

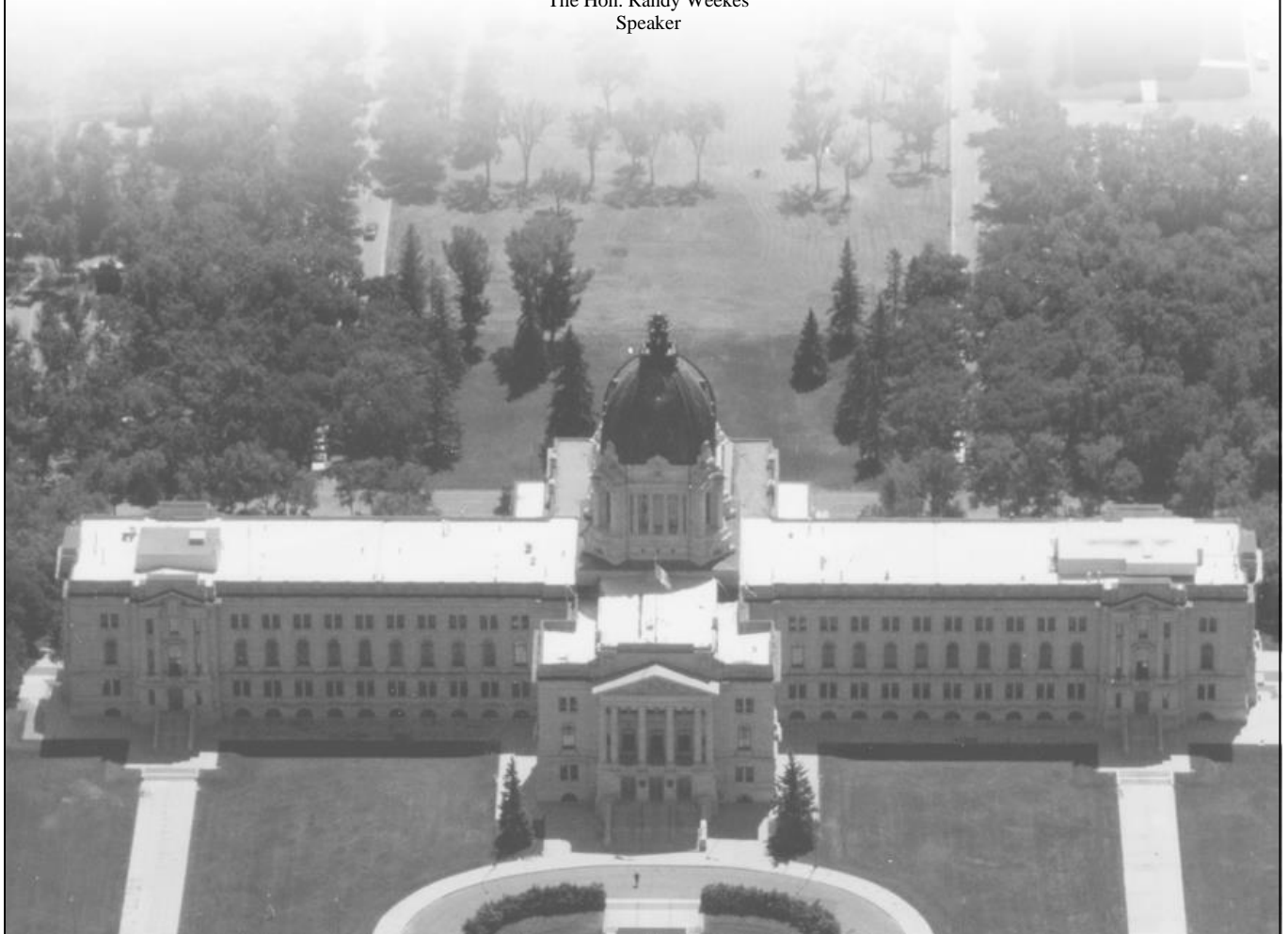
THIRD SESSION — TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

of the

Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan

**DEBATES
AND
PROCEEDINGS**

(HANSARD)
Published under the
authority of
The Hon. Randy Weekes
Speaker



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF SASKATCHEWAN
3rd Session — 29th Legislature

Lieutenant Governor — His Honour the Honourable Russ Mirasty, S.O.M., M.S.M.

Speaker — Hon. Randy Weekes
Premier — Hon. Scott Moe
Leader of the Opposition — Carla Beck

Beck, Carla — Regina Lakeview (NDP)	Makowsky, Hon. Gene — Regina Gardiner Park (SP)
Bonk, Steven — Moosomin (SP)	Marit, Hon. David — Wood River (SP)
Bowes, Jennifer — Saskatoon University (NDP)	McLeod, Hon. Tim — Moose Jaw North (SP)
Bradshaw, Fred — Carrot River Valley (SP)	McMorris, Hon. Don — Indian Head-Milestone (SP)
Buckingham, David — Saskatoon Westview (SP)	Merriman, Hon. Paul — Saskatoon Silverspring-Sutherland (SP)
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Cheveldayoff, Ken — Saskatoon Willowgrove (SP)	Morgan, Hon. Don — Saskatoon Southeast (SP)
Cockrill, Hon. Jeremy — The Battlefords (SP)	Mowat, Vicki — Saskatoon Fairview (NDP)
Conway, Meara — Regina Elphinstone-Centre (NDP)	Nerlien, Hugh — Kelvington-Wadena (SP)
Dennis, Terry — Canora-Pelly (SP)	Nippi-Albright, Betty — Saskatoon Centre (NDP)
Domotor, Ryan — Cut Knife-Turtleford (SP)	Ottenbreit, Greg — Yorkton (SP)
Duncan, Hon. Dustin — Weyburn-Big Muddy (SP)	Reiter, Hon. Jim — Rosetown-Elrose (SP)
Eyre, Hon. Bronwyn — Saskatoon Stonebridge-Dakota (SP)	Ritchie, Erika — Saskatoon Nutana (NDP)
Fiaz, Muhammad — Regina Pasqua (SP)	Ross, Alana — Prince Albert Northcote (SP)
Francis, Ken — Kindersley (SP)	Ross, Hon. Laura — Regina Rochdale (SP)
Friesen, Marv — Saskatoon Riversdale (SP)	Sarauer, Nicole — Regina Douglas Park (NDP)
Goudy, Todd — Melfort (SP)	Skoropad, Hon. Dana — Arm River (SP)
Grewal, Gary — Regina Northeast (SP)	Steele, Doug — Cypress Hills (SP)
Hargrave, Joe — Prince Albert Carlton (SP)	Teed, Nathaniel — Saskatoon Meewasin (NDP)
Harpauer, Hon. Donna — Humboldt-Watrous (SP)	Tell, Hon. Christine — Regina Wascana Plains (SP)
Harrison, Daryl — Cannington (SP)	Vermette, Doyle — Cumberland (NDP)
Harrison, Hon. Jeremy — Meadow Lake (SP)	Weekes, Hon. Randy — Biggar-Sask Valley (SP)
Hindley, Hon. Everett — Swift Current (SP)	Wilson, Nadine — Saskatchewan Rivers (Ind.)
Jenson, Terry — Martensville-Warman (SP)	Wotherspoon, Trent — Regina Rosemont (NDP)
Kaeding, Warren — Melville-Saltcoats (SP)	Wyant, Hon. Gordon — Saskatoon Northwest (SP)
Keisig, Travis — Last Mountain-Touchwood (SP)	Young, Aleana — Regina University (NDP)
Kirsch, Delbert — Batoche (SP)	Young, Colleen — Lloydminster (SP)
Lambert, Lisa — Saskatoon Churchill-Wildwood (SP)	Vacant — Lumsden-Morse
Lawrence, Greg — Moose Jaw Wakamow (SP)	Vacant — Regina Coronation Park
Lemaigre, Jim — Athabasca (SP)	Vacant — Regina Walsh Acres
Love, Matt — Saskatoon Eastview (NDP)	

Standings

Government Caucus: Saskatchewan Party (SP) — 45; Opposition Caucus: New Democratic Party (NDP) — 12;
Independent: Saskatchewan United Party (Ind.) — 1; Vacant — 3

Clerks-at-the-Table

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Deputy Clerk — Kathy Burianyak
Principal Clerk — Robert Park

Sergeant-at-Arms — Lyall Frederiksen

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[The Assembly met at 13:30.]

