



FOURTH SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

No. 52

Wednesday, April 24, 2024

1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Petitions of citizens of the province of Saskatchewan were presented and laid upon the Table by the following members: McLeod (Moose Jaw North), Nippi-Albright, Burki, Clarke, and Sarauer.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

According to order and pursuant to rule 16(7), petitions from residents of the province of Saskatchewan, requesting the following action, were read and received:

To pass legislation to improve conditions for Saskatchewan workers.

(Addendum to sessional paper no. 17)

To meaningfully address the affordability crisis in Saskatchewan.

(Addendum to sessional paper no. 30)

To immediately suspend the carbon tax across the nation of Canada and acknowledge its significant impact on affordability and inflation in Canada.

(Addendum to sessional paper no. 155)

To immediately implement a comprehensive affordable housing strategy aimed at helping individuals and families in securing stable and affordable housing.

(Addendum to sessional paper no. 159)

To enshrine Duty to Consult into law by enacting meaningful duty to consult legislation.

(Addendum to sessional paper no. 161)

REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Ms. Ross (Prince Albert Northcote), Chair of the Standing Committee on Human Services, presented the committee's seventh report, which is as follows:

2024–25 Estimates

The committee considered the following estimates for the executive branch of government and adopted the following resolutions:

Resolved, that there be granted to His Majesty for the twelve months ending March 31, 2025 the following sums:

Executive Branch of Government

For Advanced Education.....	\$792,526,000
For Education.....	\$2,904,816,000
For Health	\$7,591,409,000
For Labour Relations and Workplace Safety	\$20,406,000
For Social Services	\$1,544,754,000

Lending and Investing Activities

For Advanced Education.....	\$80,000,000
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2023–24 Supplementary Estimates No. 2

The committee considered the following supplementary estimates no. 2 for the executive branch of government and adopted the following resolutions:

Resolved, that there be granted to His Majesty for the twelve months ending March 31, 2024 the following sums:

Executive Branch of Government

For Education.....	\$16,000,000
For Health	\$450,100,000
For Social Services.....	\$22,750,000

The committee recommends that upon concurrence of its report by the Assembly, the sums as reported and approved shall be included in the appropriation bill for consideration by the Legislative Assembly.

(Sessional paper no. 187)

On motion of Ms. Ross (Prince Albert Northcote):

Ordered, That the seventh report of the Standing Committee on Human Services be now concurred in.

ADJOURNED DEBATES

Bill No. 158 — The Saskatchewan Commercial Innovation Incentive (Patent Box) Amendment Act, 2024

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the Hon. Mr. Harrison (Meadow Lake): That Bill No. 158 — The Saskatchewan Commercial Innovation Incentive (Patent Box) Amendment Act, 2024 be now read a second time.

The debate continuing and the question being put, it was agreed to and the said bill was accordingly read a second time.

By designation of the Hon. Ms. Carr, in accordance with rule 85, Bill No. 158 — The Saskatchewan Commercial Innovation Incentive (Patent Box) Amendment Act, 2024 was committed to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

Bill No. 160 — The Immigration Services Act

The Assembly resumed the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the Hon. Mr. Harrison (Meadow Lake): That Bill No. 160 — The Immigration Services Act be now read a second time.

The debate continuing and the question being put, it was agreed to and the said bill was accordingly read a second time.

By designation of the Hon. Ms. Carr, in accordance with rule 85, Bill No. 160 — The Immigration Services Act was committed to the Standing Committee on the Economy.

On motion of the Hon. Ms. Carr:

Ordered, That this Assembly do now adjourn.

The Assembly adjourned at 2:33 p.m. until Thursday at 10:00 a.m.

*Hon. Randy Weekes
Speaker*

RETURNS, REPORTS, AND PAPERS TABLED

The following papers were laid upon the Table:

By the Hon. Ms. Harpauer:

Public Employees Deferred Salary Leave Fund: 2023 annual report (Sessional paper no. 188)

Public Employees Dental Fund: 2023 annual report (Sessional paper no. 189)

Extended Health Care Plan for Retired Employees: 2023 annual report (Sessional paper no. 190)

Extended Health Care Plan for Certain Other Employees: 2023 annual report (Sessional paper no. 191)

Extended Health Care Plan for Certain Other Retired Employees: 2023 annual report (Sessional paper no. 192)

Extended Health Care Plan: 2023 annual report (Sessional paper no. 193)

Municipal Employees' Pension Plan: 2023 annual report (Sessional paper no. 194)

By the Hon. Mr. McMorris:

Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board: 2023 annual report (Sessional paper no. 195)

NOTICE OF WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The following questions were given notice on day no. 49 and are to be answered by day no. 54:

Question no. 10 (Ms. Ritchie):

