the opportunity to discuss through the Assembly. Therefore I will not be supporting the motion put forward by the member from Saskatoon Westview. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Sally Housser: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am delighted to speak to this motion by my wonderful colleague from Saskatoon Westview. And you know, my colleague from Saskatoon Westview talked about 75-minute debate. It's no secret that this is one of my favourite things in the legislative session.

And there's different parts, the different roles that parts of legislative sessions play. You have the theatre of question period, the 25 minutes where we get to let it all out. And that's what the media likes to watch, and the public in general. You have the 75-minute debate, where we have time to really put forward and really debate ideas in a little bit of a longer form.

But probably one of the most unsung parts of the legislative process is the committee and estimates process. And that's where, in legislatures in the Westminster system here in North America and across the world, that's where a lot of the work gets done and where we can kind of put aside the theatrics and really look at bills in a serious way, as we were elected to do as legislators.

And, Mr. Speaker, I've only been elected for about a year and a half now, but I've been around politics for some time. And I have to say that in the Committee of the Whole yesterday, in Premier's estimates, I have never in any legislature here or anywhere else in Canada seen the level of histrionics and obfuscation in the use of that committee by the Premier and that government. It really beggars belief in terms of . . . It was a disgrace to the parliamentary system, Mr. Speaker.

Now I will move on to the task at hand, and frankly so many bills, so little time, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's something we hear not just from this government but from people across the province, is that yes, you're the opposition and we know it's your job to hold this government accountable, but tell us what you would do.

And that's exactly what this opposition under the leader of the NDP has done this session. We have put forward practical,

achievable, and frankly non-partisan . . . These bills that we have put forward should not be controversial. These are common-sense measures that would make the daily lives of the people in Saskatchewan better, Mr. Speaker.

I will start by talking about *The Rent Control Act*, again put forward by my very capable and committed colleague from Saskatoon Westview. Mr. Speaker, well I guess it was last summer I was visiting a seniors' residence in the great riding of Regina University. And the rent for that residence had gone up by \$400 a month, Mr. Speaker. And these are people who did everything right their whole lives. They mostly had worked, had good pensions, but they are on fixed incomes. And people simply cannot afford an extra \$400 a month.

And one of the women I spoke to . . . And she said this kind of in a joking way, but it was heartbreaking. She said to me, "I can no longer afford to live as long as I'd hoped to," Mr. Speaker. So when the government talks about how affordable this province is, and according to them renters have never had it so good in this province, I want them to think about that constituent of mine who is worried that she can no longer afford to live as long as she'd hoped she would, Mr. Speaker.

And it's not just renters that are affected by the soaring cost of rent, Mr. Speaker. I talked to other people in my constituency, homeowners, people who are just retiring, hoping — again they've done everything right; they owned a home — and hoping that they could spend their retirement maybe doing some travelling, enjoying their life. But now they are worried about the fact that their kid can't afford to move out of the house. And not only that, but their parents are going to have to move back in because they can't afford their rent, Mr. Speaker. This is something that would make life better not just for renters in this province, but for everybody across Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker.

[11:30]

I'll move on next to *The Saskatchewan Wildfire Strategy Act*, introduced by my very young and handsome colleague from Athabasca, Mr. Speaker. Bill 609, *The Saskatchewan Wildfire Strategy Act* would require the Ministry of Public Safety to create and regularly update a provincial wildfire management strategy; maintain ongoing consultation with experts and Indigenous and community partners; and provide clear, transparent public reporting.

And it boggles my mind, Mr. Speaker, that the government can find any fault in that piece of legislation. What could you find that says that that's something that we should not be doing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, particularly given the chaos and tragedy that we saw last year?

And I remember in April of last year where my colleague from Cumberland asked the minister if they were ready, if they were ready for wildfire season, Mr. Speaker, and they nearly laughed him out of the legislature. And just six short weeks later, the North started burning. And here we are in May, and we still do not see a plan from this government, Mr. Speaker.

Again, Mr. Speaker, so many bills, so little time, and I'd like to get to my own. But one more that I'd like to talk about, and again it staggers me that the government could find fault with this. Bill

615, banning parking fees for cancer patients, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is staggering to me that you could drive to Casino Regina and park for free but that you cannot go to get your cancer treatment without paying.

And the other thing that is so unfair in this: that is not consistent across the province. So in Prince Albert, if you were in one of the toughest points in your life and have been diagnosed with cancer, you have to pay when somebody else in the province doesn't. This is something that is so clear, and should be passed immediately. And I would challenge any one of the members of that government to stand up and explain to somebody suffering from cancer why they should be charged for parking when they are going for treatment, Mr. Speaker.

So moving on to my personal favourite for reasons that are all too obvious: Bill 621, the public works and services, prioritizing local jobs Act, Mr. Speaker. This came from talking to many people in the building trades that were concerned about losing projects to out-of-province companies, out-of-province workers.

And I actually again spoke to somebody in my constituency who's an ironworker. And he said to me, in his shop that they'd trained people up to work on wind projects. They actually invested their time and money and energy training that generation of people. And then they lost the contract to an out-of-province company that hired out-of-province workers. So they actually lost money by doing the right thing and preparing their workforce for building the energy projects that we need in this province, Mr. Speaker. And I tell you what, he was mad about that.