[Prayers]

The Speaker: — Before introductions I'd just like to welcome all our guests here today. It's good to see school classes and other people that come to watch the proceedings. I'd just like to caution you not to take part in the proceedings — no clapping or talking or shouting or taking photos or videos. So welcome, and thank you.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

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

Mr. Domotor: — Ask leave for an extended introduction, Mr. Speaker.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Mr. Domotor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I would like to welcome 35 amazing grade 9 students in the west gallery from Maidstone High School. They are accompanied here today by their teachers: Natasha Wicks, Brad Lejeune, Rhonda Cammidge, and Michele Lundquist. Thank you so much for joining us here today. I'm very much looking forward to meeting with them after question period and listening to the kind of questions they're going to have after they've watched question period. I would ask that all members of this Assembly join me in welcoming these bright students to their Legislative Assembly.

And while I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure today to introduce, in your gallery, my parents, Louis and Sharon Domotor. Mr. Speaker, my parents are retired and live in Humboldt, where I was raised for the better part of my child and adolescent life. I'm excited that they got to make the trip down and join us here today. It's been some time since my parents have been to this beautiful building, Mr. Speaker, but it's a very familiar place to them, as my father served as the MLA [Member of the Legislative Assembly] for the Humboldt constituency from 1982 to 1986, as well as being the former minister of Rural Development.

Mr. Speaker, quite often we talk about how important it is to have our families support us in these roles and what they have to put up with while we work for our constituents and be away from home to serve in this Assembly. And it's an honour to be able to recognize the people that helped shape us and turn us into the individuals that we are today.

My upbringing was spending countless hours on my dad's farm and helping out, which I believe was where I obtained most of my work ethics from. My mother played no small role in my

upbringing, as she was a schoolteacher for many years, but then switched careers to work at the *Humboldt Journal*, providing editorial review, before retiring. During my adolescent teens, I'm sure it was the schoolteacher coming out in her as she was trying to keep me in line with my school studies, but much to her chagrin I seem to have had a lot of fun during those times, and I'm probably responsible for some of the grey hairs that are left behind.

All fun aside, it is only with the guidance from our parents that assisted us in developing our leadership skills that we have today, along with the support that we receive from our spouses and our children, which allows us to fulfill our goals in this Assembly and within our constituencies. And on that note, I just want to say thank you for the love and direction you've given me over the years, as well as the guidance you've provided me with.

And I would ask that all members of this Assembly to join me in welcoming my parents, Louis and Sharon, to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed a pleasure of mine to introduce to you and through you to all members of the Assembly one of my daughters. Shannon Harpauer is here today — give us a wave — as well as a number of her colleagues from work, and a friend and a past colleague from work at Scott Land & Lease. So give us a wave when I introduce you. We have Shaun Kozak, we have Lisa MacGillivray, Tara Wallis, Arianne Graham, Matt Powell, and Matt's daughter Blayke.

Blayke was here a couple of weeks ago apparently with her class, and she got to meet with the Minister of Corrections and Policing. She liked it so much that she wanted to come again because I promised her that she gets to meet the Premier afterwards, and she thought that was pretty special. So with that we're looking forward to taking her to meet the Premier. And I had time to spend with these individuals and show them my office and my boardroom earlier. And I want all members to welcome them to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Health.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I ask leave for an extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Hon. Mr. Merriman: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'm pleased to introduce to the Legislative Assembly, seated in your gallery, the Okolita family from Fort Qu'Appelle, Mr. Speaker, if they could give us a wave. Catherine is the Hospitals of Regina Foundation's pediatric ambassador. She is joined here today by her mother, Caralen, and her younger sister Vivienne.

Catherine began her charitable journey at the age of five years old when she created Catherine's Cause. What began as an organized cleanup of their hometown park over time gradually grew into the fundraising of the neonatal intensive care unit at the Regina General Hospital, and so much more, Mr. Speaker. Catherine's little sister Vivienne has been an avid supporter of the work that Catherine has done and has joined her with her sister's efforts. Catherine and Vivienne worked together this year to raise funds for the Z99 radio marathon and the two sisters donated over \$70,000, Mr. Speaker.

Not only that, Mr. Speaker. Other causes have received their generous support in recent years including the Canadian Mental Health Association Saskatchewan Division, Souls Harbour, the Regina Food Bank, the Regina Humane Society, and the Regina Cat Rescue. We are very lucky to have such strong young people giving back to Saskatchewan. I'm very pleased to be introducing them and highlighting them and their achievements in the House today.

I also see that Dino Sophocleous, the president and CEO [chief executive officer] of the Hospitals of Regina Foundation is seated in your gallery, Mr. Speaker. Our government has a very positive relationship with Dino and his team over at the foundation. I'm very thankful for the work and the foundation that does the work for Regina and southern Saskatchewan residents to have access to the necessary care, and support what they need.

I ask all members to welcome Catherine, Vivienne, Caralen, and Dino to their Legislative Assembly.

And Mr. Speaker, while I'm on my feet, I'd like to introduce, seated in the west gallery, Michael and Bonnie Keogan — if they can give us a wave. Seated with Mike and Bonnie are someone who is no stranger to this Assembly, their son and my soon-to-be-former chief of staff, David. I'll have to have words with the Minister of CIC [Crown Investments Corporation of Saskatchewan] later.

David's parents recently retired after 10 years of owning and operating Mike's Your Independent Grocer on Broadway Avenue here in Regina. Now that the weather is improving, I'm told that Mike looks forward to spending more time on the golf course this summer and Bonnie is also looking forward to a restful summer but plans to take on part-time work in the curling rink to keep herself busy this fall. Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members congratulate Mike and Bonnie on their recent retirement and welcome the Keogan family to their Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to join in with the minister in welcoming these guests to their Legislative Assembly today, the Okolita family, in particular Catherine who is a pediatric ambassador and was also nominated for a Women of Distinction Award. So congratulations on that as well, Catherine. And as well, welcome to Dino.

I look forward to our reception later this afternoon where we'll hear more about what the hospital foundations have been up to in Saskatchewan. I want to thank you all for your work, for your

advocacy, and as well as the important fundraising efforts that support our health efforts in the province. So I would ask all members to join me in welcoming these guests to their Assembly.

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

Hon. Mr. McMorris: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too want to join with the Minister of Health and the opposition critic and welcome both Catherine and Vivienne to their Legislative Assembly. It's not the first time they've been here — especially Catherine has been here a couple of times before — but always a privilege to have people from your constituency, but people from Fort Qu'Appelle that have given so much back not only to their community but to their province.

One of the things I found very interesting, Catherine raised quite a bit of money for the playground equipment that goes in the school, around the school, and she's home-schooled, never took advantage of it. But she did, I think, probably off-hours.

But just really proud to represent Fort Qu'Appelle with such great people like yourselves. I was able to nominate Catherine for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Medal, Mr. Speaker, probably one of the youngest recipients of that medal. She does great work, and only now will that be better with her sister Vivienne helping her out. So thank you very much for all you do for the Fort Qu'Appelle area.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I just want to join in the well wishes to Bonnie and Michael Keogan that are with us here today. These are strong, local business owners, Mr. Speaker. They ran a very nice grocery store, Mike's Independent, Mr. Speaker. I know my wife, Stephanie, she teaches a little bit out over there to the east side a bit, so she was a regular customer there and always sang their praises, Mr. Speaker.