To the Minister Responsible for Water Security Agency, regarding water-related emergency response and planning, (a) please list the amount of inflow into Lake Diefenbaker each year over the past 10 years and as a percent of historic inflows; (b) please provide outflow data (hydro and simple releases through the spillway) through the Gardiner dam for each year over the past 10 years, and as a percentage of historic outflows; (c) what is the projected inflow into Lake Diefenbaker in 2024; (d) what is the present level of the South Saskatchewan River and where does the level stand from an historical perspective (i.e. lowest in the last 10 years, 20 years, etc.); (e) according to the Alberta government, many areas in Alberta are dealing with drought conditions, particularly in the southern part of the province; there are currently 51 water shortage advisories in place in Alberta; on March 6, the flow near the mouth of the Bow River was measured to be 39.9 m³/s, the lowest March measurement in the last 24 years; please provide a record of specific actions the Water Security Agency has undertaken to assure that Saskatchewan will continue to receive its 50 percent share of the water flow from Alberta; (f) in early December last year, the town of Leader declared a state of emergency with respect to its water supply given that the level of the river where the town gets its water had fallen to such a low level that its intake could no longer sustain the community's vital supply; what is the province doing to assist the community to ensure that this doesn't happen again, and what was the reason for the low water supply on the South Saskatchewan River back in December; (g) are you expecting to see flooding in any of the Saskatchewan water basins and, if you are, which basins; and (h) are you expecting water levels to be low on any of the major lakes in the province such that it will cause problems for piers, floating docks, ferries, boat moorings, etc., and, if you are, which lakes would that be?

Question no. 11 (Ms. Ritchie):

To the Minister Responsible for Water Security Agency, how many FTEs does the Water Security Agency presently have and how many did you have in each of the past 10 years?

Question no. 12 (Ms. Ritchie):

To the Minister Responsible for Water Security Agency, for those portions of *The Environmental Management and Protection Act, 2010* that the Water Security Agency is responsible, (a) what performance objectives related to the protection of water resources and habitat has the WSA established and undertaken monitoring and reporting, and (b) can you please provide monitoring and reporting results for the past 5 years?

Question no. 13 (Ms. Ritchie):

To the Minister Responsible for Water Security Agency, (a) what actions and mitigation measures is the WSA taking to address elevated mercury levels in the Rafferty and Alameda reservoirs, and (b) can you please provide water quality monitoring data for the Rafferty and Alameda reservoirs for the past 5 years?

Question no. 14 (Ms. Ritchie):

To the Minister Responsible for Water Security Agency, in 2022-23, the Water Security Agency entered a memorandum with the Ministry of Highways to provide a full range of expertise and advice related to the Lake Diefenbaker Irrigation Expansion Project with respect to planning, cost estimating, designing and rehabilitation or construction of all aspects of the project; is that memorandum still in effect and how much money has the WSA paid to the Ministry of Highways for the above services?

Question no. 15 (Ms. Ritchie):

To the Minister Responsible for Water Security Agency, in 2021 the Provincial Auditor recommended that the Water Security Agency actively monitor and enforce using technology (e.g., drones, airplane flights, mapping tools) to collect information (e.g., aerial photographs) in high-risk areas specifically to identify and take action on unapproved drainage works; the auditor also noted that not taking timely enforcement action on unapproved drainage works increases the risk of landowners not achieving compliance or not changing the culture; in addition, further damage may occur to surrounding landowners and the receiving water body if compliance does not occur timely: (a) how much did WSA spend on monitoring and enforcement in 2022-23, (b) how much is budgeted for monitoring and enforcement in 2024-25, and (c) how many acres were brought into compliance in 2022-23 as a result of WSA monitoring unapproved drainage?

Question no. 16 (Ms. Ritchie):

To the Minister Responsible for Water Security Agency, (a) how many fulltime equivalent employees (FTEs) were in the Agricultural Services and Economic Development Division within the Water Security Agency in 2021-22, 2022-23, and 2023-24, and (b) what is the budget FTEs for 2024-25?

Question no. 17 (Ms. Ritchie):

To the Minister Responsible for Water Security Agency, with respect to irrigation in the province, how much water from a water rights perspective has been allocated in total and by major regions in the province for the years 2019-20, 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24, and current year 2024-25?

Question no. 18 (Ms. Ritchie):

To the Minister Responsible for Water Security Agency, (a) can you advise how many water-related legal claims or legal suites are presently registered against either the Water Security Agency or are managed by the Water Security Agency on behalf of the province, (b) can you please provide a list of claims, the reason for the claims, as well as who registered the claim, and (c) how significant an issue will salinity claims from irrigators be in the future for the Water Security Agency?

Question no. 19 (Ms. Ritchie):

To the Minister Responsible for Water Security Agency, WSA recently announced that it will be charging \$1,000 to file drainage complaints, (a) why was this fee introduced, (b) how many complaints have you received since implementing this fee, (c) has WSA undertaken any cost analysis on different methods of handling unapproved drainage works, (d) how many orders did WSA issue in 2022-23, (e) how many drainage complaints are outstanding as of today, and (f) how much does it cost to acquire a drainage license?

Question no. 20 (Ms. Ritchie):

To the Minister Responsible for Water Security Agency, it is my understanding that WSA will be piloting the proposed Ag Water Stewardship Policy this year, (a) how much has WSA budgeted in the current 2024-25 fiscal year to pilot the proposed Ag Water Stewardship Policy, (b) how much has WSA budgeted to measure impacts to water quality and habitat loss as part of these pilots, and (c) how much has WSA budgeted to restore wetlands in these pilots?

Question no. 21 (Ms. Ritchie):

To the Minister Responsible for Water Security Agency, (a) can you tell me where in the Growth Plan it states that the proposed almost 2 million acres of new land will be gained through wetland drainage, (b) how much has WSA spent over the past 5 years, either directly or indirectly, supporting farmers to drain wetlands, and (c) how much does WSA intend to spend in the current fiscal 2024-25 year to support wetland drainage?