And again I challenge any member of that government to explain to that constituent of mine why prioritizing Saskatchewan workers is not something that they support, Mr. Speaker.

And this bill not only talks about prioritizing Saskatchewan workers; Indigenous workers as well. You know, I talked to an Indigenous business leader and he said we don't have a labour force gap, what we have is a skills gap. We have the people in this province. They need the training to be able to work.

And it's one thing when I talked to people in industry as well, is that we can talk all we want about building all these projects — and we should; we should be developing and building the infrastructure we need — but we don't have enough people.

And as the country grows — we're not the only people talking about building — the competition for that labour is going to increase. And we have to make sure that we have the homegrown labour force here in Saskatchewan so that we can build right here at home well into the future, Mr. Speaker.

Which is why we're also saying that projects should also prioritize having apprentices and also prioritize communities that come in with a community benefit, whether that's investing in the local community or also providing skills training. These are practical things. Industry is doing it. First Nations are doing it. They need a partner in this government, Mr. Speaker, to step up and ensure that we have the workers, local workers that can build this province well into the future.

And again I am disappointed because there are so many fantastic

bills put forward by this opposition with practical, achievable solutions that show that we are a government-in-waiting and we are ready to govern, Mr. Speaker. I am delighted to be part of a team that is being proactive, and it's so, so excellent to be proud like this when faced with a government that is absolutely bereft of ideas and obsessed with the status quo, Mr. Speaker.

I am delighted to be supporting the motion from my colleague from Saskatoon Westview. Thank you very much.

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — I recognize the member from Dakota-Arm River.

Barret Kropf: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The motion before us today asks this Assembly to commit to quickly pass the legislation brought forward by members of the official opposition this session. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wanted to take that motion seriously, so I read all the bills, every single one of them. And I want to thank the members opposite because what I read makes the case against this motion better than I ever could.

There is a motion that really asks the question, Mr. Speaker. It asks the elected legislators of Saskatchewan to abandon the duty of scrutiny, to take 18 private member bills and pass them without committee work, without amendment, without debate on their merits, and without the basic question of whether the bill in front of us actually does what the title says. That is not how a serious legislature works, Mr. Speaker, and it's certainly not how this side of the House works.

So I'll break it up into three categories today, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Let me explain why we cannot support this motion, because after reading all 18 of these bills a pattern emerges. They fall into these three categories.

Category one: they are solutions in search of a problem. Bills that address things this government has already done administratively are things that don't actually exist as problems in Saskatchewan. Category two: they are just bad economics. Bills that if passed would actively make Saskatchewan worse off — drying up housing investments, locking our companies out of interprovincial markets, or blocking standard fraud detection mechanisms. Category three: bills that are simply not drafted correctly. Bills where the actual text of the legislation does not do what the press release says it does. The most fundamental of all, Mr. Deputy Speaker, bills that demand spending the opposition does not have the constitutional authority to authorize.

So let me give you a few examples. On Bill 619, from the member from Saskatoon Southeast. The member rose in this Chamber on April 23rd in a 75-minute debate on the cost of living, and she set out with great enthusiasm to lecture this side of the House on the difference between predatory pricing and AI [artificial intelligence] pricing. She told the Assembly, and I quote, that "AI pricing is when companies track consumer data through information that is available or entered online through websites or through apps, and it's used to adjust prices." Mr. Speaker, that is a definition the member offered this Chamber.

Now think about what that captures. Every loyalty program in our province — your Costco membership and the pricing attached to it, the PC Optimum points cards, Air Miles cards, Save-On rewards, Tim Hortons cards and points, McDonald's

points — every single digital coupon, every personalized offer. By her own definition, bill C-19 would ban all of those.

Then the member referenced the 14 grocery stores within five minutes of this building. And she said, I quote, "It's not just two stores competing; it's many stores. So they have to keep their costs down. That saves consumers money." Mr. Speaker, the member just answered her own bill. Saskatchewan has competition.

The Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority, the body that would actually receive these complaints, has reported zero complaints of surveillance pricing in this province — zero, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Bill 619 is a solution in search of a problem defined by a member who by her own example talked herself out of the case for it.

Bill 618, the so-called "stitches, not snitches" bill. The NDP wants to ban an anonymous reporting mechanism that, by the way, the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners has found doubles the rate of fraud detection. It is a standard practice across Canada health systems and with major employers.

But here's what makes this bill remarkable, Mr. Deputy Speaker. On April 13th, 12 days before they introduced this bill, the member from Regina Elphinstone-Centre publicly encouraged Saskatchewan health professionals to report concerns through, and I quote, "an anonymous form" sent directly to her email inbox.

So the member wants to ban anonymous reporting at the SHA, but operate her own anonymous reporting system at the same time. Anonymous reporting for me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but not for thee. Another solution by the NDP in search of a problem.

Bill 610, the members opposite want the government to legislate transparency reports about virtual physician availability in our emergency rooms, except that very opposition brought a motion to this Chamber opposing virtual health care. Mr. Deputy Speaker, you cannot oppose a service in the morning and demand reporting of it in the afternoon. Virtual care has prevented thousands of ER closures province-wide. It's connecting patients to primary care and is a priority for our patients-first plan.