And also to David, it's wonderful to see that he's finally got that long-awaited shift in government over there, Mr. Speaker. He's an old Thom Collegiate graduate, and I think he's just a wonderful, thoughtful guy, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request leave for an extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Hon. Ms. Tell: — Thank you. Today is Correctional Services Appreciation Day. Today is a day to honour the hard-working men and women who work within our correctional centres across the province. Every correctional worker in Saskatchewan plays a pivotal role in protecting public safety by helping offenders gain

education, employment skills, and knowledge about their culture. They protect offenders from harming others and harming themselves, and provide care that perhaps they wouldn't have received otherwise.

I had the privilege this morning to celebrate with representatives from across the province who work in our correctional services, as well as to award the Minister's Award for Excellence. I want to recognize all corrections representatives here with us today in your gallery who made the trip down to Regina from across the province. Thank you for the work that you all do in your respective centres.

I also want to introduce a few special representatives from Paul Dojack Youth Centre cultural camp team who were the chosen recipients for this year's Minister's Award for Excellence: Bill Stevenson — please wave — Krystal Wollbaum, and Michelle Pyne. I would also like to acknowledge the team members who could not be with us today: Ray Aldinger, Muna De Ciman, Tanner Exner, Carmy Gallagher, Brett Friday, and Keegan McArthur.

I want to thank all of you here today and all the correctional workers from across the province for playing a pivotal role in protecting public safety. Your efforts collectively benefit everyone who lives in this great province. Thank you again for your service, and welcome to your Assembly.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the minister opposite in welcoming and congratulating all of these correctional service workers to their Legislative Assembly on this, the Correctional Services Appreciation Day. First of all, thank you so much for all the work that you and all correctional officers, all correctional service workers do every single day for this province in your respective facilities. I know oftentimes it may feel that it goes unnoticed, but it's incredibly, incredibly important. And thank you so much for all the work that you do.

[13:45]

I also want to take this opportunity to highlight in particular the cultural camp team from Dojack Centre. Myself and several of my colleagues on this side of the House had the opportunity, absolute pleasure of visiting cultural camp a little while ago while camp was going on. It was an absolutely inspiring and incredible program, an opportunity for us to see your work in action and really see the impact that it was having in those kids. And hearing about their stories and what that impact was to them was very heartwarming to all of us. So thank you so much for that.

And to all of you, again just a heartfelt thank you for all the work that you do every single day. And once again I ask all members to join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Justice and Attorney General.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to request leave for an extended introduction.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Hon. Ms. Eyre: — Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to introduce a group of visitors seated in your gallery this afternoon. We have with us today 11 articling students who are working with the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General and at courts across Saskatchewan, coming to the end of their tenure. So if you can give a wave.

Kennya Bhimji is currently working for the ministry in Regina as a student at law. After articling she will be working for the federal government with public prosecutions in Ottawa, I'm assuming. Katarina Kostihina is also articling with the ministry. She will be practising with Gerrand Rath Johnson LLP once she is called to the bar.

Lexi Morash is articling with the ministry as well. Lexi plans to stay with the ministry and work in the child protection branch. And, Mr. Speaker, we are delighted to have her. Savannah Downs, Mr. Speaker, is also articling with the ministry in the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee for the month of May. Savannah has also made the excellent choice to join the ministry once she joins the bar, in the constitutional law branch. There's not a lot going on there.

Emily Arthur, Mr. Speaker, is currently articling at the Court of King's Bench. She did her secondments at Legal Aid Regina and the Department of Justice Canada. When she returns from an overseas trip that she's planning, she'll be working with the federal Department of Justice in Saskatoon.

Taylor Moroz is articling at the Court of King's Bench in Regina. After he completes his articling he plans to practise law in Saskatoon. Mr. Speaker, Corbin Golding is currently clerking at the Court of Appeal for Saskatchewan, and after completing articling he plans to clerk at the Supreme Court of Canada.

Julie Labach is currently articling at the Court of Appeal for Saskatchewan. After completing her articling she plans to take a year to focus on her track and field pursuits, which she's very serious about, before returning to full-time legal work. Jason McNiven is articling at the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal. Once he's called to the bar, he plans to practise at the Vancouver office of MLT Aikens.

Callie Schwartz is currently clerking at the Court of Appeal for Saskatchewan. Upon completing her article, she will be taking a position in civil litigation at MLT Aikens in Regina. And finally, Mr. Speaker, Stephanie Pankiw, who is articling at the Provincial Court of Saskatchewan.

These students are joined today by Theresia Cooper from the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General. Mr. Speaker, we're very pleased to host them today and to have attracted several to the ministry and are always on the lookout for more. Please join me in welcoming this accomplished group to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour to join with the minister and rise today in welcoming this incredible and distinguished group of articling students in the conclusion of their articling year to their Legislative Assembly.

Thank you so much for those who've chosen to stay for choosing Saskatchewan as your place of practice. I hope that the few that are going away will ultimately make their way back here again. It's an incredible bar to be a part of. It's a very friendly, very wonderful place to work. I know I am biased. And I know this isn't always a popular statement in this House, but I know some do agree that the more lawyers we have in this Chamber, the better, Mr. Speaker. So we're always happy to have articling students and clerks here as well.

Again thank you so much for your service so far to this province, and we do hope that you enjoy a long and very distinguished career. I know you will. For those who I've already had the opportunity to meet, and those I'm looking forward to meeting in the future, again welcome and thank you for being here today.

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

Mr. Friesen: — Well thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to introduce a couple of constituents from my riding. Cliff and Irene Arthurs, if you could give us a wave.

You know, we had a chance to chat a little bit over lunch and found out that one of my friends — their son — I had no idea it was their son, Mr. Speaker. But we've been friends for about 25 years. And we just had a great chat. They are very active in the Holiday Park community, as well as with St. John Bosco church, Mr. Speaker. And their children and grandchildren actually went to the school that I mentor, so St. John School. And just a great pleasure for you guys to be here today, and I really appreciate you coming. And I hope you enjoy question period and the rest of your afternoon.

With Cliff and Irene, Mr. Speaker, are Shelly Janostin and her mother, Nydia. Now Nydia and I actually sit on the Meewasin board together. So welcome to your legislature today. I'd ask all members to join me in welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker . . . [inaudible interjection] . . . I forgot to let the minister know. It is also my great pleasure, Mr. Speaker, to introduce Shaun Tuck in your gallery. Shaun and I have known each other, I think we figured out, a little over 40 years. I met his parents, knew them quite well, in the church that we went to for years, Mr. Speaker.

And so Shaun and I became pretty close over those years, as well as his siblings and actually his wife and his wife's family. So they were here with the trucking association group yesterday and got a chance to go for, spend a little bit of time, have some dinner. So really appreciate . . . It's my pleasure to introduce you today, Shaun.

And with Shaun is Jim Yonge, who I've known for a number of years as well. And I got a chance to chat with them as well yesterday and Scott Buzinsky, who I just met but had a great evening last night with these gentlemen.

So to you and through you, Mr. Speaker, and to all members, please help me welcoming them to their Legislative Assembly.

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

Hon. Ms. L. Ross: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to join with the member and welcome both Shelly and Nydia Pobran to the Legislative Assembly.

You know, in Saskatchewan we talk about six degrees of separation. I had an opportunity to meet Shelly Janostin when she was chief of staff in the building. And she introduced me to her mother, Nydia Pobran. Turns out Nydia happened to share with me that she was a teacher and that when she started her career, she started out in Hafford. Well my oldest sister Arlene started out teaching in Hafford. Found out that in fact they started their teaching careers together. So in Saskatchewan it's six degrees of separation because you never know who you're going to meet and the kind of close relationship you end up developing.

Shelly and Nydia have become very close friends of our family, and Shelly and her husband, Mike, come down every Labour Day and we make sauerkraut. That's our idea of Labour Day. So I just want to welcome both Shelly and Nydia to their Legislative Assembly.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Mr. Keisig: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I would like to introduce Schell School grade 8 class from Holdfast. They're here today; give a wave, guys. They are joined by their teacher Mikayla Farrell and parent chaperones Danielle Dennis and Emily Fosson.