Now let's go to category 2, bad economic sense. Bills 608 and 612, rent control, Mr. Speaker. In 2025 housing starts in Saskatchewan grew by nearly 42 per cent. We were first in the country, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The member opposite wants us to take the province with the fastest-growing housing supply in Canada and apply the one policy that has been proven in jurisdiction after jurisdiction to dry up housing investment. Saskatchewan groups have written to this Assembly opposing the bill. The economists oppose the bill. The actual housing data says that we do not need this bill.

Bill 612, lower power and SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] rates. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Saskatchewan has the second-lowest utility bundle in the country. Industrial investment is voting with its feet. Sixty major investments totalling \$62 billion have been announced in our province. Why? Because we have a reliable and affordable grid. The bill politicizes Crown utility rates and undermines the independent rate review panel,

the very body designed to keep decisions out of politics.

Category three, appropriations without authority. This Assembly's own glossary defines a money bill as one that requires the spending of public money and the rules on it are unambiguous, Mr. Speaker. I quote the Assembly's own unpublished explanation of how laws are made: "Only a member who is a cabinet minister, having first obtained the Lieutenant Governor's royal recommendation, may sponsor a so-called money Bill."

This is a financial initiative of the Crown. It's rooted in section 54 of the *Constitution Act*. It is the foundation of responsible government in every Westminster legislation in this country. The opposition cannot initiate spending, full stop.

And the Leader of the Opposition knows this, Mr. Deputy Speaker. On March 1st of this year before this spring sitting had even begun, she told reporters about the wave of bills that she was promising. And I quote her directly: "Of course, they cannot have any cost attached to them so there is going to be some limitations there." She is correct, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So the members opposite have done some wordsmithing. They have written bills that mandate spending without appropriation spending and they impose obligations and walked away from their funding commitments.

As I said, the Leader of the Opposition told reporters that her caucus bills cannot have a cost attached to them and this constitution requires it. Only the Crown can initiate those appropriations. And yet every reporting requirement, every fee band, every rate freeze, every administrative obligation in their 18 bills imposes costs the opposition cannot fund and refuses to take the responsibility for it. They throw 18 bills against the legislative wall with no plan ever in place. And it's yet another reason why nobody can take them seriously.

If this Assembly is to quickly pass legislation that demands spending the opposition has neither costed, neither funded nor possessed the constitutional authority to authorize, then this Chamber has stopped doing its job. Mr. Deputy Speaker, scrutiny is a job. Amendments is a job. Asking whether a bill actually does what the title says and whether the funding actually exists to deliver it, that is a job.

[11:45]

What we will not do is pass bad ideas, badly drafted ideas, or ideas that violate trade agreements, ideas that ban loyalty programs by accident, or ideas that demand spending the opposition cannot fund just because they demand it. And for these reasons, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will be voting against this motion from Saskatoon Westview, and I encourage every member of this Assembly to do the same.

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

Leroy Laliberte: — Well thank you, Deputy Speaker. And I want to say also I appreciate that the two members — both the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford and the member from Dakota-Arm River — for entering into the 75-minute debate with us.

I feel deeply honoured to be able to take part in the 75-minute debate today, Deputy Speaker. There's lots to be said. I know that both members spoke about all of the money that we want to spend, spend, spend. But not really. Take a look at the \$26 billion that they're looking to spend regarding the province right now.

Deputy Speaker, I want to speak about a lot of the things that are taking place in the North. And I also want to speak about a little bit of a history of what took place last year and the reason as to why I introduced a bill for a wildfire strategy Act for this province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, years ago — in the '90s — we had had a team of young individuals go firefighting. That was the summer job every year. So a lot of the teenagers from Beauval or throughout the North, they went firefighting. There was a team called "initial attack." So every time that there was a fire, they were gone. They had these people that travelled, come and grab the teenagers, take them to the fire cache. They were trained and then sent off to the fire line for 10 to 14 days at a time to get the fires out, not to sit there and manage them, but to put them out, Deputy Speaker.

Now one of the things — and the reason why I wanted to introduce a bill like this and in the support of my colleagues — was because I've seen first-hand the devastation that was taking place last year. There was a lot of . . . And I spoke to this many times with the scramble mode that took place in the North. There was people that were sent to the city centres. They were told to log onto an app. A lot of people didn't even understand the way that the app worked. And we even asked some of the SPSA workers how to use the app, and they couldn't figure it out either.

So we had had a lot of people travel out on their own to escape from those wildfires. Now I'd had the Minister of Public Safety, the new Minister of Public Safety make a comment here a few weeks back that the NDP were using fear tactics on the people of northern Saskatchewan. That's not the case, Deputy Speaker. If they're seeing a 100-foot flame coming at you, you're about to lose your home, that individual would be scared too. And that's what had taken place last year.

We were getting these updates, and there was an update for the community of Beauval saying that the possibility of the fire maybe hitting the community would be four days. Well four hours later people were escaping with their lives. Now that's not just a story. That really happened, Deputy Speaker.

Back when I was a kid, we had had . . . like I said, you had the initial attack. We had had fire tower watchers, people that stood in these towers to see if there was smoke. They would report that in right away, let the SPSA know what was going on if there was a fire that started up, you know, so many kilometres away in this direction. And that's the way you did it. Then you'd get the initial attack — water bombers, everybody was going.

Last year there was a fire burning right beside the tower out by Dore Lake. That new digital system didn't pick up because the camera was down. Wasn't working properly. So it was one of the community members from Dore Lake that had called in to say that this fire started.

And then for two weeks, Deputy Speaker, from Beauval, from Ile-a-la-Crosse, from Buffalo Narrows, from all of these places

on the west side — this was shortly after there was scramble mode on the east side — 16,000 people, I think it was, that were evacuated from that area. We seen this fire come for two weeks, Deputy Speaker, and there was not one water bomber to be seen.

People were trapped in their homes. And this is the reason why I spoke about the highways yesterday. Many times I spoke about the highways in here. Highway 918 washed out in five different places in English River, Patuanak — five places. It's only an 87-kilometre stretch into the community. No way in and no way out.

In case of an emergency like we did last year, those people in the community were stuck there last year, Deputy Speaker. They were stuck. And if it wasn't for the good people of Ile-a-la-Crosse that drive over or take a boat from Ile-a-la-Crosse lake to bring them supplies, the people would have . . . kids wouldn't have had Pampers, no milk. The people in the community didn't have any food. There was no way to get in and out of that community. And it was the reason why we called to get the federal government involved to ensure that we could get the supplies that they needed.

The same thing happened in the far North. People were cut off — Stony Rapids, Fond-du-Lac, Black Lake, all of these different places — from receiving what they needed to survive, Deputy Speaker.

Now I spoke about these roads because one, we don't get the services that we get here in the South. We don't get the resources that we need in the North, but yet there's billions of dollars in natural resources that are taken out year after year, Deputy Speaker. And we're still lacking services in 2026. That road into the far North should be a double-lane highway by now.

Just a few weeks ago we had had a group of 15 people from the far North stuck on the roads in a blizzard because there was funding that was pulled away from the people to be able to take care of their own roads up there and not used to give them the contracts. And it was given back to Highways.

So those people stayed in their vehicles all night, Deputy Speaker. They were trapped because of the road conditions at that time. They couldn't get in and out of there. They stayed in that vehicle. So people from the far communities got on a Ski-Doo to deliver gas to these people so they wouldn't freeze in their vehicles overnight. This is happening in 2026.

Last year — and again I'll give a bit of a history lesson — we'd had water bombers that were grounded. You knew that. It was quite upsetting seeing that the North was up in flames and people were evacuated. There was people stuck in their communities that should have been evacuated because some of them already had lung issues. And that smoke wasn't going to help.

This season, now we're in the spring season, Deputy Speaker. And the sad part about it, while we're excited about all of the warm weather that we're going to be getting, that we're starting to get, the people in northern Saskatchewan, right now are worried. PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder], you know, for some of them that had to evacuate last year, so they're worried about this warm weather where we should be enjoying it. Because there is no plan in place for wildfire season again.

I'm not blaming anybody personally about the weather. We can't control the weather, Deputy Speaker. But we could have plans in place to ensure that everything is prepared before we get into these types of seasons.

The infrastructure, the bridges, the roads in northern Saskatchewan, I've said many times — and I'll name those roads: the road into Patuanak, English River into Pinehouse, into Beauval, into Michel Village, into Dillon, St. George's Hill, into Turnor Lake, all the way to La Loche, all the way to the far North — those roads should be done. Cumberland House should be done. It should be done. Absolutely no reason as to why we're, you know . . .

So you know, we had a hospital closure up in La Loche, and this happens a lot. They were told to go to the next place in case of an emergency — 165 kilometres away, Ile-a-la-Crosse. This is happening in 2026, Deputy Speaker.

So I have lots to speak about. Running out of time, but I'm ready for the questions, Deputy Speaker. And I just want to say that I support the motion made by my colleague, my good friend, the MLA for Saskatoon Westview. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Carlton.

Kevin Kasun: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's my pleasure to enter the debate, the opposition motion:

That the Assembly calls upon all members to quickly pass the legislation brought forward by the members of the opposition.

But before I start, I just constantly hear from the other side of the House about the fun and, to quote the member opposite, the theatre that is question period. Mr. Deputy Speaker, on this side of the House you have a government that takes this role seriously. It's not theatre. It's not a platform for entertainment. And that's why you cannot take the opposition seriously.

Anyway I would assume that this motion would encompass all 18 bills that the opposition introduced. I obviously won't have time, as we're all running out but, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will endeavour to show you why the people of this great province can't take the opposition seriously.

One of the bills introduced was 605, *The Free Trade within Canada (Mutual Recognition) Act*. Our government has been a leader in breaking down internal trade barriers since 2007. We are the ones who signed the New West Partnership, despite opposition from the NDP, and continued to work with other provinces to reduce internal trade barriers in the years that followed.

Most recently our government introduced and passed *The Saskatchewan Internal Trade Promotion Act*, which is the next step in mutual recognition and increasing flow and trade across Canada. For example, in Saskatchewan interprovincial exports of goods and services represent more than 22 per cent of Saskatchewan's GDP. Exports to other provinces increased 33 and a half per cent from 19 billion in 2018 to 25 billion — which

seems to be a good number around here today — in 2022 . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . Yeah, well you guys can't do math anyway.