It's important to note, Mr. Speaker, that this school is located in the constituency of Arm River represented by the Minister of Environment, but he is currently away on government business, and I am filling in for him. It's also important to note that the minister's mother attended this school. And she's probably watching, so I better do a very good job today.

So please join me in welcoming Schell School to this their Legislative Assembly.

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

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To you and through you, I'd like to join with my colleague from Douglas Park and the Minister for Justice in welcoming one of these articling students who's up there. Couldn't see her from where I was seated, but Julie Labach, I had the honour of teaching Julie early in my career as a public school teacher at Aden Bowman Collegiate. I taught, I think it was English 10. It was a long time ago but she was just a brilliant student at the time. It is no surprise to anyone who has worked with Julie in a school setting that she'll continue to do

great things for this province, for the people of Saskatchewan.

I've had the honour of watching her track career as she went on to compete with the U of S [University of Saskatchewan] Huskies, and I believe that she was the U Sports Female Track Athlete of the Year at least one year, if not more. She's got a distinguished career. The sky is the limit with this individual. I'm happy to see her here and welcome her to her Legislative Assembly.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Last Mountain-Touchwood.

Mr. Keisig: — We, the undersigned residents of the province of Saskatchewan, wish to bring to your attention the following: that the NDP [New Democratic Party]-Liberal federal tax on carbon continues to make life more expensive for Saskatchewan residents; that the federal Liberal-NDP coalition government continues to be disingenuous with the rhetoric surrounding the carbon tax; and that according to the parliamentary budget officer's analysis, "Most households will pay more in fuel charges and GST, as well as receiving slightly lower incomes, than they will receive in climate action incentive payments."

Despite promises from the federal government that the tax would remain revenue neutral and that families would benefit, the reality is that families are paying more than they receive.

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan take the following action: to call upon the Government of Canada to immediately end the federal carbon tax and support Saskatchewan's development as a global supplier of food, fuel, and fertilizer.

The below undersigned are residents of Regina and Balgonie. I do so submit, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Mowat: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise once again today to present a petition calling for recruitment and retention of pediatric specialists. These citizens wish to bring to our attention: that Saskatchewan's sole practising pediatric GI [gastroenterologist] has announced her intention to close her practice this year and leave the province; the parents of pediatric GI patients will have to leave the province to get medical care for their child; that Saskatchewan has an insufficient number of pediatric specialists in other fields, including neurologists, immunologists, adolescent medicine, and ENTs [ear, nose, and throat]; and that Saskatchewan children requiring specialized care are not receiving the medical treatment they need.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to immediately recruit an appropriate complement of pediatric GI specialists and adjunct services, and develop a plan to address the service

gaps in pediatric specialty fields.

This is signed by individuals in Regina today, Mr. Speaker. I do so present.

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

Mr. Love: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm proud to be on my feet to present this petition calling for adequate funding for education, just as I have every day since thousands of people gathered on these steps to raise these same issues.

Those who signed the petition today would like the Assembly to be aware that education funding included in this year's budget is wholly inadequate and will lead to cuts in the classroom again. The Saskatchewan School Boards Association, who represent 27 public and Catholic divisions in a non-partisan way, have harshly criticized this budget, stating that it will further erode public education in our province. Teachers have also had lots to say, and after budget day they described this government's response as completely baffling.

Mr. Speaker, it's important to note that this year's cuts in the classroom come on top of years of cuts and our school divisions describe a system that's already cut down to the bone.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to provide adequate, sustainable, and predictable operating funds for our 27 public and separate school divisions to ensure that schools, teachers, and other caring professionals are able to meet the needs of every student in Saskatchewan.

Those who signed the petition today are from Swift Current. I do so present.

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

[14:00]

Mr. Teed: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm on my feet again today as I have been for much of the session, presenting a petition calling on the Government of Saskatchewan to join municipalities and provinces across Canada and codify a ban on conversion therapy. Mr. Speaker, conversion therapy or reparative therapy is a discredited and abusive practice that is opposed by psychiatric and psychological organizations across North America and the world. The practice can lead to lifelong trauma and is in direct contravention of *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code*.

The undersigned demand action on this file and demand Criminal Code reform concerning the practice of conversion therapy. Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan is an outlier on this. There is simply no place in our society for this prejudiced practice.

I'll read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to ban the practice of conversion therapy and prohibit transportation of youth and adults outside the province for such purposes.

Mr. Speaker, the signatories today reside in Tisdale. I do so present.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to present a petition to the Legislative Assembly calling for the funding of in vitro fertilization treatments here in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, we know that one in six couples in Canada experience infertility, Mr. Speaker. I recently saw this described by a friend of mine as her greatest heartbreak.

This is a government, Mr. Speaker, that's sitting on billions in windfall revenue, and we know that IVF [in vitro fertilization] treatments are prohibitively expensive with one cycle typically costing upwards of \$10,000. Mr. Speaker, other provinces have created programs that financially assist in providing fertility treatments to those struggling to conceive and investing in people determined to grow their families here in Saskatchewan. It's the right thing to do and it makes economic sense, Mr. Speaker. It is truly growth that works for everyone.

I will read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Government of Saskatchewan immediately move to cover the financial burden of two rounds of IVF treatment for Saskatchewan people experiencing infertility.

Mr. Speaker, the signatories of this petition today reside in Weyburn and Oungre. I do so present.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, I'm on my feet to again present a petition calling on this government to provide adequate and equitable SAID [Saskatchewan assured income for disability] rates.

For years, Mr. Speaker, folks on the SAID program were told times are tough, and we can't increase amounts. Eight years to be exact. Then with the crushing cost of living and over a billion in windfall revenue, hopes were high for this 2023 budget. Instead, folks got a buck a day. That's a 2 per cent increase after eight years with no increase, which represented an overall 20 per cent reduction in benefits. Let's not forget this is a program for folks with significant and enduring disabilities with barriers to employment. What a shame, Mr. Speaker.

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 (1) increase SAID rates to account for inflation; (2) respect the constitutional rights of

persons with disability in Saskatchewan by halting their discriminatory clawback policies; index SAID rates going forward; and finally, provide targeted relief to those in deepest poverty, namely single individuals paying market rent.

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

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Saskatoon University.

Ms. Bowes: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise once again today to present our petition calling for universal access to birth control for all Saskatchewan people. The undersigned residents would like to bring to our attention the following: that Saskatchewan has some of the highest rates of adolescent pregnancy in the entire country — that's youth ages 12 to 20 years old; that cost is one of the biggest barriers to accessing contraceptive birth control in Saskatchewan, particularly among adolescents; that having consistent and affordable access to contraceptive options is essential for promoting bodily autonomy, preventing unwanted pregnancy, and saving money on sexual and reproductive health care; and finally that sexual and reproductive health and rights are human rights.

Mr. Speaker, we had medical students join us here in the legislature three weeks ago tomorrow, and I know that they met with the Health minister. And I hope that he's been following up with those students since that time, and we'll see action on this front.

I'll now read the prayer:

We, in the prayer that reads as follows, respectfully request that the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan call on the Government of Saskatchewan to adopt a policy making no-cost prescription contraceptive available to all Saskatchewan people.

The signatories today, Mr. Speaker, reside in Grenfell, Indian Head, and Wolseley. I do so present.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Moose Jaw North.

Moose Jaw Health Foundation Fundraiser

Hon. Mr. McLeod: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's another great day in the city of Moose Jaw. Last week the 800 CHAB Family First Radiothon was held for the 17th year. Raising money for the Moose Jaw Health Foundation, the goal of this year's event was to raise \$150,000. After 36 hours on the air, the radiothon had raised a grand total of \$592,533.

Mr. Speaker, those funds will now be used to purchase state-of-the-art equipment at the Dr. F.H. Wigmore Regional Hospital, equipment that includes a specialized critical care bed, a GlideScope, an ultrasound probe, and a QuickThaw Plasma system. Local physician, Dr. Caitlyn Howe, explained how this new equipment will benefit our local residents. She said:

To be able to provide that elevated level of care to people really does change their outcomes, and it allows them to stay close to home without having to be transferred every time they might need that little extra bit of support.