Through the Canadian Free Trade Agreement and active participation in the regulatory reconciliation co-operation table, Saskatchewan continues to work with federal, provincial, and territorial counterparts to enable companies to conduct business across provincial and territorial borders.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, before I can speak further on that, we have to mention how our province keeps a competitive advantage over other jurisdictions. For business to want to be in and want to do business in Saskatchewan, we must remain competitive with others. Some numbers first: total capital investment in Saskatchewan this year is over 60 projects bringing in over 60 billion in private investment. Private investments account for the majority of the total capital investment in our province.

We absolutely want free trade within Canada, but let's attract more business to Saskatchewan. How do we do that? Here are a couple ways. Business taxes. Saskatchewan has some of the lowest statutory corporate tax rates amongst the provinces. Saskatchewan is tied with Prince Edward Island for the second-lowest provincial small-business tax rate, which is 1 per cent; tied with Ontario for the second-lowest provincial manufacturing and processing tax rate of 10 per cent. Saskatchewan also has one of the highest small-business income thresholds in Canada at 600,000.

Another way we stay competitive is the Sask Party government's regulatory environment. The red tape reduction committee, which over the last decade has reviewed all business-related regulations for relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness. Red tape reduction efforts have saved businesses a total of 682 million since 2015. Our government has made a commitment for Saskatchewan to be the best location for investment. This commitment includes a strong and stable business environment with a host of incentives to support investment.

[12:00]

To further build and diversify our economy and reach new markets, our government has introduced a collection of resources to serve as a guide for our province's economic expansion. It includes Saskatchewan's plan for growth, the province's critical minerals strategy, our labour market strategy. We even have a website, investsk.ca. We constantly invite investors to be part of the Saskatchewan advantage.

I want to speak for a second on Bill 621, prioritizing local jobs. We know that the NDP says one thing and does another. Fact: the member from Saskatoon Eastview hired an out-of-province GOTV [get out the vote] coordinator. Fact: the member from Regina Mount Royal had a campaign manager from Edmonton. Fact: and the Leader of the Opposition, representing the constituency we're standing in right now, hired a campaign manager from Calgary for her local re-election campaign. Fact: although the NDP expensed over a quarter million in out-of-province contracts in the last election.

Fact: they recently hired a Quebec consultant for their plan to put the carbon tax back on SaskPower bills. Fact: they hired an

American health care consultant to tell them how Saskatchewan health care works. Fact: and of course plan to outsource our energy strategy to BC and the United States with their plan to import LNG or whatever — whatever number, whatever they want to use now — and export jobs to those jurisdictions.

The NDP talk a lot about hiring local, but when given the chance to practise what they preach, they fall short every time. I guess that's why they need this bill, to legislate themselves.

I'm going to group these next bills together — Bill 608, 612, and 620 — because they have to do with affordability. *The Rent Control Act*. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we know that rent control dries up investment in housing. And at a time when housing is what we need, this is the wrong approach. In 2025 housing starts increased by nearly 42 per cent compared to 2024, ranking first in the country. Groups in Saskatchewan have put their opposition to rent control on record opposing this bill.

612, lower power bills and car insurance Act. Saskatchewan has the second-lowest utility bundle in Canada. SaskPower is making the investments necessary to ensure we have an affordable and reliable grid so the lights go on when you flick that switch. The reliability has been key as industry is voting with investments in this province.

620, *The Restricting Property Controls for Grocery Stores and Supermarkets Act*. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we recognize the price of groceries are a concern for people in Saskatchewan. That is why we have allowed people to keep more of their own money through significant income tax reductions. Saskatchewan already . . .

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — Please stop the clock, please. The member from Saskatoon Chief Mistawasis and the member from Cumberland, very loud interruptions have been heard very, very significantly from myself. I would listen very, very closely when your members were speaking. There wasn't a single heckle — not one. Let that sink in, each and every one of you.

The member from Prince Albert Carlton.

Kevin Kasun: — Saskatchewan already has protections in place to discourage restrictive covenants on a case-by-case basis, including if they're unclear, outdated, or no longer serve a legitimate purpose, or if enforcing them would clearly harm the public interest.

We will continue to take concrete steps to reduce the cost of living in Saskatchewan. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're doing a lot of things to keep Saskatchewan the most affordable place to live in Canada. Making life more affordable for small businesses by keeping the small-business tax at 1 per cent. Making life more affordable for homeowners through the home renovation tax credit. Making life more affordable for persons living with a disability and their caregivers by raising the disability tax credit and caregiver tax credit.

Making life more affordable for post-secondary graduates and encouraging them to start their careers in Saskatchewan by raising the graduate retention program benefit. Making life more affordable for young people buying their first home by raising the first-time homebuyers tax credit. Making life more affordable

for low-income residents by raising the low-income tax credit. Making life more affordable for seniors by raising the seniors' supplement and personal care home benefit.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, these are not just one-time measures. They're not a temporary measure to help out temporarily. These are ongoing government measures that will ensure Saskatchewan continues to be the most affordable place to live in Canada.

But our government is putting patients first. Saskatchewan's health system is undergoing one of the most comprehensive patient-focused transformations ever, from primary care and diagnosis to workforce development, urgency and emergency services, seniors' care, and health infrastructure. The province is making deliberate, measurable steps to ensure people get the right care in the right place at the right time. We're expanding access to care; improving recruitment, retention, and training; modernizing care delivery and scope of practice; improving safe and quality care; improving facilities and equipment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that there are, like, 10 bills I didn't get a chance to talk to. I'm not going to be supporting the member opposite's motion. In summary, short-term thinking through these bills cannot bring long-term results. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — The 65-minute period has expired. The 10-minute question-and-answer period will begin. I recognize the member from Moosomin-Montmartre.

Kevin Weedmark: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We know that rent control dries up housing investment, and housing investment is what we need. Saskatchewan cities have some of the lowest rents in the nation, and in my community we have brand new, privately owned, affordable rental units and more under construction. And the people who are building them say they would not build them if there was rent control in Saskatchewan.

So to the member from Saskatoon Westview: why would you want to implement rent control like exists in BC, where rent and housing is notoriously expensive?

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

April ChiefCalf: — I would say that you should talk to the seniors who are struggling to pay their rent and are one step away from being evicted.

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

Sally Housser: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like the member from Prince Albert Carlton to explain to me and to his constituent why he thinks that he should still be paying parking fees for his cancer treatment.

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — I recognize the member from Prince Albert Carlton.

Kevin Kasun: — Yeah, thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I just . . . No, I'm just amazed a member from that side of the House could

have so much compassion, as I'm suffering with cancer, to bring that question right to me. I thank you for that. That just makes me feel great for the compassion on that side of the House, for somebody suffering from that.

But I guess the official answer is, parking fees at SHA facilities go towards the upkeep and infrastructure at SHA-run facilities. This is important in making sure our health care facilities are kept safe and modern. That being said, I understand the minister has directed the SHA to review the parking policy and ongoing work is engaging. Thank you for the question.

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

Terri Bromm: — To the member from Athabasca: why did the opposition need to hire an out-of-province consultant for the unserious energy plan? Was it your leader or the Quebec consultant firm you hired who advocated returning the carbon tax to Saskatchewan families' power bills?

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

Leroy Laliberte: — Thank you, Deputy Speaker, and I do appreciate the question brought forward by the member opposite. Deputy Speaker, there's more important things to talk about than that right now, like the \$26 billion thing that was brought forward here today. So thank you.

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

April ChiefCalf: — Does the member for Cut Knife-Turtleford endorse the SaskPower and SGI rate hikes imposed on their constituents?

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

James Thorsteinson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And it is no secret that Saskatchewan has the second-lowest utility bundle anywhere in the nation of Canada. We are focused on keeping life affordable for Saskatchewan residents.

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — I recognize the member from Moosomin-Montmartre.

Kevin Weedmark: — Thank you. To the member from Saskatoon Westview: what private medical fees that are currently being charged would be banned under your Bill 614? Why do you continue to advocate for more restrictions and against more options for Saskatchewan people seeking health care?

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

April ChiefCalf: — Mr. Speaker, I know all too well the difficulties of accessing health care in Saskatchewan, and I just want everybody to know — in the legislature, in the province — we will do everything we can to make sure that people have access to a doctor, to health care, and free parking when they have cancer.

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

Sally Houser: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I'd like to apologize to the member from Prince Albert Carlton. I was unaware.

But to the member from Dakota-Arm River, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like him to explain to myself and the hard-working men and women in Saskatchewan building trades why his colleague, the Minister of SaskBuilds, said that prioritizing hiring local workers was reckless. And does he believe that when my constituent loses out on the next job to an out-of-province company and out-of-province workers, that they're going to care who we hired as a campaign manager?

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — I recognize the member from Dakota-Arm River.

Barret Kropf: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I appreciate the question from the member opposite. And when it comes to hiring people from across Saskatchewan to fill all the incredible jobs that are being created by the \$62 billion worth of projects in our province, our Minister of Advanced Education has signed a bill that allows the education in our province to expand its coverage. We just had an announcement in Humboldt that expanded the development of more workers here in Saskatchewan, and we're going to continue to do that as we protect our families across this province.

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

Terri Bromm: — Last week your federal leader, Avi Lewis, claimed in an interview that he had seen your energy plan and said this in response when referring to the Leader of the Opposition: "She encouraged me to read it. I have. There's lots of good stuff in there and lots of alignment." To the member from Athabasca: are you aligned with your federal leader and his radical policies?

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

Leroy Laliberte: — Thank you, Deputy Speaker. I will say this: I am in line with our leader here, Deputy Speaker. That's all I need to say.

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

April ChiefCalf: — To the member from Cut Knife-Turtleford: can you explain to your constituents why you will continue to allow illegal foreign farm-landownership to drive out local producers?

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

James Thorsteinson: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I speak to my constituents on this topic on a regular basis. Foreign farm-landownership is a serious topic. However the auditor found zero evidence of any illegal foreign landownership in the

province of Saskatchewan. We just recently had the Farm Land Security Board look at the ... do a review on farm landownership. We are going to take a fulsome look at the entire Act, and those changes will be coming forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — I recognize the member from Moosomin-Montmartre.

Kevin Weedmark: — To the member from Athabasca: can you give an example of any illegal foreign farm-landownership that the proposed Bill 613 would influence?

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

Leroy Laliberte: — I appreciate the question, Deputy Speaker. We don't have the stats on that. And I'm going to say this, Deputy Speaker. With the \$26 billion that's going to be used on the people of Saskatchewan, I'll say this: we are a government-in-waiting and we're going to teach this government how to run this province, Deputy Speaker. Thank you very much.