Mr. Speaker, when you add up all the donations raised over the past 17 years, the Family First Radiothon has now raised more than \$5.4 million for the Moose Jaw Health Foundation. I would ask all members to join me in thanking the people of Moose Jaw and surrounding communities for their many years of generous support and for all the great work being done by the Moose Jaw Health Foundation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Recognizing the Work of the Meewasin Valley Authority

Ms. Ritchie: — Mr. Speaker, the Meewasin Valley Authority plays a key role in the daily lives of the constituents of Saskatoon Nutana and beyond. Recently the Meewasin Valley Authority announced that trail usage for 2022 was over 2.3 million visits. We should all be very proud of this amazing organization that stewards and maintains such an important asset for quality of life, and a major economic and environmental driver for our province.

In addition, more travellers than ever are looking to sustainable vacations with access to quality nature trails, with Meewasin being a strong attraction for visitors as well. Usage of the trail is up 40 per cent from what it was in 2019. Trail usage increased during the early days of the pandemic and continues to play an important part, not only in the lives of Saskatoon residents but also as a driver for tourism in Saskatoon.

I'm very proud to support the work of the MVA [Meewasin Valley Authority] throughout the year in its many community activities. A huge thank you to the Meewasin Valley, their staff, and volunteers who continue to make sure the South Saskatchewan riverbank and other conservation areas under their authority are maintained for all to enjoy.

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

Saskatchewan Baseball Hall of Fame Inductees

Mr. Domotor: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Three constituents of mine received Saskatchewan Baseball Hall of Fame inductions in the individual category this past August. Congratulations to Kelvin Colliar from Meota, Roger Blaquiére from Edam, and Mary Anne Gaetz from Unity.

Kelvin Colliar dedicated hours on the baseball diamond umpiring games. From the year 2000 to present day, Kelvin serves as the league commissioner for the North Saskatchewan River Baseball League and umpired in the same league from 1985 to 2022. Kelvin says there's no better place to be on a summer night than on the ball diamond in Saskatchewan.

Roger Blaquiére not only played baseball himself but also has dedicated his time towards coaching and umpiring baseball over

the years. Roger says: "Do all the little things right and big things will happen. On the field play to win, respect your opponents, and tip your hat when you lose."

Mary Anne Gaetz has spent 51 years volunteering, scorekeeping baseball and softball games in her community. Mary Anne says the biggest benefit of scorekeeping is having the best seat in the house for each game and just enjoying the hometown team pride. In one year Mary Anne averages 186 hours in the scorekeeper's booth.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that all members of this Assembly join me in congratulating Kelvin, Roger, and Mary Anne on their induction into the Saskatchewan Baseball Hall of Fame. Thank you for your great contributions to baseball heritage in Saskatchewan. Thank you.

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

Opening of Pine Lodge Addiction Recovery Centre

Ms. Conway: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am honoured to rise today to recognize the opening of Pine Lodge Addiction Recovery program in my constituency of Regina Elphinstone-Centre. In June, 2022 Pine Lodge opened near 8th Avenue and Elphinstone, aiming to help people across the province with substance use disorder. I had the great privilege of touring the facility a few weeks back.

Pine Lodge operates from a client-centred, trauma-informed model of care. It has nurtured relationships with community-based organizations across the province to offer a high-quality continuum of care. Pine Lodge offers a substance-free, live-in environment with . . . Clients benefit from individualized case planning, Mr. Speaker, that put them at the centre of a plan that is realistic and has regard to what will be available to them in their home community. Their transition planning helps individuals develop the necessary skills and resources to maintain sobriety and prevent and address relapse as they transition from treatment to their home or community.

The dedication and hard work of the team behind this project has resulted in much-needed resources that will help to break the cycle of addiction and support the health and wellness of our community. Executive director Andy Love and the staff at Pine Lodge are bringing hope to so many individuals and families who struggle with substance use disorder. Recognizing the need for a community hub, Andrew has prioritized a barrier-free, interdisciplinary approach.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating and celebrating Pine Lodge on their opening and the dedicated work they do in our community.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Cypress Hills.

Community Support for Injured Cowboy

Mr. Steele: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak about a young man with courage, strong will, and determination. On December 30th, Sandy Cooper-Black, a 16-year-old cowboy from the Consul area, was involved in a rodeo accident in

Brooks, Alberta. The outcome wasn't in Sandy's favour. Doctors believed that Sandy would have a 5 per cent chance in breathing on his own, and the damage to his spinal column would pretty well all but limit his arms and legs movement. Mr. Speaker, the doctors did not know Sandy and did not know the support that Sandy had behind him. Mr. Speaker, today Sandy is breathing on his own and he has movement in his hands and arms and legs.

Sandy Cooper-Black family are not alone in this journey to recovery. The communities of Reno, Consul, and Maple Creek stepped up right away to help the families in the time of need. Mr. Speaker, it started when family friend Colter Wall announced all the proceeds from his new album would be put to assist Sandy's recovery.

The community of Maple Creek hosted a hockey game which raised \$100,000 and a GoFundMe page at this present time that's \$120,000 to Sandy's recovery. Mr. Speaker, this is another example of how Saskatchewan people get behind their friends and neighbours.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all the members to join me wishing Sandy a speedy recovery and thanks to those for supporting Sandy and his family as time goes forward. Thank you.

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

Mosaic Multicultural Festival Returns

Mr. Grewal: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to speak about the return of the Mosaic festival after a three years pause. Mosaic — A Festival of Cultures, is one of the biggest multicultural festivals in Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, I have personally been involved in various roles for the India pavilion as a volunteer in this fun-filled and educational festival for many years. It is truly a wonderful celebration of our province's multiculturalism, showcasing each country's culture in its own unique pavilion.

Each pavilion is an immersive experience into that country's music, dance, cuisine, fashion, art, and trade, capturing the distinct energy and identity of the countries they represent. There are already 17 pavilions confirmed to represent their distinct traditions from across the world. This year's Mosaic will also include the return of free transportation that allows people to easily travel from pavilion to pavilion.

This tried-and-true model has made Mosaic the cultural event of summers past. The festival started in 1967 and was held each year until 2020 when health concerns related to COVID-19 put the event on hold.

This year's much-anticipated return will bring a great opportunity for our constituents to celebrate Regina's rich cultural heritage. Thanks to the Regina Multicultural Council and all the volunteers for their hard work year after year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

[14:15]

Opposition Statement on Legalization of Drugs

Mr. Bradshaw: — Mr. Speaker, the NDP claim they oppose the carbon tax, but the member from Nutana supports it. The NDP say they support municipalities being able to allow alcohol consumption in parks, but the member from Nutana is against it. The NDP voted in favour of our firearms legislation, but the member from Nutana now opposes that too.

And here's one more interesting statement she made that requires some clarification. On April the 4th she called for the legalization of currently illegal drugs. The member said, and I quote:

. . . in a similar context of harm reduction, you will see the merits of why it's necessary to legalize and ensure that we are addressing a toxic drug supply here in Saskatchewan that remains unregulated and within the criminal domain . . .

So just to recap, that member is against toxic positivity but she wants to legalize toxic drugs. Mr. Speaker, I think Saskatchewan people deserve some clarity on the NDP's position. Will the NDP leader be crystal clear and stand in this House and tell us exactly which illegal, toxic drugs they want to legalize? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION PERIOD

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

Cost of Living and Affordability

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, this tired and out-of-touch government is failing to deliver when it comes to the cost of living. Despite a generational cost-of-living crisis and the fact that they're sitting on windfall revenues, this government failed to provide any relief to those struggling. Mr. Speaker, why did the Premier fail to provide any relief at all in his budget to those struggling with the cost of living?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Premier.