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

Sally Houser: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Could the member for Dakota-Arm River explain to this legislature if he endorses the SaskPower and SGI rate hikes imposed on his and all of our constituents? And how is he going to explain to his constituents the next huge rate hike that is going to come as a result of this \$26 billion boondoggle?

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — I recognize the member from Dakota-Arm River.

Barret Kropf: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And as I serve as the Legislative Secretary for Education, I think it's a priority for me to make sure that not only is K to 3 [kindergarten to grade 3] reading a priority, but also is the financial literacy course that is offered in our schools a priority, so that they can make sure they understand what the difference is between a \$26 billion addition and what the opposition is planning for their plan for utilities in this province, or if they're going to stick to our plan that's affordable and reliable power for this province.

[12:15]

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

Terri Bromm: — To the member from Regina University: how can Saskatchewan take the NDP seriously when so many of your bills, such as Bills 619 and 620, are just copies of bills from NDP Manitoba, which has one of the highest levels of inflation in Canada?

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

Sally Houser: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And I'm delighted to talk about our friend from Manitoba, the most popular premier in the country, Mr. Wab Kinew. Thank you very

much, Mr. Speaker. I'm super excited for our leader to be joining him in those First Ministers' meetings in the not-too-distant future, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am so proud of the practical, common-sense, and it should be non-partisan legislation that has been put forward by this team. Practical measures that are going to make life more affordable for the people of this province, that is going to ease their suffering, that is going to make sure that everybody in this province feels seen and heard and taken care of, Mr. Speaker. I could not be more proud.

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — The 75-minute debate period has expired.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS AND ORDERS

ADJOURNED DEBATES

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

Motion No. 2 — Support for the Patients-First Health Care Plan

[The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion by Terri Bromm.]

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

David Chan: — Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is a privilege to rise today to speak about something that touches every family, every community, and every corner of our province — the health and well-being of the people we serve. When we talk about health care we are talking about the lives, hopes, and future of people who call Saskatchewan home.

Our patients-first health care plan and our transition to a recovery-oriented system of care are built on the simple but powerful belief that every person in Saskatchewan deserves timely, compassionate, and dependable care. That belief guides every decision we make and every investment we bring forward.

Health care is not simply a system. It is the people who rely on it and the people who deliver it. It is the seniors who want to stay safely in their homes. It is the parents who want reassurance when their child is sick. It is the individuals facing mental health or addictions challenges who need support. And it is the thousands of dedicated health care professionals who show up every day with kindness, skill, and commitment to care for all of us.

This year our government is making a record \$8.5 billion investment in health care. Behind that number are real people, people who will be connected to a family doctor or nurse practitioner, people who will receive faster diagnostics, and families who will access treatment and recovery services closer to where they live.

As the patients-first plan reminds us, standing still is not an option. Saskatchewan families deserve progress, and that is exactly what we are delivering. Mr. Speaker, the new patients-first health care plan outlines more than 50 steps to strengthen

care across the province. These actions include expanding the scope of practice for health care professionals, improving access to primary and virtual care, increasing the number of urgent care centres, and continuing to recruit and train more doctors, nurse practitioners, nurses, and other providers.

A strong and skilled workforce is at the heart of this plan because every investment in infrastructure, technology, and innovation depends on having skilled professionals who deliver that care.

Mr. Speaker, one of the most meaningful changes under way is the expansion of nurse practitioner-led primary care. In just six months, 23 new nurse practitioner contracts were signed, with capacity to connect more than 18,000 patients to a primary care provider. This is the largest publicly funded nurse practitioner expansion in Saskatchewan's history. It means thousands of people will have a dedicated provider they can turn to, someone who understands their needs and supports them throughout their health journey.

The patients-first plan makes it clear that there will be no limit to the number of contracts for nurse practitioners interested in delivering publicly funded primary care. That is a reassuring message for families who value strong, consistent access to care.

Alongside this expansion, fully functioning nurse practitioner-led teams are being developed, allowing nurse practitioners to hire registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, dietitians, occupational therapists, and other allied health professionals to support comprehensive, relationship-based care.

Mr. Speaker, we know none of this progress is possible without the people who deliver these services. That's why, since 2022, more than 7,500 nurses and health professionals have joined our system. That is 7,500 people who chose Saskatchewan, who chose to serve, and who chose to make a difference.

To continue building this momentum, training seats are expanding. Rural pathways are being strengthened. And 20 new medical student seats are being added to the University of Saskatchewan. Nurse practitioner training capacity is also increasing by 45 per cent with 26 new seats — 13 at the University of Saskatchewan and 13 at the University of Regina and Saskatchewan Polytechnic program. Hear, hear.

These investments strengthen our health care workforce and build on the strong foundation already in place. Again, Mr. Speaker, because every investment in infrastructure, technology, and innovation depends on having skilled professionals who deliver that care.

Access to urgent and emergency care is also improving. Regina's urgent care centre has already provided care for over 65,000 patients, averaging more than 100 patients per day. That is 65,000 moments where someone received help, reassurance, and relief. Saskatoon's first urgent care centre, opening in early 2027, will include a dedicated entrance for mental health and addictions care ensuring people can receive support in a calm, respectful environment. Additional urgent care centres are being planned for Moose Jaw, North Battleford, Prince Albert, Regina, and Saskatoon.

At the same time, emergency response capacity continues to

grow. Since 2022, 200 full-time equivalent EMS [emergency medical services] positions have been added in 68 communities. These are the people who show up on our hardest days, and we are giving them the support they need to continue serving with excellence.

Now let's talk about acute care, Mr. Speaker. Saskatchewan has opened or staffed 201 acute care beds since 2021 — 201 acute care beds. This includes 155 beds across Saskatoon hospitals, 44 beds in Regina, and new pediatric beds at Jim Pattison Children's Hospital. ICU [intensive care unit] capacity has expanded at St. Paul's Hospital, and construction is under way on the Prince Albert Victoria Hospital acute care tower. This will add 57 new acute care beds to that community. These investments reduce delays, improve patient flow, and ensure timely care for critically ill patients. They also bring comfort to families who want their loved ones cared for close to home.

Mr. Speaker, diagnostics are another cornerstone of timely care. Saskatchewan has increased annual capacity by 55,000 CT [computerized tomography] scans and 15,000 MRI [magnetic resonance imaging] scans since 2020. A mobile MRI unit has launched in Regina. PET/CT [positron emission tomography/computerized tomography] capacity has expanded by 1,300 patients annually. And the new breast health centre received 1,400 referrals in its first year.

Screening mammograms have increased nearly 30 per cent since 2020-21. These improvements mean earlier answers, earlier treatment, and better outcomes. The patients-first plan sets a clear target that 90 per cent of patients receive diagnostic scans within 60 days by 2028, and we are well on our way to achieving that.

Mr. Speaker, what about our seniors and vulnerable populations? Our seniors deserve dignity, safety, and independence. That's why \$9.2 million is being invested to strengthen home care, long-term care, and community-based supports. Dementia programming is expanding. The Autism Resource Centre is being supported, and funding for individuals with intellectual disabilities is increasing. This includes 11.8 million for increased services for individuals with intellectual disabilities, 7 million for families accessing autism individualized funding, and 11 million for new group homes, including a specialized home in Saskatoon for individuals with higher medical needs.

These investments help people remain safely in their homes and communities, connected to the supports they rely on, surrounded by the people that they love.

Another essential part of this work is the transition to a recovery-oriented system of care. Mr. Speaker, every life lost to substance abuse is a tragedy, and every person deserves the chance to heal. This year a record 674 million is being invested in mental health and addictions. Treatment spaces are expanding, detox services are being strengthened, and programs that help people rebuild their lives are growing.

More than 300 new addiction treatment and recovery spaces are already operational with a commitment to reach 500 new spaces across the province. These include treatment spaces in Lumsden and Estevan, mobile withdrawal management in Saskatoon, intensive out-patient programs, family-focused treatment, second-stage sober living, and new spaces in communities like

Pinehouse, Lloydminster, North Battleford, and Prince Albert.

A new six-bed youth detox unit is opening at Calder Centre, doubling secure youth detox capacity and giving young people a safe place to begin their healing journey.

Mr. Speaker, our complex needs facilities in North Battleford and Moose Jaw have supported thousands of individuals in crisis. Most individuals discharged from these facilities accept transportation to follow-up services, and that matters. It shows that when people are treated with dignity at their most vulnerable moments they are willing to take the next steps towards recovery.

These facilities provide a safe, medically supervised alternative to police cells or emergency rooms and they connect individuals to long-term supports such as housing, income assistance, and addiction treatment.

Across the province, important work is under way to support vulnerable families, children, and youth. Income assistance benefits are rising by 2 per cent, housing supports are being strengthened, and additional services are being provided for individuals fleeing interpersonal violence. Funding includes \$8 million for seniors in personal care homes, 3.2 million to increase housing benefit rates, 5.4 million for new emergency shelters in Saskatoon and Prince Albert, and 19.1 million for children and youth with complex needs. These investments demonstrate a clear commitment to ensuring that every person has access to dignity, safety, and opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, the patients-first health care plan is about building a system that reflects the spirit of Saskatchewan, a system that is accessible, modern, compassionate, and focused on people. A system that lifts people up, supports them in their hardest moments, and celebrates their successes.

I am proud of the progress we are making. I am proud of the partnerships we are building. And I am proud of the hope these investments bring to families across Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I support the motion moved by my friend and colleague the member from Carrot River Valley:

That the Assembly supports the Government of Saskatchewan's recovery-oriented system of care and the patients-first health care plan to protect our most vulnerable residents.

And I now move to adjourn debate.

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 the

Assembly do now adjourn. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Deputy Speaker B. McLeod: — Carried. This Assembly now stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30. Thank you.

[The Assembly adjourned at 12:28.]

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN CABINET MINISTERS

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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
Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety
Minister Responsible for the
Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board

Hon. Jeremy Cockrill
Minister of Health

Hon. Kim Gartner
Minister of Highways

Hon. Jeremy Harrison
Minister of Crown Investments Corporation
Minister Responsible for the Public Service Commission
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Government Insurance
Minister Responsible for
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Hon. Sean Wilson
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Minister Responsible for the
Global Transportation Hub Authority