Hon. Mr. Moe: — Mr. Speaker, as I've said many times on the floor of this Assembly, in the rotunda, the Minister of Finance, the Deputy Premier as well, this budget — as every budget in the province of Saskatchewan over the last number of years — has just over \$2 billion that are there to address affordability, there to address cost-of-living pressures. To the level that a family of four in this province making a household income of about 75,000 today: \$5,000 in tax under the members opposite when they had the honour to serve in government; less than \$2,000 in tax by this current government, Mr. Speaker.

Another example was just the other evening in committee, Mr. Speaker. One of the largest tax incentives for students that are transitioning to a career in this province, in a community in this province, Mr. Speaker, are able to make a claim under the graduate retention program. Indicated by the member at committee the other night that they would do away with the graduate retention program, likely the largest tax incentive to someone starting their career, attracting them to live in a community in this province.

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

Sales Tax on Food Items

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, back in 2017 as a part of the largest tax hike in the history of this province, this government expanded the PST [provincial sales tax] to include prepared meals and “snacks.” But when you look at the list published, Mr. Speaker, of the things that they call snacks, you will find a list of things that most people in this province would call groceries: rotisserie chickens, ready-to-make salads, and fruit bars that people put in their kids’ lunches. All of these grocery basics are now subject to that Saskatchewan Party food tax.

Mr. Speaker, why won’t the Premier give families a break and scrap his tax on groceries?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, it’s interesting that they still want to debate a budget from six years ago and there’s been an election since then. But however, Mr. Speaker, I fully recognize that the cost of food is inflated right now and that is a pressure on families.

So when the decision was made in the 2017 budget — and there’s a number of reasons that we have stated in this House as to why we made those difficult decisions — we used the federal government definition on what is snack food. That then helps with the retailers, confusion among the retailers. So it’s the same definition on what qualifies as snack food that the federal government use, supported by the members opposite. Quite frankly, it is their leader Jagmeet Singh that’s keeping the federal government in power.

Other provinces that have harmonized tax, and by the way the PST component of that harmonized tax is more than our PST . . . is also applied to those same criteria, list.

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

Ms. Beck: — So I guess they’re hauling water for the feds now, Mr. Speaker. But there’s no reason, there’s frankly no reason to be charging this tax on groceries, especially while they sit on windfall revenue and especially while families, seniors in this province are facing a generational cost-of-living crisis, Mr. Speaker. But for a minister who shows an I-don’t-care attitude after an \$8,000 flight that should’ve been a four-hour car ride, perhaps that shouldn’t be surprising.

Now, Mr. Speaker, it’s not just families. It’s food companies as well who have responded to this increased cost by reducing the amount of food in the packages. With fewer items per box, that actually makes those food items subject to the PST. A box of cereal bars, six, no tax; a box fewer than six, the Sask Party tax on groceries. It makes no sense. Mr. Speaker, why won’t the Premier scrap the tax today?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, again I’m going to say it is to help the retailers with confusion. We use the same definition that the federal government uses as to what qualifies to be snack food. So we’re not carrying the water for the federal government; we’re helping for the confusion with the retailers, Mr. Speaker.

But to say that there is no affordability measures in our budget is simply dead wrong, Mr. Speaker. It has been put into the record numerous times. And what they do not want to mention is the \$500 affordability tax credit that this government gave for a family of four with two adults. That is \$1,000 — \$1,000 — which is way more, more than double what that member opposite promised to do should they be government. And they never will.

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

Ms. Beck: — Mr. Speaker, I guess the federal government made them do it. That’s the defence over there now.

But, Mr. Speaker, meanwhile here in Saskatchewan families are cutting back at the grocery store and trying to cope with the rising cost of groceries, the rising cost of living. Instead of grabbing a half a dozen muffins at the bakery that would be PST exempt, many families, often seniors, are looking at smaller purchases which are subject to the PST. Again it makes no sense. The minister acts like this is news to her, Mr. Speaker.

Why is this tired and out-of-touch government forcing families to pay PST on items that they need at the grocery store?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I did address the answer to that question. When we made the difficult decision six years ago, in order to have a very stable base of revenue to pay for health care, education, and social safety nets within our province — services that the citizens of our province expect and should receive, quite frankly — we used the federal government criteria on what qualifies to be snack food. The member opposite knows the vast, the vast majority of groceries are not subjected to PST, nor are they subjected, quite frankly, to GST [goods and services tax], Mr. Speaker.

What we did do, aside from the affordability tax credit, Mr. Speaker, is we have the active families benefit, a benefit that was introduced by our government. The NDP never had that. We introduced the children’s drug plan to help those same families with the cost of prescription drugs. We have the first-time homebuyers tax credit, the only government to have one. And we have \$10-a-day daycare.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, tell me you’re out of touch without telling me you’re out of touch. Now it was wrong for the feds to impose the tax on these food items, but it was clearly wrong for that province to follow suit. It makes no sense for the Sask Party to tax basic foods.

Every day in this province working parents stop in to a grocery store to grab something like a hot rotisserie chicken to help put a good, healthy meal on their table for their family, often on the fly between activities or shifts. But because of this tired and out-of-touch government, they’re now paying the PST on that meal. An uncooked chicken, well it’s not taxed. But a cooked rotisserie chicken, it’s taxed, Mr. Speaker.

Why is the Finance minister forcing families to pay PST on basic

groceries like hot rotisserie chickens?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, in going back to decisions that were made six years ago, it's a bit of a stretch that they have found . . . And yes, there are some odd foods that are on the list that the federal government has. The majority of foods are chips, chocolate bars, candies. They are like genuinely what we would think of as snack food. However to save confusion with the retailers, we use the same criteria so that there is no question as to what the PST qualifies and what doesn't.

What I do find interesting, and if anyone has time to go through *Hansard* of committee where my budget was scrutinized by that member opposite, you will find that the members opposite, in all of their asks of additional spending, it adds up to \$1.5 billion, Mr. Speaker. Heaven help us if they are ever in charge of the finances of this province.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, so nickel-and-diming people on their groceries, some of the hardest workers, is the answer? You've got to be kidding me, Mr. Speaker. The list of groceries captured by the Sask Party's PST goes on and on: granola bars, shrimp rings, cold cut trays, fruit salads, and salads. It makes no sense.

Families trying to put food on the table and pack lunches for their kids shouldn't be forced to pay more . . . You know, the pompous member from Meadow Lake, Mr. Speaker, wants to heckle. But there's hard-working families trying to put food on the table and put lunches together for their kids, and the price of food just keeps going up and up. So does the revenue from that Sask Party's decision to raise the PST here, to impose it.

Why won't the minister give families a break and cancel the costly PST on the food that families use as staples for lunches and meals?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well I'll say one thing: when the NDP had a chance to govern, they didn't nickel-and-dime; they majorly gouged.

Mr. Speaker, today a family of four earning \$75,000 income pays \$1,891 in provincial income tax. Do you know what that same family is paying in income tax when the NDP were in power? \$5,015. Same family, same income, over \$5,000 under an NDP government, and it's less than \$2,000 today. That's a savings of over \$3,000 for that very same family, not just this year, not just this year, every single year, and it's indexed, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — You want to talk about predecessors? Their predecessors bankrupted the province, Mr. Speaker, and that government imposed the biggest tax hike in Saskatchewan's history.

Mr. Speaker, families aren't the only ones cutting back as a result of inflation. Manufacturers and food processors are cutting back too. Smaller packaging means that items that used to be exempt from PST and GST no longer qualify and now count as so-called snacks.

So if you're buying the box of six granola bars, no tax. Five or less, Mr. Speaker, the tax applies. The same for muffins. The story goes on. Why does this tired and out-of-touch government think it's fair for families to pay more in PST just because they're buying food in smaller sizes?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — Mr. Speaker, I would like to just share . . . Because, you know, there was a member's statement earlier about some of their members say one thing and other members have something else to say.

So I have a quote from the member from Regina University. And what did the member from Regina University say, Mr. Speaker? And I quote, "Taxes aren't leading to an income insecurity. So instead of giving me a \$850 tax cut, I'd rather contribute another \$850." So does that member support his colleague from Regina University?

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Regina Rosemont.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — My colleague from University and this entire caucus and that leader has stood up against the biggest tax hike in Saskatchewan's history by that government . . . [inaudible] . . . proving how out of touch they are, Mr. Speaker.

[14:30]

People are working longer hours but taking home fewer dollars. They have to budget their time and their money. They're often prepping a family meal and eating quick between shifts or between activities and then arriving late to prep that meal for the next day, starting all over again. But if they take a rotisserie chicken and a bag of lettuce, this government thinks they should be penalized with taxes. It's an unfair tax.

When will this government start listening to people and scrap this unfair tax on the staples for lunches and meals for families across Saskatchewan?

The Speaker: — I recognize the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — The member opposite is well aware the vast, the vast majority of groceries are tax free, Mr. Speaker. He knows that. He absolutely knows that. And he knows that there is a number of choices that anyone has in any given grocery store. He knows that as well.

But does he know that when you start to add up all of the things that the NDP think we should spend more money on or forgo the revenue on, that it adds up to way more than \$1.5 billion? Does he know that with all of their asks added together, we would be in a deficit position, Mr. Speaker? We would be paying higher interest, and we would never see the light of day financially. Is he aware of that?

The Speaker: — I recognize the member for Regina University.

Utility Rates and Affordability

Ms. A. Young: — Mr. Speaker, people can make choices in the grocery store? You want to talk about choices, let's talk about the government that's tripled the provincial debt. Because it's not just the cost of groceries that people are struggling with, Mr. Speaker. People's power bills are ballooning. Even if they've managed to get food on the table, they're having trouble keeping the lights on. Fifty-two per cent of people in the province are struggling to pay their bills. They can't afford to pay them.

So, Mr. Speaker, can the minister, in a province sitting on billions of windfall revenue, explain why more than half of people can't afford to pay their bills?

The Speaker: — I recognize the member from Crown Investments Corporation.

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to listen to some of the comments made by the members opposite about a matter that was debated before the last election. And maybe they're going to be complaining next about the high cost of fax paper or phone booths or something. And, Mr. Speaker, the reality of it is, the issue of affordability is something that our government takes seriously. We know that this is something that affects the citizens in our province.

And, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite have no credibility on this issue. The cost of the carbon tax is now, in our province, 76 per cent as much as the actual cost of the goods that are being consumed. If the members opposite are serious and sincere about wanting to do something, they ought to contact their leader, their co-leader Jagmeet Singh and do something about the carbon tax. Mr. Speaker, we are in a province that's highly dependent on fossil fuel. They can do something about it.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We've been dead clear on the carbon tax, Mr. Speaker. We do not support the carbon tax. What we do support is people being able to afford to put food on the table.

This is serious, Mr. Speaker. And we know this is a government that's tired, that's out of touch, that's not listening. But we also know that they can be begged, bullied, or shamed into doing the right thing, whether it's Colin Thatcher or a new compensation model for physicians.

So people are begging for help, Mr. Speaker. Why aren't they listening? They act like they cannot hear people in the province saying, we can't afford to pay our bills. So, Mr. Speaker, I ask again, when will the minister start listening to people, take it seriously, and scrap the SaskPower rate hike?

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, members opposite I don't think are genuinely sincere about this. On September 13th, the

new Leader of the Opposition was quoted as saying that "in an affordability crisis, we have some of the best rates as a province."

Mr. Speaker, we will continue to be careful, and we will monitor things that are taking place in the province. When we formed government, we changed the tax laws so that 112,000 people were taken off the tax rolls completely. Those people do not pay any money in tax whatsoever.

Mr. Speaker, the member for Regina University talks about lower power rates, but during the pandemic she called our 10 per cent power rebate "a handout for business that doesn't seem like good public policy." Mr. Speaker, those members opposite have no credibility on this issue. They've got a long ways to go.

They point to natural gas programs in Alberta and Manitoba as an affordability measure. Mr. Speaker, we're already lower than either Alberta and Manitoba on natural gas. We're not going to follow their lead because it would actually mean a rate increase.

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

Ms. A. Young: — Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Maybe the minister can take a break from faxing himself oppo research and remember that he has raised power rates not once, not twice, not three times, but four times in just a few months. Because even this tired and out-of-touch government can't possibly believe that people will accept that they're sitting on billions of dollars and still needed to raise their power rates four times in just a few months.

And now, Mr. Speaker, 52 per cent of people cannot afford their bills here in Saskatchewan right now. When is that tired and out-of-touch minister going to take this seriously and scrap the SaskPower rate hikes?

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

Hon. Mr. Morgan: — Mr. Speaker, I'd ask the members opposite to look at the cost of the total utility bundle. The average Saskatchewan family pays over \$700 less than a family in British Columbia, \$1,300 less than a family in Quebec, \$3,700 less than a family in Ontario, over \$4,000 less than a family in Alberta, and over \$5,500 less than a family in Newfoundland.

Mr. Speaker, over the last two years, SGI [Saskatchewan Government Insurance] has issued two rounds of rebate cheques to vehicle owners, averaging \$480 per vehicle and returning a total of \$370 million to the people in Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, we will continue to deal with affordability in the province. We will continue to give rebates where appropriate. We will continue to watch carefully. But I'd urge the members opposite, take some time, contact Jagmeet Singh and ask them to do something about the high carbon tax rate that they have imposed and are continuing to look . . . and support increases in that carbon tax, Mr. Speaker.

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

Income Assistance and Affordability

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, this government has simply failed to help Saskatchewan people in their time of need. They've mishandled the cost-of-living crisis that has impacted essentials worst of all: food, utilities, housing. And this regressive, arbitrary Sask Party food tax, it's just another example of an approach that hits working and struggling families hardest. No wonder food bank use is skyrocketing and the homelessness crisis is out of control.

Insult to injury: low-income families that need to cover skyrocketing utilities and food prices, just like everyone else, got an extra dollar a day. The same living amount if they have two, four, six kids. A 2 per cent increase for folks on the SAID program. No wonder it was called a slap in the face. Why isn't the minister doing more to help low-income people in this crisis?

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, this government understands the challenges that are out there. That's why this past fall we came up with the affordability tax credit. Every person in Saskatchewan over 18 got a \$500 tax credit and on top of that, Mr. Speaker, that was exempted by this government. The members opposite came forward with \$105 per individual, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of income assistance, it's a \$620 million budget this year, Mr. Speaker. And to correct the member once again, on the SIS [Saskatchewan income support] and SAID program there was a 6 per cent increase, Mr. Speaker, on those two programs. Those are some of the highest rates in Canada. We're going to continue to work with the sector, but we've made significant increases and investments in those folks that are most vulnerable in our province. Thank you.

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

Ms. Conway: — Mr. Speaker, this same government that raised power bills four times in the matter of months didn't increase support for low-income people for almost a decade. Meanwhile people are paying more for all of their essentials.

The housing picture isn't much worse. We have 3,000 vacant units across the province, a 20 per cent vacancy rate, while homelessness is higher than it's ever been. The wait-list is long and the people living out on the street is high. They can't afford food. They can't afford power. They can't afford housing. No support from this government, just cuts and more taxes.

Does the minister really think \$30 is enough, or was his intention to simply slap people in the face? How is this Sask government failing to deliver on the very basics of life from putting food on the table to a roof over people's heads?

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, we can hear the desperation coming from the members opposite when they misrepresent facts over and over every time. In terms of the SAID program, there's a \$30 increase on the basic benefit, Mr. Speaker.

Actual pay is about \$40 on average per person. There's exemptions within the SAID program for those that are able to work, as well as new on the SIS program. Mr. Speaker, this is part of \$620 million we are investing this year on income assistance, some of the highest rates in Canada.

We take a whole-of-income approach. There's not just the provincial contributions, Mr. Speaker; there's the federal contributions. So, Mr. Speaker, for example, one single adult with two dependent children, they'll get 2,771. That increases the more children you have, contrary to what the member said.

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

Overdose Deaths and Harm Reduction Initiatives

Ms. Ritchie: — Mr. Speaker, the coroners service has released the latest overdose death statistics for this province. We've lost 186 people to drug overdoses this year — not in the last 12 months but since January. One hundred and eight-six is more than we lost in all of 2019 and every year before that. Some of them lived in my constituency and some of them may just have easily lived in yours. Overdose numbers in this province are spiralling, and we have yet to see meaningful action from that minister or cabinet.

When is the minister going to recognize the crisis proportions of this calamity and take real concerted action to decrease the numbers of deaths by drug overdose?

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

Hon. Mr. Hindley: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government takes this issue very seriously. We're making a number of significant investments into prevention, into harm reduction, into long-term treatment and recovery, Mr. Speaker. This government has talked about and is working on adding at least 150 more treatment spaces in this province. Just so far this spring, we've announced 62 spaces with more to come as the rest of the phases of that treatment and recovery bed and space expansion continue throughout the coming weeks and months ahead.

Mr. Speaker, last week this government announced, as part of our harm reduction initiatives alongside the pathway to treatment and recovery, the addition of spectrometer machines being now utilized at Prairie Harm Reduction in Saskatoon and the Nēwo-Yôtina Friendship Centre in Regina to support those harm reduction efforts, again in conjunction with the long-term plan for treatment and recovery, making sure that's available for people in this province. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — I'm going to go first. To the member from Regina Rosemont, you used the words, referring to the Minister of Trade and Export Development, "the pompous member from Meadow Lake." Two things wrong: unparliamentary language and not referring to the member by the proper title. I ask you to stand and withdraw and apologize.

Mr. Wotherspoon: — I withdraw and apologize.

The Speaker: — Okay, does that cover it?

Hon. Ms. Carr: — Covers my point of order.

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

Ms. Sarauer: — Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: — State your point of order.

POINT OF ORDER

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, during the Minister for Social Services' response in question period today, he accused members on this side of misrepresenting facts. You've already ruled that that phrase is unparliamentary. I ask that you ask him to apologize and withdraw.

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

Hon. Mr. Makowsky: — Mr. Speaker, I believe for the first time, I withdraw and apologize.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Speaker: — I recognize the Deputy Chair of the Standing Committee on House Services.

Standing Committee on House Services

Ms. Sarauer: — Mr. Speaker, I have been instructed by the Standing Committee on House Services to report that it has considered certain estimates and to present its 12th report which includes the 2023-24 estimates. I move:

That the 12th report of the Standing Committee on House Services be now concurred in.

[14:45]

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the Deputy Chair:

That the 12th report of the Standing Committee on House Services be now concurred in.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried. I recognize the Chair of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Mr. Wotherspoon: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Public Accounts to present its third

report which reflects the work of the committee for the period May 18th, 2022 to May 9th, 2023.

I want to thank all the committee members, the committee Clerks, and very importantly, the Provincial Auditor and her team, and all audit entities, ministries, and government reporting entities. I move:

The third report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be now concurred in.

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

That the third report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be now concurred in.

Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

Mr. Bradshaw: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 94, *The Public Pension and Benefits Administration Corporation Act* with amendment.

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

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

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 94, *The Public Pension and Benefits Administration Corporation Act* and that the bill and its amendments be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — When shall the amendments be read a first time?

FIRST AND SECOND READINGS OF AMENDMENTS

Bill No. 94 — *The Public Pension and Benefits Administration Corporation Act*

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — I move that the amendments be now read a first and second time.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that

amendments be now read a first and second time. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — First and second reading of the amendments.

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

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 94 — *The Public Pension and Benefits Administration Corporation Act*

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — I move the bill be now read the third time and passed under its title.

The Speaker: — It has been moved by the minister that Bill No. 94, *The Public Pension and Benefits Administration Corporation Act* be now read the third time and passed under its title. Is the Assembly ready for the question?

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — Third reading.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

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

Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

Mr. Bradshaw: — Mr. Speaker, I'm instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 122, *The Saskatchewan Revenue Agency Act* without amendment.

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

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

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 122, *The Saskatchewan Revenue Agency Act* and that the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 122 — *The Saskatchewan Revenue Agency Act*

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

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

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — Those in favour of the motion please say yea.

Some Hon. Members: — Yea.

The Speaker: — Those opposed to the motion say no.

Some Hon. Members: — No.

The Speaker: — Call in the members.

[The division bells rang from 14:50 until 14:52.]

The Speaker: — All those in favour of the motion please stand.

[Yeas — 43]

Moe	McMorris	Reiter
Merriman	Harpauer	Morgan
Duncan	Tell	Wyant
Makowsky	Marit	Cheveldayoff
Bradshaw	Kaeding	Cockrill
Eyre	J. Harrison	Carr
Hindley	Buckingham	Hargrave
Fiaz	Lambert	Dennis
Kirsch	A. Ross	Ottenbreit
Francis	C. Young	Steele
Lawrence	Bonk	McLeod
Friesen	Grewal	Nerlien
Goudy	Keisig	Lemaigre
Jenson	D. Harrison	Domotor
Wilson		

The Speaker: — All those opposed please stand.

[Nays — 10]

Beck	Mowat	Wotherspoon
Love	Teed	A. Young

Sarauer
Ritchie

Conway

Bowes

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this bill.

Principal Clerk: — Mr. Speaker, those in favour of the motion, 43; those against the motion, 10.

The Speaker: — Third reading. I recognize the Government House Leader.

The Speaker: — I declare the motion carried.

Hon. Mr. J. Harrison: — Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In order to facilitate the work of committee this afternoon and this evening, I move that this House do now adjourn.

Deputy Clerk: — Third reading of this bill.

The Speaker: — The minister has moved to adjourn the House. Is it the pleasure of the Assembly to adopt the motion?

The Speaker: — Third reading.

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

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

The Speaker: — Carried. This House now stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow.

Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies

[The Assembly adjourned at 14:58.]

Mr. Bradshaw: — Mr. Speaker, I am instructed by the Standing Committee on Crown and Central Agencies to report Bill No. 133, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2023* without amendment.

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

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

The Speaker: — The minister has requested leave to waive consideration in Committee of the Whole on Bill No. 133, *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2023* and that the bill be now read the third time. Is leave granted?

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

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

THIRD READINGS

Bill No. 133 — *The Income Tax Amendment Act, 2023*

Hon. Ms. Harpauer: — I move that the bill be now read a third time and passed under its title.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Question.

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

Some Hon. Members: — Agreed.

The Speaker: — Carried.

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

Hon. Lori Carr
Minister of SaskBuilds and Procurement
Minister Responsible for the
Public Service Commission
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority
Minister Responsible for
The Global Transportation Hub Authority

Hon. Jeremy Cockrill
Minister of Highways
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Water Security Agency

Hon. Dustin Duncan
Minister of Education

Hon. Bronwyn Eyre
Minister of Justice and Attorney General

Hon. Donna Harpauer
Deputy Premier
Minister of Finance

Hon. Jeremy Harrison
Minister of Trade and Export Development
Minister of Immigration and Career Training
Minister Responsible for Innovation
Minister Responsible for Tourism Saskatchewan

Hon. Everett Hindley
Minister of Mental Health and Addictions,
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Hon. Gene Makowsky
Minister of Social Services

Hon. David Marit
Minister of Agriculture
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation

Hon. Don McMorris
Minister of Government Relations
Minister Responsible for
First Nations, Métis and Northern Affairs
Minister Responsible for the
Provincial Capital Commission

Hon. Paul Merriman
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Minister of Crown Investments Corporation
Minister Responsible for SaskEnergy Incorporated
Minister Responsible for
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Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Government Insurance
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Power Corporation
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Telecommunications
Minister Responsible for
Saskatchewan Water Corporation
Minister Responsible for the
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Hon. Dana Skoropad
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